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Egypt and the Augustan Cultural Revolution : an interpretative archaeological overview

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2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter explores the theoretical framework underlying the interpretative study of the manifestations of Egypt presented in this dissertation's overview. First, the development of Kopienkritik towards creative emulation is examined (2.1.1), as well as Hölscher's visual semantics system and the notion of a repertoire of Roman material culture (2.1.2.). In both cases, first the views from these theoretical perspectives are outlined, followed then by a more critical review of their approaches in the context of this particular dissertation. Next is an exploration of some prominent theoretical perspectives on 'objects in motion' (2.2.), touching upon the wider anthropological angles of entanglement and cultural biography and how these are important to be aware of in the context of more inductive research. In conclusion, (2.3.) these theoretical explorations are considered as framework for the practical methodology that has been applied this dissertation. This final paragraph outlines that methodology in detail, prior to its application in the overview of the third chapter.

2.1. Imitation and the Visual Semantics of Roman material culture

2.1.1. From Kopienkritik to creative emulation

Kopienkritik or copy criticism has been the academic norm for studies of Roman material culture until the mid-late twentieth century. It traditionally classifies Roman artworks as copies of (lost) Greek originals, and uses Roman literary descriptions of artefacts as predominant, if not singular, sources of information. Its paradigm follows the concept of an evolutionary line in style and form by a process of *Aufstieg, Höhepunkt* and *Niedergang*, where the highest (and often only) artistic value is attributed to original Greek artworks.[73]

When reappraising this theoretical approach, it is first of all important to discern that Roman copies of Greek original artworks were indeed produced and exchanged throughout the Roman world. The creative and innovative aspects of Roman material culture should therefore be approached as an independent process from this tradition of copying. The initial step towards a more comprehensive expansion of the Kopienkritik framework came with the emphasis on 'Romanitas', from the 1940s, with focus on the deliberate use of Greek examples for specific Roman purposes. Later scholarship originally based on the Kopienkritik paradigm came to realise that, rather than a strict deconstruction, an expansion of copy criticism would be required to oversee the developments within Roman material culture more clearly. A crucial step towards this was the shift of focus from literary sources to object-focus analyses of the archaeological record itself, leading to such important studies as Tonio Hölscher's and Paul Zanker's, as will be explored in this paragraph below.

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[73] See Barbanera 2008, 35-62 for the most recent and comprehensive overview on the Kopienkritik paradigm of Aufstieg, Höhepunkt and Niedergang.

At the same time, academic focus began to shift from copying to 'emulation' in order to explore the by then recognised contextual diversity and significance of 'imitation' in Roman material culture. These studies, from the late twentieth century onwards, are concerned with the processes whereby existing (Greek) forms and styles are used in order to create a new (Roman) object, with its own significance within a specific Roman context. This was regarded as distinctly bound to the influential role of Roman patrons in regard to both personal taste and social expectations, and as a result had to develop into a more creative turn of the traditional Roman imitation process. Since the beginning of the twenty-first century the interpretative approach to this process became known as creative emulation theory. In reaction to distinctly object-focused studies such as Hölscher's, which emphasised superimposed functionality, creative emulation theory focuses predominantly on the contextual significance and interpretation of emulated artefacts in the Roman world.

Despite this reappraisal and development from Kopienkritik to creative emulation, none of these approaches have yet expanded to explore copies or influences from non-Greek cultures in Roman material culture, as will be explored in the final section of this paragraph. First we will explore the development of the copy criticism paradigm and its (continuing) impact on Roman scholarship.

The impact of copy criticism as a theoretical paradigm revolves around the recognition that imitation has been a crucial component in the development of human culture on a wide scale. The process of imitation, the copying of forms, behaviour and context, opened the door to cumulative human culture: and, as such, to innovation. The oldest examples of this cumulative imitation process can be found with the early Homo sapiens in the Stone Age, where basic innovations such as those in the manufacturing of stone axes were still an immensely gradual process evolving over a span of thousands of years.[74] It was only with the increase of complexity in human societies, regarding living environments and relationship networks, that creativity began to develop and accumulate, leading to the emulation of and the trial-and-error experimentation with techniques and material forms that led the way to innovation.[75] Concepts such as imitation leading to creativity, emulation and improvisation challenge us to focus on the so-called 'growing points of social life': the change and exchange of ideas and forms.[76]

'Innovation' encompasses the processes by which a new trait or invention emerges and becomes part of a society.[77] Innovation is not a temporally cumulative thing; it relies heavily on social, political, demographical and economic factors within any complex society. Networks of knowledge, moreover, are crucial for the exchange of innovation, and thus for its preservation and continuation. And yet, even the most potentially useful innovation can disappear if financial criteria are required that are beyond what a given society can afford, regardless of how otherwise complex or well-connected that society might be.[78] Innovation, as a phenomenon, is heavily dependent on the meeting and fusing of ideas (generally a circumstantial and irregular process) as well as on the preservation of those ideas (generally a deliberate and superimposed process); this implies that any process of innovation, even when consciously motivated and deliberately enticed, is also irregular and unpredictable by nature.[79] The intangible nature of innovation as a cultural phenomenon is contrasted by the tangible archaeological record that is our main source of information on the invention of techniques and crafts throughout (pre)history, based on imitation, improvisation and especially the preservation and generational transmission of the resulting innovations.[80]

From this light, it is not strange that the notion of 'imitation' has been an inherent component in studies on ancient material culture, from its earliest origins onwards. Especially in regard to material culture from the Roman world –where innovation came from the wide-ranging exchange of ideas and material forms that the accessibility and diversity of the Mediterranean world allowed on a large scale–

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[74] Hallam & Ingold 2007, 45; Stringer 2011.

[75] *Philosophical Transactions of The Royal Society,* Series B, vol. 266; 1050.

[76] Hallam & Ingold 2007, 25.

[77] Mesoudi 2010, 175.

[78] O'Brien & Shennan 2010, 4; New Scientist, vol. 215, 2012, No. 2884, 31-33.

[79] There has recently been much interest in applying evolutionary principles to the social sciences, especially to studies of cultural processes. Innovation has thus become a major interest for archaeologists and anthropologists alike, who are increasingly exploring the role of innovation in cultural systems as an actual evolutionary process rather than as a so-called 'product'. See: O'Brien & Shennan 2010, 2-3; Johnson, S. 2012, *The Natural History of Innovation*. New York.

[80] Shiffer 2010, 235; Stringer 2012, 53.

the majority of research from the eighteenth century onwards has traditionally been concerned with imitation and copying techniques. However, this focus on imitation in the Roman world was never a deliberate attempt to study the influence of imitation processes on the cultural innovation of Rome on a larger scale. If anything, the inherent importance of imitation as a social process may have been an instinctive realisation even in these earliest studies, but above all, and perhaps ironically, it became a paradigm too delimited and rigid in focus to include any notion of social processes and context altogether.

In the eighteenth century, Johann Joachim Winckelmann was a pioneer in setting the scene for the academic study of ancient material culture in Western scholarship. As philologist, cataloguer and historian, he aimed to unite the 'ancient' and the 'antique', and left the field its fundaments for Classical Archaeology along with countless 'unresolved conflicts' of perspective and source treatment to go with it.[81] The paradigm of Kopienkritik, which developed in the nineteenth century German scholarship, dealt with these conflicts by opting for a clearly delimited view on the Roman process of copying after Greek originals, namely by following, as mentioned above, the interpretative line of *Aufstieg, Höhepunkt* and *Niedergang.*[82] From the late nineteenth century onwards, this became the predominant methodological approach in studies of Roman material culture. At the time these studies, as part of the paradigm of colonial archaeology and art history, were exclusively focused on monumental and 'high' art from Antiquity, regarding Greek styles (in particular sculpture) as the highest artistic ideal. The fact that Roman literary sources often valued and praised Greek artworks was used as both source and argument for this approach – even though this could simultaneously be explained by the fact that 'the original Greek artist' was considered a topic of interest by Roman authors; a topic worth knowing and mentioning in elite company.[83] The fixed concept of Roman copies and Greek originals nonetheless persisted throughout art historical and archaeological studies.

A main reason for this was the fact that the copying of material forms and styles could be recognised as an important phenomenon throughout Roman material culture. For example, in regard to sculpture, Pliny the Elder writes about a first century BCE artist by name of Arcesilaus, who made plaster models

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[81] Marvin 2008, 103-120. Marvin provides a recent and very informative overview of Winckelmann's achievements in developing the scientific study of ancient material culture in the sixth chapter of: Marvin, M. 2008. *The language of the Muses: the dialogue between Greek and Roman sculpture*, Los Angeles.

