Framing Egypt : Roman literary perceptions of Egypt from Cicero to Juvenal

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FRAMING EGYPT

Roman literary perceptions of Egypt from Cicero to Juvenal

Proefschrift

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Maaike Elisabeth Cecilia Leemreize
geboren te Lichtenvoorde
op 27 oktober 1977

PROMOTIECOMMISSIE

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	Prof. dr. O.M. van Nijf (Rijksuniversiteit Groningen)
	Dr. M.A.J. Heerink (Universiteit van Amsterdam / Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam)

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Voorwoord

Vanaf september 2010 heb ik gewerkt aan dit proefschrift; eerst fulltime, toen parttime en op het laatst in de avonduren. Wat op een gegeven moment een eindeloos project leek, is, althans zo lijkt het, ineens af. In retrospect klopt het beeld van een traag en slepend proces natuurlijk niet. Het zijn voor mij zeer enerverende en vormende jaren geweest. Niet in de laatste plaat vanwege de mensen die mij hebben geholpen dit project te voltooien.

Bovenal wil ik mijn beide promotores, Miguel John Versluys en Ineke Sluiter, bedanken. Ik noem hen in één adem, omdat dat hun goede samenwerking onderstreept en aangeeft dat zij voor mij een 'dreamteam' waren. Miguel John heeft als supervisor van het NWO VIDI project 'Cultural Innovation of a globalising society: Egypt in the Roman world' mijn dagelijkse sores geduldig aangehoord en gerelativeerd waar nodig. Zijn visie op de Romeinse wereld heeft mijn ideeën daaromtrent stevig opgeschud. Tevens heeft hij ervoor gezorgd dat de inhoud van dit proefschrift binnen de kaders van het overkoepelende project bleef. Ineke heeft met haar scherpte en haar onuitputtelijke kennis van de klassieke talen en cultuur ervoor gezorgd dat ik de vragen die ik wilde beantwoorden vanuit het VIDI-project kon vertalen naar vragen die gesteld konden worden aan geschreven bronnen. Het enthousiasme van beide promotores voor mijn onderzoek en ook hun warme belangstelling voor mij persoonlijk hebben een belangrijke bijdrage geleverd aan de afronding van dit proefschrift.

Zonder Eva Mol, Sander Müskens en mijn paranimf Marike van Aerde, de drie andere promovendi in het VIDI-team, waren de afgelopen jaren zonder twijfel minder enerverend geweest. Ik koester de herinneringen aan de momenten dat we ook daadwerkelijk allemaal op hetzelfde moment aanwezig waren op ons kantoor en niet ergens in het buitenland voor veldwerk. Het op een hoog niveau kunnen bediscussiëren van ideeën over de Romeinse perceptie van Egypte in combinatie met het kunnen delen van onze zieleroerselen is voor mij van onschatbaar belang geweest. Onze Italië tripjes

– waarvan één onder de bezielende leiding van Paul Meyboom – vormden een absoluut hoogtepunt hiervan.

Delen van mijn proefschrift heb ik kunnen bespreken tijdens (internationale) congressen en workshops. Tevens hebben de bijeenkomsten georganiseerd door de onderzoeksgroep OIKOS en door de Graduate School of Archaeology bijgedragen aan de inhoud van dit proefschrift. Daarnaast dank ik iedereen op de Faculteit der Archeologie, Leiden Universiteit, die mij geholpen heeft met de praktische en inhoudelijke kant van mijn onderzoek. Na de verhuizing van de Faculteit Archeologie naar het Van Steenisgebouw heb ik gebruik mogen maken van een kantoor in het Johan Huizinga complex. Hierdoor bleef de door mij vrijwel dagelijks gefrequenteerde Universiteit Bibliotheek binnen handbereik. Tevens hebben sociale en inhoudelijk gesprekken met de collega's op de gang bij Klassieke Talen mij geholpen nog een extra slag te maken in mijn onderzoek. In het bijzonder wil ik mijn buurman Christoph Pieper bedanken voor het lezen en becommentariëren van een gedeelte uit mijn proefschrift en zijn immer positieve kijk op het leven.

Mijn interesse voor het onderzoek is gewekt tijdens mijn studies Rechten en Klassieke Talen aan de Rijksuniversiteit Groningen. Hiervoor is vooral een aantal oudhistorici verantwoordelijk geweest: Onno van Nijf voor zijn inspirerende en prikkelende colleges, Ed van der Vliet voor zijn originele kijk op de oudheid en Bert Overbeek die mij (toen nog rechtenstudent) aanvankelijk heeft gedoceerd wat Oude Geschiedenis was en met wie ik later als goede vrienden vele interessante oudheidkundige kwesties heb kunnen bediscussiëren.

De afgelopen jaren ben ik bijgestaan door veel dierbare vrienden. Twee van hen waren ervaringsdeskundigen pur sang. Susan Ketner wist niet alleen wat het was om een proefschrift te schrijven, maar gold ook als vraagbaak op een ander enerverend en vormend moment: zij was namelijk drie maanden eerder zwanger dan ik. Het drinken van al dan niet alcoholvrije biertjes met haar werkte motiverend. De hechte vriendschap met mijn paranimf Marlies Schipperheijn is ontstaan op een legendarische Griekenlandreis. Beiden hebben we Klassieke Talen gestudeerd en een proefschrift geschreven. Maar onze vriendschap is veel meer dan een gedeelde liefde voor de Oudheid. Onze immer genuanceerde en uitgebalanceerde visie op werkelijk alles heeft mij er op cruciale momenten doorheen gesleept. Ik hoop dat we nog vaak onverwachts bubbels drinken!

Het schrijven van een proefschrift in combinatie met zwanger-/moederschap was moeizamer geweest zonder de hulp van mijn familie. Mijn schoonouders, Ans en Jan Grefhorst, stonden altijd begripvol klaar om mij uit de brand te helpen. Niet alleen komen zij vrijdags om de week vanuit Apeldoorn om op hun kleinkinderen op te passen, maar ook daarbuiten kon ik altijd op hen rekenen. Ik had geen betere schoonouders kunnen wensen! Mijn zwager en schoonzus, Ronald en Marije, zijn er medeverantwoordelijk voor dat ik niet ben vergeten dat er een leven is naast het proefschrift. Vooral ons bezoek De Staat in Het Paard van Troje was fantastisch. Ook mijn broer Robert, schoonzus Marieke en hun kinderen Roos en Sofie zorgden voor de nodige ontspanning en een feestelijke sfeer. Het is heel mooi en bijzonder onze kinderen samen te zien spelen en opgroeien! Mijn ouders kan ik niet genoeg bedanken. Pap en mam, jullie hebben mij altijd de ruimte gegeven mezelf verder te ontwikkelen. Ook op momenten dat ik niet voor de hand liggende keuzes maakte of dingen deed die niet altijd te begrijpen waren. Ik ben erg blij dat jullie mij al die jaren hebben gesteund en dat jullie vrijdags om de week vanuit Vragender (in de Achterhoek) naar Den Haag komen om op jullie kleinkinderen te passen.

Lieve Aldo, het is onmogelijk hier in een paar woorden op te schrijven hoe belangrijk je voor me was en bent. Ik ga dat dan ook niet doen. Ik volsta met een citaat uit het dankwoord in jouw proefschrift en sluit dan ook aan bij jouw adagium dat een goede grap niet vaak genoeg herhaald kan worden, dus: ‘Trouwens, had ik je vandaag al gezegd ….’ De geboorte van onze drie kinderen is onlosmakelijk verbonden met het schrijven en de afronding van dit proefschrift. David, Thomas en Elsa, jullie maken de wereld zoveel rijker en mooier!

Nederlandse samenvatting

Dit proefschrift is geschreven binnen het door NWO gefinancierde VIDI onderzoeksproject 'Cultural innovation in a globalising society: Egypt in the Roman World' onder leiding van Miguel John Versluys, Faculteit der Archeologie, Universiteit Leiden. Dit onderzoeksproject beoogt te achterhalen hoe Egypte geïntegreerd is in Rome. Vanuit archeologisch, filologisch en archeometrisch perspectief streeft dit interdisciplinaire project ernaar nader inzicht te krijgen in de Romeinse cultuur door middel van onderzoek naar de appropriatie van Egypte. Moderne studies naar de Romeinse perceptie van Egypte – zowel studies die geschreven bronnen als archeologische bronnen tot onderwerp hebben – benaderen Egypte vooral vanuit gefixeerde en normatieve concepten. Zo zijn Aegyptiaca traditioneel geïnterpreteerd binnen het kader van oriëntaalse religies of exotisme. Dit onderzoeksproject, daarentegen, laat zien dat Egypte een constituent is van wat wij 'Romeins' noemen. Dit betekent dat we voorzichtig moeten zijn met de dichotomie Rome versus Egypte. Naast dit proefschrift zijn nog drie andere studies verschenen binnen dit onderzoeksproject. Eva Mol's *Egypt in material and mind: the use and perception of Aegyptiaca in Roman domestic contexts of Pompey* (Leiden 2015) beschrijft hoe Aegyptiaca uit Romeinse huiscontexten in Pompeï nieuwe betekenis kregen binnen deze context. Marike van Aerde's *Egypt and the Augustan cultural revolution: an interpretative archaeological overview* (Leiden 2015) laat zien dat Egyptisch elementen een integraal en divers deel uitmaakten van het Augusteïsche stadsbeeld. Sander Müskens' *Aegyptiaca beyond representation: a study into the raw materials of Egyptian objects and their social implications in the Roman world* (Leiden 2016) analyseert en interpreteert stenen Aegyptiaca in Rome en toont aan dat materiaalgebruik een fundamenteel aspect was van de materiële cultuur.[1]

[1] Voor een beschrijving van het onderzoeksproject met een tweetal casus, zie Versluys, Miguel John, Maaike Leemreize, Eva Mol, Sander Müskens en Marike van Aerde, 'L'Egitto a Roma', *Forma Urbis* 19.9 (2014) 17-19.

Het proefschrift dat voor u ligt kijkt naar de beeldvorming over Egypte in de Romeinse literatuur. Het bestudeerde tijdsbestek beslaat de periode tussen de tweede helft van de eerste eeuw v. Chr. tot het begin van de tweede eeuw n. Chr., zodat zowel literatuur van vóór de slag bij Actium in 31 v. Chr. – waar Marcus Antonius en Cleopatra werden verslagen door de latere keizer Augustus – als na deze zeeslag bekeken is. In moderne studies over Romeinse percepties van Egypte worden de slag bij Actium en de Augusteïsche poëzie daarover gezien als bepalend voor latere Romeinse beeldvorming over Egypt. Deze moderne studies richten zich veelal op een bepaald onderwerp (zoals Cleopatra of Egyptische verering van dieren) of een bepaalde periode (bijvoorbeeld de Augusteïsche periode) en benadrukken vooral dat Romeinse bronnen Egypte negatief benaderen: Egypte is de stereotiepe Ander.

In tegenstelling tot deze moderne studies benadert dit proefschrift Romeinse beeldvorming over Egypte zonder voorkeur voor onderwerp en periode. Hierdoor wordt duidelijk dat Romeinse literaire referenties naar Egypte zeer gevarieerd zijn en afhangen van de context. Binnen de normatieve en gefixeerde raamwerken van negatieve percepties van contemporain Egypte – of positieve percepties van oud Egypte aan de andere kant – kunnen deze referenties niet goed worden uitgelegd en begrepen. Dit proefschrift toont aan dat het bevorderlijk is om de veelzijdige en soms tegensprekende Romeinse literaire percepties van Egypte te begrijpen en te verklaren vanuit de notie van zelf-representatie. Dit betekent echter niet dat Egypte in literaire bronnen altijd gepercipieerd werd als een integraal onderdeel van Rome. Dit proefschrift laat zien dat Egypte niet alleen maar ingekaderd werd als stereotiepe Ander, noch als het Zelf, maar dat het altijd een polyvalent begrip is in termen van Romeinse identiteitsvorming.

Introduction

regia pyramidum, Caesar, miracula ride;
iam tacet Eoum barbara Memphis opus:
pars quota Parrhasiae labor est Mareoticus aulae!
clarius in toto nil videt orbe dies.

Laugh, Caesar, at the royal wonders of the pyramids;
now barbarous Memphis no longer talks of eastern work.
How small a part of the Parrhasian palace is equaled by Mareotic toil!
The day sees nothing more magnificent in all the world.[1]
Mart. 8.36.1-4

This is a study of Roman concepts of Egypt as found in the Roman literary discourse from the last half of the first century BCE to the beginning of the second century CE. It is, therefore, not about 'real' Egyptian history but about how Roman perceptions of Egypt are used and function in Roman literature and society to tell a Roman story. In the lines of Martial quoted above at the beginning of an epigram that celebrates Domitian's newly built palace, two perceptions, or concepts, of Egypt can be discerned. Mentioning the Egyptian pyramids, which were the prime examples of large-scale buildings and hence 'wonders' (*miracula*) in antiquity, recalls on the one hand the Roman respect for ancient Egypt.[2] But on the other hand, Egypt, represented in Martial's text by Memphis, the ancient royal citadel of Egypt, as *pars pro toto*, is barbaric (*barbara*).[3] The pyramids are 'eastern work' (*Eoum opus*), i.e. they are clearly un-Roman. Hence, Egypt is simultaneously approached positively and negatively. Both concepts of Egypt together serve to get Martial's message across. The proverbial immense size of Domitian's palace and the effort it took to build this structure is stressed when the total volume of the pyramids,

[1] Tr. Shackleton Bailey 1993, with some modifications.
[2] The pyramids were famous for their height: Prop. 3.2.19; Tac. *Ann.* 2.61.1; *Anth. Lat.* (ed. Shackleton Bailey) 415 and 416 = Breitenbach 2010, nos. 20 and 20a.
[3] Regarding the negative connotation of *barbarus*, see Schöffel 2002, 330.

referred to as 'Egyptian toil' (*Mareoticus labor*), covers only a small fragment of it.[4] Domitian's palace surpassed the pyramids in size and in labor, and consequently also emulated them in fame. Moreover, Martial's lines formulate a new premise: from now on (*iam*), other parts of the world, such as Egypt, should not praise their own miracles but should instead admire Roman wonders such as Domitian's palace.[5] Rome is the new standard by which everything else needs to be judged. Martial's text is exemplary for the way Egypt is used in the Roman literary discourse, that is, as a fertile and polyvalent concept. However, the role of Egypt in Roman literature has been interpreted rather differently until now.

This introduction will first explore the presence of 'Egypt' in Rome – i.e. literary references, persons, material objects, etc. – from a historical point of view, followed by an interpretative point of view concerning cultural transformation. The second section examines current scholarly explanations of literary references to Egypt with particular attention paid to their deficiencies, resulting in an enumeration of this study's research questions. The third section explains how these research questions are tackled by presenting the outline of this study. The fourth section explains the theoretical methods, techniques, debates and concepts that have played a role in this study. Finally, the fifth section will present the scope of this study.

1. Setting the scene, Egypt in Rome

1.1. *A short history*

Diplomatic contacts between Rome and Egypt had existed since 273 BCE, but profound political entanglement between Egypt and Rome arose only in late

[4] Although the exaggeration in these lines is obvious, there is no need to argue for hidden irony in Martial, see Cordes 2014. *Labor* probably implies the 'hardship' it took to build the pyramids, see Reitz 2012, who argues that 'hard work' is one of the positive aspects of construction processes that literary descriptions (and also visual images on monuments) of architectural works tend to emphasize.

[5] In Mart. *Spect*. 1, the same technique is used when the Flavian amphitheater surpasses other wonders of the world; note the beginning of this epigram with its similar phrase (*barbara pyramidum sileat miracula Memphis*). For a commentary and translation of this epigram see Coleman 2006, 1-13, also for a Greek antecedent of this poem.

Republican times.[6] Egypt had gradually lost its influence in the East and become more and more dependent on Rome. Roman annexation of Egyptian territory, Cyprus, in 59 BCE eventually led to an Egyptian rebellion and the exile of the Egyptian king at that time, Ptolemy Auletes XII, who was held responsible for the loss of Cyprus. Ptolemy fled to Rome where he stayed in one of Pompey's houses from 58 to 55 BCE. After offering huge bribes, he was restored to the throne by Pompey's protégé Aulus Gabinius.[7] In 49 BCE Pompey, having lost the Battle of Pharsalus to Julius Caesar in the Civil War (49-45 BCE), fled to Egypt expecting auxiliaries and support from Ptolemy XII's son and successor, Ptolemy XIII. In Egypt, Pompey was murdered by officers of Ptolemy who favored Caesar's side.[8] Caesar, chasing Pompey and his army, got involved in the Alexandrian civil war between Ptolemy XIII and his sister and original co-ruler Cleopatra VII, whom Ptolemy had driven from the throne. Caesar defeated Ptolemy's army and restored Cleopatra to the throne together with another of her brothers, Ptolemy XIV in 47 BCE. In the same year Cleopatra gave birth to Ptolemy Caesarion XV, Caesar's son.[9]

In the second half of the first century BCE, Egypt got involved in the Civil War between Mark Antony and Octavian (Augustus after 27 BCE). In the power vacuum after the death of Julius Caesar, a second triumvirate was formed by Octavian, Marcus Aemilius Lepidus and Mark Antony. After Caesar's murderers Marcus Junius Brutus and Gaius Cassius Longinus were slain at Philippi in 42 BCE, the *triumviri* decided to divide the Roman empire into three parts: the West was assigned to Octavian, the East to Antony and the province Africa to Lepidus. After Lepidus was sent into exile – he was accused by Octavian of abuse of power and inciting rebellion – the already tense relationship between Octavian and Antony worsened. Although he had married Octavian's sister Octavia in 40 BCE, Antony lived openly together with Cleopatra VII in Alexandria and fathered three children with her, the twins Alexander Helios and Cleopatra Selene, and Ptolemy Philadelphus. In

[6] Smelik and Hemelrijk, 1986, 1920; Malaise, 1972a, 315.
[7] For the events leading eventually to the restoration of Ptolemy XII to the Egyptian throne, see Siani-Davies 2001, 1-91, and Klodt 1992, 23-59, see also pp. 120-121.
[8] Pompey's flight to Egypt and his murder are dramatically described in book 8 of Lucan's *Bellum Civile*, see pp. 135-139, see also Plut. *Pomp*. 76-80; D.C. 42.1-7; App. *BC* 2.84-86.
[9] The Alexandrian war is the subject of late Republican writing *B. Alex*. by, probably, several anonymous authors, see p. 123.

32 BCE Octavian officially declared war on Egypt. The actual Civil War between Octavian and Mark Antony, who allied with Cleopatra, ended with the suicide of Mark Antony after he lost the Battle of Actium (31 BCE). Octavian subsequently annexed Egypt and turned it into a Roman province in 30 BCE.[10] Governed by a prefect instead of a governor, probably because of its importance as Rome's granary, Egypt was under Octavian's close supervision. The latter replaced the first prefect of Egypt, Gaius Cornelius Gallus, when the latter's strong habitual fondness of self-display had probably crossed the line: after putting down a revolt in Memphis, Gallus celebrated that victory by erecting a trilingual inscription – in Latin, Greek and Hieroglyphs – in Philae.[11] Octavian legislation that prohibited senators from setting foot on Egypt's soil without his permission caused friction between Tiberius and Germanicus when the latter visited Egypt unannounced in 18 CE.[12] In 69 CE, Vespasian was declared emperor in Egypt by the Judean and Alexandrian troops he commanded.[13]

Several Roman emperors seem to have shown more than the usual interest in the Egyptian culture. After the annexation of Egypt, Augustus transported two obelisks from Heliopolis to serve as landmarks in Rome.[14] In the wake of the annexation, many Egyptian objects found their way to Rome, a process which is sometimes called Egyptomania.[15] Nero, too, seems to have had a special interest in Egypt as shown by his expedition to the source of the Nile. His tutor was the Egyptian scholar Chaeremon.[16] Vespasian's crowning in Egypt may have stimulated him to legitimize his reign through Egyptian references. For example, Sarapis and the Egyptian goddess Isis were adapted

[10] An historical overview of the second triumvirate is Pelling 1996, see also p. 134, n. 313.
[11] For the trilingual inscription, see Minas-Nerpel and Pfeiffer 2010; Hoffmann, Minas-Nerpel and Pfeiffer 2009.
[12] Tac. *Ann*. 2.59.2, see also pp. 167-168.
[13] Cf. Levick 1999, 43-64.
[14] For these obelisks as an integral part of Rome, see Van Aerde 2015, see also pp. 69-70 and pp. 75-76.
[15] Wallace-Hadrill 2010, 357, for instance, notes: 'the impact of Octavian/Augustus' conquest of Egypt and the "Egyptomania" that followed it.' For critique of this term, see p. 5-6.
[16] Cesaretti 1989, has collected literary, epigraphic, papyrological and archaeological evidence for Nero's interest in Egypt. A recent study specifically on Nero and Egypt is Bricault and Veymiers 2008. Cf. Manolaraki 2013, 40-42; Pfeiffer 2010a, 88-105 and Legras 2004, 34-35; and p. 138, n. 321.

as tutelary deities of the Roman emperor under the Flavians, as underlined by the rebuilding of the Iseum Campense under Domitian.[17] In Flavian times, Rome was studded with many Aegyptiaca (Egyptian and Egyptianizing) objects ranging from obelisks to golden rings decorated with images of Egyptian gods.[18]

Egypt and Egyptian topoi are evident in Roman literature as well. Observing and emphasizing this omnipresence, a contemporary scholar wrote, 'Put simply, references to Egypt and its culture occur in the works of almost every surviving classical author.'[19] Scattered over poetic, ethnographical, historical, and philosophical works, references can be found to Egyptians acting in Rome. Furthermore, we find references to Roman politics in Egypt, descriptions of historical events, thoughts on the Egyptian religion, anecdotes starring Cleopatra, touristic descriptions, and contemplation on the Nile and its characteristics.[20]

1.2. *Interpreting Egypt in Rome*

The Egyptian omnipresence in Rome has been labeled 'Egyptomania', i.e. an 'obsession with Egypt', and was given as a reason for the presence of so many Egyptian objects and concepts. It has already been objected that 'Egyptomania' is an insufficient term to understand the use of 'Egypt' in Rome: 'obsession' or 'fascination' are far too implicit qualifications to explain

[17] See, Capriotti 2014; Pfeiffer 2010b, *contra*. An archaeological study on the Iseum Campense is Lembke 1994. For the Iseum Campense (and Egyptian cults) in the epigrams of Martial, see Kardos 2011.

[18] Catalogs of Aegyptiaca include: Arslan 1997; Roullet 1972; Malaise 1972b (on the cults of Isis); for an interpretation of these catalogs, see Versluys 2002. A recent work that has collected manifestations of Egypt under Augustus and interpreted them within the framework of 'cultural revolution' is Van Aerde 2015. Cf. Müskens 2016, which is an interpretative study of Imperial Roman Egyptian and Egyptianizing material.

[19] Burstein 1996, 592, with reference to Jacoby, 1994: 3C, 608a-665, and Hopfner, 1922-1925.

[20] Studies that give an impression of the number of literary references to Egypt include: Meyer 1965, who presents a collection of all (not restricted to one topic or theme) references to Egypt in pre-Christian Latin diachronic categorized by author; Becher 1966, who gives a diachronic and thematic overview of sources on Cleopatra in Greek and Latin literature from Augustan to Byzantine Empire; Postl 1970, who presents a collection of particularly Roman sources on the Nile; Smelik and Hemelrijk 1986, who focus on the conceptualization of animal worship in Greek and Latin sources from 5th century Greece to the church-fathers.

why certain Egyptian objects and concepts appeared in certain contexts.[21] The presence of Egyptian objects and concepts in Rome is a manifestation of cultural transference and includes information about the Roman society. When analyzing processes of cultural change and identity-making, research in recent years has underlined that 'conscious choice' is pivotal: Romans chose to incorporate certain foreign objects and concepts for certain purposes.[22] Hence within the framework with which cultural innovation in the Roman world has been approached, Egyptomania does not explain anything.

Traditionally, the cultural transformation of the Roman world has been understood as being the result of a two-phase interaction between 'Roman' and 'native'. Firstly, a native culture, Greece, took over Rome (Hellenization) in such a way that it became 'Roman' or 'Greco-Roman'; and secondly, with the expansion of the Roman Empire, Roman culture conquered the provinces (Romanization).[23] Over the last decades, Romanization as a model to understand cultural interaction in the Roman world has lost its momentum. The main criticism is the top-down (or colonial) model, the superiority of Rome over the 'weaker' natives, which the term Romanization implies.[24] As a counter-reaction, post-colonial studies introduced the down-top model that emphasized the ability of the natives to maintain their own culture while adopting some Roman aspects.[25] A framework that clearly accounts for the general effects of global culture contact (hybridity/homogeneity), but also allows for regional deviations (heterogeneity) that underline choice and

[21] See Curran 2007, 11.

[22] A good example of a study which accentuates conscious choice is Orlin 2010, who in the introduction of his study on the incorporation of foreign cults in Rome notes: 'The process of assimilation and incorporation was not automatic, however, on either the divine or the human level; not every foreign cult or practice became part of the Roman religious system, just as not every community was admitted to citizenship. The Romans made *conscious choices* about how to act in individual cases', 4. My italics. For the concept of invention of tradition and Roman 'choices', see Versluys 2015. Mol 2015, is a recent study that explores the deliberate uses of Egyptian artefacts in Roman domestic contexts of Pompeii.

[23] For this 'dual process' as 'our standard terminology', see Wallace-Hadrill 2008, 10.

[24] Severe criticism of the concept Romanization can be found in Millett 1990a; 1990b, and Mattingly 1997, 2004, 2006, 14-17. For a debate on whether Romanization has a future in (archaeological) research through a liaison with Globalization theory and Material Culture Studies or whether the term belongs to the field of historiographical study, see Versluys 2014 with a response by Hingley 2014.

[25] Edited volumes in which tools drawn from post-colonial theory are used to understand Roman imperialism are Webster and Cooper, 1996 and Mattingly 1997.

adaptation to their own purposes, is supplied by Globalization theory. Although Globalization theory was developed with modern global mass-communication in mind, it has been applied to more historical periods, too.[26] Fending off the main criticism associated with applying Globalization theory to antiquity, i.e. that the Roman world was never global, by arguing among other things that the Romans themselves perceived their Empire as *orbis terrarum* or *imperium sine fine*, a recent study has shown that it can be successfully implemented to explain cultural change in the Roman world.[27] Globalization theory supplies a useful framework to approach manifestations of Egypt in Rome, whether objects or concepts. In the first place, it places these manifestations into a larger network of circulating 'Hellenistic *Koine*' elements.[28] In this sense, the Roman understanding and use of Egypt were not based on profound Roman knowledge of the ancient Egyptian culture and Roman historical experiences with Egypt (at least not solely), but were filtered through more universal circulating ideas such as those about foreigners, kings and religion. For instance, the Roman use of Egyptian objects and concepts had in many cases more to do with Greek or 'Hellenistic' interpretations of them than with ancient/authentic Egyptian ones. In the second place, the framework of Globalization theory places emphasis on local peculiarities (heterogeneity) within the homogenizing world. It points out the importance of context and leads to questions of purpose. Applying the framework of Globalization to the Roman world leads to the hypothesis that Egyptian objects and concepts were appropriated and particularized for local Roman use.[29]

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[26] The edited volume of Hopkins 2002, is pioneering in this respect, although it suggests that Globalization theory is only applicable to the period from 1600 onwards.
[27] Pitts and Versluys 2015, see especially their introduction.
[28] It is argued that Romans had access to a 'repertoire' of material culture (referred to as Hellenistic *Koine*) on which they could draw. This repertoire contains a collection of 'original' Greek and Egyptian objects which are 'Hellenized', for a discussion, see Versluys forthcoming, who also draws parallels to literary studies with reference to Nauta and Harder 2005. For this present study, the literary tradition is important as many Roman sources on Egypt draw heavily on Greek predecessors. Note recent works on Greek perceptions of Egypt with (partial) titles such as 'Hellenizing Egypt', Vasunia 2001, and 'Egypt and the limits of Hellenization', Moyer 2011.
[29] The term 'glocalization' is sometimes used for the inextricable relation between globalization and localization. For the relation between global and local, see Pitts and Versluys 2015, 14-15.

The possibility that the presence of Egypt in Roman society may have stood for many different ideas and thoughts depending on their context hardly exists in previous scholarship on Aegyptiaca and Roman literary references to Egypt. In these studies Egypt has traditionally been approached in terms of fixated and normative concepts: Egypt was perceived to be the Other as opposed to the Self. Whereas modern studies label Greek culture as an integral part of Roman culture, Egypt is first and foremost understood as 'exotic' or 'Other'.[30] Egyptian culture seems to be omnipresent in Rome, but of marginal importance when Roman identity is at stake. The present study aims to redress that imbalance.

2. STATUS QUAESTIONIS AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

2.1. *Negative stereotypes and the Augustan age*

Previous scholarship on Roman literary perceptions of Egypt has mostly emphasized the use of negative stereotypes.[31] In Roman texts we find many examples in which Egyptians are said to be untrustworthy, superstitious, effeminate and insane. Although most of them also point out several, more positive Roman views, the negative stance is held to be normative. For

[30] In this respect, Versluys 2015 raised the question of why we speak about a Greco-Roman Empire, but not of an Egypto-Roman Empire.

[31] Modern studies with a special focus on negative Roman stereotypes of Egypt include: Isaac 2004, 352-370, who discusses 'proto-racism in antiquity', i.e. the hostility and stereotypes; Maehler 2003, who explores Roman poets (in particular, Horace to Juvenal) for their understanding of Egypt's culture and discusses the impact of Augustan propaganda on their poetry; Versluys, 2002 387-443, who interprets Roman perceptions of Egypt in terms of the 'Other'; Berthelot 2000, who argues that Roman literary sources mainly repeated and sharpened Greek stereotypes of the Egyptians; Sonnabend 1986, who focuses on the Roman perceptions of Egypt (and Parthia) in the late Republican and early Imperial period and argues that these perceptions remained more or less the same despite increasing political contact; Smelik and Hemelrijk 1984, 1922-1950, who focus on animal worship; Reinhold 1980, who discusses the relationship between the political isolation of Egypt and stereotypes. Recent studies that place an emphasis on the positive evaluation of Egypt are: Gruen 2011a, who demonstrates the overlap and similarities between the Greco/Roman and Egyptian culture; Manolaraki 2013, who analyzes the Roman perception of the Nile diachronically.

instance, Meyer Reinhold in his attempt (somewhat misguided) to get to the core of 'real' Roman feelings about Egypt notes, 'It is true that numerous Romans traveled in Egypt as tourists, but they were repelled by the native population. True they were in general a submissive people, patiently supplying Rome with wheat, papyrus, and other products, and tribute. But Romans felt profound contempt for them because of their "deviant" behavior and failure to be "civilized".'[32] Even in an important recent study on the complex representation of the Nile in Roman literature that aims to go beyond stereotyping, *Noscendi Nilum cupido* by Eleni Manolaraki, Roman negative attitudes towards Egypt are taken as a point of departure. This book describes a chronological process in which first the 'Actian otherness of Egypt' needs to fade away before the Nile can be 'reimagined as an ambiguous space that is no longer foreign nor is it yet domestic.'[33] My study will question whether Roman stereotyping of Egypt ever was normative (even in Augustan times). If 'negative Egypt' turns out to be just one of many concepts, then a direct relation between positive remarks in later times and the negative earlier ones becomes hard to explain. One reason why negative stereotypes of Egypt seem to be prominent in Roman literature may be the choice of period and subject. Generally, the Augustan age has received relatively more scholarly attention as it covers almost five decades in which Rome changed dramatically from a Republic into an Empire and as it produced many still extant, remarkable archaeological objects and literary works.[34] In addition, it seems impossible

[32] Reinhold 1980, 100.

[33] Manolaraki 2013, 216. Cf. *ib*. 219: 'The Flavian editions, additions, and elaboration on the original "Augustan" Nile provide a model of discursive change that leads us to the next and final part. As Actium becomes ever more distant and the Flavians give way to the Antonines, the Nile is once again reinvented in the increasingly decentralized empire.' See also Laguna's comment (1992) on Stat. *Silv*. 3.2, 1992, 229, referred to and translated by Manolaraki 2013, 184: 'In his commentary, Gabriel Laguna observes that the mood of the hymn contrasts with the anti-Egyptian-ism of previous literature and therefore reflects a turning point in the Roman making of Egypt: "the religion and customs of Egypt had traditionally met with hostility and criticism in Roman mentality, but in Statius we observe for the first time a greater interest and a greater acceptance for Egypt".'

[34] Influential works are: Syme 1939, who argues that Augustus' power base was established by a military coup (instead of by processes of cultural transformation); Zanker 1988, who shows how Augustan material culture embodied and contributed to the transformation of Roman society; Galinsky 1996, focussing on material culture and literary sources describes processes of cultural transformation in Augustan times;

to write a historical/archaeological/literary study of Egypt in Rome without giving the Augustan age a prominent place: Octavian defeated Antony and Cleopatra in the Battle of Actium, annexed Egypt as a Roman province, turned Egypt into an important granary of Rome, and transported two obelisks from Heliopolis to Rome. It is argued that in this period certain fixated stereotypes (negative) were created that dominated Roman perceptions of Egypt for ages. Stephen Nimis summarizes these perceptions as follows: 'Literary sources from the Augustan period on tend to repeat a number of negative clichés and topoi: the treacherous murder of Pompey by Ptolemy XIII, the pernicious attack on the state by the dangerous and seductive Cleopatra, the bizarre worship of animals, Egyptians as cowardly Orientals and barbarians, etc.'[35] Another example is Versluys (2002) who, by focusing on Nilotic scenes and matching them to literary evidence, argues that the Roman concept of Egypt as the stereotypical Other became dominant after the Battle of Actium (31 BCE). Augustan stereotyping is held to be normative to the extent that deviating Augustan literature, i.e. sources presenting a positive attitude towards Egypt, are interpreted as being a reaction to Augustan official propaganda.[36]

Modern studies on Roman perceptions of Egypt tend to focus on specific Egyptian topoi or a specific author instead of presenting an overall study.[37] For instance, a study has recently appeared on the representation of Egypt in Lucan's *Bellum Civile*.[38] Topoi that are considered in depth include, apart from negative stereotypes, the Nile, Cleopatra and animal worship.[39] Although

cf. 2005; Wallace-Hadrill 1993 places Augustan politics and poetry in its archaeological and social context.

[35] Nimis 2004, 41.

[36] See chapter IV on Tibullus 1.7, especially pp. 182-184.

[37] Important Studies on Greek perceptions of Egypt are *overall* studies, see: Froidefond 1971, who investigates Greek 'imagining' of Egypt from Homer to Aeschylus. Cf. Vasunia 2001, who focuses on the period from Aeschylus to Alexander and explores the use of representations of Egypt for Greek identity formation. Meyer 1965 is an overall study of references to Egypt in Roman literature. But this study investigates the Roman knowledge of Egypt and does not focus on Roman concepts of this region.

[38] Tracy 2014. Studies on the representation of Egypt in the works of a specific Greco-Roman are Pearce 2007 and Cordier 2007 on the representation of Egypt in the works of Philo and Cassius Dio, respectively.

[39] Over the last decades a massive pile of works on Cleopatra have appeared, from historical / archaeological and literary points of view, for an overview I would like to

Manolaraki in her above-mentioned study on Roman perceptions of the Nile has shown that this river has many identities, her book also reveals the limitations of looking at just one subject. The fact that the Nile *is* a river directs Roman references to the Nile to specific Roman discourses on rivers and their relationship to geopolitical thinking. In other words, focusing on the Nile may not do justice to the wide range of Roman perceptions of Egypt. This can be illustrated by a parallel taken from the material culture. Though pyramids were, and are, one of the prime features of Egypt, they are nevertheless completely absent from all Nilotic scenery that can be found in the Roman world. When it comes to Nilotic scenes, the Nile apparently belonged to a different domain than the pyramids.[40]

2.2. *The 'traditional' concepts*

Based on previous scholarship, two major Roman concepts of Egypt arise. Firstly, Romans perceived Egypt negatively, they addressed many negative stereotypes to this region. Secondly, Romans understood Egypt to be particularly ancient and expressed that aspect positively. These two different perceptions are related to the dichotomy between contemporary Egypt and ancient Egypt, and it is held that both views are strictly unrelated: i.e. positive Roman thinking of ancient Egypt did not lead to a more respectful attitude towards contemporary Egypt.[41] Although the observed discrepancy in Roman evaluations of ancient and contemporary Egypt is generally accepted, it is not without its problems: not all positive images of Egypt concern ancient Egypt per se, and not all negativity was projected on contemporary Egypt. Examples include the 'timeless' marveling about the features of the Nile and the critique of the 'uselessness' of ancient pyramids. Hence, the two traditional concepts do not seem to cover the whole range of Roman perceptions of Egypt.

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refer to a recently published edited volume by Miles 2011 and Chapter II, especially pp. 85-86. The most recent study of the Nile in Roman literature is Manolaraki 2013, who presents a diachronic interpretation of the Nile in which its various identities are related to social and political contexts; cf. Schrijvers 2007, who compares literary Nile descriptions with those on Nilotic scenes; Postl 1970, see p. 5, n. 20. An important diachronic study on animal worship in Greek and Roman literature is Smelik and Hemelrijk 1986, see p. 5, n. 20.

[40] Pyramids are also absent from literary Nile descriptions such as that of Plin. *NH* 5.51-54, see Schrijvers 2007, 227.

[41] See, Sonnabend 1986, 101, quoted on p. 163.

Moreover, whereas Roman stereotyping of Egypt was related to identity-making, a positive Roman evaluation of Egypt was not. In the context of Actium, it is a well-trodden path to argue that Roman stereotyping of Egypt is an expression of Augustan propaganda to cover up the fact of civil war by creating a clear foreign enemy (the Other) who fought against a Roman force (the Self) that is defined positively by contrast. This process of 'Othering', in which the Other seems to be the antipode of the Self, has been called 'negative self-definition'.[42] In contrast to Roman stereotypes of Egypt, a good explanation has not been given for the use of positive Roman expressions of Egypt in terms of self-definition.

At this point it is instructive to consider a comparable discussion, that on Greek attitudes towards Egypt. In recent scholarship on Greek literary perceptions of Egypt, the dichotomy between Greek/Self and Egyptian/Other has been questioned. Phiroze Vasunia, for instance, in his study about the Greek discourse on Egypt states, '[a] study that simply creates an opposition between self and other [..] fails to comment fully and meaningfully on the complex portrayal of Egypt in any period of Greek literature. For one thing terms such as 'self' and 'other' are often unstable, giving the idea of two monolithic and homogeneous categories. This book posits a Greek identity that is less fixed and more variable than such an idea implies.'[43] Greek literature shows that the Greeks not only diametrically opposed themselves to the Egyptian Other, they also saw themselves as successors to ancient Egyptian achievements. Egypt was conceptualized as the first inventor culture of many great institutions, and this aspect of Egypt became the object of appropriation for the Greeks. In this respect, Plato's *Timaeus* 21e-23e forms a good example as it uses Egypt's great antiquity to enhance the status of Athens, which turns out to be even older than Egypt.[44] In particular, François Hartog's studies of the use of ethnographies as tools to reflect upon and question Greek identity is pioneering in this respect. In his book *Le miroir d'Hérodote: essai sur la représentation de l'autre* (1980, tr. 1988), he argued that the Other not only functioned as a negative mirror for the Greek civilization, it could also be staged to reveal the Greek flaws. Moreover, in his

[42] Stereotyping foreigners in Roman texts can be explained as a tool to define civilization: to underline the fact that Rome is civilized, a culturally accepted antipode, here Egypt, is staged. Cf. Versluys 2002, 392.
[43] Vasunia 2001, 2-3.
[44] For a full analysis of this passage in similar terms, see Hartog 2001, 56-59.

later work *Mémoire d'Ulysse* (1996, tr. 2001), Hartog distinguishes between 'real' traveling through Egypt ('voyage en Égypte') and 'imaginary' trips to this territory ('voyage d'Égypte') and explicitly shows how diverse Greek concepts of Egypt in the latter could be used to think and rethink Greek conventions. In modern scholarly literature dealing with Greek and Roman literary perceptions of foreigners, such as the book by Vasunia, Hartog's approach has become prominent.[45]

Taking my inspiration particularly from studies like Hartog and Vasunia, I have discerned a number of hypotheses/questions concerning the interpretation of Roman literary perceptions of Egypt that will be addressed in this thesis: 1) The Roman literary discourse on Egypt can probably not be fully covered by an explanation involving the two traditional concepts (negative perception of contemporary Egypt versus positive perception of ancient Egypt). Are other concepts present that can explain the Roman use of references to Egypt? 2) All concepts of Egypt (whether positive or negative perceptions) are likely to have a function in terms of self-definition. As context is decisive, what is the meaning of each single use of a particular concept in this respect? 3) The existence of other concepts than Egypt as the stereotypical Other can undermine the central place given to Actium in the Roman discourse on Egypt. How important is the role of Actium and Augustan poetry in Roman perceptions of Egypt?

3. METHOD AND CHAPTER OUTLINE

To tackle these questions, my research has taken two steps in the analysis of Roman literary references to Egypt. The foundation of these two steps was an investigation of all kinds of references to Egypt in (Greco-)Roman literary sources covering the late first century BCE to the first century CE – hence avoiding a focus on one author, subject or period. This investigation was aimed to explore 'the furniture' of Egypt (what *makes* Egypt according to Romans). The first step included a matching of the texts with references to Egypt to the two traditional concepts: could every reference to Egypt be understood as a reflection of either a positive evaluation of ancient Egypt or a negative conception of contemporary Egypt? The second step included the

[45] Vasunia 2001, 29-32. Cf. Murphy 2004, 77-128.

explanation of texts with references to Egypt in terms of self-definition. Questions asked in this phase were: does Egypt function as a negative mirror for Roman behavior only (standard explanation of Roman stereotypes of Egypt), or can it also function to demonstrate Roman faults, or otherwise? My study consists of four chapters that represent the two steps taken. The first two chapters focus on the first step and question the relationship between a reference to Egypt and the two traditional concepts. The last two chapters concern the second step and thus focus on the function of Egypt in terms of self-definition.[46]

Chapters I, II and IV each concentrate on a specific text, respectively Pliny the Elder's *Natural History*, Propertius 3.11 and Tibullus 1.7. Chapter III revolves around a specific topos, negative Roman stereotypes, and discusses several texts related to that topic. I have chosen to focus on these texts primarily on the basis of narrative volume. Passing references to Egypt do not provide enough information in most cases to discern the use of Egypt in terms of self-definition. On the other hand, analyses of sources that devote much ink to one particular subject, such as contemplations of the Nile, would have unbalanced my aim to present an overall study. Comparable sources to my central texts are collected in the footnotes.

The first chapter deals with the representation of Egypt in Pliny the Elder's *Natural History*. Firstly, this encyclopedic work is a good case-study to investigate and critically question the relation between references to Egypt and the two traditional concepts (see above on pp. 11-13) as it contains many references to all kinds of 'furniture' of Egypt. It includes information about the Nile, Cleopatra, pyramids, obelisks, Egyptian flora and fauna. Recent scholarship suggests that this work can be read as a monograph as it contains general messages.[47] Hypothetically, the Egyptian topoi function within these general messages more than within the traditional concepts. Secondly, the *Natural History* was composed in the Flavian period and seems to convey the Flavian 'Zeitgeist'. It is, hence, a good start for a study that aims to put the Augustan age and its role in the Roman conceptualization of Egypt into perspective. Thirdly, this work is related to historical/geographical genres and not poetry. Previous scholarship on Roman perceptions of Egypt

[46] A good impression of the scope of ancient sources with references to Egypt that form the foundation of this study can be found in 'the index of references to Egypt' on p. 201-204.
[47] See pp. 40-43.

suggested that genre influences Greek and Roman perceptions of this foreign culture. Historical and geographical works tend to approach these cultures and their features in less violent stereotypes than poetry.[48] As chapter I functions to set the scene, it looks beyond concept to function. It investigates how Pliny's conceptualization of Egypt functions within the larger context. Does it affect Pliny's representation of Rome? And if so, how is Egypt used to convey messages about Roman society?

The relationship between topos and the traditional conceptualization of Egypt is further elaborated in chapter II by looking at one important Egyptian subject: Cleopatra. After having examined the Flavian period in chapter I, we turn back to the Augustan age. One feature that seems to be inextricably linked to Actium and negative stereotyping is Cleopatra. In this chapter the text that seems to contain the most violent oppositions between Egypt and Rome in which Cleopatra operates, Propertius' *elegy* 3.11, is investigated for the relationship between the Egyptian queen and negative stereotyping. Although the portrayal of Cleopatra is generally interpreted as being negative, the poem itself is explained differently. Some believe that this poem was meant to praise Augustus, while others argue that it contains criticism. This chapter contributes to this discussion about the general interpretation of this poem by examining the conceptualization of Cleopatra in Propertius 3.11. Does Propertius 3.11 conceptualize Cleopatra in just one way (negative) or in more diverse ways? Like chapter I, this chapter also anticipates the third and fourth chapters by analyzing what effects the conceptualization of Cleopatra had on Roman self-representation.

Chapter III examines the function of a particular concept that has received much emphasis in earlier research: negative stereotypes. As the Augustan age seems to be pivotal in the creation of negative stereotypes, the texts analyzed in this chapter include those of Cicero, the Augustan poets, Lucan, Pliny the Younger and Juvenal, i.e. sources dated before and after Actium that allegedly contain stereotypes. Do negative stereotypes only function as a negative mirror for the self (Othering) or is there more at stake? By approaching these texts in a diachronic way, the role of Actium in the creation of stereotypes will be investigated.

Chapter IV focuses on the function of the other 'traditional' concept of Egypt: the positive evaluation of Egypt's antiquity. Are references to ancient

[48] See p. 37, n. 109-110.

Egypt used to convey messages about the Roman identity? And if so, how do they contribute to self-representation? The second and especially the third chapter discusses the role of Augustan poetry in Roman conceptualization of Egypt. The fourth chapter broadens this discussion and questions whether negative stereotypes should be seen as normative in Augustan times by looking at Tibullus' *elegy* 1.7, a poem that is known for its positive presentation of Egypt, or lack of negative stereotypes. The question of how Tibullus could write such a 'deviant' Roman view on Egypt is highly debated in modern literature: is he offending Augustus? To answer this question, more historical debates about the Augustan policy towards Egypt and more particularly his politics concerning the worship of the original goddess Isis in Rome need to be included along with a philological interpretation of the text. However, the main question this chapter has to answer is: did Tibullus represent Egypt in an extraordinary way, deviant from what was normative, or did he use a concept of Egypt that was also alive in Roman society (in a similar way as that of negative stereotypes)?

4. THEORETICAL METHODS, TECHNIQUES, DEBATES AND CONCEPTS

This study presents a rather different view on the Roman literary discourse on Egypt than most previous research. It tries to demonstrate how to study Roman literary representations of Egypt on the basis of some selected texts. In the analysis of the selected texts, several methods, techniques, debates and concepts have played a role: discourse analysis and framing (4.1); imagology and discursive patterns (4.2); stereotyping and its social meaning (4.3); post-colonialism (4.4); and cultural memory (4.5). The first three form the main framework from which the Roman literary discourse on Egypt has been approached in this study. As both discourse framing and the social meaning of stereotyping are concerned with meta-communication and cognitive processes meant to make sense of the world, these concepts give insights into the discursive patterns (or filters) that construct the Roman discourse on Egypt. Post-colonial theory and cultural memory need to be considered as broader frameworks underlying the Roman discourse on Egypt as post-colonialism concerns the construction of the Other and cultural memory that of the Self.

4.1. *Discourse analysis and framing*

The concept of framing is of central importance for discourse analysis, which is primarily concerned with unraveling how human discourse functions, how people are able to understand each other when communicating 'complex meanings by means of coherent texts'.[49] Communication is a social activity as it involves interaction between the recipient and the communicator. As communication and interaction are complex processes, studied in many fields such as sociology, anthropology, Artificial Intelligence and linguistics, a uniform definition of framing/frame is lacking, but some overlaps can be found.[50] To understand each other, both the recipient and the communicator need to share a 'common ground', they need to possess a certain amount of the same knowledge or experience, and also be able to estimate what the interacting partner knows. The concept of framing concerns the 'common ground', both parties need to have some shared understanding of how the discourse is 'framed', i.e. what the aims and purposes are of the interaction in which they participate.[51]

Although framing concerns the 'common ground', diverse studies on framing either focus on the recipient or look at the communicator. For instance, within social sciences, frames are 'metamessages' that people rely on when making sense of an event. Based on earlier experience, people interpret interaction in a certain way, for instance, whether something is really

[49] For the quote see Ensink and Sauer 2003, 1, who refer to Brown and Yule 1983, ix; Fairclough 1995, 4-10 and Wood and Kroger 2000, 3-16.

[50] Ensink and Sauer 2003, 2-4, show how the many fields of research apply different meanings to framing /frame; even within these fields, various other terms are circulating that are more or less synonymously used. Cf. Druckman 2002, 226-227, who lists several different definitions of framing/frame. Both single out overlapping features and use that as their description of framing/frame. See also Scheufele 1999, who argues for a comprehensive model of framing in political communication, instead of the 'vague conceptualizations' of framing. Since its introduction in the field of anthropology (Bateson, 'A Theory of Play and Fantasy', 1954, 177-193), the concept of framing has almost immediately been very influential in scholarly disciplines that study language in interaction such as in the field of social and cognitive sciences (important ones are Goffman 1974; 1981; Minsky 1975). From the 1990s onwards, the concept has truly been applied to linguistic studies (but Fillmore 1975 is pioneering). For instance, Tannen 1993 demonstrates that the presence of certain frames in communication can be revealed by linguistic study.

[51] Clark 1996, 92-121.

happening, or whether it is actually a joke or theater. In his influential book *Frame analysis* (1974) in which he studies framing in everyday communication, Irving Goffman notes that frame analysis comes down to constructing a framework that helps to understand the answer to the question 'what is it that is going on here?' that an individual faces when he comes across some kind of communicative move.[52] Goffman's frames (or schema of interpretation) are related to the *perception* of individuals, how they interpret a given situation or any act of communication. As an individual's perception is based on his experience, it may vary among individuals.[53] Other scholars use the term frame to refer to 'words, images, and presentation styles' that are used by the speaker or the writer in interaction with his public and not to the perception of the individual. These 'frames in communication' are related to what is said or written, to the actual *phrasing*, and may reveal what the communicator considers salient in the discourse.[54] Different phrasing or different emphasis in phrasing can direct the recipient's thoughts. This process in which phrasing molds the perception of individuals is called 'frame setting'.[55]

The present study is actually concerned with the 'frame setting' of Roman literary sources. Hence, I treat Roman literary texts as communication sources that construct a point of view – whether deliberately or not – that encourages

[52] Goffman 1974, 8: 'I assume that when individuals attend to any current situation, they face the question: 'What is it that's going on here?' Whether asked explicitly, as in times of confusion and doubt, or tacitly, during occasions of usual certitude, the question is put and the answer to it is presumed by the way the individuals then proceed to get on with the affairs at hand. Starting, then, with that question, this volume attempts to limn out a framework that could be appealed to for the answer.'

[53] Tannen 1993, 14-56, demonstrates how past experiences raise certain expectations by recipients when involved in interaction. Cf. Kuypers and Cooper 2005, who show how the experiences of journalists who travelled with military troops in the 2003 Iraq war led to different reporting than that of behind-the-lines journalists. The use of frames in understanding how the percipient makes sense of the world has been labeled 'frame in thought', see Druckman 2002, 227-228, with references to other scholars than Goffman.

[54] See Druckman 2003, 227 for the quote and further references.

[55] Scheufele 1999 developed 'a process model of framing research' in political (mass) communication that is more elaborate than the one applied here. He unraveled four processes in framing: frame building (how frames are formed by the media, i.e. the communicator), frame setting (the effect of a frame on the audience's frames), individual-level effects of framing (how and why individuals react to frames), and 'journalists as audiences' (how journalists pick up frames).

the reader to understand the themes (or concepts) in a text in a particular way. Hence, a 'theme' (for instance, Roman stereotypes of Egypt) is not the same as a 'frame'. To understand how the 'theme' functions, what it actually means, we need to understand it in its larger context, i.e. we need to know how the theme is 'framed'.[56] Martial's text at the beginning of the present introduction can serve as an illustrative example. In these lines the concept of Egypt's antiquity (recalled by mentioning pyramids), usually interpreted as conveying Roman respect for Egypt, is 'framed' as evidence for Rome's own successes.

4.2. *Imagology and discursive patterns*

The Roman discourse on foreigners harbors certain patterns that give an impression of the 'common ground', the knowledge and past experiences that both the Roman text and the Roman reader share when they communicate about foreigners. A recent research field that studies the literary representations of European 'nationalities', Imagology, has unraveled general discursive patterns that seem to be present in every literary representation independent of nationality. Three of these patterns seem to govern the ancient discourse on foreigners as well: 1) East versus West; 2) center versus periphery; and 3) positive versus negative characterization.[57] These patterns

[56] Cf. Kuypers 2009, who analyzed the methodology used in social scientific studies in the period after 9/11 using 'a rhetorical version of framing'. These studies argued that news media took over uncritically the exact words of the president, focusing on the binary themes good versus evil and security versus peril. Kuypers, 188, criticized these studies in the following way: 'From a rhetorical point of view, .. [they] .. found only *content*. They did not analyze or interpret *the context* in which these binaries were found. They mistook the presence of *themes* as evidence of a particular *frame*. What is left out of many studies suggesting a permissive press is information about how the discovered themes are *framed*. The news media may well relay what the president says, but it does not necessarily follow that the president's framing of those themes is accurately conveyed prior to the press commentary or criticism of others. Thus we often find the echo of a *theme*, but not of a *frame*.' Original italics.

[57] Within Imagology it is claimed that 'a systematically diversified and particularized assignation of characters to specific ethnic groups (as opposed to incidental instances of finger-pointing and name-calling) appears in European written culture only during the modern period', Leerssen 2000, 272. However, the patterns that govern the discourse on stereotypes from the early modern period onwards can be found in the Roman discourse on Egypt. Note that Beller and Leerssen 2007, in their 'critical survey' of Imagology, include papers on 'pre-modern ethnic and national images' of

are *discursive* as they are limited to literary discourse only; they do not concern 'real' knowledge of foreigners or 'real' experience with foreigners.

Firstly, according to Imagology, the discourse on foreigners in literature from the early modern period onwards is governed by the distinction between North and South in which the Northern people are more severe than the Southerners.[58] The same kind of division can be found in Greek and Roman ethnographical remarks, but then in antiquity mainly between South and East. The Hippocratic essay *Airs, Waters, Places*, dated between c. 430 and c. 400 BCE, relates the characterization of Europeans and Asians (including the Egyptians, but their description is lost) to climate, geography and ways of life. According to this essay the Asians lack spirit, are more gentle and less warlike than the Europeans.[59] In Aristotle a distinction between the Western Europeans and the Asians can be found as well. The former is full of spirit, but lacks intelligence, whereas the latter lacks spirit, but is intelligent. Aristotle adds that the Hellenic race, geographically positioned in the middle, has both good qualities.[60] Regarding the Roman West-East division, Balsdon notes in his study on Roman perceptions of foreigners ('aliens'), 'If westerners were crude and uncultured, they were tough and warlike; effeminacy, lack of enterprise and courage marked the unwarlike oriental.'[61] For instance, in Caesar *De Bello Gallico*, the Germans were presented as extremely warlike, living a very disciplined life without luxury.[62] From Rome's perspective the Egyptians were Eastern people, as we have already noticed in the example of

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which one concerns antiquity, Nippel 2007. Nippel presents a good introduction to the topic of ethnocentric thought in antiquity.

[58] Leerssen 2000, 272.

[59] For an useful analysis of *Airs, Waters, Places* concerning the division between Asia and Europe, see Thomas 2000, 86-98. About this division she notes: 'But the ethnography of *Airs* is not primarily and exclusively about Greek superiority over barbarians: on the contrary it is about continents and general physical rules (climate, continents) that should in theory apply to all mankind.' Cf. Backhaus 1976, *contra*. For the dating of this Hippocratic essay, see Thomas 2000, 24-26.

[60] Ar. *Pol. VII* 1327b23-31. See Thomas 2000, 93, for a comparison between Aristotle's division and that of *Airs, Waters, Places*.

[61] Balsdon 1979, 61. Roman discourse on the North-South division overlaps with that on the West-East division. Generally, the Northerners/Westerners were perceived to be physically strong, and the Southerners/Easterners were represented as intelligent, *ib*. 59-76.

[62] See, for instance, Caes. *B Gal*. 4.1-4. Roman stereotypes of the Germans were not static, see below on pp. 21-22 and Kremer 1994. A study into the utility of ethnographies, or 'myths', of Western barbarians for Roman purposes is Woolf 2011.

Martial, where pyramids were framed as Eastern work. Consequently, the Egyptians were labelled as more outgoing, sensual and untrustworthy.[63]

The second structural pattern ordering the discourse on foreigners is the distinction between center and periphery, in which the center is associated with "historical dynamism" and development, whereas the peripheries are stereotypically "timeless", "backward", or "traditional".[64] The same notion can be found in Greek and Roman texts with references to Egypt. In these texts Egypt is not only truly ancient, it is also 'frozen' in its past. For instance, Vasunia, with reference to Froidefond, notices with regard to the Greek literary discourse on Egypt that 'few writers apprehend the country as it exists at the time of their writing. There appears, instead, a homeostatic view of a country removed from the present, a view that often focuses on the antiquity of Egyptian civilization, the invention of writing, the scribal tradition of chronicling the past, the contributions of the Egyptian philosophical and religious systems to Greek counterparts.'[65] The effect of such a representation of Egypt is that Egypt appears to be bygone while Greece is associated with progression: the Greeks took over Egypt's inventions and developed them further. The distinction between past and present governs the lines of Martial quoted at the beginning of this chapter. This distinction is indicated by the word *iam*: from 'now on', ancient Egypt should not be marked as a point of reference, instead present Rome should be. The achievements of ancient Egypt are superceded by those of 'modern' Rome.[66]

The third discursive pattern is the variability of stereotypes and the existence of opposites. Depending on the literary and historical context, different and even contradictory characterizations may appear.[67] An example

[63] In this respect, it is not remarkable that it is sometimes hard to distinguish whether Roman negative stereotypes are aimed at Egyptians proper or at Greek Alexandrians. From Roman point of view, the Greeks and the Egyptians were both Easterners, see also Balsdon 1979, 68. For the opposition between Greek/Alexandrians and Egyptians in general and in particular in Philo's *In Flaccum* and *Legatio ad Gaium*, see Pearce 2007, 45-80.

[64] Leerssen 2000, 277.

[65] Vasunia 2001, 7, with reference to Froidefond 1971.

[66] Cf. Farrell 2014, whose examples of Veii and Falerii show that the Roman *suburbium* could be perceived 'almost as an imaginary landscape dominated by ruins, cult sites and other institutions that helped make it a kind of time machine, a zone of virtual antiquity, a nearby area of chronological as well as other kinds of refuge from the modern city and its discontents.'

[67] Leerssen 2000, 278-280.

of how a contradictory characterization becomes attributed to one group of people can be found in the Roman discourse on the Germans. Whereas in Caesar the Germans were extremely warlike, Tacitus' *Germania* characterized them as warlike *and* lazy (see Tac. *Germ*. 15.1). When studying the Roman discourse on the Germans, coining it as 'Borealism' in dialogue with Said's 'Orientalism', Christopher Krebs argued that Tacitus reversed Caesar's more positive description of the Germans for political reasons. Representing the Germans in positive terms, Caesar created a distinct group of people, i.e. distinct from the Gauls, and supplied a reason why the Romans should not attempt to include this extremely warlike people in the Roman Empire. In Tacitus' time, Trajan had already approached the Rhine. According to Krebs, Tacitus altered Caesar's conceptualization of the Germans by adapting Seneca's *homo iracundus* (the 'irascible man'), Polybius and Livy's description of Celts, and Caesar's representation of the Gauls. By doing so, Tacitus showed that the Germans could be defeated by the Romans.[68] According to Imagology, a certain stereotype may be dominant in certain situations, but the contradictory stereotype does not simple vanish – texts written in certain circumstances may be readable for ages – and can be evoked when needed in other circumstances.[69] This may explain why Roman texts can refer to the same foreigners in positive as well as negative terms. Thus, in the literary discourse we find notions that Egypt can be perceived as uncivilized on the one hand (negative characterization), but as civilized on the other (positive characterization). An example of the coexistence of both kind of stereotypes can be found in the quoted lines of Martial where Egypt is conceptualized as barbarian and ancient.[70]

[68] Krebs 2011. For the shifting Roman perception of the Gauls, see Williams 2001 and Kremer 1994. A study into the utility of ethnographies, or 'myths', of Western barbarians for Roman purposes is Woolf 2011.

[69] Leerssen 2000, 278-280.

[70] See also Woolf 2011, 114, who gives the following examples of Roman alternating perceptions of Westerners: 'Druids were *either* natural philosophers who taught the transmigration of souls, mediators in their own communities and respected beyond it for their great reserves of orally transmitted wisdom, *or else* they were terrifying barbarian priests who conducted savage human sacrifices. Gallic warriors were *either* symbols of strength that came from a simple life and diet *or* illustrations of the limits of that strength and passion without discipline and intelligence.' With references. Original italics.

