



DEATH AND THE RIGHT FLUIDS: PERSPECTIVES FROM EGYPTOLOGY AND ANTHROPOLOGY

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ABSTRACT

Anthropology and Egyptology share the same interest in mortuary rituals. However, the higher-order interpretative framework developed by anthropology is not standardly applied by Egyptology. The present study focuses on summarizing a comparative framework of mortuary rituals and applying it to the study of bodily fluids in ancient Egypt. The bodily fluids under discussion—menstrual blood, milk, efflux of Osiris (rdw-fluids), and semen—have been chosen because of their specific connection to birth and rebirth in the ancient Egyptian symbolical system.

INTRODUCTION: AIMS OF THIS STUDY

The general aim of the present paper is to analyse—in the broadest sense—the symbolical complex of death and rebirth in ancient Egypt. As both birth and death are physiological processes connected with specific types of bodily fluids, they represent the focusing mechanism which will allow us to limit the vast amount of potential research material. Bodily fluids are ideal because they are ambivalent: they may be simultaneously thought of as polluting and beneficial, which makes them a unique tool in our attempt to understand the ancient Egyptian classification system: “classification, like symbolising, is the creation of culture, or equally one could say that culture is the creation of classifying processes.”¹

According to the anthropologist Mary Douglas, substances issuing from the human body are imbued with special power, they are a “matter out of place,” in between categories.² In Douglas’ understanding, power is always relational—one can only have power over somebody or something; power does not exist of itself.³ Any power-structure is therefore a more or less intricate system of relationships between categories which are being continuously (re)established through performative action by the

members of a certain group. However, there always exists a universal type of power transcending these categories—the power stemming from the infinite possibilities of alternative arrangements (or alternative categories) which the given culture did not realize.

Being actual substances, fluids may be manipulated, their qualities and positioning in relation to other substances and objects may be associated or contraposed reflecting—on a physical level—the abstract notions culturally ascribed to them as a system of categories. The moment they are separated from our bodies, they enter into the interim space of “in-between.” “The danger that is risked by boundary transgression is power,” says Douglas.⁴ None of the bodily fluids are beneficial or harmful *per se*. By analysing the transgressive moments from the textual sources available to us, we may map the web of symbolical associations, create a “semiotic map” related to a segment of the symbolical system. And because systems tend to replicate their structures⁵ and project them to include the whole of creation (“the sky is the limit”), understanding the web of symbolical associations on one microcosmic level (for example of the relationship of bodily fluids) has the potential to

provide understanding of other, often larger semiotic clusters as well. The first specific aim of our study is to exemplify how such a “map of meaning” of one small semiotic cluster may be established.

The second aim is to contextualize the findings arrived at in relation to the ancient Egyptian bodily fluids semiotic complex within the framework of higher-order anthropological theories structuring the death-rebirth experience cross-culturally. We will try to show in what way these approaches may actually enhance our understanding of the ancient Egyptian material and *vice versa*.

1: BODILY FLUIDS: MENSTRUAL BLOOD, MILK, SEMEN, AND THE *RDW*-FLUIDS OF THE DECEASED/OSIRIS

The first issue to settle is the choice of bodily fluids for the analysis. Theoretically, one should consider all of the bodily fluids which play an important role in funerary and creational texts: *rdw*-fluids of Osiris/the deceased, urine and faeces, saliva, blood, semen, tears, sweat, and mother’s milk. However, the point of establishing a semiotic map is not primarily to include the numeric complexity of all relevant elements, but to cover their functional scope. The selection must, of course, always be informed in relation to the emic categories available to us from the sources.

The ancient Egyptians established a functional relationship between semen and some of the other bodily fluids: spittle, blood, tears, and sweat.⁶ Shu and Tefnut, representing air and moisture, were created either from Atum’s sperm,⁷ and/or by him spitting and sneezing.⁸ Humans were created by tears of Re-Atum.⁹ The late Papyrus Berlin 15765A describes the creation of Apophis from the blood of Re’s umbilical cord.¹⁰

Examples of mythological creation by semen or saliva should be understood no differently from tales of the creation of mankind from the creator’s tears (...) plants and minerals from divine sweat, blood, et cetera. In each instance, the cast-off portion of the god’s body retains divine power and may engender new life.¹¹

Even though faeces were both symbolically and ritually considered a substance relevant to the regenerative process (the cosmic dung-beetle rolling the sun-disk; faeces of sacred animals were considered a sacred object and even mummified),¹² the consumption of faeces (*hs*), along with urine

(*wzš.t*), in the Netherworld—as described in the funerary texts—was primarily a sign of a failed transition.¹³ This narrows our selection to the *rdw*-fluids (a unique category in themselves, see below), semen, and milk. However, the process of dying in ancient Egypt was intrinsically associated with the idea of simultaneous rebirth.¹⁴ The sarcophagus is likened to the womb of Nut and the deceased to a foetus, just like Re is reborn every day from Nut. For the understanding of these events, the physiological processes within the female body—the main concern of medical texts—are thus of primary importance. This legitimizes the choice of milk and necessitates the inclusion of menstrual blood, as the issues of lactation and the menstrual cycle are crucial to the physiological experience of (re)birth.

As we will show, semen and the *rdw*-fluids are the symbols of choice in mortuary texts as this process is essentially modelled on a male archetype of the dead Osiris. Milk and menstrual blood are their female counterparts and are of main concern to medical texts. Together, these four fluids form a “semiotic cluster” which, once described, may provide a useful tool in approaching the intricate web of symbolical associations which we encounter in ancient texts.

Our analysis will therefore proceed in the following way. We shall provide a brief description of all of the four fluids in relation to the death-rebirth symbolical complex. During our research, the association of the bodily fluids with the Nile proved to be of special importance, and thus is provided in separate sections. We shall then systematize the various details into a “map of meaning,” in which we discuss the symbolical associations in context of the whole group. Finally, we shall assess the general relevance and usefulness of this approach for the study of ancient Egyptian material.

1.1: MENSTRUAL BLOOD

Little is known about menstruation in ancient Egypt.¹⁵ Medical texts emphasize the importance of the “closeness” of women’s bodies for their health and protection from demons, especially during pregnancy. Menstrual blood was, in the mind of the Egyptians, identical to the blood of parturition or miscarriage.¹⁶ When the body was “open,” the shedding of the blood occurred, and when it was closed and the woman was pregnant, its purpose was to nourish the child and it should not have left the body. Turning towards the body in the mortuary context, Nyord, in his analysis of the body in Coffin

Texts, writes that the womb was conceptualized as “a CONTAINER, somewhat surprisingly, however, never for the fetus itself, but rather for the protection (...) it is given.”¹⁷ Coffin Texts Spell 148 thus informs us: “It is in my uterus that he (i.e. Re-Atum) has tied a protective circle around him (i.e. Horus) (because) he (i.e. Re-Atum) knows that that is the heir of Osiris.”¹⁸ The womb was understood, at least in the Coffin Texts, as a container for protection of the deceased, separated from the dangers outside. A protective space around the child is created in healing rituals as well. Tying knots and placing protective tampons inside the woman also suggest that the body of the woman is, through a ritual, transformed into a container for the *protection* of the child that, through the ritual, is established within the body of the woman and around the child. This idea of protection is linked to the belief by Egyptians, suggested by Jean and Loyrette, that the placenta/womb (i.e. *mw.t-rmt*),¹⁹ “the mother of people”) is made of menstrual blood.²⁰ The placenta becomes a metaphor for the maternal protection of the child and men.

A term traditionally employed for menstruation, but also purification, is *hzm*.²¹ Frandsen suggests that the connection between these two meanings lies in that “[t]he woman rids herself of the blood and is thereby purified and restored to her normal status.”²² Menstruating women were considered impure, worthy of avoiding in ritual contexts.²³ This notion is confirmed by absentee lists from Deir el-Medina tomb workers, attesting that men were absent from work when their wives or daughters had *hzm*.²⁴ Frandsen suggests that “activities related to *human* procreation were evidently incompatible with the purity required for service related to temple/tomb which, in turn, had as its goal various forms of recreation/regeneration of *the divine*.”²⁵ Husbands or fathers of menstruating women were, according to Frandsen, to avoid work on tombs for the fear of contamination as it could decrease the regenerative power of the tomb.²⁶ The existence of such a list is attested only for New Kingdom Deir el-Medina and these interpretations can therefore be employed only in this particular context of royal tomb-builders. However, throughout various periods of Egyptian history, starting with the Ramesside period, we come upon the motif of a male god suffering from the “poison” (*mtw.t*) of a goddess whom he rapes or has intercourse with.²⁷ It has been suggested by interpreters that it is in reaction to the impure character of the vaginal fluid she is

discharging. The possibility that it is menstrual blood is indicated by the fact that the context of these episodes is often framed by the goddess cleansing herself with water.

