

ABSTRACT

The thesis seeks to explain the sexual passages of women related to fertility, such as menstruation, pregnancy and birth, in the ancient Egyptian world. The passages related to fertility have strong connotations with death in the Egyptian mythological context. The aim of the thesis is to understand this relationship, often metaphorically conveyed in iconography or in the netherworld literature. The thesis collects material from various sources, archeological, textual, iconographical, not only Egyptian, but also Greek and Roman. The methods used vary from cognitive linguistics and semiotic analysis to religious anthropology. Menstruation, pregnancy and birth in ancient Egypt are explained not only on the level of the understanding of the body of the Egyptians, but also in terms of what role they play in iconography and mythology. Furthermore, the relationship between birth and death is made with regards to fertility. The basic findings of this thesis consist of illustrating a dichotomy between the feminine nurturing principle of and masculine creative principle which appear in different contexts related to birth and death: in iconography, on the level of bodily fluids, or in mythological creation.