[82] Hallett 1995, 121-160; Barbanera 2008, 35-62. See also: Selheimer 2003. *Form- und kopienkritische Untersuchungen zum hellenistischen Porträt.* Saarbrücken; Junker, K. and Stähli, A. & Kunze, C. 2008. *Orignal und Kopie*. Wiesbaden

[83] Tanner 2006, 1-30, 205-276.

(*proplasmata*) of the works of his contemporaries and sold them at a higher price than that of the actual sculptures.[84] Gisela Richter has argued that these *proplasmata* were casts of existing Greek sculptures, devised to facilitate the creation of copies.[85] Cicero's letters to Atticus confirm the reproduction of both older (Greek) works and contemporary (Roman) works; he refers to *proplasmata* as models for contemporary works in relation to actual sculpture as well as a metaphor for literary composition, while at the same time he encourages Atticus to collect copies of original Greek statues and 'trinkets'.[86] Archaeological evidence has been found of such plaster casts: a set of *proplasmata,* including the the Tyrannicides by Critios and Nesiotes were discovered in Baiae 1954.[87] Moreover, in 1987 on the Palatine Hill in Rome among the remains of the so-called Domus Tiberiana palace complex, moulds for bronze figurines and sculptures were discovered, which can arguably be linked to the plaster casts from Baiae.[88]

This apparent coexistence of contemporary copies and copies of older works seemed to suggest that a variety of processes contributed to Roman material culture, rather than merely a collection of different copying techniques and sources. Moreover, apart from the continuing production of and demand for copies, copy criticism has shown that processes of emulation held an important place in Roman culture as well, demonstrating a rather more creative nature. Herein copy criticism does not address the question, however, whether these 'emulated' copies were created for the sake of copies – or whether any other (contextual) factors were of influence. This is also one of the main reasons why from the latter half of the twentieth century scholarship has been increasingly examining processes of emulation, thus expanding its approach beyond the copy criticism paradigm.[89] In their reappraisal of copy criticism, these studies have identified a number of interpretative problems that they aim to provide solutions for.[90] As early as 1939, Andreas Rumpf was among the first scholars to suggest that a reappraisal of Kopienkritik was required. By example, he argued that the bronze 'Idolino' statue from Florence (fig. 2) belonged to a specifically Roman type of lamp-holders, i.e. *lychnouchoi* lamp-holders found in Pompeii (fig. 3), as opposed to its traditional identification as a Roman copy of a Greek original bronze sculpture, either based on or compared to the sculptures of Polykleitos, the famous spear-bearer (Doryphoros) in particular.[91]

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[84] Plin. *Nat. Hist.* 15. 155-156.

[85] Richter 1955, 114. Richter's general view is that 'Roman art consisted of mostly exact copies or close adaptations of former creations.' See: Idem. 1951, 37-38.

[86] Cic. *Att.*, Vol. I: Libri I-VIII. Vol. II: Libri IX-XVI. See, in specific: Cic. *Att.* 12.41.

[87] These finds were published in: Landwehr, C. 1985. *Die antiken Gipsabgüsse aus Baiae: Griechische Bronzestatuen in Abgüssen römischer Zeit*. Berlin.

[88] Tomei 1987, 73 (Tav. 6.)

[89] From the early 1990s onwards, this alternate approach has launched a series of conferences, colloquia and publications on Roman copying and creative emulation. See especially: Gazda 1991, 2002; Perry 2002, 2005: Marvin 1985, 2008; Trimble 2000. See also: Ridgeway 1984, 2000; Pollitt 1985, 1996; Bartman 1992; Hallett 1995, 2001; Elsner 1995, 2006; Fullerton 2001.

[90] Gazda 2002, 2-24; Perry 2005, 1-27; Marvin 2008, 154-225.

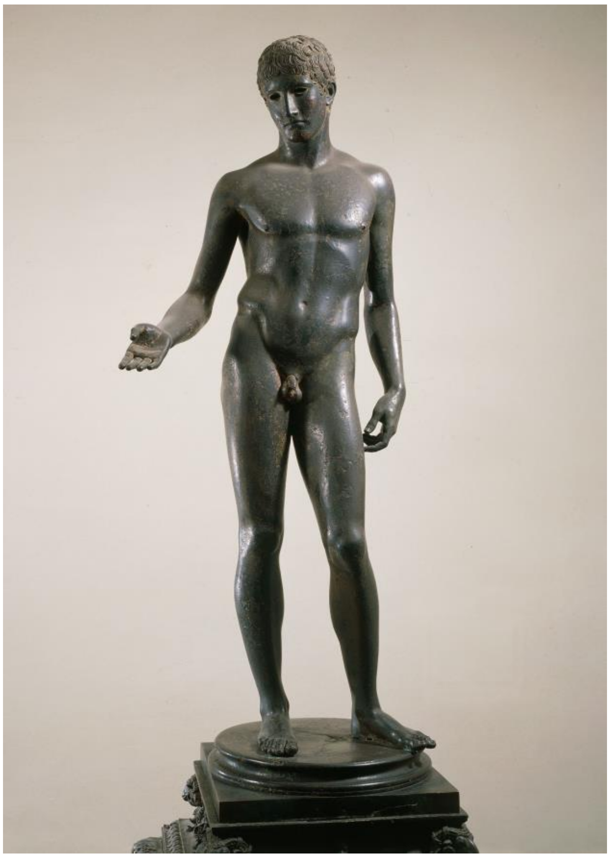

Fig. 2. 'Idolino', Roman bronze sculpture, originally interpreted as copy of a Greek original bronze (Image: Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Firenze)

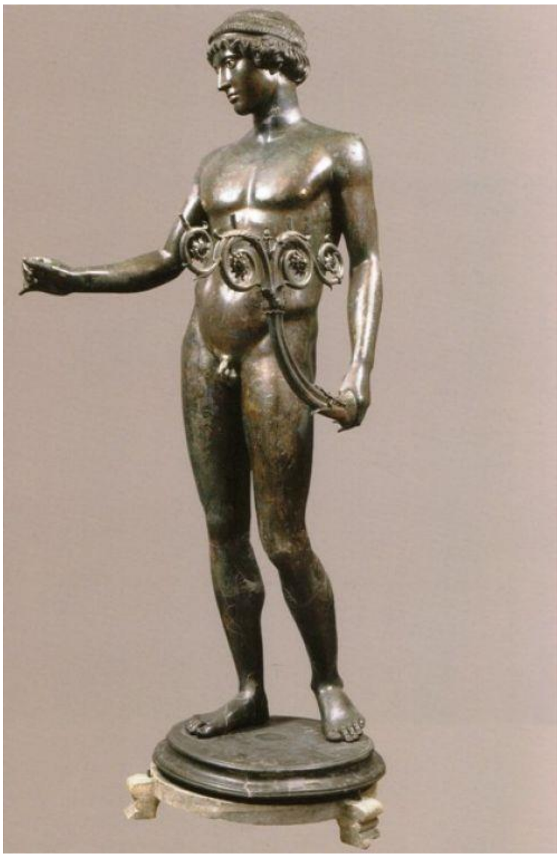

Fig. 3. Bronze lychnouchos lamp-holder, from Pompeii. (Image: Soprintendenza Speciale per I Beni Archeologici di Napoli e Pompei)

Rumpf's at the time radical interpretation led to the development of the concept of 'Romanitas' in studies of Roman material culture: the search for a specifically Roman purpose or implied significance expressed through material culture, even while the general consensus towards such objects remained firmly fixed in Greek examples.[92] The example of the lamp-holder suggests that a specific choice of form and style was chosen to suit a certain role or purpose within a Roman context. The example of a Greek bronze sculpture gets adapted into the form of a typically Roman lamp-holder figure: the Greek style is certainly recognisable, but the object itself is not a direct copy. Arguments similar to Rumpf's lamp-holder have since been developing, gradually causing a paradigm shift not by replacing copy criticism, but by broadening the perspective of the creative processes within Roman material culture as a whole.[93]

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[91] Rumpf 1939, 17-27. Because of the Roman statue's high quality of form and style, Rumpf notes, some traditional interpretations even suggested that it had to be a Greek original from the 5th century BCE (thus perhaps a Greek copy of a Polykleitos original) that had been transported to Italy, rather than a 'mere Roman copy'. This clearly illustrates the high artistic value that the Kopienkritik paradigm applied to Greek art but never to any kind of Roman material culture, not even by association. See also: Zanker 1974, 30.