4.3. *Stereotyping and prejudice*

In the research field of social psychology, an empirical division is made between stereotyping and prejudice. Stereotypes are *thoughts* about the characteristics of groups of people: '[s]tereotypes represent the traits that we view as characteristic of social groups, or of individual members of those groups, and particularly those that differentiate groups from each other. In short, they are the traits that come to mind quickly when thinking about groups.'[71] Stereotyping is the application of stereotypes when interacting with members of that group. Prejudice is a negative *attitude* towards these members. As such, stereotyping can be coined 'cognitive' and prejudice 'affective'. Although the two phenomena are two sides of the same coin, stereotyping groups of people does not immediately imply prejudice as the latter involves emotions such as dislike, disgust, hate. For instance, characterizing professors as absent-minded does not immediately imply negative feelings.[72] In the field of social psychology, however, stereotypes are primarily held to be negative. Positive stereotypes do exist, but they generally do not lead to positive reactions. Explicitly saying that a minority group has positive characteristics is in most cases understood as acknowledging implicitly that negative characteristics also exist.[73] Studies in social

[71] Stangor 2009, 2. Cf. Dovidio *et al*. 2010, 8, whose definition includes the effects of stereotypes on individuals: '[S]tereotypes represent a set of qualities perceived to reflect the essence of a group. Stereotypes systematically affect how people perceive, process information about, and respond to, group members.' For stereotypes as cognitive representations, or *prototypes* and *schemata*, in the field of social psychology, see Dovidio *et al*. 1986.

[72] For definitions of stereotyping and prejudice, see the fine overview studies of Stangor 2009; 2000, 1, whose definitions I have adopted here. The absent-minded professor is an exemplary stereotype frequently used in Stangor's 2000 introduction. Cf. Dovidio *et al*. 2010, 5-8; Fiske 1998, often cited. For the fact that stereotypes and prejudice are two sides of the same coin, see Stangor 2009, 4: 'The relationship between stereotypes (cognition) and prejudice (affect) is not always strong, but is reliable. This is reasonable, because affect and cognition represent different components of the same underlying attitudes, and because stereotypes are in part rationalizations for our prejudices.' With references.

[73] Stangor 2009, 2, who gives the following example: 'Consider how we might react to people who have claimed that African Americans have the positive traits of being athletic and musical. The problem, in part, is that if we express positive stereotypes, it is assumed that we hold the negative ones, too.' Following Allport 1954 (generally acknowledged by social psychologists to be the most important study on stereotyping

psychology show that the accuracy of stereotypes is hard to pin down. They seem to have a 'kernel of truth' as it is difficult to imagine how they would be useful if they were completely untrue, although a few studies suggest that a relationship between perception and some kind of reality is not necessary.[74]

Stereotyping is functional. There are good reasons why people categorize individuals in groups and do not judge them as unique individuals. Firstly, stereotypes can be informative (when accurate). When a person is categorized as a shop employee (and not a customer), certain forms of social knowledge about this person are immediately processed. Secondly, stereotypes and prejudice are necessary to make sense of a complex world. They simplify and structure the complicated information flow. Sometimes there may simply not be enough time to get to know someone better or to gain a full understanding of the situation. Thirdly, stereotypes and prejudice are related to self-esteem. Thinking in negative terms about other groups makes people feel good about themselves. In general, people like to be part of relevant social groups, and they tend to think more positively about their own groups than about other ones.[75]

Apart from individual motivation, stereotyping also has a social or collective variant which is called 'intergroup stereotypes'. Research into this domain revolves around questions such as 'What kind of shared construction of social reality, mediated through social categorizations, leads to a social climate in which large masses of people feel that they are in long-term conflict with other masses?'[76] Intergroup stereotypes seem to function in three different situations: when explanation is needed for a complex event; when justification is needed for certain reactions against groups of others; when differentiation is needed in times of fading boundaries between groups of people.[77] The individual and collective functions of stereotyping seem to

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and prejudice) only negative stereotypes have been seen as pointing to prejudice. Studies on stereotype content (in contrast to stereotype processes) argue that stereotypes fall into two dimensions: competence and warmth. These studies show that positive stereotypes exist, but that they do suppose prejudice. See Fiske *et al*. 2002.

[74] Stangor 2009, 2 with reference to Swim 1994.

[75] Stangor 2000, 4, with multiple references.

[76] Tajfel 1979, 188, quoted by Tajfel and Forgas 1981.

[77] Tajfel and Forgas 1981 coin these three functions 'social causality', 'justification' and 'differentiation', respectively. An example of the first is blaming a certain group of people for the outburst of certain diseases such as the plague; an example of the

overlap in their simplification and structuring of the complex world. Intergroup stereotypes are, for instance, particularly created in 'times of crisis, such as wars, economic recessions and natural disasters. During these times, leaders use stereotypes of the enemy to reduce potential ambiguity, stifle dissent, and to provide a clear set of behavioral norms.'[78]

When applied to this study, research in the field of social psychology is first and foremost important because it shows that stereotyping is highly functional. This means that the relation between Rome and Egypt cannot be explained in simple terms of hatred or dislike – given as *the* reason for stereotypes in most studies on Roman perceptions of Egypt – based on the use of stereotypes in the literature. Seeing stereotyping as functional encourages us to look for the reasons (possible complex) why they are used. Secondly, the use of stereotypes is not only related to self-esteem, i.e. something that Othering implies. Stereotypes can also be informative or simplifying. Thirdly, the social function of stereotypes suggests questions of historical circumstances that urge the use of stereotypes.[79] In times of crisis, they can easily be explained as having a clear structuring function. The use of them outside times of crisis may need different explanations. In this respect, the Civil War between Octavian and Mark Antony is most obviously an example of crisis, but not all Roman literary stereotypes of Egypt appear in this period or refer to this event.

4.4. *Colonialism, post-colonialism, globalization*

The three previous sections explored theoretical angles that were all concerned with meta-communication and cognitive processes used to make sense of the world. In this section the debate on post-colonialism will be discussed as supplying a general background to the Roman discourse on Egypt as it deals with perceptions of the colonized Other. This section only serves to show the

second is the European justification of their colonization of overseas territories in terms of bringing 'civilization' or 'human rights'. The third function seems to be the result of ethnocentrism, which is present in almost every culture.

[78] Stangor and Schaller 1996 also mention contrasts between individual and social functioning of stereotyping.

[79] Stangor 2000, 14-17. When stereotypes have achieved general acceptance, they receive permanence as they are hard to change or to erase. Their maintenance seems to be inherent in the use of stereotypes themselves. Stereotypes can be changed by intergroup contact, but only when the contacts between the two are positive.

observed overlaps and parallels, it is not meant to claim that the present study is a post-colonial one.

Post-colonialism is related to the dismantling of colonialism – in the sense of European overseas territories – in the twentieth century. It suggests (mistakenly) a linear progress, development from pre-colonialism to colonialism to post-colonialism. After former colonies received their independence in the decades after World War II, diverse strategies were undertaken to 'resist' the colonizers, such as emphasizing their own identity, ideology and even waging wars. However, the post-colonial period did not lead to independence: the ideological, political, economic and military influence of former colonizers, referred to as neo-colonization or imperialism, was still omnipresent. In this sense not all former colonies are 'post-colonial' at all.[80] Post-colonial theory is not 'anti-colonialism' as 'sympathy for the oppressed other, and pressure for decolonization, is as old as European decolonization itself', but part of 'an attempt to decolonize European thought and the forms of its history as well'.[81] Although this new way of approaching colonialism was not initiated by Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978) – he implemented French theory and transferred it to the English-speaking world – his work led to the academic field of colonial discourse analysis.[82] Concerned with the complicity between Western economic and political global power and

[80] See McClintock 1992, 88, who argues strongly against the use of 'post-colonialism' (and of 'post-isms' in general): 'My misgivings, therefore, are not about the theoretical substance of 'post-colonial theory', much of which I greatly admire. Rather, I wish to question the orientation of the emerging discipline and its concomitant theories and curricula changes, around a singular, monolithic term, organized around a binary axis of time and power, and which, in its premature celebration of the pastness of colonialism, runs the risk of obscuring the continuities and discontinuities of colonial and imperial power.' Cf. Williams and Chrisman 1994, 1-4.

[81] Young 1990, 119, does not mention post-colonialism in this context, but rather summarizes the general shift in thinking about colonialism in the years after World War II, in the years in which decolonization took place.

[82] See Young 1990, 119-126, for a discussion of important French thinking on decolonization, of which Fanon 1961 is the most important. Williams and Chrisman 1994, 5, in their introduction to the edited volume that collects important essays on colonial discourse and post-colonial theory, introduce Said's *Orientalism* in the following way: 'It is perhaps no exaggeration to say that Edward Said's *Orientalism*, published in 1978, single-handedly inaugurates a new area of academic inquiry: colonial discourse, also referred to as colonial discourse theory or colonial discourse analysis.'

with Western representations of the Orient, Said analyzed 'Orientalism' which he defined as 'a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient'. Taking the French philosopher Michel Foucault's ideas about the relation between power and language (discourse analysis) as his point of departure, Said argued that Western power provided access to knowledge about other cultures, but that Western knowledge of these cultures resulted in certain representations of *the* Orient that in turn supported Western hegemony.[83]

By exploring the Western production of knowledge, post-colonial theory focuses on the colonized cultures themselves, their ideologies, histories and their 'resistance' against the colonizer. Although Roman colonialism is not the same as its modern European counterpart, the discourses that supported and enabled Roman power over the provinces are comparable to those in the time of European hegemony. Hence, post-colonial theory is also used to study Imperial processes in antiquity and especially to criticize the model of 'Romanization'. Romans not only ruled the provinces by imposing their will on their subordinates, they also collaborated with local élites, and the provincials did not slavishly follow Roman orders, but also engaged actively in building or protecting their own identity and social standing.[84] Colonial discourse analysis explores how the West created representations of the Orient, and what discursive strategies were used to support and sustain Western hegemony. In other words, it investigates how representations of the

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[83] Said 1978, 3, where he explains he explored Orientalism as a 'discourse' in the way Foucault has described it in *The archaeology of knowledge* (1973) and *Discipline and punish* (1975): 'My contention is that without examining Orientalism as a discourse one cannot possibly understand the enormously systematic discipline by which European culture was able to manage – and even produce – the Orient politically, sociologically, militarily, ideologically, scientifically, and imaginatively during the post-Enlightenment period. Moreover, so authoritative a position did Orientalism have that I believe no one writing, thinking, or acting on the Orient could do so without taking account of the limitations on thought and action imposed by Orientalism.' Said's concept of Orientalism is heavily debated within the scholarly field, see for instance: Young 1990 and Porter 1983 (critique on Said's methodology), cf. Sprinkler 1992; MacKenzie 1995; King 1999; Elmarsafy *et al*. 2013. For an impression of the debates raised by Said's academic work and his political statements, see Iskandar and Rustom 2010.

[84] See Millett, 1990a and 1990b. For a defense of the use of post-colonial theory to understand the Roman Empire, see Webster and Cooper 1996, 8-9.

Other were used to define the Self. Whereas *post-colonial theory* aims to deconstruct the binaries (Self versus Other, center versus periphery) that dominate the Western discourse on the Orient by placing the other/periphery in the center, *colonial discourse analysis* explains them in terms of identity building.[85] Said's *Orientalism* showed that the West did not think only in negative or denigrating terms about the Orient, it was also utterly fascinated by its un-Western exotic aspects. This observation led the social anthropologist Gerd Baumann to question the notion 'we are good, so they are bad': 'what is at stake in orientalism is not merely a binary opposition, but I argue, a binary opposition subject to reversal.'[86] In a process labeled as 'negative mirroring' or elsewhere 'negative self-definition', Western negative stereotypes of the Orient implicitly recall positive counterparts which contribute to Western self-definition. For instance, coining the Orient as irrational highlights Western rationality. However, this process of negative mirroring is dialectic as it also allows for self-reflection and self-criticism, since Western conceptions of the Orient as, for instance, 'spontaneous' lead to a characterization of the West as 'calculating', which does not always have a positive connotation (labeled 'positive reversal' by Baumann). Western self-criticism does not mean that feelings of superiority or ethnocentricity are not reflected in their 'Othering/Selfing' as the positive qualification of the Orient mostly implies something that the Orient still possesses and that the West does not have *anymore*.[87]

Modern scholarship on ancient literary texts has already shown that Greeks and Romans created the Other, or the 'barbarian', in order to define the Self in positive as well as negative terms. For instance, in *Inventing the barbarian* (1989), Edith Hall argued, by studying Greek tragedies, that fifth-century

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[85] Cf. McClintock 1992, 85, who notes while criticizing the term 'post-colonial': 'If "post-colonial" *theory* has sought to challenge the grand march of western historicism with its entourage of binaries (self-other, metropolis-colony, center-periphery, etc. the *term* "post-colonialism" nonetheless re-orients the globe once more around a single, binary opposition: colonial/post-colonial.'

[86] Baumann 2004, 19-20. In this work Baumann transforms Said's concept of Orientalism into one of the 'grammars of Us and Them.' The other two grammars that Baumann describes are 'segmentation' and 'compassment'. Cf. Versluys 2013, 244, for reference to Baumann's 'grammar of Orientalization' in his argumentation that Orientalism ('othering') and Orientalizing ('including' the Orient) cannot be seen as two opposing processes.

[87] Baumann 2004, 20.

Athens created an antipode, the barbarian, in order to cope with the geo-political Persian threat.[88] Particularly Greek and Roman ethnographical works show a very nuanced treatment of the 'barbarian'. I have already mentioned François Hartog's study of Herodotus' representation of the Scythians. His view that ethnographies can be read as reflecting on Greek identity in either a positive or a negative way has been taken up by other scholars such as by Gregory Murphy in his study on Pliny the Elder's ethnographies. The Roman ethnographical work *par excellence*, Tacitus' *Germania*, has also been interpreted in a similar way. Tacitus' portrayal of Germans not only functions to encourage contemporary Romans in a positive way, but also to put a finger on their low moral standards.[89] This present study overlaps with colonial discourse analysis by defining the Egyptian Other as a tool whose functions range from positively constructing Roman identity to criticizing that identity.

4.5. *Cultural memory*

Colonial discourse analysis looks specifically at discursive strategies, at *representations* of the Orient. In my discussion of the social function of stereotypes, it has already become clear that the Roman literary discourse on Egypt cannot be fully understood without examining the relation between the representation of Egypt and the reconstruction of the past, such as that of the Battle of Actium. Cultural (or 'collective' or 'social') memory studies investigate how groups of people *construct* their common past, deliberately or otherwise. Roman literature about an event such as Actium can be seen as a reflection, a representation and a (co-) construction of that particular historical event. Cultural memory studies generally hold that the construction of the past serves social reasons: remembering is a group process centered on a group identity. Having a shared past underpins the presence of a group to which people belong.[90]

Cultural memory studies cover a broad field of scholarly research, each with its own points of interest, that has developed substantially over the years.

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[88] See, Vasunia 2003, 89 and n. 6 for references to earlier works of Hellenists addressing the dichotomy between Greeks and barbarians.
[89] See p. 20, n. 62. Rives 1999.
[90] Although most research in memory studies has focused on intentional remembering and the construction of identity, cultural remembering can also be unintentional and implicit, see Welzer 2010.

Having started with the studies of Maurice Halbwachs on *mémoire collective* (1925, 1941, 1950), the concept of cultural memory garnered great interest in the late 1980s from almost every academic field, including history and literature. The study of cultural memory has been highly debated ever since its introduction. It has been criticized for being too multifarious to be a distinctive field of research, or being superfluous as other concepts than cultural memory could just as easily describe the same kind of processes.[91] Because memory studies are the domain of so many (interdisciplinary) academic fields, a 'conceptual foundation' of it did not exist until recently.[92] It goes beyond the scope of this study to present a state of the art of memory studies, and I will discuss here just two accepted adjustments to the original notion of 'group process' and 'group identity' because they pre-eminently help us to understand the Roman literary discourse on Egypt: firstly, a homogenous group and a homogenous group identity do not exist; and secondly, contemporary (eyewitness) groups remember an event differently than later generations.

In the first place, it seems evident that a society or any collective does not remember anything. Only the individual has the mental capacity to remember.[93] However, it also seems obvious that shared memory exists, such as national memory or group (family, friends, colleagues) memory or even transnational memory (for instance, the remembrance of the Holocaust). To bridge the gap between collective and individual memory, cultural memory studies emphasise the multiplicity of groups, memories and identities. The existence of multiple memories includes the existence of conflicting memories. In a particular context, an event may be remembered differently

[91] An example of a critical paper on cultural memory is Gedi and Elam 1996.

[92] The edited volume of Erll and Nünning 2010, containing papers of 41 scholars active in various research fields, is 'the first step on the road towards a conceptual foundation for the kind of memory studies which assumes a decidedly cultural and social perspective'. Other overview studies giving an impression of the large scope of memory studies and its theoretical and methodological approaches include Olick *et al*. 2011; Olick and Robbins 1989; Radstone 2000; Erll 2005. Studies on antiquity using the concept of cultural memory include Galinksky 2014, an edited volume focusing on Roman monuments as well as literature as evidence for Roman perceptions of the past; Koning 2010, who studies the conceptualization of Hesiod in the Greek literary discourse; Alcock 2002 on ancient Greek monuments and landscapes.

[93] Cf. Alcock 2002, 15, with further references.

than in another environment. Furthermore, as the past is remembered to serve the present situation, present memories of groups and individuals may be adapted, new memories may be invented, and old memories may disappear. Susan Alcock put it as follows, 'What we are talking about [..] is a plurality of concurrent, possibly conflicting, and potentially competing memories available to peoples at any given time.'[94] Relying on literary evidence in order to get a sense of what was held to be important in Roman society, this study takes plurality as its point of departure and focuses on how and why a particular memory (of Egypt) is used in order to define the Self.

Secondly, a useful angle from which the relation between contemporary versions and later reflections on history can be approached and studied is the distinction between communicative memory and cultural memory as formulated by Jan Assmann.[95] According to Assmann, with reference to what Maurice Halbwachs defined as 'collective memory', the concept of *communicative memory* concerns the collective memory of people as reflected in everyday oral communication. It includes the information exchange between individuals such as that taking place in 'train rides, waiting rooms, or [at] the common table'.[96] Although the specific context in which these conversations take place imposes limits on what is said, beyond these regulations 'reigns a high degree of formlessness, willfulness, and disorganization'.[97] Communicative memory is bounded by time: by the lifespan of eyewitnesses of an event (approximately 80 years). After this period of communicative memory, the period of 'cultural memory' begins. This is a period in which 'a 'common version' of history is negotiated, which goes down into the collective cultural knowledge of the group whose interests are at stake'.[98] The difference between *communicative* memory and *cultural*

[94] Alcock 2002, 15.
[95] Assmann 1988, 9-19 (tr. 1995) and 2000, 1-44.
[96] Assmann 2000, 127.
[97] Assmann 2000, 127.
[98] Sluiter and Visser 2004, 240, who discuss the literary construction of history at the hand of Aeschylus' Persians. They present an expedient summary of Assmann's distinction of collective memory into communicative and cultural memory in which they point to the need to develop Assmann's model in more detail. They suggest looking at the 'qualitative differences: subjective versions versus authoritative ones, autonomous versions versus negotiated ones'. They show that attempts to come to one common version of history are already being made in the period of communicative

memory lies in cultural formation ('texts, rites, monuments') of the past.[99] In this period 'poets, teachers, prophets, historians, their knowledge deriving from sources as different as divine inspiration and hardwork in the library, are the bearers *par excellence* of cultural memory'.[100] Assmann's chronological division of the processes of collective memory into a period of communicative memory and a period of cultural memory is important for this study as it points to possible different Roman evaluations of historical events involving Egypt through time. For instance, after the lifespan of eyewitnesses, Actium may have been remembered differently, and this new memory may have led to a different representation of Egypt.[101]

5. THE SCOPE (AND LIMITATIONS) OF THE PRESENT STUDY

The present study is part of a larger project that focuses on the impact of Egypt on *Rome* and mainland Italy. Considering that concepts of Egypt and their function may have been different outside the city of Rome and mainland Italy, in other regions of the Empire, it does not focus specifically on sources that cannot be related, or at least not directly, to the social, cultural and political situation in the city of Rome. For instance, this thesis does not give prominence to Plutarch's representation of Egypt in his treatise *De Iside et Osiride* because this work probably is likely to be understood in relation to the position of Greece under Roman rule. Consequently, his treatise may not have been about Roman self-representation, but about Greek identity.[102] Generally, other Greco-Roman works (works written in the Greek language in Roman times) seem to present a different conceptualization of Egypt than Roman works do. In these works Egypt is openly characterized as *the* cultural foundation of Greece, as many references can be found to Greek adaptations and developments of Egyptian institutions.[103] It seems unlikely that Egyptian

memories. In the period of cultural memory, a new communicative memory of recent events may alter the common interpretation.

[99] Assmann 2000, 127.

[100] Sluiter and Visser 2004, 240.

[101] See Gurval 2001, for Augustan monuments of Actium and contemporary reactions on this battle in poems.

[102] Manolaraki 2013, 252.

[103] See Vasunia 2003, Moyer 2011and Gruen 2010.

culture had such a direct influence on Rome.[104] As we shall see, Rome did appropriate Egyptian institutions, but mostly via Greek and Hellenistic traditions.[105] Hence, it is only due to the place of interest (the city of Rome) – i.e. not based on the difference in Greek and Latin language *sec* – that the selected texts in this study are mainly Latin texts.

Thus, the selection of my central texts is based on an investigation of all kinds of references to Egypt in (Greco-)Roman literary sources from Cicero till Juvenal, i.e. the periods shortly before and after Augustus. The index on pp. 201-204 gives a good impression of the scope of the texts I have studied. To summarize the selection criteria as already demonstrated above: 1) narrative volume, passing references do mostly not provide enough information in terms of self-definition; 2) my aim to present an overall study, a focus on similar kind of sources (genre, period, subject, author) would have unbalanced this aim (and my aim to put the role of Augustan poetry in perspective) – comparable sources to my central texts are collected in the footnotes; 3) *Roman* self-representation, sources that cannot directly be related to the city of Rome and Roman identity would have destabilized my aim to study the impact of Egypt on Rome and mainland Italy.

This study, therefore, is not a collection of all passages in (Greco-) Roman literature that mention Egypt. Rather it intends to rethink the prevailing explanations that all have their deficiencies, as has been argued in this introduction. This thesis does not intend to convey that every conclusion drawn from the analyses of the selected texts can be universally applied to every single Roman literary reference to Egypt. On the contrary, it will firmly demonstrate the complexities of the Roman conceptualization of Egypt. It does so, however, by approaching them from one angle: that of identity making. This, then, is the first study that investigates whether and how Roman representations of Egypt were used for Roman self-representation – without preference for one particular period, author or subject.

Focusing on the intercultural relationship between Rome and Egypt, this study hopes to be useful not only for classicists, but also for historians and archaeologists interested in the role of foreign elements in Roman society. The Roman literary discourse on Egypt cannot be understood without placing it in

[104] The Romans thought of the Greek past as fundamental to Rome's own society. They shared the same cultural background, or *humanitas*, see Woolf 1994.

[105] See pp. 193-196; 91-95; 177-182. Cf. Assmann 2004-2005, 28, on what he characterizes as 'Gestaffelte Tiefenzeit.

its historical and archaeological context. Although my analysis of the ancient sources is primarily a philological investigation, sometimes resulting in the meticulous analysis of just one line of text, considerable attention is paid to the historical and archaeological contexts.

I

Pliny the Elder's Egypt: representations of Egypt in the *Natural History*

1. Introduction

The *Natural History*, the encyclopedic work of Pliny the Elder (AD 23 – 79), claims to cover everything found in the Roman world. It is the largest, surviving, single work of Roman times. Its 37 books contain a myriad of well-organized facts: first, the world above the earth's surface; then the different regions, humans, animals and vegetation on the surface; and finally the stones and minerals beneath it. Thus, representations of Egypt can be found distributed over several books and chapters in the *Natural History*. For instance, its geography and topography are explained in book 5; Egyptian animals can be found in book 18; and Egyptian monuments are described in book 36 where Pliny discusses various types of stone. Although not specifically about Egypt, the *Natural History* is the most informative and comprehensive Roman source on Egypt. Other Roman literature contains perceptions of Egypt but they mainly focus on one specific theme, such as the Nile or animal worship. The potential importance of the *Natural History* for establishing Roman perceptions of Egypt has been noted before but not been studied well, apart from a couple of passages such as Pliny the Elder's account of Egyptian wonders, probably because of its bulk and prosaic nature.[106] This chapter is the result of an investigation into all kinds of references to the various different Egyptian topoi that the *Natural History* contains. This

[106] In her work on Roman perceptions of the Nile Manolaraki has recently emphasized the 'amount of Egyptian material' in the *Natural History*, and she notes that this work embodies 'shifting associations of the Nile', but she decided not to undertake a study of the entire *Natural History*, because 'the sheer volume of Pliny's *Aegyptiaca* discourages a full analysis and falls outside my scope', 2013, 127.
— Note on text edition and translation of Pliny's *Natural History*: the text used is Von Jan and Mayhoff's 1967 Teubner edition, translations are my own.

chapter focuses first and foremost on Pliny's conctualization Egypt by comparing them to two traditional concepts of negative stereotyping and antiquity. It deals, in the second place, with the contextualization of Pliny's representation of Egypt. It discusses how this representation functions within the larger context of the *Natural History*.

Pliny wrote his encyclopedia approximately a century after Actium. This means that the communicative memory – possibly reflected in Augustan poetry – of Actium has disappeared, to use Assmann's term (explained in the general discussion on pp. 31-32). According to Assmann, after three generations communicative memory is transferred into cultural memory by 'cultural formation' and 'institutional communication'. Pliny wrote exactly in this time of transition. Consequently, his representation of Egypt in the Flavian age may have differed greatly from those who eye-witnessed Actium. Furthermore, Pliny the Elder wrote in a time when concepts of Egypt were actively used by Flavian emperors to legitimate their rule. For instance, in ancient historical sources the crowning of Vespasian in Egypt was associated with the flooding of Nile and, consequently, with the prosperity of Egypt and Rome. Apart from Roman literary sources, also Roman material culture shows grand-scale Flavian adaptation of Egyptian and Egyptianizing objects in particular those related to the cults of Isis.[107] It has been argued that the Flavian use of concepts of Egypt was a consequence of an increased interaction between Rome and its periphery that took place in that time; this close relationship between center and periphery in the Flavian period led to an intercultural framework in which new concepts of Egypt could operate. Based upon this argumentation it has been stated that in the Flavian period Augustan negative stereotypes coexist with perceptions that are 'less contemptuous and more inquisitive'.[108] In addition, the *Natural History* belongs to the genre of ethnographical/geographical works, which seem to have approached Egypt from a less biased stance than poetry did. For instance, Smelik and Hemelrijk note that 'ethnographical writings show more openness than usual towards barbarian cultures', when stating that Strabo's work shows less prejudice

[107] See Versluys forthcoming, with references to relevant literature.

[108] Manolaraki 2013, 126, who quotes on the same page Ando 2003, 326, to support her argument. Ando notes in relation to Roman religion: 'the Mediterranean world in the Flavian period was integrated as never before. This can be studied in a number of ways: trade, migration, communication and, as a special example of the latter two, the spread of diaspora cults.'

against Egypt than Augustan poetry.[109] At least negative stereotypes of Egypt or the Egyptians are extremely rare in the *Natural History*.[110] By studying Pliny's conceptualization of Egypt, the present chapter aims to put the allegedly central role of Actium and Augustan poetry in perspective.

The *Natural History* is an encyclopedic work. Nevertheless, in the last three decades it has been reappraised as a monograph. It is now widely acknowledged to be a product of empire, since knowledge of previously unknown regions was becoming available as a result of military conquest and exploration. Because of its relation between 'imperial control' and 'imperial knowledge', the *Natural History* can be called a product of its time, i.e. it contains the Flavian 'Zeitgeist'.[111] It also produces a mental map of the Roman world in which interconnectivity and interdependence are central themes. The present chapter aims to investigate whether Pliny's conceptualization of Egypt fits into the two 'traditional' concepts (negative stereotypes and positive evaluation of Egypt's antiquity, see general introduction on pp. 11-13) and explain it in the larger context of the *Natural History*. How does Egypt function in Pliny's overall message?

1.1. *A short guide to the contents of the Natural History with special attention to representations of Egypt*

Pliny wrote the *Natural History* in the last decade of his life (70-79 CE) and dedicated it to Titus who was about to become the next emperor.[112] In the

[109] Smelik and Hemelrijk 1984, 1929.

[110] Particularly one passage involving Alexandrians can be read as including the negative stereotype of untrustworthiness that appears frequently in association with Alexandria or Egypt in the Roman literature (Plin. *HN* 12.59). In this passage the Alexandrians appear to be notorious for stealing frankincense. Murphy 2004, 103, however, shows that in this passage it is not the untrustworthiness of Egyptians *sec* that is most important, but the fact that their fraudulence as *civilized* people contrasts with the honesty of native Arabians. See also Beagon 1992, 78 n. 46. Another text involving the fraudulence is Plin. *NH* 12.200 in which the Alexandrians are said to adulterate opium. Another instance where *adulterare* is used in an Egyptian context is *NH* 37.119. Here Egyptian kings are said to be famous for their adulteration of the stone *cyanus* by other tinted stones.

[111] See p. 46, n. 142-143.

[112] Pliny and Titus may have served together in the Roman army; for this and other biographical information on Pliny the Elder, see esp. Syme 1969; 1987; 1991, but also Beagon 2005, 1-11.

preface, Pliny formulates the object of his study as the 'world of nature or, in other words, life' (*rerum natura, hoc est vita, pref.* 13). His work aims to cover the entire natural world (*NH* 2.2):[113]

> *sacer est, aeternus, immensus, totus in toto, immo vero ipse totum, infinitus et finito similis, omnium rerum certus et similis incerto, extra intra cuncta conplexus in se, idemque rerum naturae opus et rerum ipsa natura.*
>
> It is sacred, eternal, immeasurable, complete in completeness, rather itself truly completeness, infinite and similar to the finite, definite of all things and similar to the indefinite, including in it everything that is within and without, at once a work of nature and nature itself.

In order to give the impression that he succeeded in presenting everything there is to know, Pliny arranged his work carefully. The imposed order is underlined by the table of contents. The encyclopedia starts with a description of the universe (book 2), followed by the treatment of the geography and ethnography of the territories that together make up this universe (books 3-6). Then the focus shifts to life on the earth's surface: humans (book 7), animals (books 8-11), trees and plants (books 12-27), and the medical uses of the flora (books 28-32). The last five books contain a description of elements delved from underneath the earth's surface: stones and minerals (books 33-37).[114]

Based upon the bibliography that Pliny gives for each book in his table of content, Pliny gathered the relevant facts from earlier Roman and Greek sources. The *Natural History* cannot, however, simply be characterized as a compilation. Pliny's 'creative intentions'[115] can be traced throughout the work. He is striving to present new information, and the way the facts are presented points at several underlying tactics and strategies to persuade the

[113] For the relation of his passage and the cosmological theories of Plato, Aristotle and the Stoics, see Beagon 1992, 26-54. This passage of Pliny together with his cosmological section have been analyzed thoroughly, for references see Beagon, *ibid*, 26 n. 1. See also Carey 2003, 21-22, who points out the ambivalence (infinite and finite, definite and indefinite, within and without) of the passage and reads it as a reflection of Pliny's *Natural History* as a whole: it is a work about nature, but it can also be a work of nature itself.

[114] An extended description of the organization of the *Natural History* can be found in Isager 1991, 41.

[115] For the quote, see Beagon 1992, 21.

reader to come to certain conclusions.[116] Though Pliny's work reflects his interest in geography, physics and biology, it is not based on 'fieldwork'. A vivid image of Pliny's devotion to studying literary sources is given by his nephew Pliny the Younger in a letter to Baebius Macer (Plin. *Ep*. 3.5): his uncle appears to have been a workaholic, he seems to have spent every available hour of the day studying and reading sources, assisted by several secretaries. In this respect, a modern study called it 'somewhat ironical'[117] that Pliny the Elder died during the natural phenomenon of the eruption of Mount Vesuvius as commander of the Roman fleet at Misenum. This final episode in Pliny the Elder's life is also famously narrated by Pliny the Younger in another letter (Plin. *Ep*. 6.16).[118]

The *Natural History* is first and foremost associated with geographical and historical works. Pliny's sources for his description of Egypt seem to have been predominantly historians like Herodotus, Diodorus of Sicily and Apion. Herodotus is mentioned as the source in the chapters on pyramids (*NH* 36.79) and the Egyptian labyrinth (*NH* 36.84). Diodorus is not specifically referred to when discussing Egypt, but Pliny does mention him rather prominently in his preface (*NH pref*. 26) and in his table of contents as the source for book 5 – where he discusses the geography and topography of Upper and Lower Egypt and the Nile. Apion, who wrote a treatise on Egyptian affairs, τὰ Αἰγυπτιακά, seems to be an important source for Pliny on Egyptian matters: *NH* 30.8 on a magical plant that also grows in Egypt; *NH* 30.99 on the beetle

[116] For Pliny's strategies to give the impression of 'totality', see Carey 2003, 17-40. Pliny recognized the difficulty of presenting his work in an attractive manner as can be derived from *NH pref.* 15: *res ardua vetustis novitatem dare, novis auctoritatem, obsoletis nitorem, obscuris lucem, fastiditis gratiam, dubiis fidem, omnibus vero naturam et naturae sua omnia*, 'It is a hard task to give novelty to what is old, authority to what is new, splendour to what is worn-out, light to what is obscure, attraction to what is repugnant, credibility to what is doubtful, yet nature to all things and all her properties to nature.' To underline the novelty of his work, he stresses that he is presenting new material in *NH pref.* 17: *ex exquisitis auctoribus centum inclusimus XXXVI voluminibus, adiectis rebus plurimis, quas aut ignoraverant priores aut postea invenerat vita*, 'We have included in 36 volumes facts from one hundred writers that we have studied meticulously, with a great number of facts in addition that previous writers either ignored or later experience discovered.'

[117] For the quote, see Beagon 1992, 1.

[118] Pliny the Younger describes his uncle as possessing *acre ingenium, incredibile studium, summa vigilenta*, 'an acute intellect, an amazing devotion to study, and an immense capacity of doing without sleep', Plin. *Ep.* 3.5.8 tr. Beagon, 1992, 1.

as one of Egypt's deities; *NH* 36.79 on pyramids; and *NH* 37.75 on a statue of Serapis in the Egyptian labyrinth.[119]

Throughout the *Natural History* hundreds of references are made to Egypt that include geographical and topographical information on Egypt's territory and the Nile, descriptions of Egyptian flora and fauna, medical use of Egyptian plants, descriptions of Egyptian monuments and anecdotes about Cleopatra. Not all of the references are equally useful for the study of Roman perceptions of Egypt. For example, the information that some kind of stone originated in Egypt may give the impression that the provenance of a stone mattered to the Romans, but without additional information, it does not give much insight into what Romans thought of Egypt. Hence, the passages discussed below have in common that they contain Roman cultural and geopolitical views regarding Egyptian material. The interpretative framework that relates the *Natural History* to Roman attitudes towards rule, conquest and the cultural implications of embedding foreign areas in the Roman Empire has been constructed by modern research.

1.2. *Reading the* Natural History *as a monograph: status quaestionis*

In the last three decades modern research has shown that the *Natural History* is more than a reference work.[120] Since the 1980s it has been studied in its entirety, as a treatise on a particular subject with a central message. The break from the traditional *Quellenforschung* was first established by several studies of the scientific world of Pliny, placing his writings within the larger context of Roman technical and philosophical thoughts.[121] Several scholars who

[119] Apion was a 1st cent. CE Alexandrian grammarian who wrote a five-book work about Egypt, called *Aegyptiaca* or τὰ Αἰγυπτιακά ('Egyptian affairs'), see J. *Ap*. 2.10; Gell. *NA* 5.14.4; 6.8.4; 10.10.2; Tatian, *Oratio ad Graecos*, 39. Damon 2011, argues that Pliny in *NH pref.* 26 specifically referred to Apion's *Aegyptiaca* as a source for his *Natural History.* See also Damon 2008, 347-359, for a biography of Apion and Apion's negative reputation in antiquity, specifically focussing on his *Aegyptiaca*.

[120] Due to the interest in isolated items, research on the *Natural History* mostly involved a study into the sources used by Pliny. For this *Quellenforschung* see: Detlefsen 1901; Münzer 1897 and a more modern example: Sallmann 1971.

[121] The first studies that focussed on the ancient scientific culture in which Pliny wrote are papers of several conferences. The papers of the Como-conference (1979), *Atti del convegno di Como, 27-29 settembre 1979*, published in four volumes: *Tecnologia, economia e società nel mondo romano* (1980), *Plinio il Vecchio sotto il profilo storico e letterario* (1982), *Plinio e la natura* (1982), *La città antica come fatto di cultura*

approached the *Natural History* as a monograph and actually *read* it instead of just *referred* to it are of special importance for my discussion of Pliny the Elder's Egypt.[122]

In her book *Roman Nature, the thought of Pliny the Elder* (1992), Mary Beagon demonstrates the diverse intellectual and philosophical discussions on which Pliny drew when he composed his encyclopedia. According to Beagon, the relation between Pliny's divine 'Nature' (*Natura*) and man is the central theme of *Natural History*, although that relationship is complicated: 'The benevolent deity [*Natura*] who serves the interests of her supreme creation, man, can sometimes unleash a chaos of unruly elements which threaten his very existence. On some occasions, she is no more than a backdrop for the works and deeds of man. At other times, her power imposes limitations on the ambitions of man's inferior intellect.'[123] Beagon's work is particularly important for my study as it gives insight into Pliny's selection criteria. Whether certain information was stressed or omitted – including his representation of Egypt – was first and foremost molded by certain philosophical thoughts. For instance, animal worship is mainly approached negatively elsewhere in the Roman literature. Pliny's account (*NH* 8.184-186) of Apis, on the other hand, shows respect and interest in this animal god, and lacks the regular rejection of animal worship. His attitude towards Apis becomes understandable when the wider context is taken into account. In the *Natural History* animals are considered to exist for the purpose of man.[124] The

(1983); the papers of the Nantes conference (1985), published in *Helmantica* and in Pigeaud and Oroz 1987; and the papers of the London symposium (1983) published in French and Greenaway 1986. The most influential study focussing on Pliny's contribution to Roman science and technology is Healy 1999.

[122] Other important studies that contribute to the tendency to read the *Natural History* as a monograph include: Gibson and Morello 2011, a collection of papers of the Manchester conference 2006 that focussed on several aspects of imperalism in the *Natural History*; Bispham, Rowe and Matthews 2007, a collection of essays that particularly placed Pliny's *Natural History* in the politics and culture of the Flavian age; De Oliveira 1992, who studied Pliny's moral and political motives; Citroni Marchetti 1991, who studied Roman moral opinions in the *Natural History*; Wallace-Hadrill 1990, who noted the antithesis between nature and luxury and argued that this digression was part of Pliny's strategy to give science a more prominent place in Roman culture.

[123] Beagon 1992, 50. See also Beagon 2005.

[124] Teleology (here the purpose of animals in men's lives), though important, is not the only guideline in Pliny's description of animals, see Beagon 1992, 133: 'Teleology is certainly part of Pliny's view of life, but it is not allowed to restrict his aim of

account of Apis forms a digression in the discussion of one of the most useful animals for man according to Pliny: the ox. Within this context of conducive relationships between man and animal, negative conceptualizations of such an animal as useful as the ox would have been out of place.[125]

The other three scholars to whose work this chapter is particularly indebted do not focus on Pliny's thoughts but on Pliny's project of encyclopedism. All three studies appeared almost simultaneously and connect Pliny's encyclopedia with Rome's world power, but from different angles. The first one is Valérie Naas' *Le projet encyclopédie de Pline l'ancien* (2002). In this book Naas lays bare the methodological and ideological nature of Pliny's 'project'. She argues that many characteristics of the *Natural History*, such as its order and totality, are peppered by Flavian moralities. For my study, her chapters on the *mirabilia* are especially important.[126] Naas notices the centrality of Rome in the *Natural History* and Pliny's techniques to create this result. The *mirabilia* of the remote parts of the Roman Empire are emulated by the city of Rome itself in such a way that Rome becomes the greatest miracle of all.[127] Naas explains how *mirabilia* are usually connected to far and remote places 'which is part of their status; what is far away can be unknown or vague and the confrontation with it arouses surprise and wonderment.'[128] The connection between *mirabilia* and the periphery makes the very inclusion of the *mirabilia* on its own an important indication of Rome's ability and power to control the periphery of its empire. The periphery functions to glorify Rome, and because those miracles of the periphery are manifest in Rome, Rome becomes the world, a *mundus alius in uno loco*.[129] Naas' main example of *mirabilia* of the periphery that serve to enhance Rome's status are Egyptian monuments. This topic will be discussed further below on pp. 75-76.

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portraying *Natura* both in detail and as a coherent whole.' See *ib*. 125-133, for a discussion of teleology and the influence of Aristoteles on the *Natural History*.

[125] See for similar argumentation Smelik and Hemelrijk 1984, 1960, who, however, do not relate the ox to its usefulness for mankind.

[126] In this respect another study of hers in Gibson and Morello 2011, is of the greatest importance. For *mirabilia* in the *Natural History* see also Beagon 2011; 2007 and 1992.

[127] The emulation of *mirabilia* also had negative effects on Rome, especially when luxury was involved. See Naas 2011; Carey 2003 and 2000; Wallace-Hadrill 1990.

[128] Naas 2011, 63.

[129] Plin. *NH* 36.101; Naas 2011.

Sorcha Carey in her book, *Pliny's catalogue of culture, art and Empire in the NH* (2003), explains Pliny's chapters on art history within the totality of the *Natural History*. Her research can be connected to the tendency to move away from the mainly late nineteenth-century approach to isolate the chapters on art from the rest of Pliny's encyclopedia.[130] Another exponent of this perspective is Isager's *Pliny on art and society* (1991). 'Art' is linked inextricably to the central theme of the *National History*, which is 'Roman totality' according to Carey. In my discussion of Pliny, the attention Carey pays to Pliny's 'strategies of encyclopaedism' to construct a Roman totality is particularly important. Her analysis of Pliny's structuring devices emphasizes his way of adapting data to the aims and purposes of his work.[131]

Trevor Murphy in his book, *Pliny the Elder's Natural History, the empire in the encyclopedia* (2004), interprets the whole *Natural History* as 'an artifact of Empire': Pliny's work could only exist because of Rome's Empire. Secondly, it is also an exponent of empire, because it is a manifestation of Roman domination, comparable to Roman triumphs and maps. All three, the *Natural History*, Roman triumphs and maps, expose the world which has now become Roman to the Roman public. Murphy shows that the centrality of Rome in the *Natural History* exists not only in its demonstrated ability to display all kinds of foreign artifacts in Rome; it can also be found in Pliny's way of describing foreign cultures and peoples. Using François Hartog's method of studying ethnographies, Murphy shows how Pliny's thoughts on the 'Other' can be read as Roman self-reflection. For my study on Pliny's Egypt, Murphy's metaphor of the *Natural History* as a map of the Roman world is particularly influential. By describing all the corners of the world now dominated by the Romans, the *Natural History* reveals the unknown and the process of description makes the unknown known.

2. PLINY'S CONCEPTUALIZATION OF EGYPT

The purpose of this section is to investigate whether Pliny's conceptualization of Egypt fits into the two 'traditional' concepts: the negative stereotypical

[130] See e.g. Jex-Blake and Sellers 1896 and Ferri 1946.
[131] For the quote, see Carey 2003, 13. *Ibid*., 17-40, who discusses the 'strategies of encyclopaedism'.

Other and positive evaluation of Egypt's antiquity. The first traditional concept will be addressed in 2.1 and in 2.2. First it will be explored whether the region Egypt belonged or did not belong to the Roman Empire according to the *National History* and, secondly, it will be discussed whether Egypt was labelled as the Other or as exotic. The second traditional concept, Egypt's antiquity, will be addressed in 2.3.

2.1. *Egypt as isolated and unfamiliar?*

In modern literature the Augustan legislation prohibiting Roman senators and the important *equites* from setting foot on Egypt's soil (Tac. *Ann*. 2.59.4) is connected with two characteristics of the Roman discourse on Egypt. In the first place, it turned Egypt into unknown territory because the scholarly classes could not verify facts about this region with their own eyes or gain extensive knowledge through experience. Consequently, it has been argued that the works of Roman writers about Egypt, such as Pliny, show an unfamiliarity with this territory.[132] Secondly, the resulting isolation of the Roman province of Egypt led to the existence of negative stereotypes about the Egyptians. For instance, Meyer Reinhold argued: 'on the Roman side we know that there ensued growing contempt and hatred for the Egyptians. The "Sonderstellung Aegyptens" (*Augustus seposuit Aegyptum* [reference to Tac. *Ann*. 2.59.4], its isolation and singular institutions gave the Romans the assurance of the region as the "breadbasket" of Rome, but the policy engendered many problems. One aspect of the uniqueness of Egypt was the exclusion of Roman senators and important equites (*equites illustres*) from Egypt, with the result that few who wrote about Egypt had first-hand knowledge of the population, its thoughts, and psychology.'[133] The idea behind this kind of argumentation seems to be that since important Romans never really engaged with Egyptian people, they did not have the opportunity to adjust their opinion about them in a more positive way. Both assumptions are the result of a comparison between the

[132] Smelik and Hemelrijk 1984, 1959-1960: 'Pliny the Elder says surprisingly little about Egyptian animal worship in his 'Naturalis Historia' while the subject of his work lent itself most readily to an elaborate description. Perhaps the fact that he had never been in Egypt plays a part in this matter. … The *relative unfamiliarity* with Egypt already noticed in Pliny the Elder comes sharply to the fore in a poem by Statius, 'Propempticon Maecio Celeri' [*Silv*. 3.2] by name.' My italics.
[133] Reinhold 1980, 100.

'real' Egypt and its representations in the works of Roman writers.[134] This also suggests that the Roman norm was to apply stereotypes. As a result the *Natural History*'s lack of them is ascribed to Pliny's 'personal attitude', i.e. as deviant from the general attitude.[135]

In this section a different approach will be taken by reading the *Natural History* as a mental map of the Roman world. The studies of Naas, Carey and Murphy show that Pliny's world is utterly Roman. However, this does not mean that all areas described by Pliny were Roman territory, strictly speaking. Regions like India or Ethiopia, for instance, did get a fair amount of attention although they were not Roman provinces. While Pliny uses Roman provinces as the framework for his description of the Roman world in books 3 - 6, his mental map of the Roman world is larger than the Roman Empire and its provinces.[136] The idea that Rome owned the world manifested itself under Augustus. In his *Res Gestae* Augustus displayed a long list of areas that he had either conquered or explored. All those territories together formed the *orbis terrarum* that was actually nothing more than another phrase for *orbis Romanus*, as Augustus himself clarified in the introduction of the Res Gestae, 'Below is a copy of the achievements of the deified Augustus, by which he made the world subject to the rule of the Roman people' (*rerum gestarum divi Augusti, quibus orbem terrarum imperio populi romani subiecit .. exemplar sub[i]ectum*).[137] Similar expressions of the Roman sense that the world was theirs can be found in contemporary poets like Ovid and Horace.[138] In his influential book *L'inventaire du monde: géographie et politique aux origines de l'Empire Romain* (1988, tr. 1991), Claude Nicolet showed that Augustus' *Res Gestae* can be read as a mental map of the world and that his process of mapping the world was equivalent to claiming the world as Roman.[139] Augustus not only described the Roman world in words, he also illustrated it on a pictorial map. Augustus' son-in-law Agrippa finalized a project started

[134] Reinhold's assumption that negative stereotypes may change by intergroup contact is only partly true, see general introduction, p. 25, n. 79.
[135] See p. 44, n. 132 and pp. 36-37.
[136] For Rome's provinces as framework for a world view, see Talbert 2004.
[137] Translation and text edition of Cooley 2009.
[138] Ov. *Fast.* 2.683; Hor. *Ep*. 2.1.254. But Polybius had also expressed the same kind of feeling (1.1.5)
[139] Nicolet 1991, 15-27. See *ib*. 29-56 on 'symbolism and allegories of the conquest of the world' for the use of the terms *orbis terrarum* or its Greek equivalent, ἡ οἰκουμένη.

by Julius Caesar to visualize the scope of the Roman Empire. Agrippa's map was placed in the Porticus Vipsania.[140] Vespasian put an updated version of this map in the newly built Temple of Peace. Pliny referred to this map as 'the world worthy to be observed by the city' (*orbem terrarum urbi spectandum*, *NH* 3.17). The Temple of Peace has been described as a 'World Museum' as it gathered famous artifacts from all over the world. The presence of a map of the world would have worked as an interpretative frame: the world is now Roman.[141]

Trevor Murphy compared the *Natural History* with 'mapping'. Like actual maps of the Roman Empire, the *Natural History* showed to Pliny's Roman readers what should be considered Roman. Although cultural contacts between the territories described in the *Natural History* existed before the Romans incorporated the diverse areas as provinces within their Empire, without doubt, knowledge about all the corners of the world only became truly available through Roman conquest. Pliny is not the only Flavian author whose work shows a tendency to map the Roman world in literary form. It has been argued that Tacitus, especially in his *Agricola*, also demonstrates a 'conceptual relationship between mapping, conquest, knowledge and imperialism'.[142] In general, it has been stated that '[w]hat can be discerned from the writings of the Flavian period and of the principates which immediately ensued is that, in a strong conceptual sense, imperial control and imperial knowledge, *imperium* and *scientia*, were coextensive.'[143] Rome and regions conquered by Rome are *presented* as known – in contrast to the level of real knowledge.

Set against this theoretical background, Egypt, conquered by the Romans and annexed as a Roman province in 31/30 BCE, can be expected to be known territory in the *Natural History*. To verify this hypothesis, first Pliny's

[140] Brodersen 1995, 275-86, argued that Agrippa's map was not a pictorial one, but an inscription with distances. See also Salway, 2001, *contra* and Brodersen's response, 2001. Carey 2003, 64, takes up Brodersen's suggestion and relates it to Pliny's use of inscriptions as 'devices within the text'.

[141] Flavius Josephus relates that the outside of the building displayed the *sacra* of the temple of Jerusalem and the menorah, and that the *temenos* kept famous artifacts from all over the world, Joseph *BJ* 7.5.7. Pliny tells us that the main collection on display in the Temple of Peace was originally part of the *Domus Aurea*, the private palace of Nero. For the Temple of Peace as 'World Museum', see Versluys forthcoming.

[142] Boyle 2003, 37, with reference to Evans 2003, 255-276.

[143] Boyle 2003, 37.

description of a region will be discussed that has a prominent place in the *Natural History*: Hispania Ulterior or Hispania Baetica, a Roman province since 197 BCE. This region (and not Rome or Italy) forms the starting point of Pliny's treatment of all regions in the world (books 3 - 6). It has been argued that it may not have been a coincidence that Pliny began his geographical and topographical account of the world with this territory as it is known from a letter of Pliny the Younger that his uncle held a procuratorship of province.[144] Then the geographical treatment of Hispania Baetica with that of Egypt will be compared. As a reality check, finally Pliny's description of both Roman provinces will be compared with his discussion of the islands around Britannia, a region unconquered by the Romans.

Mapping Egypt in the Natural History

The geographical description of Hispania Beatica, Egypt and the Glass Islands can be found in the geographical section of the *Natural History*, books 3 - 6, which discusses all regions of the *orbis terrarum*. These books deal with 'places, peoples, seas, towns, harbors, mountains, rivers, measurements, present and past populations' [*situs, gentes, maria, oppida, portus, montes, flumina, mensurae, populi qui sunt aut qui fuerunt*, *NH* 1 (3); (4); (5); (6)]. After treating northeastern Spain, Italy, the transalpine regions and the coast of the Adriatic sea in book 3, and Greece, Germany, Britain, Belgium, Spain, Portugal and the Atlantic islands in book 4, Pliny turns his gaze across the Strait of Gibraltar to Mauritia, Numidia, Africa and Egypt in book 5. After Egypt the northwest-oriented order is continued by discussing Arabia, Syria and Palestine. Book 6 describes Asia Minor.

Hispania Baetica is geographically demarcated by its natural boundaries, rivers and mountains (*NH* 3.6). It is separated from Hispania Lusitania by the river Anas in the north and from Hispania Tarraconensis in the east by Mount Solorius and the ridges of Oritani, Carpentani and Astures. The capricious course of the river Anas – spreading and narrowing, burrowing underground and emerging – is stressed. The fertility of Hispania Baetica, named after the river Baetis which splits the region in two, is praised, 'it is superior to the other provinces in its rich cultivation and in its particularly fertile and peculiar

[144] Beagon 1992, 4-5. She reads 'eye-witness references' and 'positive enthusiasm' in Pliny's treatment of Spain throughout the *NH* esp. in *NH* 37.203 which 'suggests personal contact with Spain and her people'.

brightness, too' (*cunctas provinciarum divite cultu et quodam fertili ac peculiari nitore praecedit*, *NH* 3.7). Thereafter, Pliny lists the most important coastal places from west to east (*NH* 3.7-3.8) and the most important inland places by region from east to west among which the cities and rivers of the four jurisdictions of Hispania Baetica get special attention: Gordubensis (*NH* 3.10), Hispalensis (*HN* 3.11), Astigitanus, (*NH* 3.12) and Gaditanus (*NH* 3.15). His account of Hispania Baetica ends with a discussion of its length and breadth according to Marcus Agrippa as given on his map (*NH* 3.16-17).

The systematic and factual way in which Pliny gives shape to Hispania Baetica by first giving a general lay-out and then zooming in meticulously on its different zones by mentioning and counting their important places reads like an imperial map. Pliny gives his reader the impression that he knows exactly what he is talking about. The legal bonds between the towns in Hispania Baetica and Rome are clearly expressed: '[Hispania Baetica] comprises four jurisdictions, those of Gaditanus (Cadiz), Cordubensis (Cordoba), Astigitanus (Ecija) and Hispalensis (Seville). Its towns number 175 in total, of which 9 are colonies, 10 municipalities of Roman citizens, 27 towns granted early Latin rights, 6 free towns, 3 bound by treaty to Rome and 120 paying tribute' (*iuridici conventus ei IV, Gaditanus Cordubensis Astigitanus Hispalensis. oppida omnia numero CLXXV, in iis coloniae IX, municipia c. R. X, Latio antiquitus donata XXVII, libertate VI, foedere III, stipendiaria CXX*, *NH* 3.7). In her study Carey shows that this union between taxonomy and Empire can be found throughout books 3 - 6.[145] She argues that the world described in the *Natural History* coincides with the Roman Empire as the legal connections (*municipium*, *colonia*, *libertas*, etc.) between the towns and Rome are stressed while at the same time those which are located outside are diminished, because towns which did not have a legal connection with Rome were regularly set aside as unimportant, *ignobilia*. Hence it is argued that Pliny's enumeration of diverse geographical areas and cities of the world found in books 3 - 6 is not random. It was based on Roman administrative lists.[146]

The same well-organized structure with an eye for the legal relation with Rome defines Pliny's geographical description of Egypt as well. First the triangular shape of Lower Egypt, the Nile Delta, is delineated. Two branches

[145] Carey 2003, 32-35. For a discussion and quotation of *NH* 3.7 see *ibid*., 33.
[146] Sallmann 1971, 95-106; Nicolet 1991, 176-178; Christol 1994, 45-63.

of the Nile ending in the Canopic and the Pelusiac mouth separate Egypt from respectively Africa and Asia (*NH* 5.48). Like the Anas and the Baetis, the Nile serves as a natural boundary. Thereafter, Pliny turns his attention to Upper Egypt in the following way (*NH* 5.49):

> *summa pars contermina Aethiopiae Thebais vocatur. dividitur in praefecturas oppidorum, quas νόμους vocant: Ombiten, Apollonopoliten, Hermonthiten, Thiniten, Phaturiten, Coptiten, Tentyriten, Diospoliten, Antaeopoliten, Aphroditopoliten, Lycopoliten. quae iuxta Pelusium est regio nomos habet Pharbaethiten, Bubastiten, Sethroiten, Taniten. reliqua autem Arabicum, Hammoniacum tendentem ad Hammonis Iovis oraculum, Oxyrynchiten, Leontopoliten, Athribiten, Cynopoliten, Hermopoliten, Xoiten, Mendesium, Sebennyten, Cabasiten, Latopoliten, Heliopoliten, Prosopiten, Panopoliten, Busiriten, Onuphiten, Saiten, Ptenethum, Ptemphum, Naucratiten, Meteliten, Gynaecopoliten, Menelaiten, Alexandriae regionem, item Libyae, Mareotis.*
>
> The uppermost part of Egypt, bordering on Ethiopia, is called Thebaid. It is divided into prefectures of towns, that they call *nomoi*: the Ombite, Apollonopolite, Hermonothite, Thinite, Phaturite, Coptite, Tentyrite, Diospolite, Antaeopolite, Aphroditopolite and Lycopolite. The *nomoi* in the regions near Pelusium are the Pharbaethite, Bubastite, Sethroite and Tanite. The rest of the *nomoi* are called the Arabic, Hammoniac (extending to the oracle of Jupiter Ammon), Oxyrhynchite, Leontopolite, Athribite, Cynopolite, Hermopolite, Xoite, Mendesian, Sebennyte, Cabasite, Latopolite, Heliopolite, Prosopite, Panopolite, Busirite, Onuphite, Saite, Ptenethus, Ptemphus, Naucratite, Metelite, Gynaecopolite, Menelaite, these are in the region of Alexandria, likewise Mareotis is in the region of Libya.

This passage – the underlining marks the subdivision of Upper Egypt and Lower Egypt with special attention for Alexandria – can be regarded as typical for Pliny's accurate and well-structured treatment of Egypt. It gives detailed information about Egypt's division in *praefectures* of towns, called *nomoi*. First the districts of Upper Egypt (*summa pars*) are systematically listed from South to North. Thereupon Pliny directs his attention to the districts of Lower Egypt centering around the Pelusiac mouth of the Nile. After treating the eastern part of Lower Egypt, Pliny enumerates the remaining parts of the Delta around Alexandria. The use of the juridical term *praefectures* denotes the difference in Roman government between its province Egypt and a province like Hispania Baetica and underlines the administrative character of the supplied information. Since its annexation Egypt had been ruled by a prefect of equestrian rank instead of by the traditional senatorial governor and was

not divided into jurisdictions, but into 40 districts, or the already mentioned *nomoi* or *praefectures*, each governed by a *strategos*. After the systematic topographical description of all the districts of Egypt, Pliny focuses on the Nile, the river that divides Egypt into an upper and lower part.[147] Its course is described from its unknown source to its discharge in sea (*NH* 5.51-54). Despite his earlier remark that the source of the Nile is unknown, Pliny begins his account of the Nile by stating that King Juba located its source in the mountains of Mauretania. From here it flows through scorching deserts and over long distances to Ethiopia (*NH* 5.51-53). Its course is capricious. Sometimes it dives under the surface for days before it appears again, but it proceeds fiercely.[148] Apparently, the disappearance of the Nile underground for long distances led to questions of whether certain waters located in Mauretania and Ethiopia did or did not belong to the Nile. In this respect Pliny relates how King Juba could prove by a crocodile caught in a Mauretanian lake that the Nile created this lake. The crocodile was thereupon dedicated by King Juba to Isis in her temple at Caesarea where it could still be seen in Pliny's day.[149] On the border of Egypt and Ethiopia when the Nile reaches the First Cataract (Pliny notes *novissimo catarracte*, *NH* 5.54), its violence is stressed. Here the Nile does not seem to flow, but to riot between the

[147] Rivers in the Natural History function as structural devices, see Murphy 2004, 142-148; Beagon 1992, 194-200; Sallmann 1971, 221-225. Rivers separate areas from each other, but they also connect them. The Danube (*NH* 4.79-80), Po (*NH* 3.117-122) and the Tigris (*NH* 6.126-130) – rivers that are described by Pliny from their source to discharge in the sea – create divisions between areas. And so we are informed that the Po was once a frontier of the Roman Empire. Also the Nile plays a demarcating role; it divides Asia from Africa (*NH* 3.3) and it causes a division into Lower and Upper Egypt. Beside being natural boundaries, rivers also connect diverse areas. The Danube, for instance, forms the connection between Germany and the Black Sea (*NH* 4.79-80). Pliny emphasizes the use of rivers for travel and transport when he repeatedly remarks that they are *navigabilis*. For the use of *navigabilis* (and also *amoena*) to describe rivers, see Beagon 1992, 194-200. Like the other rivers in the Natural History, the Nile is treated as a road.

[148] For the personification of the Nile in the *Natural History*, see Manolaraki 2013, 127-131, who discusses Pliny's Nile tradition with a focus on the Nile's commitment towards Rome.

[149] Juba II (48 BCE – 23/24 AD), son of King Juba I of Numidia, was given the throne of Mauretania in 25 BCE by Augustus. In 25 BCE Juba married Cleopatra Selene, daughter of Mark Antony and Cleopatra VII. Both grew up in Rome in aristocratic circles and both had by birth a legal claim on Africa and Egypt. For Juba's and Cleopatra's rule over Mauretania, see Roller 2003.

mountains. Finally, the river flows gently towards its discharge in the Egyptian sea by its many mouths (*NH* 5.54). After describing the Nile from source to discharge, Pliny discusses the various reasons for and particularities of the flooding of the Nile (*NH* 5.55-58). His chapters on the Nile are closed by presenting diverse authorative calculations of the place where the Nile enters Egypt to Lower Egypt and its discharge into the sea (*NH* 5.59).

