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

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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.