1.1.1: Menstrual Blood and the Nile

The Nile water was the prototypical liquid for the ancient Egyptians. Medical Incantation 29 from the London Papyrus BM 10059 (IX,14–X,1) draws a parallel between blood issuing from a woman’s body and the Nile flood.²⁸ This spell against bleeding of the future mother encourages uttering these words over a knotted tampon, like the one protecting this mother: “Anubis came forth to prevent the flood (*H’p*) from entering the pure (*w’b*) territory of (the goddess) Tayet²⁹ to protect what is in her. This incantation is recited over linen yarn on which a knot has been made. Place inside her vagina.”³⁰ In this case the bleeding very probably concerns the prevention of a possible miscarriage rather than menstruation.³¹ Tying a knot while reciting a spell was a common medical practice. The knot had a protective function, reinforced by its mythological connection to Isis and its fabrication in a ritual context thus evoking the notion of containment and separation from evil.³²

The parallel between the Nile flood and menstruation seems to have played a crucial role within the central mythological complex which integrated the main ancient Egyptian goddesses (Sakhmet, Tefnut, Bastet, Hathor, Isis, and possibly other local goddesses) and which is known as the *Return of the Goddess, Distant Goddess*, or even the *Wandering Goddess*.³³ The basic plot describes the disappearance of the daughter/eye of the sun god (into Nubia) and her subsequent return after being cajoled by a male god (Thoth, Shu, Onuris, and others). Upon her return, the goddess becomes enraged and must be appeased before reuniting with her father. The mythological complex has been related to various natural phenomena (waxing and waning of the moon, atmospheric phenomena, the sun cycle, heliacal rising of Sirius),³⁴ many of which are linked to the annual inundation cycle.³⁵ Focusing on biomorphic aspects and based on the material available to us from the Saite mythological manual of the Delta (Papyrus Brooklyn 47.218.84),³⁶ Jørgensen argues for a connection of this mythological complex with the menstrual cycle, at the same time showing the congruence with the other interpretations.³⁷ By doing so, he links the biological (menstruation), microcosmic level with

the macrocosmic framework (inundation, movement of the stars, etc.). In this context, it is relevant to take into consideration the physical aspects of the Nile waters during inundation. Maspero writes: “In eight or ten days (the Nile) has changed from greyish blue to dark red, occasionally of so intense colour as to look like newly shed blood.”³⁸

1.2: MILK

Milk, *jrt.t*, is, as well as menstrual blood, a fluid that nourishes the child, human or divine. Milk was considered a delicacy in ancient Egypt and was consumed by the gods, the living and the deceased.³⁹ Lactation established a special relationship between the woman and the child. Goddesses breast-feeding gods and kings, the “divine wet nurses,” are very common in Egyptian iconography and textual sources.⁴⁰ The goddess lactating the king established a relation between him and her, legitimized him as being of higher status than other mortals and demonstrated a transmission of divine power from the goddess to the king.⁴¹ In mortuary and religious literature as well as in medical texts, milk had yet another layer of meaning—it enabled purification.⁴² A relation between the divine milk and the purity of the mouth and of the deceased was established, as is apparent in Coffin Texts Spell 96: “Osiris has cleansed my mouth with milk of the Red Cow coming out of the sunlight (...).”⁴³ Other examples of this relation can be found in Coffin Texts,⁴⁴ as well as in the Pyramid Texts,⁴⁵ that relate milk and natron-water which emphasizes the purificatory role of the former. Milk was also often used in purification rituals.⁴⁶ The divinity’s milk, as well as water, were both considered to be purifying substances (see below).⁴⁷ Interestingly, milk is almost always presented as positive in mythological imagery. Medical texts, however, cite cases when “bad milk” (i.e. bad smelling milk) can harm the infant.⁴⁸ Another mention of the potential harmfulness of milk is related to the 25th Peret, on which it was forbidden to consume milk, as noted in the Cairo Calendar.⁴⁹ On this day, a cow was placed in front of Ra to provide him with milk, however nobody else was to drink it on that day.⁵⁰ Milk, as other bodily fluids, is ambivalent, it is taboo under certain circumstances.⁵¹

1.2.1: Milk and the Nile

The identification of these two liquids is strong on the phenomenological level. The Nile, just like milk, is often referred to through its nurturing and

revivification qualities, such as for example in the famous *Hymn to Hapy*, in which these qualities of the inundation—among others—are repeatedly stressed.⁵² Similar phenomenology in relation to the Nile may be identified in case of the Pyramid Texts (such as Spell 581), Coffin Texts (such as Spells 317–321), and other sources.⁵³ Notable is also the iconographic depiction of Hapy as a figure with pendulous breasts and other feminine features.⁵⁴

On the ritual level, the identification of milk with the Nile is a bit more tentative than in the case of the other bodily fluids. Nevertheless, the available sources provide interesting indications that make the relationship worth considering even from this perspective. In the Pyramid Texts Spell 413, we thus read: “Raise yourself, father! You have your water, you have your inundation, you have your milk from the breasts of Mother Isis.”⁵⁵ Even though the relationship between these substances is probably metaphorical (all liquids) and not that of identity, the sequence is still significant (why this specific choice?).

An inscription on a *situla* of a certain priest *Wsjr-wr* depicting the goddess Nut, in her capacity as a tree goddess, offering a libation to the deceased, states: “O Osiris, take this libation that comes from Abydos, this *rdw*-fluid that comes from Osiris, which Sothis brings with her own arms as she unites Khnum with you. A great Nile inundation (*H'pj-wr*) has come to you, its arms filled with rejuvenated water. (...) May Isis, the God’s Mother, offer you her breasts, that you may be flooded with life. (...) May you receive libation from the arms of your son punctually every tenth day, when the libator crosses over to the west of Thebes to offer a libation of water at Medinet Habu under the supervision of the father of his fathers.”⁵⁶

Notable is also the physical similarity of the Nile waters with milk. When the main flood—which is of reddish/dark brown hues—from the Blue Nile and Atbara started to recede, the waters of the White Nile entered Egypt. These had been held up by the plains and marshes and therefore carried a significant amount of yellowish-white sediments turning it muddy white—closely resembling milk (or semen).⁵⁷

1.3: *RDW*-FLUIDS OF THE DECEASED/OSIRIS

In the context of mortuary literature, *rdw* refers to the efflux of Osiris or the deceased, which are almost indistinguishable.⁵⁸ Meeks argues that *rdw* may “refer to any form of liquid bodily emanation, as for example sweat or sperm.”⁵⁹ However, he does not

provide any supportive argument or examples. In fact, *rdw* is associated with bodily fluids of gods or the dead, never of ordinary humans. In line with such a context, the function of *rdw*-fluids is creational, purificatory, i.e. states or activities which are ritually relevant. In the Coffin Texts, the efflux thus has a creative potential; the *ba* of Osiris was created from it, among other beings.⁶⁰ Nevertheless, the inherent ambivalence of the bodily fluids is most clearly defined in case of the *rdw*-fluids. The creative potential (i.e. “power”) associated with this substance is simultaneously indicative of its destructive, threatening aspects. A substantial amount of funerary texts thus focuses on the *rdw*-fluids escaping the body.⁶¹ However, once outside, the creative potential of the *rdw*-fluids may be fully utilized, most often to the advantage of the very same deceased from whose body they were expelled. Andreas Winkler described this two-way process in relation to spells from the Pyramid Texts,⁶² Rune Nyord provided a more detailed analysis of this phenomenon in relation to the Coffin Texts.⁶³ The necessity of the harming *rdw*-fluids to flow out and then re-enter the body of the deceased transformed into the beneficial *rdw*-fluids of Osiris is their determining characteristic. As the deceased ultimately gains an Osirian identity, these fluids must exit and re-enter the same body to become effective. This distinguishes them from all of the other bodily fluids that become effective either inside the body of another entity (semen, milk) or are effective only if they remain within (menstrual blood).

1.3.1: *Rdw-Fluids and the Nile*

The *rdw*-fluids of Osiris, who provided the template for the fate of the individual after death, were directly associated with the Nile.⁶⁴ From the Pyramid Texts we thus learn that: “You have your water, you have your inundation, the *rdw*-fluids that come from the god, the decay coming from Osiris”⁶⁵, and similarly: “Ho, Pepi! Your water is the inundation; your cool water is the great inundation that comes from you.”⁶⁶ In the Coffin Texts, the identification of Osiris with the inundation is for example explicitly included on the coffin of Heqata (AIC) through Osiris’ epithet “Lord of the Flood” (*nb 3gb*).⁶⁷ In Spell 74 of the Coffin Texts Isis entices Nephthys to make an incision in Osiris’ side urging: “Flow out, fluid, come out from this 3h, fill the canals, create the names of rivers!”⁶⁸ Very revealing is also the Year 4 Abydos Stela of Ramses IV to Osiris: “You (Osiris),

you are the High Hapy (*H'pj-wr*),⁶⁹ who rises at the beginning of the season. The gods and people live from the *rdw*-fluids (which issue) from you (i.e. Osiris/Hapy).”⁷⁰ In the Book of the Dead Chapter 147 Osiris is first identified with the inundation and the deceased is then cleansed with the *rdw* of Osiris/Nile waters.⁷¹ Chapter 149 hints at a similar event: “The river is (filled with) plants as the dribble/moisture/flood(?) is (filled) with the *rdw*-fluids, which come from Osiris.”⁷² In the same sense, the *wmm-hw33.t* (Putrefaction-eater)—one of the guardian-gods on late Egyptian sarcophagi—has the ability to control the putrefaction (*hw33.t*) of Osiris and thus the Nile,⁷³ the term *hw33.t* being an alternative designation of the *rdw*-fluids.⁷⁴ The explicit connection between Osiris, the fluids issuing from his body and the Nile are also the main feature of the so-called Osiris Room, a roofed chapel of the Isis temple at Philae.⁷⁵ The above stated examples show that the syncretic link between Osiris and Hapy is the creative and nurturing qualities of the *rdw*-fluids/inundation issuing from (being identical with) either entity.⁷⁶