In chapter 5.60 Pliny returns to his praxis of presenting lists of topographical places when he enumerates important Egyptian cities. Like his treatment of the general division of Egypt and its districts, these cities are not listed randomly but are carefully divided by district. First the cities of Upper Egypt (*NH* 5.60-61) are mentioned, then the city of Alexandria gets special attention: 'but with reason Alexandria shall be praised, founded by Alexander the Great on the coast of the Egytian Sea on the side of Africa'(*sed iure laudetur in litore Aegyptii maris Alexandria, a Magno Alexandro condita in Africae parte*, *NH* 5.62). Lastly the names of the most important towns of Lower Egypt (*NH* 5.63) are given. Taking the Pelusiac mouth as a natural border, Pliny changes his subject and shifts his attention to Arabia Petraea (*NH* 5.64).

Comparing the geographical description of Egypt with that of Hispania Baetica, they appear to be very similar. In both cases the general layout of the region is presented first with special attention being paid to the natural boundaries, followed by an accurate and meticulous presentation of administrative data, including a systematic division in districts and cities. In both cases Pliny seems to speak with authority. Let us now compare his accounts with that of a region that did not belong to the Roman Empire at that time: the islands around Britain (*NH* 4.104):

> *Timaeus historicus a Britannia introrsus sex dierum navigatione abesse dicit insulam Ictim, in qua candidum plumbum proveniat; ad eam Britannos vitilibus navigiis corio circumsutis navigare. sunt qui et alias prodant, Scandias, Dumnam, Bergos, maximamque omnium Berricen, ex qua in Tylen navigetur*
>
> The historian Timaeus says that the island Ictim is a six days' journey by ship away inwards from Britain, where tin occurs, and to which the Britons sail in boats made of wickerwork covered with hides. Some attest that there are other islands too, the Scandiae, Dumna, Bergos, and Berrice, the largest of all, from which one sails to Thule.

In this account of the 'Glass Islands' (*Glaesiae*, NH 4.103-104) located beyond Britain that also include the legendary Thule, the island 'most distant of all' (*ultima omnium*, *NH* 4.102), Pliny does not report data in a factual way like he does in his geographical accounts of Egypt and Hispania Baetica.[150] He uses the authority of other writers (*Timaeus historicus.. dicit* and the vaguer *sunt qui*) to account for the existence of certain islands. This forms a major contrast with his treatment of Egypt and Hispania Baetica, as he can confidently put their regions and cities in their right place. Apart from calculations of distances between places, historical and mythical tales, and theoretical expositions about natural phenomena such as the flooding of the Nile – all of them are discussions in which Pliny often expresses his opinion – Pliny's treatment of Egypt and Hispania Baetica is devoid of references to other authorities. Apparently the topography of both was known to such an extent that any doubt about the certainty of it could be left behind.

Reading the *Natural History* as a mental map of the Roman world, imperial knowledge seems one of the markers that determine the boundaries of that world. Roman provinces are known because Romans set foot there and needed accurate administrative and topographical information to organize their government. The inextricable relation between 'imperial control' and 'imperial knowledge' seem to be most explicit when Pliny focusses on the legal bonds between Rome and certain provincial regions. The borders of Pliny's map are demarcated by those areas, such as the islands around Britain, about which hardly anything is known and even their existence cannot be confirmed. In his geopolitical reality, Egypt was a Roman border region as it was the southernmost Roman province. Its neighbor Ethiopia was never legally part of the Roman world, regardless of some Roman expeditions in that area.[151] There is a gap between being legally and mentally part of something. This is what Reinhold seems to be pointing out when he ends his discussion of the Roman legal isolation of Egypt and the existence of stereotypes with the following words, 'Egypt was in the Empire, but not of

[150] For a discussion of Thule in relation to the unknown source of the Nile, see Romm, 1992, 121-171, particularly 149-156. Britain is often referred to as Thule, see Evans 2003, 256-257: 'The elision of Britain and Thule was more than a convenient metrical variant for Roman poets – it also encapsulated the concept that Britain was fabulously remote, mystically unreal and beyond the bounds of knowledge.'

[151] For the Roman expeditions in Ethiopia, see n. 153 and pp. 138-139, n. 321.

it.'[152] On the mental map of the *Natural History*, however, Egypt plainly belonged to the Roman world. It was not even considered a border region as this place was reserved for regions such as Ethiopia.[153] Hence, within the framework of the *Natural History*, Egypt is clearly mapped within the Roman Empire.

2.2. *Egypt as the Other or the exotic?*

Ancient sources bear witness to a long literary tradition in which Egypt functions as the Other.[154] Herodotus described Egypt as a clear antipode to the Greek world. In his famous ethnography of the Egyptians, the women went to the market and were responsible for trade, while the men stayed home to weave. And, to give another example, it was claimed the Egyptians used to read from right to left.[155] Roman writers were not as radical as Herodotus, but they did envisage Egypt as having characteristics opposed to what Romans found acceptable.[156] Nilotic scenes found in Roman contexts with their representation of the Nile surrounded by indigenous species such as crocodiles, ibises and hippopotamuses and vegetation like the papyrus plant

[152] Reinhold 1980, 103.

[153] The alleged relationship between knowledge and military expansion is prominent in Pliny's description of the Nile from the Egyptian border to its unknown source in *NH* 6.183-188 when discussing Ethiopia. In this account he describes what became known after Nero's expedition to Ethiopia. This expedition aimed to map Ethiopia by following the Nile upstream. The report shows a remarkable shift in the kind of information it supplies when it reaches the regions beyond Meroë, i.e. the regions not penetrated by Roman expeditions. When discussing the regions 'known' to the Romans because of expeditions, Pliny is able to mention discoveries of animals and environmental changes (*NH* 6.184-186). As soon as the regions beyond Meroë are reached, Pliny presents an ethnography of the Ethiopians (*NH* 6.187-188). Compared to other ethnographies in the *Natural History*, the Ethiopians together with the Indians were attributed the most extreme abnormalities, see Murphy 2004, 88-90. Throughout the ancient literature the Ethiopians were an epitome for exotic people far away: Hom. Il. 23.205, for their virtue: Il. 4.423; Hdt. 3.97, for their longevity Hdt. 3.23; Strabo 1.2.24-28. See also: Lesky 1957: 27-38; Snowden 1983: 3-17, 46-59; Romm 1992: 45-60.

[154] See the studies of Froidefond 1971 and Vasunia 2001, p. 10, n. 37.

[155] These are just two examples of a long list of 'aberrant' behavior of the Egyptians, Hdt. 2.35-37. For a detailed discussion of Herodotus' book 2, see Froidefond 1971, 113-207.

[156] For Roman negative stereotypes of Egypt, see chapter III.

and lotus give the impression that Egypt was the exotic region par excellence for the Romans. These scenes seem to underline a link between Egypt's exotic flora and fauna and the Roman perception of Egypt as the Other as it is argued that the physical deformations of the depicted Egyptians became more pronounced in the Augustan age.[157] The *Natural History* hardly contains negative stereotypes, but it includes ethnographical descriptions of people that can be interpreted as reflecting on Rome's own behavior, and it also pays considerable attention to exotic or foreign flora and fauna.[158]

In the previous section it was argued that the Roman world was demarcated by regions that legally did not belong to the Roman world. Those legally belonging to Rome, Egypt included, are characterized by a high interconnectivity. Within the context of the *Natural History* these Roman provinces and Rome itself are part of one large network: the Roman Empire. An example of a passage that creates the sense of high interconnectivity can be found in book 15 when Pliny discusses the cherry tree (*NH* 15.102):

> *Cerasi ante victoriam Mithridaticam L. Luculli non fuere in Italia, ad urbis annum DCLXXX. is primum invexit e Ponto, annisque CXX trans oceanum in Britanniam usque pervenere; eadem [ut diximus] in Aegypto nulla cura potuere gigni.*
>
> Before the victory of Lucius Lucullus over Mithridates, in the 680st year of our city [74 BCE], there were no cherry-trees in Italy. Lucullus first imported them from Pontus, and in 120 years they have crossed the ocean and arrived in Britain, but all the same [as we said] no amount of care enabled them to grow in Egypt.

According to this passage the cherry tree was introduced in Italy after Rome conquered Pontus. The same species could be found in Britain 120 years later when Britain was conquered and became part of the Roman Empire under Emperor Claudius. The claim that it was impossible to cultivate the cherry tree in Egypt shows that Pliny linked its cultivation to the entirety of the Roman Empire: the province Egypt formed the most southeastern edge of the Empire and the province Britain, the northwestern border. Hence, this passage shows that Romans envisaged the Roman Empire as a global network in which every corner of the Empire was connected to each other and where every corner

[157] Versluys 2002.
[158] Cf. Murphy 2004, 77-128.

could exchange commodities. This example also clarifies that Rome was literally the center of this exchange: the cherry tree was transported from Pontus via Italy to Britain, but Rome was also the creator of this global exchange as its Empire, its army, its government and the roads it built ensured exchange.[159] Beside pointing at global interconnectivity, this passage also shows the effects of being interconnected: the same things could be found everywhere, i.e. interconnection leads here to a certain amount of homogeneity, making different parts of the Roman Empire less distinctive despite all the differences.[160]

The passage of the cherry tree is an example of how content in the *Natural World* underlines Pliny's major goal: to encompass the entire world, which is the Roman world.[161] As the structure and content of the *Natural History* are composed to mirror, but also create an entire world, the different regions or parts of this world are likely to be made subordinated to its totality. Hence the general loss of the exclusiveness of single regions seems to be a result of Pliny's urge to enclose the entire world. Against this background first Pliny's rendering of the Egyptians will be discussed (2.1) followed by an interpretation of Pliny's representation of the Egyptian flora and fauna (2.2).

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[159] Cf. Carey 2003, 35, with reference to *NH* 3.39: 'Pliny imagines Italy as not only the conqueror of the world, but its very creator, the country which gave birth to all others (*terra omnium terrarium alumna eadem et parens*).'

[160] In this section 'homogeneity' and its derivatives will be used in relation to the status and identity of the various regions in the *National History*. Homogeneity as used in this section should, therefore, not be interpreted as being opposite to the 'variety of nature', *varietas naturae*, which is a theme throughout the *NH*. In her interpretation of Pliny's encyclopedic work in which she approaches the *Natural History* and its subject 'nature' (*natura*) from the Roman Stoic point of view, Beagon notes: '[n]ature's supreme power is proven through her supreme variety.' See, Beagon 2005, 24 and *ad* 7.6-8. The *Natural History* surely forms a huge, highly diverse collection of everything nature has to offer. Especially the inclusion of many 'wonders', *mirabilia*, that happen all over the Roman world seem to underline the variety of the Roman world. Hence, Egyptian animals, for instance, are not the same as Ethiopian ones in the *Natural History*. Being different in landscape, flora, and fauna, however, does not immediately mean that the diverse regions also have a clearly different cultural status in the *NH*.

[161] For a detailed study on Pliny's strategies to achieve totality, see Carey 2003, 17-40.

Egyptians

The *Natural History* does not abound with ethnographies compared to other Greek and Roman writings, but those included concern groups living beyond the boundaries of the Roman Empire: the Hyperboreans (*NH* 4.89-91), the Essenes (*NH* 5.73), the Seres (*NH* 6.54 and 6.88), the Ethiopians (*NH* 6.187-188), the cannibals in the north (*NH* 7.9-11) and the Indians (*NH* 7.21-32).[162] As Egypt is a known region, the *Natural History* contains no ethnography of the Egyptians.[163] Pliny is not interested in ordinary customs and habits of human beings; he collects the extraordinary as this underlines the diversity *Natura* has to offer.[164] In line with this, in book 7 of the *Natural History*, which

[162] Murphy 2004, 87, with reference to Shaw 2000, 374, notes that '[a]mong the Greek and Roman books that contain ethnographic matter, the *Natural History* does not make an overwhelming first impression. Brent Shaw has compared the amount of ethnographical material in Pliny's book unfavorably to Strabo and argues from this that the Flavian Romans were less concerned about barbarians than earlier generations.'

[163] The association between pygmies (or dwarves; for the differences between the two, see Meyboom 1995, 150-151) and Egypt is particularly present in Nilotic scenes in which they frequently appear. On this matter: Versluys 2002, 275-277, who relates the presence of pygmies (or dwarves) in Nilotic scenes to the Roman perception of Egypt as the 'Other'; Meyboom 1995, 151, stressing the difference between pygmies and dwarves, argues that pygmies (and naked black dwarves) stood for indigenous Egyptians while dwarves with a whiter skin who often wear Greek clothes represented Hellenized and Greek Egyptians. *Ibid*., 150-154, for the association between pygmies and dwarves with Egypt in general. In the context of crocodiles, the *Natural History* describes a tribe of humans 'of small stature' (*mensura eorum parva*) living right on the Nile in what is now Denderah who are said to be hostile to the crocodiles 'mounting on the back of the crocodiles as if riding a horse' (*dorsoque equitantium modo inpositi*) scaring these animals away from their land (*NH* 8.92-94). As this is just one tribe of people located at a specific spot, they cannot be seen as being representatives of indigenous Egypt within the *Natural History*. Pliny *NH* 6.188, like Homer (*Il.* 3.2-6) and Herodotus (2.32), places pygmies at the source of the Nile in *Aethiopia*.

[164] In *NH* 7.6 the link between the 'power and the majesty' of nature and *mirabilia*, here the Ethiopians, is explicit: *quis enim Aethiopas antequam cerneret credidit? aut quid non miraculo est, cum primum in notitiam venit? quam multa fieri non posse priusquam sunt facta iudicantur? naturae vero rerum vis atque maiestas in omnibus momentis fide caret, si quis modo partes eius ac non totam complectatur animo*, 'for who believed in the Ethiopians before seeing them? Or what is not taken for miraculous when it comes first into our awareness? How many things are judged to be impossible before they have happened? Certainly, the power and dignity of Nature at every stage lacks credibility, if one's mind encompasses just parts of it and not the

deals with the human race, the Egyptians do not stand out except for one theme: human fertility, especially concerning multiple births. When discussing multiple births, Pliny skips 'ordinary' twins and jumps rather quickly over triplets (*NH* 7.33):

> *tergeminos nasci certum est Horatiorum Curiatiorumque exemplo. super inter ostenta ducitur praeterquam in Aegypto, ubi fetifer potu Nilus amnis. proxime supremis Divi Augusti Fausta quaedam e plebe Ostiae duos mares, totidem feminas enixa famem, quae consecuta est, portendit haud dubie. reperitur et in Peloponneso quinos quater enixa, maioremque partem ex omni eius vixisse partu. et in Aegypto septenos uno utero simul gigni auctor est Trogus.*
>
> It is certain by the examples of the Horatii and the Curiatii that triplets are born. Higher multiple births are considered as portentous, except in Egypt where drinking the water of the Nile enhances fertility. Close to the deified Augustus' funeral, a certain plebeian woman in Ostia called Fausta gave birth to two boys and two girls, which was no doubt a portent of the famine that followed. In the Peleponnese a woman gave birth to a quintuplet four times, and the majority of infants from each of the births survived. In Egypt, Trogus has reported that septuplets were born at the same time from one uterus.

The birth of quadruplets, quintuplets and even septuplets is so extraordinary that it must be an omen. In this passage Egypt is mentioned twice. Both instances refer to its high fertility rate, which is here associated with the frequency and size of multiple births. From other ancient sources we know that Egypt was one of the areas which was believed to have a high fertility rate. Strabo, for instance, mentions that according to Aristotle, Egypt was second in fertility after India.[165] Aulus Gellius interprets a text of Aristotle concerning the birth of quintuplets – the highest multiple birth according to Aristotle – as referring to Egypt, a connection that Aristotle himself did not make. Aulus Gellius' interpretation makes sense when another passage of Aristotle is taken into account where he notes that high levels of multiple births frequently lead to abnormalities of the newborn and that these

whole.' This passage reads as a justification for the inclusion of much incredible material. See also Beagon 2005, 24-25; 43-46.

[165] Strabo 15.1.22-23. On the attestation of high levels of 'twins' on censor lists in Egypt, see Huebner 2007, 37-38.

abnormalities especially occur in Egypt.[166] In the *Natural History* a few examples of deformed Egyptians can be found, but an explicit link between a high level of multiple births and abnormalities is not made in Pliny's work.[167] The quoted passage of Pliny also shows that though *mirabilia* were first and foremost associated with faraway people and regions at the ends of the earth, they could also happen closer to home, here in Ostia. Throughout the *Natural History*, we find references to foreign *mirabilia* matched to the wonders of Italy and Rome, giving them a prominent place. This characteristic of Pliny's work will be discussed further in section 3 on p. 66.

Apart from the high level of multiple births, no ethnographical attention is paid to the Egyptians. And even this one extraordinary Egyptian characteristic is not very striking compared to the multiple extreme abnormalities Pliny attributes to the Indians, for instance (*NH* 7.22):

> *multos ibi quina cubita constat longitudine excedere, non expuere, non capitis aut dentium aut oculorum ullo dolore adfici, raro aliarum corporis partium: tam moderato solis vapore durari. philosophos eorum, quos gymnosophistas vocant, ab exortu ad occasum perstare contuentes solem inmobilibus oculis, ferventibus harenis toto die alternis pedibus insistere.*
>
> It is known that many people in that place are taller than five cubits (2.2 m.), do not spit, do not suffer any pains in the head, teeth or eye, and rarely in any other bodypart: so hardened they are by the moderate heat of the sun. Their philosophers, whom they call gymnosophists stand persistingly gazing at the sun from dawn till dusk without blinking eyes, standing the whole day in the burning sand on alternating feet.

On the one hand, Pliny ascribes extreme abnormalities firmly to the unknown regions beyond the borders of the Roman Empire while on the other, he is rather silent about ethnographical differences between the people living inside the territories of the Roman Empire. This strategy gives the impression that

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[166] Arist. *GA* 770a, 35-36. Prolific birth or its opposite was a theme in the Greek literature in the second half of the fifth century BCE, see Thomas 2000, 243-149, on Herodotus and others.

[167] *NH* 7.35: a dead Egyptian hippocentaur brought to Rome by Claudius and preserved in honey; *NH* 11.272: an Egyptian 'monstrosity' with an extra pair of eyes in the back of his head; *NH* 11.253. Regarding the dead hippocentaur mentioned in *NH* 7.35 as an example of the many strange births in book 7 of the *Natural History*, the existence of this creature was not exclusive to Egypt as Pliny also mentions the birth of a dead hippocentaur in Thessaly in the same context.

all people living in the diverse regions within the Roman Empire, including the Egyptians, are similar and interchangeable. In the *Natural History* the Egyptians are not the Other, but appear to be the Self.

Egyptian flora and fauna

Land animals are discussed in book 8 which distinguishes between foreign, or exotic, animals and indigenous animals. In line with Pliny's overall structure, book 8 starts with a description of the largest land animal, the elephant (*NH* 8.1-35), and ends with the smallest, the mouse (*NH* 8.220-224). The chapters devoted to exotic animals are loosely categorized by region, with one reserved for Egypt. First the animals of the Northern part of the world, Scythia, Germany, the island of Scandinavia get attention followed by those of Africa, India, Ethiopia, Egypt and ending with those of the Black Sea and Alpine. The following Egyptian animals are described: snakes (*NH* 8.85-87), the ichneumon (*NH* 8.88), the crocodile (*NH* 8.89-90), the *scincus* (African lizard, *NH* 8.92), the hippopotamus (*NH* 8.95-96) and the ibis (*NH* 8.97). Foreign trees are discussed in books 12 and 13, including those of Egypt, Ethiopia, Cyrenaica, Asia and Greece, followed by a treatment of trees and bushes from the Mediterranean, Red Sea, Indian Ocean, Cave dwellers Sea. In book 13 the following Egyptian trees are discussed: the *ficus Aegyptia* (Egyptian fig, *NH* 13.56-57), *arbor Persea* (*NH* 13.60-61), *cuci* (doum palm), *NH* 13.62), *spina Aegyptia* (thorn-wood, *NH* 13.63), the *prunus Aegyptia* (plum-tree, *NH* 13.64), including some notes on Egyptian gum (*NH* 13.66-67) and with a relatively long description of the papyrus plant and its uses (*NH* 13.68-89). Compared with other foreign regions Egypt is not most exclusive in harboring exotic flora and fauna.

Pliny shows that his Roman reader probably fancied exotic species more than the domestic ones as can be derived from the following remark (*NH* 10.118): *Minor nobilitas, quia non ex longinquo venit, sed expressior loquacitas certo generi picarum est*, 'A certain kind of magpie is less renowned, because it does not come from afar, but its garrulity is more distinct.'[168] It is not the features of an animal that are important, but the fact that it came from afar. Another passage seems to be pointing in the same direction (*NH* 8.142): 'Many of the domestic animals are also worth studying' (*ex his quoque animalibus quae nobiscum degunt multa sunt cognitu digna*).

[168] Cf. Beagon 1992, 128.

This remark reads like a justification for including information that perhaps nobody is waiting for.

In his discussion of foreign animals, Pliny constantly relates them to Rome. He never seems to fail to notice when they were put on display for the first time in Rome, such as the first appearance of the elephant (*NH* 8.16):[169]

> *Elephantos Italia primum vidit Pyrri regis bello et boves Lucas appellavit in Lucanis visos anno urbis CCCCLXXIV, Roma autem in triumpho V annis ad superiorem numerum additis.*
>
> Italy saw elephants for the first time in the war with King Pyrrhus, and called them Lucan oxen because they were seen in Lucania, in the 474th year since the city's foundation (280 BC), but Rome first saw them at a date five years later, in a triumph.

These kind of references to Rome can also be found in Pliny's treatment of Egyptian animals such as the crocodile and the hippopotamus, see pp. 67-69. The interconnectivity between Rome and the rest of the (Roman) world is also stressed in his description of foreign trees. An example can be found at the beginning of Pliny's account of foreign trees and this involves a naturalized tree, the plane. This tree travelled from the areas of the Ionian Sea, to Sicily, Italy, and Belgium according to Pliny (*NH* 12.6):

> *Sed quis non iure miretur arborem umbrae gratia tantum ex alieno petitam orbe?platanus haec est, in mare Ionium Diomedis insula tenus eiusdem tumuli gratia primum invecta, inde in Siciliam transgressa atque inter primas donata Italiae et iam ad Morinos usque pervecta ac tributarium etiam detinens solum, ut gentes vectigal et pro umbra pendant.*
>
> But who would not justly look with awe at a tree required from another world merely for the sake of shade? This tree is the plane, first imported into the Ionian Sea as far as the island of Diomede to be placed on his tomb, and which from there crossed over to Sicily and was among the first trees bestowed on Italy, and which now has travelled as far as Belgium and yet occupies soil that pays tribute to Rome, so that the people pay revenue even for shade.

[169] Other examples are the lion, *NH* 8.53; leopard, *NH* 8.64; tiger, *NH* 8.65; giraffe, *NH* 8.69; lynx, *NH* 8.70, etc. Occasionally Pliny also mentions that an animal has never been seen in Rome: *alces*, probably the reindeer or the moose, *NH* 8.39.

This passage shows some overlap with the one figuring the cherry tree quoted above on p. 54, in its connection between the Roman Empire (the provinces who have to pay tribute) and the existence of the same kind of trees all over the globe. Pliny starts discussing proper foreign trees (*externas*) after informing the reader that he will discuss the naturalized foreign trees in his book on fruit-bearing trees. The *Natural History*'s tendency to highlight the exotic already been explained by Valerie Naas in her studies about the *Natural History* as a vehicle to highlight the marvel of Rome and its Empire itself.[170]

Egypt harbors flora and fauna that are foreign to Rome and Italy, it forms one of the exotic places in the world encompassed by the *Natural History*. But the descriptions of Egyptian vegetation and animals do not turn Egypt in the exotic Other, because including the 'exotic' generally serves Pliny's aim to encompass the Roman world in its entirety: it is inseparably related to the *Natural History*'s creation of a Roman world. Hence while being exotic, Egypt is not Rome's antipode, but firmly part of the Roman world.

2.3. *Egypt as particularly ancient?*

In two sources probably consulted by Pliny the Elder for his representation of Egypt, Herodotus and Diodorus Siculus, a particular concept of Egypt stands out: it is perceived as one of the oldest regions in the world. In Herodotus, Egypt is the second oldest nation after Phrygia, and in Diodorus Siculus it is the most ancient region in the world.[171] In both works Egypt is also particularly influential on the development of other territories which came into existence later. All kinds of Egyptian inventions, such as agriculture, spread from Egypt to surrounding areas, most prominently to the Greeks. It is illustrative of the wisdom attributed to Egypt that Greeks like Plato and Pythagoras were believed to have studied in Egypt under the supervision of Egyptian priests. In the Roman literature from Cicero to Tacitus, references to the antiquity of Egypt can be found, as will become clear in chapter IV. In this section it will be questioned whether Egypt is perceived as particularly ancient in the *Natural History*. My interpretation is based on the information considering Pliny's effort to encompass the Roman world in its entirety, which was outlined in the previous section 2.2.

[170] Cf. p. 42.
[171] See pp. 191-193.

Egyptian discoveries

In the works of Herodotus and Diodorus Siculus, Egypt is rendered as the origin of many inventions that were taken over by surrounding areas such as Greece.[172] An inquiry as to whether the *Natural History* presents the same concept of Egypt as the first inventor can best start with the list of human discoveries that Pliny presents at the end of book 7.[173]

Scrolling through this list of all kinds of discoveries, Egypt appears to be related to seven inventions, including writing (*NH* 7.192-193); cities (*NH* 7.194); woven fabrics (*NH* 7.195); medicine (*NH* 7.196); monarchy (*NH* 7.199); astrology (*NH* 7.203); and painting (*NH* 7.203).[174] These seven inventions seem to stand in close relationship to the theme of Egypt's great antiquity. In particular, the convention that Egypt was much older than the relatively young Greece seems to be hinted at in, for instance, *NH* 7.193, where according to Anticleides Egypt developed writing long before the first kings of Greece came into being:

> *Anticlides in Aegypto invenisse quendam nomine Menon tradit, X'V' annorum ante Phoronea, antiquissimum Graeciae regem, idque monumentis adprobare conatur.*
>
> Anticleides relates that in Egypt a certain man called Menon had invented writing, 15,000 years previous to Phroneus, the most ancient king of Greece, and he tried to prove this with documents.

After mentioning Anticleides' opinion, Pliny also refers to Epigenes, who claimed that the Babylonians had already inscribed their astronomical records on baked bricks for 730,000 years, although others came to a number of 490,000 years. Like the Egyptians, the Babylonians, who are sometimes confused with the Assyrians, were generally thought of as very ancient.[175] Another case in which the antiquity of the Egyptians is presented as being in some kind of rivalry with that of Greece can be found in Pliny's discussion

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[172] On the theme of first inventor, see e.g. Kleingünther 1933; Thraede 1962. Cf. Hartog 2001, 41-77 and p. 191.

[173] An excellent commentary on book 7 is Beagon 2005.

[174] When Danaus is also taken into account, two discoveries need to be added: wells, *NH* 7.195, and navigation, *NH* 7.206.

[175] Beagon 2005; *ad loc*. Note that *NH* 7.193, like Roman sources in general, indicates that especially the fact that hieroglyphs on still consultable inscriptions about Egypt's deep past proved Egypt's antiquity.

of the foundation of the first city. Three different opinions of who invented the first town are given – Cecrops, Phoroneus or the Egyptians - of which the third option is said to be much earlier (*NH* 7.194)[176]:

> *oppidum primum Cecrops a se appellavit Cecropiam quae nunc est arx Athenis; aliqui Argos a Phoroneo rege ante conditum volunt, quidam et Sicyonem, Aegyptii vero multo ante apud ipsos Diospolin.*
>
> Cecrops gave his name to the first town, Cecropia, which is now the Acropolis of Athens. Some authorities place the foundation of Argos by King Phoroneus earlier and certain others that of Sicyon also; while the Egyptians date their own town of Diospolis (= Thebes, ML) much earlier.

Nevertheless unlike the works of Diodorus Siculus and Herodotus, Egypt is not given a prominent place in world history in the *Natural History*. This is due to Pliny's striving to be as comprehensive as possible. He includes every invention imaginable and this results in a long list. When we look at the different regions where these inventions originated, most of them appear to be attributed to individual Greeks. These Greek inventions are interspersed with the inventions of other people such as Egyptians, Scythians and Phrygians. An impression can be gained from the following example, *NH* 7.197:

> *aes conflare et temperare Aristoteles Lydum Scythen monstrasse, Theophrastus Delam Phrygem putant, aerariam fabricam alii Chalybas, alii Cyclopas, ferrum Hesiodus in Creta eos qui vocati sunt Dactyli Idaei. argentum invenit Erichthonius Atheniensis, ut alii, Aeacus; auri metalla et flaturam Cadmus Phoenix ad Pangaeum montem, ut alii, Thoas aut Aeacus in Panchaia..*
>
> Aristotle thinks that Lydus the Scythian gave instructions to melt and work copper, but Theophrastus believes that it was the Phrygian Delas; the manufacture of bronze some attribute to the Chalybes and others to the Cyclopes; the forging of iron Hesiod ascribes to the people called the Dactyli of Mt. Ida in Crete. Erichthonius of Athens discovered silver, or according to others Aeacus, goldmines and smelting gold were discovered by Cadmus the Phoenician at Mt. Pangaeus, or according to others by Thoas or Aeacus in Panchaia ..

[176] In his discussion about the geography and topography of Egypt, Pliny had already stressed the abundance of Egyptian cities (*NH* 5.60) among which Thebes was generally regarded as being an ancient city.

Within this long list, Egypt's seven discoveries do not stand out. Egypt is just one first inventor out of many.

In the previous section on Egyptian flora and fauna, it has been showed that while discussing foreign species, Pliny always kept his eye on Rome. The same tendency can be found in his enumeration of human inventions. Pliny concludes this list by relating three of them specifically to Rome. These three inventions are singled out by Pliny in his discussion of the three earliest agreements between all people and concern the introduction of the use of the Ionian alphabet (*NH* 7.210), the habit of shaving one's beard (*NH* 7.211), and a similar way of time-keeping (*NH* 7.212-215). For instance, regarding shaving Pliny notes (*NH* 7.211):

> *Sequens gentium consensus in tonsoribus fuit, sed Romanis tardior. in Italiam ex Sicilia venere post Romam conditam anno CCCCLIV adducente P. Titinio Mena, ut auctor est Varro; antea intonsi fuere. Primus omnium radi cotidie instituit Africanus sequens. Divos Augustus cultris semper usus est.*
>
> The next agreement of peoples [second after the introduction of the Ionian alphabet] was in the matter of barbers, but it was agreed upon later by the Romans. They came to Italy from Sicily in 300 BCE, being brought there, according to Varro, by Publius Titinius Mena. Before that the Romans had been unshaved. The first to introduce a daily-shave was Africanus the second. The deified Augustus always used the razor.

Considering Pliny's urge to encompass the Roman world in its totality, ending a long list of human discoveries with three inventions that were adopted by *all* people is not insignificant. Pliny specifically relates these inventions to Rome by mentioning that these agreements were introduced in Rome at a later date than in other regions. This seems to suggest that neither the date of the invention nor the original inventor itself was important; rather how it was adopted and made significant in later (Roman) times is.[177]

[177] A similar tendency to underline the development and contemporary use by the Romans of an item invented earlier can be seen in Pliny's account of the papyrus plant in *NH* 13.68-89. Pliny justifies the relatively great attention he pays to the papyrus plant by emphasizing the importance of this plant for civilization (*humanitas*) and the keeping of records (*memoria*). It becomes clear that Pliny means *Roman* civilization. The great majority of information Pliny supplies about papyrus – its use, variety and manufacture – concerns Roman society. The history and the discovery of papyrus are also bound up with Roman intervention. Although the great Roman authority Marcus Varro related the discovery of papyrus to the foundation of Alexandria by Alexander

Egyptian past

Although the past in the *Natural History* seems to play a minor role in general and Egypt does not hold a leading position in world history, Pliny certainly does not hide the fact that Egypt had a long and famous history. The following passage taken from book 5 on Egyptian cities is telling (*NH* 5.60):

> *Aegyptus super ceteram antiquitatis gloriam X'X' urbium sibi Amase regnante [habitata] praefert, nunc quoque multis etiamsi ignobilibus frequens.*
>
> In addition to the other glories of the past, Egypt can declare it had 20,000 cities in the reign of King Amasis, and even now it is heavily packed with many, although of no importance.

According to Pliny, Egypt was proud of several other achievements such as the mention in book 36 of a couple of Egyptian 'wonders' like pyramids and obelisks. In his accounts Egypt's deep antiquity is particularly highlighted. However, like Pliny's treatment of human discoveries discussed in the previous section, the relation with the present is stressed. Referring to the altered contemporary situation (*nunc*), Pliny clearly distinguishes the past from the present: Egypt was once glorious, but now not (so) anymore in the present.

Another example in which Egypt is related to the present Roman situation concerns the Nile. After discussing the various theories of the flooding of the Nile, Pliny notes about the rising of the Nile (*NH* 5.58):

> *maximum incrementum ad hoc aevi fuit cubitorum XVIII Claudio principe, minimum V Pharsalico bello, veluti necem Magni prodigio quodam flumine aversante.*
>
> The highest rise up to date reached the level of 18 cubits [27 feet] in the principate of Claudius, and the lowest to a level of 5 cubits [7.5 feet] in the year

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the Great (*NH* 13.69), Pliny notes important examples that disagree with Varro's opinion (*ingentia exampla contra M. Varronis sententiam*, *NH* 13.84). The first deviation is the story that books written in Greek and Latin were discovered in the coffin of the Roman King Numa (*NH* 13.48), proving that the discovery of papyrus should be dated earlier than Alexander the Great. In the passage that follows, Pliny discusses the number and the titles of the books found in Numa's coffin (*NH* 13.85-88). Although Rome is not identified as the place where papyrus was invented, in this discussion it certainly is the place where the oldest paper books were discovered.

> of the War of Pharsalus, as if the river were showing its aversion to the murder of Pompey by some kind of portent.

According to this passage the Nile – whose rising had been measured accurately in Egypt for thousands of years, because the grain harvest depended on it – reached its highest and lowest point relatively recently, when the histories of Rome and Egypt were intertwined, as if the Nile only existed for Roman causes. Particularly the personification of the Nile as being concerned about the fate of Rome presents a great contrast with the Nile's function in other Roman sources, especially Augustan poetry, where the Nile seems to be violent towards Rome.[178] This suggests that Egypt's antiquity only mattered when the Roman present was concerned. Meaning that in the *Natural History* the traditional concept of Egypt's deep antiquity is not that prominent.

3. THE FUNCTION OF EGYPT IN THE *NATURAL HISTORY*

In the previous section it was argued that Pliny presented Egypt as an integral part of the contemporary Roman world. Some features of Egypt may have differed from Rome, but it was certainly not the Other. And Egypt may have had an ancient history, it was the present situation that mattered. Beside investigating *how* Pliny conceptualized Egypt, in this chapter it is also explored *why* Egypt was presented that way. To do so, we have to start with the overall message of the *Natural History*. It can be read as a celebration of the Roman world in its entirety, but it has one obvious centre which ranks higher than the rest: Italy and, most prominently, Rome.[179] Throughout the *Natural History* Rome is the point of reference, everything is compared, matched or otherwise related to Rome in such a way that 'Rome becomes the world', i.e. Pliny creates a particular Roman identity.[180] This part investigates whether the conceptualization of Egypt has a function in this process of identity creation and discloses what its contribution to Roman identity was exactly.

First, the physical contribution of Egypt to Rome will be discussed (3.1). Then the physical presence of Egyptian objects in Rome will be compared

[178] See Manolaraki 2013, 129; Cf. Carey 2003, 36.
[179] For an eulogy on Italy and Rome, see *NH* 3.39-40.
[180] See my discussion on Naas 2002 and 2011, on p. 43.

with that of Greek objects to put Egypt's status as cultural testator in the *Natural History* into perspective (3.2). Third, it will be investigated how Egypt could contribute to Roman identity by focusing on examples of Roman emulation (3.3). This part will end by discussing a special case of Roman emulation in which emulation forms the tool to effectuate the incorporation of an Egyptian tradition into Roman society (3.4).

3.1. *Everything flows to Rome: a hippopotamus, five crocodiles, and three obelisks*[181]

In his discussion of Egyptian animals, Pliny notes the following in his discussion of the hippopotamus (*NH* 8.96):

> *Primus eum et quinque crocodilos Romae aedilitatis suae ludis M. Scaurus temporario euripo ostendit.*
>
> Marcus Scaurus exhibited it [a hippopotamus] in a temporary channel at Rome first time, together with five crocodiles, at the games which Scaurus gave when aedile.

Marcus Scaurus funded the games in which these Egyptian animals figured in 58 BCE. In Rome they were literally placed in a new context, a temporary channel (*temporario euripo*). Images of these animals, such as Nilotic scenes, were already known in Italy. The Nilotic scene found in Pompeii in the House of the Faun, dated to 80-70 BCE, is probably the most famous, but in 58 BCE Romans saw these foreign animals for the first time in real life in Rome. They did so in the context of Roman games where these animals became part of public entertainment, clearly with political and social intentions.

Given Pliny's standard comment of when a foreign animal was first seen in Rome, Trevor Murphy argued that the actual display in Rome of foreign animals – most notoriously in triumphs – coming from what was now Roman territory can be matched to the description of these animals in the *Natural*

[181] Parts of my discussion of Pliny's account of the obelisk were published earlier in Leemreize 2014a. This section title is borrowed and adapted from a statement of Murphy 2003, 52, who in his discussion of Pliny's account of the transportation of the obelisk now known as the Montecitorio Obelisk from Egypt to Rome sees this transportation as the prime example of 'how things flow to Rome, marking it the center of the world's power'. See also Leemreize 2014b.

History. In both cases Murphy suggests that the display of these animals in Rome is not the result of a simple transportation of 'objects'. Rather, Pliny's work shows how foreign objects were used to become an integral part of Roman culture. As these animals mostly came from subdued regions and were considered booty, both triumph and reference in the *Natural History* revealed to the public 'the world that is now Roman'. Notwithstanding the fact that Egypt was not Roman territory in 58 BCE when Scaurus displayed the hippopotamus and the five crocodiles – it was after all a Roman province when Pliny composed his *Natural History* – these animals became Roman because they came from territory that Rome considered to be theirs, in fact the whole world.[182]

Considering the 'Roman' hippopotamus and five crocodiles, the fact that they came specifically from Egypt was probably less important to the Roman audience than the fact that they came from afar and that they had never seen them in real life before. At least Pliny's text does not stress the importance of 'Egypt' in this example. This kind of information can be gained from the passage in which Pliny describes the transportation of three obelisks to Rome. In Pliny's much-discussed account (*NH* 36.64-74), the Egyptian obelisk

[182] For the Roman claim that the whole world was theirs, see p. 45-46. The specific passage in the *Natural History* in which a hippopotamus and crocodiles are said to have been displayed in Rome also lays bare another interpretative layer. The person responsible for the games in which the hippopotamus and five crocodiles figured, Marcus Scaurus, is firmly associated in the *NH* with extravagance and decadence: *docebimusque etiam insaniam eorum victam privatis opibus M. Scauri, cuius nescio an aedilitas maxime prostraverit mores*, 'I shall show that their [Caligula's and Nero's] insanity was surpassed by the private exploits of Marcus Scaurus, whose aedileship may probably have done more than anything to overthrow the morals', *NH* 36.113, see also Carey 2003, 96-97. Scholars have already argued that the *Natural History* can be read as a moralistic work that shows the negative consequences of being a successful conqueror, i.e. the riches of the world become the riches of Rome. On 'the problem of luxury' Carey 2003, 101, argues: 'The image of Rome as the world, luxury theaters and all, may ultimately reflect Nature's human microcosm ('there was no evil anywhere that was not present in man'); but it also embodies the paradox which has dominated Pliny's inventory – that trying to catalogue the glorious totality of the Roman Empire, you inevitably include luxury, the substance directly responsible for Rome's decline.' Pliny complains on several occasions about the display of wealth and moral decay, and Marcus Scaurus seems to embody Rome's steps on the pathway to decadence. Interpreted in this vein, the hippopotamus and the five crocodiles are in their specific context of the *Natural History* part of a Roman discussion about *luxuria*.

becomes incorporated in Roman culture without dismissal of its original Egyptian function.

In Pliny's account, obelisks are first and foremost dedications to the sun.[183] He begins by describing obelisks as monoliths made of Syene granite, constructed by pharaohs as a form of competition *and* as dedications to the sun (*obeliscos … solis numini sacratos*, *HN* 36.64). He concludes his account by noting that the third obelisk now in Rome was originally a dedication to the sun by Pharaoh Nencoreus, who was ordered to do so by an oracle (*HN* 36.74). Pliny relates that during his time, three obelisks were on display in Rome: one in the Circus Maximus, the second in the Campus Martius (both transported by Augustus), and the third in the Vatican Circus (transported by Caligula). He does not devote many words to the function of the first and third obelisks in Rome, but he does elaborate on the second one. Although the original function of obelisks as dedications to the sun remains explicitly intact in the Roman inscription that was added to this monument,[184] Pliny only refers implicitly to this aspect when he describes the new 'Roman' function of the obelisk: 'to the one in the Campus, the deified Augustus added a remarkable function in order to measure the sun's shadows and thereby the length of days and nights' (*ei qui est in campo divus Augustus addidit mirabilem usum ad deprendendas solis umbras dierumque ac noctium ita magnitudines*, *HN* 36.72). Thus, the new Augustan function as a meridian can only be seen as a Roman adaptation of the original function.[185] In the lines (*HN* 36.72-74) following the above quoted passage Pliny explains the layout and workings of the meridian, and especially discusses the various reasons for the failure of this mechanism to correspond with the calendar over the last thirty years. In

[183] For a discussion on this account see Reitz 2012, 51-53; Murphy 2004, 51-52; Carey 2003, 86-89; Naas 2002, 353-355. For an archaeological study focused on Egyptian obelisks in their new Roman context, see Schneider 2004.

[184] *CIL* VI.702: 'Imperator Caesar Augustus son of the deified Caesar, pontifex maximus, imperator for the twelfth time, consul for the eleventh time, holding tribunician power for the fourteenth time, when Egypt had been reduced to the power of the Roman people, *gave this gift to the sun*' (*imp. Caesar divi fil. / Augustus / pontifex maximus / imp. XII cos. XI trib. pot. XIV / Aegypto in potestatem / populi romani redacta / soli donum dedit*).

[185] An interesting paper on Augustus' so-called *Horologium* in its larger context is Heslin 2007, according to whom the obelisk is a meridian instead of a sundial. On this debate see Haselberger 2011, with responses and additional remarks by Heslin, Schütz, Hannah and Alföldi. A general study on obelisks in Rome is Iversen 1968.

Pliny's account. The focus is on the new Roman function of the obelisk, but its original Egyptian function as dedication to the sun is never absent.[186] Hence, this account presents an example of incorporation of (ancient) Egyptian ideas for Roman purposes.

3.2. *Everything flows to Rome: Egyptian versus Greek art*

The *Natural History* pays attention to all kinds of foreign art found in Rome, but first and foremost to originally Greek artifacts.[187] Only rare references can be found to pieces of art associated with other territories. In only four instances – apart from the obelisks – does Pliny refer to objects that seem to have been transported from Egypt to Rome. Two of them are about Hellenizing works of art such as the father Janus made by the 4th century BCE Greek sculptor Scopas or his contemporary, Praxiteles. Noting that the sculptors of many pieces of art are now unknown to Romans, Pliny remarks (*HN* 36.28):

> *item Ianus pater, in suo temple dicatus ab Augusto ex Aegypto advectus, utrius manu sit, iam quidem et auro occultatus.*
>
> Similarly, the statue of father Janus, dedicated to his temple by Augustus after being transported from Egypt, is carved by one of them [Scopas or Praxiteles], and now because of a golden covering it is even more obscure.

Pliny also mentions the statue of a personification of the Nile with 16 children that Emperor Vespasian placed in the Temple of Peace. This statue was made of the Ethiopian stone 'basanite' which was discovered by the Egyptians according to Pliny. He does not state whether this probably Hellenizing statue was carved in Egypt or Rome, but the subject and its material appear to have a clear link to Egypt as Pliny immediately presents another statue in Egypt made of this material: the colossal seated Memnon in Thebes (*NH* 36.58):[188]

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[186] See Naas 2002, 353-355, for Pliny's appreciation of technical and practical 'wonders' in relation to his account on obelisks.

[187] Throughout the books on mineralogy (books 33 to 36) chapters on art can be found: book 33 contains chapters on silver casting; book 34 on bronze statuary; book 35 on painting and modeling and book 36 on marble and other stone sculpture. For a collection of these texts specifically, Jex-Blake and Sellers 1896.

[188] The statue of Memnon is one of the two seated colossi of Amenhotep III (fourteenth century BCE) in the necropolis of Thebes. Because the statue produced a sound at dawn, tourists to Egypt identified it with Memnon who was the son of Eos, the Dawn.

> *invenit eadem Aegyptus in Aethiopia quem vocant basaniten, ferrei coloris atque duritiae, unde et nomen ei dedit. numquam hic maior repertus est quam in templo Pacis ab imperatore Vespasiano Augusto dicatus argumento Nili, sedecim liberis circa ludentibus, per quos totidem cubita summi incrementi augentis se amnis eius intelleguntur. non absimilis illi narratur in Thebis delubro Serapis, ut putant, Memnonis statuae dicatus, quem cotidiano solis ortu contactum radiis crepare tradunt.*
>
> Egypt has also discovered a stone in Ethiopia that is known as 'basanite', its color and hardness resembles iron, this is why it is given its name. Never a larger piece was found than the one dedicated in the Temple of Peace by Emperor Vespasian Augustus that represented the Nile, surrounded by sixteen playing children who represent the equal number of cubits of the most favorable level the river should rise. Not unlike, they say, a block in the sanctuary of Serapis at Thebes, chosen for the statue of, as they believe, Memnon, about which they state that it cracks every day when it is touched at dawn by the first rays of the sun.

A third reference to pieces of art brought from Egypt to Rome can be found in Pliny's discussion of the stone red porphyry which is quarried in Egypt. According to Pliny, Vitrasius Pollo, the agent of Emperor Claudius, brought statues carved out of this material from Egypt to Rome. The text does not give us any clue as to their style, Egyptian or Hellenizing. But the Romans did not like statues of red porphyry as Pliny notes that 'this innovation was not quite approved' (*non admodum probata novitate*, *NH* 36.57). In confirmation, the archaeological record of Egyptian material in ancient Rome seems to indicate that the import of statues of this kind of material was rare.[189] The fourth and last reference to an originally Egyptian statue concerns the repatriation of, according to Pliny, an Osidian statue of the Greek mythological warrior Menelaus (*NH* 36.197):[190]

> *remisit et Tiberius Caesar Heliopolitarum caerimoniis repertam in hereditate Sei eius, qui praefuerat Aegypto, obsianam imaginem Menelai.*

This identification, however, might have originated even before the statue started to 'speak' at dawn, see Théodoridès 1989. Studies on the colossus of Memnon include Bowersock 1984 and Foertmeyer 1989, 23-25.

[189] See, for instance, the latest study on Imperial Roman Egyptian and Egyptianizing material, Müskens 2016, which catalogue contains no object of red porphyry.

[190] In Greek mythology Menelaus was linked to Egypt, see Hom. *Od*. 4 and Eur. *Hel*.

> And Emperor Tiberius returned to the ceremonies of the people of Heliopolis an obsidian statue of Menelaus that he found in the legacy of one Seius who had been prefect of Egypt.

In the context of the cults of the sun-god at Heliopolis, it is highly likely that the statue was meant to represent a pharaoh in Egyptian style and not Menelaus, who was linked to Egypt in Greek mythology. Pliny, however, identified the statue with a mythological male figure associated with Egypt who was familiar to him (*Interpretatio Graeca / Romana*).

Compared to Pliny's overview of the presence of Greek art in the Rome, these four instances of art transported from Egypt to Rome are rather disappointing. In reality, more Egyptian works were probably to be found in ancient Rome as modern archaeological studies seem to indicate.[191] However, as Pliny aims to recall the splendor of Rome by pointing out the flow of all important pieces of art to Rome in the *Natural History*, we should be careful not to exaggerate the role of Egyptian art styles as being Rome's cultural foundation.

3.3. *Emulating Egypt*

In his account of the obelisks, Pliny stresses the problems of transporting these gigantic monoliths. He notes how the Egyptians dug channels to transport them. The Romans after shipping the obelisks across the sea, transported them from the coastline to Rome through the Tiber. This transportation motivated Pliny to comment about the Tiber (*HN* 36.70):

> *quo experimento patuit non minus aquarum huic amni esse quam Nilo.*
>
> The experiment shows that the river has just as deep a channel as the Nile.

The Nile in the *Natural History* is *the* river of rivers as it is in general in antiquity. Other large rivers such as the Euphrates, Tigris, Ganges and the

[191] Catalogues of Egyptian and Egyptianizing objects in Rome include: Arslan 1997; Roullet 1972; Malaise 1972a and b; for an interpretation of these catalogues see Versluys 2002. For 'manifestations of Egypt in Augustan Rome', see Van Aerde 2015.

Niger are described by comparison to the Nile.[192] By comparing the Tiber with the Nile, Pliny illustrates the great dimensions of the Tiber, producing a status-enhancing effect. It is as if Pliny is saying: 'You would not believe it, but the Tiber is actually as great as the Nile'. This is not the only occasion where representations of Egypt are made to contribute positively to the status of Rome.

Valérie Naas has shown that in the *Natural History*, the *mirabilia*, 'wonders' of the world, served Rome's prestige. In particular, book 36 offers a good example of this mechanism. Pliny enumerates foreign *mirabilia*, including obelisks, pyramids, the sphinx, the lighthouse of Pharos, the Egyptian, Cretan, Lemnian and Italian labyrinths, the 'hanging' (*pensilis*) town of Thebes, the temple of Diana at Ephesus, and the *mirabilia* of Cyzicus including the 'run-away' (*fugitivus*) stone and the Thracian Gate famous for its echo. Next, Pliny immediately pays attention to the 'wonders' (*miracula*) of Rome. He justifies his change of subject as follows (*NH* 36.101):

> *verum et ad urbis nostrae miracula transire conveniat DCCCque annorum dociles scrutari vires et sic quoque terrarum orbem victum ostendere.*
>
> But is it now suitable to move on to the wonders of our city, to investigate the resources apt to 800 years of experience, and to show that here [in wonders] too the world is surpassed.

According to Pliny, Rome's buildings surpass those of the rest of the world. Roman standards and morality are the leading principle in valuing Rome's achievement. The usefulness of buildings was an important criterion for ranking achievements, more so than other criteria such as beauty. For instance, Pliny holds Roman sewers to be 'the greatest achievement of all' (*opus omnium … maximum*) and the importance of 'functionality' of buildings

[192] Niger, probably not the river now known by that name, *NH* 5.55; Ganges, *NH* 6.65; Tigris and Euphrates, *NH* 18.170, 18.182. A comparable source is Vitr. 6.8, where the constructions of temples alongside the riverbank of Nile is used as an example for Roman city planning. Cf. Manolaraki 2013, 36. On several occasions in the *Natural History* the extreme fertility of Egypt's soil caused by the flooding of the Nile leading to an abundance of crops, is mentioned. For the fertility of Egypt, see *HN* 5.55; 17.31; 18.62; 18.92; 21.86.

probably caused him to describe pyramids as 'superfluous and foolish display' (*otiosa ac stulta ostentatio*).[193]

In the *Natural History* all foreign *mirabilia*, whether it be buildings, multiple births, strange creatures, or extreme decadence, seem to have at least some kind of Roman equivalent or are surpassed by a Roman version. A good example is the famous anecdote of Cleopatra swallowing an expensive pearl in book 9 of the *Natural History*. While enjoying a lavish banquet, Cleopatra bet with Antony that she could spend 10,000,000 sesterces on a single banquet. Cleopatra won this wager by dissolving one of the most expensive pearls in the world in vinegar and swallowing it (*NH* 9.119-121). Pliny rounds this anecdote off by remarking that (*NH* 9.122):

> *non ferent hanc palmam spoliabunturque etiam luxuriae gloria. prior id fecerat Romae in unionibus magnae taxationis.*
>
> They [Cleopatra and Antony] will not carry off this trophy and will be robbed even of this false pride of luxury. A person of earlier time had done this before at Rome regarding pearls of great value.

The predecessor was the son of a tragic actor, Clodius, who wanted to know the exact taste of pearls. When he found out that he liked them, he shared his pleasure with guests, whom he all offered their pearl of choice to swallow. In the *Natural History* Cleopatra as well as Antony are prime examples of persons with a lust for luxury, but Antony was worse (*NH* 33.50):

> *Messalla orator prodidit Antonium triumvirum aureis usum vasis in omnibus obscenis desideriis, pudendo crimine etiam Cleopatrae. summa apud exteros licentiae fuerat Philippum regem poculo aureo pulvinis subdito dormire solitum, Hagnonem Teium, Alexandri Magni praefectum, aureis clavis suffigere crepidas: Antonius solus contumelia naturae vilitatem auro fecit.*
>
> The orator Messalla has transmitted that the triumvir Antony used golden vessels amid all indecent desires, a crime that even Cleopatra would have been ashamed of. Till then the sum of wantonness was in the hands of foreigners, King Philip used to sleep with a golden cup under his pillow, Alexander the Great's prefect Hagnon of Teos used to sole his sandals with golden nails: Antony alone, however, made gold cheap by this indignity to nature.

[193] See also Beagon 2005, 7-8, for the contrast between Pliny's rejection of private buildings and appraisal of public buildings: 'buildings with a public and/or utilitarian function are applauded'.

Clearly distinguishing between 'foreign' (*exteros*) and Roman, here in the person of triumvir (*triumvirum*) Mark Antony, Pliny drives his point home: Rome outdoes all previously known foreign decadence.[194] Hence, the fixed pattern that Rome surpasses everything, Egyptian decadence included, does not always have status enhancing effects.

3.4. *Rome as successor culture*

Previously, on pp. 69-70, it has been shown how the original Egyptian function of the obelisk was adapted to Roman circumstances and that in this process the obelisk became incorporated as an integral part of Rome. However, Pliny's report on the obelisk can also be interpreted as a Roman incorporation of the Egyptian *history* of the obelisk. As Pliny associates the Roman employment of the obelisk with an Egyptian tradition, Egyptian and Roman history seem to merge. Pliny's account of the obelisks is a story of continuous competition. First, the ancient pharaohs, who lived before and during the Trojan war according to Pliny, are competing against each other in creating obelisks.[195] The difficulties in erecting these obelisks are stressed by the example of Ramses who tied his son to the apex of an enormous obelisk - spurring the laborers to work as carefully as they could - to ensure the construction of the obelisk (*HN* 36.66). The difficulties of erecting such a large monument are surpassed by the transportation of an obelisk to Alexandria by Ptolemy Philadelphus. Pliny narrates how boats and rivers were modified to get the job done (*HN* 36.67-68). And finally the Roman Emperor Augustus, in turn, surpasses Ptolemy by his transportation of the obelisks to Rome: 'Beyond all difficulties was the task of transporting obelisks to Rome by sea' (*super omnia accessit difficultas mari Romam devehendi, HN* 36.69). Here we have a clear example of emulation: the works of Augustus' Egyptian predecessors have a status-enhancing effect on Augustus' achievement. It turns out to be even more astounding because the difficulties Augustus had to overcome were greater than those of Ramses and Ptolemy. But this emulation not only relates the achievements of Roman and Egyptian rulers to each other, it also connects the Roman present to the Egyptian past. By writing a history

[194] For the problem of luxury, see p. 42, n. 127.

[195] Plin. *NH* 36.64: 'Monoliths of this [granite of Syene], that were called obelisks, were made by the kings, out of a certain kind of competition' (*trabes ex eo fecere reges quodam certamine, obeliscos vocantes*).

of the obelisk from the first pharaohs via the Ptolemies to Roman emperors in such a way that each 'generation' surpasses the former, Pliny inscribes Roman emperors into an ancient tradition. This transition implies that Rome incorporated not only the object but also the ancient tradition for which the obelisk stood.[196] Hence, Pliny's account is an example of how the concept of Egypt's antiquity can have a function in terms of self-definition: incorporating Egypt's antiquity provides Rome with an admired deep antiquity.

4. CONCLUSIONS

This chapter served in the first place to investigate the relationship between the literary representation of Egypt and the two traditional concepts: Egypt as the stereotypical Other and Egypt as particularly ancient. Reading the *Natural History* as a monograph, this chapter interpreted the passages in which Egyptian topoi figured within its larger context, the aims and purposes of this encyclopedia. Firstly, this chapter argued that Egypt is not particularly represented as the stereotypical Other in the *Natural History*. Section 2.1 showed that the region Egypt was familiar territory. The systematic and factual way in which Pliny describes Egypt with his keen eye on Egypt's legal bonds Rome shows that Egypt is mentally mapped within the Empire. It was as well-known to the Romans as any other region that legally belonged to the Roman Empire. The unknown and abnormal was placed outside Pliny's map of the Roman Empire. By looking at the representation of the inhabitants of Egypt section 2.2 argues that Egyptians appear interchangeable with other people living in the Roman Empire. Ethnographical attention is only paid to abnormal people living in the unknown and unfamiliar regions outside the borders of the Empire. Considering the Egyptians the only exception to this rule seems to be the high fertility rate in Egypt, a feature often entangled with Egypt in the literary tradition. However, compared to the ethnographies of other people this feature does not stand out as outlandish. Section 2.2 also discussed the representation of Egyptian flora and fauna. Although Egypt harbors certain vegetation and animals that are foreign to Rome or Italy, these

[196] See also Parker 2007, who discusses five aspects that contribute to answering the question: 'What did obelisks mean to Romans of the Empire'. These five aspects are: 'transportation; the measuring of obelisks and the use of them to provide measurements; the habit of adding inscriptions to them; problems involved in describing them; and finally imitations and representations', *ib*. 210.

exotic flora and fauna do not turn Egypt into the exotic Other. The description of Egyptian flora and fauna needs to be interpreted in Pliny's overall theme to connect these with Rome in order to create one Roman world of which Egypt is firmly part. Secondly, section 2.3 demonstrated that Egypt is also not particularly represented as ancient. Unlike the literary tradition in which it is held to be one of the oldest regions and coined the first inventor par excellence, Egypt appears as one regions of inventions in a pool of many of these. Although the *Natural History* does reckon with Egypt's deep and famous antiquity, it is the present situation in which Egypt was not that glorious anymore that mattered. Pliny's focus on the contemporary Roman Empire to which all former independent regions including Egypt belong, makes the past of these less significant.

Beside investigating the relation between representations of Egypt and the concepts of the Stereotypical Other and Egypt's antiquity, this chapter also looked at the function of Egypt in terms of Roman self-representation. By analyzing passages in which Egyptian objects and animals were said to be on display in Rome, section 3 showed that their presence in Rome was not the result of a plain transportation of 'objects'. These original Egyptian animals and objects contributed to Roman self-esteem because they came from subdued faraway territory that was now Roman. Especially Pliny's description of transportation of obelisk demonstrates how the incorporation of specifically Egyptian objects could have contributed to Roman self-representation. Pliny's account shows how the original Egyptian meaning of the obelisk becomes an integral part of Rome by adaptation: his accounts shows that the Romans knew something of the original Egyptian function of the obelisk and that they probably used that knowledge to give it a new Roman function. Pliny's account makes the obelisk a symbol for a a deep history of competition between pharaohs. By inscribing Augustus' transportation of the obelisk into this tradition, Rome not only incorporated an object from a subdued region, but also the ancient tradition for which the obelisk stood. However section 3 also showed by comparing the presence of Egyptian with Greek art in Rome as attested by Pliny, not to over-estimate Egypt's role as Rome's foundation culture, at least not in the *Natural History*.

In the third place, this chapter wished to put Actium and Augustan poetry in perspective as the focus on this event and this period may have led to an over-emphasis of negative stereotypes and the function of these negative stereotypes as negative mirroring. This chapter showed that Egypt does not

always have to be rendered the stereotypical Other in Roman literature. It also demonstrated that Egypt could be treated like an integral part of Roman society, instead of being just the Other and it also showed that the appropriation of Egypt could contribute to Roman status. Pliny wrote in Flavian instead of Augustan times and his work was geographical/ ethnographical, not poetical. Hence, taking the conclusions of this chapter in mind, the next chapter will delve into the relationship between Augustan poetry and Egypt as the stereotypical Other.

II

Framing Cleopatra: Propertius 3.11

1. Introduction

In the general introduction it was hypothesized that there are other conceptualizations of Egypt alongside the traditional ones of Egypt as the stereotypical Other and Egypt as particularly ancient. The previous chapter on Pliny's *Natural History* has shown that Egypt could also be conceptualized as an integral part of Rome in Flavian times. In this chapter we shall discuss whether Egypt was rendered to be primarily the stereotypical Other in Augustan times by looking at a poem in which Egypt seems to be most clearly opposed to Rome, Propertius 3.11. This poem concerns the Battle of Actium and specifically focusses at length on Cleopatra's role in this affair. Modern studies relate the representation of Cleopatra in this poem – and generally in Augustan poetry – to negative Roman attitudes towards Egypt as Cleopatra embodies Egyptian bad behavior. The relation between an Egyptian topos (Cleopatra) and concept (negative stereotypical Other) is analyzed by looking at how Cleopatra is 'framed'. Is she only rendered as Rome's antipode? To place 'Augustan' Cleopatra in context, an overview of earlier and later sources will be presented first, followed by a historiography on modern research to elucidate the approach of this present chapter.