[92] Revell 1999, 52-58; Kuttner 1998, 93-107; Brooks 2002, 797-829; Arenas-Esteban 2005, 107-124; Wilson 2006.

Another main reason that encouraged a shift of perspective on Roman copying, was the fact that copy criticism remained steadfast in its use of (often fragmentary) literary sources for the identification of the majority of 'Roman copies'. Descriptions of Greek artworks that consist of only a few lines and lack any detailed information about materials, forms or styles, were used to categorise Roman artworks as lesser mirror images of the Greek originals heralded in these textual sources.[94] The deep-rooted notion of 'Roman copies' in Classical Archaeology meant that such fragmentary literary texts continued to be used as valid sources throughout the twentieth century.

Even while this deep-rooted paradigm continued, one of the first shifts of interpretation was the change from 'copy' to 'free copy'. Interest rose into the Roman representations of mythical figures – gods, heroes, mythological creatures, warriors and athletes– and how they seemed to gain significance from their specific (physical) contexts of display, or from certain imagery concepts and ideas deliberately promoted by the Roman patron enabling or commissioning the artist, rather than gaining their identity solely from the Greek original artwork of which they were believed to be a copy.[95] In such cases, even the most direct imitations would need to rely on a contextual sense of 'Romanitas' for their purpose and interpretation – already a significant step beyond Kopienkritik.

Another point of critique is the fact that the influence of Roman patrons and their commissions has largely been ignored by copy criticism scholarship. Visual repetition, from 'ideal sculpture' to realistic Roman portraiture, has traditionally been interpreted as a sign of repetitive copying of a Greek style that was favoured by Roman patricians. Repetition, of course, remained an important component in mainstream production of Emperor portraits, which were copied and distributed in considerable numbers throughout the Empire.[96] This kind of visual repetition, however, doe not mean that direct copying was the automatic choice for Roman patrons and their commissions. Incentives and reasons for commissions will have varied from political associations and status to physical contexts and specific contemporary fashions; individualisation, in the form of personal motivation, will have played a determining, if not central role in these choices.[97] This does not diminish the general Roman appreciation for Greek artworks, however, as illustrated by the famous example of the public outcry in Rome in reaction to Tiberius' removal of Lysippos' 'Apoxyomenos' statue from the baths of Agrippa. Pliny the Elder accounts how Tiberius had the original statue removed to his own house, substituting it with a copy, and how that the people of Rome forced him, by means of public protest, to return it.[98]

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[93] Perry 2005, 16-17.

[94] As has been pointed out by Perry, a well-known example of the misinterpretation of material culture based on textual sources is the assumed connection between the Apollo Belvedere and the sculpture of Ganymede and the Eagle at the Vatican Musea (Perry 2005, 7 ff.). Franz Winter identified the Ganymede sculpture as the work of the Greek sculptor Leochares based on a description in Pliny the Elder (Plin. *Nat. Hist.* 34.79: Leochares aquilam sentientem, quid rapiat in Ganymede et cui ferat, parcentemque unguibus etiam per vestem puero.) Because of the stylistic similarities between the Apollo Belvedere and the Ganymede sculpture, Winter concluded that the Apollo was a Roman copy of a Greek original by Leochares. Moreover, a brief mention in Pausanias (Paus. 1.3.4) about an Apollo statue from Leochares in Athens, was considered proof to confirm this connection. Winter 1892, 164-177. See also: Deubner 1979; Mattusch 2002.

[95] Perry 2005, 7, 96-110. On physical context and display as interpretive argument in Roman sculpture, see also: Hill 1981; Manderscheid 1981; Bartman 1988; Marvin 1989.

Replications of Greek art works in Roman material culture could subsequently be seen as a process whereby contextual significance seemed to be more of a determining factor than the isolated identity of artefacts as direct copies of a specific original. This too, then, would be in favour of so-called 'free copies', commissioned by individual Romans in accordance to their personal motivations and appreciations, as well as to contemporary social and cultural trends. Ellen Perry presents a noteworthy literary analogy for this specifically Roman process of selection and context: 'Cicero derives many of his ideas about the aesthetic concept of *decorum* from Greek philosophy; and it is possible to dedicate one's time to sorting out which ideas he borrowed from Aristotle and which from Panaetius. For our purposes, however, what matters is that he found some of those ideas useful, because they suited the cultural milieu of the first century BC and because they could be employed to enhance his own political and personal image.'[99]

This inherent complexity of artefacts within the society that produced them continued to present a number of yet-untested problems and opportunities in the developing studies on Roman imitation. Along with this came the observation that Roman material culture, especially from the late Republican and early Imperial era, produced work that was often 'classicising' and 'Greek' in style, while at the same time was commissioned, designed, executed, purchased and exchanged by Romans, artisans and patrons alike. 'Classicism' appeared to have been a stylistic choice in a Roman context; but that choice did not necessarily imply that examples of Greek predecessors needed to be followed directly, or even were required as example at all.[100] Here one might speak of a process of 'selective imitation', whereby any choice for Greek classical examples was above all a Roman choice. Moreover, Roman material culture was not limited to Greek models and prototypes. As of the twentieth century it became known that Roman artists also copied models and prototypes from their own local workshops, and that they reproduced original works from Roman contemporary artists as well as classical Greek artworks.[101] This implied a process of Roman copying from Roman examples alongside the process of Greek replications.[102]

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[96] Rose 1997, 183. In the late Julian-Claudian period, especially during Nero's time, we find patronage commissions of portraiture that was, at least in part, inspired by Emperor portraits. These examples imitated specific hairstyles and features of the Emperor, but also included direct copies of Emperor portraits. See also: Hiersinger 1975, 113-124; Varner 2000; Fejfer 2008.

[97] Alexandridis 2005, 111-124.

[98] Plin. *Nat. Hist.* 34.62. The full passage reads: '[The Apoxyomenos] was dedicated by Marcus Agrippa in front of his baths. Tiberius greatly admired this statue [...] and removed the *Apoxyomenos* to his bedroom, replacing it with a copy. But Romans were so indignant about this, that they organised a protest in the theatre, crying "Bring back the *Apoxyomenos*!" And so, despite his love for the statue, Tiberius had no choice but to return the original statue.'

[99] Perry 2005, 22.

One of the most prominent points of critique on the copy criticism paradigm that arose so far gave way to perhaps the most important shift – the shift from the question of whether or not imitation occurred in Roman material culture, to the question of why and how it occurred. Scholarship on Roman copying from the mid to late twentieth century appears to agree that the subject-matter of replications was a leading motivation for why (and how often) specific original examples were used, as opposed to the isolated status of these original Greek examples.[103] This is supported by various cases where Roman artists have replicated the works of lesser-known Greek artists in far greater numbers than the works of famous masters. For example, Roman replications of Kresilas' famous Perikles portrait appear considerably fewer in number than reproductions of a Demosthenes portraits by an early Hellenistic sculptor about whom very little is known.[104] This implies that the subject-matter of the orator Demosthenes, and not the fame of the sculptor of his portrait, was the incentive for so many reproductions. At the same time, Kresilas' Perikles portrait may have been less in demand because Perikles, as a subject-matter, was less in demand than Demosthenes within that specific Roman context: 'it was not the fame of the respective [artists] but the importance of the subject to the Romans which determined demand and consequent production'.[105]

Imitation in Roman material culture was not a process delimited to direct replication; it was one of the most significant and diverse artistic processes that shaped and was shaped by the Roman world. Because of this, the term ‘emulation’ began to appear more frequently in scholarship from the latter half of the twentieth century, instead of the term ‘imitation’. Briefly put, ‘emulation’ here refers to the process whereby existing Greek forms and styles were chosen in order to create a new object with a significance of its own, within its own Roman context, which was not necessarily –and not usually– related to the original, inherent significance of the Greek example(s) that is/are emulated.[106] Bound to the influential role of patrons and social expectations, this more creative turn of the imitation process –hence, since the beginning of the twenty-first century, referred to as ‘creative emulation’– was very much a case of the Roman ‘aesthetics of appropriateness’, as well as of the ‘artistic eclecticism’ that was required to achieve this and which, at the same time, resulted from it.[107]

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[100] On 'Classicism' in Roman material culture from the late Republic to the early Empire, influential studies have been: Wünsche 1972; Zanker 1974, 1988; Trillmich 1979; Neudecker 1988, 1989; Marvin; 1997; Perry 2005.