1.4: SEMEN

The importance of semen in the death-rebirth symbolical complex must be analysed in close association with the *rdw*-fluids. The ability to procreate as part of the resurrection process was conceptualized already in the Pyramid Texts, such as in Spell 493: “Air is in my nose, semen is in my penis like the One whose shape is hidden (*sfg-jrw*, i.e. Shu) in the midst of the sunlight.”⁷⁷ There seems to exist a link through the character of the god Shu between these Pyramid Texts and the later tradition of the so-called Shu-spells contained within the Coffin Texts.⁷⁸ According to Willems, the ritualist, acting as Shu (god of air, son), performs funerary/resurrection rites on the deceased cast in the position of Atum (creator god, father) thus enabling the deceased to act in the same capacity as Shu towards Atum: “(...) the ritual stage has been telescoped into the hereafter, where the deceased performs the rite for the god Atum, whose resuscitation is tantamount to the creation of the world.”⁷⁹ Within this context, Shu bears the same title *sfg-jrw*, “the One whose shape is hidden” as was mentioned in the Spell 493 of the Pyramid Texts.⁸⁰ The crucial element in this process is the mutual relationship between the deceased and his son, who functions as the deceased’s image on earth, regardless of the specific actors mentioned, which

would have been determined by the ritual context.⁸¹ From the Coffin Texts Spell 94 we therefore learn: “I am the great *ba* of Osiris, through whom the gods commanded that he (Osiris) copulates, living up high during the day, whom Osiris created with the *rdw*-fluid which is in his flesh, the sperm which emerged from his (son’s/Osiris’) phallus in order to go out into the day and (in order that) he may copulate through him.”⁸² From this perspective, the *rdw*-fluids and semen are functionally equivalent,⁸³ serving as a physical conceptualization of the mortuary father-son relationship.⁸⁴

Semen shares one more trait with the *rdw*-fluids, or fluids in general, and that is its ambivalence. The two terms designating semen in Egyptian are *mtw.t* and 𓄀 , which also designate “poison”⁸⁵ and an “illness.”⁸⁶ This is not to say that semen *was* considered poison by the Egyptians *per se*, but must be—yet again—understood contextually and related to the concept of power stemming from the matter “out of place” (see “Introduction”). The term 𓄀 therefore does not designate an arbitrary illness, but is rather connected to problems caused by the displacement of a fluid from the body of a god or a dead person.⁸⁷ The famous homosexual episode from the *Contendings of Horus and Seth* is very illustrative in this manner.⁸⁸ Seth’s semen, intended to impregnate Horus but caught by him in his hands, is considered by Isis to be so contaminating and dangerous that she immediately cuts Horus’ hands off and throws them into the water.⁸⁹ The workings of demons through semen are obvious especially in medical texts.⁹⁰

1.4.1: Semen and the Nile

The whole concept of the Nile being assimilated to the *rdw*-fluids of Osiris (see above) inherently also associates Osiris’ semen with the Nile. After all, it was Isis, who, through her powers, enticed semen—or more generally a creative fluid—from the corpse of Osiris to beget Horus. In a similar manner—as we have learnt from the New Kingdom *situla* inscription (see above, section “Milk and the Nile”)—Isis in her form of Sothis,⁹¹ goddess of the new year, enticed the *rdw*-fluids of Osiris/inundation to appear in Egypt. The connection between the inundation, semen/efflux and a bull, traditional symbol of virility, is concisely shown in the Coffin Texts, in the transformation spell for “Becoming Hapy” (*hpr m H’p*).⁹² Here the speaker proclaims: “Pay attention to me, now! I have risen in light, and I have come into being from the *drw*-fluids (var. S1C: *mtw.t* “semen”)

of the Bull of the West.”⁹³ The idea that the semen of a certain god fertilizes the fields as the Nile water could also be extended to other substances with similar functions. Thus, for example, *Papyrus Leiden* (I 350, rto, V, 24) from the New Kingdom includes the following description of the god Amun: The “One whose semen is the stuff of life (*mtw.t=f-ht-n-nh*, i.e. seed-corn)” and the “One whose *rdw*-fluids are corn” (*rdw=f-npr*), whose wife is the field (*hm.t-ḥ.t*) over which he spread (*st=f r=s*).⁹⁴ In a similar line of reasoning, the term *bḥ(.w)*, “inundation”⁹⁵  may also be metaphorically expressed as “(Sobek’s) stream of semen”⁹⁶ , Sobek being an aquatic deity often taking on the form of a crocodile.⁹⁷ However, this example is limited only to two attestations from Sobek’s temple in Kom Ombo.

2: RELATIONSHIPS OF THE BODILY FLUIDS: THE SEMIOTIC MAP

2.1: SOME METHODOLOGICAL REMARKS

To understand the roles of the four bodily fluids within the death/rebirth symbolical complex, we must systematize their interrelations. A note on method is appropriate here, even though an evaluation of the whole model will be more appropriate only once we have actually established it (section “2.2 Summary”).⁹⁸ We may illustrate the main categories through which we are relating the four bodily fluids on the basic pair of semen and menstrual blood (see position 1 and 2 in Fig. 1): (1) origin (masculine as opposed to feminine); (2) desired location—i.e. where they are most effective and whether transference from one body to another is a desired part of this process. The purpose of semen is—in contrast to menstrual blood—fulfilled only *outside* the body from which it comes and inside the body of another.⁹⁹ Menstrual blood nourishes the child, but a menstruating woman is a “taboo” (*bwt*) (inside another [transference desired] × inside the one [transference not desired]); (3) desired effect—i.e. for which phase of the birth-death-rebirth process are they crucial (creative before conception × nurturing before birth); (4) colour (white/yellowish × red/dark brown).

Why should the elements be related through contrasts? As we are trying to define the limits of a semiotic cluster, concepts with opposing qualities represent its extremities and thus give us an idea of its symbolical extent and depth. We could have chosen different contrastive categories (e.g., structure, smell, purity, etc.) and further the analysis. However, these four seem most relevant to the

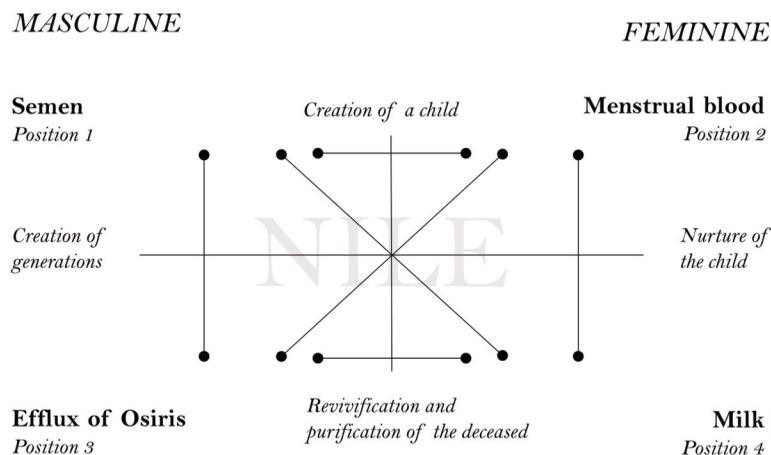


FIGURE 1: Semiotic map of symbolical associations of bodily fluids in ancient Egypt.

source material and sufficient enough to illustrate the symbolical relations between the fluids. Semen and menstrual blood have been chosen as the basic pair primarily because the differences between them are most clearly defined.

2.1.1: *R_dw-Fluids and Milk*

These two remaining fluids form another pair (see position 3 and 4 in Fig. 1). However, this pair is weaker in its contrastive qualities because the *rdw*-fluids tend to have opposing meanings depending on the performative context, thus defying a clear binary division into the categories set out by the primary pair (origin; desired location; desired effect; colour). As the fate of the deceased is essentially modelled on a male archetype of the dead Osiris, the *rdw*-fluids may be understood as primarily a masculine fluid (this position is strengthened by the functional similarity of the *rdw*-fluids and semen). Nevertheless, the *rdw*-fluids physiologically also originate from female cadavers, thus obscuring a clear binary categorisation. Milk, on the other hand, is clearly a feminine substance. The desired location of milk is inside another (infant/deceased), whereas the *rdw*-fluids are contextually desirable outside (being a harmful substance) and—transformed into the *rdw*-fluids of Osiris—inside the one who produces them (Osiris/deceased). Similarly, the desired effect of the transference of these two fluids

is both nurturing and creative (after death) in case of *rdw*-fluids, but primarily nurturing (after birth) in case of milk. Colour is only implied in case of *rdw*-fluids and may be associated with both white (through association with semen) and red/dark brown (through association with purge fluids issued by a dead body).¹⁰⁰ In case of milk, it is simply white/yellowish.

By establishing the relationships between this second pair, we have mapped out the outer limits of a semiotic cluster (see Fig. 1). However, precisely because being a cluster, its constitutive elements share certain characteristics also outside their primary pairing (semen–menstrual blood; *rdw*-fluids–milk). By mapping these in the following paragraphs, we will systematize the symbolic possibilities of the whole group simultaneously exemplifying in what way may these relationships aid us in understanding certain symbolical connections in ancient Egyptian texts.

2.1.2: *Menstrual Blood and Milk*

As the menstrual blood does not appear during lactation, Jean and Loyrette suggest that—at least in later phases of Egyptian history—milk may have been considered as analogical to blood.¹⁰¹ A Stoic philosopher living in Egypt in the first century CE reports that Egyptian priests were not to drink milk because of its similarity with blood.¹⁰² Medical texts

provide information concerning healthy lactation (Papyrus Ebers 808–813, Papyrus Berlin 3038 14–18).¹⁰³ One of the spells (Papyrus Ebers 808: 95, 1–3: a remedy for “not letting the nipples descend,” *tm r-^c h3j bn.ty*) is revealing: “Bathe them (breasts) in the blood of one whose menstruation has come for the first time. Rub it on the belly and both of her thighs so that *gesu* (a disease of the breasts overflowing with milk) do not appear with her.”¹⁰⁴ The enigmatic connection between the first menstrual blood of a young woman and the overflowing/clotted breasts of a mother may be explained with reference to the semiotic map proposed in this our text. Menstrual blood falls into the same category as milk: female fluids nourishing the child (see Fig. 1). The difference is that one nourishes the child in the womb before birth, the other after parturition. When blood escapes, it does not fulfil its purpose any more. The role of milk is, in contrast, fulfilled only when escaping the body. When a woman produces milk, it is for the nourishment of a born child. Menstrual blood and milk are analogues as well as opposites implying each other. Both of these meanings seem to be evoked within this ritual. Clotted breasts overproducing milk may thus be cured by the application of a substance that is in certain aspects contextually its structural opposite. At the same time, however, as analogues, the very first unobscured flow of menstrual blood simultaneously stimulates the free flow of breast milk. We may say that menstrual blood (position 2) implies milk (position 4) in the sense that menstrual blood is a prerequisite of the existence of milk (the foetus must be nourished before birth to be able to drink milk). Being both feminine in origin and nurturing in their desired effect, the two fluids (menstrual blood and milk) can thus be contrasted by desired location (inside the one [transference not desired] × inside another [transference desired]) and colour (red/dark brown × white/yellowish).

