



# The Defeat of Death: A Reading of Sir Henry Rider Haggard's Cleopatra

*Afroditi-Maria Panaghis*

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
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## **The Defeat of Death: A Reading of Sir Henry Rider Haggard's Cleopatra** Afrodit-Maria Panaghis

The monograph reads Sir Henry Rider Haggard's historical romance *Cleopatra* (1889) with the aim to delineate the last decade of the Victorian period, shed light on the attempt to forge identity, and demonstrate the author's preoccupation with the concept of *coincidentia oppositorum* as the basic principle of life, death, and regeneration. Through the mythic figure of Cleopatra, the simulacrum of the goddess Isis, the writer underscores that death can be defeated and immortality attained. By simulating ancient Egypt, submerging in the unconscious, withdrawing from the ephemeral world and espousing the spiritual, he came to terms with his fear of mortality, rejuvenated his self, and redeemed his soul. In perusing the three papyri, discovered in the hero's sarcophagus, the reader traces the progress from the Ptolemaic degenerate court to that of Isis.

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