1.1. *Overview of the sources on Cleopatra: from the 1st century BCE to the first decades of the 2nd century CE*

The portrayal of Cleopatra varies according to different genres and at different times.[197] Sometimes she is just mentioned in a short comment or anecdote;

[197] This thematic overview serves as background information and is not intended to be exhaustive. For an elaborate study of the representation of Cleopatra in the classical

other times she is the main character in a longer story. Historical works devote relatively many lines to her, compared to other genres in which she figures. For instance, she was probably prominently present in Livy's *Ab urbe condita*, a Latin historical work composed during Cleopatra's life, describing Roman history from the foundation of Rome to the Augustan age in 142 books. The books about the age of Ceopatra are lost in their original shape, but of these a fourth-century summary composed by Paulus Orosius, the *Periochae*, has survived which suggests that her role in the conflict between Mark Antony and the later Emperor Augustus was probably described in detail in the original edition.[198] Flavius Josephus' first-century CE historical work, *Antiquitates Judaicae*, addressing Jewish history with a special emphasis on the first century CE and the first Jewish-Roman war, provides a considerable amount of information about Cleopatra and her relationship with Mark Antony.[199] Dio Cassius' *Roman History*, a voluminous late second- and early third-century historical work addressing Roman history from the founding of Rome to Emperor Alexander Severus, describes Cleopatra and her relationship with Julius Caesar and Mark Antony in detail in the parts that have survived.[200] Together with Plutarch' first-century CE description of her in his biography of Mark Antony, Dio Cassius' portrayal of Cleopatra has greatly influenced our present-day image of Cleopatra (not least through

literature, including Byzantine works, see Becher 1966, on which my overview draws. Becher's work appeared fifty years ago but is still the only analytical study of this collection of sources that contains a diachronic overview of the historical sources followed by an overview of poetical works in a thematic and chronological order.

[198] Liv. *Per*. 111-112; 130-133.

[199] Joseph *AJ* 14.324; 14.374ff; 15.25; 15.32; 15.45ff.; 15.48; 15.63; 15.76; 15.79; 15.88; 15.89; 15.90; 15.92; 15.93; 15.95; 15.97ff; 15.106ff; 15.109ff; 15.191; 15.217; 15.258. See also of the same author *contra Apionem* 2.57; 2.58, and *Bellum Judaicum* 1.243; 1.359; 1.360; 1.361; 1.397; 7.296f.; 7.300. Josephus' work concerned first and foremost the history of the Jews, hence especially Herodes' political dealings with Cleopatra, in which Cleopatra's role is not described in a flattering way. According to Josephus she even tried to seduce Herodes: Joseph *AJ* 15.99. Regarding this passage Becher 1966, 66, notes the parallel with Augustus' rejection of Cleopatra – see D.C. 50.12 and Flor. *Epit.* 2.21 – and suggests that this may have been intentional.

[200] For the relationship between Cleopatra and Julius Caesar, see D.C. 42.34-44. For the relationship between Cleopatra and Mark Antony, see D.C. 49.34; 49.40-41. Book 50 describes the Battle of Actium. Important passages are 50.1-6, reasons for the battle of Actium; 50.24-31, Octavian's speech to encourage his troops at Actium; 50.33, the flight of Cleopatra and Mark Antony from Actium; 50.10-14, deaths of Cleopatra and Mark Antony.

Shakespeare's adaptation of Plutarch's biography in his play entitled Antony and Cleopatra).[201] Other historical works that pay attention to Cleopatra but in a less comprehensive way include the *Historiarum Philippiacarum libri XLIV* written by Trogus under Augustus. This work places Cleopatra in the context of the Diadochi and their successors.[202] Strabo, another historian working in the Augustan age, presents the love affair between Antony and Cleopatra, their deaths and the Battle of Actium factually, without the juicy details that can be found in, for instance, Plutarch's *Life of Antony*.[203] Cleopatra's role in Roman history is also mentioned in the concise work – about eight hundred years compressed into two books – written by Velleius Paterculus under Tiberius.[204] Furthermore, she features in the short history of Rome from its foundation to the age of Augustus written by Florus in the age of Trajan and Hadrian, and in the biographies of Caesar and Augustus written by Suetonius in the beginning of the second century CE.[205] Unfortunately, the four books Appian (c. 95-165 CE) devoted to the history of Egypt (*Aigyptiacon*, books 18-21 of his *Roman History*) are lost, but passages in his *Bellum Civile* (books 13-17 of his *Roman History*) contain some information about the role of Cleopatra in the civil war between Mark Antony and Octavian and about her love affair with Julius Caesar.[206]

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[201] Reception studies concerning Cleopatra include: Curran 2011, Cleopatra and Egypt in High Renaissance Rome; Pucci 2011 unravels the myth of Cleopatra from her own life to modern day; Rowland 2011, is a study of a 17th-century manuscript supposedly containing the correspondence between Cleopatra, Mark Antony and the physician Quintus Soranus of Ephesus that contains recipes of 'love potions'; DeMaria Smith 2011, Cleopatra in the paintings of Alma-Tadema; Wyke and Montserrat 2011, Cleopatra in Hollywood movies. All of the above papers are collected in Miles 2011. See also Wyke 2002, 244-390, who has described the reception of Cleopatra from the 1870s until the 1970s.

[202] Justin, *Epitome of the Philippic history of Pompeius Trogus*, prologue book 40. A possible allusion to Cleopatra, Julius Caesar and their child Caesarion can be found in Just. *Ep*. 12.7.9-11, about the affair between Alexander the Great and Queen Cleophis, who bore him a son. On this topic see Von Gutschmid 1882, 553-4; Becher 1966, 38; Seel 1972, 181-182.

[203] See Strabo 17.1.10-11.

[204] Vell. 2.63.1; 2.82.4; 2.83-87, the Battle of Actium and deaths of Cleopatra and Mark Antony.

[205] Flor. *Epit*. 2.21: *Bellum cum Antonio et Cleopatra*, 'the war against Antony and Cleopatra'. Suet. *Jul*. 35.1; 52.1; *Aug*. 9.1; 17.4

[206] In Appian's *Roman History* the four books about the history of Egypt (*Aegyptiacon*) followed after five books on previous civil strife (*Bellum Civile*) in

When representing Cleopatra, the focus in these historical work lies on her relationship with Mark Antony. Some works, e.g. Dio Cassius (see, for instance, D.C. 43.27.3), mention the love affair between Cleopatra and Caesar rather extensively, but other historical works such as Plutarch's *Life of Caesar* are reticent on this topic, as is Julius Caesar himself in his commentaries, or Cicero in his letters to Atticus.[207] The first person to have elaborated on the love interest between Caesar and Cleopatra is Lucan in his tenth book of the epos *Bellum Civile*. His account of the affair between Caesar and Cleopatra seems to have been anachronistically affected by the later affair between Antony and Cleopatra.[208] Another element that the above-mentioned historical works have in common is that their focus is on Mark Antony and not on Cleopatra. In most of these works, it is his mistakes – most notoriously his love for Cleopatra – that caused the war with Rome, i.e. in most of the historical works it is evident that it was not a foreign war between Rome and

Rome. These five books functioned as some kind of overture to the *Aegyptiacon*, see App. *BC* 1.6. Appian's remark that Julius Caesar had placed a statue of Cleopatra in the temple of Venus Genetrix next to the cult statue of that goddess, App. *BC* 2.102, is a misinterpretation: Octavian/Augustus was responsible for that act, not Julius Caesar, see C.D. 51.22.3.

[207] Plut. *Caes*. 48.5 and 49.3 refer to the love affair between Julius Caesar and Cleopatra, but unlike the affair between Antony and Caesar in Plutarch's *Life of Antony*, this is not a relevant episode in Caesar's personal or political life. In Caesar's *Bellum Civile*, Cleopatra appears as the rightful heiress to the Egyptian throne, she is solely discussed in the context of the war between her and her brother Ptolemy XIII over Egyptian rule after their father Ptolemy XII died, and not as his mistress, see Caes. *B Civ*. 3.103.2; 3.107-108. The love affair is not mentioned either in the work *De Bello Alexandrino* attributed to Hirtius, see *B Alex*. 33. The only time Cicero more or less explicitly refers to the affair between Caesar and Cleopatra is when he mentions the existence of 'that Caesarion' (*Caesare illo*, Cic. *Att.* 14.20.2). Cicero's remarks about the queen in his letters are generally rather cryptic, see Cic. *Att.* 14.8.1; 15.1.5; 15.4.4; 15.15; 15.17.2. For speculations on what these letters may have been about, see Becher 1966, 17-18. Cicero is the sole witness of the presence of Cleopatra in 46 and 44 BCE. Cleopatra's stay in Rome has traditionally been seen as an important indication of the love affair between Cleopatra and Caesar. See on this matter, however, Gruen 2011b, whose conclusion is mentioned on p. 85.

[208] Becher 1966, 122: 'Rückschauend stellen wir fest, daß Lukan fast alle Züge der Überlieferung über Kleopatra aufgegriffen und kontaminiert hat, indem er sie teils durch Antizipation späterer Ereignisse einfügte, teils sie dadurch mit den alexandrinischen Geschehnissen verknüpfte, daß er auf Caesar übertrug, was die Tradition von Antonius berichtete.'

Egypt, but a civil war.[209] Consequently, Cleopatra's role as an equal partner of Antony in the Battle of Actium is not stressed in every historical work. In Strabo, for instance, she is just a 'client' queen, and in Tacitus she is completely absent.[210] The most striking similarity of the majority of these historical sources is their general negative attitude towards Cleopatra (Strabo forms an exception). She does not appear as a queen of Egypt who takes responsibility: she lives an extraordinarily luxurious life; is dominant in her relationship with Mark Antony; is sexually perverse; and has an unrestrained urge to expand her empire. The same kind of invectives can be found in another type of source that gives more information about Roman perceptions of Cleopatra: Augustan poetry.

After Cleopatra's death the Augustan poets Horace in his ninth *Epode* and *Carmen* 1.37, Propertius in his elegies 3.11 and 4.6, and Virgil in his *Aeneid* 8.679ff address her role in the civil war between Antony and Octavian.[211] In these poems her appearance, her morals, her way of fighting and her gods are both explicitly and implicitly opposed to what Romans approved of, i.e. she is the stereotypical Other. In this chapter, however, we shall discuss whether this is the only message than can be gained from Augustan poetry by focusing on Propertius 3.11.

Apart from the above-mentioned sources, Cleopatra features mostly in anecdotes and short references. She is mentioned briefly in Julius Caesar's commentary when he is in Alexandria after the death of Pompey and in Cicero's letters to Atticus.[212] In both of these late Republican sources, Cleopatra appears primarily as the legitimate queen of Egypt and not as the lover of a Roman general. Seneca the Younger, Martial, Statius and Juvenal refer to her in passing. Seneca the Younger recalls the devastating love Antony felt for Cleopatra (Sen. *Ep*. 83.25). Martial in one epigram refers to her luxurious tomb and to her death by the bite of a poisonous snake (Mart. 4.59) and in another draws parallels between the civil war between Emperor

[209] For instance, Suet. *Tib*. 59.2, the war is called: *Antoni civilia bella*.
[210] Tac. *Ann*. 1.9.4 and *Hist*.1.11.1. Regarding Strabo's description of the Battle of Actium and Cleopatra's role, Becher argues: 'Der "Abfall" Kleopatras C 288 is wohl so zu verstehen, daß sie als vom Imperium Romanum abhängige Fürstin sich mit einem "abtrünnigen" römischen Beamten gegen die "rechtmäßige" (weil siegreiche) Gewalt verbündet hatte. Antonius riß Kleopatra in seinen Untergang mit hinein.'
[211] For the connection between Virgil's Dido and Cleopatra, see pp. 94-95.
[212] See p. 82, n. 207 for references.

Domitian and L. Antonius Saturninus and the one between Octavian and Antony. Both Octavian and Domitian tried to cover up the fact of civil war by declaring war on Cleopatra (*Pharia coniunx*) and on the Germans (Mart. 4.11), respectively. Statius mentions her palace as a place to visit in Egypt (Stat. *Silv*. 3.2.119-120), and Juvenal represents her and Semiramis as luxurious beauty queens by noting that she wore a face mask made of dough (Juv. 2.107-109). And in Pliny the Elder, as we have seen, Cleopatra is the subject of a couple of anecdotes referring mostly to her and Mark Antony's luxurious way of living in Alexandria, see pp. 74-75.

Passages in works composed after Cleopatra's death give the impression that she was probably the subject of many other writings (particularly contemporary): letters, histories and plays. The Elder Seneca refers to Cleopatra's contemporary Dellius of whom 'obscene letters to Cleopatra are in circulation' (*epistulae ad Cleopatram lascivae feruntur*, Sen. *Suas*. 1.7). It is not important whether these letters were forgeries or not; it is more telling that these letters were thought to be of some interest in the time of Seneca.[213] In his biography of Augustus, Suetonius includes a passage about a letter which he claims Mark Antony sent to Augustus. In this letter we read how Antony tried to defend his relationship with Cleopatra, whom Antony calls 'my wife' (*uxor mea est*), by arguing that it was nothing extraordinary for a man of his status to have affairs with other women. According to Antony's view, Augustus himself had had other women than his legal wife (Suet. *Aug*. 69.2). Gellius, when discussing the rare word *cocio*, refers to a fragment of a play by the Augustan mime player Laberius which refers to 'two wives' (*duas uxores*, Gell. *NA*, 16.7) in the context of Julius Caesar. This may have been a hint at Julius Caesar's affair with Cleopatra.

In general, the classical sources dealing with Cleopatra show a development from more politically motivated Augustan writings interested in her role as Rome's opponent to the private settings of later literature that is concerned with her luxurious life in Alexandria and her love affair with Antony. Augustan literature is said to be in dialogue with the social and political issues of that time, and civil war is definitely one of them.[214] Apparently, in the Augustan age, Rome had to accept its recent history of a

[213] Rowland 2011, discusses 17th-cent. forgeries of Roman letters concerning the libido of Cleopatra, see also p. 81, n. 201.

[214] See Wyke 2002, 226, quoted on p. 86, for the relation between contemporary anxieties and Augustan literature.

civil war in which Cleopatra was involved while in later times the trauma of civil war seems to have been processed, resulting in a more moral interest in Cleopatra as a subject in discussions about Eastern *luxuria*.

1.2. Cleopatra: status quaestionis

Modern works on the Roman literary representation of Cleopatra are based on two branches of research: historical and reception studies. In both research fields a central theme can be distinguished: Cleopatra as the Oriental Other. Recently, historical studies have tried to deconstruct the Augustan literary representation of her as a drunk nymphomaniac in their search of the 'real', historical Cleopatra. As a result, a re-evaluation of Cleopatra as a solid and responsible queen willing to protect her empire at all costs has been established. Gruen, for instance, has convincingly argued that Cleopatra did not, as commonly assumed, continuously stay in Rome from 46 until 44 BCE. Reminding the reader that Cleopatra had only just regained her throne, Gruen puts his finger on the problem when he asks, 'What was she doing in Rome for months at a stretch while her own hold upon loyalty in Alexandria must have been very shaky?' According to him she visited Rome twice briefly for political matters. That would not be remarkable for a Roman 'client' king.[215] My approach is obviously not historical as it does not concern 'reality', but rather Roman literary representations of Egypt. In reception studies, perceptions of Cleopatra have been traced from Roman times to modern day. One representation of her, that of the Oriental Other, seems to be eternal as it pops up throughout the ages in the literature and Hollywood movies. A good

[215] Gruen 2011b, p. 39 for the quote. Other works that distinguish between fantasy and history to uncover the real Cleopatra are: Miles 2011, this collected volume contains papers addressing Cleopatra's historicity and her perception; Walker and Higgs 2001, who address particularly the relationship between myth and history in an important catalogue of the British museum exhibition; Hughes-Hallett 1990, who wrote a biography of Cleopatra and, among others, distinguished between Octavian's and Cleopatra's story; Wes 2000 presents ancient sources concerning Cleopatra while remarking on their (un)historical character. Other works dealing with the historical Cleopatra are: Grant 1972; Southern 1999; Roller 2010; Schiff 2010, all biographies. See for a historical account of Cleopatra's affair with Mark Antony: Goldsworthy 2010 and a cultural history: Hamer 1993; see also Strootman 2010 for a historical analysis of the Donations of Alexandria. On kingship in the Roman Near East generally, see Kaisar and Facella 2010.

example is Wyke's paper 'Oriental Vamp: Cleopatra 1910s' which presents a direct connection between the Oriental image of Cleopatra in ancient Rome and that of the western world in the first decade of the twentieth century.[216] My approach will differ from those reception studies as it will not try to unravel a diachronic pattern in the representations of Cleopatra by comparing sources from different periods. In the first place, such a diachronic approach runs the risk of focusing only on those themes which are obviously present in every period in world history, such as Cleopatra as vamp. Second, to truly understand how representations of Cleopatra were used in a certain period, they first need to be interpreted in the textual and historical context of that period. For instance, Pliny's representation of Cleopatra holding lavish and decadent banquets can be labeled 'Oriental'. However, when interpreted in the larger context of the *Natural History*, his portrayal functions within a Roman self-reflective discourse on luxury. Roman society and behavior do not appear much different to Cleopatra's palace and attitude, whereas the 'Oriental' Cleopatra in Augustan poetry – and I follow the generally accepted explanation here – functioned as a negative mirror for Roman moral standards. Considering that Augustan poetry 'refracts, interrogates, or even enables the social, political, and economic changes that were taking place under the new regime', this poetry will be read here as embodying the excitement and uncertainties of dynamic times.[217]

2. PROPERTIUS 3.11: GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Book three of Propertius' elegies was published around 23 BCE, hence Propertius 3.11 appeared almost a decade after the Battle of Actium.[218]

[216] Wyke 2002, 247: 'The narrative of Octavian's victory over the erotic and political tyranny of Cleopatra, of masculine Rome's ultimate triumph over feminine Egypt, became the founding myth of western culture.' Part two of Wyke 2002, 195-45, is in general concerned with the reception of Cleopatra. See also Wyke and Montserrat 2011. A very thought-provoking study concerning the reception of Egypt in the Renaissance is Curran 2007. See also Curran 2011.

[217] For the quote Wyke 2002, 226. See idem n. 99 for references.

[218] It is also argued that this poem was composed for a special occasion such as the first anniversary of the celebration of the *ludi quinquennales* in 24 BCE: Richardson 1977, 359; repeated by: Goold 1990. Gurval argued, however, that there was no relation between the *ludi quinquinnales* and the Battle of Actium, 2001, 191, n. 32.

Propertius 3.11 is a problematic text not least because its transmission has undergone many corruptions. It also contains a strange transition between private love affairs and politics concerning the Civil War that makes it very hard to explain this poem in one coherent interpretation. In this section I will first present a summary of this poem, followed by a discussion of the interpretative problems, before I analyze the representation of Cleopatra with regard to these interpretative problems in the next section (3).

2.1. *Propertius 3.11: A summary*[219]

The following summary is based on a version of the text that has been generally accepted.[220] The poem can be divided into four sections.

A. ll. 1-8:

These lines form the prooemium in which the poet introduces his subject: the dominant woman. The reader is meant to learn from Propertius' experience of being a slave of such a dominant female. In this prooemium Propertius seems to suggest that he, as a subordinated man, is in good company by presenting mythological examples of dominant women with the implication that he is like the men who were subdued by them.

B. ll. 9-28:

The four examples of these dominant women in Greek mythology are: Medea who overpowered Jason with her magic;[221] Penthesilea whose beauty captured

[219] Note on translations: I use G.P. Goold's 1990 Loeb translation on Propertius 3.11 with some modifications.

[220] Propertius' work has been transmitted with many corruptions. Regarding Prop. 3.11, many alternatives have been suggested for the manuscript order of lines 57-70. For the 'confusion' of the manuscript tradition that led to these alternatives, see Camps 1966, *ad loc*. The transposition of ll.67-68 after ll.57-58 is generally accepted; see, e.g. Hanslik's 1979 Teubner edition; Fedeli's 1984 Teubner edition. Some also place ll. 65-66 after ll. 57-58; see e.g. Camps 1966, Heyworth's 2007 *OCT* edition which contains many speculative conjectures. An alternative can be found in Shackleton Bailey 1956 (ll. 57-58, ll. 67-68, ll. 59-60, ll. 65-66, ll.61-64, ll.69-72). With Nethercut's discussion of the various orders of Prop. 3.11 in mind, and particularly his note that 'the sense of the passage remains clear even without the reorganization', Nethercut 1971, 431, I follow particularly Camps' 1966 edition with some modifications that will be discussed.

[221] See also Heyworth and Morwood 2011, *ad* 3.11.9-12: 'The poet focuses not on her erotic power but on her ability to control her world through intelligence and magic. All the actions are here attributed to her, not Jason. And also *ibid. ad* 3.11.21-26 with

Achilles and turned the conqueror into the conquered; Omphale whose beauty made Hercules spin the wheel; and Semiramis. As the text does not mention the names of the subdued men, it is not immediately clear in the case of Semiramis which man is dominated by her. The text only states that she built Babylon, strengthened it with enormous and solid walls, manipulated the stream of the Euphrates to flow through it, and subordinated the region Bactra.[222]

C. ll. 29-56:

The mythological examples of dominant women are followed by a historical one: Cleopatra. This section can be divided as follows:

ll. 29-32: Cleopatra is accused of having had sexual intercourse with her slaves and of having ordered the Roman throne as a wedding gift from Mark Antony.

ll. 33-36: These lines read like an intermezzo in the list of invective accusations addressed to Cleopatra. The reader is reminded of the murder of Pompey in Egypt: after his defeat at the Battle of Pharsalis, Pompey fled to Egypt where he was murdered by accomplices of Ptolemy XIII. This episode in Roman history is dramatically described by Lucan in Book 8 of his *Bellum Civile*.

ll. 37-40: These verses return to the negative characterization of Cleopatra by calling her 'the harlot queen of licentious Canopus' (*incesti meretrix regina Canopi*).

ll. 41-46: The contraposition between Egypt and Rome is demonstrated by opposing Roman anthropomorphic gods to an animal god, Anubis; the Nile is

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reference to Fedeli 1985, *ad* 3.11.1.6 who notices the repetitive use of words: '..it shows Semiramis performing the action of a hero.'

[222] Concerning the identification of the man subordinated by Semiramis, it is surmised Jupiter is meant. He is mentioned in ll. 27-28: *nam quid ego heroas, quid raptem in crimina divos? / Iuppiter infamat seque suamque domum*, 'Enough, for why should I bring gods and heroes to trial on this account? Jupiter shames himself and his whole house.' In Herodotus the story is told that Jupiter fell for Semiramis in the very temple that she built for him. This Herodotean story would also form a good explanation for ll. 27-28, but this story seems to be relatively unknown. See Fantham 2006, 197: 'The distich 27-28 turning from dominant woman to dominated men seems inadequately motivated, and to understand Propertius' argumentation the reader must know that Semiramis constructed a temple of Belus/Jupiter to which the god came to sleep as her consort; hence Jupiter disgraces himself and his temple. See *idem* n. 25 for a reference to Hubbard 1968, 317, who refers in this context to Hdt. 1.181-182 and Diod. 2.9.2. See also Heyworth 2007b, *ad loc*., for references to sources concerning Semiramis and her relationship with her two husbands Onnes and Ninus.

set off against the Tiber; the Roman trumpet (*tuba*) is contrasted with the sistrum – a rattle that is associated with the cults of Isis; the Egyptian Nile boat (*baris*) is pitted against the Roman galley (*liburna*); and finally Egyptian mosquito nets are imagined to stand between the weapons and the statues of Marius, suggesting an opposition between Egyptian effeminacy and Roman masculinity.

ll. 47-50: These verses remind the reader first of the consequences if Cleopatra had won the Battle of Actium ('had we been fated to bear a woman's yoke', *si mulier patienda fuit*, l. 49), but immediately brings to mind the person who prevented such an unwanted situation: 'Sing out your triumph, Rome, and, saved, pray for long life for Augustus' (*cane, Roma, triumphum / et longum Augusto salva precare diem*, ll. 49-50).

ll. 51-56: The topic of Cleopatra is closed by referring to her flight and suicide. The fact that she avoided becoming a Roman prisoner by committing suicide is stressed. While dying, drunken, she uttered the following sentence according to the poem in which she acknowledged the superiority of her conqueror: *Non hoc, Roma, fui tanto tibi cive veranda*, 'Having so great a citizen as this, O Rome, you need not have feared me.' According to her the Romans should have known that she didn't stand a chance against a person like Augustus.

D. ll. 57-72:

Several of Rome's great military successes and legendary heroes are mentioned, implying that Augustus' victory in the Battle of Actium and Augustus himself surpass all these examples. They included the Roman victory over Hannibal, the Gauls, Mithridates and Pyrrhus, and the Roman heroes are, respectively, M. Curtius, P. Decius, Horatius Cocles and M. Valerius Corvinus or Corvus. The poem ends with a reference to the temple of Apollo on the promontory of Leucas.[223] This temple is associated with Augustus' success at Actium and with the *pax Romana* of Augustus: *Leucadius versas acies memorabit Apollo / tanti operis bellum sustulit una dies*, 'Leucadian Apollo will tell of a host turned in flight: one day put an end to a war of so much labour.' The sailor who enters or leaves the harbor will remember Augustus all over the Ionian sea (71-72).

[223] The temple of Apollo on the promontory of Leucas predates the Battle of Actium, but it became associated with this battle. Mentioning this particular temple of Apollo may also have brought to mind the temple of Apollo situated at Actium. For a discussion of the meaning of *Leucadius*, see Gurval 2001, 206-207.

2.2. *Propertius 3.11: public versus private character of the poem*

One major discussion has dominated the study of this elegy: the relationship between its 'private' (the writer's enslavement to women, in ll. 1-28) and 'public' character (the Battle of Actium, in ll. 29ff.).[224] Some have put an emphasis on the 'public' by arguing that Propertius is sincere in his 'eulogy' of Augustus. Camps, for instance, notes, 'this elegy is a 'patriotic' poem, for which the love-theme does no more than furnish what is frankly a peg.'[225] Others put question marks next to Propertius' approval of Augustus. For instance, Thompson has called the Battle of Actium an 'empty triumph' because this 'battle' hardly involved true combat due to the enemy's early flight. And Propertius shows a 'grim or ironic' attitude towards the Battle of Actium in his other writings.[226] Still others have interpreted the poem from the angle of love poetry. An interpretation in this vein runs as follows: whereas the writer could not free himself from his enslavement to a woman, Augustus could, and as a consequence saved the world.[227]

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[224] According to Fantham 2006: 'private and public are converging in these poems [Prop. 3.11 and 3.13].'

[225] Camps 1966, 104. See Tronson 1999, 185, n. 64 for references to studies in which Prop. 3.11 is described as a panegyric and *ibid* n. 65 for references to studies in which the poem is described in terms of Propertius' patriotism. For similar references, see *ibid* n. 11.

[226] For this argumentation see Tronson 1999, 185, also for the quote. The poem is indicated as being 'ironic' and not sincere because of the presumed allusions to Julius Caesar and his love affair with Cleopatra. See Stahl 1985, 244: 'Beside this, with Cleopatra's residence in the back of his reader's mind (but for doubts cast on the relation between Cleopatra's residence in Rome and her love affair with Caesar, see p. 85), Propertius can superbly undercut his 'official' argument because Octavian has done nothing else than save Rome from his father's mistress.' See also Mader 1989, 190, n. 21, for the same quote and references to other scholarly work in which Propertius' sincerity is questioned. For his 'grim or ironic' attitude toward the battle of Actium in his other writings, see Prop. 2.1; 2.15; 2.16; 2.34; and 4.6. For a discussion of the references to Actium in the second book, see Nethercut 1971, 412-415, for the quote p. 412.

[227] Wyke 2002, 195 summarizes her reading of the poem as follows (after having quoted Propertius' introductory lines 3.11.1-2): 'A catalogue of dominating women of myth and history follows, culminating in a lengthy assault on Cleopatra's ambition to rule Rome and praise for Augustus who alone has released the citizenry from such a fearful prospect.' For parallels between Propertius and Mark Antony, see Griffin 1985, 32-47.

Cleopatra clearly forms the link between the 'private' and the 'public'. As an example of a dominant woman, she ties in very well with the private theme, and as the enemy in the Battle of Actium, she does the same for the public theme. It is probably best not to search for one coherent explanation of this poem but to see it as containing two different discussions, as Hans-Peter Stahl has suggested, 'The two different addressees of elegy 3.11, then, correspond to the two different levels on which the poet speaks. His censurer addressed in line 1 receives as an answer [to the questions formulated in Prop. 3.11.1-4, see p. 92] Propertius' own opinion: a man living in servitude to a woman is nothing monstrous; his case is humanly understandable and can be confirmed by instances from myth and history, even Roman history. The sailor addressed in line 72 receives the official answer: praise of Augustus, who saved Rome from servitude to a woman.'[228] It is up to the reader to identify with whomever he prefers, the censurer or the sailor.

In Propertius 3.11, Cleopatra plays a role in the 'private' as well as the 'public' part of this poem. Hence, it can be hypothesized that this representation of Cleopatra cannot be given one coherent explanation, such as that of the stereotypical Other. The remainder of this chapter investigates the different conceptualizations of Cleopatra in this poem. As Cleopatra seems inextricably linked to Roman perceptions of Egypt, the way she is represented may give a good impression of how the conceptualization of Egypt works in Augustan Rome.

3. PROPERTIUS 3.11: FOUR WAYS OF FRAMING CLEOPATRA

3.1. *Mythological women: Medea, Penthesilea, Omphale, Semiramis* and *Cleopatra*

In lines 9-26 four mythological women are mentioned as examples of women who dominate men: Medea, Penthesilea, Omphale and Semiramis. The fifth example is historical: Cleopatra. She held Mark Antony under her sway.[229]

[228] Stahl 1985, 247.

[229] In the context of all these examples, the writer's own case turns into an *exemplum*. Propertius' list of women given in 3.11 has been related to the *Catalogue of Women*,

Mentioning five examples of female dominance is the poet's strategy to defend himself against his own slavery to a woman. In the first two diptychs he asks the reader:

> *quid mirare, meam si versat femina vitam*
> *et trahit addictum sub sua iura virum,*
> *criminaque ignavi capitis mihi turpia fingis,*
> *quod nequeam fracto rumpere vincla iugo?*
>
> Why wonder that a woman governs my life, and hauls off a man in bondage to her sway? Why do you frame shameful charges of cowardice against me because I cannot burst my bonds and break the yoke?

The examples of dominating women show that being a slave to a woman is not something strange as there seem to be plenty of mythological and historical examples. The reader should not be too quick to judge; and as it may happen to him, too, he should keep the writer's warning in mind:

> *ventorum melius praesagit navita morem,* 5
> *vulneribus didicit miles habere metum.*
> *ista ego praeterita iactavi verba iuventa:*
> *tu nunc exemplo disce timere meo.*
>
> The sailor best predicts the temper of the winds; the soldier has learned from his wounds to feel fear. Words like yours I used to utter in my bygone youth: learn from my example to be afraid.

The writer is now an experienced man and no longer thinks as he did in the past, when he thought the same as his critic does. The reader should learn from this and fear becoming the victim of a woman. In lines 3-4 the writer is rather indignant because the reader seems to utter 'shameful charges' (*crimina turpia*) out of ignorance. Hence, the examples of dominant women have a dual function: they have a mitigating effect (it happens to others, too), and they serve as deterrents (do not wish for it).

Modern scholars have read the four mythological examples as containing information that contributes to the portrayal of Cleopatra. When the characteristics of the four mythological women are related to Roman

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an incomplete, transmitted poem of Hesiod. See e.g. Heyworth and Morwood 2011, 205; Hunter 2005.

perceptions of Cleopatra in general, thematic links between them can be constructed, for instance: Medea used magic, Cleopatra's sway over Antony can be understood as being achieved by love potions (see for this argument D.C. 50.5.3).[230] Scholars who interpret this poem as love poetry have emphasized the representation of Cleopatra as an irresistible seductress. Interpreted in this vein, Antony becomes 'seduced', while Octavian can be called 'resistant'.[231] Stressing the love theme, some believe that the poem alludes to the love affair between Julius Caesar and Cleopatra.[232] Stahl, for instance, argues that 'Propertius can superbly undercut his "official" argument [eulogy to Augustus] because Octavian has done nothing else than save Rome from his father's mistress: "Seize, Rome, the triumph, and saved, pray for a long life for Augustus!"'[233]

Regarding the relationship between Cleopatra and the other four dominant women, one aspect has not received enough attention: the fact that Cleopatra is compared to *Greek mythological* women. Studies of the Roman perception of Egypt have already noted that Greek mythology functions as a bridge between Roman perceptions of Egypt as 'foreign' or 'strange' and what Romans believed was native, i.e. it transforms something 'Egyptian' into something more 'Roman'.[234] Roman texts, such as Virgil and Ovid, show a

[230] See Becher 1966, 55, for the thematic links between Cleopatra and the four mythological women.
[231] Wyke 2002, 195-200, p. 200 for the quotes.
[232] See e.g. Stahl 1985, 240-247.
[233] Stahl 1985, 244. Nethercut 1971, 422-426, connects the mythical examples with Roman history in such a way that Jason resembles Antony; Achilles, Julius Caesar; and Hercules, Augustus. Derived from the parallels, 'it would appear that Propertius chose to make the point that Augustus' victory, coming as it did over a woman capable of subduing heroes and bringing down countries, was indeed significant.' But according to Nethercut who argues for an ironic reading, this image of Cleopatra is twisted in her flight and the non-battle of Actium.
[234] An example can be found in my discussion of Tibullus 1.7 in chapter IV where the 'alien' Osiris is transformed into something 'Roman' by identifying him first with Dionysus and later with Bacchus. See also Virgil's *Georgica* 4 in which an Egyptian ritual, *bugonia*, is described (Verg. *G.* 4.280-314) that later on seems to be retold as a Greek (or even Roman) ritual (Verg. *G.* 4.537-558). The Greek version reads as a transformation of the 'strange' Egyptian one, Stephens 2004, 160. Virgil's transformation of Egypt in *Georgics* 3 and 4 can be read in the context of Callimachus, who adapted Greek culture to Egyptian standards, see Acosta-Hughes and Stephens 2012, 242-243. On Callimachus' adaptation of Greek culture into an Egyptian context, see Stephens 2003. See, also Syed 2005, 106-112, who interprets Ov. *Met.* 1.747-779,

tendency to 'domesticate' Egyptian gods and rituals, i.e. to make these 'alien' Egyptian customs less 'alien' by inscribing them into a Greek mythological context. For instance, in an interesting study, Rosati shows how Ovid used etiology (Ov. *Met*. 5.318-31) to explain the strange Egyptian habit of worshipping animal gods with a story in which the Roman anthropomorphic gods fled to Egypt when assaulted by Typhon and hid there from him by disguising themselves as animals. Rosati argues, 'If the theriomorphism of Egyptian gods is a consequence of the presence of Greek gods, then the phenomenon is less absurd and disturbing', and regarding Ov. *Met*. 5. 327-328 '[c]onceiving and calling Ammon, the chief divinity of the Egyptian pantheon, a '*horned* Jupiter' is a way of normalizing the Other and of assimilating it: a way of taming the monster.'[235] This 'domestication' is not merely *interpretatio Graeca* or *interpretatio Romana* as it has more extensive implications than just creating a simple translation of something 'Egyptian' into something 'Greek' or 'Roman'.[236] It is more helpful to interpret it in a larger context of a globalizing Roman Empire, as I already argued in the general introduction. For instance, Erich Gruen in his study of Plutarch's *De Iside et Osiride* states that the use of Greek mythology suggests a profound cultural interconnectivity in the Roman World in the second century CE in which Egypt is not perceived as the Other but as part of this interconnected world.[237] In this specific case, Cleopatra is matched to the mythological Greek women in such a way that she becomes like them, and this identification shapes her representation.

Propertius is not the only Augustan poet who associates Cleopatra with mythological women. Virgil's Dido can be read as an introduction to Cleopatra, and it is clear that Virgil's profile of the Carthaginian queen has consequences for the reader's perception of Cleopatra. As Dido is portrayed as a victim of the intervention of Venus whose irrational actions are the result

containing a dialogue between Epaphus (the son of Io/Isis) and Phaethon, as Ovid's reaction to ruler cult. A practice that Roman emperors took over from the Ptolemies and other Hellenistic monarchs.

[235] Rosati 2009, 276, org. italics. See also Manolaraki 2013, 199-201, who refers to Rosati 2009, in her discussion of Stat. *Silv*. 3.2.112 in which Anubis is identified as Cerberus.

[236] Particularly in the field of classical religion, *Interpretatio Graeca* and *Interpretatio Romana* are studied as 'an act of translation.' See Ando 2008, for a critical view of this kind of approach.

[237] Gruen 2011a, 107-114.

of mad passion, 'Virgil's Dido destabilizes the Roman chauvinism and confidence that had constructed the Egyptian queen as a hated figure of sexual perversity, female dominance and ruin.'[238] Likewise, the comparison of Cleopatra to mythological women may have (re)constructed Roman perceptions of her. It places question marks against Roman invectives addressed to her in this poem (see the next section). It also may have created some understanding for Antony's behavior. By presenting her as another dominant woman, the mythical powers of Medea, Penthesilea, Omphale and Semiramis become attributed to her, and it becomes clear that she simply cannot be resisted. The same explanation can be given for Lucan's comparison of Cleopatra with Helen the first time she met Caesar, 'As much as Helen by her fatal beauty set in motion Argos and the Trojan horse, Cleopatra roused Italy's anger' (*quantum impulit Argos / Iliacasque domos facie Spartana nocenti, / Hesperios auxit tantum Cleopatra furores*, Luc. 10.60-62). Helen's mythical beauty is transferred to Cleopatra by the comparison, and as a result Caesar's and Mark Antony's behavior, eventually resulting in a civil war, becomes less strange.

Hence, drawing parallels can be said to have domesticating effects: it makes their story one of those well-known myths relating a dominant woman to a subordinated man. Cleopatra is not unique, and Mark Antony's behavior is not strange, it can be compared to that of Jason, Achilles, Heracles, and Jupiter himself. As a result of this 'domestication', the relation between Mark Antony and Cleopatra becomes a good parallel for the poet and his subordination to his lover. It underlines the message he gives in line 4, 'learn from my example to be afraid' (*tu nunc exemplo disce timere meo*). His critic should be afraid to meet a woman like Cleopatra or the poet's mistress. The previously 'strange' Cleopatra and the previously detested relationship between Cleopatra and Mark Antony become normalized by 'Hellenization', and that is beneficial for the poet.

3.2. *Stereotypical Other:* meretrix regina

After the mythological examples, Cleopatra is introduced as follows in Prop. 3.11.29-32:

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[238] Gurval 2011, 55. For the relation between Virgil's Dido and the historical Cleopatra, see especially Griffin 1985, 183-197.

quid, modo quae nostris opprobria vexerit armis
et famulos inter femina trita suos?
coniugii obsceni pretium Romana poposcit
moenia et addictos in sua regna patres.

What of her who of late has fastened disgrace upon our arms and, a woman who fornicated even with her slaves, demanded as the price of her shameful union the walls of Rome and the senate made over to her dominion.

Cleopatra is now represented as having involved Roman arms in a disgraceful conflict (l.29);[239] as being sexually insatiable and perverse (l.30); being dominant in her relationship with Mark Antony (l.31-32); and having a need to rule Rome. Lines 33-8, which will be discussed below, seem to form an intermezzo by linking recent historical circumstances concerning Egypt with previous conflicts. In any case, lines 39-41 continue the invectives addressed to Cleopatra:

scilicet incesti meretrix regina Canopi,
una Philippeo sanguine adusta nota,
ausa Iovi nostro latrantem opponere Anubim,
et Tiberim Nili cogere ferre minas,
Romanamque tubam crepitanti pellere sistro,
baridos et contis rostra Liburna sequi,
foedaque Tarpeio conopia tendere saxo,
iura dare et statuas inter et arma Mari!

To be sure, the harlot queen of licentious Canopus, una Philippeo sanguine adusta nota [this lines will be discussed in the next section] dared to put barking Anubis against our Jupiter and to force the Tiber to endure the threats of the Nile, to drive out the Roman trumpet with the rattling sistrum and with the poles of her barge pursue the beaks of our galleys, to stretch effeminate mosquito-nets on the Tarpeian rock and give judgments amid the arms and statues of Marius!

[239] Heyworth 2007a, *ad loc.* reads *Baehrens' qui*, which would cause this sentence to refer to Antony instead of to Cleopatra. The switch to Cleopatra is in this reading established by *femina* in l. 30. The disgrace, *opprobria*, can refer to civil war, but also to Roman soldiers serving under a woman.

Cleopatra is again represented as being sexually perverse and as the driving force of the Battle of Actium. Lines 41-46 directly juxtapose representations of Rome with those of Egypt, creating two opposing enemies.[240]

Comparison between the image of Cleopatra presented in Augustan poets and the contemporary Greek writer Strabo shows a difference in Cleopatra's role in the Civil War. In Strabo the clash between Antony and Octavian is predominantly Roman. Cleopatra is just taking part as a Roman client queen.[241] The reasons for emphasizing the importance of Cleopatra in the Civil War in Augustan poetry over that of Antony have been sought in Octavian propaganda. The war needed to be understood as a foreign war against a foreign enemy. According to Dio Cassius, Octavian had ritually declared war on Egypt alone in 32 BCE.[242] Though based on the representation of this conflict by Strabo and by practically all other contemporary and historians of later date, and on the views in Augustan poetry, it can be argued that it was actually considered to be a civil war.[243]

This poem (in lines 29-32 and 41-46) seems to describe a foreign war by turning the enemy into the stereotypical Other, but taking into account the main theme of this poem, the dominant woman, the clear division between Egypt and Rome becomes blurred. In line 29 we read that she 'has fastened disgrace upon our arms' (*nostris opprobria vexerit armis*). *Opprobria* seem to be explained in line 49: 'had we been fated to bear a woman's yoke' (*si mulier patienda fuit*). This reminds us of Propertius 4.6.22, where Antony's Roman soldiers obey Cleopatra: *pilaque feminea turpiter acta manu* ('and Roman javelins shamefully swayed under the authority of a woman'). *Pilae* are spears particularly used by Roman infantry.[244] The phrase *nostris opprobria vexerit*

[240] Propertius may have been inspired by Virgil, who also contrasts Egypt's anthropomorphic gods with Roman ones: Verg. *Aen.* 8.698-700: *omnigenumque deum monstra et latrator Anubis / contra Neptunum et Venerem contraque Minervam / tela tenent*, 'Monsters of every form and barking Anubis wield weapons against Neptune and Venus and against Minerva.'

[241] See p. 83. For a similar interpretation, see Becher 1966, 39-42.

[242] D.C. 50.4.4f. See Rüpke 2004, 32: 'In 32 B.C., Octavianus as a fetial priest declared war against the foreigner Cleopatra and herewith marked the beginning of the decisive phase of both the civil war against his *Roman* rival Mark Antony. Ritualization set both the tone of the conflict as well as its representation in the city of Rome, deflecting from the fact of civil war.' Org. italics.

[243] Cf. p. 83, n. 209.

[244] Hor. *Ep*. 9.11-14 conveys the same message, see pp. 132-133 n. 309.

armis, then, seems to refer to Romans serving Cleopatra in the context of the Civil War. Hence, although Cleopatra/Egypt is rendered as the stereotypical Other fighting against the Roman Self, the reality of civil war comes to the fore.

3.3. Una philippeo sanguine adusta nota

In my summary of Propertius 3.11, I labeled lines 33-38, which refer to Pompey's murder in Egypt, as an intermezzo in Cleopatra's representation as the stereotypical Other because she is addressed in the lines before it as well as in the lines thereafter. The passage reads as follows:

> *quid, modo qui nostris opprobria nexerit armis,*
> *et, famulos inter femina trita suos,*
> *coniugii obsceni pretium Romana poposcit*
> *moenia et addictos in sua regna Patres?*
> *noxia Alexandria, dolis aptissima tellus,*
> *et totiens nostro Memphi cruenta malo,*
> *tres ubi Pompeio detraxit harena triumphos--*
> *tollet nulla dies hanc tibi, Roma, notam.*
> *issent Phlegraeo melius tibi funera campo,*
> *vel tua si socero colla daturus eras.*
> *scilicet incesti meretrix regina Canopi,*
> *una Philippeo sanguine adusta nota,*
> *ausa Iovi nostro latrantem opponere Anubim,*
> *et Tiberim Nili cogere ferre minas*
>
> What of him who of late has fastened disgrace upon our arms, and a woman, who fornicated even with her slaves, demanded as the price for her shameful union the walls of Rome and the senate made over to her dominion? Guilty Alexandria, land ever ready for treason, and Memphis, so often blood-stained at our cost where the sand robbed Pompey of his three triumphs. No day shall ever wash you clean of this mark of shame, Rome. Better had your funeral processed over the Phlegrean plain, even if you had to bow your neck to your father-in-law. To be sure, the harlot queen of licentious Canopus, una Phillippeo sanguine adusta nota, dared to put barking Anubis against our Jupiter and to force the Tiber to endure the threats of the Nile.

Lines 33-38 include invectives addressed to the region of Egypt in its entirety. Alexandria as the capital of Lower Egypt and Memphis as the capital of Upper Egypt are together a *pars pro toto*. The murder of Pompey is mentioned in

particular. Considering the portrayal of Cleopatra, these lines seem to be superfluous: it is not particularly necessary to refer to Pompey's murder to get the message across of a queen hostile to Rome.[245] However, lines 33-38 may be the key to understanding another line that has gained a lot of scholarly attention, line 40, which I leave untranslated for the moment.

una Philippeo sanguine adusta nota

This line is interpreted in various ways, the two most commonly adopted ones being:

a. 'the signal mark of shame branded on Philip's line.'[246]

b. 'the signal mark of shame branded [on Rome] by Philip's line.'[247]

As a modification to these interpretations, an alternative interpretation of *una* is applied. Here Shackleton-Bailey's suggestion is followed to interpret *una* as *praecipuus*, 'signal', and not as 'sole'.[248] His interpretation does justice to the poor reputation that the Ptolemies generally had in the first century BCE, instead of making Cleopatra the only one. This line is fundamental to

[245] See Stahl 1985, 240, who wonders about the inclusion of this reference, 'Did Propertius perhaps just want to utter another accusation against Egypt in order to give geographical background to the evil character of Cleopatra?' According to him this is a 'surface explanation'. He suggests reading this passage in total as a reference to Julius Caesar and his romance with Cleopatra.

[246] Scholars who adhere to this interpretation include Fedeli 1985, *ad loc*.; Shackleton-Bailey 1956, *ad loc*.

[247] Scholars who argued for this interpretation include Butler and Barber 1933, *ad loc*.; Camps 1966, *ad loc*.

[248] Shackleton-Bailey 1956, *ad loc*., who argues that '*unus* = *praecipuus* is .. a well-established idiom in Propertius.' With the result that '[n]o more, then, is implied than Cleopatra was the most infamous of her dynasty.' Fedeli 1985, *ad loc*. adopts Shacketon-Bailey's suggestion and adds more examples of this use of *unus*. A third reading of line 40 can be found in Heyworth 2007b, *ad loc*., who argues 'The descendants of Philip are not conspicuous for their honourability, and it would be surprising for Propertius to make Cleopatra a single blot on the family escutcheon.' He rejects therefore the first interpretation which takes *sanguine* as locative ablative – but does not discuss the second one in which the dative *Romae* is included – and conjectures '*una Philippea sanguinis usta nota* ('the woman uniquely branded with the mark of Philip's blood'). He does admit that 'the corruptions are not easy to explain.'

understand the representation of Cleopatra in Propertius 3.11. Hence, the following pages present a detailed text analysis.

The first interpretation (a) concerns the reputation of the Ptolemies. Cleopatra is the most infamous member of a family which already had a bad reputation. The second interpretation (b) concerns the self-representation of Rome. Cleopatra is the extraordinary (different from other Ptolemies) mark of shame that made Rome look ugly. In this reading the dative *Romae* needs to be supplied in thought. Grammatical explanations form the heart of the discussion over the sound interpretation of line 40. In the first reading, taking *Philippeo sanguine* as locative ablative after *aduro* – which seems to require a dative – seems to be strange.[249] Regarding the second option, the omission of the dative *Romae* seems to be problematic.[250] Hence, based on grammar, both translations seem equally audacious.

Focusing instead on *interpretative* reasons, two arguments for a combined reading of line 40 with lines 33-38 appear. In the first place, Pompey's murder refers to a gruesome act of Cleopatra's brother, Ptolemy XIII, who is one of the descendants of the Macedonian king Philip II (*Philippeo sanguine*, l.40), just like his sister. Notwithstanding the fact that Ptolemy XIII is not mentioned by name, his decisive share in Pompey's murder by ordering the assassination was probably well-known. By referring to a family member who had previously interfered negatively in Roman affairs, Cleopatra becomes inscribed into a history of Roman incidents involving Egypt. The theme of an ongoing hostility between Egypt and Rome is also emphasized in line 34, in

[249] See, for instance, Shackleton-Bailey 1956, *ad loc*., who mentions that 'a dative would be requisite after *aduro*', but rejects this objection, because of 'the extra-ordinary freedom with which Propertius uses the locative ablative.' See also Butler and Barber 1933, *ad loc*., who reject the variant that takes *sanguine* as locative ablative because '*adusta* requires a dative of the remoter object, and in all cases where the ablative is used with it, it is instrumental.'

[250] Butler and Barber 1933, *ad loc*., argue that 'On the assumption that *nota* is nominative, the only possible sense is 'the unique disgrace branded by the blood of Philip; i.e. branded on Rome. The lack of the dative *Romae* is a difficulty; but in the absence of any other possible object, *Romae* must be supplied from the immediate context.' Camps 1966, *ad loc*. discusses both options and argues that this one 'seems the easiest grammar and the likeliest sense; for why should Propertius be concerned about the honour of Philips' line? The point seems to be that in Rome's earlier encounters with Philip of Macedon's descendants (Philip, Perses, etc.), it got nothing but honour; Cleopatra alone had inflicted disgrace, by entangling Antony with the consequences described in lines 29ff. above and 58 below.'

which Memphis is said to have staged so much (*totiens*) bloodshed at Rome's cost, *totiens* referring probably to Caesar's wars in Alexandria.

Secondly, it is remarkable that the same word, *nota*, appears twice (*notam* in line 36, *nota* in line 40) so close together. In line 36 it is said that 'no day shall ever wash you clean of this mark of shame, Rome' (*tollet nulla dies hanc tibi, Roma, notam*). Here the *nota* is obviously placed against the name of Rome. This line is complicated to interpret as it is unclear what exactly *hanc notam* refers to. Scholars have suggested that it may point to Pompey's modest grave, which is referred to in line 35: despite Pompey's three triumphs, his grave only consists of sand, *harena* – Lucan relates how Pompey was hastily buried on the beach (Luc. *BC* 8.712-93) – instead of a decent tomb befitting a general of his status.[251] The contents of lines 37-38 seem to accord with the suggestion that Pompey's poor grave formed the general concern of lines 33-38: 'Better had your funeral [Pompey's] processed over the Phlegrean fields, even though you had to bow your neck to your father-in-law' (*issent Phlegraeo melius tibi funera campo, / vel tua si socero colla daturus eras*). The Phlegrean plain probably refers to the Battle of Pharsalus (59 BCE), where Pompey was defeated by Caesar, his father-in-law by Pompey's marriage to Caesar's daughter Julia.[252] The message of these lines seems to be: if you had to bow your head to your father-in-law, it would have been

[251] According to Shackleton-Bailey 1965, *ad loc*., 'Pompey's death by Egyptian contrivance was in itself an affront to Roman dignity.' However, Butrica 1993, 344, comments on Shackleton-Bailey's suggestion, 'surely 'hanc' demands something immediately relevant to the context, not something which the poet neither mentions nor even suggests.' He also points out that *harena* seems odd as Pompey is not murdered on the beach but on a boat offshore. Based on parallels in other texts concerning the death of Pompey, he suggests reading *vernam* instead of *harena*, referring to the servile status of the eunuch Pothinus who proposed Pompey's murder. Heyworth 2007b, *ad loc*. however, argued that *harena* may not refer to the crime scene, but to Pompey's modest burial at the beach: 'it should be clear to any reader of this passage that a Roman could find rhetorical force in the sand of Egypt robbing Pompey of his three triumphs: instead of a magnificent tomb with inscriptions announcing his great services to the state, his corpse received the most basic identification: *hic situs est Magnus* (Luc. 8.793).'

[252] On the *Phlegraeus campus*, l.37, the gigantomachy took place. Ancient sources map the Phlegrean fields in Thessaly or in Campania. The latter would recall Pompey's illness at Campania, about which, see Cic. *Tusc.* 1.86; Plut. *Pomp*. 57. See on this topic e.g.: Fedeli, 1984, *ad loc.,* Heyworth and Morwood 2011, *ad loc*., who also note that Roman literary sources witness an association between gigantomachy and civil war.

better to have done so in the Battle of Pharsalus than here where you received a grave unworthy of you. *Socero colla daturus erat* recalls the decapitation of Pompey in Egypt and the presentation of his head to Caesar by accomplices of Ptolemy XIII.[253] Although *hanc notam* may grammatically suggest the existence of Pompey's modest grave, this does not mean that it cannot have more extensive connotations. A clue can be found in the meaning of *nota*. In this context of degradation, *nota* should be interpreted as a metaphorical variant of the literal 'mark of condemnation placed by the censors against the names of citizens [on the census list] degraded by them, or the punishment itself', also known as *nota censoria*.[254] One obtained a *nota* because of one's dishonorable behavior: the censor judged a person with regard to the *mores*. Most historical cases of *notae* concern magistrates who had done something wrong in performing their official duties. A *nota* placed against one's name on the census list had far-reaching consequences for the person's social status, political and military career.[255] This means that *hanc notam* in Prop. 3.11.36 involves Rome's dishonorable behavior, for which it can rightly be criticized. It is hard to see how Rome's conduct in the context of Pompey's modest grave in Egypt can be judged wrong other than when it is related to civil war. Pompey's murder in Egypt is firmly associated with civil war in lines 37-38. These lines refer directly to the Civil War between Caesar and Pompey, but they also implicitly predict the future Civil War. After all, if Pompey had not fled to Egypt, Caesar would not have followed him there; consequently, he would not have met Cleopatra, a meeting which set in motion all kinds of developments which ultimately led to the Civil War between Caesar and Pompey.[256] The reader is already reminded of the Civil War between Mark Antony and Octavian in the larger context of Propertius 3.11. Hence, though

[253] For a similar interpretation of *socero colla daturus erat*, see Gurval 2001, 198, n.39 and Heyworth and Morwood 2011, *ad loc*.
[254] For the definition, see *OLD ad. nota* 4.
[255] For *nota censoria*, see Suolahti 1963, esp. 48-56; Baltrusch 1989, 5-30.
[256] Scholars who argue likewise hasten to add that the love affair between Caesar and Cleopatra is not mentioned literally, see Heyworth and Morwood 2011 *ad loc*. But a parallel between Caesar and Antony is not necessary to understand the implications between Caesar's trip to Egypt and Cleopatra's role in Roman history. In his own commentary Caesar notes how he, after he followed Pompey to Egypt, restored Cleopatra to the Egyptian throne after she was outcast by her brother and co-ruler Ptolemy XIII, see p. 82, n. 207.

hanc notam refers explicitly to Pompey's modest grave, it refers implicitly, but not insignificantly, to civil war.[257]

Wrapping up my argumentation, Cleopatra is portrayed as being Rome's enemy, like her brother Ptolemy. They are both represented as being part of a long-term history of violence between Egypt and Rome. Furthermore, in line 36 Rome's reputation is at stake, the *nota* is clearly placed against Rome's name. Hence one would expect an opposition between Egypt and Rome in line 40 with consequences for Rome's reputation (option b) and not a comparison between Cleopatra and her family members concerning their reputation (option a). Cleopatra in this poem is portrayed as a dominant woman (or the Other). The fact that Romans served her (or were about to serve her) was already called a 'disgrace' (*opprobria*) in line 29. Consequently, the *nota* in line 40 is probably related to Cleopatra's dominance over Rome. Hence, line 40 seems to imply, 'Our (Roman) dishonorable behavior of serving a woman turned Cleopatra into a signal mark of shame placed at our name' (i.e. option b). In the reading of option b, the ablative *Philippeo sanguine* is a reference to previous negative Roman incidents with the Ptolemies for which Rome itself is ultimately responsible, in the case of Pompey's murder as well as Cleopatra's threatened dominance over Rome: civil war.

3.4. *Drunken suicide*

In the previous sections we have seen how Cleopatra could be framed as a mythological Greek woman (3.1), as a stereotypical Other (3.2) and as mark of shame (*nota*) branded on Rome (3.3). Here I shall discuss a fourth way in which the portrayal of Cleopatra is shaped, the representation of her self-inflicted death. The following lines are relevant in this respect:

[257] Gurval 2001, 196-200, also argues that the *nota* branded on Rome is civil war. He, however, does not discuss the implications for line 40 which he reads as option a), see *ib*. 196.

fugisti tamen in timidi vaga flumina Nili:
non cepere tuae Romula vincla manus.
bracchia spectasti sacris admorsa colubris,
et trahere occultum membra soporis iter.
'Non hoc, Roma, fui tanto tibi cive verenda!' 55
dixit et assiduo lingua sepulta mero.[258]

Yet you fled to the wandering outlets of the craven Nile: your hands did not receive Roman fetters. You endured the sight of your arms bitten by the sacred asps and your limbs channeling the stealthy route of the numbing poison. 'Having so great a citizen as this, O Rome, you need not have feared me': thus spoke even a tongue drenched in ceaseless toping.

These lines relate how Cleopatra stayed out of Roman hands by committing suicide.[259] According to them, she was drunk when she died. Other contemporary and later Roman sources interpret Cleopatra's suicide as a deliberate act to avoid being displayed as a prisoner – in chains – in a Roman triumph. For instance, two 2nd CE scholars, Helenius Acron and Pomponius Porphyrion, noted in their commentaries on Horace's *Carmen* 1.37 (the

[258] I have included two conjectures. Standard text editions like Hanslik's 1979 Teubner edition, Butler and Barber's 1933 *OCT*, Camps 1966 and Fedeli's 1984 Teubner edition read in l. 52 *accepere* instead of *nec cepere* and in l. 53 *spectavi* for *spectasti*. However, Heyworth's 2007 *OCT* reads *spectasti*. Reading *spectavi* implies that the poet himself witnessed a picture of Cleopatra's suicide carried along a cart in a triumph, while *spectasti* turns Cleopatra into the spectator of her own suicide. *Accepere* would imply that Cleopatra did receive Roman chains. Tronson 1999 has convincingly argued on historical and text interpretative grounds for the two conjectures that were already suggested by the 18th-century scholar Markland. Another textual problem can be found in l. 55. Some editions read *fuit*, which is in the manuscript tradition, instead of *fui*, see Camps 1966 and Fedeli's 1984 Teubner edition – they contain both versions (*fui[t]*) and a discussion of this problem. However, most editions, such as Hanslik's 1979 Teubner edition, Butler's 1933 *OCT* and Heyworth's 2007 *OCT*, read *fui*. *Fuit* would imply that the poet is speaking, not Cleopatra. Although Propertius shows a passion for drinking elsewhere, such an uttering seems out of place in 3.11. Cleopatra, however, was notorious for her drinking habits, see also Gurval 2001, 202, n.44.

[259] Other ancient sources also relate that she may have died from the prick of a poisonous hairpin: D.C. 51.14.2.; or that she may have smuggled poison in a comb that she had in her hair: Plut, *Ant*. 86.2. In these two sources Cleopatra is also said to have tested various methods of suicide on human prisoners: Plut. *Ant*. 71; D.C. 51.11.2. Other sources also relate this gruesome preparation of Cleopatra for her suicide: Pherc 817, col. V (*Carmen de Bello Actiaco*, cf. p. 130, n. 306) and Aelian, *HA*, 9.11.

Cleopatra Ode, see below) about a now lost book of Livy: *Livius refert, cum ab Augusto capta indulgentius de industria tractaretur, dicere solitam, 'non triumphabor'* (Livy says that Cleopatra, while she was captured by Augustus and was intentionally treated with considerable liberality, used to say, 'I will not be shown in a triumph').[260] A Roman perception of Cleopatra's deliberate choice to take her life can be gained from Horace *Carmen* 1.37, the so-called Cleopatra Ode which appeared around 23 BCE, like Propertius 3.11. [261] This Ode is well-known for its contrasting portrayal of Cleopatra.[262] As it renders Cleopatra in two different ways, it demonstrates that different representations of her could have existed in the Augustan age. Hence, this Ode will be quoted in its entirety:

Nunc est bibendum, nunc pede libero	Now we must drink, now we must
pulsanda tellus; nunc Saliaribus	beat the earth with unfettered feet, now,
ornare pulvinar deorum	my friends, is the time to load the couches
tempus erat dapibus, sodales.	of the gods with Salian feasts.
antehac nefas depromere Caecubum	Before this it was a sin to take the Caecuban
cellis avitis, dum Capitolio	down from its ancient racks, while the mad queen
regina dementis ruinas,	with her contaminated flock of men
funus et imperio parabat	diseased by vice, was preparing
contaminato cum grege turpium	the ruin of the Capitol and the destruction
morbo virorum quidlibet inpotens	of our power, crazed with hope
sperare fortunaque dulci	unlimited and drunk
ebria. sed minuit furorem	with sweet fortune. But her madness

[260] See Ferdinandus Hauthal (ed.), *Acronis et Porphyrionis commentarii in Q. Horatium Flaccum*, ed. Berolini: Sumptibus Julii Springeri, 1864-1866.