2.1.3: *Semen and R_dw-Fluids of Osiris/Deceased*

The close connection, identification almost, of these two fluids has already been established above (see section 1.4). In relation to the semiotic map, the relationship of this pair will be modelled similarly as we have done in case of menstrual blood and milk only moving from the “feminine” to the “masculine” sector. We may thus say that semen (position 1) implies *r_dw*-fluids (position 3) in the sense that semen is a prerequisite of the existence of *r_dw*-fluids (one must first be born to be reborn after death).

Contextually defined by their relationship, both fluids are masculine in origin and creative in their desired effect in creating generations. Even though the desired location for semen is inside another (transference desired), the situation with the *r_dw*-fluids is more complicated as the process implies both transference outside the body in which they originate and the desire to return them (transference as a prerequisite of their return to the source). Colour is an irrelevant contrastive category as the *r_dw*-fluids can be conjecturally associated with either red/dark brown (purge fluids) or white/yellowish hues (semen).

2.1.4: *Semen and Milk*

The relationship between semen and milk was established in the Papyrus Jumilhac,¹⁰⁵ a manual listing the rituals and myths relevant to the 17th and 18th Upper Egyptian nomes. Per this theory, semen comes from the bones of the father and creates the child’s bones and the soft tissue of the child comes from the milk of the mother.¹⁰⁶ This concept is well attested from temple inscriptions dating to the Greco-Roman period, but seems to be lacking from earlier periods.¹⁰⁷ This has prompted some commentators to question the relevance of this concept in general as non-Egyptian (Greek).¹⁰⁸ This, however, we consider to be limiting as it is easily explainable through the semiotic model proposed in this paper. Even though all of the four fluids comprising the semiotic map may be found in various texts throughout Egyptian history, it does not mean that all of the relationships between them had to be actualized at one specific time or in one performative context. The semiotic model rather represents the potential sum of symbolical associations a certain semiotic cluster offers. As is shown in this case, the relationship between semen and milk seems to have been actualised for some reason only in the Greco-Roman period. Foreign influence may have triggered its conceptualization, but that does not make it a non-Egyptian motif (see below).

The milk and semen parallel is also, for example, reflected in the bovine zoomorphic mythological imagery, which can be easily documented throughout Egypt’s history. Cows produce milk, and the god or the deceased, as well as the ordinary living, benefit from it as is obvious from the innumerable depictions of the deceased being breast-fed by various goddesses.¹⁰⁹ Bulls are closely associated with semen and, by association, with

power.¹¹⁰ Likewise, the colour of these two fluids, as well as the fact that both fulfil their creative potential outside the bodily organ of origin, establishes an important link between them. Gordon and Schwabe even suggest that milk is a female analogy to semen.¹¹¹ It is therefore not surprising that in the *Tebtunis Mythological Manual*, a series of five manuscripts from the Temple of Tebtunis dating to the second century CE,¹¹² the great Mehet-Weret in the form of a cow drops a single drop of milk into the primeval waters creating the first lotus from which Re emerges,¹¹³ demonstrating the functional equivalence of milk and semen. The difference is that whereas milk may be both nurturing and creative, semen seems to be restricted to its creative aspect. Within the semiotic map, these two fluids are contrasted by their origin (masculine × feminine); however the remaining three categories, i.e. desired effect (creative and in case of milk also nurturing), desired location (inside another [transference desired]) and the colour (white/yellowish), further strengthen the association between the two fluids.

2.1.5: The *R_dw*-Fluids of Osiris and Menstrual Blood

Jørgensen established the parallel between menstruation and the *r_dw*-fluids by referring to a passage in the Papyrus Brooklyn 47.218.50, a liturgical text concerning royal ceremonies dating to the Saite period.¹¹⁴ The text describes contents of a *b³s* jar associated with Bastet, which is used to anoint the pharaoh to protect him from the rage of the goddess—the Eye of Re—in her many forms. Jørgensen interprets the passage as containing the menstrual blood of the goddess:¹¹⁵ “He grasps you (the *b³s* jar) and provides for himself this your pure and perfect efflux (*r_dw*) which came forth from you, being as this pure and perfect efflux (*r_dw*) which came forth from Osiris.”¹¹⁶ The association of the *r_dw*-fluids with menstrual blood is based on the same performance (outflow), and the well-established beneficial aspects of the *r_dw*-fluids is then transposed to menstrual blood thus making it a purifying instead of a contaminating substance. It is also important to note that the text is avoiding a direct reference to “menstruation” (*h_zmn*), using rather *r_dw*. The link between these two fluids therefore seems to be the weakest from the whole semiotic cluster, which would be in line with the overall consideration of menstrual blood (or rather of a menstruating woman) as something primarily polluting or impure.

This is the only example of the tentative

association of *r_dw*-fluids with menstrual blood, which we have been able to track. It defies the symbolical associations which are implied by the semiotic map between these two fluids (see below) by actually choosing to stress the creative associative line through semen (and conjecturally, through its purificatory function and similarity in colour also with milk). The reason might be the symbolical context: menstrual blood simply cannot be transformed directly into anything positive (thus the avoidance of the direct term *h_zmn*) because being ritually “tabooized.”

As the *r_dw*-fluids avoid the possibility to absolutely define their qualities within the binary categories framed by the semiotic map (their qualities are defined by context) and are thus a very versatile substance, we may say that the *r_dw*-fluids and menstrual blood could share a *bwt*-quality.¹¹⁷ What differentiates them on an analytical level is that menstrual blood is related primarily with the period before birth whereas *r_dw*-fluids with the revivification of the deceased. The most important difference, however, is that for the *r_dw*-fluids to become nurturing (like menstrual blood), they must escape the body of the deceased and return as the *r_dw*-fluids of Osiris. Transference is thus a transformative requirement, whereas in case of menstrual blood transference outside the body of the woman must be avoided. The *r_dw*-fluids of Osiris (position 3) are thus simultaneously paralleled and opposed to menstrual blood (position 2). These associations were, however, never exploited by the ancient Egyptians in the material we have at our disposal even though they are implied by the semiotic map.

2.2: SUMMARY: THE SEMIOTIC MAP AND THE CASE OF THE “GLUTTONOUS SYMBOL”

As the semiotic map presents an analytical tool, it is very important to be aware of both its possibilities and limitations.

Firstly, even though individual elements within the semiotic map are placed in a specific quadrant with specific characteristics assigned to them, these are not fixed. Even though static in its representation, the semiotic map provides mechanisms to accommodate the essentially dynamic character of the whole cluster. Through the symbolically associative processes, each of the elements may functionally occupy—with certain limitations—the position of other elements also belonging to the given semiotic cluster (see below).

In fact, the whole model must be understood as a translation mechanism enabling us to monitor how our own clear-cut etic binary categories are defined by the elements on which we impose them. By monitoring these movements, we may deconstruct our own system and get a glimpse of the emic classificatory system. Just like the *via negativa* of mysticism, we learn about the object of our interest by negating our own categories, which, simultaneously, are the only tools we have.

Secondly, we must bear in mind that it is a synchronic representation of the possible symbolic associations among its constituent elements—regardless of their actual existence or varying levels of relevance in the primary sources and their distribution over time. One must therefore not only take caution in attributing equivalent importance to all of the possible connections, but primarily must resist the temptation of misinterpreting the source material so as to fit these analytical categories. In fact, it is very rare that every possible symbolical association would be valid at once at one specific moment. Rather, individuals pick certain symbolical associations in accordance with the given performative context. Even though the inclusion of all possible symbolical associations might seem primarily as a drawback, this synchronic model has a major advantage. When a certain symbolical system (“culture”) decides to actualize different set of symbolical associations within the given semiotic cluster, it is not necessary to explain such a shift as—for example—an interference from an outside culture, as we have already argued in relation to the issue of the concept of the origin of foetus’ bones from the semen and soft tissues from mother’s milk as a foreign concept from Greece. Symbolical systems indeed borrow elements from outside and may even deliberately retain their foreign characteristics, but they integrate them only if these “new” elements make sense within their own system. Otherwise they tend to ignore or even expel them. Such “foreign” elements should therefore be viewed as trigger mechanisms actualizing associations that were theoretically possible, but muted or not conceptualized at all.¹¹⁸ This approach is in line with the principle of Occam’s razor, as various euhemeristic and historicizing explanations, which are still quite prominent in Egyptology, often tend to be conjectural and convoluted.

Thirdly, such a semiotic map can help us in discovering associations which would be enigmatic without it. Thus, a ritual or textual association can

be made through characteristics which are crucial for one element but only secondary or rarely associated with the other. Alternatively, one association crucial for the first element may override an opposing characterisation associated with the other element. We have seen this in case of the association of menstrual blood with the *rdw*-fluids. Under normal circumstances, menstrual blood is primarily polluting outside the body of a woman. Nevertheless, the outflow itself is what essentially defines it (when it does not flow out, it is transformed within the body into milk). The association of the *rdw*-fluids with menstrual blood is thus based on the same performance (outflow). But the well-established beneficial aspects of the *rdw*-fluids are then transposed to menstrual blood thus making it a purifying instead of a contaminating substance even outside the body.