[101] Perry 2005, 80-11. An example is provided by three statues of Diana, of which the best known was found in Pompeii (Museo Nazionale, Naples. Ref. 6008). All three statues are of an archaising Roman style and are likely to have been reproductions of each other, with Roman artists copying Roman (contemporary) examples. See also the above mentioned example of the Baiae *proplasmata.*

[102] Fullerton 1990, 22-29, 35.

[103] Gazda 2002, 3-6. See also: Ridgway 1984; Marvin 1997, 2008; Perry 2005.

[104] Raubitschek 1973, 620-621; Ridgway 1984, 60-68.

[105] Ridgway 1984, 67.

In philological studies, the concept of emulation was already an established Roman literary phenomenon, and it is remarkable that this connection was not made until Arno Reiff’s 1959 study, wherein he emphasised the nuances of emulation in ancient literature.[108] He made the distinction between ‘interpretatio’ (the direct translation of one example), ‘imitatio’ (a form of free copy, with interpretations based on more than one example), and ‘aemulatio’ (the creative process whereby new works are created as a form of creative rivalry, incited by the author’s continuous exposure to several examples and his deliberate assimilation of these sources). Following this, Raimund Wünsche was the first scholar to expand this literary perspective on emulation to the study of Roman material culture.[109] The Romans themselves, however, appear to have identified processes of creative emulation in both their literary and material culture in equal measure – as illustrated by a passage in the ‘Rhetorica ad Herennium’, where an example from the visual arts is used as analogy for Roman authors in order to convey the incentive that they should not simply copy passages from famous literary works directly, but that instead they should create their own rhetorical technologies and styles.[110] This emphasises the importance of the individual artist’s creative process as a process in its own right, while based on certain external examples that suit the specific context wherein they are thus emulated. Criteria for this selective eclecticism could either be the famous status of a specific example or the relevance of a certain subject-matter – while throughout, and in any case, the main criterion was the suitability of these specific examples and their implied significance as part of their new Roman contexts. This distinction lies at the core of the concept of creative emulation.[111]

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[106] Gazda 2002, 3-7.

[107] Perry 2002, 154, 161. See already: Preisshofen & Zanker 1970, 100-119.

[108] Reiff, A. 1959. *Interpretatio, Imitatio, Aemulatio: Begriff und Vorstellung literarischer Abhägigkeit bei den Römern*. Würzburg. See also: Fuhrmann 1961, 445-448

[109] Wünsche focused in his studies on Roman ‘Idealplastik’ on actual examples from material culture (mainly sculpture), rather than on their (partial) descriptions from literary sources, as had been the trend among his predecessors as well as contemporaries. Wünsche 1972, 45-80.

[110] *Rhet. Her.* 4.6.9. ‘Chares did not learn to make sculpture because Lysippus showed him a head made by Myron, and arm made by Praxiteles and a chest made my Polycleitus, but because he saw his teacher sculpting all these things himself.’ (Chares ad Lysippo statuas facere non isto modo didicit, ut Lysippus caput ostenderet Myronium, brachia Praxitelis, pectus Polycletum, sed omnia coram magistrum facientem videbat.) See also: Preisshofen & Zanker 1970, 100-119; Perry 2002, 161.

Miranda Marvin likewise alludes to the similarities between processes of emulation as inherent to Roman culture on a broader scale, including literature and material cultures.[112] She explores a number of fundamental criteria in reappraisal of what she refers to as 'the modern copy myth' and its active relations:[113] first of all, she emphasises the importance of object-focused research, which initially and too exclusively delimited Kopienkritik studies, and which, as a reaction, were neglected in creative emulation scholarship. The next point of emphasis is the issue of display; namely, the physical context of objects, whether as a deliberate choice in connection to the object itself or as a circumstantial coincidence. Thirdly, she alludes to the importance of the artisan's own identity in relation to objects from Roman material culture: in other words, the individual context of the object's actual maker. Closely linked to this, at the same time, would be the individual context of the object's commissioner or patron, and/or subsequently the customer. Finally, Marvin hints at what may well be the most intangible and complex element as result of any creative emulation process, namely the issue of contextual viewing and interpretation: any object's meaning, she rightly stresses, 'is only ever realised at the point of reception'.[114]

Reception theory has become an important perspective on Roman material culture – but due to the fact that conclusions on reception, in almost every case, can only be approached by association and through probable hypotheses, it also moves away (perhaps too far away) from object-focused research.[115] Creative emulation, as part of recent trends focused on social processes, has become more and more removed from the actual archaeological record that it reflects upon. Also, the inherent links with literary sources, dating back from the original copy criticism paradigm, are still evident in many studies.

This overview has shown where lacunas remain and faults can be recognised in the approaches to imitation and emulation that are still dominant in scholarship today. In reaction to copy criticism, creative emulation theory has already recognised the need to step away from literary texts as main source, as well as the need to raise questions of material culture as well as social contexts. However, like copy criticism, also creative emulation studies have remained focused mainly on interpretations of 'artworks' that appeared in the contexts (both material and social) of the Roman elite, while generally not touching upon any wider scopes of material culture spheres or repertoires. Moreover, the perhaps foremost critique remains valid for both the original approach of copy criticism and the reacting creative emulation studies: their exclusive focus on imitations and emulations of Greek elements in Roman material culture.

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[111] Perry 2005, 20-23. It is remarkable here that Perry uses a literary analogy (the reverse idea from the above example from the 'Rhetorica ad Herennium') in order to illustrate her point about the contextual significance of emulation in Roman material culture.

[112] Marvin 2008, 10-15, 121-167.

[113] Marvin 2008, 122, 168-217.

[114] Marvin 2008, 243-245.

[115] Parker 2007, 209-222

From creative emulation studies, apart from the important question of context, the attention to the actual merging of styles is a crucial approach that has proven particularly valuable for the study of the objects presented in the overview of this dissertation. In this case, however, it deals with the incorporation of Egyptian elements as part of Roman objects (not solely artworks, at that) – and as such provides a new step in the approach of creative emulation studies, such as will be applied in the case studies from chapter three. But here also relevance remains in the copy criticism paradigm. The question whether –in case of this research– we can speak of Egyptian forms and styles in Roman material culture as 'copies', 'free copies' or as entirely adapted, emulated objects, is certainly relevant for each example presented.

These topics have therefore formed an important base for the analysis of the objects in overview in chapter thee: the merging of different styles, the question of these objects' contextual relevance as well as questions of imitation, adaptation and /or emulation have proved valid for each case study in turn. However, without a concrete framework these topics seem only still loosely connected to their initial academic paradigms. Neither copy criticism nor creative emulation theory provides such a framework. However, when reappraised in the framework of Tonio Hölscher's original visual semantics system and the subsequently evolving scholarship on the Roman material culture repertoire, these specific topics from both copy criticism and creative emulation theory nonetheless maintain direct relevance for the case studies presented.

2.1.2. From visual semantics to material culture repertoire

Tonio Hölscher's influential 1987 study was in many ways a return to the formalist approach that was generally abandoned in copy criticism scholarship. Basically put, Hölscher's theory of visual semantics regards the process whereby elements of (Greek) style become semantic tools in a Roman visual language. Combined, the 'form' and 'style' of objects constitute their significance or meaning. Through this process, the incorporated individual (Greek) stylistic elements become value-free components within Roman material culture and, as such, they receive a new and entirely Roman significance unrelated to their (Greek) origin.

This approach of visual semantics is object-focused, in the sense that it aims to study the significance of concrete objects as part of Roman visual language, in particular the significance of these objects as they are created by means of a combination of multiple forms and styles. This visual language is regarded as a means of communication from the Roman elite towards commoners – but also as a visual language created to accommodate the tastes of the educated elite. The emphasis in all this lies on functionality: hereby artistic creativity can be regarded as secondary or even irrelevant to the process. Moreover, Hölscher emphasises, the significance and workings of this semantics system and its resulting visual language can only be understood in its own historical context, namely as part of the Roman Imperium.