[261] Scholars commonly match Prop. 3.11.53-56 with Hor.1.37 and notice the difference in tone. Paratore 1936, was the first to argue that Propertius' version of Cleopatra's death diminished the status of Augustus' triumph. However, other parallels can be drawn than just her suicide. Gurval 2001, 201 compares Cleopatra's flight with 'the soft dove and hunted hare from Horace's ode or Virgil's *regina* on the shield of Aeneas, who is pale with signs of her approaching death as she seeks the comforting embrace of a grieving Nile.' But whereas Cleopatra's deliberate suicide is not a theme in Virgil, it is in Prop. 3.11.

[262] On the shifting evaluation of Cleopatra, see esp. Davis 1991, 233-242.

vix una sospes navis ab ignibus	decreased when scarce a ship escaped the flames
mentemque lymphatam Mareotico	and her mind, which had been deranged by
redegit in veros timores	Mareotic wine, was made to face real fears
Caesar ab Italia volantem	as she flew from Italy, and Caesar
remis adurgens, accipiter velut	pressed on the oars (like a hawk
mollis columbas aut leporem citus	after gentle doves or a swift hunter
venator in campis nivalis	after a hare on the snowy plains
Haemoniae, daret ut catenis	of Trace) to put in chains
fatale monstrum. quae generosius	this monster sent by fate. But she looked
perire quaerens nec muliebriter	for a nobler death and did not have a woman's fear
expavit ensem nec latentis	of the sword, nor did she make
classe cita reparavit oras.	for secret shores with her swift fleet.
ausa et iacentem visere regiam	Daring to gaze with face serene upon her ruined
voltu sereno, fortis et asperas	palace, and brave enough to take deadly serpents
tractare serpentes, ut atrum	in her hand, and let the body
corpore conbiberet venenum,	drink their black poison,
deliberata morte ferocior;	fiercer she was in the death she chose, as though
saevis Liburnis scilicet invidens	she did not wish to cease to be a queen, taken to
privata deduci superbo,	Rome on the galleys of savage Liburnians
non humilis mulier, triumpho	to be a humble woman in proud triumph.
	Tr. West 1995

In the first half, lines 5-20, she is the stereotypical Other. Keywords in this concept of Cleopatra are: *demens*, *contaminatus*, *ebrius*, *inpotens*, *furor* and *mens lymphata*. She is associated with mental illness, sexual perversity, drunkenness, impotence and frenzy. The turning point in her profile is heralded by the word *monstrum* (l.21). *Monstrum* can be explained as referring to something horrible and as such embodying all the Othering invectives addressed at Cleopatra, but it is also a signal word for something 'miraculous', and arouses Roman interest. In lines 21-32 Cleopatra's profile is radically opposed to the one created in the first half. Keywords are: *generosus*, *nec muliebris*, *serenus*, *fortis*, *deliberatus*, *ferox*, *non humilis mulier*. She is now characterized as mentally sound, calm, brave and determined. Her femininity is literally denied. In this second half, she is the antipode of the stereotypical Other, consequently she becomes like the Roman Self. The turning point in her profile is anchored in her suicide. Her deliberate decision not to become a

humble woman in a Roman triumph by taking her own life makes her somebody with whom a Roman could identify.

Modern scholars explain Horace's positive portrayal in line with Augustan propaganda as it supposes that Octavian beat a mentally sound, manlike enemy and not a mad woman, i.e. a positive portrayal of the queen has status-enhancing effects on Octavian's military success in the Battle of Actium.[263] As both poems mention Cleopatra's suicide in the context of Octavian's victory at Actium, it seems evident that Propertius 3.11 forms some kind of dialogue with Horace's Ode and Augustan propaganda.[264] Comparison between the two poems reveals one major difference in their description of Cleopatra's suicide. In Propertius, she commits suicide while being drunk; in Horace, her drinking stops the moment she decides to take her own life.

In Hor. *Carm*. 1.37, drinking is obviously a theme. The poem starts with the famous *nunc est bibendum*, 'Now we should drink'.[265] The reason for drinking and the reason to take 'the Caebuban wine down from its ancient ranks' (*antehac nefas depromere Caecubum / cellis avitis*, ll. 5-6) is Augustus' defeat of Cleopatra. In the third stanza Cleopatra is said to be 'drunk with sweet fortune' (*fortunaque dulci ebria*, ll. 11-12). Cleopatra's drinking habits are mentioned again in lines 12-15, but now she is said to have sobered up the moment she faced reality, 'But her madness decreased when scarce a ship escaped the flames and her mind, which had been deranged by Mareotic wine, was made to face real fears' (*sed minuit furorem / vix una sospes navis ab*

[263] See West 1995, 189, who refers to Wyke 1992 (reprinted in 2002) to argue that Horace's ode follows Augustan propaganda that seems to have represented a different picture of Cleopatra after her death and notes, 'I think rather that Octavian and his advisers realized that little was to be gained by gloating over the death of a woman.' See *ib*. 188-189 for another explanation for the shift in tone than Augustan propaganda.

[264] Particularly *tamen* in l. 53 seems to indicate a contrast to the previous line in which Augustus is praised for his victory over Cleopatra and, hence, seems to contain criticism, see Nethercut 428-429 and 439; Tronson 1999, 183. Those scholars who read Prop. 3.11 as patriotic translate *tames* with "after all', despite your hopes and our fears', see Camps 1966, *ad loc*.; Baker 1976, 61.

[265] This opening line is an allusion to a poem of Alcaeus (fragm. 332, Campbell, *Greek lyric* vol. 1), which opens with νῦν χρῆ μεθύσθην. Regarding the topic of drinking Gurval 2011, 64, states, 'a drinking both literal and metaphorical, that impels the dramatic action of the ode, linking the celebrant and the conquered. The pointed contrast, however, is not between drunken queen and symposiastic poet, but between the conflicting emotion of the queen who at the end of the ode drinks in her body the black poison.'

ignibus / mentemque lymphatam Mareotico / redegit in veros timores). In the penultimate stanza the topic of drinking is touched upon again, but now it concerns her body drinking the poison or literally the snakes drinking their poison into her body, 'Daring to gaze with face serene upon her ruined palace, and brave enough to take deadly serpents in her hand to drink into her body their black poison' (*ausa et iacentem visere regiam / voltu sereno, fortis et asperas / tractare serpentes, ut atrum / corpore conbiberet venenum*, ll. 25-28). In Horace's Cleopatra Ode, Cleopatra dies while being sober, and this contributes greatly to her positive representation. Because Horace's Cleopatra Ode is heavily focused on the theme of drinking, Propertius' version of Cleopatra's suicide seems to form a contrast as here Cleopatra is intoxicated while committing suicide.

Regarding Augustan propaganda, scholars have debated whether Propertius' alteration does contain some kind of criticism aimed at Augustus' success or not. Some have argued, emphasizing the eulogic character of the lines following Cleopatra's suicide and the patriotic character of the poem in general, that Propertius was not expressing criticism, but that he went out of his way to match Augustan propaganda in which bashing Cleopatra with her inebriation was simply part of the repertoire.[266] Others believe that Propertius

[266] See especially Mader 1989, who focussed on the 'official' Augustan propaganda and argued in his comparison of Hor. *Carm.* 1.37 and Prop. 3.11 that Horace's description of Cleopatra's death 'challenges Octavian propaganda', and that Propertius 'went out of his way to advertise that his Cleopatra portrait conformed with the official, hostile Octavian version.' Cleopatra's excessive drinking was one of the general Roman invectives against her directed at the good sober Roman way of living versus the licentious customs of the other. Although the Ptolemaic court may have been known for its abuse of wine, it is also plausible that the image of Cleopatra as a drunk is created because of her affiliation with Mark Antony, who famously had to apologize for his alcohol abuse in his tractate, *De ebrietate sua*. The specific association between Cleopatra and drunkenness may also have been created *extra* Mark Antony as a Greek epigram linking Cleopatra to the figure of [méthee, Greek], possibly referring to méthee nephalios: 'divine joy of life'. For the probable impossibility that the Augustan connections between Cleopatra and drunkenness are 'a willful misinterpretation of this symbol', see Nisbet and Hubbard 1970, 414-415, also for the quotes and further references. Other reference to alcohol abuse at the Ptolemaic court under Cleopatra include: Prop. 3.11.55-56; Hor. *Carm.* 1.37.14; Strabo 17.1.11; Luc. *BC* 10.161-163. For Mark Antony's apology, see Sen. *Epist.* 83.25; Plin. *NH* 14.148. For anecdotes concerning Antony's licentiousness, see e.g. Plut. *Ant.* 9.3-4; with reference to Cicero's description of Antony's life, see particularly Cic. *Phil.* 2.

expressed disapproval by stressing the implications of Cleopatra's intoxication on her dying words, like Tronson: 'There was nothing dignified about her suicide. The protagonist's dying words always have a solemn significance in literature, yet here Cleopatra is so drunk (Horace's Cleopatra suddenly becomes sober when her end is imminent) that it is only her disembodied wine-sodden tongue which appears to confess that Rome had nothing to fear with a citizen such as Augustus at hand. This implies that since her mind was inebriated, she was not fully aware of what she was saying.' [267] Taking into account the Roman literary discourse on suicide, Propertius' alteration from Horace's version may have been significant.

Roman suicide was a literary topic in the early Roman empire in which some self-inflicted deaths were regarded highly while others were far from being heroic.[268] To perform a respectable suicide, the committer needed to have the right reasons to do so, like the act of *devotio*, self-sacrifice. An example of such a suicide is the death of the Roman emperor Otho, who offered himself to save the life of others.[269] Another justified reason for suicide is avoiding disgrace. Examples include women taking their lives in order to stay chaste or because they lost their chastity. Generals also committed suicide when facing defeat.[270] Roman suicide was an aristocratic affair: it was a public act following social expectations of how the aristocracy should behave. There were good and bad ways for the aristocracy to commit suicide, and whether this act worked positively or negatively on the reception of the person depended on the circumstances.[271] Some of the right circumstances leading to

[267] Tronson 1999, 184.
[268] Examples of highly regarded suicide are the deaths of Seneca (Tac. *Ann*. 15.61-64) and T. Pomponius Atticus (Nep. *Att*. 21-11).
[269] Tac. *Hist*. 2.47-50.
[270] Griffin 1986a and particularly 1986b argues that Roman suicide was influenced by Stoic philosophy, but not to the extent that Stoicism caused a shift from a negative point of view to a more positive one in Roman attitudes towards suicide. According to her, Stoicism attributed severe conditions to a highly valued suicide, and Roman society already had historical examples of justified suicide long before Stoicism was introduced. Collections of Roman sources on Roman suicide include Grisé 1982 and Van Hooff 1990.
[271] For a discussion of the differences between modern notions of suicide and ancient views of self-killing, see Hill 2004, who stresses the public implications of Roman self-inflicted death. Van Hooff 2004 and Arand 2002 discuss good and bad deaths of emperors, respectively. Though the word suicide is derived from Latin, it was not used

status-enhancing effects are 'calmness' and 'fearlessness'. It is evident that Horace's description of Cleopatra's self-inflicted death meets these conditions, while Propertius' account lacks these qualities.[272] By tempering the status of Augustus' defeat of Cleopatra, Propertius seems to have made another footnote to Augustus' success in this poem, besides referring to civil war, creating an extremely ambivalent picture of the Battle of Actium and of Augustus.[273]

4. CONCLUSIONS

In this chapter I have distinguished four different ways in which Cleopatra is framed in one Augustan poem: Propertius 3.11. Firstly, Cleopatra is conceptualized as a mythological woman. She is added to an illustrious list of dominant Greek mythological women. Secondly, Cleopatra is described as the stereotypical Other, she (and Egypt) are placed diametrically opposed to Roman standards. Thirdly, she is framed as the signal mark of shame (*una nota*) branded on Rome. Fourthly, she is also presented as a drunken suicide.

In the context of Roman self-representation, the effects of these four conceptualizations are different. Adding Cleopatra to an illustrious list of dominant Greek mythological women has a domesticating effect. It makes Antony's and ultimately the poet's own subordination to a woman more acceptable. The three other conceptualizations have alienating effects as *un*Roman behavior is attributed to her. Despite being rendered as unRoman, this chapter has shown that the representation of Cleopatra does not function only as a negative mirror for Rome's own behavior. Her portrayal as a dominant woman, for instance, blurs the distinction between the Other and the Self. Cleopatra held Roman men under her sway who fought against Rome.

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in antiquity. For a discussion of Roman terms referring to self-killing, see e.g. Hooff 1991 and Hooff 2001.

[272] For Cleopatra's 'calmness' and 'defiance' in Hor. *Carm.* 1.37, see Gurval 2011, 65-66. The 'demonstration of calm and fearlessness ' is one of the general characteristics of a good Roman suicide, see e.g. Griffin 1986a, 67.

[273] As Gurval 2001, 205, argues about the final lines of the poem (ll. 69-72), 'The battle of Actium is thus the achievement of Caesar Augustus that will stand beside the deeds and *monumenta* of past Roman heroes. But this is not the only message in the final command by the poet to recall Actium.' Actium in this poem also recalls civil war, and this implies that a serious undertone is activated when praising Augustus.

Hence, Cleopatra as the stereotypical Other in this poem is not used to cover up but rather to emphasize the fact of civil war. Furthermore, being *una nota* means that she also represents Rome's own dishonorable behavior: in this context, civil war. The rendering of her as a drunken suicide seems to temper the status of Augustus' victory in the Battle of Actium, making her a tool to criticize the successes of Augustus. In all three cases Cleopatra functions as a vehicle to display Rome's own negative conduct.

This chapter has shown that an Egyptian topos that seems to be primarily linked to the concept of the stereotypical Other can be rendered in many other ways in one Augustan poem. Considering the Roman literary discourse on 'Egypt', a caveat needs to be made: Propertius' representation of Cleopatra cannot simply be transposed to a Roman conceptualization of Egypt in general, as it is unclear whether all Romans thought about her in the same way. Even more importantly, the four ways in which Cleopatra is framed cannot simply be considered Roman ways of conceptualizing *Egypt*: a dominant mythological woman or drunken suicide are not standard ways to frame 'Egypt'. They may function as tools to reflect upon the Self and may be illustrative of the general Roman discourse on Egypt.

III

Framing Egypt: negative Roman stereotypes

1. Introduction

Previous scholarship on Roman literary perceptions of Egypt has mostly emphasized the use of negative stereotypes.[274] In terms of Roman self-representation, the use of negative stereotypes of Egypt has been explained as Othering: a positive Roman image was created by contrasting it (implicitly) to a negative example. This process is called negative self-definition.[275] In the previous chapters it has been demonstrated that the Roman conceptualization of Egypt cannot be explained by looking only at negative Roman stereotypes. This chapter will investigate the assumed relationship between the use of negative stereotypes (concept) and Othering (function). Were stereotypes only used as a means of negative mirroring to emphasize Roman self-esteem? The Augustan use of negative stereotypes will be put into perspective by comparison with earlier and later uses. Let us start by discussing how Roman stereotypes of Egypt have been explained previously.

[274] For relevant studies see p. 8, n. 31. Although over-emphasized in modern studies, negative stereotypes are a fundamental part of the spectrum of Roman literary perceptions of Egypt and cannot be dismissed as insignificant, as was recently suggested. See Gruen 2011a, 107, who argues, 'A similar assembling [to Greek authors] of fragmentary bits from miscellaneous Roman writers has kept scholars busy. It is easy enough to cite authors from Cicero to Juvenal, and beyond, to accumulate ostensibly hostile comments about Egypt, and to pile up numbers that seem impressive at first glance. Do they show that Rome seethed with anti-Egyptian prejudice? On closer scrutiny, the significance of these snippets rapidly shrinks.' Although Gruen is right in emphasizing other Roman voices about Egypt, when exploring the Roman literary perception of Egypt in its totality, the negative stereotypes are also significant.

[275] See the general introduction, p. 12.

1.1. *Roman use of negative stereotypes: status quaestionis*

The passages conveying negative Roman perceptions of Egypt have rarely been studied in depth by a critical analysis of their full discursive and literary contexts. The negative stereotypes are in most cases singled out of their context, lumped together and mentioned in a matter-of-fact way to supply background information for a more specific subject. They are also explained mostly by historical circumstances and are not discussed as part of discursive strategies. Smelik and Hemelrijk, for instance, enumerate a list of historical explanations: 'But perhaps because of the extremely awkward circumstances under which contacts between Rome and Egypt started, because of the conduct of Cleopatra, the dependence on corn-supply from Egypt, the insubordination of a population that did not want to pay their taxes and because of the Roman aversion to an essentially foreign culture and religion, the strong Roman dislike of Egypt persisted until the time of Julian.'[276]

In the general introduction it was argued that stereotyping is highly functional. Stereotypes are used to make sense of a complex world by simplification. Hence, they should not be explained simply as utterances of dislike or hatred, such as expressed by Meyer Reinhold, who noted a 'growing contempt and hatred for the Egyptians' on the Roman side.[277] In a similar vein, stereotypes are explained as in accordance with the general Roman dislike of foreigners and seen as an augmentation of negative Greek attitudes towards Egypt.[278] When interpreted in a functional way, negative Roman stereotypes of Egypt are explained in terms of Othering: they are used to enhance the status of the Self. However, as argued in the general introduction, the social function of stereotypes is not only about self-esteem. Stereotypes can also work as informative, simplifying or structuring devices.

Negative stereotypes in the Augustan age have generally been highlighted. From that period onwards, Roman hostility towards Egypt is believed to have become stronger. But we can question whether Roman stereotypes of Egypt in the Augustan literature can be put on par with those found in periods without a major crisis such as civil war. Instead of lumping all Roman negative

[276] Smelik and Hemelrijk 1984, 1955.
[277] Reinhold 1980, 100.
[278] Isaac 2004 is a good example of such a work as it enumerates negative Greek and Roman stereotypes of Egyptians along with Greek and Roman stereotypes of other people under the heading ancient proto-racism.

stereotypes together and explaining them as examples of 'Othering', we shall investigate here whether similar negative stereotypes have the same function each time they are used by placing them in their larger discursive contexts. The examples discussed are given a prominent place in modern scholarship on Roman perceptions of Egypt. In each section the general role of Egypt in the concerned text(s) will be presented first, followed by an overview of the specific negative perceptions, and finally the function of the stereotypes used will be analyzed by looking at how they are 'framed'. In order to put the Augustan period into perspective, this chapter is arranged in chronological order.

2. PRE-AUGUSTAN: CICERO

Many modern studies on Roman perceptions of Egypt focus on Cicero (106-43 BCE). Ruth Meyer in her dissertation *Die Bedeutung Aegyptens in der lateinischen Literatur der vorchristlichen Zeit* (Köln 1965) studied the Roman perceptions of Egypt chronologically from the first appearances in Ennius through to Ovid and noticed an increase of Roman knowledge about Egypt in Cicero's works, gained from the Greek literature and from experience.[279] In Cicero, Egypt is known for its antiquity (its deep past), philosophy (Plato and Pythagoras), fortune-telling (oracle of Hammon, Isis fortune-tellers), the Nile, the legendary Egyptian king Busiris, embalming of corpses, Alexandria and animal worship. Cicero not only gained information about Egypt from the Greek literature, he also met Egyptians, including Queen Cleopatra and Egyptian slaves and freedmen.[280] Apart from the presence of Cleopatra in

[279] According to Meyer, Cicero introduced many Egyptian subjects into the Roman literature by taking the Greek literature as an example, but his writings also show the presence of Egypt in contemporary Rome (slaves, Isis cult, Alexandria). For an overview and discussion of Egypt in Cicero, see Meyer pp. 31-66; for a summary, see *ib.* 164-167.

[280] Cicero's Egypt: antiquity, *Div*. 1.2, *Rep.* 3.14; philosophy (Plato and Pythagoras), *Fin*. 5.87, fortune-telling (oracle of Hammon) *Div*. 1.3; 1.95; *Nat. D.* 1.81 (Isis fortune-tellers), *Div.* 1.132, the Nile, *Rep*. 6.19; *Nat. D.* 2.130; 3.54-59, the legendary Egyptian king Busiris, *Rep*. 3.15, embalming of corpses, *Tusc*. 1.108, Alexandria, *Rep*. 3.14, *Rab*. 35, animal worship, *Nat. D.* 1.43; 1.81; 1.101; 3.39; *Tusc.* 5.78; Cleopatra, *Att*. 13.12.3; 14.8.1; 14.20.2; 15.1.4; 15.4.4; 15.15.2; 15.17.2. For Egyptian slaves or freedmen in Cicero, see Meyer 1965, 63. Cicero probably met Cleopatra

Rome and Caesar's Alexandrian war, Egypt was in the news in Cicero's age as the Romans supported Ptolemy XII in his attempts to regain the Egyptian throne.[281]

Smelik and Hemelrijk mention Cicero in their diachronic study on Greek and Roman perceptions of Egyptian animal worship as 'the first Roman author to express himself negatively about Egypt'.[282] Although they interpret these Ciceronian remarks about animal worship in the larger context and see them as useful examples in Cicero's argumentation, they argue that his passages on animal worship 'clearly show Cicero's negative attitude'.[283] Versluys starts his theoretical section on Othering in his reconstruction of the Roman discourse on Egypt with a quote from Cicero's *Pro Rabirio Postumo*. Cicero also features prominently in the conclusion of Versluys' overview of Roman literary attitudes towards Egypt: 'Cicero personifies the rupture between the more or less realistic view and the later period which seems mainly to testify to a recollection of stereotypes. In Cicero both the sincere admiration for the Egyptian culture is present, it hardly matters that he thereby places himself sometimes in Greek tradition, and a negative perception of concrete expression of that culture, such as the Egyptian cults and Alexandrians in Rome. Literary sources after Cicero emphasize almost only these negative aspects.'[284] These studies show that Cicero is felt to be the point of departure to discuss negative Roman stereotypes of Egypt in the later literature.

The Ciceronian representation of Egypt need not have been based on a *Roman* opinion of Egypt per se or Cicero's own view. An analysis of the literary structure, characterization of the interlocutors, and dramatic composition of the works reveal that most Ciceronian stereotypes of Egypt are

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when she visited Rome in 44 BCE, at least he was involved in a business affair with her through her agent, see *Att*. 15.15.2.

[281] Cicero's *Pro Rabirio* perfectly underscores Cicero's and Roman embroilment in a complicated political matter, see for this case pp. 120-125.

[282] But Smelik and Hemelrijk 1984, 1921. Cf. *ib*. 1922: 'In general, Cicero had a negative opinion of Egypt.' Pearce 2007, 52, is more nuanced: 'Cicero, often viewed as the first representative of the hostile image of the Egyptians, actually shows very little interest in Egypt. His negative remarks about Egyptian religion must be understood in the philosophical context in which they are presented, reflecting Academic discourse about animal worship as one among many examples of "mistaken notions" about the gods.'

[283] *Ib*. 1956.

[284] Versluys 2002, 434. For the quote of Cic. *Rab*. 35, *ib*. 389.

used in a Greek context. *De Republica* 3.14 is an elusive example. This passage is frequently quoted to argue that Egypt evokes both rejection as well as admiration in Cicero. His philosophical dialogue, *De Repubica*, which is Platonic in inspiration, describes a conversation between Aemilius Scipio and eight of his friends who gathered at Scipio's suburban villa during the *Feriae Latinae* in early 129 BCE. The passage under discussion is part of an argument of Lucius Furius Philus, consul in 140 BCE, in which he reproduces the second public speech of the Greek Stoic philosopher Carneades delivered in Rome as a member of the famous Athenian philosophers' embassy (155 BCE). When arguing that justice (*ius*) is a matter of nurture (*civile*), not nature (*naturale*), because the terms justice and injustice do not mean the same to everyone, Philus/Carneades gives Egypt as an example:

> *si quis .. multas et varias gentis et urbes despicere et oculis collustrare possit, videat primum in illa incorrupta maxime gente Aegyptiorum, quae plurimorum saeculorum et eventorum memoriam litteris continet, bovem quendam putari deum, quem Apim Aegyptii nominant, multaque alia portenta apud eosdem et cuiusque generis beluas numero consecratas deorum.*
>
> If one could visit many diverse nations and cities and examine them, .. he would see first of all that in that well-known particularly authentic Egypt, which preserves written records of the events of countless ages, a bull, which the Egyptians call Apis, is deemed a god, and many other monsters and animals of every sort are held sacred as divine. Tr. Keyes 1948, with modifications.

Generally, scholars explain this example as an argumentative strategy in a philosophical debate to convince the opponent of the variability and, hence, relativity of justice. The first part, in which Philus/Carneades expresses his admiration for Egypt by praising it for being authentic (*incorrupta*), arouses the expectation that Egypt's justice will be in accordance with Rome's *ius*, but the second part about animal worship immediately squashes that expectation as worshipping animals is something a 'true' Roman should not do. His message seems to be that even countries that can be called civilized and are admired, such as Egypt, have 'astonishing' customs.[285] It is, however,

[285] Smelik and Hemelrijk 1986, 1956, argue with regard to this passage, 'In a very suggestive manner the reader is reminded of the positive conception of Egypt as a land of age-old traditions only then to be confronted by the sharp contrast of the astonishing custom of worshipping beasts and monsters. In this same vein Cicero goes on to remark that some nations consider human sacrifice an act of piety.' But it can

questionable whether this passage can be used as an example of *Cicero'*s – or *Roman* – perception of Egypt. The passage is after all Philus' version of Carneades' speech transmitted by Cicero. Not only here but generally in Ciceronian work, the authorial voice of Cicero is debated by modern scholars.[286] Hence, it should not be concluded *a priori* that Roman *communis opinio* about Egypt is in accordance with the version given by Philus/Carneades. On the other hand, as Cicero wrote for a Roman public, the representation of Egypt in his work must have been familiar to his Roman public. In this sense Ciceronian representations of Egypt will be considered to be 'Roman' in this chapter.

2.1. Negative stereotypes of Egypt in Cicero

Passages can be found in Cicero's work that denigrate the Egyptians or Egyptian customs by calling them 'ridiculous', 'insane', 'uncivilized' and 'untrustworthy'.[287] By far the most negative perceptions are related to their religious customs and animal worship. Hence previous studies have stressed

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be argued that *Rep.* 3.14 does not convey a *negative* Greek/Roman perception of Egypt at all. The second part of the passage about animal worship can be related to the word *incorrupta* 'authentic' of the first part of the passage in which Egypt was praised. In this vein animal worship becomes an example of an Egyptian tradition that has not changed since deep antiquity. Along this line of reasoning, the mention of animal worship just points out a different religious custom than that of the Greeks/Romans and is not used to stress Greek/Roman religious customs by negatively approaching animal worship, or the civilization of the Egyptians, per se. Though *quendam bovem* and *quidam* suggest low regard, see Büchner 1984, *ad loc*.

[286] For the discussion of whether Philus' version was truly a reflection of the speech of Carneades with minor additions by Cicero, or whether this speech was mainly Cicero's, see Glucker 2001. See also Büchner 1984, 282, for a list of mentioned facts in Philus' speech that Carneades could not have known.

[287] 'Ridiculous', Cic. *Nat. D.* 1.101: *inridentur Aegyptii*; 'insane', Cic. *Nat. D.* 1.43: *Aegyptiorumque… dementiam*; 'uncivilized', Cic. *Nat. D.* 1.81: *at non Aegyptii nec Syri nec fere cuncta barbaria*, and Cic. *Nat. D.* 3.47: *cur barbarorum deos repudiemus*; and 'perverse', Cic. *Tusc.* 5.78: *Aegyptiorum morem quis ignorat? quorum inbutae mentes pravitatis erroribus*. See also Cic. *Leg.* 1.32 for the term 'superstition' in relation to animal worship: *nec si opiniones aliae sunt apud alios, idcirco qui canem et felem ut deos colunt non eadem superstitione qua ceterae gentes conflictantur*, 'and even if different men have different beliefs, that does not prove, for example, that it is not the same quality of superstition that besets those races which worship dogs and cats as gods, as that which torments other races.' Tr. Keyes 1948.

that this Egyptian religious custom is 'a most inferior form of religion'.[288] Cicero associates the Egyptian religion with the superstition of the ignorant. For instance, in the treatise *De Natura Deorum*, the Syrians and the Egyptians are grouped together as examples of *imperiti* ('ignorants') because they worship animals.[289] In another Ciceronian philosophical work, *De Divinatione*, the worship of Isis is also associated with superstition when a couple of lines of Ennius are quoted to demonstrate that the speaker, Quintus, does not believe in any kind of divination.[290] In this passage Isis-seers (*Isiacos coniectores*) are identified as frauds along with augurs, soothsayers, astrologers and dream interpreters.[291] Outside the context of the Egyptian

[288] For the quote, see Smelik and Hemelrijk 1984, 1956. The passages dealing with animal worship include: Cic. *Tusc*. 5.78; *Nat. D*. 1.43; 1.81; 1.101; 3.47. Cf. previous note.

[289] Cic. *Nat. D*. 3.39: *nec vero volgi atque imperitorum inscitiam despicere possum, cum ea considero quae dicuntur a Stoicis. sunt enim illa imperitorum: piscem Syri venerantur; omne fere genus bestiarum Aegyptii consecraverunt*, 'In fact, when I reflect on the utterances of the Stoics, I cannot despise the stupidity of the vulgar and the ignorant. With the ignorant you get superstitions like Syrians' worship of a fish, and the Egyptians' deification of almost every species of animal.' Tr. Rackham 1961.

[290] *De Divinatione* contains a philosophical dialogue between the Stoic Quintus and his Academic brother Marcus. For a discussion about the 'authorial voice', and whether Marcus is the voice of Cicero, see Schultz, 2014, Beard 1986, *contra*, and Schofield 1986, *pro*. For a debate on Ciceronian inconsistencies, Cic. *Nat. D*. 3.95 is of special importance, see p. 125, n. 302.

[291] Cic. *Div*. 1.132: *nunc illa testabor, non me sortilegos neque eos, qui quaestus causa hariolentur, ne psychomantia quidem, quibus Appius, amicus tuus, uti solebat, agnoscere./ non habeo denique nauci Marsum augurem; / non vicanos haruspices, non de circo astrologos; / non Isiacos coniectores, non interpretes somnium;—non enim sunt ei aut scientia aut arte divini— .. ,* 'I will assert, however, in conclusion, that I do not recognize fortune-tellers, or those who prophesy for money, or necromancers, or mediums, whom your friend Appius makes it a practice to consult. / In fine, I say, I do not care a fig / for Marsian augurs, village soothsayers, / astrologers who haunt the circus grounds, / or Isis-seers, or dream interpreters: / —for they are not diviners either by knowledge or skill — ..' Tr. Falconer 1923 with modification. With regard to the authenticity of *Isiacos coniectores* in Ennius, note Wardle 2006, *ad loc.*: 'Worship of Isis reached Campania in the 2nd cent. through the region's strong economic ties with Egypt and Delos, and by the early 1st cent. there was a cult on the Capitoline hill in Rome (*CIL* 6.2247, datable 90-60 cf. Apul. *Met*. 11.30). Given that the worship of Isis had probably not reached Rome by Ennius' death, these words are Cicero's, reflecting a view of his time: from the early 50s to 48 the senate had tried repeatedly to remove the unauthorized cult-sites from Rome, as a threat to the *pax deorum*.' With reference to Takács 1995, 27-70. For the senate's interference with the cults of Isis in Rome, see pp. 171-175.

religion, only one instance exists where the Egyptians are addressed in negative characterizations. In his defense of Rabirius Postumus, Cicero discredits the Alexandrian witnesses of the opposing party for their untrustworthiness, as will become clear below (2.2).

The Ciceronian instances in which clearly negative perceptions of Egyptians appear include: *Pro Rabirio Postumo* 35; *De Divinatione* 1.132; *Tusculanae Disputationes* 5.78; *De Natura Deorum* 1.43; 1.81-82; 1.101; and 3.47. Of these seven passages, six deal with the Egyptian religion, and five are related to animal worship; four of the latter appear in the same text, *De Natura Deorum*. This treatise discusses the notions of gods of different philosophical schools, and in such a context remarks about Egyptian animal worship can be expected. Considering the quantity of surviving Ciceronian texts and taking into account the profound Roman political interferences with Egypt in Cicero's day, the small number of negative perceptions of Egypt in Cicero should perhaps warn us not to make too much of them.

2.2. *The function of negative stereotypes of Egypt in Cicero*

With regard to their function, the negative perceptions of Egyptians in Cicero can be divided into two groups according to the two different genres in which they appear (oration and philosophical treatise). To demonstrate the different functions of stereotypes in Cicero, the use of negative stereotyping in Cicero's defending speech, *Pro Rabirio Postumo*, will be explored first in this chapter, followed by a discussion of an example from the philosophical treatise *De Natura Deorum*.

Pro Rabirio Postumo 35

Cicero's defense of Gaius Rabirius Postumus deals with an already long-running Roman debate about whether or not Rome (read: one of the Roman triumviri at that time, Julius Caesar, Pompey or Gaius Crassus) should intervene in Egyptian political matters. Roman annexation of the Egyptian territory Cyprus in 59 BCE had led to an Egyptian rebellion. Ptolemy Auletes, who was held responsible for the loss of Cyprus, fled to Rome in 58 BCE where he tried to persuade influential Romans to support him in regaining the Egyptian throne by promising them huge amounts of money. One of these Romans was Pompey, whose Eastern campaigns had previously brought him into contact with the Egyptian king, who had sent him 8000 soldiers in the

Mithridatic war. It was also Pompey who provided the king with a place to stay in his Roman villa. The senate, however, assigned Consul Publius Cornelius Lentulus Spinther the task of restoring the Egyptian king to his throne. Eventually, the effectuation of this plan was frustrated by the senatorial decision, after a long debate, to restore the king without military actions. Thereupon, Ptolemy – who had already left Rome for Ephesus – motivated Pompey's protégé Aulus Gabinius, the proconsul of Syria, with a gift of 10,000 talents to march his army into Egypt. Gabinius restored the king to his throne in 55 BCE. As the king had incurred major debts, Gabinius started to collect money in Egypt by employing tax-farmers. Gaius Rabinius Postumus, who was one of the most important financiers of the king's expenses and as such an important creditor, became the *dioecetes* ('the chief royal treasurer'). Postumus' actions in Egypt provoked such an outrage among the Egyptians that he had to flee Egypt in 54 BCE. With respect to his actions in Egypt, Gabinius was first charged with treason, but this trial did not lead to a conviction. Thereafter, Gabinius was charged with extortion (corruption in public life) in a trial in which Cicero acted as his defense counsel. This time Gabinius was found guilty and consequently fined the enormous sum of 10,000 talents. As Gabinius was unable to pay this fine, the prosecutors directed their attention to Postumus, who was seen as Gabinius' partner in crime. Postumus was also charged with extortion, and Cicero acted again as defense counsel in the trial. He published the transcription of his speech at this trial: *Pro Rabirio Postumo*. It remains unclear whether Cicero won this case or not, but it is argued on substantive grounds and on the fact that Cicero published his defense of this case that he likely did.[292]

From Cicero's speech, it becomes clear that the same Egyptian witnesses were summoned in both trials. In the trial of Gabinius, these witnesses gave a testimony favorable for Gabinius but were apparently not believed by the jurors; whereas in the case of Postumus, these witnesses argued the opposite of what they had attested in Gabinius' case and, hence, testified against Postumus (*Rab*. 34-35):

[292] See Siani-Davies 2001, 82-84.
— Note on translation and text edition of Cic. *Rab*.: The translations used are those of Siani-Davies 2001, with some modifications. The text edition is Olechowka's Teubner edition 1981.

> *at de me omittamus, ad Alexandrinos istos revertamur. quod habent os, quam audaciam! modo vobis inspectantibus in iudicio Gabini tertio quoque verbo excitabantur; negabant pecuniam Gabinio datam. recitabatur identidem Pompei testimonium regem ad se scripsisse nullam pecuniam Gabinio nisi in rem militarem datam. 'non est' inquit 'tum Alexandrinis testibus creditum.' quid postea? 'creditur nunc.' quamobrem? 'quia nunc aiunt quod tum negabant.' quid ergo? ista condicio est testium, ut quibus creditum non sit negantibus, isdem credatur aientibus?*
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> But enough about me; let us return to these Alexandrians. What cheek and what insolence they have! A little while ago, when you were sitting as jurors in Gabinius' trial, they were on their feet at every other word denying that money had been given to him. Pompey's testimony was repeatedly quoted to the effect that the King had written to him stating that he had given no money to Gabinius except for military purposes. 'But at that time,' my learned friend says, 'no faith was placed in the Alexandrian witnesses.' What then? 'They are believed now.' And why? 'Because now they admit what they previously denied.' What is going on? Is it standard practice for witnesses to be disbelieved when they deny something and believed when they affirm it?

As Cicero defended both Gabinius and Postumus in these trials, the qualified statement of the same Egyptian witnesses in Postumus' case must have been a disgrace for Cicero and could form a serious argument for the opposing party. Cicero seems to have anticipated the critique of the prosecutors by distancing himself from these witnesses by proclaiming, 'what cheek and insolence they have' (*quod habent os, quam audaciam*).[293] But most importantly, Cicero discredited the witnesses by making them stereotypical Alexandrians (*Rab*. 35):

> *audiebamus Alexandream, nunc cognoscimus. illim omnes praestigiae, illim inquam omnes fallaciae.*
>
> We heard rumors of Alexandria; now we know! Alexandria is the home of all deceit and falsehood.

Cicero here plays on a well attested stereotype in the Greek literature of Egyptians in general and of Alexandrians more specifically, one which was repeated in the Roman literature later: their untrustworthiness. In a fragment of Aeschylus, the Egyptians are said to be 'skillful in devising tricks', and in

[293] Siani-Davies 2001, *ad loc*.

Old Comedy, the term αἰγυπτιάζω (literally: 'to be like an Egyptian') has the connotation of 'to be deceitful'.[294] In *De Bello Alexandrino*, a work composed in Cicero's time and traditionally attributed to Hirtius, we read similar pejoratives: 'no one can doubt that this kind of people [the Alexandrians] are most efficient at treachery' (*aptissimum esse hoc genus ad proditionem dubitare nemo potest, B. Alex*. 7.2). In the previous chapter about Propertius 3.11, a similar expression had been discussed: 'Guilty Alexandria, land most efficient in treachery' (*noxia Alexandria, dolis aptissima tellus*). Furthermore, Seneca also suggests the unreliable nature of the Egyptians when he praises his aunt – who lived in Egypt for years because her husband was its prefect – for avoiding contact with the local Egyptians. According to him, her reticence had the following effect (Sen. *Dial.*12.19.6): [295]

> *itaque loquax et in contumelias praefectorum ingeniosa provincia, in qua etiam qui vitaverunt culpam non effugerunt infamiam, velut unicum sanctitatis exemplum suspexit et, quod illi difficillimum est cui etiam periculosi sales placent, omnem verborum licentiam continuit et hodie similem illi, quamvis numquam speret, semper optat.*
>
> The result was that a province that was gossipy and ingenious in insulting its rulers, one in which even those who had avoided wrongdoing did not escape ill fame, respected her as a singular example of integrity, restrained altogether the license of their tongues - a most difficult achievement for a people who take pleasure in even dangerous witticisms - and even to this day keeps hoping, although it never expects, to see another like her. Tr. Basore 2001, with modifications.

Seneca wished to stress his aunt's integrity, which is made all the more remarkable because *even* the Egyptians, 'gossipy and ingenious in insulting its rulers' (*loquax et in contumelias praefectorum ingeniosa*), acknowledged this quality of hers and showed respect for her. Whereas Seneca uses negative stereotypes to emphasize his aunt's good qualities, not to discredit the Egyptians per se, in Cicero *Pro Rabirio* 35, known negative Roman stereotypes of Egyptians function primarily to discredit the Egyptian witnesses.

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[294] Aesch. fr. 373. For αἰγυπτιάζω: Cratin. 387; Ar. *Th*. 922. See also Isaac 2004, 353-354.

[295] Gaius Galerius was prefect of Egypt from AD 16-31. At some point during this period Seneca spent some time with his aunt and uncle.

The Greco-Roman literature seems to suggest that the capital of Egypt is not perceived as properly Egyptian[296] as it had a large Greek population.[297] With regard to Cicero *Pro Rabirio* 35, it has been noted that 'Cicero's denunciation [..] of the deceit and trickery associated with Alexandria refers to Greeks rather than Egyptians.'[298] Cicero makes the link between the behavior of the Egyptian witnesses in this case and Roman stereotypes of Greek attitude explicit when he states in relation to the perjury of the Egyptians, 'you [the jurors] are already familiar with the impertinence of the Greeks' (*iam nostis insulsitatem Graecorum*, Cic. *Rab*. 36). In general, Cicero's work shows respect for the ancient Greeks, but contemporary Greeks are described in less respectful words.[299] Greeks living outside the mainland were also not held in high esteem. For instance, in his defense of Flaccus, Cicero attacked Asian Greeks by making them perjurors par excellence (Cic. *Flac*. 11). When taking into account the East-West distinction (see general introduction pp. 20-21), it seems too simple to argue that Cicero's denunciation of the witnesses is just based on Roman stereotypes of the Greeks. As 'untrustworthy' is a characterization of both Egyptians and Greeks, and Alexandria is Egyptian territory geographically speaking – Cicero's speech in defense of Postumus deals with an Egyptian affair, not a proper Alexandrian one – the possibility that Cicero is playing with Roman stereotypes of the Greeks *and* those of the Egyptians needs to be considered. The Alexandrian witnesses are firmly set aside as fickle Easterners. Regardless of their nationality, it was Cicero's job to discredit the witnesses of the opposing party in speeches in front of a jury. Hence, framed in this particular case, the stereotype has less to do with Roman self-definition than with the qualification of the Alexandrian witnesses. The

[296] Gruen 2011a, 107: 'Alexandria is not Egypt. That city had long been notorious for periodic unrest and upheaval which had little to do with the *Egyptian* character.' Original italics. With reference to Polybius' account of the riots in Alexandria at the end of the third century: Polyb. 15.24-3.

[297] For the population of Alexandria in Roman times, see Fraser 1972, 86-92. Based on names on Augustan papyri, the largest group within Alexandria would have been Greek speakers, regardless of whether they were native Greeks or naturalized Egyptians, followed by Persians, Romans, native Egyptians and Jews.

[298] Gruen 2011a, 108.

[299] Cicero shows his disrespect for contemporary Greeks by addressing them with *Graeculus*, the diminutive of *Graecus*. See Cic, *de Orat*. 1.47; 1.221; 1.162; *Flac*. 23; *Tusc*. 1.86; *Scaur*. 3.4; and elsewhere.

stereotype is meant to influence the jury to judge the witnesses in a particular way.

De Natura Deorum 1.81-82

Cicero's essay *De Natura Deorum* consists of three books in which three philosophical doctrines, the Epicurean, the Stoic and the Academic, are discussed in the form of a debate between three men, Velleius, Balbus and Cotta, who each represent one doctrine. The setting of the debate, in 77/76 BCE, is the house of Cicero's friend, Cotta, and the occasion is the *Feriae Latinae*. Cicero states that he was invited by his friend Cotta on this occasion, but he does not take part in the discussion and should be considered a silent listener. His personal views can be found in the introduction of the work and in the conclusion.[300] After Cicero's introduction in the first book, in which he presents his motives for writing this treatise and his views as a member of the Academic school, an otherwise unknown senator, Gaius Velleius, explains the Epicurean theology.[301] Book 1 ends with the Academic Gaius Aurelius Cotta's response to the Epicureans. In the second book, Quintus Lucilius Balbus elucidates the Stoic doctrine, with the third book containing Cotta's response to Balbus. This third and last book ends with Cicero's conclusion of the debate in which he states that Cotta convinced Velleius, but that in Cicero's eyes, 'Balbus' argumentation seemed to come more nearly to a semblance of the truth' (*Balbi ad veritatis similitudinem videretur esse propensior*, Cic. *Nat. D.* 3.95).[302]

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[300] For a good general introduction to Cic. *Nat. D.*, see Dyck 2003, 1-19. An extensive commentary on the complete *Nat. D.* is Pease 1955-1958.
— Note on translation and text edition of Cic. *Nat. D.*: the text edition of Cic. *Nat. D.* Book 1 used is Dyck's Cambridge edition 2003. The text edition of Cic. *Nat. D.* book 3 is Pease's Harvard edition 1958. The translation is that of Rackham 1961, with some modifications.

[301] In Cic. *de Orat*. 3.78 Velleius and Balbus are also representatives of the Stoic and Epicurean school.

[302] As Cicero is a philosopher of the Academic school, this conclusion comes somewhat as a surprise; for an explanation of this seemingly strange conclusion, see Walsh 1997, XXXVI-XXXV: 'The solution must be that at the time of composition, when his mind was concentrated on the traditional practices of Roman religion, his judgement of what was probable (the characteristic criterion of Carneades [214-129 BCE] who argued that this could vary according to time and place) was swayed by his sense of Roman piety.'

Of the four passages of the *De Natura Deorum* conveying negative Roman stereotypes of the Egyptians, three can be found in the first book of this treatise: 1.43 in Velleius' explanation of the Epicurean theology; 1.81-82 and 1.101 in Cotta's response to Velleius. All these passages refer to animal worship, a religious custom which was already treated negatively in the Greek literature, but seems to have been rejected even more in the Roman literature.[303] As these references to animal worship are used in a debate, they are part of rhetorical strategies to show that the doctrine of the philosophical school represented by the opposing party is wrong, of which Cicero *De Natura Deorum* 1.81-82 is an elucidating example. In this passage, Cotta attacks the Epicurean custom of visualizing gods as men. He tries to convince his audience that the reason why they can only think about gods in human form is because they have seen images of anthropomorphic gods since childhood. To show the arbitrariness of imagining gods, he mentions people who were not surrounded by these kinds of images (Cic. *Nat. D.* 1.81-82):

> *at non Aegyptii nec Syri nec fere cuncta barbaria; firmiores enim videas apud eos opiniones esse de bestiis quibusdam quam apud nos de sanctissimis templis et simulacris deorum. etenim fana multa spoliata et simulacra deorum de locis sanctissimis ablata videmus a nostris, at vero ne fando quidem auditum est crocodilum aut ibin aut faelem violatum ab Aegyptio. quid igitur censes Apim illum sanctum Aegyptiorum bovem nonne deum videri Aegyptiis? tam, hercle quam tibi illam vestram Sospitam.*
>
> But they [certain Roman anthropomorphic gods] are not so known to the Egyptians or Syrians [who worship a fish, Cic. *Nat. D.* 3.39]. Among these you will find more firmly established beliefs in certain animals than is reverence for the holiest sanctuaries and images of the gods with us. For we have often seen temples robbed and images of gods carried off from the holiest shrines by our fellow-countrymen, but no one ever even heard of an Egyptian laying profane hands on a crocodile or ibis or cat. What therefore do you infer? that the Egyptians do not believe their sacred bull Apis to be a god? Precisely as much as you believe your Sospita [Juno the Savior] is.

[303] Cf. Smelik and Hemelrijk 1984. See also pp. 158-159.

The use of animal worship in this example has been interpreted as demonstrating the 'depravity of Roman religion' because it seems to show that Egyptians were 'better than the Romans'.[304] But Cotta seems to argue that both parties are equally wrong in visualizing gods, whether they represent them as men or as animals. His main argument in this context concerns the arbitrariness of the appearances of gods. This becomes clear in the passage that follows immediately after the just quoted one (Cic. *Nat. D.* 1.82):

> *quam tu numquam ne in somnis quidem vides nisi cum pelle caprina, cum hasta, cum scutulo, cum calceolis repandis. at non est talis Argia nec Romana Iuno. ergo alia species Iunonis Argivis alia Lanuinis. et quidem alia nobis Capitolini alia Afris Hammonis Iovis.*

[304] For the quote, see Smelik and Hemelrijk 1984, 1956. For the account that in Egypt people were severely punished for harming animals, see Hdt. 2.65.5, Diod. 1.83.8 and Cic. *Tusc*. 5.78. For a possible allusion to Phld. *PHerc*. 1428.13.23, see Dyck 2003, *ad* 1.81. A Ciceronian example that uses Egyptian animal worship to show the superiority of the Egyptians over the Romans is Cic. *Tusc*. 5.78. Book 5 of Cicero's philosphical work the Tusculan Disputationes (54-44 BCE) deals with the question of whether virtue (*virtus*) alone is enough for a happy life (*beata vita*). 5.78 is part of Cicero's discussion about the question of whether virtue will succumb to pain. He presents a number of examples of foreign people who seem to be able to endure great pain, including Spartan boys who do not groan when beaten severely; Indian wisemen who endure snow and winter on their naked bodies without feeling pain; and Indian women who happily let themselves burn on the pyres of their dead husbands. These examples reflect Cicero's opinion that contemporary Romans are too spoiled to be able to endure the same pains that those foreign people could (Cic. Tusc. 5.78): *sed nos umbris, deliciis, otio, languore, desidia animum infecimus, opinionibus maloque more delenitum mollivimus*, 'But we have tainted our souls with shady retreats, daintiness, idleness, and slackness, we have softened and unmanned them with mere opinions and bad ways', tr. Douglas 1990. Immediately hereafter, Cicero presents a fourth example of foreign people who are willing to endure great pains: the Egyptians (Cic. Tusc. 5.78): *Aegyptiorum morem quis ignorat? quorum inbutae mentes pravitatis erroribus quamvis carnificinam prius subierint quam ibim aut aspidem aut faelem aut canem aut crocodilum violent, quorum etiamsi inprudentes quippiam fecerint, poenam nullam recusent*, 'Who does not know the Egyptian custom? Their minds are steeped in the errors of perversity, yet they would rather submit to the executioner than injure an ibis or asp or cat or dog or crocodile.' Tr. Douglas 1990 with modification. By referring to animal worship in a pejorative and negative way, Cicero first creates a clear distinction between his Roman audience and the Egyptians, addressing them in the immediately preceding lines. However, Cicero's addition that these 'perverse' Egyptian are willing to suffer great pain has negative effects on the Roman inability to sustain pain, i.e. even the 'perverse' Egyptians are not afraid to suffer great pain.

> You never see her [Sospita] even in your dreams unless equipped with goat-skin, spear, buckler, and slippers turned up at the toe. Yet that is not the aspect of the Argive Juno, nor of the Roman. It follows that Juno has one form for the Argives, another for the people of Lanuvium, and another for us. And indeed our Jupiter of the Capitol is not the same as the Africans' Jupiter Ammon.

Apparently, Cotta intended to discuss the influence of convention on people's religious customs. Mentioning the worship of animals in this context focuses this discussion as it equates two seemingly incompatible conventions, the 'foreign', generally rejected habit of worshipping animal gods, and the Roman, generally approved worship of anthropomorphic gods. Cotta is aiming to show the arbitrariness of convention by the comparison between animal gods and anthropomorphic gods, not to show that the 'barbarian' Egyptians were even more pious than Romans. His addition that the Egyptians show 'more firmly established beliefs' (*firmiores opiniones*) than the Romans should therefore be read as an introduction to his (now) rhetorical question: *quid igitur censes Apim illum sanctum Aegyptiorum bovem nonne deum videri Aegyptiis?* ('What therefore do you infer? that the Egyptians do not believe their sacred bull Apis to be a god?'). Considering the *firmiores opiniores* of the Egyptians, surely Apis is considered a god to the Egyptians: *tam, hercle, quam tibi illam vestram Sospitam* ('Precisely as much as you believe your Sospita is'). This comparison of two seeming extremes can be seen as a powerful tool to rethink Roman conventions rather than a chastisement.

Likewise in all other uses of animal worship in *De Natura Deorum*, it is general Roman rejection of this Egyptian religious custom that makes it a good tool to rethink Roman conventions, either by putting the views of certain philosophical schools regarding gods on par with Egyptian animal worship and arguing that both are equally wrong (Cic. *Nat. D.* 1.81, but also in *Nat. D.* 1.43 and 3.47), or by using an *a fortiori* argument, as Cicero does in *De Natura Deorum* 1.101:

> *quanto melius haec vulgus imperitorum, qui non membra solum hominis deo tribuant sed usum etiam membrorum; dant enim arcum sagittas hastam clipeum fuscinam fulmen, et si actiones quae sint deorum non vident, nihil agentem tamen deum non queunt cogitare. ipsi qui inridentur Aegyptii nullam beluam nisi ob aliquam utilitatem quam ex ea caperent consecraverunt.*

> The unlearned multitude are surely wiser here – they assign to god not only a man's limbs, but the use of those limbs. For they give him bow, arrows, spear, shield, trident, thunderbolt; and if they cannot see what actions the gods perform, yet they cannot conceive of god as entirely inactive. Even the Egyptians, whom we laugh at, deified animals solely on the score of some utility which they derived from them.

In this passage Velleius and his Epicurean doctrine are criticized by Cotta for imagining gods that seem to be inactive. Cotta mentions that the ignorant masses (*vulgus imperitorum*) at least envision gods with attributes that are useful. Second, he touches upon Egyptians. By referring to a positive characteristic of animal worship, the inactive Epicurean gods can be rejected even more.[305] In Cicero's philosophical treatise *De Natura Deorum*, stereotypes of the Egyptians do not function to enhance the status of the 'Self' but to discuss Roman religious conventions.

3. AUGUSTAN

Augustan poets published several works on the Battle of Actium in which representations of Egypt figure. Perceptions of Egypt are mostly found in relation to the Civil War between Mark Antony and Octavian, but they are present in other contexts too, such as that of personal prayer to Isis (see chapter

[305] The negative stereotypical connotation of animal worship, however, is probably not the only reason why Cotta wished to refer to this religious custom. By mentioning the worship of animals, he is able to bring into the debate a long-standing philosophical theme: the usefulness of animals. The just quoted passage continues with Cotta's presentation of several Egyptian animals and the benefits they supply for mankind, Cic. *Nat. D.* 1.101. By mentioning the usefulness of ibises, Egyptian rats, crocodiles and cats, Cotta refers to philosophical thoughts on animals. Ciceronian source for the story of the ibis is Hdt. 2.75, see also Plin. 10.75. For the usefulness of Egyptian rats (or *ichneumon*), see Arist. *HA*. 9.6.612a15-20, see also Plin. *NH* 8.87-88; for the crocodile, see Diod. 1.87. For other references to Greek and Roman sources, see Pease 1955, *ad loc*. In my first chapter on Pliny the Elder's Egypt, I have already noted that the topic of animals could be approached from the angle of their usefulness for mankind in Roman philosophical debate, see pp. 41-42, n. 124. The Roman connection between animal and usefulness may be why the Egyptian habit of worshipping animal gods was such a good example in this context in which Cotta tried to discredit the 'inactive' gods of the Epicureans.

IV, p. 175-177). In this context Isis and Egypt are not always approached negatively. An Augustan poem in which Egypt is conceptualized differently than as the stereotypical Other is Tibullus 1.7, which will be discussed extensively in chapter IV.[306]

3.1. *Negative stereotypes of Egypt in Augustan poetry*

When we look solely at the evidence of negative perceptions of Egypt expressed in the works of Augustan poets, it appears that they are not overwhelmingly present. One poem of Propertius (3.11), two poems of Horace (*Ep*. 9 and *Carm.* 1.37), and a couple of lines in Virgil's Aeneid (8.675-712) supply our main data. It is not unlikely that other works concerning the Battle of Actium and Egypt's role in this fight circulated at the time as later historical writings addressing the Battle of Actium appear to have drawn on other sources in which negative stereotypes of Egypt may have been abundantly present. An example of such a later historical work is Dio Cassius' transcription of Octavian's speech in which he tried to motivate his troops in the wake of the battle of Actium (D.C. 50.24.5 – 50.25.1):

[306] Here I wish to refer to an extremely fragmentary poem that has been dated by some scholars to the Augustan age, *Carmen de Bello Actiaco* (P. Herc. 817), from the villa of the Pisones, which will not be discussed further in this chapter. Firstly, because it is too lacunous to derive its exact meaning. For instance, it is unknown who the speaking *persona* of the third column is, could it be Antony? (Zecchini 1987), Cleopatra? (Kraggerud 1990), or just somebody? (Kloss 1997, 22; Courtney 1993). Secondly, the name under which the poem is known is misleading, based on the surviving lines, as it is not about the Battle of Actium but about the subsequent war in Egypt/Alexandria. Thirdly, although some scholars attribute this poem to Rabirius, who is known to have written about Antony's death (see Sen. *De Ben*. 6.31), its date is uncertain. As it must have been written between the fall of Alexandria in 30 BCE and the eruption of Mount Vesuvius, a Neronean or a Flavian date is also possible. Those scholars who attribute it to Rabirius include: Ciampitti 1809 who first published the fragmentary poem; Zecchini 1987. But *contra*: Courtney 1993, 334, who felt that it may have been part of the *Res Romanae* of Cornelius Severus; Benario 1983, 1657, n. 12, for further references. The surviving lines do not include perceptions of Egypt that can be labelled as negative stereotypes. Zecchini's thesis that the poem is hostile towards Octavian (instead of being hostile towards Antony and Egypt) is generally considered unconvincing, see the reviews of Kraggerud 1992 and Carter 1988.

> πῶς δ' οὐκ ἂν ἡμεῖς μεγάλως ἀσχημονήσαιμεν, εἰ πάντων ἀρετῇ πανταχοῦ περιόντες ἔπειτα τὰς τούτων ὕβρεις πρᾴως φέροιμεν, οἵτινες, ὦ Ἡράκλεις, Ἀλεξανδρεῖς τε καὶ Αἰγύπτιοι ὄντες (τί γὰρ ἂν ἄλλο τις αὐτοὺς χεῖρον ἢ ἀληθέστερον εἰπεῖν ἔχοι;) καὶ τὰ μὲν ἑρπετὰ καὶ τἆλλα θηρία ὥσπερ τινὰς θεοὺς θεραπεύοντες, τὰ δὲ σώματα τὰ σφέτερα ἐς δόξαν ἀθανασίας ταριχεύοντες, καὶ θρασύνασθαι μὲν προπετέστατοι ἀνδρίσασθαι δὲ ἀσθενέστατοι ὄντες, καὶ τὸ μέγιστον γυναικὶ ἀντ' ἀνδρὸς δουλεύοντες, ἐτόλμησαν τῶν τε ἡμετέρων ἀγαθῶν ἀντιποιήσασθαι καὶ δι' ἡμῶν αὐτὰ κατακτήσασθαι, ὥστε σφίσιν ἑκουσίους ἡμᾶς τῆς ὑπαρχούσης ἡμῖν εὐδαιμονίας παραχωρῆσαι;
>
> Should we not be acting most disgracefully if, after surpassing all men everywhere in valor, we should then meekly bear the insults of this throng, who, oh heavens! are Alexandrians and Egyptians (what worse or what truer name could one apply to them?), who worship reptiles and beasts as gods, who embalm their own bodies to give them the resemblance of immortality, who are most reckless in effrontery but most feeble in courage, and who, worst of all, are slaves to a woman and not to a man and yet have dared to lay claim to our possessions and to use us to help them acquire them, expecting that we will voluntarily give up to them the prosperity which we possess? Tr. Cary 1924.

Although the opposing troops also consisted of Roman soldiers (it was after all a civil war), his enemy is framed as Egyptian only. As we have seen in the previous section on Cicero's use of negative perceptions of Egypt, mentioning animal worship is the rhetorical tool par excellence to evoke Roman rejection. The further enumeration of Egyptian characteristics such as being reckless, feeble, slaves to a woman (suggesting effeminacy) and showing overconfidence (daring 'to lay claim to our possessions') not only functions to portray the enemy as weak, but can also be understood as mirroring the Roman characteristics negatively: declaring the weaknesses of the opposing party goes hand in hand with stressing one's own strength.

This representation of the Egyptians pretty much resembles what can be found in the texts of Augustan poets. In chapter II, I have already demonstrated how Propertius described the clash between Augustus and Antony as a foreign war by explicitly contrasting several Roman and un-Roman entities with each other. A fundamental element in his description is the opposition between Egyptian animal gods and Roman anthropomorphic gods of the Pantheon. An identical antithesis can be found in Virgil's description of the Battle of Actium in Book 8 when describing the images on the shield of Aeneas. In this ekphrasis we read how Augustus approached the battlefield with his Italian troops, the Senate and the People, the Penates and

the gods (anthropomorphic), while Antony nears the scene with his barbarian, Eastern troops followed by his Egyptian wife, Cleopatra, who rattles her *sistrum* (Virg. *Aen*. 8.698-700):[307]

> *omnigenumque deum monstra et latrator Anubis*
> *contra Neptunum et Venerem contraque Minervam*
> *tela tenent.*
>
> Monstrous gods of every form and barking Anubis wield weapons against Neptune and Venus and against Minerva. Tr. Fairclough 2000.