Fourthly, one must bear in mind that the individual elements of the semiotic cluster and their relationships may not be all equally pronounced within the primary material—some might not even be conceptualized at all. Certain elements tend, for various reasons, to be “symbolically gluttonous.” Their characteristics are so contextually conditioned that from a synchronic/static perspective, such as the semiotic map, they expand over several positions. If the basic pair defines the limits of the semiotic cluster, then these versatile elements make up the variations, alternations, and permutations of the basic binary positions. They are crucial for the whole system as they provide the necessary flexibility to it. This is apparent for example in relation to the qualities of the *rdw*-fluids, which are much more versatile to the point that they defy a clear binary categorisation in three of the four categories: they can be considered as either creative or nurturing; we have no idea about their colour; they may theoretically issue both from a male and a female body. How to console this symbolic polyvalence of the *rdw*-fluids with the seemingly clear-cut binary structure of the semiotic map? Does it not disprove the relevance of the model or the categories? On the contrary, the semiotic map accounts for exactly such examples. In an extreme case, if an element spreads over all of the defining categories, it may be considered a meta-term. Such meta-terms can be used within a symbolical system as a certain gear-unit enabling the association of any individual element with all the others regardless if certain characteristics—were the elements to be considered individually—would prohibit that. Even though the

rdw-fluids might be a good candidate for this position, the last of our four categories seems to be defining and limits certain associations—in order for the *rdw*-fluids to cease being harmful, they must leave the body of the deceased only to return to it as the beneficial *rdw*-fluids of Osiris. As transference is a necessary aspect of its characterisation, the *rdw*-fluids are not the meta-term we are looking for. Such a meta-term must not be limited by any of its characteristics. It must be a concept that can subsume all of the ambivalent characteristics which are more or less strongly exemplified by the individual elements. We want to claim that the waters of the Nile functioned as such a meta-term.¹¹⁹ To this end we have included the sections in which we describe the evidence of the connection of each of the fluids with the Nile. Again, not all of these connections are equally pronounced, but that does not matter. The ultimate question is whether the chosen meta-term can be easily substituted in any of the positions, which the Nile seems to have been. Such meta-terms are important in that they vastly broaden the scope of symbolical associations and thus the efficacy of substances used in ritual contexts (see below, section 3.3).

3: ANTHROPOLOGICAL ANALYSIS: BODILY FLUIDS AND FUNERARY RITUALS

What can we deduce from this web of relationships from an anthropological perspective? First, bodily fluids related to birth are interrelated and in many cases substitutable, no matter if they are male or female. Through various metaphors discussed above, a seemingly marginal topic as bodily fluids reflects important elements of the ancient Egyptian's life: (1) mother, father and child relationship in their ideal and experienced mode, (2) the physical sexual experience, (3) the gender roles, (4) the importance of creating relationship through the exchange of fluids, (5) the physiological understanding of the body by the Egyptians, as witnessed through medical texts (6) and this relationship being reflected on the zoomorphic level—the bull (semen, father) and the cow (milk, mother), reflecting also the (7) mythological or divine realm of the family of Osiris, Isis and Horus, (8) visual experiences of colour (red – blood, white – milk). Stemming from an embodied reality, this experience is then transformed into a classified reality (and vice versa)—this is reflected in writing and iconography, and, consequently, in medical texts, in mortuary literature and in healing and mortuary rituals interrelated with these texts.

This is enabled by metaphors as intellectual constructs. This illustrates that the interrelationships of these fluids accommodate a wider range of “semiotic clusters” belonging to social, biological, and cultural domains connecting them into a meaningful system.¹²⁰ The bodily fluids were thus analysed in their embodied, physical context, in their ritual context and in their mythical contexts. However, we would like to argue that this ancient Egyptian material also has a very strong comparative potential. The analysis provided above may complement anthropological frameworks studying mortuary rituals across cultures. As we will try to show, this endeavour provides striking symbolical similarities to the Egyptian semiotic system of bodily fluids relating birth and death.

3.1: LIMITATIONS OF A TRANSCULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGICAL COMPARISON OF ANCIENT EGYPTIAN MORTUARY RITUALS

Fieldwork, interaction with living people, and studying performances in their actual context has been the staple of anthropology ever since the discipline rose from its academic armchair.¹²¹ Given that ancient Egyptian culture is one long gone, its students can hardly fulfil this basic obligation. It is true that the developed tradition of Egyptian archaeology does compensate to a certain extent as it provides information about the material background. We thus have texts describing mortuary rituals and the depictions of their various stages throughout ancient Egyptian history. However, ritual is always and only a “thing done;”¹²² it cannot be reduced to a static representation of any kind. Rituals form their participants and participants form rituals in a mutual manner.¹²³ Unfortunately for us, we are missing the ancient Egyptians themselves that could actually perform a mortuary ritual for us to observe its ritual dynamics. The ground for an intercultural anthropological comparison of funerary rituals involving ancient Egyptian material nevertheless exists. Any data collected in the field must be analysed in context of the whole symbolical system of the given culture as to make sense of its various facets. We must analyse metaphors the wide array of which we tried to describe in relation to ancient Egyptian bodily fluids. This was clearly shown by Robert Hertz in his famous study on funerary customs called “Death and the Right Hand”¹²⁴—to which the title of this paper blatantly refers—later expanded by Richard Huntington and Peter Metcalf.¹²⁵

In order to set a framework, three aspects of mortuary rituals that are cross-culturally significant will be illustrated on the ancient Egyptian semiotic system of fluids: (1) funeral as a transition, (2) funeral as a means of generating vitality, (3) the symbolism of food within funerary context. In the following two sections, the relationship to the ancient Egyptian bodily fluids is outlined and comparative material provided.

3.2: FUNERAL AS A TRANSITION: *RDW*, MILK, AND SEMEN

Hertz must be credited with describing the phenomenon of the “secondary burial” or “re-burial.” The focus of the primary burial is to dispose of all humid elements of the corpse. After humidity has been removed, a secondary funeral takes place;¹²⁶ it is during this ceremony that the deceased finally joins the ancestors or generally attains a new type of existence. There are four basic ways to achieve the desiccation of the body: firstly cremation (secondary burial operates with ashes); secondly interment and subsequent decomposition of flesh (“cleaned” bones or symbolic remnants are exhumed and reburied),¹²⁷ with an alternative being the “sky-burial,” a practise widespread for example among the Buddhist population in Tibet or in Iran among the Zoroastrians (carrion eaters eat off the flesh leaving only bones which may then be buried);¹²⁸ third possibility is endo-cannibalism during which the soft tissues of the deceased are eaten (often mixed with others stuffs, such as banana-mush) by the members of the social group to which the deceased belonged.¹²⁹ The fourth possibility, mummification, was the preferred choice of the ancient Egyptians.

Regardless of the differences in details, various forms of desiccation have the same aim: to ensure the transition of the deceased from one community (of the living) to another (of the ancestors). The bodies—not only of the deceased, but also of the living ritualists invested in the whole process—are then utilised to physically ensure this transition, often transforming the physical remains into a god-like entity.¹³⁰ Bodily fluids are therefore a very convenient medium through which various cultural concepts about the integrity of the (social) body, issues of purity and impurity, and border-transitions may be conceptualised. After all, as we have attempted to show, these were the main associations with bodily fluids even in relation to living bodies.

Even though it has become almost a convenience

to understand such transitions within the van-Gennepian framework of the three basic phases—separation, liminal period, reintegration—the situation which we witness with actual rituals is rather more complicated.¹³¹ Individual phases mix and intertwine, elements are repeatedly separated to be re-integrated again and again. Individual phases of the mortuary ritual can therefore include all three van-Gennepian stages even though these ritual performances can be considered as one of the van-Gennepian stages themselves in relation to the framework of the given ritual as a whole. It is quite common to encounter these three-fold performative structures “nested” in one another. To give an example, the Egyptian Opening of the Mouth ritual was performed at the conclusion of the mummification rituals—marking a reintegration phase—but was then repeated in front of the tomb itself, again marking a reintegration phase, only to be repeated at special occasions throughout the years to come thus reanimating the reintegration momentum from which both sides (the living and the dead) profited.¹³²

Regardless of its shortcomings and coarseness, the van-Gennepian tripartite structure is important in that it posits the necessity for at least one reintegration phase. As the desiccation customs mark the crucial event of the death itself and the physical disposal of the body, the reintegration phase paralleling this event includes the re-moistening of the deceased. Only this time the liquids provided are beneficial rather than harmful. Thus, in certain parts of Asia and within various religious traditions (mainly in Hinduism, but similar concepts also appear in Buddhism, and other systems), the deceased, after being cremated, enters an intermediate state of a *preta* (“hungry ghost”). This is a starving and parched entity that must be aided into the Netherworld—primarily through offerings among which liquids are essential. These provisions then gradually establish individual parts of his Nether-worldly body.¹³³

In relation to the semiotic system of fluids in ancient Egypt, this issue is central to the ancient Egyptian ideas surrounding the *rdw*-fluids. As argued, their defining characteristics is the necessity to leave the body after death because they are harmful. Once outside the body, they are transformed into the *rdw*-fluids of Osiris, which have purifying, protective, and nurturing functions, and must be ritually presented back to the deceased. Throughout the process, the *rdw*-fluids share

functional similarities with the other fluids. They escape the body just like semen does and just like semen, if misplaced, are considered dangerous (play on the similarity of the words *mtw.t* designating both poison and semen). In the form of the *rdw*-fluids of Osiris, they are functionally equivalent to milk in their nurturing and purifying qualities, mirroring the idea of the rebirth of the deceased. The re-humidifying process may thus also be understood in terms of the transference of foodstuffs as the medium of (transcendental) power and vitality, both of which are aspects to be discussed in the following section.

