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PATTERNS OF QUEENSHIP

in ancient Egyptian myth and history



Doctoral dissertation

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Abstract

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This study explicates the role of the royal women of ancient Egypt in terms of its relationship to a mythic prototype.

The first part of the book delineates the character of the prototype. It begins by outlining its conceptual background which, it is concluded, is found in a dualistic worldview in which the generative properties of the cosmos are seen as actualized in the relationship of male and female. Masculine and feminine sexual properties are projected in the symbolism of Egyptian myth using a system of symbolic modes, characterized as "phallic" and "uterine". The pattern of interaction of these modes is traced through the myths of creation, renewal and resurrection in the Egyptian mythological corpus. The final chapter of the first part summarizes the characteristics of the feminine prototype as the background to the presentation of the queenship in the royal monuments.

The second part relates the role of the royal women to the prototype on four levels: as a mortal manifestation of the mythic ideal, as priestess actualizing the generative powers of the prototype, as analogue to the prototype in a multi-generational relationship to the kingship and finally as the feminine aspect of the royal office, representing Egypt itself in a consort relationship to the king, and as the daughter of Re, the female monarch. The organization and function of the harem is also discussed.

Two extensive registers, containing the basic documentation of the queenship, organized chronologically, and the titulary and epithets of the queenship, organized thematically, accompany this study.

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