Furthermore, Augustan poetry also stresses the effeminacy of Egyptians, primarily in being slaves of their queen, Cleopatra. The Egyptians are presented as immoral and sexually perverse. According to Horace, they are 'a contaminated flock of men diseased by vice' (*contaminato cum grege turpium morbo virorum*), in which 'men' (*virorum*) is surrounded by irony and should probably be understood as 'half men' or 'eunuchs'.[308] In another poem Horace takes the allegation of being a slave to a woman to the extreme by making Roman soldiers subordinate to Cleopatra.[309] The idea that the Egyptians used

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[307] See the whole passage of Virgil's Battle of Actium, Virg. *Aen.* 8.679-700, of which the following is an excerpt: *Hinc Augustus agens Italos in proelia Caesar / cum patribus populoque, penatibus et magnis dis, stans celsa in puppi* .. [4ll.] .. */ Hinc ope barbarica variisque Antonius armis, / victor ab Aurorae populis et litore rubro, / Aegyptum viresque Orientis et ultima secum / Bactra vehit, sequiturque (nefas) Aegyptia coniunx* .. [7ll.] .. */ Regina in mediis patrio vocat agmina sistro* .. [1l.] .. *omnigenumque deum monstra et latrator Anubis / contra Neptunum et Venerem contraque Minervam / tela tenent*, 'On the one side Augustus Caesar stands on the lofty stern, leading Italians to strife, with Senate and People, the Penates of the state, and all the mighty gods .. On the other side comes Antony with barbaric might and the strength of the East and farthest Bactra; and there follows him (oh the shame of it!) his Egyptian wife .. In the midst the queen calls upon her hosts with their native sistrum .. Monstrous of every form and barking Anubis wield weapons against Neptune and Venus and against Minerva.' Tr. Fairclough 2000.

[308] Hor. *Carm.* 1.37.9-10. For the derogatory connotation of *grex* and the associations with sexual perversity of *morbus*, see Nisbet and Hubbard 1989, *ad loc.* For the association of eunuchs with Cleopatra's court, see also Hor. *Ep.* 9.13: *spadonibus*. For immorality, see also Prop. 3.11.39: *incesti Canopi* (licentious Canopus).

[309] Hor. *Ep.* 9.11-14: *Romanus eheu – posteri negabitis - / emancipatus feminae fert vallum et arma miles et spadonibus / servire rugosis potest*, 'The shame of it! A Roman soldier enslaved to a woman (future generations will refuse to believe it) carries a stake and weapons and can bear to serve a lot of shriveled eunuchs.' Tr. Rudd

mosquito-nets to arm themselves against discomfort and disease was similarly seen as a sign of effeminacy and weakness.[310] The Egyptians (primarily Cleopatra) were framed as being over-confident by threatening to overthrow Rome as, for instance, in Horace *Carm*en 1.37.5-12 (see pp. 105-106 for the quote) and Propertius in 3.11.31-32 (see p. 98 for the quote).

Moreover, another Roman allegation against the Egyptians that has already been discussed under the Ciceronian use of negative stereotypes can also be found in Augustan texts: untrustworthy. In this context I have also stressed that Propertius 3.11.33-38 addresses Alexandria and Memphis – both cities are probably cited to cover the whole of Egypt – calling Alexandria 'guilty' (*noxia Alexandria*), a 'land most efficient in treachery' (*dolis aptissima tellus*), while Memphis is held responsible for Roman bloodshed (*et totiens nostro Memphi cruenta malo*).[311] The text also supplies an explicit example of Egypt's treacherous character when it refers to the death of Pompey (see p. 98).

3.2. *The function of negative stereotypes of Egypt in Augustan poetry*

In general, the function of negative Roman stereotypes of Egypt in Augustan poems lies in the creation of two opposing parties, Egypt led by Mark Antony (and Cleopatra) versus Rome led by Octavian, in favor of Octavian. Roman stereotyping leads to a positive distinction of one's own identity from the other one (Egyptian). It not only creates unity among the Romans, it also presents an utterly foreign enemy. Modern scholars explain the focus on the degradation of Egypt in descriptions of the Battle of Actium as an effect of Octavian's politically clever manoeuvres to declare war not on Antony, but on a foreign enemy. According to Dio Cassius, Octavian as a *fetialis* solemnly declared war against Cleopatra alone.[312] Although Augustan poems place

2004, with modification. The singular *Romanus miles* is to be interpreted as collective, see Mankin, 1995, *ad loc.*

[310] Prop. 3.11.45 and Hor. *Ep.* 9.15-16.

[311] Prop. 3.11.33-34.

[312] D.C. 50.4.4: τοῖς μὲν γὰρ συνεξεταζομένοις οἱ τήν τε ἄδειαν καὶ ἐπαίνους, ἂν ἐγκαταλείπωσιν αὐτόν, ἐψηφίσαντο, τῇ δὲ Κλεοπάτρᾳ τὸν πόλεμον ἄντικρυς ἐπήγγειλαν, καὶ τάς τε χλαμύδας ὡς καὶ ἐν χερσὶν ὄντος αὐτοῦ μετημπίσχοντο, καὶ πρὸς τὸ Ἐνυεῖον ἐλθόντες πάντα τὰ προπολέμια κατὰ τὸ νομιζόμενον, 'For they [the Romans] voted to the men arrayed on his [Antony's] side pardon and praise if they would abandon him, and declared war outright upon Cleopatra, put on their military

emphasis on Cleopatra and not so much on Antony – his name is hardly mentioned, for instance – these poems certainly do not omit the fact that it is a civil war in which Roman soldiers are fighting against Romans, see chapter II, p. 97.[313]

When used to describe the Battle of Actium, particular negative perceptions of Egyptians have a different connotation than they do in non-combative contexts. For instance, mentioning animal worship in both the works of Cicero and Augustan poetry functions to evoke Roman rejection. In Cicero's texts Egyptians are dismissed by calling them 'barbarians', 'ridiculous', 'insane', because they worship animals. These allegations appear to be relatively innocent and harmless when compared to the role animal worship plays in Augustan poetry addressing the Battle of Actium. Here animal gods are rendered as literally attacking Roman anthropomorphic gods. In Cicero's texts animal gods are also contrasted with 'Roman' notions of gods

cloaks as if he were close at hand, and went to the temple of Bellona, where they performed through Caesar as *fetialis* all the rites preliminary to war in the customary fashion.' Tr. Cary 1924.

[313] Antony's name does not appear in Hor. *Ep*. 9, Prop. 3.11 and 4.6, but it is mentioned in Virg. *Aen.* 8.685. Cognitively, there may have been another reason or a contributing reason for the use of negative Roman perceptions in Augustan poetry. Augustan poetry describing scenes of the Battle of Actium is implicitly ruled by fear as can be derived from the allegation against Cleopatra that she wished to destroy and rule Rome. By including this kind of 'boasting' of Cleopatra, Augustan poets speculated on an un-welcome result of this war that could have become reality: Cleopatra and Antony could have won the Battle of Actium and could have become the rulers of Rome. Roman fear of this outcome of the Civil War was probably real, because Antony was the better commander of the two based on his military record. At least he was until his dramatic campaign against the Parthians in 36 BCE, see Pelling 1996, 34. For a speculation on a different outcome of the Battle of Actium, see Pelling 2005, 1, in his introduction on his commentary on Plutarch's *Life of Antony*: 'Actium was one of those battles which mattered. It mattered much more than Pharsalus or Philippi, perhaps as much as Salamis, Plataea, or the victories of Alexander. A[ntony] might well have won it. If he had, he would have been remembered very differently: great Antonian poets would have ensured that, with epics perhaps of Hercules and Anton, not Aeneas and Iulus, and lyrical celebration of the great dynastic marriage which at last had linked east and west. More important, the Roman Empire would have shifted its center of gravity eastwards four hundred years earlier than it did, as Rome would in some way have shared power with Alexandria.' Thus, a hidden compliment addressed to Cleopatra and Antony may have lain in the use of negative Roman stereotypes of Egyptians in the specific context of Civil War: because they were thought of as serious opponents, they were dismissed as such in Augustan poetry.

such as those of the Stoic, Epicurean and Academic schools, but they open up a possibility to rethink Roman religious conventions by comparing a foreign habit to more accepted Roman ones and do not function as a vehicle to describe a battle. After all, in Cicero's works the use of animal worship needs to be understood as part of rhetorical strategies to win a 'local' debate, whereas Augustan poetry serves to come to terms with a recent, traumatic political event. Therefore, in the next sections three examples of the Roman use of stereotypes of Egyptians in later times will be discussed (Lucan, *Bellum Civile*; Pliny the Younger, *Panegyricus*; and Juvenal, *Satire* 15).

4. POST-AUGUSTAN 1: LUCAN

Another author who is given a prominent place in modern studies on Roman perceptions of Egypt is Lucan (39-65 CE).[314] In Lucan's time Egypt had already been a Roman province for 80 years. Lucan's *Bellum Civile* describes the Civil War between Julius Caesar and Pompey and his successors fought between 49 to 46 BCE. Focusing on a civil war, it refers to a similar historical event as Augustan poetry. Egypt plays a major role in Books 8 and 10 of the *Bellum Civile*. In Book 8, Pompey has lost the Battle of Pharsalus and decides to turn to Egypt for help against Caesar after his proposal to seek an alliance with the Parthians has been turned down. Pompey's men believe that Egypt is a suitable partner because the current ruler Ptolemy XIII owes Pompey a favor: without Pompey's interference, Ptolemy's father would not have regained the Egyptian throne, see p. 2-3. Ptolemy XIII, however, decides to take the side of the winner, Caesar. The Egyptians pretend to welcome Pompey warmly and persuade him to change ships and to embark on their little boat where he is murdered by Ptolemy's assassins. His head is cut off, and his body is left behind on the shore where it is buried, hastily, at night by the Roman *quaestor* Cordus.

In Book 10 of the *Bellum Civile*, Julius Caesar is chasing Pompey and arrives in Egypt, where he is welcomed by Ptolemy XIII. When Pompey's

[314] Recently, two studies appeared that focus on the representation of Egypt in Lucan, Tracy 2014 and Manolaraki 2013.
— Note on text edition and translation used of Lucan's *Bellum Civile*: The text edition is Shackleton-Baileys 1997 Teubner edition. The translation of Duff 1928, is adopted with modifications.

head is shown to him, Caesar pretends to grieve whereas he is actually delighted to hear about his opponent's death. During Caesar's stay at Ptolemy's palace, Cleopatra – who was expelled from the Egyptian throne by her original co-ruler Ptolemy XIII and his accomplices – enters the palace and convinces Caesar to restore her to the Egyptian throne. The agreement between Cleopatra and Caesar is celebrated with a banquet at which Caesar asks the Egyptian priest Acoreus to reveal to him the source of the Nile. Acoreus' answer contains a long digression on the Nile. Thereafter, Ptolemy's accomplice Pothinus plans to defeat and murder Caesar. Book 10 ends with the war between Caesar and Pothinus *cum suis* in Alexandria.

It is evident that Lucan's representation of Egypt is generally supported by Roman stereotypes of Eastern people. The following passage in which the North/West-South/East digression is described serves as an example (Luc. 8.363-366):[315]

> *omnis, in Arctois populus quicumque pruinis*
> *nascitur, indomitus bellis et mortis amator:*
> *quidquid ad Eoos tractus mundique teporem* 365
> *ibitur, emollit gentes clementia caeli*.
>
> Every native people of the Northern snows is vehement in war and courts death; but every step you will go towards the East and the warmth of the world, the mildness of the sky makes the people soft.

The Northerners are warlike, and the Easterners are effeminate. For instance, court orgies organized by the 'Eastern' Parthian king are mentioned, 'The king, maddened with feasting and wine, ventures on unions that no laws have ever specified' (*epulis vaesana meroque / regia non ullis exceptos legibus audet / concubitus*, 8.401-403). Eastern effeminacy, decadence and despotism are also attributed to Egypt. Especially in Book 10 where Cleopatra's luxurious palace and banquet are described, general stereotypes of the East resonate.[316] However, Lucan's *Bellum Civile* also displays specifically Roman perceptions of Egypt by recalling stereotypes created in the Augustan age

[315] Roman discourse on the North-South division overlaps with that on the West-East division, see p. 20, n. 61.
[316] But, see Ambühl 2014, 364-391, who tempers an utterly stereotypical reading of Lucan's description of Alexandria, Cleopatra's palace and banquet by showing the intertextuality of Alexandrian poetry.

which will become clear below in section 4.1. The present section focuses on negative perceptions in the *Bellum Civile*, but Lucan's work contains different Roman views of Egypt, particularly in Book 8. This book presents a discussion between Pompey and his men at Syhedra, after their defeat at Pharsalus, about whether they should ask the regions Parthia, Libya or Egypt for help (Luc. 8.279-453). Pompey pleas for Parthia because he does not trust the Egyptian ruler (Ptolemy XIII, because of his young age, Luc. 8.281-282) nor the Libyan king (Juba, because he desires to avenge Hannibal, Luc. 8.283-288).[317] Pompey is contradicted by Lentulus. The latter's positive description of Egypt as a Pompey-minded, Rome-orientated, wealthy region convinces Pompey's men.[318] Contradictory renderings of Egypt can also be found in the passage in which a meeting is held at the Ptolemaic court to decide whether or not to support Pompey. First the Egyptian priest Acoreus, who is positively portrayed as mild and moderate because of his old age, tries to convince the pharaoh to support Rome by reminding him of the benefits, loyalty and his father's will (Luc. 8.475-481). Another advisor, Pothinus, receives general acclaim when he argues that Egypt should not get involved in the Civil War as it will inevitably lead to Caesar's vengence (Luc.8.484-535). In general, the representation of Egypt in the *Bellum Civile* can be divided into admiration for its timeless qualities, such as natural wealth, philosophy and wisdom, and rejection of its Eastern characteristics.[319]

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[317] Pompey also argues that Parthia is remote, i.e. untouched by the Civil War, and warlike. Pompey believes that he has a good name among Eastern people, because of his military successes in the East. Moreover, by dragging Parthia into the Civil War, Parthia will be destroyed in the process and Crassus will be avenged (Luc. 8.289-327). For the historicity and analysis of Pompey's plan to collaborate with Parthia and for other Roman examples of such ideas, see Sonnabend 1986, 179-183.

[318] Lentulus questions rhetorically, 'Why not turn your eyes to the Roman world?' (*quin respicis orbem / Romanum?*, Luc. 8.441-442) and proposes involving Egypt in the conflict as it is secluded geographically from the rest of the world and self-sufficient. He also adds that the king can easily be manipulated because of his youth and that this king, after all, owes his throne to Pompey (Luc. 8.451-453). Tracy 2014, 31-96, discusses the council at Syhedra and the council at Ptolemy's court at length. He argues that Lentulus presents a utopian image – one that can be found in the Greek and Latin literature of Egypt as a place of refugee or as protected against natural violence because of the Nile – mentioning its autarky and fidelity and that Acoreus renders an Egypt based on ancient Egyptian mores.

[319] Lucan's references to Egypt's admirable achievements and characteristics include: vast knowledge of astronomy, Luc. 1.639-640; invention of writing, Luc. 3.222-224; navigation, 4.135-136; religion, 6.449-450. Egyptian kings were despots.

Two recent studies have focused on the relationship between explicit historical events regarding Egypt and philosophical contemplations of the Nile in the *Bellum Civile*.[320] Jonathan Tracy (2014) argues that both Pompey and Caesar tried to escape the violence of the Civil War by travelling to Egypt and by exploring Egyptian natural sciences (the Nile digression of Book 10). The flight of both men turns out to be a failure as both 'utopian' Egypt and the inquiry into natural sciences are already infected by the contemporary politics of the Civil War. By focusing on 'Nilescapes' in Lucan's *Bellum Civile*, Eleni Manolaraki (2013) demonstrates that the Nile is not only the scene of the Civil War, it also supplies an escape from historical reality to timeless utopia. In Lucan's philosophical digression on the Nile in Book 10, Egypt/Nile is a medium for Lucan to react to Nero and his imperial, philosophical and poetical interest in the Nile on a meta-poetical level.[321] Where Nero fails to survey the

[320] Lucan is the first to have combined explicit historical events regarding Egypt with philosophical contemplations of the Nile: Manolaraki 2013, 12.

[321] Specific passages dealing with Egypt in Lucan's *Bellum Civile* have been interpreted by modern scholars in relation to Lucan's perceptions of Nero. Some emperors seem to have been more fascinated with Egypt than others, and Nero is one of the emperors whose great interest and involvement with Egypt (as apparent from material and literary sources) has been labeled 'Egyptomania'; see Cesaretti 1989, who has collected literary, epigraphic, papyrological and archaeological evidence for Nero's interest in Egypt. See also Manolaraki 2013, 40-42; Pfeiffer 2010a, 88-105 and Legras 2004, 34-35. For a critique on the term 'Egyptomania', see p. 5-6. As Nero was not perceived to be a good emperor – at least Roman sources do not particularly characterize him as sympathetic – in some cases where associations with Egypt contribute to Nero's image as an oriental tyrant, Nero's interest in Egypt seems to have negative connotations in the Roman literature. A much cited example in this context is Nero's quest for the source of the Nile which was still unknown at that time; Pliny the Elder and also Seneca, *Q Nat*. 6.8.4, mention a Neronian expedition that followed the Nile upstream in order to find its source. In Book 10 of Lucan's *Bellum Civile*, this quest was firmly linked to world domination. Lucan narrates how Caesar, after having followed Pompey to Alexandria, inquires after the source of the Nile. Acoreus, the priest to whom Caesar addressed his question, thereupon compares him with 'oriental' kings, such as Alexander the Great, Sesostris and Cambysis who had the same aspirations. This passage has, therefore, been explained as criticizing Nero for his imperialism, see Luc. *BC* 10.191-2 (Julius Caesar) and 10.268-82 (Alexander, Sesostris, Cambyses). Cf. Murphy 2004, 143-144. For the source of the Nile in connection to Thyle: Romm 1992, 121-171. It has also been argued that Lucan's description of Cleopatra's palace and his Nile digression criticize Nero's megalomaniac building project, the Domus Aurea, and his extensive investments in hydraulics and aquaplaning. On comparisons between Lucan's description of Cleopatra's palace and the Domus Aurea, see Spencer 2005, 65-66; Schmidt 1986,

Nile, Lucan succeeds. Manolaraki explains Lucan's dialogue between a 'historical' and a 'utopian' Nile as a way to rethink pre-defined Roman frameworks: 'Lucan finds in the Nile a way to confront the artificiality of geographical, historical, and political boundaries, the very building blocks of Rome's Empire.'[322] Instead of emphasizing the presence of alternating identities of Egypt in the *Bellum Civile* to demonstrate Lucan's uneasiness with contemporary frameworks, this present section will focus on one Roman concept of Egypt (negative stereotyping). I shall attempt to concretize *how* (and not *that*) Roman representation of Egypt could contribute to Roman self-representation.

4.1. *Negative stereotypes of Egypt in Lucan*

In his description of Egypt, Lucan repeats Roman representations of Egypt which are prominent in Augustan poetry. For instance, the following lines appear in Lucan's introduction of Cleopatra in Book 10 (Luc. 10.60-67):

> *... quantum impulit Argos* 60
> *Iliacasque domos facie Spartana nocenti,*
> *Hesperios auxit tantum Cleopatra furores.*
> *terruit illa suo, si fas, Capitolia sistro*
> *et Romana petit imbelli signa Canopo*
> *Caesare captivo Pharios ductura triumphos;* 65
> *Leucadioque fuit dubius sub gurgite casus,*
> *an mundum ne nostra quidem matrona teneret.*
>
> As much as the Spartan woman [Helen] with her dangerous beauty overthrew Argos and Trojan homes, so Cleopatra increased the frenzy of Italy. The Capitol was terrified by her rattle – if that is possible – and she attacked Roman standards with unwarlike Canopus, hoping to lead an Egyptian triumph with Caesar as captive; and up to the waters of Leucas [at Actium] it was dubious whether the world should be ruled by a woman who was not even a Roman matron.

194-195, 241-242. One comprehensive archaeological study on the Domus Aurea is Meyboom and Moormann, 2013. Manolaraki 2013, 103-105, relates Nero's extensive waterworks to Lucan's Nile digression. On Lucan's description of Cleopatra's palace, see Ambühl 2015, 364-391, p. 136, n. 316.

[322] Manolaraki 2013, 116.

In accordance with Augustan poetry, the Civil War between Octavian and Mark Antony is here understood as a foreign one between two clearly opposing parties: unwarlike Egypt and warlike Rome. Also the alarming possibility, prominently present in Augustan poetry, that Rome could have been conquered by Egypt and ruled by a woman is underscored.

Negative Roman stereotypes of Egyptians as being soft, unwarlike, not 'real' men can be found on several occasions in the *Bellum Civile*. For instance, the Egyptian Pothinus uses it as one of the arguments with which he successfully tries to convince Ptolemy XII to take Caesar's side and to kill Pompey: 'What reliance upon our kingdom brings you (Pompey) hither, ill-fated man? Do you not see our unwarlike population, scarce able to till the fields softened by the receding Nile? ' (*quae te nostri fiducia regni / huc agit, infelix? populum non cernis inermem / arvaque vix refugo fodientem mollia Nilo,* Luc. 8.524-526).[323] Just as in the quote above, Canopus is linked to effeminacy in Lucan's condemnation of Egypt's decision to kill Pompey: 'Ye gods! Have the Nile and barbarous Memphis, and the effeminate (soft) people of Egyptian Canopus, such arrogance?' (*o superi, Nilusne et barbara Memphis / et Pelusiaci tam mollis turba Canopi / hos animos?* Luc. 8.542-544). Also Ptolemy XIII is addressed as 'half-man' (*semivir,* Luc. 8.552 and Luc. 9.152). In the *Bellum Civile* Ptolemy XIII is held guilty for the murder of Pompey. As a result, he is insulted several times. His incestuous relationship with his sister Cleopatra is mentioned, though rather indirectly (*incestae .. sorori*, Luc. 8.693); he is called a doomed and degenerate king (*perituraque proles, / degener*, Luc. 8.692); a foul monarch (*rege .. inpuro*, Luc. 9.130); he is addressed as an arrogant boy (*puer improbe*, Luc. 8.557); and he is believed to be unreliable, because of his age.[324] It is clear that the Egyptians display

[323] Luc. 8.524-526. The Egyptians did not need to plough as the Nile did that for them, Plin. *NH* 18.167-170.

[324] Pompey mistrusts Ptolemy because of his youth: Luc. 8.281: *Aetas Niliaci nobis suspecta tyranni est.* Lentulus disagrees. According to him the boy is not untrustworthy, but easily manipulated because of his youth: Luc. 8.449-453: *quis nominis umbram / horreat? innocua est aetas. ne iura fidemque / respectumque deum veteri speraveris aula; / nil pudet assuetos sceptris: mitissima sors est / regnorum sub rege novo*. 'Who would not dread the shadow of a name? His is the age of innocence; look not for friendship or loyalty of fear of god in a court where the king has long reigned; use robs kings of all shame; the lot of reign is lightest where the king is new.' Pothinus actually responds to Lentulus' argument by mentioning to Ptolemy that the Romans probably turned to Egypt because they believed that the king was easily

their general untrustworthiness in their misleading of Pompey (Luc. 8.563-565). Egypt cannot be trusted in cases of loyalty, either. On several occasions Egypt's disloyalty is expressed by mentioning that Ptolemy XIII should have supported Pompey because he owed his crown to him (Luc. 9.130-132). Egypt is also said to be guilty of the destinies of civil war (*noxia civili tellus Aegyptia fato*, Luc. 8.823). Furthermore, the negative Roman characterization of Egypt concerning decadence and luxury can be found in Book 10 in the descriptions of Cleopatra's palace and the banquet organized for her guest Caesar.

The *Bellum Civile* also refers to the Augustan theme of the denigrated Roman soldier who left his Roman customs behind and obeyed the orders of an Egyptian ruler. According to Lucan, the Roman soldier Septimius takes part in misleading Pompey. He welcomed Pompey on the Egyptian boat where he was murdered (Luc. 8.595-600):

> *… transire parantem*
> *Romanus Pharia miles de puppe salutat*
> *Septimius, qui, pro superum pudor, arma satelles*
> *regia gestabat posito deformia pilo,*
> *immanis, violentus, atrox nullaque ferarum*
> *mitior in caedes.*
>
> As he prepared to step across, a Roman soldier hailed him from the Egyptian boat. This was Septimius, who – shame upon the gods! – had laid down the *pilum* and carried degrading royal weapons as an attendant: a savage, wild, and cruel man, and bloodthirsty as any wild beast.

This Roman soldier (*Romanus .. miles*) Septimius, who turned away from being a true Roman soldier by getting rid of the *pilum*, a javelin used by the Roman legionary, and taking up 'royal weapons' (*arma .. regia*) that are called 'degrading' (*deformia*), was responsible for the decapitation of Pompey.[325] Septimius, a former centurion under Pompey, is one of those Roman soldiers who came to Egypt together with Gabinius to restore Pompey XIII's father to the Egyptian throne (see section 4.2). These 'Gabinians' stayed in Egypt to

manipulated because of his age: Luc. 8.496-498: *non impune tuos Magnus contempserit annos, / qui te nec victos arcere a litore nostro / posse putat*. 'Let Magnus suffer for having despised your youth; he thinks you cannot repel even a beaten man from our coast.'

[325] Luc. 8.596-598.

maintain order. Caesar had complained that these Roman soldiers had left their Roman roots behind and started to become Egyptian.[326]

4.2. *The function of negative stereotypes of Egypt in Lucan*

In this section two passages in which stereotypes are more than just interjections to condemn the behavior of Egyptians will be discussed. They are Lucan's reflection on Egypt's plan to murder Pompey in Book 8, in particular lines 542 to 545, and the introductory representation of Cleopatra in Book 10. In both instances Egypt and her last queen are said to be impertinent. In Book 8 the following digression is included as a reaction to the decision taken by the Egyptians to murder Pompey: 'Have the Nile and barbarous Memphis, and the effeminate people of Egyptian Canopus such arrogance? (*Nilusne et barbara Memphis / et Pelusiaci tam mollis turba Canopi / hos animos?* Luc. 8.542-544). And in Book 10 we find: 'Her (Cleopatra's) arrogance was due to that night which first in bed united the wanton daughter of Ptolemy with our Roman general', (*hoc animi nox illa dedit quae prima cubili / miscuit incestam ducibus Ptolemaida nostris*, Luc. 10.68).'[327]

In Book 8 Egypt is framed as a denigrated opponent of Rome, as it is in Augustan poetry. However, Augustan poets do not literally point to the fact of civil war, whereas Lucan does. Immediately after the line in which he portrays Egypt as the stereotypical Other, a digression asks, 'Does the curse of the Civil War weigh thus on all the world, and has Rome fallen so low? (*sic fata premunt civilia mundum? Sic Romana iacent?*, Luc. 8.544-545). Due to the Civil War, Rome lost its previously gained respect in the world in such a way that *even* unwarlike countries such as Egypt dared to intermingle in Roman affairs. Thus, upon consideration, the stereotypes of Egypt do not lead to positive Roman self-reflection as they denigrate Rome's own status even more. The digression continues by arguing that the intervention of Egypt is particularly shameful for Rome because now a Roman (Pompey) had been murdered by the hand of a derogatory foreigner (Ptolemy XIII's accomplices) instead of a Roman (Caesar), 'Let civil war at least keep this assurance:

[326] Caes. *B Civ*. 3.110. For Septimius' as Pompey's centurion: Plut. *Pomp*. 78; Caes. *B Civ*. 3.104.

[327] In accordance with the hostile context *animus* is here translated with the negative emotion 'arrogance' instead of the neutral/positive 'courage' or 'spirit'. For the hostile context, see below.

provide kindred hands and keep foreign fiends far away, if Magnus because of his so famous name has deserved to be Caesar's crime' (*hanc certe servate fidem, civilia bella: / cognatas praestate manus externaque monstra / pellite, si meruit tam claro nomine Magnus / Caesaris esse nefas*, Luc. 8.547-549). In Book 10 Caesar has arrived in Alexandria and is welcomed by Ptolemy XIII. He takes shelter in the Macedonian court. Cleopatra bribes the guards and finds her way to Caesar. The *Bellum Civile* informs the reader that the prospect of her being the future ruler of Rome – which might easily have become reality – terrified Rome (Luc. 10.60-67, see the quote on p. 13). The reason for her daring to fight against Rome follows immediately in Luc. 10.68-69: 'Her insolence was due to that night which first in bed united the wanton daughter of Ptolemy with our (Roman) general', (*hoc animi nox illa dedit quae prima cubili / miscuit incestam ducibus Ptolemaida nostris*). Hereafter, the text focuses specifically on Caesar's shameful behavior that night (Luc. 10.70-81):[328]

quis tibi vaesani veniam non donet amoris, 70
Antoni, durum cum Caesaris hauserit ignes
pectus? et in media rabie medioque furore
et Pompeianis habitata manibus aula
sanguine Thessalicae cladis perfusus adulter
admisit Venerem curis, et miscuit armis 75
illicitosque toros et non ex coniuge partus.
pro pudor, oblitus Magni tibi, Julia, fratres
obscaena de matre dedit, partesque fugatas
passus in extremis Libyae coalescere regnis
tempora Niliaco turpis dependit amori, 80
dum donare Pharon, dum non sibi vincere mavult.

Who would not forgive you, Antony, for your wild love affair, when the stubborn heart of Caesar devoured fire? Even in the midst of rage and fury, in the palace inhabited by Pompey's ghost, adulterously he, drenched with the blood of Pharsalian slaughter, put Venus with worries, and he combined with war unlawful wedlock and spurious offspring. Shame on him! Forgetting

[328] Many similarities exist between Virgil's rendering of Aeneas' stay in Carthage (and Dido's banquet) and Lucan's description of Caesar's stay in Alexandria (and Cleopatra's banquet). Caesar seems to be modeled by Aeneas and Cleopatra by Dido, see Berti 2000 and Zwierlein 1974. Interpreted in this vein, the fact that Caesar is stunned by Cleopatra's beauty is even more striking, as in Virgil's story, it is Dido who falls for Aeneas' beauty, see Rossi 2005, 240.

> Pompey, he gave you, Julia, brothers by an abominable mother; he tolerated the defeated party to rally in the remote realms of Libya; and he spent his time upon a shameful intrigue in Egypt, because he would rather give Egypt to another than conquer it for himself.

According to the *Bellum Civile*, it was Caesar's shameful behavior that caused 'wanton' Cleopatra and 'unwarlike' Egypt to take up arms against Rome. If he had conquered Egypt rather than restore Cleopatra to the throne, the Battle of Actium would not have happened. The comparison between Caesar and Antony brings to mind the Roman intervention in Egypt that ultimately led to the Battle of Actium. As in the previous example, negative Roman stereotypes of Cleopatra/Egypt seem to function as negative self-definition, but instead they underscore Rome's own fault even more.

Framed in a clear context of civil war and Rome's own responsibilities, the negative Roman stereotypes of Egyptians play a different role here than in Augustan poetry. Previously, it was argued that Augustan poetry seems to struggle with its own share in a recent political event, the Civil War, in which Egypt partakes. Although Augustan poetry does not completely hide the fact of civil war, it does not discuss Rome's own faults as openly as in Lucan's *Bellum Civile*. Consequently, negative Roman stereotypes in Augustan poetry seem to function primarily as negative self-definition in order to enhance the status of the Self. In the *Bellum Civile*, a work that appeared long after the Civil War – most eye-witnesses were probably dead – Rome's own mistakes could be spelled out, and stereotypes similar to those of the Augustan age could function to underscore Lucan's negative portrayal of Rome.

5. POST-AUGUSTAN 2: PLINY THE YOUNGER

Often mentioned in the context of Roman stereotypes of Egypt, is the *Panegyricus* of Pliny the Younger (61- c. 112 CE). His largest surviving work, the letters he addressed to acquaintances such as Emperor Trajan (reigned 98-117 CE) touch upon Egypt sporadically.[329] The *Panegyricus* was written on the occasion of Pliny the Younger's attainment of the consulship and contains

[329] Plin. *Ep.* 5.19.6; 8.20.2; 10.6.1; 10.6.2; 10.10.2.
— Note on the translation of Plin. *Pan*. and the text edition: the translation is Radice 1969, with major modifications. The text edition used is Trisoglio's 1973 edition.

a 'vote of thanks' (*gratiarum actio*) addressed to Emperor Trajan.[330] The speech aimed to clarify what good rulers do well and what bad ones ought to do (Plin. *Pan*. 4.1). Thus, the *Panegyricus* is basically Pliny's manifest of an ideal ruler. Consequently, not every good deed of Trajan mentioned by Pliny necessarily needs to have happened in reality.

Egypt was a fertile region due to the flooding of the Nile, and after its annexation by the Roman Empire, Egypt functioned as Rome's granary.[331] Pliny relates an apparently historical event in which the Nile refused to flood (Plin. *Pan*. 30.2-3):

> *haec inopina siccitate usque ad iniuriam sterilitatis exaruit, quia piger Nilus cunctanter alveo sese ac languide extulerat, ingentibus quidem tunc quoque ille fluminibus, fluminibus tamen conferendus. hinc pars magna terrarum mergi repararique amne consueta alto pulvere incanduit.*
>
> Then she became completely dry because of unforeseen dryness up to the point of the injurious act of barrenness, because the lazy Nile reluctantly and feebly departed its bed, even under these conditions still one of the greatest rivers, but now it was comparable to other rivers. Thus a great part of lands which used to be flooded and refreshed and revived by the river became intensely hot from thick dust.

In order to avert starvation, Egypt had to ask Trajan for help, which he did provide.[332] Pliny the Younger stresses this extraordinary achievement of Trajan because 'for long it was generally believed that Rome could only be fed and maintained with Egyptian aid' (*percrebruerat antiquitus urbem nostram nisi opibus Aegypti ali sustentarique non posse*, Plin. *Pan*. 31.2). But Egypt now appears to be dispensable as Trajan was capable of sending Roman

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[330] A recent introduction to Pliny's *Panegyricus* is Roche 2011, 1-28; see also Kühn 1985, 1-12.

[331] See Garnsey 1988, 231-232, for the import of Egyptian corn to Rome, see also *ib*. 229-230.

[332] Historians date this episode to 99 CE and read Plin. *Pan*. 30-32 in the context of Trajan's corn-supplying program, see Pfeiffer 2010a, 137-139 and Erdkamp 2005, 228 and 238, cf. Manolaraki 2013, 234, n. 50 and 235, n. 51. The Egyptian famine and Trajan's reaction, however, may have been fictional and to be read as something that Trajan ought to do. For an overview of Pliny's advice – what Trajan ought to do – in the *Panegyricus*, see Roche 2011, 5-10. The emperor's concern with the flooding of the Nile seems to have been a topic in the Roman literature. A parallel is: Stat. *Silv*. 5.99-100. Cf. Gibson 2011, 118.

grain to Egypt while keeping the grain supply of Rome intact. Doing so he proved that 'We have no need of Egypt, but Egypt must always need us' (*et nos Aegypto posse et nobis Aegyptum carere non posse*, Plin. *Pan*. 31.5). Hence the story of Rome's dependence on Egypt becomes reversed. It was to Egypt's advantage that it belonged to the Roman world, otherwise it would have meant the end of that most prosperous region. Pliny praises Trajan for uniting the Roman Empire in such way that 'no one suffers personal loss and all share in the common wealth' (*singulorum mala ad neminem, ad omnes omnium bona pertinent*, Plin. *Pan*. 32.3). However, Egypt should learn a lesson from this episode, namely that from now on it should continue to do what it does best: supply corn to Rome, even when Rome does not ask for it.[333]

5.1. *Negative stereotypes of Egypt in Pliny, Panegyricus*

Pliny's attitude towards Egypt in the *Panegyricus* can generally be described as scornful. He considers Egypt's sudden famine as the best opportunity for Trajan to show his concern about the welfare of all regions in the Roman Empire and his ability to manage the corn distribution throughout this vast Empire. Even though Pliny comments that it is his wish that every region should be prosperous (i.e. Egypt included), he is content that Egypt was not at that time (Plin. *Pan*. 31.1):

> *omnibus equidem gentibus fertiles annos gratasque terras precor; crediderim tamen per hunc Aegypti statum tuas fortunam vires experiri tuamque vigilantiam spectare voluisse.*
>
> I pray, of course, that every nation enjoys fertile years and grateful lands, but I would like to think that Fortune chose Egypt's condition to test your resources and witness your vigilance.

[333] Plin. *Pan*. 32.4: *non equidem reposcimus fenus: putet tamen esse solvendum fallacemque unius anni fidem omnibus annis omnibusque postea seculis tanto magis, quia non exigimus, excuset*, 'We ask for no interest, but let Egypt consider the debt payable: let it redeem the promise of this one year in all the years and all the centuries to come, the more so as we are making no demands.'

Egypt formed such a good opportunity for Trajan to show off his administrative and economical competence because it was known for its vast supply of corn to Rome. According to Pliny, Egypt used to brag about its fertility (Plin. *Pan*. 30.1):

> *Aegyptus alendis augendisque seminibus ita gloriata est, ut nihil imbribus caeloque deberet, siquidem proprio semper amne perfusa nec alio genere aquarum solita pinguescere, quam quas ipsa devexerat, tantis segetibus induebatur, ut cum feracissimis terris quasi numquam cessura certaret.*
>
> It was once Egypt's boast that she owed nothing to rain and weather to nurture and mature the seeds in her soil; watered as she always was by her own river and accustomed to grow fertile by no other kind of water than the water she herself conveyed downstream, she was clad in crops so rich that she could rival the most fertile lands with never a thought that this could cease.

In this passage it is not so much the extreme fertility of Egypt that seems to have bothered Pliny, but Egypt's attitude: its pride in being so fertile.[334] In the *Panegyricus* 30-31, this Egytian attitude is thematized as it is touched upon again in harsher terms (Plin. *Pan*. 31.2):

> *percrebruerat antiquitus urbem nostram nisi opibus Aegypti ali sustentarique non posse. superbiebat ventosa et insolens natio, quod victorem quidem populum pasceret tamen quodque in suo flumine, in suis navibus vel abundantia nostra vel fames esset.*
>
> For long it was generally believed that Rome could only be fed and maintained with Egyptian aid, so that this puffed up and arrogant region used to boast that they must still feed the conqueror, that their river and their ships ensured our plenty and our want.

Egypt is presented as boastful (*superbiebat*), arrogant (*insolens*), and puffed up (*ventosa*). Similar stereotypes were used in Augustan poets to describe Cleopatra's over-confidence when she dared to attack Rome (see p. 133 and p. 134, n. 313). In a similar way, Pliny's text suggests that the Egyptians were over-confident: they had it coming that the tables were turned on them.

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[334] Compare Plin. *NH* 5.60, see p. 65. See also Manolaraki 2013, 239-241, who compares Plin. *Pan*. 30-32 with Dio Chrysostom 32, and notes among others: Dio singles out the Nile, the city's trademark, as the climactic example of the Alexandrians' misguided self-importance'.

5.2. *The function of negative stereotypes of Egypt in Pliny, Panegyricus*

On historical grounds, Egypt's claim that it was responsible for feeding the Romans is not a boast, but reality. Here Egyptian alleged arrogance covers up what is really going on: Rome's actual dependence on its corn supply. By framing reality as Egypt's false pride, Pliny also enhances the status of Trajan's will to supply food to all regions in his Empire: he not only provides food to a major corn supplier in need, he does so even to a region that does not really deserve it.[335] These passages in which reality is twisted can best be understood in an imperial context: Rome's struggle with its position in a large Empire. In this sense the context in which negative perceptions of Egypt are delivered in Pliny *Panegyricus* is clearly different from that in the works of the Augustan poets (and Lucan): in the former, negative Roman stereotypes of Egypt do not concern civil war. They function within the context of Empire and Rome's central role within its Empire. Their function can be compared to the use of representations of Egypt in the work of Pliny the Younger's uncle, the *Natural History*.

In the *Panegyricus* Egypt is mapped inside the Roman world in a similar way as in the *Natural History*. It is part of a network of exchange in which Rome (or the Roman emperor) is central. After having discussed Trajan's reaction to Egypt's drought, Pliny the Younger adds a generalizing remark that includes all Roman provinces (Plin. *Pan.* 32.1):

> *quam nunc iuvat provincias omnes in fidem nostram dicionemque venisse, postquam contigit princeps, qui terrarum fecunditatem nunc huc, nunc illuc, ut tempus et necessitas posceret, transferret referretque, qui diremptam mari gentem ut partem aliquam populi plebisque Romanae aleret ac tueretur!*
>
> What a benefit it is for every province to have come under our rule and protection when we are blessed with a Princeps who could switch earth's bounty here and there, as occasion and necessity require, bringing aid and nourishment to a nation cut off by the sea as if its people were numbered among the humbler citizens of Rome!

[335] Note that in Plin. *Pan*. 32.1 Trajan is praised for his ability to ensure prosperity to all regions of the Roman Empire, see quote below.

Due to being part of the Roman Empire and having such a man as Trajan as their ruler, food shortage is history in the provinces as the emperor redistributes the overproduction of other regions to those regions in need. The centrality of Rome is explicit as it is Rome that functions as the staple market. The passage of the cherry tree in Pliny's *Natural History* (see p. 54), which was transported from the East to the North via Rome because of Roman military conquests, can serve as a parallel example. In both texts, Rome is rendered as the center of the world.

The representation of Egypt in this eulogy of Trajan also serves to enhance the status of Rome (or at least its emperor), as it does in the *Natural History*. In the *Panegyricus* Rome is able to perform what Egypt falsely claimed to do: supply food to people who need it. Egypt's status as a fertile region is used to make Roman achievements impressive. The glory that was once attributed to Egypt is now Rome's. The reversal of glory is expressed explicitly in the following passage (Plin. *Pan*. 31.6):[336]

> *Ita beneficio tuo nec maligna tellus, et obsequens Nilus Aegypto quidem saepe, sed gloriae nostrae numquam largior fluxit.*
>
> Thus by your gracious aid the earth was not unbountiful, and propitious Nile – though it may often have flowed more generously for Egypt – never flowed more generously for our glory.[337]

[336] In her reading of Plin. *Pan*. 30-32, Manolaraki, 2013, 234-247, argues that the myth of Egypt's superiority over Rome turns out to be untrue because the drought is not an Egyptian affair, but a Roman one as the texts 'publicize[s] the emperor as a patron of Egyptian fertility and a substitute for the Nile', *ib.* 247. Lavan, 2013, 168-174, in his reading of Plin. *Pan*. 30-32, by pointing out Egypt's servile status in this episode (*serviat*, Plin. *Pan*. 31.3) and the fact that Egypt is not supplying food, but tribute (*non alimenta se nobis, sed tributa praestare*, Plin. *Pan*. 31.3), claims that Egypt is not superior to Rome, because Egypt is now Roman: 'Pliny turns Trajan's management of the drought in Egypt into a Roman solution to a distinctively Roman problem', *ib*. 174.

[337] For the reading of *obsequens* as an epithet and the consequences for the translation of this passage, see Lavan 2013, 171, n. 38.

In his analysis of this passage, Lavan notes, 'Roman glory is earned at Egypt's expense.'[338] The Nile now acts on behalf of Rome, not Egypt anymore.[339] The passage also contains Roman perceptions of Egypt: Egypt is bypassed in history, it was once an impregnable, glorious region because it could depend on its fertility, but now those days are gone. Egypt needs Rome to sustain itself.[340] In the *Panegyricus*, Egypt does not function as the stereotypical Other. It is part of the Self as it is part of the Roman Empire. Egypt's status as food-supplying region *par excellence* is inscribed in Roman history and as such contributes to Rome's status as the center of the Roman Empire. This is certainly the case as the now Roman Nile is more propitious than ever.

6. POST-AUGUSTAN 3: JUVENAL, *SATIRE* 15

Juvenal's fifteenth Satire is described as showing 'deep hatred for the Egyptians' and heaping 'all imaginable abuse on "deranged Egypt" (*demens* / *Aegyptos* [Juv. 15.1-2])'.[341] In his first Satire (written between the late first and early second century CE) Juvenal explains that he writes satires out of

[338] Lavan 2013, 171, who focusses on the 'exchange of Roman conceptions of power', *ib*. 168, and notes the reversed flow of goods: instead of Roman dependence on Egypt, Egypt is dependent on Rome.

[339] A passage reminiscent of this one is discussed in the first chapter on Pliny the Elder's Egypt, *NH* 5.58, pp. 65-66, where the personified Nile is concerned about the fate of Rome.

[340] Other examples of this structural device are Plin. *NH* 5.60, see p. 65; Mart. 8.36.1-4, see p. 1-2. It has been noted that Plin. *Pan*. 30 begins with the 'familiar Augustan polarity between Rome and Egypt, accusing the latter for what Meyer Reinhold [1980, 101] calls 'an atavistic smugness in a once glorious past', Manolaraki 2013, 238. The passage creates a digression between Rome and Egypt – not dissimilar to the Augustan use of negative perceptions of the Egyptians – but the context-dependent function of Pliny the Younger's digression is different from that in Augustan poets. In Pliny it is used to reaffirm the new power relationships in the Roman Empire, in the Augustan poets to discuss Roman sentiments in the Civil War.

[341] Smelik and Hemelrijk 1984, 1965: 'If this is true [Juvenal's exile in Egypt under Domitian] he obviously acquired there the deep hatred for the Egyptians which he manifests specifically in the 15th satire.' Maehler 2003: 'It is in his fifteenth satire that Juvenal heaps all imaginable abuse on "deranged Egypt" (*demens* / *Aegyptos*, XV.1-2)..'

indignation about the abuses and decadence of his society.[342] A couple of his invectives concern the low morality of Roman women as wives, the hypocrisy of the Roman upper class, creed, decadence and superstition. In the past scholars have related his mockery of Egypt to personal aversion caused by an assumed exile to Egypt.[343] But nowadays the first person presentation of Juvenal (as well as that of authors writing in all Roman genres) is predominantly not understood as autobiographical material. The 'speaker' is a *persona*, a creation of the author and a construct of which the Roman audience was well aware.[344]

In Juvenal, Egypt is associated with decadence, a general stereotype of Easterners. One character in Juvenal's satires is Crispinus, an Egyptian who rose to equestrian status under Domitian and held a high position at his court. Crispinus is an example of the nouveau riche. In the following fragment, the Tyrian cloak expresses luxury, Juv. 1.26-30:[345]

cum pars Niliacae plebis, cum verna Canopi
Crispinus Tyrias umero revocante lacernas,
ventilet aestivum digitis sudantibus aurum
nec sufferre queat maioris pondera gemmae,
difficile est saturam non scribere.[346] 30

[342] Juv. 1.22-30, ll. 26-30 are quoted below. Juvenal wrote verse satires. For information about the characteristics of Roman satire and in particular about Juvenal's satires, see Braund 1996a.
— note on translation and text edition used of Juv. 15: the text edition used is Clausen's Oxford edition 1992. The adopted translation with modification is Braund 2004.

[343] An example of the autobiographical reading is Highet 1954.

[344] Studies on *persona* in Juvenal include: Anderson 1982 who launched the *persona* approach in several essays from the 1960s onwards and was the foremost opponent of the autobiographical interpretation of Highet 1954, Anderson 1982, viii-x; Braund 1988; 1992; 1996a, and 1996b; McKim 1986. For criticism of the *persona* approach, see Mayer 2003, esp. 71-78 and 71 nt. 28 for references. Mayer argued that Romans did read satires as personal expressions of the poets who wrote them. For a discussion of why *persona* theory does not 'solve the problem of what to make of a satirist's self-representation', see also Rosen 2007, 220-223, for the quote *ib*. 220.

[345] One theme in Juvenal's first book, especially in the third satire, is the replacement of native Romans by eastern immigrants such as Crispinus, who is also mentioned in the opening line of the fourth satire, see on this topic Braund 1996a, 35. For condemnation of Egyptians, see also 1.130-131, for condemnation of other easterners, see Juv. 1.102-109 (freedman from the Euphrates) and Juv. 3.58-125 (Greeks). Canopus in Juvenal is known for its vices: Juv. 6.82-84.

[346] Verse 29 is generally omitted, see Braund 1996a, *ad loc*.

> When that remnant of the Nile's trash, that native slave of Canopus, that Crispinus, wafts a gold ring[347] in summer on sweaty fingers while his shoulder hitches up a Tyrian cloak! – then it is hard *not* to write satire.

Egypt is also linked in Juvenal to religious fanaticism. Modern scholarship on the cults of Isis frequently mention Juvenal's mockery of them in his sixth satire, where he also sneeringly describes how a Roman woman is even willing to visit Egypt's border town Meroe (modern Aswan) in order to bring back water of the Nile when Isis/Io asks her to.[348] The woman's obedience is particularly ridiculous as, according to Juvenal, the cult is surrounded by corruption and superstition (Juv. 6.535-541):[349]

> *ille petit veniam, quoties non abstinet uxor* 535
> *concubitu sacris observandisque diebus,*
> *magnaque debetur violato poena cadurco*
> *et movisse caput visa est argentea serpens:*
> *illius lacrimae meditataque murmura praestant*
> *ut veniam culpae non abnuat ansere magno* 540
> *scilicet et tenui popano corruptus Osiris.*
>
> He's [Anubis] the one that asks for a pardon whenever your wife does not refrain from sex on the days which should be kept sacred and a large fine is due for violation of the quilt. When the silver snake has been seen to move its head, it's his tears and his practiced mumblings which ensure that Osiris will not refuse to pardon her fault - provided, of course, he's bribed by a fat goose and a slice of sacrificial cake.

As the reference to the cult of Isis is mentioned directly after Juvenal's description of the behavior of worshippers of the cult of Bellona and the Mother goddess, the mockery does not concern the cult of Isis as such, but all Orientalizing cults. The foreign aspects of these cults are stressed in particular, such as that of extreme self-flagellation: submersion in the ice-water of the

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[347] The gold ring marked equestrian status.

[348] Juv. 6.526: *si candida iusserit Io, / ibit ad Aegypti finem calidaque petitas / a Meroe portabit aquas, ut spargat in aede / Isidis*, 'If white Io tells her to, she'll go to the ends of Egypt and brings back water fetched from sweltering Meroë to sprinkle in Isis' temple'. Other instances where Juvenal refers to the cult of Isis include: 8.29-30 (the death and resurrection of Osiris); 12.28 (exorbitant decorated Isis temples); 13.92-96 (penance to Isis).

[349] For the relation between Roman cult practices related to the worship of Isis and fraud, see also Joseph *AJ* 18.65-80.

Nile in the winter or crawling naked across the Campus; or the abnormal appearances of the priest are emphasized: a eunuch or a priest with a shaved head. It goes beyond saying that Juvenal presents a degrading image of oriental cults. However, jibing at these cults is not the point he wants to make in his sixth satire. His rejection of these cults contributes to his major aim which is convincing Semonides to refrain from marriage. In his attempt to persuade Semonides, Juvenal's Roman women are made out to be utterly unfit for marriage. Whereas in the sixth satire the degrading Egyptian cult of Isis contributes to portraying Roman women as highly superstitious in order to incite aversion to marriage, the fifteenth satire addresses animal worship and the religious fanaticism of the Egyptians themselves.

Juvenal's fifteenth satire can be divided into two parts. The first part (ll. 1-131) describes a case of cannibalism in Egypt which, Juvenal claimed, had happened in the consulship of Iuncus in AD 127.[350] Two Egyptian towns in lower Egypt, Ombi and Tentyra, driven by disagreement over the worship of different animal gods, start a fight which ends in the dismembering and devouring of one town's inhabitants by those of the other. It is argued that Egypt has no excuse for this excess, unlike other examples of cannibalism

[350] Commentaries on the fifteenth satire include: Mayor 1966; Courtney 1980. Especially the subject of cannibalism has received much attention: cannibalism as a real fact: Moreau 1940; Highet 1949; cannibalism as a mistaken religious celebration: Powell 1979; cannibalism as rhetorical theme: Courtney 1980; cannibalism as topos: Singleton 1983; Rankin 1969. McKim 1986 and Anderson 1987, though looking at different values, interpret this satire from the angle of irony. The 'speaker' is self-contradictory throughout the poem, and in this process the emphasis is put on the Roman instead of the Egyptian culture. Tennant 1995, however, argues against the *persona* approach. According to him Juvenal is spreading his own perceptions. Alston 1996, in a post-colonial reading, elaborates three ways in which a distinction is created between 'us' Romans and 'them' Egyptians: 1) cannibalism is associated with the uncivilized world of the 'Other', 2) animal worship creates a difference between the Egyptian animal gods and the Roman anthropomorphic ones, 3) audience versus object: 'The literature Roman 'us' discuss the voiceless Egyptian 'them'', *ib*.102. Alston shows how the digression between 'us' and 'them' becomes gradually eroded by pointing at Juvenal's question mark about the credibility of the story (comparison with Odysseus) and by paralleling the presence of Egypt in material culture: 'It was not 'them' but 'us' who were being discussed in *Satire* XV.' Shumate 2006, 129-158 esp. 143-144, in her post-colonial reading of Juvenal's fifteenth satire, does not see an erosion of the digression between 'us' versus 'them'.

(15.119-122).[351] Cannibalism is here framed as something true Romans would not do except when driven to it by starvation. The second part of the satire (ll. 132-174) contains a more 'humanitarian' consideration in which Juvenal compares original compassion – when humans were given life in the beginning of the world, they cared for each other, according to Juvenal – with the degenerated behavior of humans nowadays (Juv. 15.147-160):

> *… mundi*
> *principio indulsit communis conditor illis*
> *tantum animas, nobis animum quoque, mutuus ut nos*
> *adfectus petere auxilium et praestare iuberet,* 150
> *dispersos trahere in populum, migrare vetusto*
> *de nemore et proavis habitatas linquere silvas,*
> *aedificare domos, laribus coniungere nostris*
> *tectum aliud, tutos vicino limine somnos*
> *ut collata daret fiducia, protegere armis* 155
> *lapsum aut ingenti nutantem volnere civem,*
> *communi dare signa tuba, defendier isdem*
> *turribus atque una portarum clave teneri.*
> *sed iam serpentum maior concordia, parcit*
> *cognatis maculis similis fera.* 160
>
> To them [those who gaze at the ground, *terram spectantia*, i.e. animals], at the beginning of the world our common creator gave only the breath of life; to us he gave reason as well, that fellow-feeling might bid us ask or offer aid, gather scattered dwellers into a people, desert the primeval groves and woods inhabited by our forefathers, build houses for ourselves, with others adjacent to our own, that a neighbors' threshold, from the confidence that comes of union, might give us peaceful slumbers; shield with arms a fallen citizen, or one staggering from a grievous wound, give battle signals by a common trumpet, and seek protection inside the same city walls and behind gates fastened by a single key. But these days, there is more amity among serpents than among men; wild beasts are merciful to beasts spotted like themselves.

This passage first creates a sharp distinction between animals and humans based on the oppostion between *anima* and *animus*: we, humans, have a rational soul (*animum*) in contrast to the animals, which only have the breath

[351] Juv. 15.119-122: *quis modo casus / inpulit hos? quae tanta fames infestaque vallo / arma coegerunt tam detestabile monstrum / audere?* 'But in this recent case, what crisis drove them to it? What hunger so terrible, what weapons threatening their defences forced them to commit such an abominable outrage?'

of life (*animas*) and, therefore, we help and protect other humans. Second, the passage distinguishes between a bygone era in which people acted humanely towards each other and the situation now in which feelings of compassion are lacking. Even animals live more in harmony with each other than the people of today: animals do not kill and eat their own species. Whereas cannibalism is framed as specifically *unRoman* in the first part, it is framed in the second part as *unhuman*: it is something humans (the Egyptians included) should not do.[352] The function of stereotypes of Egypt in Juvenal's fifteenth satire is inextricably related to this change in frames.

6.1. *Negative stereotypes of Egypt in Juvenal, Satire 15*

Many stereotypes of Egyptians can be found in the first part of the fifteenth satire. In the first line the Egyptians are said to be demented in their worship of monsters: 'Volusius Bithynicus, is there anyone who doesn't know the kind of monsters that crazy Egypt worships?' (*Quis nescit, Volusi Bithynice, qualia demens / Aegyptos portenta colat?* Juv. 15.1-2).[353] Whether or not this line is an intended composition of two phrases found in Cicero's work, animal worship is used to evoke general Roman rejection like it did in Cicero.[354]

In the fifteenth Satire, animal worship is related to Egypt's antiquity when an image of an animal god is compared to the statue of Memnon and (ancient / *vetus*) Thebes (Juv. 15.4-7):

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[352] McKim 1986, 69: 'Juvenal, we are told, accuses the Egyptians of being 'bestial' (Anderson [1962], 151). But clearly the satirist's implicit ironical point is that, according to his speaker's self-defeating logic, *all* men, and not just the Egyptians, are *sub*-bestial.'

[353] Juvenal's addressee, Volusius Bithinicus, is unknown elsewhere.

[354] Cic. *Tusc.* 5.78: *Aegyptiorum morem quis ignorat.*. and Cic. *Nat. D.* 1.43: *Aegyptiorum .. dementiam*, see p. 118 n. 287. Regarding the claim that Juvenal modelled this line on Cicero, Anderson 1987, 204, warns, 'Such a claim may not be very likely, inasmuch as so much of the ordinary remarks about Egypt, which were written between the time of Cicero and A.D. 127, have vanished, material that would have been more readily available to Juvenal than Cicero's work.' But Anderson adds, 'However, it remains interesting to notice the way Juvenal drastically alters the emphasis of his 'model'', and elaborates the comparison between Cicero and Juvenal, *ib*. 204-205.

> *effigies sacri nitet aurea cercopitheci,*
> *dimidio magicae resonant ubi Memnone chordae* 5
> *atque vetus Thebe centum iacet obruta portis,*
>
> 'The sacred long-tailed monkey's golden image gleams where magic chords reverberate from crumbling Memnon and ancient Thebes lies in ruins with its hundred gates.

The colossus of Memnon and Thebes were tourist attractions in Roman times. They stood for Egypt's deep past.[355] As both are in decay, this passage seems to suggest that animal worship should also be reckoned to be obsolete. In Cicero's *De Republica* 3.14, Egyptian antiquity probably formed a contrast with animal worship, see pp. 116-118. This passage of Cicero seems to have suggested that Egypt had two faces: it had an admirable deep past, but it also worshipped animals. Juvenal's text seems to deviate from Cicero's model as Egypt's antiquity is used to make animal worship even more objectionable. The Egyptian religious customs of worshipping animals is placed in opposition to the Roman religion when Juvenal commends, 'but no one worships Diana' (*nemo Dianam*, Juv. 15.8). It is no coincidence that the anthropomorphic gods are represented here by Diana as she is particularly associated with wild animals. The text emphasizes Egyptian religious fanaticism by explicitly stating that Egyptians are prohibited from eating animals and some vegetables while they allow for eating humans. This remark refers to the Egyptian custom – which is a topos in Greco-Roman literature – to corporally punish somebody for violating animals.[356]

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[355] See Leemreize 2014a, 65. Cf. Bowersock 1984; Foertmeyer 1989, 23-25.

[356] Juv. 15.9-13: porrum *et caepe nefas violare et frangere morsu / (o sanctas gentes, quibus haec nascuntur in hortis / numina!), lanatis animalibus abstinet omnis / mensa, nefas illic fetum iugulare capellae: / carnibus humanis vesci licet*, 'It's a violation and a sin to crunch your teeth into a leek or an onion. Such holy peoples, to have these gods growing in their gardens! Their tables abstain completely from woolly animals, and there it's a sin to slaughter a goat's young. But feeding on human flesh is allowed.' An example of another reference to the Egyptian custom to not violate animals is Cic. *Tusc.* 5.78, see p. 127 n. 304. For a comparison between Cic. *Tusc.* 5.78 and Juvenal, see Anderson 1987, 204-205. Anderson notes that the willingness to endure pain in Cicero's example is a logical consequence of the Egyptian worship of animals. In Juvenal, however, cannibalism is rendered a consequence of the religious fanaticism of Egyptians not to eat certain animals and vegetables.

In his account of the fight between the two neighboring Egyptian towns, Ombi and Tentyra, Juvenal mentions several negative stereotypes of the Egyptians as an explanation for their gruesome act of cannibalism. For instance, Egyptian licentiousness is stressed (Juv.15.44-46):

> *… horrida sane*
> *Aegyptos, sed luxuria, quantum ipse notavi,* 45
> *barbara famoso non cedit turba Canopo.*
>
> Egypt is uncouth, for sure, but in terms of extravagance, as far as I can tell from my own observations, its barbarian mob matches scandalous Canopus.

Here a distinction is made between 'native' Egypt and 'hellenized' Canopus, a famous Egyptian town near Alexandria which was known for its extravagance, licentiousness and vice.[357] Egypt turns out to be even more licentious than was believed as native Egypt and Hellenized Egypt can be put on a par in this respect.[358] The Egyptians are also called unwarlike and useless (*imbelle et inutile vulgus*, Juv. 15.126).[359] Their unmanly way of fighting is highlighted in Juvenal's description of the course of the fight between Ombi and Tentyra as Juvenal relates that the Egyptians believed they were playing a game at the beginning of their fight, 'to practice a childish fight' (*puerilis exercere acies*), because there were no corpses (Juv. 59-60).

[357] For Alexandria as a 'Hellenized' Egyptian city, see p. 124, esp. n. 296-297. For Canopus, cf. p. 96 (Prop. 3.11.39); p. 140 (Luc. 8.542-544; 10.64).

[358] McKim 1986, 63, places an emphasis on the Roman identification with the inhabitants of Canopus, which 'was a notorious resort for Greeks and Romans' and argues that 'the "civilized" probates of Canopus are *no better than* the tribesmen.'

[359] This passage is also dominated by irony as Egypt is called unwarlike whereas Juvenal is about to argue that war is the most barbarous act. McKim 1986, 66 comments on this passage: 'Since he is soon to inveigh against war as proof of the barbarity of all mankind, it is hardly consistent for him to denigrate Egyptians here from being singularly unwarlike in spirit and sail craft. Non-belligerence should by right be to the cannibal's *credit*, modifying their barbarism, just as non-cannibalism is to the credit of belligerent barbarians!' Also Anderson 1987, 211, notes the irony: 'If the Egyptians are unwarlike, then perhaps they are closer to the ideal harmlessness of the animal world.'