3.3: GENERATING AND CHANNELLING VITALITY: FUNERAL AND PROVISIONS

Through ritual, death is often transformed into a moment generating vitality. Bloch and Parry distinguish two types of vitality which is often being evoked within funerary contexts.¹³⁴ The first type of vitality is the never-ending biological cycle of death and rebirth. This vitality is, however, often contraposed to a higher, transcendent vitality that is also perceived as a source of power from the Netherworld. Ritually, this can be evoked by sacrificing an animal as part of funerary rituals. The ritual of the Offering of the Heart and Leg, which was part of the Opening of the Mouth ritual, is an interesting example from ancient Egypt.¹³⁵ During this ritual,

a foreleg of a living calf was amputated while its mother stood behind it, mourning her young with upraised head and her tongue stuck out. A priest went running with the leg, carrying it to the mummy: evidently, it was important that it be presented while it was still warm with life. (...) Both of these, the fresh meat and the bellowing of the bereaved cow, which was interpreted as mourning over the deceased, were supposed to have a life-endowing, “mouth-opening” effect on the mummy.¹³⁶

The animal is devoted to the gods, killed, and transformed, becoming a new source of higher vitality at the sacrificial feast. In the same way, the body of the deceased is treated: at the funeral, its lower vitality, which is represented by meat and moisture, must be discarded. Only then may the dry residue be incorporated into the transcendental world of the gods/ancestors. This integration then

becomes a source of regenerative metaphysical power for the living, often mediated through a funerary feast.

A less extreme, less expensive and therefore more common—yet functionally equivalent—form of transferring vitality was through offering provisions of other kinds than livestock. In ancient Egypt, these were of primary importance in mortuary ritual.¹³⁷ As the ultimate manifestation of well-nourished vitality leads to spreading of life through procreation, the first type of vitality incorporates sexual aspects. In ancient Egypt, this was conceptualised through the archetypal filial relationship in which the deceased wishes to copulate through his son in the world of the living (see section 1.4). The medium which enabled to uphold these social relationships was the *ka*:¹³⁸ (Pyramid Texts Spell 356, *Pyr.* 582c–d): “O Osiris N., Horus has intervened for you, he has acted on behalf of his *ka* in you, that you may be satisfied in your identity Satisfied *Ka*.” The *ka*—sometimes thought of as a “twin” of a person born simultaneously: “soul, protective spirit and doppelgänger, all rolled into one”¹³⁹—passes from father to son through embrace and is thus a conceptualisation of their mutual dependence. The hieroglyph for the *ka*  depicts two outstretched arms. The father is dependent on his son for the maintenance of his mortuary cult (mediated by the *kau*—provisions)¹⁴⁰ and the preservation of his good name, but it is the community of the deceased in the Netherworld, who provide legitimacy and vitality to the living. Having been transformed (resuscitated), the deceased have access to the second, transcendental type of vitality. This second type must also be thought of along the lines of reproduction, but without the messy business of dying and being born, devoid of sexuality—self-engendering and thus completely self-sufficient. Willems described the mechanism in his analysis of the coffin of Heqata:

(...) Heqata identifies himself with Osiris, the obvious aim being to be granted the same benefices as the god (i.e. being embalmed). As a result of his ensuing resuscitation, he is able, however, to become an embalmer himself. After being initiated, he enters the Place of Embalming and assists in the mummification of Osiris. Considering that it was Osiris who ordained that the mummification of the deceased should take place (...), the whole process might be termed a cycle of resuscitation.¹⁴¹

This was the ideal a non-royal Egyptian could look forward to in the Netherworld. However, in case of the pharaoh, whose nature was divine already during his earthly existence, the circular model found its fullest expression through the New Kingdom concept of the *Kamutef*, “Bull of his mother,” the self-begetting pharaoh, who is his own creator.¹⁴²

In relation to the system of bodily fluids in Egypt, the transcendental vitality is channelled through the masculine fluids related to Osiris and the ancestors—*rdw* of Osiris and semen—which, ultimately, relate to “collective” metaphors of continuity through the archetypal, self-begetting father-son (Osiris-Horus) relationship. The female fluids then tend to conceptualize the resurrection process through evoking “individual” metaphors of the deceased as a new-born in the biological cycle of death and rebirth (symbolism of re-birth, goddesses suckling the deceased). Again, this symbolical division along the sexes is a phenomenon attested from many cultures and has direct correspondences in various ritual customs, which set varying rules of attendance in funerary rites for members of either sex (women may thus be required to prepare the deceased and wail, whereas men then bury the body and are prohibited from any such expressions of emotions).¹⁴³

In relation to the specific female fluids, the situation is more complicated. Functionally, the whole symbolical cluster of bodily fluids includes a position symbolising the nourishing quality in its purest form. Milk, which is mentioned in funerary contexts, does fulfil also this function. However, based on the reading of medical texts, the archetypal nourishing fluid was menstrual blood. As opposed to milk, which required the act of transference—during which it could get corrupted—menstrual blood had to stay within the body. In fact, if it came out of the body of the woman, it immediately became polluting. This nurturing function thus had to be maintained even within the funerary context, without, however referring to the polluting substance itself. How to solve this conundrum? Through the symbolical associative possibilities of the individual fluids as members of a semiotic cluster, the nurturing function was easily occupied by the “symbolically gluttonous” *rdw*-fluids of Osiris—a ritually acceptable substance.

4: CONCLUSION

Anthropology has managed to show how symbolical systems utilize the human body to illustrate complex social and psychological processes, be the body alive¹⁴⁴ or dead. The decomposition process or fermentation allows symbolical systems to connect the post-mortem state of the bodies with various culinary techniques or agricultural phenomena. In ancient Egypt, this took on the form of the symbolical complex surrounding the efflux of Osiris identifying it with the Nile, the agricultural cycle, birth (menstrual blood, semen) and rebirth (milk). In a similar manner, in Berawan society,¹⁴⁵ the dead are treated in the same manner as rice balls from which alcoholic (fermented) drink is prepared.¹⁴⁶ In this process, bodies are inserted into vessels which are normally used for preparing rice-wine. The fluids are let out of the vessels, collected and after a certain period the bones are taken out and buried. Rune Nyord described a very similar pattern for ancient Egyptians’ handling of the *rdw*-fluids of Osiris.¹⁴⁷ In both of these cases, the deceased is transformed through fermentation into something pure, intoxicating even. The customs further demonstrate that the transition from this world to the other does not happen purely on an intellectual level—the deceased undergoes the process physically. We can thus see that what anthropology has formulated as general, cross-cultural principles of funerary rituals can be very conveniently illustrated by the semiotic complex of ancient Egyptian bodily fluids. This shows that there exist certain types of behaviour which are apt to appear in some form whenever people are faced with the fact of death, i.e. all the time. This has implications for both disciplines. For Egyptology, it shows that studying higher-order anthropological models referencing comparative material of different provenance and time-frames can provide very interesting impulses for the re-assessment of concepts either long considered decided or maybe not considered relevant at all. It also shows that ancient Egyptian symbolical system, even though fascinating and impressive, is not at all an isolated phenomenon. For anthropology, ancient Egyptian material can provide a wealth of comparative data as its symbolical system underwent a continuous development over more than three millennia, constantly cross-referencing and intertextually referring to its older strata gradually exploiting the full spectrum of symbolical associations provided by the semiotic system of their culture.

How does the Egyptologist benefit from our analysis and why should he turn to anthropology? First, it is necessary to understand that anthropological theories are abstractions, often detached from the ethnographic sources. Thus, there exists a danger, of which we are aware, of “deforming” the material studied, or simply to choose to ignore certain aspects of it or highlight others. Such a deformation will always exist when we are studying cultures long gone. Our aim was to merely show that because all of the liquids formed a semiotic cluster, the ancient Egyptians could understand one liquid through another. Thus, the Pyramid Texts Spell 455: “The canals have filled, the rivers have flooded, and with the cleansing that comes from Osiris. (...) Sit down (i.e. *sem*-priest) and see this cleansing of father Osiris, this Pepi, with natron, with (condensed) milk, with cleansing natron,”¹⁴⁸ can, in relation to the semiotic map of the bodily fluids, be interpreted in the following way. The deceased enters the realm of Osiris, of the ancestors, by purifying himself and connecting with the “transcendental vitality” (Bloch and Parry) through the *rdw*-fluids of Osiris. Flood, the prototypical nourishing and fertilizing fluid, is evoked here, as well as milk, connoting the motherly love and sweetness towards the individual new-born on one hand (Bloch and Parry’s first type of vitality), and the ritual purity associated with its colour on the other. The analysis of bodily fluids can help us understand why the ancient Egyptians chose to use a particular fluid in a ritual and what meaning they conveyed by operating with it. Of course, the mother-father-son relationship is evident from Egyptian sources concerning the afterlife, but anthropology helps to systemize them: the motherly aspect relates to the afterlife of the individual in the Egyptian context, whereas the fatherly relates to the collective through Osiris. This is not any radically new observation; the purpose of the article is rather to show that such observations can be made by studying marginal elements appearing in rituals, as, for example, bodily fluids, and perhaps encourage other Egyptologists to look at the subject they study from different and, perhaps, less intuitive perspectives. This article is an intellectual exercise and its aim is to multiply the paths we can take to find answers about the matter we study.

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ABBREVIATIONS

CT = de Buck, Adriaan. 1935–1961. *The Egyptian Coffin Texts*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

LGG = Leitz, Christian, Frank Förster, and Dagmar Budde (eds.). 2002–2003. *Lexikon der ägyptischen Götter und Götterbezeichnungen*. Leuven: Peeters.

Pyr. = Sethe, Kurt. 1908–1910. *Die altaegyptischen Pyramidentexte nach den Papierabdrucken und Photographien des Berliner Museums I–II*. Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs.

Wb. = Erman, Adolf, and Hermann Grapow. 1926–1931. *Wörterbuch der Ägyptischen Sprache*. Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs.

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égyptienne." *Bulletin de l'Institut français d'archéologie orientale* 61, 139–146.