One of the most important components of Hölscher's system is a repertoire of material culture forms and style that were available for Romans to suit certain (Roman) contexts. When this concept is expanded beyond the constraints of Hölscher's original somewhat rigid functional system, it can provide a vital perspective on foreign elements that became part of Roman material culture, and thus also go beyond Greek influences.

Despite the dangers of overemphasising linguistic parallels with material culture or confusing the significance of forms and styles with the increasingly explored (and more theoretical) approach of semiotics, there is an undeniable practicality in Hölscher's theory that remains acutely relevant today, as will be explored below. Moreover, the concept of Roman visual semantics with a material culture repertoire of available forms and styles, including (Greek and non-Greek) foreign elements, may well be one of the most crucial criteria of Roman material culture as a whole.

'Few cultural phenomena have a more pronounced collective and social character than artistic style and the language of artistic imagery.'[116] This holds true especially for Roman material culture. A language of imagery in the Roman world needed to rely on the ability to reach wide-spread audiences of considerable number, and at the same time adhere to an almost equal number of (visual) cultural and communicative presuppositions to get, so to speak, the message across. Tonio Hölscher's theory on the visual semantics of Roman material culture revolves around these criteria, with the crucial point that the different types of imagery within that semantic system would not be automatically tied to individual subjects (or meanings) of representation. This then resulted in 'a kind of formulaic visual culture where manner follows matter and where appropriateness (decorum) seems to be the main instrument for the application of a certain subject or style.'[117]

The concepts of 'style' and 'form' are crucial within the working of this semantics system. They are, of course, inherently connected and create meaning only when combined. In a sense, 'form' and 'style' represent different ways of looking at a similar object. The concept of 'form' represents an object's empirical essence: its shape, its size, the material that it is made of, as observed unaffected contextual variables or interpretations. The concept of 'style' represents an object's contextual essence: the way it incorporates certain shapes, materials, imageries and sizes according to the preference for these elements in the context of any particular place and/or time period.[118]

Combined, form and style are defining criteria for any object to hold and to communicate significance. Hölscher's semantics system works through the arrangement of different forms and styles into objects that, through this, gain specifically Roman significance: 'Roman objects', he proposes in many detailed examples, are thus created by means of selecting and/or combining Greek or Hellenistic forms and styles.[119] Moreover, he argues, these selected forms and styles subsequently became 'value-free' elements within this Roman visual communication system: 'In such conditions, what mattered was not necessarily the origins of the forms, in terms of the history of style, and doubtless even their connection with values frequently came to be loose. The received forms were allowed to become value-free elements in a language of imagery, which one simply used'.[120]

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[116] Elsner 2004, i. (From his introduction to the English translation of Hölscher 1987)
[117] Perry 2005, 49. See also: Alexandridis 2010, 259.
[118] Hölscher 1987 (Eng. trans. 2004), xiii-xxxi.
[119] Hölscher 1987 (Eng. trans. 2004), 10-22.
[120] Hölscher 1987 (Eng. trans. 2004), 125-126.

Especially the often rather inflexible nature and predisposition for functionality (and its resulting interpretative delimitations) of Hölscher's semantics system has met with some critique in reacting scholarship.[121] In his own study he nuances this seeming 'rigidness' by emphasising the inherent interconnectivity between the theoretical compartmentalisation and practical spontaneity of material culture, both as vital wheels in the clockwork of such a system:

> 'The interrelation between the two attributes, the theoretical and the spontaneous, is obvious. Both contributed, not to the forming and preserving of a strict classification, but to establishing a certain set of rules for practice, whereby appropriate modes of representation and figural types were found for various subjects and messages. These rules then tended to acquire, in a fairly short time, a certain coherence and consistency. In this general sense, we can reasonably speak of a system.'[122]

In line with this, one of the most crucial components in Hölscher's theory is his identification of a repertoire of different forms and styles that were available to Romans to use for the visual communication of certain (Roman) significances and evoke specific (Roman) associations.[123] Such a repertoire seems to have been a necessity for a language of imagery to take effect; a visual language that was shaped and marked by many different stimuli, presuppositions and imponderables, while at the same time it functioned on an all-encompassing scale throughout the whole of the Roman world.[124] By nature, such a repertoire as Hölscher proposed could only function, expand and develop in a far less rigid way than his initial emphasis on functionality and value-free forms may have suggested – as he himself is aware: 'it was a repertory, gradually evolved, of inherited forms and potential formulae; the choice between them remained ultimately a matter of taste.'[125] As such, according to Hölscher, this repertoire created a collective coherence in Roman art bound to the requirements of certain contexts, while at the same time it allowed for divergence and diversity. Versluys takes on this concept of a material culture repertoire available to suit certain Roman contextual scenarios as well as creative development, and argues that such a repertoire would have developed throughout the Hellenistic world, prior to Roman Imperial times, and that it would have included different forms and styles from the many diverse cultures that became part of the Roman world, rather than solely Greek influences.[126] He compares this to the concept of a Hellenistic *koine* in Greek language: a repertoire of phrases and syntactic formulae available throughout the expanding Hellenistic world, soon united under Roman rule, to suit a variety of verbal contexts (such as dedications, political formulae, prayers, poetry etc.), as extensively explored by Stephen Colvin: 'the linguistic culture of the Hellenistic world is the result of a new social and political reality, and *koine* reflects this.'[127] Colvin points out the difficulty of studying the linguistic *koine*, due to the lack of evidence on its verbal use, compared to the remaining written sources. He suggests that the inherent 'polysemy attached to the term koine can be structured by shifting the term from a purely linguistic domain to one where language, culture and politics coincide.'[128] This process of linguistic *koine* in the expanding Hellenistic and later Roman world not only seems to mirror the visual repertoire originally suggested by Hölscher, but they both seem to be part of a widespread cultural process throughout the Hellenistic world. This process especially seemed to thrive in the Roman world from Augustus' rule onwards; in Augustan times we find a flourish of Roman literature full of (deliberate) Hellenistic influences, as well as a rise in foreign elements in material culture – as if in a complex 'bricolage' of elements from diverse origins (some newly added to the repertoire and some re-functionalised).[129]

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[121] See Elsner 2004, ii-xxxi; Zanker 2007; Strocka 2010; Versluys 2013 (I).
[122] Hölscher 1987 (Eng. trans. 2004), 99-100.
[123] Hölscher 1987 (Eng. trans. 2004), 20-21; 99; 125-126. Zanker characterizes this Hölscherian system as "Schlagbildt-Repertoire". See: Zanker 2007; Hölscher 2008.
[124] Versluys 2013 (II); Hölscher 1987, 98-100.
[125] Hölscher 1987 (Eng. trans. 2004), 99.

Perhaps this is one of the reasons why Hölscher opted for a language parallel for his semantics system. He links the working of this material culture process directly to a linguistic process: 'it is similar to the linguistic process by which formerly stylistic phenomena, belonging to specific periods or groups, are transformed into stylistically neutral, isolated elements of vocabulary, of set phrases or of syntax.'[130] Communication is an undeniable component in any social environment, and therefore its role in archaeological research is important; material culture should be studied as both meaningful and active in the creation of social relationships.[131] This focus on the 'communication of meaning' has initiated a long-running tendency of scholars to study archaeological data according to a certain syntax or notion of semantics; in other words, to 'read' objects as if they are conveying communication like a language. Halfway through the twentieth century, structuralism in anthropology and sociology, in the wake of Levi-Strauss, made extensive use of linguistic or textual metaphors, and this particular perspective was picked up by archaeologists, leading them 'to treat artefacts as if they communicated meaning like language', and to regard the designs and decorations on objects as 'silent grammar, whose logic remained to be decoded by archaeologists'.[132] The significance of visual language in material culture is not something that can be explained from either a wider historical perspective or an exclusively object-focused perspective – but it is crucial not to regard objects strictly as communication devices within a certain 'visual text' parallel. Even when objects can be regarded as 'signifiers' in a larger, social communication system, they are still physical material objects as well; an object is never just an abstract chunk of meaning. Philologists likewise take a two-fold approach to any linguistic source. A text is not only a linguistic vessel to convey certain ideas and meanings, it is also a text in a strictly technical sense: a collection of letters arranged according to a certain alphabet, words arranged according to a certain grammatical syntax, sentences arranged according to a certain metric system, etc. Before trying to derive and understand the possible meanings that a text communicates, one needs to first decipher and understand the text as a strictly technical grammatical entity.[133] And at the same time, one should realise that a text is *also* a physical object; a book or scroll that contains a text is inherently material. This not only makes a written text's grammatical structure crucial for our understanding of it, but it also makes the physical existence of its letters and words a necessity for us to even know and read it. This makes, perhaps, for a more nuanced parallel, and shows the similarity with how an archaeologist needs to study a material object as an object of material properties prior to trying to derive and understand the possible meanings that this object might have communicated within a certain context.