6.2. *The function of negative stereotypes in Juvenal, Satire 15*

In the first part of Juvenal's fifteenth satire, Egypt seems to function as a negative mirror for superior Roman behavior. Egyptian animal gods are literally put in opposition to Roman anthropomorphic ones (*nemo Dianam*, Juv. 15.8). The link between cannibalism, Egyptian animal worship and Eastern decadence makes cannibalism utterly foreign.[360] However, the distinction between Roman (the Self) and Egyptian (the Other) is not that clear on second glance. In his study of Juvenal's fifteenth Satire, Richard McKim notes many ironical contradictions that undermined the then current assumption that Juvenal was personally moralizing about Egypt's low status in order to show off Greco-Roman superiority. By taking the existence of a 'speaker' as premise,[361] he argued that Juvenal (and Petronius) 'are more concerned to satirize human nature and those who moralize about it than to indulge any moralizing of their own.' Among the many ironical contradictions, the one concerning the representation of Diana is most manifest. This Roman goddess is not only referred to in line eight, in which an opposition between Egyptian animal worship and the Roman veneration of anthropomorphic gods can be found. She is also hinted at a couple of lines later. Juvenal argues that the cannibalistic act of the Egyptians is worse than 'the altar at Maoetis': 'What self-defense of this kind can Egypt, which is more barbaric than the altar at Maeotis [Tauris], offer?' (*tale quid excusat Maeotide saevior ara / Aegyptos?*, Juv. 15.115-116). By referring to the altar at Maeotis Juvenal refers to the sacrifice of Iphigeneia by her father at the altar of

[360] The opposition in the opening lines is further elaborated in Juvenal's contrasts between the eating of cooked meat, i.e. what 'ordinary', 'civilized' Romans used to do, versus 'barbarian' swallowing of raw meat, Juv. 15.72-92. In the first part of the Satire, Egypt is mentally mapped outside the Roman world. In Juv. 15.110-112 Greek culture, via Rome, has conquered the world, but Egypt forms an exception, Juv. 15.115-116. Ll.110-112 are utterly satirical. In other Satires of Juvenal, the same kind of negative stereotypes is used for the Greeks as here for the Egyptians. Moreover, the representation of Rome in earlier Satires was marked by its lack of high culture. The Romans were well aware that Greek culture was profoundly present in Egypt, particularly in Alexandria. See Shumate 2006, 137-139. Cf McKim 1986, 66-68. The exclusion of Egypt from the civilized world becomes even more pressing in Juv. 15.124-128. Here Egypt is represented as even more savage than other peoples such as the Cimbrians, Britons, Scythians and Agathyrsians.

[361] McKim wrote in a period in which the first person presentation was not yet commonly interpreted as a *persona* or a 'speaker'.

Artemis/Diana in Tauris. Juvenal explains why Egypt is more barbaric than that altar: 'After all, the Taurian inventor [Diana] of that ghastly rite, assuming for now that poetic tradition can be reliably believed, only sacrifices humans. The victim fears nothing more or worse than the knife' (*quippe illa nefandi Taurica sacri / inventrix homines, ut iam quae carmina tradunt / digna fide credas, tantum immolat; ulterius nil /aut gravius cultro timet hostia*, Juv. 15.116-119). Meaning that whereas the Egyptians killed and ate a human being, the Roman goddess Diana 'only' ordered that Agamemnon killed his daughter.[362] By comparing Egyptian cannibalism with the Greco/Roman ritual sacrifice of Iphigeneia, the difference between the two acts becomes clear, but at the same time the overlaps between the two are stressed. Hence, the first part of Juvenal's fifteenth Satire seems to mock the Roman feelings of superiority. Animal worship is an illustrative sign of 'foreign' and 'unRoman'. Like in Cicero, it forms a good example in a discussion about Roman standards as this Egyptian religious custom is itself based on the Roman convention to immediately reject animal worship.

The first part of the Satire, in which the Romans' own behavior is mocked by comparison to Egyptian behavior, reads as an introduction to the second part (ll. 131-174) that discusses contemporary *human* bad behavior. Whereas in the first part Juvenal applies negative remarks to specific peoples (Egyptians, Cimbrians, Britons, Agathyrsians), in the second part he addresses the 'human race' (*humano generi*, 131). As he speaks about this human race in first person ('we', 'us'), a clear opposition between Rome and Egypt seems to have vanished. Egyptian cannibalism has become just an example to show how low humans have sunk, Juv. 15.165-171:

[362] Cf. Lucian *Dial. Deor.* 16.1. See also Courtney 1980, *ad loc*. McKim 1986, 60, links this passage to the second part of the Satire in which animals show compassion for each other and humans not: 'Thus, in condemning the Egyptians in A (ll. 1-32) for worshipping animals rather than their anthropomorphic mistress, the speaker is by his own subsequent account condemning them for worshipping divinities who behave in accord with the greatest virtue rather than the one who forced a man to violate is so cruelly as to kill his own daughter. The speaker is oblivious to the fact that his reference to Artemis in C (ll. 93-131) thus undermines his elevation of Diana in A, but Juvenal is playing with his speaker's prejudices for laughs and plants the irony there for us to seize on.'

ast homini ferrum letale incude nefanda
produxisse parum est, cum rastra et sarcula tantum
adsueti coquere et martis ac vomere lassi
nescierint primi gladios extendere fabri.
aspicimus populos quorum non sufficit irae
occidisse aliquem, sed pectora, bracchia voltum
crediderint genus esse cibi.

But for human beings it is not enough to have beaten out lethal steel on the wicked anvil, although the first blacksmiths spent their time and effort on forging rakes and hoes and mattocks and ploughshares only. They didn't know how to produce swords. Now we are looking at peoples whose anger is not satisfied by killing someone but who think his torso, arms, and face are a kind of food.

This passage shows a diachronic development in which mankind in the early days was preoccupied with agrarian work: the blacksmiths only made agrarian tools. In later times people made weapons to kill each other ('lethal steel' / *ferrum letale*). The summit, however, of all human lack of compassion is cannibalism. Framed in a discussion about universal mankind, cannibalism, a former example of unRoman/Egyptian behavior, becomes an example of human behavior in general. In this satire, however, a complete merge between 'them' cannibalistic people and 'us' seems to be prevented as 'we are looking at (them) peoples' (*aspicimus populos*, Juv. 15.169).

7. Conclusions

In this chapter, prominent texts in modern discussions on the Roman literary representation of Egypt have been analyzed. The previous sections have shown that the use of negative Roman stereotypes of Egypt does not always function as a means to construct a positive self-image by contrast to a negative one of the Other. In Cicero's *Pro Rabirio Postumo* 35, the stereotype can be called 'informative'. It tries to influence the jury of the trial to think poorly about the testimony of the Alexandrian witnesses. The stereotype is not used to increase Roman self-esteem, but just to discredit the reputation of the Alexandrians. In Cicero's *De Natura Deorum*, stereotypes of Egyptians are used as part of a rhetorical strategy to discuss Roman conventions and do not as such enhance Roman status. In Augustan poetry, negative perceptions of

Egypt seem to predominantly function as Othering. In the context of the Battle of Actium the Egyptian Other implicitly underscores good Roman behavior. In Lucan the distinction between Us and Them created by stereotypes is not used to represent Rome positively, but to discuss Roman mistakes and responsibilities. In Pliny the Younger's *Panegyricus* the negative stereotypes are not used to form a contrast between Rome and Egypt, they cover up the reality of Roman dependence on Egyptian corn. As such – and not by contrast – they can be supportive of Roman self-esteem. And finally, in Juvenal Satire 15, the opposition between 'bad' Egypt and 'good' Rome is actually used to discuss human nature in general. The Egyptian example of cannibalism turns out to be a general example of how low humans have sunk. Not unlike Cicero's rendering of animal worship, reference to such a clearly unRoman religious custom forms a good start to discuss one's own standards.

Considering the assumed prominent position of Augustan literature in the Roman literary tradition of negative stereotypes, this chapter has argued that 'similar' stereotypes may have different meanings. Not each later literary employment of 'Augustan' stereotypes is a reaction on Augustan literature/society. For instance, the opposition that Juvenal creates between Egyptian animal gods and Roman anthropomorphic gods in his fifteenth Satire has more in common with Cicero's use of that contrast – hence Juvenal has reason to refer to such an example of Cicero in his opening line – than with that of the Augustan poets. Even in the context of civil war, 'Augustan' stereotypes function differently in the later literature. Although the fact of civil war was not completely absent in the Roman literature, it was explored fully in Lucan. In his work that appeared after most eyewitnesses of the Civil War would have died, Roman stereotypes of Egypt turn against Rome itself: it was Rome's own fault that Egypt could be so arrogant. Whereas Augustan texts conveying stereotypes seem to create an opposition between Us/Rome and Them/Egypt, Pliny the Younger's *Panegyricus*, like his uncle Pliny the Elder's *Natural History*, show a thoroughly interconnected Roman Empire of which Egypt was firmly part. In order to stress Rome's central position in this Empire, the status of Egypt, a region that was economically of vital importance for Rome, needed to be lowered. But Pliny the Younger's *Panegyricus* demonstrates that Egypt's highly rated status could also be framed as Rome's own success.

IV

Framing the Egyptian past: Tibullus 1.7

1. INTRODUCTION[363]

In the general introduction two 'traditional' fixated and normative concepts have been distinguished derived from previous scholarship: the concept of Egypt as the stereotypical Other and that of ancient Egypt. In chapter III it became clear that the concept of Egypt as the stereotypical Other, can function rather differently depending on the larger context. This fourth and last chapter focuses on the other 'traditional' concept of Egypt: ancient Egypt. In general the concept of ancient Egypt has been understood in opposition to negative Roman perceptions of contemporary Egypt. It is argued that the Romans generally embraced ancient Egypt and rejected contemporary Egypt. For instance, studying the literary discourse and Roman tourism in Egypt, Holger Sonnabend noticed a discrepancy between the Roman evaluation of the Egyptian past and that of the present: 'Das alte Ägypten und das aktuelle Ptolemäerreich waren für Rom zwei völlig verschiedene Bereiche. .. Die Idee des alten Ägypten lebte zwar auch in der Gegenwart fort, doch bedurfte man ihrer nicht, um sich über die aktuelle politisch relevante Einschätzung des Nillandes klar zu werden.'[364] This standard way of dealing with the Roman representation of ancient Egypt does not explain how these concepts function in the larger context nor why ancient authors wished to recall the associated feelings of admiration or rejection. In the previous chapter the notion of Roman self-representation appeared to be helpful in understanding the

[363] Passages in this chapter draw heavily on my chapter 'The Egyptian past in the Roman present' in Ker and Pieper 2014. For a more extensive analysis of my discussion of Hor. *Carm*. 3.30.1-5; Front. *Aq*. 1.16; Tac. *Ann*. 2.59-61, see pp. 167-168, I refer to this earlier publication.

[364] Sonnabend 1986, 300.

concept of Egypt as the Other. In this chapter I will explore whether this notion is also useful to explain Roman references to Egypt's antiquity.

To investigate this I will discuss a case-study that concerns a poem about a contemporary event in which Roman admiration for Egypt's antiquity plays an important role: Tibullus 1.7. This Augustan text celebrates Tibullus' patron Messalla's military victory over the Aquitanians in combination with his birthday. It also includes a lengthy hymn to the Egyptian god Osiris. First I shall present an overview of Roman texts in which the antiquity of Egypt is manifest, followed by a discussion about a possible interpretation of the concept of ancient Egypt in Roman discursive contexts.

1.1. *Overview of Roman literary sources on ancient Egypt and Roman touristic interest in Egypt: From the 1st century BCE until the first decades of the 2nd century CE*

Many Romans had an urge to see Egypt with their own eyes: according to Suetonius, Julius Caesar went on a trip with Cleopatra and Augustus traveled around, notoriously refusing to visit Apis.[365] Cicero never went, but expressed his wish to do so: 'Yes, I wish and have wished for a long time now to visit Alexandria and the rest of Egypt' (*cupio equidem et iam pridem cupio Alexandriam reliquamque Aegyptum visere*).[366] Passages from Propertius and Pliny the Younger suggest that Roman touristic preferences for sites of the East (Greece, Egypt and Asia Minor) over Roman ones is a literary topic.[367] Seneca's now lost treatise *De situ et sacris Aegyptiorum*, probably a Roman version of the Hellenistic Greek books on Egypt, the *Aegyptiaca*, can be seen as evidence of Roman interest in Egypt. Likewise, the signatures that Roman

[365] Suet. *Aug*. 93: 'But on the other hand, he not only omitted to make a slight detour to visit Apis, when he was travelling through, but highly commended his grandson Gaius for not offering prayers at Jerusalem as he passed by Judaea,' tr. Rolfe 1920, *at contra non modo in peragranda Aegypto paulo deflectere ad visendum Apin supersedit sed et Gaium nepotem, quod Iudaeam praeteruehens apud Hierosolymam non supplicasset, conlaudavit*.

[366] Cic. *Att.* 2.5.1. For Caesar's and Augustus' visit to Egypt: Suet. *Jul*. 52.1 and *Aug*. 93. Vespasian, Hadrian, Marcus Aurelius, Septimius Severus, Caracalla, and Diocletian visited Egypt too; see Smelik and Hemelrijk 1984, 1943: 'In descriptions of these visits to Egypt emphasis is always laid on the ancient monuments and the wisdom of Egypt as the motive for undertaking.'

[367] Plin. *Ep*. 8.20.2; Prop. 3.22.16-18.

travelers inscribed on tourist sites, such as the statue of Memnon, give evidence of the appeal of Egypt.[368]

Roman admiration for the monuments, the main tokens of ancient Egypt, was widespread in the literature. As we have seen in chapter one, Pliny the Elder considered them to be miracles that could only be surpassed by those found in Rome (see pp. 73-74). It is also apparent in several Augustan and Flavian texts. In Horace, *Ode* 3.30.1-5 the permanence of the pyramids is stressed:

> *exegi monumentum aere perennius*
> *regalique situ pyramidum altius,*
> *quod non imber edax, non aquilo impotens*
> *possit diruere aut innumerabilis*
>
> *annorum series et fuga temporum.* 5
>
> I have completed a monument more lasting than bronze
> and higher than the decaying pyramids of kings
> which cannot be destroyed by gnawing rain
> nor wild north wind, or by the unnumbered
>
> procession of the years and flight of time.
> Tr. West 2002

Horace's poem will always be more eminent than pyramids, because it will – in contrast to pyramids that were thought of as extremely old – never be affected by weather and time.[369] Frontinus, *Aq*. 1.16, also expresses admiration, be it indirectly, for this Egyptian monument:

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[368] See Bernand 1960. The statue of Memnon is one of the two seated colossi of Amenhotep III (fourteenth century BCE) in the necropolis of Thebes. If the reconstruction of the inscription in Bernand 1960, no. 1 is correct, the oldest graffiti can be dated to 20 CE, otherwise the earliest datable signature is 65 CE: Bernand 1960, no. 2. For discussion of Bernand: Weingärtner 1969, 156 n. 155. For general information about Roman tourism to Egypt, see Casson 1994, 257-261, 271-280; Foertmeyer 1989; Friedländer 1919, 421-444.

[369] For similar use of pyramids, see Prop. 3.2.19-26. Horace and Propertius used pyramids metaphorically to glorify their own poetic achievement. Cf. the epigrams of Pseudo-Seneca, Anth. Lat. (ed. Shackleton-Bailey) 415-416. See also Suerbaum 1968, 326-327, on the 'Pyramidenmotiv'.

> *tot aquarum tam multis necessariis molibus pyramidas videlicet otiosas compares aut cetera inertia sed fama celebrata opera Graecorum*.
>
> With such an array of indispensable massive structures carrying so many waters, compare, if you will, the idle pyramids or the useless, though famous, works of the Greeks!
> Tr. Bennett 1969, with modification.

The comparison with pyramids (and Greek monuments) clearly enhances the status of the Roman aqueducts. Both works are magnificent, but the aquaducts need to be preferred: they are indispensable (*necessariis*) in contrast to the 'idle' (*otiosas*) pyramids (and the 'useless' (*inertia*) Greek works).[370]

One of the reasons for the popularity of Egypt as a tourist destination and for Roman admiration for this region seems to be its profound antiquity. Tacitus' opening lines of his account of Germanicus' sight-seeing trip to Egypt, *Ann.* 2.59-61, for example, immediately underscores the connection between Roman interest in Egypt and its antiquity: 'In the consulate of Marcus Silanus and Lucius Norbanus (19 CE), Germanicus set out for Egypt to study antiquity' (*M. Silano L. Norbano consulibus Germanicus Aegyptum proficiscitur cognoscendae antiquitatis*, Tac. *Ann*. 2.59.1).[371] Like Greek literature, Roman literature generally praised Egypt for being ancient. Cicero, for example, shows his respect for Egypt by recalling its antiquity when he notes: '... in that well-known particularly authentic Egypt, which preserves written records of the events of countless ages ...' (*in illa incorrupta maxime gente Aegyptiorum, quae plurimorum saeculorum et eventorum memoriam litteris continet*, Cic. *Rep.* 3.14).[372]

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[370] Regarding the idleness, Frontinus is probably referring to Pliny the Elder, who described pyramids as 'a superfluous and foolish display of royal wealth' (*regum pecuniae otiosa ac stulta ostentatio*, Plin. *NH* 36.75). Cf. Mart. 8.36.1-4, pp. 1-2.

[371] Roman admiration of Egypt is also manifest in Roman material culture. Rome was studded with Egyptian and Egyptianizing artifacts of which the obelisks were merely the tip of the iceberg. Catalogs of Egyptian and Egyptianizing objects in Rome and Italy include: Arslan 1997; Roullet 1972; Malaise 1972; for an interpretation of these catalogs see Versluys 2002. For 'manifestations of Egypt in Augustan Rome', see Van Aerde 2015.

[372] For a discussion of this Ciceronian passage, see pp. 116-118.

1.2. *Understanding Roman admiration of Egypt in discursive contexts: the interpretative framework of self-representation*

Elsewhere I have argued that Roman literary references to ancient Egypt could function as a means to contribute constructively to Roman self-representation and in this chapter I shall elaborate upon that notion. In that earlier study I argued extensively that Roman passages concerning pyramids in texts of Horace, Propertius, Martial and Frontinus, showed how Egypt's antiquities could contribute to Rome's, or the author's own achievements. I showed that although these writers employed different literary modes – Horace and Propertius wrote poetry, Martial panegyrical epigrams, and Frontinus a technical treaty – their argumentative strategy is the same: their own achievement is compared with and thereby connected to something truly admirable, like the pyramids, establishing a status-enhancing effect.

In that same study, with respect to Tacitus' account of Germanicus' trip to Egypt (Tac. *Ann.* 2.59-61), I argued that Tacitus went out of his way – by expressing the admiration of ancient Egypt in various ways – to frame Egypt as a region likely to win Roman approval and understanding. This representation of Egypt can be explained in the larger context of the *Annals* and especially in reference to the relationship between Germanicus and Tiberius, as Tacitus' account of Germanicus' sightseeing begins with a conflict between them. Tiberius condemned Germanicus strongly for visiting Egypt without imperial consent by which Germanicus did not comply with a prescription of Augustus.[373] Egypt was important for Rome's corn supply and its strategic position made it easy to defend. Augustus, afraid that any Roman noble who had become influential in Egypt might become a serious threat to Rome and consequently to the position of the emperor, decided to turn Egypt into an imperial province managed by Roman knights after its annexation in 30 BCE.[374] By turning Germanicus into a visitor of the theme park Egypt that is distanced from the reality of the day, Tiberius' allegations seem to be out of place.[375] The admiration of ancient Egypt does in this example not only

[373] Tac. *Ann*. 2.59.2.
[374] See also Tac. *Hist.* 1.11.1.
[375] According to Tacitus, Germanicus only *pretended* solicitude for the province: his actual reason for visiting Egypt was its antiquities (*M. Silano L. Norbano consulibus Germanicus Aegyptum proficiscitur cognoscendae antiquitatis. Sed cura provinciae praetendebatur, Ann.* 2.59.1). This can be read as an excuse for Germanicus' illegal

function as an indirect defense against Tiberius' allegations, but it also contributes constructively to the representation of Germaniucs. The distinction between Tiberius' interest in present-day Egypt and Germanicus' focus on the past is consistent with their general portrayal in the *Annals* when the two are put in juxtaposition.[376] Christopher Pelling relates Tacitus' characterization of Tiberius – summarized by Pelling as 'diplomatic, modern, unglamorous, but highly effective' – to Tacitus' general attitude towards the present principate: 'a regrettable necessity'; Germanicus, on the other hand, stood for Tacitus' conception of the republican past: 'good to write about; but out of keeping with the real needs of the modern world'.[377] Thus, the Egypt visited by Germanicus reflects the way in which he himself is characterized in the Annals; both inspire awe, but belong to a different age.

2. TIBULLUS 1.7: GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Tibullus' elegy 1.7 celebrates the birthday of Tibullus' patron, Messalla, in combination with Messalla's victory over the Gallic tribe of the Aquitanians. According to the *Fasti Capitolini*, Messalla earned a triumph for his victory over the Aquitanians on September 25th in the year 27 BCE. For that reason, this poem has generally been dated to 27 BCE. In this general introduction I shall first present a summary of this poem. Thereafter I will pay attention to

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presence in Egypt; it was not politics that interested him, but Egyptian heritage. For this explanation see Devillers 2003, 235. According to my argument, Tacitus' entire account of Germanicus' sightseeingtour supports this reading. Suetonius, *Tib.* 52.2, takes a stance different from Tacitus when indicating famine as Germanicus' sole reason for visiting Egypt. On the legality of Germanicus' presence in Egypt, see Hennig 1972; Weingärtner 1969, 46-63; Koestermann 1958. Another reason for Germanicus to visit Egypt may have been *aemulatio Alexandri*; see recently Kelly 2010 (*contra*); Gissel 2001.

[376] For the 'meaningful interaction between past and present' embodied by Germanicus in Tacitus see O'Gorman 2000, 47: 'The Tacitean Germanicus demonstrates that the past cannot be seen on its own terms; on the one hand he becomes recognised as the embryonic and unfulfilled princeps only when his son becomes emperor, and on the other he represents a past which becomes "the republican past" only when it is viewed from the present of the principate.' See also Williams 2009, 119, who argues that the Tacitean Germanicus is characterized 'as the figure who personifies the future ruler of Rome.'

[377] Pelling 1993, 77-78; also 72-74, on Germanicus' involvement with the past.

the historical context of this poem as its content has been interpreted as being a reaction on Augustan legislation concerning Isis. In the third place I will explore how Egyptian gods, particularly Isis, are generally framed in other Augustan poetry. Lastly, this general introduction will focus on previous scholarly interest in Tibullus 1.7.

2.1. *Tibullus 1.7: a summary*[378]

The poem can be summarized as follows:

A. ll. 1-8:

An introduction in which Messalla's birthday and his triumph coincide.

B. ll. 9-22:

An enumeration of geographic regions mainly indicated by their rivers: from the West (Gallia) to the East (Cilicia, Syria, Phoenicia, and finally Egypt). These geographical regions presumably refer to Messalla's foreign expeditions.

C. ll. 23-54:

Mention of Egypt and the Nile leads to a digression on Osiris: the hymn to Osiris. This section can be subdivided as follows:

ll. 23-28: The Nile's unknown source and its fertility are mentioned, and the river is identified as a manifestation of Osiris: *te canit utque suum pubes miratur Osirim / barbara, Memphiten plangere docta bovem*, 'You [the Nile] are sung and worshipped, as their own Osiris, by the barbarous folk taught to wail the ox of Memphis.'

ll. 29-38: Osiris is presented as the bringer of civilization by calling him the inventor of agriculture, arboriculture and viticulture.

ll. 39-48: The subject of wine paves the way to identifying Osiris with Bacchus as the one who cheers people up who are experiencing difficulties: *Bacchus et adflictis requiem mortalibus adfert*, 'Bacchus brings relief to mortals in distress.'

ll. 49-54: The reference to the Bacchic cult announces Messalla's birthday as Osiris/Bacchus is invited to this party and is summoned to honor the birthday spirit, the Genius.

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[378] The text edition used in this chapter is Maltby's 2002 and the translations of Tibullus 1.7 are my own.

D. ll. 55-64:

Finally, Messalla is addressed by expressing the wish that his progeny will emphasize the good works done by him by adding new ones and that they will be present in his final hour. Messalla's repair of the Via Latina is also stressed: a reparation financed with booty.[379] By referring to war booty, the poem returns to the topic of conquest and imperialism. It concludes with a proclamation to the Birthday-Spirit: *at tu, Natalis multos celebrande per annos, / candidor semper candidiorque veni*, 'But you, Birth-Spirit, come to your honors for many a year – come ever brighter and brighter still.'

2.2. *Historical context*

Tibullus 1.7 is generally dated to 27 BCE. Four years after Octavian's victory in the Battle of Actium, three years after his conquest of Alexandria and the annexation of Egypt as a Roman province, and two years after Augustus' triple triumph which he gained for his victory at Actium, the annexation of Egypt and the conquest of Illyria.[380] Hence, it is noted in modern literature that the memory of the Civil War and Egypt's collaborating role in this war must still have been fresh when Tibullus composed this poem.[381] The poem certainly concerns a political theme: it celebrates the triumph of Messalla over the Aquitanians; it seems to point at other military exploits of Messalla including an expedition to Egypt; and it also praises Messalla's public works. The combination of triumph and what seems to be an expedition to Egypt potentially evokes Augustus and his military actions against Egypt. In a similar vein, it is argued in modern literature that the prominence of the

[379] See Gaisser 1971, 228: 'It [Tib. 1.7] closes, however, not with festivity, but with a serious reference to Messalla's repairs of the Via Latina, a peacetime activity that balances the triumph at the beginning of the poem. And yet the road building itself, however emblematic of peace, cannot be completely dissociated from war, for it was paid for out of Messalla's booty (*opibus congesta suis*, 59). See also Lee-Stecum 1998, 222: 'the *via* has been described throughout the collection [Tibullus' *elegies* book one] as an instrument for the aggressive acquisition of power. It has always appeared as a channel for military and commercial ventures, directly opposed to the rural world (compare especially 1.1.25ff.).' See also Maltby 2002, *ad loc*.

[380] Scholars give different dates for the poem, most take it to be written after Messalla's triumph of 27 BCE, but Knox has argued for an earlier date in 29 BCE, see also p. 184, n. 409.

[381] As such an example of Assmann's 'communicative memory', see pp. 31-32.

Egyptian god Osiris in Tibullus 1.7 probably raised some Roman eyebrows as Augustus banned the cults of the Egyptian goddess Isis and her 'circle' to which Osiris belonged, from within the *pomerium* in 28 BCE, according to Dio Cassius (53.2.4).[382] In this section I will discuss how Augustus' legislation on the restriction of the cults of Isis should be interpreted.

According to Dio Cassius (53.2.4), Augustus banned the cults of Egyptian gods – which probably spread from Egypt via Delos and Sicily to Italy and were already clearly manifest in Rome in the Late Republic[383] – from within the *pomerium* in 28 BCE:

> καὶ τὰ μὲν ἱερὰ τὰ Αἰγύπτια οὐκ ἐσεδέξατο εἴσω τοῦ πωμηρίου, τῶν δὲ δὴ ναῶν πρόνοιαν ἐποιήσατο· τοὺς μὲν γὰρ ὑπ᾽ ἰδιωτῶν τινων γεγενημένους τοῖς τε παισὶν αὐτῶν καὶ τοῖς ἐκγόνοις, εἴγε τινὲς περιῆσαν, ἐπισκευάσαι ἐκέλευσε, τοὺς δὲ λοιποὺς αὐτὸς ἀνεκτήσατο.

[382] The Roman cults of Isis were of Hellenistic origin and adapted to Roman needs and purposes. For this process of 'Romanizing' Isis, see Versluys 2013. The cults of the Hellenistic and Roman Isis differ in many aspects from the original Egyptian / pharaonic Isis. Whereas Isis in Pharaonic times is flanked by her brother and husband Osiris, in Ptolemaic times she is accompanied by Serapis. For the Ptolemaic 'invented tradition' of Isis' companion Sarapis see Pfeiffer 2008; Schmidt 2005; Borgeaud and Volokhine 2000. Cf. Bricault 2000, esp. table 1, who counted the appearances of names of the 'cercle isiaque' on the inscripions gathered in *RICIS*. Whereas Sarapis is mentioned 803 times (659 in Greek and 144 in Latin) and Isis 767 times (489 Greek and 287 Latin), Osiris' name only appears 35 times (30 Greek and 5 Latin). Osiris' was not simply replaced by Sarapis or identified with Sarapis. According to Stambaugh, 1972, it is context that determines the presence of Sarapis and Osiris. Cf. Bricault 2013, 65: 'Dans ce cercle divin, Osiris n'est pas réellement identifié à Sarapis et les rapports entre les deux dieux sont complexes et évolutifs.'

[383] An excellent introduction to the 'diffusion' and complexities of the cults of Isis is Bricault 2004. For overviews of this subject, see Bricault 2013; 2001; and Malaise 2005. For the *Status Qaestionis* of Isis Studies see especially the publications of the International Conferences of Isis Studies: Bricault and Versluys 2014; Bricault and Versluys 2010; Bricault, Meyboom and Versluys 2005; Bricault 2003 and 2000. For shifting paradigms in the studies of 'Oriental religion' and the role of 'Orientalisation', see Versluys 2013. On this subject see also Alvar 2008. For the introduction of Isis in the Roman world in the Late Republic, see Bricault 2004, 552. See also Takács 1995, 27-70; Malaise 1972a and b; Vidman 1970, 95-105; Tran Tam Tinh 1964.

> As for religious matters, he did not allow the Egyptian rites to be celebrated inside the *pomerium*, but made provision for the cult places; those which had been built by private individuals he ordered their sons and descendants, if any survived, to repair, and the rest he restored himself. Tr. Cary 1914.

This much debated passage of Dio Cassius is read and understood differently in modern studies. Some, in particular Malaise, have taken this passage to contain two Augustan measures concerning two different types of gods: the Egyptian versus the traditional Roman ones. Malaise reads this passage in the following manner: on the one hand (μέν), Augustus banned the cults of Isis from within the *pomerium* while, on the other hand (δέ), he took care of the sanctuaries (τῶν ναῶν) erected for the *traditional* Roman gods by individuals. Malaise bases this reading on Augustus' disrespect for the Egyptian religion as expressed most famously by Suetonius (*Aug*. 93, see p. 164, n. 365) and Augustan propaganda that stressed the foreignness of Egypt. The promotion of traditional religion is explained by Malaise by as part of Augustus' restoration program which can be derived from the *Res Gestae*.[384] Others, however, feel that the passage concerns two Augustan regulations for the cults of Isis only. They argue that although Augustus banned the cults of Isis from within the *pomerium*, at the same time, he restored them outside the *pomerium*. Most recently, Orlin, has interpreted this ambivalence as evidence of a two-way strategy to redefine Roman identity by banning Egyptian deities within the heart of the city while demonstrating the incorporation of Egypt within the Roman world by promoting the worship of these gods *outside* the *pomerium*.[385]

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[384] See Malaise 1972b, 380-384; 1993, 375 and 2011. Particularly in 2011, 168, he dismisses other interpretations of this passage like that of Orlin. For readings similar to that of Malaise: Rich 1990, 25; Scheid 2007, 59.

[385] Orlin 2008, 243: 'Octavian's actions in encouraging the worship of Egyptian deities outside the *pomerium* should be understood in this light: the significance of his action lies in the need for clear boundaries in order to establish and maintain group identity. The civil wars and Octavian's eventual victory over Antony and Cleopatra had marked the end of the traditional conception of Roman identity, a conception that had been gradually eroded since the Social War and even beyond, which needed to be reconstructed.' For the incorporation of foreign deities in Rome see Orlin 2010. Takács 1995, 75-76, emphasizes a distinction between public display of these cults like processions, and private rites that took place inside temple structures. According to her, Augustus prohibited the former within the *pomerium* and stimulated the latter (also within the *pomerium*). However, when D.C. 53.2.4-5 is compared to D.C.

The second reading seems more natural than the first, when this passage is compared to another one (D.C. 40.47.3-4), in which he relates how the *naoi* of Isis and Sarapis were destroyed at the Senate's command in 53 BCE:

> δοκεῖ δὲ ἔμοιγε καὶ ἐκεῖνο τὸ τῷ προτέρῳ ἔτει, ἐπ᾽ ἐξόδῳ αὐτοῦ, περί τε τὸν Σάραπιν καὶ περὶ τὴν Ἶσιν ψηφισθὲν τέρας οὐδενὸς ἧττον γενέσθαι· τοὺς γὰρ ναοὺς αὐτῶν, οὓς ἰδίᾳ τινὲς ἐπεποίηντο, καθελεῖν τῇ βουλῇ ἔδοξεν. οὐ γὰρ δὴ τοὺς θεοὺς τούτους ἐπὶ πολὺ ἐνόμισαν, καὶ ὅτε γε καὶ ἐξενίκησεν ὥστε καὶ δημοσίᾳ αὐτοὺς σέβεσθαι, ἔξω τοῦ πωμηρίου σφᾶς ἱδρύσαντο.
>
> But it seems to me that that decree passed the previous year, near its close, with regard to Serapis and Isis, was a portent equal to any; for the senate had decided to tear down their cult places, which some individuals had built on their own account. Indeed, for a long time they did not believe in these gods, and even when the rendering of public worship to them gained the day, they settled them outside the pomerium. Tr. Cary 1914.

The line 'they settled them outside the *pomerium*' (ἔξω τοῦ πωμηρίου σφᾶς ἱδρύσαντο) seems to anticipate the (kind of) measures taken by Augustus to remove the worship of Isis from within the *pomerium* mentioned in Dio 53.2.4. If the parallelism of these two passages of Dio Cassius is accepted, Augustus' second measure in 28 BCE, to take care of the *naoi*, refers to those located outside the *pomerium*. By pointing at *naoi* erected by private individuals D.C. 40.47.3-4 seems to suggest that *naoi* for Isis do not necessarily refer to large monumental structures as was also argued by Versluys.[386] Moreover, Dio 40.47.3-4 suggests that Isis and Sarapis were once worshipped as a matter of public cult (δημοσίᾳ), rather than just privately. This obviously does not mean that their cults were officially accepted by the Senate as, for instance, was the case for the cult of Mater Magna. But judging

40.47.3-4, Orlin is probably right is seeing a digression between inside and outside the *pomerium*.

[386] Versluys 2004, argues on account of literary, epigraphical and archeological sources, that Isis was worshipped on the Capitol, but that this did not consequently mean that also a monumental temple existed. Malaise 2011, seems to narrow down the cult places for Isis to monumental sanctuaries as he argues that the measure of Augustus concerning the restriction of the cults of Isis could have only been directed at the *Iseum Metellinum* 'pour autant que son édification soit bien antérieure à cete date, les autres constructions abritant les cultes égyptiens ayant déjà été, en principe, victimes de misis à bas' and does not include the possibility cult places other than 'sanctuaries' may have existed.

from D.C. 53.2.4, some cult places for Isis seem to have existed that were not privately instigated as this passages distinguishes between 'the ones who had been built by some individuals' (τοὺς μὲν … ὑπ᾽ ἰδιωτῶν τινων γεγενημένους) and 'the other *naoi*' (τοὺς δὲ λοιπούς). This suggests that there may have been *naoi* of a more public kind in the Augustan age.[387] There seems to be no reason then to connect *naoi* in D.C. 53.2.4 with anything other than *naoi* for Isis.

Roman attitudes towards the cults of Isis and Sarapis seem to have changed a couple of times in the late Republic. Literary sources mention at least three public, senate-orchestrated destructions of the cult places of these Egyptian gods in the decades before the Augustan regulation in 28 BCE. In 58 BCE the consul Gabinius decided to execute a senatorial ban on altars for the Egyptian gods Sarapis, Isis, Harpocrates and Anubis on the Capitol, according to Varro whose text is preserved by Tertullian (Tert. *Ad Nat.* 1.10.16-18). Apparently, the altars that were destroyed previously, after the Senate had decided to prohibit them on the Capitol, had been restored by the people. Gabinius, against the people's will, wished to adhere to the previous decision of the Senate on this matter and prohibited the erection of the altars. In 53 BCE the Senate decided to tear down the *naoi* of Isis and Sarapis (D.C. 40.47.3-4). And in 48 BCE the precincts (τεμενίσματα) of Isis and Sarapis were destroyed (D.C. 42.26.1-2).[388] In 43 BCE, however, the triumvirates – Octavian, Mark Antony and Lepidus – decide to erect a *naos* for Isis and Osiris.[389] And in 28 BCE, Augustus, as we have seen, decides to restrict and to promote the cults of Isis. These meandering and possible ambivalent attitudes indicate that the decisions involved probably cannot be understood from the angle of religious tenets, nor completely from the angle of Roman hostility towards Egypt.

[387] The existence of possible public cult places of Isis is not surprising as according to Dio Cassius the triumvirs in 43 BCE decided to construct a *naos* dedicated to Isis and Sarapis, Dio 47.15.4. For modern discussions about this passage including the questions of whether this temple has ever been built and why the triumvirs decided to do so, I refer to Malaise 2011, 14-16.

[388] Orlin 2008, 237 and n. 12, sees an increasing hostility in these three Roman actions against the cults of Isis and Sarapis: 'But perhaps the most striking feature about the Late Republican Snatorial actions is the progression of increasing severity against the Egyptian cults, from a ban on one location, to the destruction of all temples, to the destruction of the precincts in which those temples had been located.'

[389] Malaise 2011, 195, suggests that the decision was taken by Mark Antony because of his love of Egypt and that Augustus reacted to this decision in 28 BCE. Malaise, as already shown above, did not take the second measure of Augustus to be directed at the cults of Isis, but at the traditional Roman religion.

These decisions were probably first and foremost politically/pragmatically motivated. Some scholars see the decision of the triumvirate to vote for a cult place for Isis and Osiris as a gesture towards the *populares*, who are believed to have been dominant among the Isis worshippers.[390] Hence, we should beware of linking Augustus' restriction of the cults of Isis in 28 BCE as described by Dio Cassius too easily with Augustan propaganda against Egypt, or the hatred for Cleopatra who was also known as Isis Nea. Consequently, the relationship between Tibullus 1.7 and Augustan policy towards Egyptian gods or Augustan negative attitudes towards Egypt becomes highly speculative.

2.3. *Framing Isis in Augustan poetry*

Instead of taking a strict historical approach the role of Egypt and that of the Egyptian god Osiris in Tibullus 1.7 can better be understood by focusing on the literary context. At this point it is instructive to consider a literary topic strongly related to that of Osiris: Isis.[391] In modern studies on the cults of Isis, Roman literature is primarily used to obtain information that contributes to the reconstruction of the 'real' nature of the cults and the devotees.[392] Analyzing the references to Isis by focusing on the different discursive context in which Isis is portrayed may not bring us closer to the historical reality of the cults of Isis and her worshippers, but it does reveal some reactions and responses in Roman society to elements of foreign cultures.

Four frames of Isis

Many visions on Isis can be derived from Augustan literature, which I have divided into four groups for analytical purposes. 1) In three different poetical works by two different writers – an elegy by Tibullus and the *Metamorphoses* and the *Amores* of Ovid – Isis appears in the context of personal prayer. In Tibullus 1.3 the speaker who fell sick on the island of Phaeacia on a voyage

[390] For this explanation see Versluys 2004, 428 and 446 n. 89, also for references.
[391] For the relation between Osiris and Isis in the Roman world, see n. 171, n. 382.
[392] Some studies have taken the literary topos of sexual immorality of the cults of Isis as a truism and took the devotees of Isis as 'loose women', see Grimal 1967, but see Becher 1970 *contra*. Others have used Roman literature as containing information about the location and existence of Isea, but Syndikus 1984 has dismissed this particular topographical use of these kinds of texts by stressing the literary topoi.

to the East prays to Isis to cure him so that he can reunite with his beloved Cynthia again. In Ovid's *Metamorphoses* Isis fulfills the prayers of her devotee Telethusa and turns her daughter Iphis into a man (Ov. *Met*. 9.666-797), and in Ovid's *Amores* 2.13 the speaker prays to Isis to save his lover Corinna whose health was in danger after an attempted abortion. 2) Isis appears in the context of sexual frustration when the sexual abstinence of women during her rites is mentioned.[393] In most cases the reference to Isis in this context involves just a short comment, but Propertius in his elegy 2.33a takes 22 lines to express the inconvenience. 3) Isis is referred to in the context of sexual immorality when her temple is indicated in passing as a place for men to pick up women and vice versa, particularly in Ovid's *Amores* and *Ars Amatoria*. It is, however, disputable whether the nature of the cults of Isis is the determining factor making her temple a suitable meeting place, or whether any temple was a place where people would meet up in general.[394] 4) Isis is also alluded to when Cleopatra is identified as the *Nea Isis* in the political context of the Civil War. Virgil and Propertius do not explicitly identify Cleopatra as Isis like Dio Cassius does, for instance in Octavian's speech before the battle of Actium (50.25.2-4), but they do evoke this image of Cleopatra when they portray her as rattling the *sistrum* – one of Isis' attributes – and as accompanied by the usual animal gods.[395]

Different visions can imply different evaluations of Isis. Obviously, in the context of civil war as we have seen in previous chapters, Isis is a hostile, Oriental goddess fighting against Rome and threatening to conquer Rome. In the context of sexual frustration, Isis is portrayed as unfriendly as she prevents the speaker having sexual intercourse with his love. The context of personal sexual frustration and the context of political civil war are not two completely different categories as the context of sexual frustration hints at recent Roman politics with Egypt. To invigorate the image of Isis as a hostile goddess, Propertius in his elegy 2.33a threatens to drive her out of the city, because 'the Nile and the Tiber were never friends' (*cum Tiberi Nilo gratia nulla fuit*). This

[393] Ov. *Am*. 1.8.74; 3.9.33-34; Prop. 2.33a.1-2; 4.5.33-34; Tib. 1.3.25-26; For abstinence not (specifically) related to the rites of Isis: Ov. *Am*. 2.19.42; 3.10.2 (Ceres); *Fast*. 2.327-330 (Bacchus).
[394] Ov. *Am*. 2.2.25; *Ars.* 3.393; 3.463-464. For sexual immorality, see especially the story of Flavius Josephus, *AJ* 18.65-80. For a discussion of the relationship between the cults of Isis and sexual immorality, see n. 393.
[395] Virg. 8.696, Prop. 3.11.43.

is probably a reference to recent historical events of the Civil War and the Battle of Actium. However, where Isis/Cleopatra in the Battle of Actium is portrayed in a frightening or threatening way, the reference to recent war in this specific context of sexual frustration is of a more amusing kind. Besides being hostile to Romans, whether in a politically threatening way or in a personally annoying way, she is also portrayed as the salutary goddess in the context of personal prayer. Being beneficial to the prayer does not mean that she is imagined to be any less Oriental/exotic. Like Isis/Cleopatra she appears in these prayers with Oriental attributes, the *sistrum*, companied by Oriental animal gods. Tibullus makes it perfectly clear that Isis does not belong to the traditional Roman gods, when after having addressed Isis in prayer to cure him because his mistress has worshipped her faithfully, he adds 'and be it mine many times to stand before the shrine of my sires' Penates and offer incense, as the months come round, to the old Lar of my home' tr. Postgate 1988 (*at mihi contingat patrios celebrare Penates / reddere que antiquo menstrua tura Lari*, Tib. 1.3.31-32). Whereas Tibullus' mistress worships the Oriental goddess Isis, he worships the traditional ones. This distinction between traditional and non-traditional gods in Rome made by Tibullus can be understood as underlining the distance between the two lovers. The poet is at home offering to the Penates while his mistress spends her time elsewhere.

Isis identified as Io

The previous section placed emphasis on the multitude of Roman representations and evaluations of Isis depending on the specific context. Within these different contexts a general Roman response to Isis can be distinguished that is particular helpful to understand the role of Osiris in Tibullus 1.7: the identification of Isis as Io. In Greco-Roman literature Isis has many identifications. For instance, Diodorus Siculus notes in his discussion about the Greek appropriation of Egyptian heroes and gods (Dio 1.24.8-1.25.1):

> φασὶ δὲ καὶ τὸν Περσέα γεγονέναι κατ᾽ Αἴγυπτον, καὶ τῆς Ἴσιδος τὴν γένεσιν ὑπὸ τῶν Ἑλλήνων εἰς Ἄργος μεταφέρεσθαι, μυθολογούντων τὴν Ἰὼ τὴν εἰς βοὸς τύπον μεταμορφωθεῖσαν. καθόλου δὲ πολλή τίς ἐστι διαφωνία περὶ τούτων τῶν θεῶν. τὴν αὐτὴν γὰρ οἱ μὲν Ἶσιν, οἱ δὲ Δήμητραν, οἱ δὲ Θεσμοφόρον, οἱ δὲ Σελήνην, οἱ δὲ Ἥραν, οἱ δὲ πάσαις ταῖς προσηγορίαις ὀνομάζουσι.

> And they say that Perseus also [like Heracles] was born in Egypt, and that the origin of Isis is transferred by the Greeks to Argos in the myth which tells of that Io who was changed in a heifer. In general, there is great disagreement over these gods. For the same goddess is called by some Isis, by others Demeter, by others Thesmophoros, by others Selene, by others Hera, while still others apply to her all these names. Tr. Oldfather 1933, with adaptation.

Diodorus Siculus was neither the first nor the last to identify Isis with many other goddesses.[396] Augustan poets and later imperial authors prefer, however, to identify her with Io, the daughter of Inachus.[397] This identification meant that the myth of Io was also part of the repertoire on which the Augustan poets could draw, besides the myth of Osiris, hymns to Isis or whatever else belonged to the cultural memory of her cult.[398] The transformation that Io

[396] Cf. Hdt. 2.59; 2.156 (Demeter). For Isis' epithets *polymorphos*, *polyônymos* and *myriônymos*, see Heyob 1975, 37, see also Prop. 2.33a: *quaecumque illa fuit*; and Apul. *Met*. 11.22: *deae multinominis*.

[397] For the identification of Isis as Io in Augustan literature: Prop. 2.28.17-18; 2.28.61-62; 2.33a; Ov. *Her*. 14.85-86; *Met*. 9.687; *Fasti* 1.453-154. See also Juv. 6.526; Stat. *Silv*. 3.2.101. According to ancient mythology Io was desired by Jupiter who turned her into a heifer in order to fool his jealous wife Hera. Hera could not be fooled and placed the heifer first under guard by the hundred-eyed Argus, but he was slain (or put to sleep) by Hermes who was sent by Jupiter. After Io's escape Hera forced her to wander the world hunted by a gadfly until she found rest in Egypt where she regained her original human form. For versions of the ancient myth of Io, see Aesch. *Prom*. 561-900; *Suppl*. 291-315; Ov. *Met*. 1.568-747.

[398] The traditional myth of Osiris and Isis' role in this myth was probably well-known in the Augustan period. Ovid alludes to this myth when he describes Osiris as *quaesitus*: 'the one who has been sought after', Ov. *Met*. 9.693: *quaesitus Osiris*. In the traditional myth Isis searches for the body parts of Osiris all over the world, after he is killed by Typhon. Versions of the traditional myth of Osiris can be found in the Greco-Roman writers Diodorus and Plutarch: Diod. 1.13-27; Plut. *De Is. et Os*. 12-20; 355d-358d. They present narrative versions of the myth of Osiris that include episodes that were displayed on ancient Egyptian monuments. The first testimony of the myth of Osiris can be found in Pyramid Texts at the end of the Fifth Kingdom and in New Kingdom sources such as the Shabaka stone. See Griffiths 1980, 1-40, for an analysis of the original myth. The versions of Diodorus and Plutarchus are they are not identical. Diodorus Siculus portrays Osiris, whom he identifies as Dionysos (Diod. 1.11.3; 1.13.5), as the bringer of cultivation to all the inhabited world, which he visited on his campaigns and as lawful king of Egypt (Diod. 1.14-20). He is murdered by his brother Typhon (identified as Seth) and dismembered into 26 pieces. These pieces are distributed by Typhon among the men who helped him murder Osiris (Diod. 1.21). Isis, the sister and wife of Osiris, together with her son Horus, avenges the murder of Osiris by killing Typhon and recovers all of his body parts except for his genitals.

underwent, from mortal maiden to cow to goddess, was a topic in Augustan literature. For instance in Propertius this transformation was an example of how a troubled life could become a pleasant one (Prop. 2.28.15-18):

> sed tibi vexatae post multa pericula vitae
> extremo veniat mollior hora die.
> Io versa caput primos mugiverat annos:
> nunc dea, quae Nili flumina vacca bibit.
>
> But after the many perils of a troubled life may a happier hour come to you at the close of day. Io in her early years lowed, her head transformed: now she who as a cow drank the Nile's waters is a goddess. Tr. Goold 1990.

In another poem of Propertius, 2.33a, in which the speaker wonders why Isis is so cruel to force him and his beloved Cynthia to sleep in different beds when she is performing the rites of this goddess, empathy is nonetheless shown for the goddess' motives: she was probably cruel because of her traumatic love-affair with Jupiter that caused her to wander the world in the shape of a cow; she was probably so arrogant because she changed from a cow into a

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Then in order to keep Osiris' burial place secret while ensuring that he is honored by all Egyptians, she constructs a body out of spices and wax around every single piece of Osiris' body and has these surrogate body parts buried throughout Egypt's districts. Consequently, there were many graves of Osiris, and funerary rites were performed in every district. Isis also made a likeness of Osiris' phallus which was to be honored (Typhon had thrown in the river as none of his accomplices wished to have it) (Diod. 1.22). According to Plutarch (Plut. *De Is. et Os.* 13-20), Typhon conspired against Osiris, who reigned over Egypt. Osiris is described as the bringer of civilization by inventing agriculture, establishing laws and teaching men to worship gods. Plutarch notes that the Greeks identified Osiris with Dionysus because Osiris conquered the world by using speech, song and poetry rather than weapons. Typhon together with 72 fellow conspirators and the Queen of Ethiopia trapped Osiris in a chest, which was floated downriver to Byblos where it ended up in a heath-tree that was used as a pillar to support the roof in the king's palace. Isis wandered everywhere in search of her husband while mourning him. She found his body and brought it to her son Horus. Typhon, upon seeing the recovered body, dismembered it into 14 pieces and scattered them. Isis went searching again, and every time she recovered a part, she buried it. According to Plutarch, this is the reason why so many tombs of Osiris are said to exist in Egypt. The only part of Osiris Isis could not find was his phallus, of which Isis made a replica and consecrated it. Horus avenged his father, helped by Osiris from the underworld, and waged war against Typhon, who was captured. Isis let him go, however, instead of killing him.

goddess.[399] However, Propertius' incomprehension is also clearly expressed: Why did she leave Egypt and take the long road to Rome? Weren't there enough swarthy worshippers? How does she benefit from letting girls sleep alone? [400] He concludes his apostrophe of Isis by threatening her: either she has to become a cow again or else she will be driven out of the city.[401]

It is evident that in both cases, Propertius' identification of Isis with Io is not merely *interpretatio Graeca* or *interpretatio Romana*: an 'identification among Greeks and Romans of a foreign godhead with a member of their own pantheons'. [402] It is true that there are all kinds of correspondences between Isis and Io, especially iconographical and mythological, that support the identification, but instead of a mere syncretism of two godheads, the identification adds another biographical phase to the mythology of Isis and Io: she was once mortal and now she is a goddess. It is especially this aspect of the transfiguration of Isis/Io that is used by Propertius, as we have already

[399] My paraphrased reading is based on Prop. 2.33a.5-14: *quae dea tam cupidos totiens divisit amantes, / quaecumque illa fuit, semper amara fuit. / tu certe Iovis occultis in amoribus, Io, / sensisti multas quid sit inire vias, / cum te iussit habere puellam cornua Iuno / et pecoris duro perdere verba sono. / a quotiens quernis laesisti frondibus ora, / mandisti <et> stabulis arbuta pasta tuis! / an, quoniam agrestem detraxit ab ore figuram / Iuppiter, idcirco facta superba dea es?* 'The goddess that has so often sundered ardent lovers, whoever she was, was always harsh. In your secret love of Jove, Io you certainly discovered what it means to travel on many paths. When Juno bade you, a human girl, put on horns and drown your speech in the hoarse lowing of a cow, ah, how often did you chafe your mouth with oak leaves and chew in your stall the arbute you had fed on! Is it because Jupiter has taken that wild shape from your features that you have become such a haughty goddess?' Tr. Goold 1990.

[400] Prop. 2.33a.11-17: *an tibi non satis est fuscis Aegyptus alumnis? / cur tibi tam longa Roma petita via? / quidve tibi prodest viduas dormire puellas?* 'Are the swarthy daughters of Egypt too few for your worship? Why did you take the long journey to Rome? What profit is it to you that girls should sleep alone?' Tr. Goold 1990.

[401] Prop. 2.33a.18-19: *sed tibi, crede mihi, cornua rursus erunt, / aut nos e nostra te, saeva, fugabimus urbe*, 'Take it from me, either you will have horns again or else, cruel creature, we will banish you from our city.' Tr. Goold 1990.

[402] Ando 2008, 43. Ando has problematized *interpretatio Graeca* and *interpretatio Romana* by discussing on what grounds an identification takes place. According to him we should not see this process as a mere translation in the linguistic field – Roman authors translating foreign gods for their Roman audience – but as revealing information about the 'epistemic and linguistic premises' of Roman religion. His study of Roman theory on *interpretation Romana* shows that for a positive identification iconography, semantics and etymology seem to be inconclusive.

seen. Thus, the identification of Isis as Io in Roman literature involves more than simply renaming her.

However, the Greek or Roman identification of a foreign god with a own god, of which the identification of Isis as Io is an example, are mainly understood in modern literature to have had a function in terms of translation: provincial gods being made understandable to the Roman public. An example of such a translation is a famous passage in Tacitus' *Germanicus* that contains the sole case in which *interpretatio Romana* is mentioned in an extant Roman work: *sed deos interpretatione Romana Castorem Pollucemque memorant*, 'but the gods commemorated there [among the Naharvali] are, according to *interpretatio Romana*, Castor and Pollux.'[403] Modern studies have emphasized especially the role of the Roman provinces here as many inscriptions found in the provinces witness the syncretism of local gods with traditional Roman ones. This has been interpreted as a conscious act of the provinces to deal with and benefit from Roman domination. The meaning and reasons for doing so has received less attention. When the identification of provincial gods as traditional Roman ones is instigated by Romans, such as in Tacitus, then it serves to help Romans understand foreign gods – and is thus believed to be based on unconscious identification. But when this act is instigated by provincials, the identification is thought to be deliberate to serve political, economic and social goals. Certainly, this identification and in a broader sense Hellenisation in Roman literary texts may reflect unconscious identification, but in some cases – such as in the examples of Propertius above – it can be understood to be a deliberate act of taking something from a foreign culture and making it your own to serve your own purposes, i.e. cultural appropriation.[404]

In Augustan literature concerning Isis the Greek appropriation of Isis as Io is dominant and it can be said that in Augustan texts, Isis is first and foremost understood as being of Greek origin, probably because the themes of the myth of Io were particularly useful for Roman poets. Nevertheless, she is still associated with the concept of Egypt as the stereotypical Other. For instance, in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* she appears as an exotic goddess with her crescent

[403] Tac. *Germ.* 43.4. However, see Ando 2008, for emphasis on the 'art of identification' instead of the 'art of naming'.
[404] Cf. pp. 91-95 on the comparison of Cleopatra to four mythological women in Prop. 3.11.

horns, the rattles (*sistra*) and entourage consisting of animal gods and foreign animals (Ov. *Met*. 9.686-695):[405]

> *cum medio noctis spatio sub imagine somni*
> *Inachis ante torum pompa comitata sacrorum*
> *aut stetit aut visa est: inerant lunaria fronti*
> *cornua cum spicis nitido flaventibus auro*
> *et regale decus; cumqua latrator Anubis* 690
> *sanctaque Bubastis variusque coloribus Apis,*
> *quique premit vocem digitoque silentia suadet;*
> *sistraque erant, numquam que satis quaesitus Osiris*
> *plenaque somniferis serpens peregrina venenis.* 695
>
> … when at midnight, in a vision of her dreams, she [Telethusa] saw or seemed to see the daughter of Inachus standing before her bed, accompanied by a solemn train of sacred beings. She had crescent horns upon her forehead, and ears of corn yellow with bright gold about her head, a sight of regal beauty. Near her were seen the dog Anubis, sacred Bubastis, barking Apis, and the god who enjoins silence with his finger on his lips [Harpocrates]; there also were the sacred rattles, and Osiris, ceaseless object of his worshipper's desire, and the Egyptian serpent swelling with sleep-producing venom. Tr. Miller 1999.

Nevertheless, the general effect of the Roman appropriation of Isis as Io can be called 'domesticating', see pp. 93-94: her Greek origin makes her less foreign or less exotic. Even in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* Isis' exoticism is tuned down by addressing her as Inachis, the daughter of Inachus.

2.4. *Tibullus 1.7: status quaestionis*

The poem has received much scholarly attention for various reasons. On the basis of their understanding of the use of Egypt in this poem, previous studies of Tibullus 1.7 can be divided into four different groups. Several scholars have related it to the historical context of the Battle of Actium and Egypt's annexation in the time of Augustus.[406] These studies have stressed the

[405] Ov. *Met*. 9.666-695, deals with the metamorphosis of the girl Iphis into the boy Iphis. A woman called Telethusa gives birth to the girl Iphis. She deceives her husband Ligdus, because he warned her that he would kill a girl baby and tells him that the baby is a boy. When Iphis is about to marry a girl, Telethusa prays to Isis and the goddess fulfills her wish and changes the Iphis into a man. Particularly line 690 (*latrator Anubis*) alludes to Virgil, Aen. 8.698 and Prop. 3.11.41. Cf. Rosati 2009, 286-287.

[406] General commentaries on Tib. 1.7 include: Putnam 1973; Murgatroyd 1980; Ball 1983; Maltby 2002. For the parallel between Osiris and Messalla, see Gaisser 1971;

discrepancy between the rather approving image of Egypt displayed by Tibullus 1.7 and the predominantly hostile Roman attitude towards Egypt in Augustan Rome evidenced in the works of other Augustan poets, such as Virgil, Horace and Propertius. Tibullus' image of Osiris in particular seems to clash with Augustus' policy of restricting the Egyptian cult of Isis. Tibullus' elegy is also curious for the absence of Augustus as Robert Ball notes in his commentary on this poem: '[t]he question also arises as to why Tibullus here ignores Augustus, especially when he describes a country subdued by the *princeps*.' Scholars have given different answers to that question, ranging from Tibullus expressing his aversion of Augustus to Tibullus' indifference toward Augustus as he is celebrating Messalla and not Augustus.[407]

Different solutions have been proposed to explain why Tibullus wrote such a positive story in contrast to the prevailing negativity. It has been suggested that Tibullus experimented with a mixture of different genres in order not to insult Augustus.[408] The poor fit between this poem and Augustus' regulations

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Bright 1975; Lee-Stecum 1998. For the characterization of Messalla, see Johnson 1990 ('Messalla is *Romanitas* incarnate', p. 95); Van Nortwick 1990, in his commentary on Johnson stresses the ambivalent characterization of Messalla. Lee-Stecum 1998, 205-226, and Lowell Bowditch 2011 emphasize the different 'moods' of the poem, e.g. peaceful versus violent. For the relation between Tibullus and Messalla, see Levy 1929; Moore 1986. For the relation between Augustan policies and Tib. 1.7: Della Corte 1966; Konstan 1978; Lambert 2003; Knox 2005. For Egyptian and Alexandrian elements in Tib. 1.7: Hunter 2006; Koenen 1976; Grimal 1969. Within these studies several reasons have been formulated for the inclusion of the Osiris episode: Messalla's interest in Egypt (e.g. Schuster 1930); Tibullus' interest in Egypt; historical and economic circumstances such as the suicide of Egypt's first prefect, Gallus, and Rome's dependence on the grain supply.

[407] Ball 1983, 124. Lambert 2003, 50, finds such a positive attitude to Egypt 'surprising' so soon after Octavian's triple triumph in 29 BCE, the last day of which was devoted to the subjugation of Egypt'; Konstan 1978, 179, after the describing the historical context of Augustus' hostile attitude towards the Egyptian religion, notes: 'Unexpected is the long and laudatory treatment of Egypt, her rivers and her gods in Tibullus' poem..'; Della Corta 1966, 133, argues that Tibullus deliberately presented a positive view of Egypt to annoy the emperor: 'Parlare di Osiride come di un [euergetes], quando ancora erra vivo il ricordo di un Antonio, noto per avere stretta una *hierogamia* con Cleopatra sotto il simbolo Iside-Osiride, appare per lo meno intenzionale e di una intenzione ostile ad Augusto'.

[408] In his abstract of his paper, Lambert 2003, 47, argues that 'Tibullus had to be very diplomatic about linking Messalla, his triumph and Egypt in 1.7. In order not to give offence to the *princeps* or to Messalla's republican sympathies, he experiments with a novel fusion of genres.'

concerning the temples of Isis in 28 BCE is also mentioned as one of the arguments to push back the date of the poem to 29 BCE instead of 28/27.[409] Others explain it as a way to argue for the rehabilitation of this region and for the integration of this new province into Roman culture.[410] Instead of approaching Tibullus 1.7 as a text deviating from normative Roman attitudes towards Egypt, I would like to approach it as a text that contains one of the many concepts of Egypt. This approach encourages us to decipher *which* 'Egypt' is evoked exactly and how this is done, instead of simply concluding that Tibullus 1.7 contains a positive view of Egypt.

