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Egypt and the Augustan Cultural Revolution : an interpretative archaeological overview

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4. CONCLUSION

4.1. Diversity and integration: Egypt in Augustan Rome

Manifestations of Egypt in Augustan Rome never simply appear as backdrop for Augustan politics; the interpretative overview explored in Chapter three has shown that from their initial arrival at the Palatine Hill onwards, manifestations of Egypt make up an integral part of Rome's transformation.⁶⁵⁵ This dissertation's interpretative overview demonstrates that especially in light of this view Egypt cannot and should not be categorised as an exotic outsider or 'Other' in Augustan Rome, such as maintained by scholars such as Wallace-Hadrill. As a crucial turning point for the urban landscape of Rome, the Augustan period was characterised by cultural diversity. By shifting focus from the predominant scholarly attention to Greek influences on this rapid transformation of Augustan material culture, this thesis demonstrates that manifestations of Egypt became not only integrated into the Augustan material culture repertoire, but were remarkably diverse in character: ranging from obelisks and monumental architecture to glassworks and personal jewellery. The assembly of such a wide range of objects and contexts from both public and private spheres into one interpretative overview has emphasised –in contrast to previous studies– that based on the archaeological record Egypt in Augustan Rome can by no means be set aside as an isolated or exotic category. Rather than a collection of objects imported from Egypt that gained new meaning in Roman contexts, in overview we find that by far the majority of manifestations of Egypt in Augustan Rome were made from Roman materials, were for certain or most likely manufactured in Rome, and often combined Hellenistic stylistic features and evocations of traditional Egyptian iconography, both already well-known in Rome at the time, in order to give expression to Egyptian themes as part of Roman objects.

And yet, the integration of Egypt in the urban landscape of Augustan Rome was shown perhaps most vividly by the two obelisks that Augustus brought to Rome from Heliopolis in 10 BCE (as discussed in paragraphs 3.9.1., 3.9.2. and 3.9.5.), and which constitute the only two objects that were imported from Egypt that we can date with certainty to the Augustan era. But instead of displaying these imported

⁶⁵⁵ This aligns, in fact, with the views expressed by Wallace-Hadrill in regard to the Augustan cultural revolution: 'the political transformation of the Roman world is integrally connected to its cultural transformation.' (Wallace-Hadrill 2008, xix.)

monuments solely as spoils of war, Augustus appears to have carefully planned the integration of the monoliths into two public urban landmarks: one was made an integral part of the meridian device on the renewed Campus Martius, while the other was placed on the *spina* of the Circus Maximus race course, in the direct vicinity of the Augustan Palatine complex. Thus both obelisks became integral components of public (monumental) Roman architecture. But their new contexts did not rob them of their already inherent meaning; their traditional Egyptian connection to the sun was maintained in both cases, and even seems to have been a reason why they were selected for these specific new contexts. The Circus Maximus obelisk, in particular, not only became a reference to the celestial bodies on a traditionally Roman *spina*, but also its direct vicinity to and most likely even a direct line of sight with the Apollo Palatinus temple that stood beside the House of Augustus on the Palatine Hill evoked a solar connection. As discussed in paragraph 3.9.5., the Apollo temple would have featured a large golden statue on its roof depicting Apollo in his capacity of Sungod, Apollo Sol, which in turn would have faced the golden solar disc that topped the obelisk that rose from the Circus Maximus in its direct vicinity. This symbolism is emphasised even more by the new inscription Augustus added to the bases of both Heliopolitan obelisks, wherein both are offered as gift from the Roman people to the deity Sol. The deliberate incorporation of these obelisks into Augustan landmarks demonstrates not only the complexity of Augustus' visual propaganda, but also the flexibility with which the Augustan material culture repertoire could integrate layers of meaning into new contexts. Moreover, it demonstrates the connectivity of Augustan material culture on a larger scale: these obelisks were not kept as isolated monuments but rather became integral parts of and/or placed directly in the vicinity of public urban contexts like the Campus Martius and the Palatine Hill – contexts, moreover, that held specific meaning for Augustus – and as such they gained new layers of meaning characteristic to these Augustan contexts.