NOTES

- 1 Douglas 2006.
- 2 Douglas 2002, 199.
- 3 Similar ideas were, however, formulated by other anthropologists as well, for example Edmund Leach, see Hugh-Jones and Laidlaw (eds.) 2001.
- 4 Douglas 2002, 199.
- 5 See for example Berger and Luckmann 1966.
- 6 See von Lieven 2011, 289–291; Gordon and Schwabe 2004, 146–148.
- 7 Pyramid Texts Spell 527, *Pyr.* 1248a–d; Allen 1988, 13.
- 8 Pyramid Texts Spell 600, *Pyr.* 1652c; Allen 1988, 13. Other forms of creation include Ptah's creative utterance.
- 9 Coffin Texts Spell 1130, *CT VII*, 465. For other references, see Nyord 2009, 324.
- 10 Quack 2015.
- 11 Ritner 2008 [1993], 78; see also Guglielmi 1980, esp. 82–85.
- 12 Von Lieven 2011, 291ff.
- 13 Von Lieven, 2011; Meurer 2002, 264–268.
- 14 See for example Meskell 1999.
- 15 Main texts to consult are: Colin 2001; Jørgensen 2015; Strouhal et al. 2014, 147–148; Wilfong 1999. See also von Lieven 2011, 289 n. 9.
- 16 Frandsen 2007, 86.
- 17 Nyord 2009, 291.
- 18 *CT II*, 218e–219a: (218e) *ts[.n=f] šnw h³=f m-hnw jd.t=j tn* (219a) *r<h>=f jw^c Wsjr js pw*.
- 19 *Wb.* II, 54.18.
- 20 Papyrus Ramesseum IV. C, 17b; see Jean and Loyrette 2010, 181–184.
- 21 *Wb.* III, 163.3–6, 8. For other terms related to menstruation: Frandsen 2007, 82–87.
- 22 Frandsen 2007, 84.
- 23 Frandsen 2007, 87–89; Colin 2001, 267; O'Rourke 2007.
- 24 Frandsen 2007, 90–96.
- 25 Frandsen 2007, 100.
- 26 Frandsen also suggests that women were leaving their houses during menstruation (Frandsen 2007, 96; also Wilfong 1999). Some theories suggest that a special place in the house was reserved for menstruation, see Colin 2001. However, none of the evidence seems decisive.
- 27 For further references, see van Dijk 1986; Ritner 1998; Jørgensen 2013, 123, 138–144.
- 28 For hieroglyphic transcription, see: Leitz 1999, Incantation 29, IX,14–X,1; similarly, Inc. 30, X,1–2 (pp. 69–70). For translation, see Borghouts 1978, 24, texts 31 and 33. For commentary, see Westendorf 1966, 146.
- 29 The “pure territory of Tayet” is probably the tampon itself, as Tayet was the goddess of weaving.
- 30 (14) *pr Jnpw r hsf H^cpj r* (15) *jw.t w^cb-t³ t³y.t jmy=s dd.tw r^c pn hr ³.t nt r³-j³³.t jr.w m ts.t mkj(?) jm=s r dj(.t) r-hnw jwf=s*. For translation, see: Strouhal, Vachala, and Vymazalová 2014, 124.
- 31 Frandsen 2007, 84–86.
- 32 On the protective function of knots and their classification in ancient Egypt, see Wendrich 2006.
- 33 Junker 1911; Junker 1917; Sethe 1912; Spiegelberg 1917; Otto 1976. For an overview of the more recent studies, see Richter 2010, 155–186; Richter 2016.
- 34 For an overview and further bibliographic references, see Jørgensen 2015, 134.
- 35 Explicitly Sauneron 1962, 58–59.
- 36 Meeks 2006.
- 37 Jørgensen 2015. First suggested by te Velde 1982, 136.
- 38 Maspero 1903, 29–30. See also Østigård 2011, 48–51.
- 39 Poo 2010; Hays 2010, 6.
- 40 Budin 2011, 37–41.
- 41 Volokhine 2017, 83–90; Nyord 2009, 331.
- 42 Jean and Loyrette 2010, 214.
- 43 *CT II*, 81b–82a: (81b) *jw j^c.n Wsjr r³=j m jrt.t n(y).t hm.t-dšr.t* (81c) *pr.t(j)* (82a) *m j³hw*.
- 44 Spell 96, *CT I*, 62e–63a, or Spell 993, *CT VII*, 205k; Nyord 2009, 330.
- 45 Spells 32–36 of the *Pyramid Texts*.
- 46 For milk and purification, see Ivanova 2009, 12, 22, 31, 37.

- 47 For the resurrecting effect of mother's milk in funerary context, see Leclant 1951, 123–127 (we thank R. Nyord for the reference).
- 48 Papyrus Ebers, 788: 93, 17–18. Grapow 1958, 491. See also Jean and Loyrette 2010, 108–109.
- 49 Leitz 1994, 220.
- 50 Ivanova 2009, 40.
- 51 See for example the *Tebtunis Mythological Manual* as discussed in Jørgensen 2013, 68–69 with further references.
- 52 van der Plas 1986. For an English translation, see conveniently Lichtheim 1973, 204–210.
- 53 For more parallels, see Clark 1955.
- 54 Baines 1984.
- 55 *Pyr.* 734a–b: (734a) *tz tw jt mw=k n=k b'h=k n=k* (734b) *jr.t n=k jm.t mnd.wy mw.t s.s.t.*
- 56 *hy Wsjr N. mn n=k qbhw=k pn jj.w m s̄bd.w rdw pr(.w) m Wsjr jn(?)=s n=k spd.t m 'w.y=s ds=s hnm=s n=k Hnm jw n=k H'pj-wr r tr=f 'w.y=f hr mw n rnpj (...) r dj.t n=k s̄st mw.t-ntr mnd.ty=s b̄h=k m 'nh (...) s̄sp=k kbhw m 'w.y s̄=k r tr n hrw 10 nb hft n'j qbh r jmn.t W̄s.t r s̄sf m j̄.t-t̄-mw.t hr st hr n jt jt.w=f.* See Pierret 1978 [1874–1878], II, 115–117. (Assmann 2005, 359–360 refers incorrectly to pp. 113–115). Assmann deviates in his translation from the original by using “Elephantine” instead of “Abydos” (*s̄bd.w*).
- 57 Østigård and Firew 2013, 32–34; Østigård 2011, esp. 53–56.
- 58 Nyord 2009, 462. For comparison, see Winkler 2006, 132–136.
- 59 Meeks 2006, 44 (“peut aussi désigner toute forme d'émanation corporelle liquide, la sueur, le sperme, par exemple”).
- 60 Spell 76, *CT* II, 1b, 6c, 7d and Spell 78, *CT* II, 19e. For the creation of *ba*, see Coffin Texts spells 94–96. Similarly, in the Papyrus Jumilhac (8,20f) a date-palm is created from the *rdw* of Osiris (Vandier 1961, 119, 162).
- 61 Nyord, 2009, 466. Pantalacci 1981, 57–66.
- 62 Winkler, 2006. The main objection which may be elevated against his analysis is that he works with limited evidence and thus any generalizations must be taken with caution.
- 63 Nyord, 2009, 462–468.
- 64 Hapy, the god representing the inundation, could be syncretised with Osiris (as his epithet), see *LGG* V, 44–45, s.v. “Hapy”: Funktionen A. b), B. 1.a), F. b), G. d), N a); or associated with the deceased: F.; and other variants of the name Hapy on pp. 47–51. For an overview of the topic with further references, see Prell 2009, esp. 223–225. On the concept of the 42 nomes of Egypt containing each one body part of Osiris being connected by his efflux, i.e. the Nile, see specifically Goyon 1988.
- 65 *PT* 436, *Pyr.* 788a–b: (788a) *mw=k n=k b'h=k n=k* (788b) *rdw pr(.w) m ntr hw̄s̄.t pr.t(j) m Wsjr.* See also *PT* 676, *Pyr.* 2007a–b; *PT* 679, *Pyr.* 2031a–b.
- 66 *PT* 460, *Pyr.* 868a–b: (868a–b) *h̄s̄ NN pn mw=k b'h kbh=k b'h wr pr(.w) jm=k.*
- 67 Spells 240–241, *CT* III, 324g–h; 325a–f. For commentary, see Willems 1996, 118–119.
- 68 *CT* I 306c–307e: (307c) *s̄sb rdw pr m s̄h pn* (307d) *mh n=k š.w* (307e) *jr n=k rn.w jtr.w.*
- 69 A parallel may be drawn between the title *H'pj-wr* and *Nwn-wr*, see Rotsch 2005, esp. 231–232.
- 70 *mnt=k H'pj-wr hr hntš hr-tp tr 'nh ntr.w rmt.w m rdw jm=k.* Korostovtsev 1945, 157 (§7–8), 161 (7,17–18). Kitchen 2012, 22, 12–13. See also Claus 2005, 204ff.
- 71 The Book of the Dead papyrus of *Jw-f-nh* (Papyrus Turin 1791, Ptolemaic period). For bibliography and translation, see Totenbuchprojekt Bonn, TM 57201, <<http://totenbuch.awk.nrw.de/objekt/tm57201>>, accessed 4 November 2017.
- 72 *jtrw <m> s̄hy mj nm(w).jt m rdw pr(.w) m Wsjr.* The Book of the Dead papyrus of *Nw* (P. London BM EA 10477, New Kingdom). For bibliography and translation, see Totenbuchprojekt Bonn, TM 134299, <<http://totenbuch.awk.nrw.de/objekt/tm134299>>, accessed 4 November 2017.
- 73 Pantalacci 1983.
- 74 Thus Spell 810 of the *Coffin Texts* (*CT* VII, 12n–o): “[...] the putrefac[ti]on this N [...] the *rdw*-fluids (of) this N are as (those) of Anubis [...]”; (12n) [...] *hw̄s̄[.t] N pn [...]* (12o) [...] *(r)dw N pn mj Jnp(w)*. Similarly in Spell 833 (*CT* VII, 34j–k). See also Nyord 2009, 322–323.
- 75 Bénédite 1893, 119–127, pls. XXXV–XLII. See also Centrone 2005.
- 76 For an overview of the topic with references, see