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[126] *Versluys 2012 (Mnemonyne); Idem. 2013 (II) PAGES*

[127] Colvin 2011, 43.

[128] Colvin 2011, 31.

[129] Terrenato 1993, 23; Versluys 2013 (II). On a further exploration of the process of *bricolage*, in the form of generalisation and participation of diversity as part if the Hellenistic *koine*, see esp.: M.J. Versluys, 2012. 'Material culture and identity in the late Roman Republic (200 BC –20 BC)', in: J. de Rose Evans (ed.), *Blackwell Companion to the archaeology of the Roman Republic*, 429-440.

[130] Hölscher 1987 (Eng. trans. 2004), 91.

[131] This is already emphasised, in connection to linguistic parallels, in early interpretative archaeological approaches. See: Hodder 1986; Tilley 1993.

If we aim to 'read' objects in this way, the archaeological record becomes not just a record of material remains of the past, but also a collection of 'meanings' from the past of which these objects are the remaining, tangible footprints (i.e. both physical book and grammatical text) . In this light, it may be implied that the theoretical framework of semiotics is inherently rooted at the core of any material culture studies, and shapes how we 'read' and interpret our data. Semiotics explores cultural processes as communication processes: for any 'thing' to contain and then convey any manner of meaning (and as such become a 'sign'), an underlying 'code system' of that thing's context is a necessity.[134] Umberto Eco pursues this basic core of semiotics in order to explore the theoretical possibility and social function of semiotics as a unified approach to every phenomenon of signification and/or communication. Originating with Ferdinand de Saussure,[135] semiotics distinguishes sign-vehicles ('meaning') and signifiers ('that what is signified'). Whereas de Saussure focused on signs as linear expressions of ideas and thus communication devices, Charles Peirce developed the three-way Peircean model depending on the interaction of three subjects: 'sign', 'object' and 'interpretant'.[136] Here a sign becomes 'something that stands for something for somebody, in some respect.'[137] Eco pursues a similar model, but according to more flexible criteria: 'a sign can be taken as something standing for something else, on grounds of previously established social conventions'.[138] As such, semiotics becomes a theoretical framework that studies all cultural processes as communication processes, wherein these communication processes are necessarily based on an underlying system of signification. This underlying code system, Eco argues, wherein the coupling of 'present entities' with 'absent entities' is an underlying social convention, is what enables the production of 'signs'. Briefly put: when an underlying code system enables people to interpret 'signs' in a certain way, then communication is possible. The theory of semiotics regards this as an elementary process that can be recognised in any kind of cultural process.

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[132] Tilley 2002, 23,24; Jones 2004, 328.

[133] For a similar approach, exploring parallels between material culture and language structures, see: Dallas 1992, 230-275.

The step to link this concept directly to Hölscher's semantics system is easily made. Like semiotics theory, he speaks of communication devised and expressed by means of certain objects that subsequently hold and convey certain meanings. But where semiotics regards linguistic and material 'things' on par, as possible 'signs' within a certain social context, Hölscher's object-focused approach remains strictly practical. His use of linguistic parallels remains a point of interpretative difficulty – however, while Hölscher points out the structural similarity, at the same time he makes sure to develop his visual semantics system based entirely on (case studies from) Roman material culture. By doing so, he does not regard Roman objects as 'signs' (things that gain meaning based on underlying code system) – he regards them as concrete objects that communicate certain Roman meanings within specific physical contexts, created from a repertoire of available forms and styles that could gain these new meanings only as part of their specific Roman contexts.

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[134] Eco 1976, 3; 16-19.

[135] De Saussure, F. 1916. *Cours de linguistique générale* (*Course in General Linguistics*).

[136] Peirce, C.S. 1931-58. *The Collected papers of C.S. Peirce. Vol. 1-8.* (*ed. Harvard*). Peirce argues for the necessity of distinguishing between logical syntax and semantics, based on the developments in logic and the foundations of mathematics such as developed by Gödel. Van Heijenoort 1967, 13. Cf. Murphey 1961.

[137] Pierce 1931, 228.

[138] Eco 1967, 16.

The sometimes overlapping theories of semiotics and visual semantics can be confusing: but Hölscher's main strength for archaeological research is his object-focused approach, as opposed to semiotics' abstract approach to social processes on a large scale.

The undeniable practicality of Hölscher's theory is still relevant today. The concept that he developed of a Roman visual semantics system that includes a material culture repertoire of available forms and styles is, in my opinion, still one of the most valuable academic contributions to our understanding of Roman material culture. As a book, Hölscher's *Römische Bildsprache als semantisches System* presents a clear if elementary thesis of his theory, presented in the form of a handful of case studies; it is in fact not a particularly in-depth study, but seems rather an invitation for in-depth studies to follow and base themselves on this initial work. However, this has so far not been done effectively, if even at all. Moreover, as a result of this, Hölscher's suggested theoretical approach has never yet branched out 'beyond Greek' either. When the basic premises of Hölscher's theory are expanded according to our expanding knowledge of the ancient Roman world –in particular the workings of a wider Hellenistic repertoire of forms and styles from many different foreign origins, applied to specific Roman contexts– this approach comes closest to what we can see with Egyptian elements in the material culture of Augustan Rome. What we see is a diversity of Egyptian elements, forms, styles, becoming part of Roman contexts and often gaining new meanings as part of these Roman contexts and, consequently, as integral part of Roman material culture. The core of Hölscher's theory, therefore, not only outlines the concrete workings of Roman material culture on a wider scale, but equally shows that the incorporation of foreign elements as integral part of that material culture was a definitive component of Roman culture.

Hölscher's visual semantics system as originally presented in 1987 has remained too focused on exclusively Greek elements in Rome, as well as on interpretative functionality and a definition of Roman 'art' instead of a wider view on Roman material culture. But the determination of the existence of a visual language repertoire available to Romans has been a truly vital step in our understanding of Roman material culture as a whole – in terms of both the process of the creation of objects and their subsequent reception in Roman contexts. As already suggested by Versluys, who refers to the notion of this repertoire as *koine*, not only Greek elements would have been available to Roman material culture, and certainly not only to fulfil strictly functional meanings. A much more widespread and diverse Hellenistic material culture repertoire or *koine* was already available to Rome before and during the time of

Augustus. Egyptian elements were already available parts of this repertoire, and became manifest as such also during the Augustan era. An interesting question, then, is whether for Augustan Rome there may have been manifestations of Egypt that were different from these already known elements from the Hellenistic repertoire – in other words: were there new manifestations of Egypt in Augustan Rome, and as such did these also become new components of the wider material culture repertoire available to Rome, from that time onwards? Likewise, the deliberate functionality highlighted by Hölscher becomes again of interest in terms of Augustan politics – certainly a number of manifestations of Egypt will have been chosen (from the repertoire or newly added to it) to deliberately function as part of Augustus' political propaganda? However, such a political functionality is not something that can be easily isolated as a trictly theoretical view, such as Hölscher's, might suggest. The influence, diversity and subsequent 'evolution' of these material culture elements would have been infinitely more fluent, much more layered, and altogether more *in motion*. This is why, although the core principle of Hölscher's theory –the Roman material culture repertoire– remains of vital importance for the study of manifestations of Egypt in Augustan Rome, a wider exploration and understanding of such 'objects in motion' is necessary. How did such layers of meaning become manifest in material culture? How does this reflect on the 'evolution' of the material culture repertoire such as developed in and from Augustan Rome? In the following paragraph these questions will be explored to more detail.

2.2. Objects in motion

The concept of 'objects in motion' is crucial for our understanding of material culture in both social and historical contexts. It is a core concept that is important to be aware of when plunging deeper into 'the social life of things', as this paragraph will aim to do. Below some basic thoughts are presented on the overall importance of being aware that the notion of 'objects in motion' forms a necessary principle for material culture studies. Following this, the theoretical background of the concepts of 'bundling' and 'cultural biography' will be explored more in-depth in the remainder of the paragraph. This is done in light of their significance for our understandinf of the material culture repertoire that forms the wider framework of this study.