As we have seen throughout the overview, those meanings were flexible and as such could indeed refer to politics and propaganda in specific relation to Augustus, but they could also imply, for example, 'ancient wisdom', religious associations (such as with the Sungod), and certain visual styles in relation to or as expression of certain Roman concepts of Egypt. Forms of 'exoticism' or specific fashion trends that became popular among the citizens of Augustan Rome should not be excluded from these layers, either. But what the overview has made especially clear, is the fact that neither one of these layers of meaning can nor should be presupposed as the only correct interpretation for these objects and monuments or their contexts – in contrast to how 'Egyptian exoticism', in particular, tends to be singled out in Augustan

scholarship of the past. Rather, these different layers of meaning will have existed simultaneously, with their interpretation depending on their specific contexts as well as the perspectives of the individuals that interacted with these objects within their Roman contexts.

The Augustan obelisks, because of their public visibility and placement at important locations within the urban landscape (Circus Maximus facing the Palatine, and the Campus Martius, respectively), seem to have left a particularly strong mark on their Roman context, and as a result became influential components within the Augustan material culture repertoire. As we have seen, the image of the obelisk – and in particular the obelisk as part of Rome – began to develop throughout Rome's material culture, not simply as part of a one-sided political propaganda process created by Augustus, but rather by evolving and becoming integrated within the material culture repertoire throughout the city, in both public and private spheres, as a *result* of the obelisks' (very public and visual) manifestation in the Augustan urban landscape.

This level of integration is highlighted by an example directly related to that of the Circus Maximus obelisk: the small sardonyx gem depicting an obelisk surrounded by race chariots (as discussed in paragraph 3.10.1.). Here we can no longer speak of a deliberate or politically motivated incorporation of an Egyptian object or theme. Instead we find a Roman-made gem, a small scale personal possession, referring to one of the most prominent urban landmarks of the city at that time: the Circus Maximus race course. The appearance of the obelisk in this scene shows that, above all, the monolith had become an integral part of the race course to the extent that the Circus Maximus had now become its predominant visual association, rather than a reference to Egypt as something external.

This sardonyx gem also shows the contrast between the above two examples: one a large monolith, the other a small gem. The overview as presented in Chapter three contains many such diverse and even contrasting examples, ranging from wall paintings and monumental architecture to glassworks and personal jewellery. Rather than highlighting such differences between separate case studies, this in fact demonstrates that *diversity* appears to have been a predominant overall characteristic of manifestations of Egypt in the material culture of Augustan Rome.

The typically Augustan cameo glass genre (as discussed at length in paragraph 3.7.) presents a very clear example of this diversity, while at the same time demonstrating how manifestations of Egypt became truly integrated into a material culture repertoire that was characteristic for Rome of that time. Recent studies have confirmed that these cameo glass cups, vases and vials were a typically Roman

product during the Augustan period, manufactured from local materials in workshops in or near the city of Rome itself. The detailed relief decorations on these vessels demonstrate a wide variety of styles, ranging from traditional ornamental motifs from the Hellenistic repertoire and Bacchic scenes to evocations of Egyptian offering scenes and Nilotic scenery; all of which were equally available to these workshops' decorative repertoire at the time. This has resulted not just in Roman-made cameo glass vessels with depictions of Egyptian figures and attributes, but in vessels that feature such manifestations of Egypt depicted on the same object, literally side by side with Bacchic scenes, Hellenistic decorative styles, and Cupid figures. Manifestations of Egypt here have been truly integrated into the overall repertoire from which these glass workshops could choose decorative themes and styles. As part of that inherently flexible repertoire, manifestations of Egypt here seem to have become something distinctly Roman, while simultaneously remaining manifestations of Egypt nonetheless. What these cameo glass examples newly add to the debate, furthermore, is the fact that they very clearly demonstrate that manifestations of Egypt functioned as an integral part of the Augustan repertoire. Based on their integrated appearance as part of the decorative themes and styles of these cameo glass vessels, these manifestations of Egypt cannot be categorised as something 'external' and 'exotic' alone. The fact that these Egyptian elements appear to have become integrated parts of the repertoire of themes and styles and imagery available to the glass workshops where they were manufactured and that, moreover, they subsequently appear as integral parts of the decorative scenes on these typically Roman vessels, demonstrated that the opposite is true. Naturally, some of these Egyptian elements may have been regarded as 'exotic' by some Romans; that interpretation should not be excluded, either, as that would only lead to a reverse form of compartmentalisation and exclusion, and this does not reflect the archaeological record at all. Rather, it calls for a change of perspective, because the data leaves no doubt that Egyptian elements were manufactured as part of the overall cameo glass decorative repertoire, and appeared on these vessels side by side with 'Bacchic' or 'idyllic' styles and themes associated with Greek and Hellenism, and certainly not as an 'exotic' subgenre that was kept separate from that overall repertoire.