- Østigård 2011, 43–53; Goyon 1988, 36–37. Kettel 1993.
- ⁷⁷ *Pyr.* 1061b–c: (1061b) $\underline{t}^3w m fnd=j mtw.t m hnn=j$ (1061c) $mj sf\dot{g}-jr\dot{w} hr-jb j^3hw$. See also Pyramid Texts Spell 317, *Pyr.* 510b–d.
- ⁷⁸ On the Shu-spells, see Willems 1996, 270–324, esp. 270–286, 323–324.
- ⁷⁹ For Sh9spells, see Willems 1996, 324.
- ⁸⁰ Compare with Spell 75, *CT I*, 450b.
- ⁸¹ Assmann 1976. Also Willems, 1996, “Index: Father-son relationship,” 541–542.
- ⁸² *CT II* 67c–68d: (67c) $jnk b^3 pw \text{ }^3 n(y) Wsjr$ (67d) $w\dot{d}.n ntr.w nk=f jm=f$ (68a) $\text{ }^3nh(w) hr k^3 m hrw$ (68b) $jr.n Wsjr m rdw jm(y) jwf=f$ (68c) $mtw.t pr.t(j) m hnn=f$ (68d) $r pr.t m hrw nk=f jm=f$.
- ⁸³ See also Nyord 2009, specifically chapter 9.3, pp. 459–467.
- ⁸⁴ See also Nyord 2009, 440–441. It is significant in the context of the Coffin Texts that the word *mtw.t* designates not only semen, but metonymically also “someone’s progeny or heir” (Nyord 2009, 460 n. 4426).
- ⁸⁵ *Wb.* II, 169.1–8.
- ⁸⁶ *Wb.* I, 167.2–4.
- ⁸⁷ Westendorf 1999, I, 361ff.
- ⁸⁸ Griffiths 1960, 41–50; Parkinson 1995; Amenta 2004.
- ⁸⁹ Gardiner 1932, 51.15–52.7 (manuscript 11,3–7). The relationship between sperm and poison was studied for example by te Velde 1967, 37, 45. See also Gordon and Schwabe 2004, 79, 108–110, 125, 137, 146–147.
- ⁹⁰ Westendorf 1966, 128–131. Westendorf 1970, 145–149.
- ⁹¹ The star Sirius the re-appearance of which after its seventy-day absence from the sky indicated the beginning of the inundation. See for example Prell 2009, 226 with further references.
- ⁹² Spell 317, *CT IV*, 110a.
- ⁹³ Spell 317, *CT IV*, 130c–e, B2L: (130c) $m^3 wj jr=tn$ (130d) $wbn=j m (w)bn.t$ (130e) $hpr=j m \dot{d}rw/mtw.t n k^3 jmn.t$.
- ⁹⁴ “*mtwt.f-h.t-n-^3nh*,” *LGG III*, 460.
- ⁹⁵ *Wb.* I, 448.1–8.
- ⁹⁶ *Wb.* I, 450.5.
- ⁹⁷ For an overview of the various animals connected with the cult of the Nile, see Prell 2009, 228–232.
- ⁹⁸ Our approach is loosely based on the method developed by Algirdas Julien Greimas and François Rastier (see for example Greimas and Rastier 1968).
- ⁹⁹ Physiologically a woman, however the motif of the (auto)impregnation of a masculine entity is also relevant in Egyptian mythology.
- ¹⁰⁰ This identification of the *rdw* and purge fluids (which may extrude from the nose and mouth of a decomposing body) and thus their red/dark brown colour is purely conjectural. There is no direct evidence in texts about the material qualities of the *rdw* outside the fact that they are liquid. One wonders whether the non-determinate colour of the *rdw*-fluids might not be intentional as to accommodate the symbolic associations with the two typical male and female discharges—semen and menstrual blood.
- ¹⁰¹ Jean and Loyrette 2010, 184–185.
- ¹⁰² van der Horst 1984, 23.
- ¹⁰³ For further information on lactation, see Marshall 2015, 175–184. See also Strouhal, Vachala and Vymazalová 2014, 182–185.
- ¹⁰⁴ (1) $b^3b^3 sj m snf n$ (2) $w\dot{d}^3=s m-tp m tp jrf sj jnw(?)$ $h.t=s smn.t rd.wy=s jm n hpr.n gsw$ (3) $r=s$. See Grapow 1958, 491. For translation, see Strouhal, Vachala and Vymazalová 2014, 119.
- ¹⁰⁵ Vandier 1961, XII, 24–25.
- ¹⁰⁶ Yoyotte 1962, 139–146. Also Gordon and Schwabe 2004, 169.
- ¹⁰⁷ Sauneron 1960, 26. See also Nyord 2009, 419–420.
- ¹⁰⁸ Sauneron, 1960, 26; Roth 2000, 190.
- ¹⁰⁹ For an overview of iconographic sources from the Old Kingdom, see Ćwiek 2003, 176–184.
- ¹¹⁰ For a detailed description of the connection of bone marrow and semen in association with bovines, see Gordon and Schwabe 2004, 97–99; also Nyord 2009, 460–461.
- ¹¹¹ Gordon and Schwabe 2004, 136.
- ¹¹² See conveniently Jørgensen 2013, 43.
- ¹¹³ *Tebtunis Mythological Manual* 4, 24–27. For a more detailed description and parallels in other texts, see Jørgensen 2013, 94–95, for transcription and translation, p. 232.

- ¹¹⁴ Goyon 1972. See also Martzloff 2014.
- ¹¹⁵ Jørgensen 2015, 142–144; see also Meeks 2006, 42–44; Winkler 2006; Kettel 1993.
- ¹¹⁶ Papyrus Brooklyn 47.218.50, 2, 11–2, 14. Translated by Jørgensen 2015, 143. Interestingly, the efflux of Osiris, as well as the efflux of the deceased, was contained in canopic jars, see Meeks 2006, 36–37.
- ¹¹⁷ See Rizzo 2007; Frandsen 2007, 87ff.
- ¹¹⁸ Similar line of argumentation in relation to Syro-Palestinian mythological motives in Egyptian texts has been pursued in Pehal 2014, 247–251.
- ¹¹⁹ A possible objection is that the connection is simply that all of the substances in consideration are liquid—and thus Nile is only one of the liquids rather than being a universal liquid. On a certain level, the objection is correct—any meta-term will necessarily display very general shared characteristics which, considered alone, cannot establish it as a meta-term.
- ¹²⁰ I have described this quality of symbols more extensively elsewhere, see Pehal 2014, 165–177.
- ¹²¹ See, for example, Eriksen and Nielsen 2013, esp. 46–67.
- ¹²² Thus the title “Lord of rituals [things done]” (*nb-jr.t-jh.t*) of the pharaoh as the main ritualist (Erman and Grapow 1926, 124.12). For textual references, see “*nb-jr.t-jh.t*” (lemma No. 400354) in the *Thesaurus Linguae Aegyptiae*, <http://aaw.bbaw.de/tla/servlet/GetWcnRefs?f=0&l=0&of=0&ll=400354&db=0&lr=0&mo=1&wt=y&bc=Start>, accessed 15 January 2018.
- ¹²³ More on the dynamic aspect of rituals, see Bell 1997, 210–252; Turner 1969; Grimes 2014, esp. 231–338. For a static understanding of ritual, see Humphrey and Laidlaw 1994.
- ¹²⁴ Hertz 1960.
- ¹²⁵ Huntington and Metcalf 1979.
- ¹²⁶ Hertz 1960 focuses primarily on cultures in Indonesia, specifically from Borneo. Secondary burials can nevertheless be identified across the globe. See further references in Huntington and Metcalf 1991, 33–35, 191–192.
- ¹²⁷ For an excellent description and analysis of rural Greek Christian Orthodox mortuary rituals, including secondary burials, see Danforth 1982.
- ¹²⁸ Gouin 2012; Corlin 1988.
- ¹²⁹ See for example Conklin 2001.
- ¹³⁰ Contrary to a general presumption that the main aim of mummification was the preservation of the body, the crucial idea of this Egyptian custom was rather the physical transformation of the deceased into a god-like object. See Riggs 2014, esp. 77–108.
- ¹³¹ For a concise evaluation of the weaknesses of this model and an appreciation of the main literature, see Hays 2013.
- ¹³² Finnestad 1978.
- ¹³³ See for example Knipe 1977; Parry 1994.
- ¹³⁴ Bloch and Parry 1982.
- ¹³⁵ Assmann 2005, 310–329.
- ¹³⁶ Assmann 2005, 324.
- ¹³⁷ See conveniently Altenmüller 1983; Barta 1983a; Barta 1983b.
- ¹³⁸ Gordon 1996, 33–35.
- ¹³⁹ Assmann 2005, 97.
- ¹⁴⁰ *Wb.* V, 91.3–13.
- ¹⁴¹ Willems 1996, 377.
- ¹⁴² See, conveniently, Jacobsohn 1980.
- ¹⁴³ See for example Huntington 1973.
- ¹⁴⁴ See for example the works of Mary Douglas, such as Douglas 1996; Douglas 2002. See also Fardon 1999.
- ¹⁴⁵ At present, numbering approximately 2,000 members belonging to the Borneo-Kalimantan people cluster. See Metcalf 1976.
- ¹⁴⁶ Huntington and Metcalf 1991, 72–74.
- ¹⁴⁷ Nyord 2009, 462–468.
- ¹⁴⁸ *Pyr.* 848a–b, 849b–c: (848a–b) *mḥ mr.w j³h.w jtr.w m r=fᶜb.w pr(.w) m Wsjr (...)* (849b) *m³=tn wᶜb pn n jt Wsjr pjpj pn* (849c) *m sntr m ḥzmn m bd.*