Another group of scholars has more or less ignored the historical context and the evoked image of Egypt by focusing on the parallels between Osiris and Messalla. For them Tibullus wrote a eulogy addressing his patron Messalla in which Egypt serves to introduce Osiris who functions to praise Messalla.[411] By stressing the identification between Messalla and Osiris, the particular representation of Egypt in Tibullus 1.7 is less important than Osiris' divine status and his association with wine.[412] Instead of deciphering precisely

[409] Knox 2005, 214: 'In this context [Augustus' restrictions of the cults of Isis 28 BCE], we may well ask how likely it is that Tibullus penned a hymn to Osiris as the central component in his poem or praise for one of Augustus' right-hand men in the year 27, only one year after this cult was banned within the city? Once again, the circumstances of the poem suit better an earlier date in 29 BCE.'

[410] Konstan 1987, sees Tibullus' description of Egypt as a peaceful countryside as 'a deliberate, public statement on a highly controversial issue.' He feels the '[t]he highly controversial issue' is Tibullus' praise of Rome as a world empire to which Egypt belonged. See also Lowell Bowditch 2011, 119, who interprets Tibullus' poem in a post-colonial way. She notes Tibullus ambivalence – he is subtly orientalizing Egypt, but also assimilating it into the Roman world – and sees this as a reflection of 'Rome's simultaneous will to integrate and to dominate her new province, Egypt'.

[411] Johnson 1990, 105, calls Tib. 1.7 a 'gift to Messalla' and to Johnson the poem seems to 'chiefly concerned with defining the quality of Messalla's energies and force, of evoking what it is that shapes the extraordinary virtue of this exemplary life.' In his commentary on Johnson, however, Norwick 1990, 117-120, shows that Tib. 1.7 does not unambiguously praise Messalla. See also Lee-Stecum 1998, 205-226, and Lowell Bowditch 2011.

[412] See Gaisser 1971, 224 for the quote. She stresses the divine status of Osiris and interprets the mentioning of Messalla's triumph in the context of religion, not of imperial politics: 'the triumph itself is useful, as it establishes Messalla as a semi-divine figure, who is at least worthy to be compared with gods, if not on a par with them', *ib*, 228. See also Bright 1975 for the identification of Messalla as Osiris. She also argues that it is Tibullus' purpose to praise Messalla's intellect by using different genres and by referring to Callimachus.

what textual ingredients bring about the identification between Messalla and Osiris, I believe that the representation of Egypt should be given more prominence as the 'Egyptianness' of Osiris is more important for our understanding of this poem than has been considered hitherto. Furthermore, this group of scholars seemed to be right in arguing that Egypt/Osiris could have supportive effects on Messalla's status by positive association. I will, however, investigate whether this kind of positive association has other consequences than for the status of Messalla alone.

Thirdly, I would like to mention a thought-provoking study of Tibullus 1.7 by P. Lowell Bowditch. She uses examples of the application of post-colonial theory to ancient sources in recent literature to demonstrate the ambivalence of framing the unknown as the Other. Her application of post-colonial theory shows how the construction of foreign countries as the Other goes hand in hand with translating or assimilating the unfamiliar in one's own terms of which *Interpretatio Graeca* is an example. According to Lowell Bowditch, Osiris/Egypt becomes assimilated to Roman cultural views in Tibullus 1.7, but at the same time the image of Egypt in Tibullus 1.7 is subject to 'an overarching imperial theme'. By looking especially at 'elegiac gender differences' and relating them to the 'East/West opposition' of Orientalizing discourse, she demonstrates the complex imperial relationship between Rome and its new province of Egypt. In her interpretation, Osiris is first presented as embodying Roman values of masculinity (29-36), whereas he is later associated with effeminizing attributes and Eastern qualities (43-48). Allowing for the ambivalent Roman attitudes towards Egypt, Lowell Bowditch concludes: 'Ultimately, the alternation in Osiris' identity demonstrates the ambivalence of the text – reflecting Rome's simultaneous will to integrate and to dominate her new province, Egypt.' I agree with her that imperialism is thematically present in this poem. However, noticing that this poem is not just elegiac – it is notorious for its mixture of other genres – I will explore whether there are other ways of understanding the relation of Egypt and Rome than as 'elegiac gender differences'.

A fourth group of scholars explained passages in Tibullus 1.7 by looking at Egyptian/Hellenistic influences in this poem. Grimal and Koenen related Tibullus 1.7 to ancient Egyptian and Hellenistic concepts of the cults of Isis and Osiris, while Hunter looked specifically at the intertextuality of Tibullus

1.7 with hymns of Isis and texts of Callimachus.[413] Grimal and Koenen's expert readings of this poem are important as they show that Hellenistic elements found their way into Roman poetry, but they do not give an overall interpretation of the poem itself. Hunter's study does use Hellenistic texts to explain Tibullus' agenda in elegy 1.7. Focusing particularly on lines 9-22, a passage reflecting the motif of 'universal conquest' that was important for Hellenistic kingship, Hunter notes Tibullus' deviation from this rhetoric of extending boundaries in which the poet's observing role is highlighted: 'The mild fascination expressed by the touristic voice is in fact a strategy by which this poem's otherwise quite remarkable combination of the very conventionally Roman and the markedly 'eastern' is here naturalized; Tibullus 1.7 stands as a striking document of the Romans' negotiation of their own position in a world where other powers, spiritual and temporal, had travelled before. Dionysus' obvious familiarity and equally obvious 'foreignness' again proved a powerful framework with which to stake one's claim.'[414] I agree with Hunter that the key to understand Tibullus 1.7 lies in the literary tradition. I also agree with his suggestion that Tibullus 1.7 is reflecting on Rome's position in the world. However, by taking the conceptualization of Egypt as a vital part to understand the overall message of the whole poem, I will investigate how precisely 'Egypt' is used in order to establish Rome's position in the world.

To sum the general introduction to Tibullus 1.7 up, in contrast to previous scholarship my study of Tibullus 1.7 will focus on the representation of Egypt and the lengthy passage devoted to Egypt and Osiris (ll. 23-54) to explain this poem. I will explore whether that passage conveys a concept of Egypt that goes beyond the religious connotations and contemporary legislation concerning the gods Osiris and Isis. Recent scholarship (Hunter, Lowell Bowditch) has stressed the imperialistic undertones of this poem and, hence, the representation of Egypt as one of Rome's provinces should be given a prominent role. The previous chapters of my study have shown that 'Egypt' could be framed in many ways and in interpreting the conceptualization of Egypt in this poem, I will not automatically look for East/West oppositions between Rome and Egypt, but allow for other determinants of the Roman discourse on Egypt. In particular I will investigate whether the representation

[413] Grimal 1969; Koenen 1976; Hunter 2006.
[414] Hunter 2006, 67.

of Egypt in this poem is related to a Hellenistic/Roman concept of ancient Egypt and whether this concept can be explained in terms of self-representation.

3. TIBULLUS 1.7: FRAMING ANCIENT EGYPT

3.1. *An ethnographical frame*

Tibullus 1.7 is unique in its mixture of different genres as Georg Luck noticed: 'What makes it so unusual, is its combination of literary *genera*. It begins as a birthday poem, turns almost imperceptibly into a triumphal ode, then becomes a religious hymn, and ends, more conventionally, as a birthday poem. In the history of the elegy, we find parallels for each of these components ... What is new here is the combination of all these elements.'[415] Based on how Egypt is introduced in this poem, I will consider in this section the influence of yet another genre on Tibullus 1.7: ethnography.

The subject of Osiris is introduced in the following lines (21-28) that touch upon several Greco-Roman topoi connected to Egypt:

qualis et, arentes cum findit Sirius agros,
fertilis aestiva Nilus abundet aqua?
Nile pater, quanam possim te dicere causa
aut quibus in terris occuluisse caput?
te propter nullos tellus tua postulat imbres, 25
arida nec pluvio supplicat herba Iovi.
te canit atque suum pubes miratur Osirim
barbara, Memphiten plangere docta bovem.

Or [why should I recount] how, when Sirius cleaves the dry fields, the fertile Nile overflows with summer water? Father Nile, for what cause or in which lands may I say that you covered your head? Because of you your Egypt desires

[415] Luck 1969, 85-86, as quoted by Bright 1975, 39, who argues, partly on account of the mixture of genres, to see Tib. 1.7 as an 'epyllion'. Different reasons have been given to explain why Tibullus experimented with a mixture of genres ranging from political ones – Tibullus did not want to provoke Augustus by presenting Egypt without mentioning him, Lambert 2003 – to private ones - Tibullus wished to compliment Messalla not only on his military exploits but also for his 'literary acumen', Bright 1975, 46.

> no showers of rain, nor do the dry crops beg humbly to Jupiter the rain-giver. The barbarous people learned to wail the ox of Memphis, celebrates and admires you as their own Osiris.

Egypt is described by the wonders of the Nile; the ability of the Nile to inundate acres in times of extreme dryness and heat (21-22)[416]; the unknown source of the Nile; and speculations about the causes of the flooding (23-24), i.e. the regular furniture of Greek and Roman Nile digressions.[417] The comparison of the Nile to the rain (25-26) is also a standard expression.[418] The identification, however, of Osiris as a manifestation of the Nile (27-28) is a more learned observation that presupposes more profound knowledge of Egypt and its cults. In this respect the connection made in this poem between Apis and Osiris – Apis is also a manifestation of Osiris/Nile – underlines Tibullus' insight into the cult of Osiris.[419] The function of these lines is clear as they form the bridge between the description of geographical locations touched upon in the previous lines (9-20) and the Egyptian god Osiris.

Lines 27-28 in particular have received scholarly interest as they seem to combine two different concepts of Egypt: the Egyptian youth (*pubes)* is concurrently called 'barbarous' (*barbara*) and 'learned' (*docta*) at once. The meaning of *barbara* is explained differently. Some read it as a neutral qualification of something exotic.[420] Others believe that *barbara* does have hostile connotations, particularly because it appears in this elegy in connection with animal worship, a religious habit that generally received Roman disapproval, particularly in Augustan poetry.[421] Rhetorically, the use of

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[416] The rising of *Sirius*, the Dog-star, signified extreme summer heat, see also Tib. 1.1.27-28; 1.41-42. For the paradox between the inundation and extreme heat, and the ancient Egyptian myth which explained this connection, see Koenen 1976, 137.

[417] The most important Nile digressions are Hdt. 2.19ff.; Diod. 1.36ff.; Sen. *Q Nat.* 4a, *De Nilo* 2.1-16; Lucan *BC* 8.285-331; Plin. *NH* 5.51-54; Mela 1.9.50-60. For the discourse on the Nile, see Manolaraki 2013; Schrijvers 2007; Postl 1965.

[418] See Koenen 1976, 139, n. 42 for references.

[419] Klinger 1951, 123-128. Maltby 2002, *ad loc.*: 'T.'s knowledge of the cult could be connected with Delia's interest in Isis.'

[420] Dauge 1981, 162; Smelik and Hemelrijk 1984, 1958.

[421] Lowell Bowditch 2011, 102-103: 'Despite the positive valence of *docta* ('knowing', 'taught', 'learned'), the reference to the ritual mourning at Memphis for the sacred bull Apis, avatar of Osiris, invokes the practice most regarded as strange and uncivilized by the Romans. Indeed, the fundamental ambivalence that characterized much Greco-Roman writing about Egypt – respect for the antiquity of its culture combined with a paradoxical sense of its religion and customs as different

barbara can easily be explained as *pubes barbara* forms a contrast with *pubes Romana* (5) and this parallel paves the way to identifying Messalla with Osiris.[422] *Docta* is generally understood as a positive attribute referring to the high and ancient culture of the Egyptians.[423] The appearance of *barbara* and *docta* can also reflect their allusion to other texts, such as the Isis aretalogies in which a distinction between Greek and non-Greek is drawn, and by Callimachus' *Aitia* 3.1 where, probably, Egyptian women are said to 'know how to cry laments for the white-marked bull.'[424] Referring to the observations in the field of 'imagology' as I have discussed on pp. 21-22, the existence of diametrically opposed stereotypes to describe other peoples appears to be a standard phenomenon in the literary characterization of foreigners. Below I will argue that Tibullus may have encouraged an ethnographical framing of Egypt with this binary image of Egypt.

To understand lines 27-28 I suggest considering them as a carefully prepared outcome of an 'introduction' that starts with a description of other eastern countries in lines 9-20:

non sine me est tibi partus honos: Tarbella Pyrene
testis et Oceani litora Santonici, 10
testis Arar Rhodanusque celer magnusque Garunna,
Carnutis et flavi caerula lympha Liger.
an te, Cydne, canam, tacitis qui leniter undis
Caeruleus placidis per vada serpis aquis,
quantus et aetherio contingens vertice nubes 15
frigidus intonsos Taurus alat Cilicas?

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and primitive – appears in the tension of these two adjectives describing the foreign, and implicitly primitive, as against the learned or civilized populace.' For the same kind of argument: Manolaraki 2013, 33-35.

[422] Maltby 2002, *ad loc.* 'looking back to *pubes Romana* (5) and drawing a parallel between Osiris and Messalla. Both are the centre of attention for their nation and both will have their praises sung, *te canit* looking forward to *te canat* of Messalla.' For the identification between Osiris and Messalla see Gaisser 1971 and Bright 1975.

[423] See Lowell Bowditch 2011, 102-103.

[424] Hunter 2006, 59: 'This [*barbara*] is a word generally avoided in high Alexandrian poetry, and it is not complimentary when Tibullus uses it elsewhere at 2.3.60. Here it presumably reinforces the almost outlandish exoticness of the Egyptian rite, but the division of the world into Greek and barbarian seems to have been an important element in Dionysiac ideas from an early date (cf. esp. Eur. *Ba.* 13-25), and it is a division, precisely with regard to language, that is a recurrent feature of the preserved 'Praises of Isis'. For Callimachean echos in Tib. 1.7: Hunter 2006; Bulloch 1973; Luck 1969, 83-99.

quid referam, ut volitet crebras intacta per urbes
alba Palaestino sancta columba Syro,
utque maris vastum prospectet turribus aequor
prima ratem ventis credere docta Tyros, 20

Not without me did you gain glory there: witness Tarbellian Pyrenees and the shores of Santones' Ocean; witness Saône and swift Rhône and great Garonne, and Loire, blue stream of the blonde Carnutes. Or, Cydnus, shall I sing of you, who blue-surfaced moves gently through peaceful waters with its silent waves. Or how chilling Taurus with its heavenly summit extending to the clouds, feeds the unshorn Cilicians? Why should I recount how the white dove, which is sacred in Syropalestine, flies unharmed through towns. And how Tyre, the first town that learned to entrust the ship to the wind, gazes out from her towers upon the immense sea-plain?

Lines 9-20 contain a geographic progression from the west to the (south)east through countries that were linked with Messalla's exploits: from Gallia in the west (11-12), to Cilicia in Asia Minor (15-16), to Syria at the eastern end of the Mediterranean (17-18), to Tyre, the capital of the Phoenicians (19-20), located south from Syra, to its final destination: Egypt (21-28).[425]

If we compare this passage with lines 21-28 in which Egypt is described in terms of its standard topoi, we notice the following parallels. Designating Egypt by the Nile and its characteristics (21-22) is already anticipated as Gallia is described by its rivers: four rivers – Saône (*Arar*), Rhône (*Rhodanus*), Garonne (*Garunna*) and Loire (*Liger*) – are mentioned in two lines (11-12). The two immediately following lines describe the characteristics of another river, the Cilician river Cydnus, creating a nice transition from the west to the east. The immeasurable length of the Nile touched upon by mentioning its unknown source (23-24) resonates with the lines addressed to Mount Taurus in Cilicia whose gigantic measurements are stressed by describing it as touching the clouds with its peak (15-16). The capacity of the Nile to bring fertility to scorched acres (25-26) can also be paralleled: Mount Taurus, while being cold (*frigidus*), is able to feed the local people.[426] Furthermore, the subject of foreign religious customs (27-28) has already been introduced by the white dove that was sacred to the Syrian goddess Astarte (17-18).

[425] Compare Valerius Flaccus 1.15-21, for a similar image of the Roman world in which east and west come together under Roman rule. Cf. Zissos 2008, 89-90; Manolaraki 2013, 134.
[426] See Moore 1989, 425-427 for 'juxtaposed opposites' in lines 9-28.

Regarding the juxtaposition of *barbara* and *docta* referring to Egyptian youth (28), it is important to note that *pubes barbara* is also a reference to the local people of Cilicia, who are called 'unshaved' (*intonsos*), with the connotation of unpolished or uncivilized. Furthermore, the adjective *doctus* (28) was used a couple of lines earlier (19-20) when the Phoenicians enter the scene through their invention of sea-faring. And the topic of the first inventor also foreshadows the role of Osiris as the bringer of civilization in lines 29-38. Thus, all topics touched upon in the description of Egypt (21-28) have already been introduced by previous lines, embedding Egypt in an ethnographical discourse where foreign people are described by their land, its climate and agriculture, and their customs.[427]

The ingredients of the catalogue of Messalla's foreign exploits (9-28) are analogous to formal characteristics of ancient ethnographies described in modern studies. These formal characteristics of ethnography are present in concise form in the information Tibullus supplies about Egypt: 1. the 'physical geography' of Egypt is represented by the Nile as its most important feature; 2. Egypt's 'climate' is referred to as warm and dry (*Sirius, arentes agros, nullos imbres, arida herba*); 3. the 'agricultural produce' of Egypt is explained by calling it a fertile land dependent on the inundation of the Nile (*fertilis aestiua Nilus abundet aqua*); 4. the 'features of the inhabitants' are touched upon by the adjective *barbara*; and finally 5. mentioning the religious customs of the Egyptians can be interpreted as a 'social institution'.[428] Although these kinds of ethnographies are mostly part of historiographies and geographies such as the work of Herodotus, Diodorus, Strabo, and to a lesser extent of the Elder Pliny, they can also be found in Roman poetry.[429]

Thus, Egypt in Tibullus 1.7 is introduced and approached ethnographically.[430] This realization has fundamental consequences for the

[427] Good introductions to the ancient ethnographic traditions are Murphy 2004, 77-87; Rives 1999, 11-21.

[428] In general ethnographies have five features: 1) physical geography, 2) climate, 3) agricultural produce or mineral resources etc., 4) origins and features of the inhabitants, 5) political, social and military organization, for this list see Thomas 1982, cf. Rives 1999. Not every ethnography contains all of these ingredients, cf. Murphy 2004, 80 ff.

[429] For ethnographies in Horace, Virgil and Lucan, see Thomas 1982.

[430] Previously, scholars have pointed to other models than ethnographies for lines 9-20. It is clear that the geographical pattern from west to east that these lines contain has parallels in other Roman literary works in which it is used as an organizing device

interpretation of this poem as the ethnographical framework activates concepts of Egypt that can be found in other works containing ethnographical elements such as Herodotus' second book, Strabo's 17th book, and particularly

to enumerate diverse geographical locations. It can also be employed to suggest universal coverage, see for instance Catullus 11.1-12 where an enumeration of lands ordered by the path of the sun demonstrates that Catullus' true friends Furius and Aurelius will follow him everywhere. For examples of this geographical pattern in Latin literature see Ball 1983, 111. Quinn 1972, 163, on Catullus 11: 'The three alternatives, Ia ('the Far East' represented by India), Ib ('the Middle East' represented by Hyrcania, Arabia, Scythia, Parthia and Egypt) and II (= 'the Far North' represented by the Alps, Gaul and Britain) represent the three main areas of what was for Catullus and his contemporaries the known world.' Furthermore, while lines 9-20 of Tibullus 1.7 are associated with the myths concerning Osiris in which he travels all around the globe and in which he conquers the entire inhabited world with the civilization he brings, they may also evoke universal dominion. According to Hunter 2006, the topic of universal dominion was (re)activated in the age of Alexander the Great's conquests and had been available for us ever since: '[f]rom the pharaohs and the Ptolemies and their poets (cf. Theocritus 17.86, Catullus 66.12), Roman leaders inherited a language of the extension of boundaries as a fundamental kingly duty and a guarantee of the safety of the land.' Although various scholars have argued that Tibullus 1.7 aims at an identification between Osiris and Messalla, the association between Osiris' travels and Messalla's foreign exploits does not seem to be strong. Hunter 2006, 66, has already showed that the identification between Messalla and Osiris remains vague: 'There are indeed suggestions here of the 'Osirian' language of universal conquest, but they remain muted hints: there is a bit of the western Ocean (v. 10), there is the east, but only the eastern Mediterranean, there are the Taurus mountains whose cold (v.16) suggests the northern wastes, though the range itself is in south central Turkey, and there is burning Egypt to suggest the south, although a much deeper south could in fact be imagined (cf. Theocritus 7.113-14, Virgil, Aeneid 6.794-7). There was, after all, room for only one living Osiris-Dionysus, and that was not (or was no longer) Messalla.' But even when a parallel is created between Osiris and Messalla in these lines, an association between these lines and military success seems unlikely. Comparison to Roman texts influenced by pharaonic and Ptolemaic rhetoric of a global empire – of which August's *Res Gestae* is the most prominent example – teaches us that Tibullus lines deviate significantly from them. In the first place, these lines do not include triumphal rhetoric. For instance, two other encomia addressed to Messalla do connect remote places with victory and military achievement, see *Catalepton* 9 and the *Panegyric of Messalla*. Secondly, these lines do not suggest that Messalla has extended the boundaries of the Roman Empire. Thirdly and most important, they stand out for their geographical and ethnographical information that goes beyond identifying regions by their rivers. It has already been argued with regard to these lines that Messalla is portrayed as a 'polished diplomat' who is 'studying scenic wonders, exploring foreign countries, and observing different customs', Ball 1983, 112.

Diodorus Siculus' first book. The guiding principle of their descriptions of Egypt was amazement. Egypt was a wondrous region in their eyes whose customs did not lead to rejection – nor always to approval – but were a cause for astonishment and wonder. In their study of the conception of Egypt in literary sources, Smelik and Hemelrijk conclude their treatment of Herodotus' second book as follows: 'Herodotus' attitude towards foreign nations is typical of ancient Greek ethnography in general, which is characterized to a large extent by curiosity for the unknown; possible feelings of superiority remain in the background. As distinct from their Roman contemporaries, Strabo and Aelian (both authors who worked in a Roman context, but wrote in the Greek tradition) show the same attitude to their writings. This indicates that ethnographic works such as these are a genre in its own right.'[431] Standard topoi of the ethnographical treatises of Egypt are: the extraordinary features of the Nile, Egypt's fertility and wealth, its remarkable animals and vegetation, its great monuments, its wisdom and antiquity. Although Egypt as presented in ethnographical works could have been used as a way to reflect on the Greek or Roman world, it was certainly not the foil that it became in Augustan poetry, employed to highlight Greek or Roman identities. Furthermore, presenting the general qualities of Egypt's land, climate, agriculture and customs equals placing it in a timeless vacuum. Hence, framed in an ethnographical tradition, Tibullus' image of Egypt was disconnected from the context of Actium and, thus, also from its function as a negative mirror of Rome.

3.2. *The literary tradition*

After a general ethnographical description of Egypt, one subject is elaborated further: Egypt's deity Osiris (ll. 29-48). By an in depth analysis of the full discursive and literary context – but covering different elements than previous studies, see pp. 182-187 – my study will address the question of what concept of Egypt is evoked by Tibullus' description of Osiris. Tibullus mentions three beneficial deeds of Osiris:

[431] Smelik and Hemelrijk 1984, 1876.

primus aratra manu sollerti fecit Osiris
et teneram ferro sollicitavit humum,
primus inexpertae conmisit semina terrae
pomaque non notis legit ab arboribus.
hic docuit teneram palis adiungere vitem,
hic viridem dura caedere falce comam;
illi iucundos primum matura sapores
expressa incultis uva dedit pedibus.

Osiris was the first to make ploughs with his skilled hand and to disturbe the young earth with iron. He first entrusted seed to the untried land, and gathered fruits from unfamiliar trees. He taught to add the young grape-vine to the pole, he taught to prune green foliage with the solid sickle. For him the ripe grapes, squeezed by uncivilized feet, first produced their pleasant tastes.

Osiris is praised here as the discoverer and propagator of agriculture (29-30), arboriculture (31-32), and viticulture (33-36). In this passage the repetition of *primus* (29), *primus* (31) and *primum* (35) emphasizes the theme of the 'first inventor' (πρῶτος εὑρετής).[432] This theme together with the beneficence Osiris brought to mankind – he teaches (*docuit*, 33) the uncivilized people (here indicated by their *incultis pedibus*, 36) what he has discovered – are standard ingredients of hymns. Regarding the specific 'aretalogy' of Osiris in Tibullus 1.7, this was at least part of the Greco-Roman mythology of Osiris as Diodorus Siculus relates similar information in his narrated version of the hymn of Osiris. Considering Egyptian hymns to Osiris and hymns to the Nile – Osiris is being identified with the Nile after all in Tibullus 1.7 – the attribution of these kinds of benefactions to Osiris may have been grounded in ancient Egyptian conceptions.[433] It has also been argued that Tibullus' structure of this passage with the repetition of *primus* is modelled after the aretalogies of Isis and Osiris.[434] Hence, these lines may have been a direct reference to the cult practices of Isis and Osiris in the Roman world and may have had a religious connotation only. However, considering that an ethnographical frame formed the overture to the hymn to Osiris, another concept of Egypt – besides that of Egypt interpreted within a framework of

[432] For the theme of the first inventor, see p. 62, n. 172.
[433] See Koenen 1976, 142-144, for references to Egyptian sources.
[434] Koenen 1976, 146-147.

'culti orientali' – is activated. Diodorus Siculus' book one forms the key to understanding which concept Tibullus is probably aiming at in his poem.[435]

In Diodorus Siculus, Osiris is presented as a human being – he is one of the gods who was once mortal, but gained immortality because of his benefactions for mankind (Diod. 1.13) – of whom great deeds were known.[436] Diodorus specifies Osiris' benefactions. He was said to be the first to make mankind give up cannibalism, because he taught men the cultivation of wheat and barley: grains that were discovered by Isis (Diod. 1.14.1). Osiris also founded Thebes in Egypt and built a temple to his parents Zeus (Ammon) and Hera (Diod. 1.15.1-3). Apart from agriculture, Osiris also taught mankind how to cultivate wine (Diod. 1.15.8). Diodorus reports how Osiris gathered an army and visited every region of the world to propagate his knowledge of viticulture and agriculture in order to gain immortality for these great deeds. Thus, Diodorus Siculus' image of Osiris as the one who brought civilization to the world is very similar to Tibullus' representation of this Egyptian god.

Regarding the role Egypt plays in Diodorus Siculus' Universal History, Osiris embodies *the* qualities of Egypt that gave this region its prominent place – Diodorus starts with the history of Egypt – in this work that covers the origin of the world down to Diodorus' time in 40 books. Diodorus notes in the introduction that he chose to start with the antiquities of the barbarians not because he thought these peoples were older, but for narrative reasons: he did not wish to interrupt the history of Greece with tales of other peoples (Diod. 1.9.5). Egypt was for him the logical place to start since it 'is the region where mythology places the origin of the gods, where the earliest observations of the stars are said to have been made, and where, furthermore, many noteworthy deeds of great men are recorded' (ἐπεὶ δὲ κατὰ τὴν Αἴγυπτον θεῶν τε γενέσεις ὑπάρξαι μυθολογοῦνται, αἵ τε τῶν ἄστρων ἀρχαιόταται παρατηρήσεις εὑρῆσθαι λέγονται, πρὸς δὲ τούτοις πράξεις ἀξιόλογοι καὶ πολλαὶ μεγάλων ἀνδρῶν ἱστοροῦνται, Diod. 1.9.6). Based on the parallel between Diodorus' image of Osiris and that of Tibullus' presentation of this god I suggest that the latter activates images of Egypt as a prominent region in world history, a

[435] Modern studies of Tib. 1.7 generally note the similarities between Diodorus Siculus' and Tibullus' description of Osiris. They, however, do not argue about the implications of such a resemblance.

[436] The mortal Osiris and Isis need to be contrasted with the gods Osiris and Isis that were believed to be eternal and first, Diod. 1.11.1.

pioneer of civilization. In the next couple of sections, I wish to discuss a possible effect of this image of Egypt on the interpretation of the poem.

3.3. *The relation between ancient Egypt and present Rome*

Considering the relation between Egypt and Rome in this poem two themes are equally present: domination and incorporation. The poem seems to present Egypt as one of the foreign countries subdued by Rome. At the end of the poem, when Messalla's construction works on the Via Latina are mentioned, a reference is made to Rome's conquest as *opibus .. tuis* (59) likely refers to booty (see p. 170, n. 379). Moreover, the Via Latina, a road to Rome, metonymically highlights Rome's central position in the world. In this context it can be argued that Egypt is represented as a province dominated by Rome. However, at the same time it is also depicted as an integral part of the Roman Empire. An analysis of lines 37 to 54, which convey a fusion of different addressees, will clarify this.[437]

Lines 37 to 54 follow directly after the lines in which Osiris is portrayed as the inventor of agriculture, arboriculture and viticulture. Tibullus dwells on Osiris' last invention, wine, which introduces Bacchus and his cult (37-48). Thereafter, the focus shifts to the birthday-party of Messalla (49-54):

ille liquor docuit voces inflectere cantu,
movit et ad certos nescia membra modos,
Bacchus et agricolae magno confecta labore
pectora tristitiae dissoluenda dedit.
Bacchus et adflictis requiem mortalibus adfert,
crura licet dura conpede pulsa sonent.
non tibi sunt tristes curae nec luctus, Osiri,
sed chorus et cantus et levis aptus amor,
sed varii flores et frons redimita corymbis,
fusa sed ad teneros lutea palla pedes
et Tyriae vestes et dulcis tibia cantu
et levis occultis conscia cista sacris.
huc ades et Genium ludis Geniumque choreis
concelebra et multo tempora funde mero:
illius et nitido stillent unguenta capillo,

[437] Regarding these lines, Lowell Bowditch 2011, 104-115, who focusses on gender specifics in love poetry argues for the importance of the theme of Roman domination over Egypt as Osiris is adorned here with female characteristics.

et capite et collo mollia serta gerat.
sic venias hodierne: tibi dem turis honores,
liba et Mopsopio dulcia melle feram.

> This liquor taught voices to modulate to the melody and moved ignorant limbs to certain rhythms. Bacchus causes the breast of the countryman when it is worn-out from heavy toil, to be relieved of sadness. Bacchus brings rest to shattered mortals, although harsh fetters clatter up their legs. Not associated with you are sad sorrows or grief, Osiris, but song and dance and light love, variegated flowers and a head encircled with ivy-berries, a saffron robe extended to soft feet, clothes of Tyrian purple, the sweet-sounding pipe, and light basket that shares the secret of holy rites. Hither come, and honor the Genius with games and dances, and drench his temples with plenty of wine: let perfumes drip from his bright hair, and let him carry soft garlands on head and neck carry. Come like this, spirit of the day [Genius]: and let me honor you with incense and bring you cake sweetened with Mopsopus' honey.

In this passage Osiris is first interpreted as Bacchus via his invention of wine (37-52), and thereafter Osiris/Bacchus is fused with the Genius. I will start by discussing the identification of Osiris as Bacchus, which is prepared by *ille liquor* (37). It is not clear, either grammatically or interpretatively, whether *ille liquor* refers to wine and takes up *iucundos .. sapores* (35) or whether it means 'he, as liquor' and refers to Osiris, who is said to be the first to have taught mankind to cultivate wine in previous lines.[438] Either way, *ille liquor* forms the bridge between Osiris and Bacchus. Pointing at the anaphora, Maltby argues: '*hic* (33), *hic* (34) and *illi* (35), all referring to Osiris, lead naturally to *ille liquor* (37) which prepares the way for the introduction of Bacchus.'[439] The identification of Osiris as Bacchus that goes back at least to Herodotus, stimulates perceptions of Bacchus as the *god* Osiris and not only as his invention wine, certainly when Osiris' name is mentioned again in line 43.[440] Regarding lines 43-48, Koenen draws our attention to the similarities

[438] See especially Murgatroyd 1980, *ad* 49-50.
[439] Maltby 2002, *ad loc*.
[440] Murgatroyd 1980, *ad* 49-50, discusses the meandering identity of Osiris/Bacchus as god and, by metonymy, as wine in lines 27-49. See also Hunter 2006, 68, who by focusing on metonymy as a tool to explore 'religious and poetic ideas' gives Tib. 1.7.35-42 as an example to argue 'the use of the name of the inventor for the thing invented (e.g.) *Bacchus* used for 'wine', *Ceres* for 'grain') is one of the most familiar types of metonymy.'

between the cults of Bacchus and that of Isis and Osiris.[441] This overlap stresses Osiris' Bacchic identity, but by literally mentioning Osiris again in the context of cult practices it also re-activates the myths of Osiris and his benefactions other than viticulture (29-36, see the previous section). Thus, formulating an answer to the question of who is invited to celebrate the birthday party of Messalla in line 49 (*huc ades*), the addressee is probably all three based on the combination of discursive context, literary tradition and possible references to cult practices: it is a hybrid of the god Osiris, the god Bacchus, and their discovery wine.[442]

In lines 49-52 Osiris/Bacchus/wine is summoned to come to the birth-day party of Messalla and to honor the Genius of Messalla in various ways. The Genius was a Roman god, associated with family cults such as that of the Lares, Penates and Vesta, which can be described as a guardian spirit. It accompanied a man from his birth to his death and was worshipped especially on his birthday.[443] In line 53 we read *sic venias hodierne*. This line is probably addressed to the Genius. *Hodierne* should probably be understood as the vocative of the adjective formed from *hodie* and thus, the translations of *sic venias hodierne* should be: Come like this, spirit of the day (= Genius). *Sic* refers, then, to lines 49-52 which list the circumstances of his coming.[444] However, this is the sole instance in Latin literature of the use of *hodierne* with reference to the Genius. We cannot assess how unusual the employment

[441] Koenen 1976, 152, points at the robe that both wore (Dionysus in Aristophanes and statues of Osiris in Plutarch), but he especially stressed the *cista* that in the cults of both gods was of extreme importantce. Koenen relates the parallels between the two cults to the god Sarapis: 'The god to whom Tibullus turns is really the god of the mysteries in whose person Dionysos and Osiris are united; his true name, it turned out before, is Sarapis.'

[442] Murgatroyd 1980, *ad* 49-50, wonders why 'Osiris, or indeed any god, should be summoned to a feast worshipping the Genius of Messalla', and argues for a personification of wine to stimulate the festivities. But, his wondering may not be justified, see Maltby, *ad loc*. who takes Osiris to be the addressee and interprets *huc ades* in the context of an invitation of a god which is 'a standand literary form, the cletic hymn' and provides parallels in Roman literature. See also Koenen 1976, 155, who also takes Osiris as the one invited and relates the presence of Osiris at a birthday party to the Egyptian ritual in which Osiris was 'at once guest and host' at parties that commemorate special occasions such as the 'birth of a child or a young man's coming of age'.

[443] See Hor. *Epist.* 2.2.187-189: *scit Genius, natale comes qui temperat astrum, / naturae deus humanae mortalis in unum / quodque caput.* See also Rose 1928.

[444] See Maltby 2002, *ad loc*., for a similar interpretation of *hodierne* and *sic*.

is of this word in this context for Tibullus' readers, and whether they would have linked it immediately to the Genius, but it may have been Tibullus aim to use an unusual word to confuse the identities of the gods. In the first place, it would take up the topic of mixing identities as he did before with Osiris and Bacchus. Secondly, the gifts for the god addressed by '*hodierne*' certainly do not clarify which god is honored. *Liba*, cakes offered to the gods, and incense are suitable gifts for the Genius as well as for Osiris in his role as Bacchus, certainly when the *liba* were sweetened with honey as is the case in our text.[445] Considering Bacchus' discovery of incense and honey, Osiris' identity as Bacchus may have been even more pronounced by mentioning these gifts. Thus, at this stage of the poem, Osiris in his role as Bacchus becomes confused with the Genius.[446] The poem does not give any further solutions to clarify the god addressed, because after line 52 Tibullus turns to another addressee, *at tibi*: Messalla himself, and leaves the topic of Osiris behind.

Recapitulating the appearance of Osiris from the moment he is introduced to the last reference to him, we can see that he is molded into a Roman frame. The first time Osiris is mentioned, he appears in an Egyptian context as a manifestation of the Nile (*te canit utque suum pubes miratur Osirim / barbara, Memphiten plangere docta bovem*, 'The barbarous people taught to bewail the ox of Memphis, celebrates and admires you as their own Osiris.').[447] Thereafter the Hellenized Osiris appears with his civilizing inventions, leading to an identification with Bacchus as we have seen above (29-52). Finally, Osiris in his role as Bacchus in the Roman homely context is merged with the Genius of Messalla (53-54). Thus, the Egyptian Osiris/Nile is domesticated into a Roman household god.

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[445] *Liba* sweetened with honey were offered to Dionysus (Liber) at the Liberalia, see Maltby 2002, *ad loc*. for references to Ovid. Incense and honey were offered to the Genius in Tib. 2.2.3ff.

[446] Koenen 1976, 155 draws a similar conclusion but on slightly different grounds. He interprets *hodierne* as *hodie* and translates it with 'today'. Based on the similarity of *huc ades* with *sic venias*, he argues that the latter is also addressed to Osiris. According to him *huc ades* already implicates a reference to an invitation of the Genius as similar words can be found, *ipse .. genius adsit*, in another poem of Tibullus: 2.2.5. According to him 'the two beings, Osiris-Dionysos alias Sarapis and the genius, have become very similar here. They belong together.' He draws a parallel with findings in Pompeii and Herculaneum where 'in the shrines of the lares we find the gods of the Isis mysteries in company with the traditional gods of the household. Sarapis, Harpokrates, and Anubis can even replace the traditional gods.'

[447] Here *suum .. Osirim* may be significant. It is not 'our' Osiris, but theirs.

It has been suggested that Tibullus' generally friendly portrayal of Egypt in this poem was a way to rehabilitate the region on the Nile after years of hostility.[448] The domestication of Osiris into a Roman household god seems to fit into this pattern of reappraisal, but this domestication is not a form of revaluing Egypt per se. In the first place, this kind of argumentation suggests that only one predominant image of Egypt existed at the time: that of Augustan negative stereotypes. Above I have argued that Tibullus did not invent a new image of Egypt as some kind of counter-reaction to Augustus' hostilities towards Egypt, but at best re-activated an image of Egypt with which the Romans were likely familiar. He presented Egypt in an ethnographic concept that was traditionally relatively void of negative cultural stereotypes. Secondly, domestication, certainly in an imperial context, is a form of subordination. Tibullus makes the 'strange', 'oriental' god Osiris (the Other), 'normal' (like the Self) and this process indicates that the former is thought to be subordinated to the latter.[449] Seen in this context, Tibullus is not revaluating or rehabilitating Egypt, but giving it a subordinated place in the Roman-centered world.

Thus, Tibullus presents us with an ethnocentric worldview. After all his poem takes Rome as the point of departure, travels all over the globe – from the west to the east (see p. 190) – and circles back to Rome. His poem shows how the Egyptian god, Osiris, ends up in Rome. Perhaps we may draw a comparison here with Pliny the Elder's image of Egypt in the *Natural History* (see the first chapter) in which all kinds of foreign things end up in Rome one way or another way. Zooming in on the representation of Egypt in Tibullus 1.7, the domestication of Osiris into the Genius of Messalla is probably flattering for Messalla: he becomes associated with the god's beneficial inventions. But on an imperial scale, the assimilation of Egypt in the Roman Empire is also beneficial for Rome's status: Rome becomes associated with a region that Tibullus has portrayed as being prominent in world history. Even more so, it becomes its ruler.

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[448] For the rehabilitation of Egypt as expressed by this poem, see Konstan 1976, 185, who by demonstrating that Egypt and the Egyptian gods are put on par with Roman gods and Rome (e.g. Osiris is analogous to Jupiter and Egypt is described as a peaceful, bucolic, countryside just as Rome's imagined antiquity) argues that Tibullus' message in this poem concerned Egypt's 'integration into the culure of Rome, and the beginning of a new age'.

[449] See also Rosati 2009, particularly 278, for similar arguments.

4. Conclusions

In this chapter I have focused on the representation of Egypt and the lengthy passage devoted to Egypt and Osiris to explain Tibullus 1.7, a poem known for its positive representation of Egypt. In contrast to previous scholarship that approached it mainly as deviating from normative Roman attitudes towards Egypt, i.e. negative stereotypes, I approached the text as containing one of the many concepts of Egypt. Comparing Tibullus' portrayal of Osiris with that of Augustan literary representation of Isis, it turns out that this representation of Egyptian gods is multidimensional: sometimes they are portrayed as unwanted gods and sometimes they are depicted as beneficial ones. Analysis of Roman historical sources concerning Roman regulation of Egyptian cults directs our attention to this miscellaneous picture too. Augustus restricted ánd promoted the cults of Isis at once. Apparently each context (whether historical or discursive) require a different rendering of Egyptian deities and Egypt in general.

In Tibullus 1.7 Osiris is a beneficial god, but more importantly, the representation of Osiris in the poem's framework of Roman imperialism likely recalls the Roman concept of ancient Egypt that is present in ancient sources from Cicero to Tacitus and beyond. As Tibullus 1.7 is unique in its mixture of different genres, I argued that the genre of ethnography was of vital importance to understand the poem. Because Egypt was framed ethnographically, a literary tradition that is manifest above all in Diodorus Siculus' treatment of Egypt comes to the fore. Egypt's prominent position in world history and its importance for cultural development are highlighted. Osiris is domesticated by identifying him with Bacchus and blurring him with the Genius. This process implicates Roman domination as Osiris is made secondary to his Roman variants. Likewise, *ancient* Egypt, which the Romans admired greatly, becomes dominated by Rome in this poem that starts and finishes with references to Rome's military power and central position in its Empire. The concept of ancient Egypt functions in Tibullus 1.7 in a similar way as in other Roman sources that touch upon its antiquity; it is used to contribute constructively to Roman self-representation. In Tibullus 1.7 it contributes positively to Messalla's ánd, on a larger scale, to Rome's image. Dominating a region with such an admirable ancient history and making this admired past beneficial for Rome's own position in the present world have status-enhancing effects on the latter.

Conclusion

The present study addressed three research questions. The first was related to the two traditional ways in which Roman literary references to Egypt were explained in previous scholarly literature: as negative stereotypes of contemporary (Roman) Egypt or positive attitudes towards ancient Egypt. This study took these two 'traditional' ways as its starting point and explored in chapters I and II the relationship between them and literary references to Egypt. The foundation of the present study was an investigation of all kinds of references to Egypt in (Greco-) Roman literary sources covering the late first century BCE to the first century CE – hence avoiding a focus on one author, subject or period. Based on this investigation several text have been selected as case-study to demonstrate the representation of Egypt in Roman literature and society. Chapter I on Pliny the Elder's Egypt set the scene by arguing for the existence of another concept than the 'traditional' concepts (negative stereopes of contemporary Egypt or positive attitudes towards ancient Egypt): Egypt as an integral part of Rome. Elaborating on the notion that references to Egypt in Flavian times, at least in Pliny the Elder, could not always be explained by negative stereotyping or positive attitudes, chapter II showed by a close reading of Propertius 3.11 that even references to Egypt in Augustan texts could be framed in many ways which could not unambiguously be labeled 'negative' or 'positive'.

The second research question concerned the function of concepts of Egypt by approaching Roman literary representations from the notion of self-representation. By emphasizing the larger context, chapter III showed that almost every use of negative stereotypes in texts from Cicero to Juvenal had its own specific effect on Roman self-representation instead of simply Othering, i.e. the general function attributed to negative stereotyping. Whereas negative stereotypes of Egypt received much attention in previous scholarly literature, positive perceptions of ancient Egypt were rather neglected and a good explanation for the use of a positive perception has not been given

hitherto. Chapter IV investigated the use of positive attitudes towards Egypt and demonstrated that positive literary perceptions of ancient Egypt also had a function in terms of self-definition by looking at Tibullus 1.7.

Regarding the third research question that dealt with the importance of Actium for Roman perceptions of Egypt, this thesis argued that the central place given to Actium and Augustan poetry needs to be reconsidered. Below I will deal with the conclusions of these three research questions in depth.

In chapter I, Pliny the Elder's rendering of Egypt in his encyclopedic work the *Natural History* was compared to the two traditional concepts: negative perceptions of contemporary Egypt versus positive attitudes towards ancient Egypt. There are hundreds of references to Egypt made throughout the 36 books of the *Natural History*, touching on various Egyptian topoi ranging from zoological descriptions of Egyptian animals to juicy anecdotes about Cleopatra. Together they present the most comprehensive picture of Egypt available through Roman eyes. The myriad of references in the *Natural History* made it impossible to take a limited perspective, such as focusing on Cleopatra or the Nile only. At the same time they presented a good overview of the scope of possible Roman attitudes towards Egypt. Hence, by starting with Pliny the Elder's Egypt, the risk of becoming bogged down in normative and fixated frameworks was lowered.

Using modern studies that reveal the interrelationship between the contents of the *Natural History* and geopolitical views of Flavian times, this thesis showed that neither traditional concept of Egypt was prominently present in Pliny's encyclopedia. Firstly, I argued that Egypt is not perceived as particularly ancient in the *Natural History*. Although Pliny hints at positive Roman perceptions of Egypt's antiquity, he focuses on the here and now. He seems to refer to Egyptian antiquity only when it contributes positively to the status of Rome. This seems to follow the general aims and purposes of the *Natural History*, which are to emphasize the city of Rome's central position in the Roman world. Secondly, this thesis maintained that in the *Natural History*, Egypt is neither unfamiliar nor exotic, i.e. it is not perceived to be the negative stereotypical Other. In contrast, Egypt is rendered as known territory. Pliny's accurate knowledge of Egypt seems to be derived from administrative and topographical information that the Romans needed to govern this province properly. Regions where Romans had hardly set foot before – and as a result were unfamiliar to them – served as Roman border regions in the *Natural History*, demarcating the Roman world from the unRoman world. The notion

that Roman knowledge and conquest are fundamentally related to each other in the *Natural History* is not new, but it has important effects on how Egypt is conceptualized when placed in the discussion about Roman perceptions of Egypt. As the region Egypt is presented as known, conquered territory, it is clearly mapped inside the Roman empire of the *Natural History*. Extraordinary people whose extreme abnormalities are presented in the few ethnographies in the *Natural History* live in those regions outside the known world. Since Egypt is a known region, Pliny did not include an ethnography of the Egyptians. Hence, the Egyptian people seem to be as ordinary as everybody else living in the Roman world. Moreover, Pliny's exhaustive description of Egyptian flora and fauna that are foreign to Rome and Italy does not turn Egypt in the exotic Other, because including the 'exotic' is part of Pliny's strategy to encompass the Roman world in its entirety and his urge to demonstrate the interconnectivity of all parts of this world. Thus, in the *Natural History*, another concept of Egypt is revealed: Egypt as an integral part of the Roman Empire.

This thesis argues that an answer to the question of why Pliny the Elder conceptualized Egypt in this particular way lies in the overall message of his work. The *Natural History* aims to celebrate the Roman world in all its variety but, in particular, the center of this world: Rome. Throughout the *Natural History* Rome appears as the point of reference. The many comparisons between foreign 'marvels' with those of Rome serve as an example of this. For instance, Pliny notes that the channel of the Tiber turns out to be as deep as that of the Nile and that Augustus' efforts in erecting an obelisk surpassed those of the Egyptian pharaohs. This pattern of comparisons and emulations that can be found throughout the *Natural History* not only involves admired Egyptian items and achievement. The negative Egyptian/eastern manner of luxury is also emulated by Roman examples. Cleopatra's decadence is, for instance, outdone by that of some Romans. Roman emulation, then, does not only have positive effects in terms of Roman self-representation.

In the *Natural History* foreign items were not only compared to Roman ones, they were also brought to Rome. I argued that the transportation of Egyptian animals and objects involved more than a physical transportation. Pliny's account of the transportation of the obelisks to Rome can be seen as a good example of this. In his discussion of the Campus Martius obelisk – the 'so-called' Horologium obelisk – the original function of the obelisk as a dedication to the sun is incorporated for Roman purposes: the obelisk is turned

into a meridian, a device that measures the sun's shadow. In this account Pliny makes the obelisk a symbol for a deep history of competition between pharaohs. By inscribing Augustus into this tradition, not the object *sec* is incorporated, but merely Egypt's antiquity. Thus, Pliny provides Rome with an admired and extensive history. Hence, conceptualizing 'Egypt' as an integral part of the Roman Empire could enhance Rome's status.

Other examples in this thesis demonstrated that the concept of Egypt as an integral part of the Roman empire can be discerned from earlier sources, too. For instance, the same kind of imperial incorporation of Egypt is used in Tibullus 1.7 (chapter IV), where a notion of the *Orbis Romanum* is displayed by the geographical progression that circles from Rome to the (south) east through territories where Messalla conducted his military campaigns and back to Rome again. Here, too, after a close reading of this poem the message seems to be that Egypt intrinsically belonged to the Roman Empire. The same kind of concept is also found in a text of a slightly later date, in Pliny the Younger's *Panegyricus* that I discussed in chapter III. Like his uncle, Pliny the Younger describes the Roman Empire as an interconnected world of which Egypt was firmly part. The function of the concept of Egypt as an integral part of the Roman Empire in Tibullus 1.7 and Pliny the Younger seems to be similar to that of Pliny the Elder: the incorporation of Egypt (features of it) enhances the status of Rome (and/or Romans like Messalla or Trajanus). The features are different, however. In the case of Pliny the Elder's account of the obelisks and in the case of Tibullus 1.7, the focus is on Egypt's antiquity. In the case of Pliny the Younger, it is Egypt's economic wealth. The appropriation of features of Egypt can also have negative effects on the Self. In Juvenal, *Satire* 15, discussed in chapter IV, animal worship is framed as utterly foreign/Egyptian in the first part. In the second part, however, it is framed as an example of how low human nature has sunk. The opposition between Rome and Egypt has vanished in such a way that a former Egyptian custom can be used to illustrate a negative feature of all humans, the Romans included.

Starting with Pliny's *Natural History*, a work that is neither poetic nor Augustan, chapter I stressed that to determine which concept of Egypt is used, the general aims and purposes of the work, generic aspects and historical contexts are key. Simply extracting one reference to Egypt out of a text and labeling it as containing *the* Roman perception of Egypt does not do justice to the multifarious messages of Egypt in the Roman literary discourse. Chapter II, which (re)turned to Augustan poetry, verified this conclusion.

In chapter II, the various ways in which a particular Egyptian topos, Cleopatra, could be portrayed were explored. Although the description of Cleopatra changes according to different genres and at different times, she seems to be inextricably linked to the concept of negative stereotypes in the context of the Battle of Actium. Especially in Propertius 3.11, she seems to be rendered as Rome's antipode. However, I argue that she is actually framed in four different ways in this poem of Propertius. Besides the fact that she *is* conceptualized as the stereotypical Other, as Rome's antipode, she is also conceptualized as a Greek mythological woman, framed as the signal mark of shame (*una nota*) branded on Rome, and presented as a drunken suicide. In the context of Roman self-reflection, the four different frames have different outcomes. In the case of Cleopatra rendered as a Greek mythological woman, she is framed as familiar to Romans and this has positive effects on the speaker's portrayal in the poem. The other three frames, each in their own way, make Cleopatra look bad. However, none of these three negative 'alienating' frames contributes positively to the representation of Rome. Whereas the frame of Cleopatra as mythological is engaged with the position of the speaker and his lover, the other three frames seem to put forward a critical view on Rome's own negative conduct.

Prop. 3.11 is not the only example of a text in which different concepts of Egypt appear. Regarding Martialis 8.36.1-4, discussed in the Introduction, I argued that Egypt was simultaneously approached positively and negatively to enhance the status of Roman wonders such as Domitian's palace. Likewise, in Tibullus 1.7.28, the use of different conceptualizations of Egypt does not seem to be unintentional, as discussed in chapter IV. It presents two different concepts even in the same sentence. Here the Egyptian youth (*pubes*) is said to be barbaric (*barbara*) and learned (*docta*), recalling negative and positive feelings, respectively. In Tibullus 1.7.28, the two concepts of Egypt foster an ethnographic approach to Egypt. This activates concepts of Egypt known from previous ethnographic works such as Herodotus' second book, Strabo's 17th book, and particularly Diodorus Siculus' first book.

Chapters I and II focused on how Egypt was framed in a particular text, and thus answered my first reseach question. By relating references to Egypt to the two traditional concepts, they not only revealed another concept of Egypt (as an integral part of the Roman Empire), they also demonstrated that one text could contain many messages about Egypt. Chapters I and II anticipated chapters III and IV by discussing the effects of a particular

conceptualization in terms of Roman self-representation. In both chapters, it became clear that a particular concept cannot be understood to have had one single effect on Roman self-representation. For instance, chapter I argued that conceptualizing Egypt as an integral part of the Self can have positive as well as negative effects. Chapter II suggested that framing Cleopatra negatively did not have status-enhancing effects on the Self. In chapter III the function of one particular concept of Egypt, Roman stereotypes, was explored further for its effects on Roman self-representation.

In chapter III, I discussed negative Roman stereotypes which have traditionally been the main focus of attention and were generally interpreted as functioning as an antipode to emphasise good Roman behavior. Instead of just lumping all negative Roman stereotypes together and explaining them as Othering, I have analyzed in depth the discursive and literary contexts of some prominent texts on the Roman literary representation of Egypt. Discussing them in chronological order, it became apparent, firstly, that not all negative stereotypes of Egypt were intended to form a contrast between Egypt and Rome. In Pliny the Younger, Egypt is rendered as an integral part of the Roman empire. Stereotypically rendering Egypt as 'puffed up' (*ventosa*) and 'arrogant' (*insolens*) functions to cover up the reality of Roman dependence on Egyptian corn. Secondly, negative stereotypes are in most cases not used to support Roman self-esteem. In Cicero's *Pro Rabirio Postumo* 35, the stereotype used can be called informative, while in Cicero's *De Natura Deorum*, in Lucan's *Bellum Civile* and in Juvenal's Satire 15, the negative stereotypes seem to form a good start to discuss one's own standards. Particularly in Lucan and Juvenal, the opposition between Us and Them is not used to present a positive picture of Rome, but to discuss Roman mistakes and responsibilities. Only in the Augustan age do they seem to predominantly function in order to create two distinguished parties in favor of Augustus in the context of civil war. But even here the message may have been more nuanced than previously suggested, as I have shown in chapter II in my discussion of Propertius 3.11. Chapter III clarified that the notion of Roman self-representation is helpful in understanding the concept of negative Roman stereotypes of Egypt. Chapter IV reveals that this notion also contributes to our understanding of positive Roman evaluations of Egypt's antiquity, which are present in ancient sources from Cicero to Tacitus and beyond.

In chapter IV, I argued that in the works of Horace, Propertius, Martial and Frontinus, references to the pyramids, which were the main tokens of ancient

Egypt, show that Egypt could function as a means to contribute constructively to Roman self-representation. Likewise, in Tacitus' account of Germanicus' sightseeing trip to Egypt, ancient Egypt serves to characterize Germanicus. Regarding Tibullus 1.7, I maintained that the concept of ancient Egypt is fundamental to understand this poem. By framing Egypt ethnographically, a literary tradition that is manifest above all in Diodorus Siculus' treatment comes the fore. I argued that in Tibullus 1.7, ancient Egypt is rendered as dominated by Rome and integrated in the Roman Empire. As such it contributes positively to the image of the addressee of Tibullus 1.7, Messalla, and to Rome.

By analyzing Tibullus 1.7, an Augustan poem about an Egyptian god, I responded to a scholarly discussion about its relationship to Augustan policy towards Egyptian gods. According to some scholars, Tibullus' positive image of Egypt and its god Osiris needs to be explained as containing some kind of critique towards Augustus as he banned the Egyptian gods from within the *pomerium* in 28 BCE. Discussing the exact measure taken by Augustus and pointing out miscellaneous politics towards Egyptian cults in the Late Republic, I argued that the relationship is highly speculative. Instead of taking a historical approach to explain Tibullus 1.7, I maintained a focus on the literary context. I showed that the Augustan literary representation of the Egyptian god Isis, a topic strongly related to Osiris, is multidimensional. Like the meandering Roman regulation of Egyptian cults suggests, the Egyptian gods are sometimes depicted as unwanted and sometimes as beneficial. This chapter demonstrated that each use of a particular reference to Egypt needs to be explained according to its context. As chapters III and IV showed that positive as well as negative perceptions of Egypt can be explained as having a function in terms of self-definition, they answered the second hypothesis/question of this thesis.

The third research question concerned the role of Actium in the Roman discourse on Egypt. This thesis argues for a reconsideration of the central place given to Actium and Augustan poetry in scholarly discussions about Roman perceptions of Egypt. Firstly, I have shown that the effects of negative stereotypes on Roman perceptions of Egypt were not as great as previously thought. Although they appear in the few extant Augustan works (and we do not know how much literature has been lost), they received relatively much attention, leading to incorrect assumptions. One example of this concerns Augustan legal restrictions on the cults of Isis as described in Dio Cassius

53.3.4 (chapter IV). These regulations have been related to an Augustan rejection of Egypt and, as a result, were interpreted as a complete ban on the cults of Isis. But when similar literary sources are taken into consideration, the Augustan restrictions on the cults of Isis probably involved a ban within the *pomerium*, but at the same time a promotion of them outside the heart of the city. Moreover, based on their context, Augustan literary references to Isis also show a more varied attitude towards this goddess than just a hostile, Oriental goddess who fought against Rome, as I argued in chapter IV. Secondly, post-Augustan Roman texts containing negative Roman stereotypes of Egypt do not necessarily reflect on Augustan poetry and the Battle of Actium. In chapter III it became clear that the later literature uses negative stereotypes in a different way than most Augustan poetry does. The Battle of Actium is a very specific context in which negative perceptions of Egypt have a different connotation than they do in non-Actium contexts. Juvenal, for instance, uses animal worship in his Satire 15 in a similar way to Cicero, i.e. to start a moral discussion about Roman conventions and standards. Thirdly, other concepts than Egypt as the stereotypical Other are present even in Augustan poetry. In Tibullus 1.7, Egypt is framed as particularly ancient and as an integral part of the Roman world by referring to the literary tradition of Herodotus and Diodorus Siculus. Their works were not unfamiliar to the Augustan public. Likewise, the concept of Egypt's admired antiquity was found in Augustan poetry such as that of Horace and Propertius.

Hence, the overall study of Roman literary references to Egypt as presented in the present thesis shows that they vary greatly, are context-dependent, and cannot be rightly understood when interpreted only within the normative and fixated frameworks of negative perceptions of contemporary Egypt or positive perceptions of Egypt's antiquity. It also suggests that approaching Roman literary references to Egypt from the notion of self-representation is useful to understand and explain their multifarious and sometimes contradictory messages. Egyptian culture was omnipresent in Rome, in the material culture as well as in the literature. This observation does not mean that every reference to Egypt is thus 'Roman'. On the contrary, Egypt was occasionally framed as the Other. Yet the omnipresence of Egypt in the Roman literature is of major importance when the Roman identity is at stake. Egypt, then, is neither only the Other, nor only the Self, but always a polyvalent notion in terms of identity-making.

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Index of references to Egypt in ancient sources from the first half of the first century BCE to the beginning of the second century CE

Below I have only indexed passages with references to Egypt in ancient literary sources from Cicero to Juvenal. Thus, this index does not contain all sources cited in this thesis. The foundation of this study is an investigation of all kinds of references to Egypt in (Greco-) Roman literary sources from the first half of the first century BCE to the beginning of the second century CE. As this index contains ancient literary references to Egypt only, it gives a good impression of the scope of ancient sources that I have explored.

Index of names, places and subjects

Curriculum Vitae

Maaike Elisabeth Cecilia Leemreize is geboren op 27 oktober 1977 in Lichtenvoorde. In 1996 heeft zij haar VWO diploma gehaald op de katholieke scholengemeenschap Marianum te Groenlo. Tijdens haar studie Rechten aan de Rijksuniversiteit Groningen is haar interesse voor de Oudheid gewekt door de colleges Romeins Recht. Zij heeft toen naast haar studie Rechten diverse colleges Oude Geschiedenis gevolgd aan de Rijksuniversiteit Groningen. Na het behalen van haar doctoraal bul Nederlands Recht in 2002 is zij begonnen met de bachelor Griekse en Latijnse Taal en Cultuur (GLTC) aan de Rijksuniversiteit Groningen welke zij in 2006 heeft afgerond. Vervolgens heeft zij de tweejarige Research Master Classical Medieval and Renaissence Studies (CMRS) in 2009 *cum laude* gehaald aan dezelfde universiteit. Tijdens haar Bachelor GLTC en de Research Master CMRS heeft zij diverse aan het middelbaar en wetenschappelijk onderwijs gerelateerde banen gehad.

In 2010 is Maaike begonnen als promovenda binnen het NWO-VIDI project 'Cultural Innovation in a Globalising Society: Egypt in Rome', geleid door Prof. Dr. Miguel John Versluys (faculteit der Archeologie, Universiteit Leiden). Naast het verrichten van onderzoek heeft zij diverse colleges gegeven aan studenten Klassieke Talen en Archeologie.

In 2016 heeft zij haar eerstegraadsbevoegdheid Klassieke Talen gehaald aan het Interfacultair Centrum voor Lerarenopleiding, Onderwijsontwikkeling en Nascholing (ICLON), Universiteit Leiden. Momenteel werkt zij als docent klassieke talen op het Antoniuscollege in Gouda.