Basically put, the notion of 'objects in motion' explains why the archaeological record can function as source of information, or rather as a literal record of objects' movements through physical as well as temporal contexts. In anthropological and archaeological studies, inanimate objects have traditionally been approached as static and fixed material things. Hannah Arendt effectively describes this approach in 'The Human Condition':

> 'It is durability which gives the things of the world their relative independence from men who produce and use them, their "objectivity" which makes them withstand, "stand against" and endure, at least for a time, the voracious needs and wants of their living makers and users. From this viewpoint, the things of the world have the function of stabilizing human life, and their objectivity lies in the fact that we can retrieve their sameness.'[139]

It was not until the early twentieth century that the actual, physical movement of material objects comes to attention. Notably, the 'Technical Manifesto of Futurist Painting' drawn up by Filippo Marinetti, the Futurist painters movement in Italy, which included such artists as Giacomo Balla and Umberto Boccioni, explored a then novel approach to inanimate objects focused on the force, velocity, viscosity and empirical movement of material objects, thereby stating that 'all things move, all things run, all things are rapidly changing'.[140] This concept of material objects that are literally in motion provided new perspectives also for studies on the material remains of the past. But Hodder is right to point out that 'the fluidity of things is not how they appear to us; objects and materials can endure over time spans considerably greater than individual human experience'.[141] Objects are, of course, inherently connected to the socio-historical movements of ideas and information that shape the contexts wherein and whereby they move, in the first place. Objects are inanimate within themselves, but to study them only as such would be a fallacy. No object is isolated and therefore inert. All 'things' in nature, varying from solid rocks to organic beings, move because they are made to move by other 'things'; the force and velocity of water, for example, or the earth's gravity that makes several things collide with each other. Material objects manufactured my humans take this another step further: raw materials are deliberately moved and changed into certain forms by humans, and the resulting objects, likewise, are put into motion throughout social human contexts – which they change and influence by means of their own movement, at the same time. Material objects that are made by humans, therefore, may well be the least isolated of all 'things'.[142]

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[139] Arendt 1958, 137. See also: Olsen 2010, 139; Hodder 2012, 4.

[140] The Manifesto was originally published in the Gazzetta dell'Emilia in Bologna, 5 February 1909, and that same year also in French ('Manifeste du Futurisme') in Le Figaro, 20 February 1909. See also: Martin, M. W. 1978. *Futurist art and theory.* New York.

[141] Hodder 2012, 5.

By moving through and being moved by human societies, wherein they likewise evoked movement by ways of physical changes through a form of contextual agency, human-made objects in particular often are the only remaining 'footprints' of past societies. In order to gain any insight about these past societies and their socio-historical contexts, we do –perhaps ironically– rely on the durability of the archaeological record; on the inanimate objects that once moved through specific places and times from our past, and have (through an endurance such a mentioned by Arendt) now moved on into our present. The concept of 'objects in motion', therefore, is as widespread as it is context-specific.

> 'A thing has a history: it is not simply a passive inertia against which we measure our own activity. It has a 'life' of its own, characteristics of its own, which we must incorporate into our activities in order to be effective, rather than simply understanding, regulating and neutralising it from the outside. We need to accommodate things more than they accommodate us. Life is the growing accommodation of matter, the adaptation of the needs of life to the exigencies of matter.'[143]

Material culture and materiality studies have become less concerned with human agency, and more with how an object can gain person-like qualities and how it, subsequently, can have agency.[144] 'Things' always seem embedded in discourse and meaning, and therefore often are not studied as physical material objects per se. But in either case, whether studies are strictly focused on material objects or on objects as part of discourse, people always seem dependent on things, too. This is one of the reasons why Andrew Jones argued for a link between social theory and archaeometry: the physical nature of objects as part of social processes of motion.[145] Things depend on people to be made, exchanged, discarded. The dependence of things on people likewise draws people deeper into 'the orbit of things'; for this reason, while Jones and Hodder's arguments about the neglect of the physical materialism of objects in recent scholarship are certainly valid, it is important that archaeological studies do not return to strict empirical materialism either.[146] Only a workable connection between such physical objects and their wider 'social lives' might provide the comprehensive insight we seek into such 'objects in motion'. Herein also lies the difficulty. Hodder calls this 'the unruliness of things'; the fact that things are not isolated and have their own temporalities forms the core but also creates the complexity of human-thing interdependence.[147] It is virtually impossible to reconstruct all resulting and/or hypothetical interactions and conjunctions this complexity makes possible. This is why Hodder proposes a specifically archaeological perspective on the concept of 'entanglement', which has developed in social sciences for studies of complex societies: by means of reconstructing the physical processes of things, he suggests, the material properties of specific objects can become direct sources of information about human-thing entanglements from the social context through which such objects moved. Societies consist of people interacting with each other, and things facilitate this by making the exchange of matter possible. Moreover, things spin webs of interactions by means of dependence, thus making people and things genuinely entangled as part of the very networks, systems, structures and cultures that make up a specific society. People, as part of such societies, likewise seek (cultural) coherence expressed through things.[148]

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[142] Deleuze & Guattari 2004, 377; Ingold 2012, 1-16; Hodder 2012, 4-5.

[143] Grosz 2005, 132.

[144] Hodder 2012, 30. See also: Latour 1992; Gell 1998.

[145] Jones 2004, 327-338. See also: Jones 2002, 2010. In response to Jones' article in Archaeometry 46 (3), 2004, a later issue of the same journal (47 (1), 2005; 175-207) featured an interesting debate of reactions on the importance of the archaeological sciences for social theories.

As mentioned in the introduction of this chapter, Appadurai already explored the consumption and exchange of objects as communicative acts and subsequently as structural parts of human societies in 'The Social Life of Things'.[149] He regards the concept of commodity not as an absolute inherent quality of the object itself, but instead as a phase through which an object passes. It is that act of exchange that creates the object's value, he argues, and that the connection between value and exchange is formed through social relations, ideas and contexts from within a particular society. As such, the routes that objects take in and out of their own 'commodity status' become socially relevant, and thus 'commodities represent very complex social forms and distributions of knowledge'.[150] Igor Kopytoff has extensively explored the social process underlying this phenomenon of 'commoditisation'.[151] He emphasises the cognitive aspects behind commoditisation, whereby an object is 'culturally marked as being a certain kind of thing'.[152] He approaches this from the perspective of cultural biography, whereby the existence or 'lifespan' of an object can, rudimentarily, be traced starting from the collection of the raw materials from which it is formed through its use, discard, adaptation and/or reuse as an object, to its final and definite destruction. Such a trace or 'lifespan', when a proper reconstruction is possible, can reveal the various ways in which a specific object has been culturally construed throughout the different phases of its own 'cultural biography'.

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[146] Hodder 2012, 59.
[147] Hodder 2012, 87.
[148] Hodder 2012, 95-101, 111, 135-136. See also: Brown 2001, 2003; Nuttall 2009.
[149] Appadurai 1987, 3-63.
[150] Appadurai 1987, 41.
[151] Kopytoff 1987, 64-91.
[152] Kopytoff 1987, 64.

Webb Keane approaches the possible flexibility and interconnectedness of these phases with a concept he calls 'bundling': 'bundling is one of the conditions of possibility for what Kopytoff and Appadurai called the biography of things, as qualisigns bundled together in any object will shift in their relative value, utility and relevance across contexts.'[153] The notion of qualisigns is a Peircian concept, derived from semiotics; it means that the significance of objects depends on certain qualities beyond their particular manifestation. Keane puts this down as an obvious and crucial effect of materiality. An object's specific properties or characteristics can never become manifest without 'some embodiment that inescapably binds it to some other qualities'; as such, they become 'contingent but real factors' in that object's social life.[154] This implies that the properties and characteristics of objects should not be studied by themselves, but rather as a means to approach the diverse possibilities of meanings inherent in these objects. These properties and characteristics are not necessarily relevant in the same contexts –as part of the same cultural scenarios– but they remain 'bound' together within the object itself, and will emerge dependent on the criteria of certain cultural scenarios wherein the objects partake. When this is tied-in with the notion of a flexible material culture repertoire, this would imply that certain forms and styles available to Roman material culture were chosen to suit certain cultural scenarios because of these specific inherent properties, which would correspond with that scenario (more precisely, with both the physical context and the human interaction that made up that scenario). Moreover, the fact that one object within the repertoire inherently contained many different properties –which could be emphasised individually while its other properties could remain 'dormant'– would increase the object's range of availability for different scenarios. An object's widely applicable suitability for Roman scenarios, perhaps, based on its inherent 'bundling' properties, may have been an important criterion for its success as part of the material culture repertoire.

