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

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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?*
>
> 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.