These anthropological theories are important to be aware of, to reflect upon the larger socio-cultural processes that shaped and were shaped by those objects constantly 'in motion' of which the archaeological record –in the case of Roman culture– is the only tangible remainder.

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[153] Keane 2003(II), 414.

[154] Keane 2003 (II), 414-415; Munn, 1986.

2.3. Methodology

This research's aim is three-fold. Firstly, to provide a comprehensive overview of Egyptian manifestations in Augustan Rome in order to demonstrate whether or not Egypt became an integral part of Augustan material culture instead of an isolated 'exotic' category such as it has long been considered. Secondly, to examine how exactly different Egyptian elements became manifest in Roman objects from the archaeological record of Augustan Rome. Thirdly, to explore what can be learned about these manifestations of Egypt in their specific contexts of the Rome (what did they actually *do*), and how did they contribute to and/or result from the Augustan cultural revolution on a wider scale. The close study of the objects represented in the overview constitutes the research's most practical element. The resulting data, subsequently, provide insight into the wider role(s) of Egypt as part of the Augustan cultural revolution.

Simply put, my chosen theoretical approach focuses on the analysis of the archaeological record. This includes objects as well as their original contexts, when available. Following these analyses, interpretations can be made based on facts, and these interpretations can then be further explored within the wider theoretical scope of the many studies on Augustan material culture. That is to say, this study does in no way disregard the wide range of existing scholarship on Augustan culture, but rather aims to reappraise our perspective on the archaeological record itself, as opposed to following a certain theoretical viewpoint from the onset.

From the theoretical paradigms discussed above, several components of copy criticism and creative emulation theory still present a solid base for interpreting foreign elements in Roman material culture – especially when combined with the awareness of the contextual significance of such different, cultural elements that are incorporated and/or emulated into Roman objects. A new step within this theoretical framework, as mentioned before, is the fact that attention is paid to non-Greek elements that interact and merge with Roman material culture.

Hölscher's original visual semantics system resulted in one of the most practical and scrutinised approaches to what may well be the crucial wheel in the workings of Roman material culture: the material culture repertoire. This concept, when likewise expanded beyond Greek, provides the enabling factor in a larger framework that considers 'objects in motion'. And, as shown in the paragraphs above, such a framework relies equally on an awareness of anthropological paradigms revolving around the interconnectedness of things and people, and the layers of meaning wherein this can become manifest. The concluding chapter of this dissertation will return to these perspectives, and evaluate them in light of the overview that forms the core of this research.

Practically, therefore, the methodology used in this dissertation is also three-fold, and as such applied to each entry in the overview. We find Egyptian manifestations in Augustan Rome in diverse varieties: imported objects, imitations, emulations, creative variations, certain material properties and/or stylistic characteristics merged into new objects. In providing an overview, the first step is to analyse these individual examples by means of empirical description, with specific focus on their material form (material properties), their stylistic characteristics, their theme or topic(s) of content, and, if known, their particular physical context in the city of Rome. This initial object-focused analysis of the objects in the overview forms the basis for subsequent interpretations of their wider context and meaning(s). The overview contains reappraisals of well-known monuments as well as previously unknown and unpublished objects from the personal sphere that were recovered during the process of this research.

The second step, simply put, revolves around the question of what these objects did in their specific contexts. More precisely, it is explored why certain choices for Egypt would have been made for certain Roman contexts, mainly in light of the workings of the Roman material culture repertoire and the flexible, layered nature of Augustan material culture (visual language) in general.

The third step explores what the information and insight derived from the first two steps can reveal about the significance of Egypt in the wider context of the Augustan cultural revolution – approaching questions whether Egypt was an integral part of it, whether it resulted from it, and/or whether it actively helped to shape Rome's cultural revolution and the socio-cultural impact it made on the Roman world.

This third step will be mainly explored in the final and concluding chapter of this dissertation, hoping to combine the diverse data and new insights derive from the complete overview likewise into a new angle upon the Augustan cultural revolution itself, perceived specifically from the perspective of Egyptian manifestations. The above two steps will be applied to each entry in the overview itself in separate descriptive/analytical and interpretative paragraphs.

The main relevance of this approach lies in the fact that in order to understand manifestations of Egypt as integral part of Augustan material culture –instead of as an exotic outsider– an overview of the diversity of these manifestations of Egypt is vital. The majority of archaeological studies on Augustan culture focus on one certain area of expertise, such as wall painting, reliefs, coins, jewellery, architecture etc. While this kind of expert focus is of course very valuable in itself, the isolation of these areas cannot approach the wider scope of Augustan culture as a whole – and thus cannot approach wider questions about cultural phenomena such as expressed through material culture, as this study aims to do. Historical studies on Augustan culture, on the other hand, often do not focus enough on empirical details of material culture when they provide a long-durée perspective.

This is why this dissertation, as archaeological study, opts for such a diverse overview of case studies. By maintaining an inductive approach and taking the diversity of the archaeological record as core, rather than isolating certain areas of expertise only, the different roles of Egypt as integral part of Augustan material culture can be approached not only in terms of the material properties, stylistic characteristics and contextual interpretations of the objects from the archaeological record themselves, but also in terms of how the archaeological record of these manifestations of Egypt, as a whole, reflects upon the wider scope of the Augustan cultural revolution that transformed the city of Rome in the forms of a process expressed through, shaped by, and resulting in material culture.

Important aspects to underline herein are the fact that this study does not attempt with its chosen focus on manifestations of Egypt to thus once again isolate Egypt. As explained above, the focus of the overview is necessary to gain insight into the nature of manifestations of Egypt in Augustan material culture and, subsequently, will be necessary for any further comparative or inclusive studies that will look at a wider range of foreign elements in Rome. This study therefore aims to approach the still existing lacuna in regard to Egypt in Augustan Rome, not to single Egypt out, but rather to provide both scope and material for continuing (wider) research. As pointed out above, this is the reason why direct comparisons to Greek elements in Augustan material culture are not pursued in this dissertation. Instead, this research should be regarded as a necessary first step that wil enable such a comparative study in the future.

It should also be pointed out that, while the case studies in the following third chapter are chosen to represent an overview of the diversity of manifestations of Egypt in Augustan Rome, some objects are treated in more detail than others. The main reason is the fact that several new finds (which include a wall painting fragment, several pieces of cameo glass and a sardonyx gem) are featured in this overview; because no previous publications on these objects exist more attention has been paid to their description and analyses than to those of frequently published objects that are here under reappraisal (such as well-known monuments as the Ara Pacis and obelisks).

In regard to some of the terminology used in the overview, as explained in the Introduction chapter, the term 'Hellenistic' is used in any example of the wider Mediterranean repertoire of Hellenistic (material) culture. The term 'Greek' is used only when referring to recognisable examples of classical Greek (material) culture when these appear in Augustan material culture. The general consensus in scholarship to differentiate between 'Egyptian' and 'egyptianising' objects is something that this dissertation will deliberately step away from, as already mentioned in the Introduction. Basically put, this distinction is categorised based on geographical criteria: 'Egyptian' for objects from the country Egypt, and 'egyptianising' for objects not originally made in Egypt but containing elements (usually style components or topics) that can be recognised as related to Egypt.[155] In order to step away from such a superimposed meaning based on a categorisation prior to any actual analysis of the objects in question, in this dissertation all objects and/or elements of objects that contain (usually a combination of) Egyptian styles, topics and/or materials are referred to as manifestation of Egypt. This is perhaps a somewhat simplistic label in itself, but it has been a necessary choice for this overview in order to let go of any presupposed 'Egyptian' contra 'egyptianising' container-thinking. Thus, the analysis of the case studies presented here is based on the objects themselves rather than having them serve as examples in the categorisation debate surrounding the term 'egyptianising'. The geographical criteria underlying this categorisation, as the following overview will show, by no means give a correct representation of the appearance of manifestation of Egypt in Rome at all. This is why, throughout the process of studying the objects presented here, this terminological choice was made for the following overview specifically.

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[155] As discussed in the Introduction, see section 1.5. On the differentiation of geographical criteria for labelling objects 'Egyptian' or 'egyptianising', see extensively: Müskens 2015 (forthcoming).