Examples from the personal sphere, like these gems and glass vessels, have shown this level of integration particularly clearly. Similarly, the wall paintings from the Augustan Palatine (as discussed in paragraphs 3.1.1-3.) and the Villa of Agrippa (paragraph 3.5.) never feature manifestations of Egypt as distinct or isolated decorative panels: instead, ornamental and figurative elements are integrally

incorporated into the overall design scheme of the wall paintings, without highlighting these Egyptian elements as something ‘Other’ or as a specific (political) reference to Egypt, and least of all as something that appears intended as different from the other stylistic and thematic components of these paintings. This integration of manifestations of Egypt appears to be the most defining characteristic of public monuments as well. Many years after the completion of the Augustan Palatine complex, both the Ara Pacis (paragraph 3.8) and the Forum of Augustus (paragraph 3.11) contain mainly ornamental motifs that can be considered manifestations of Egypt similar to those found in wall paintings – but even more so here, these motifs have become so much integrated that it raises the question of whether these would, at the time especially, have been considered as references to Egypt at all. The important implication of this question, even though it may seem impossible to answer, is of course the fact that it shows the flaw in many academic approaches to these cases; we try to interpret fixed meanings for objects because we wish to categorise them, without considering whether or not they would have been categorised in that way in their original contexts by their original contemporaries, at all. Research requires a certain amount of categorisation, naturally, but the awareness of this discrepancy should be one of the most important factors in our studies of the archaeological record. Otherwise, analyses may quickly turn into presupposed interpretations, and lead to incorrect compartmentalisation and misunderstanding of the actual data.

In the case of the Ara Pacis, in particular, this fluidity is very apparent. The ornamental features of Egyptian origin appear to have been entirely absorbed alongside Etruscan, Hellenistic and Classical Greek elements into one distinctly Roman monument. It would therefore be a misrepresentation to dissect all these different elements, as it were, in order to compartmentalise different cultural categories within the monument. But it would also be too overt a simplification to conclude that these different cultural influences had simply all become ‘Roman’ in terms of their meaning and identity, as part of this important Roman monument. Rather, these examples show that it was the diversity and the integration of different cultural influences that in fact shaped the Augustan Roman material culture repertoire and, as a result, allowed for its flexibility. And most importantly, these examples demonstrate yet again that manifestations of Egypt were integrally included into that repertoire (alongside Etruscan, Hellenistic, Classical Greek influences), and that they were not excluded as a temporary fashion or exoticism.

The chronological presentation of the case studies in Chapter three has shown that this level of integration was not something that developed over time, but rather that it was characteristic of the way

manifestations of Egypt featured in Augustan Rome from the first stages of the Augustan Palatine complex onwards. It does become evident from such a chronological overview that the integration in public monuments and Augustan visual self-representation appears to have been a deliberate choice – whereas the integration of Egyptian themes and styles into the wider scope of objects from the personal sphere (such as glass works, gems and jewellery) appears to have ‘evolved’ rather more organically and as a result of such public exposure. The incorporation of Egypt into the Augustan urban landscape and as part of distinct monuments –rather than exposed or exhibited as the ‘Other’– appears to have become the norm for the functioning of manifestations of Egypt within Roman material culture repertoire, and thus they continued to be similarly integrated into smaller personal objects throughout the city by consequence. It is likewise interesting to note here that we find no actual ‘copies’ or imports of Egyptian material culture in Augustan Rome. Apart from the two obelisks from Heliopolis and the Apis bull from the gardens of Maecenas (as discussed in paragraph 3.4.), there are no objects actually imported from Egypt. Virtually all manifestations of Egypt appear as part of Roman objects, be they large monuments or smaller artifacts, and as such they either coincide with the full range of the then Roman material culture repertoire or even merge with it entirely. In overview, it can be concluded that in Augustan Rome manifestations of Egypt are not copied or imported, but incorporated. This is notably different from the kind of creative emulation that has often been studied in the case of Greek influences; here there seems no intention to copy, emulate, surpass, or pay homage to specific ancient Egyptian examples. Instead, the overview has demonstrated that the integral incorporation of Egyptian elements appears to have become a specific characteristic of the Augustan repertoire.

But at the same time, based on these examples from the Augustan archaeological record, it is important to note that manifestations of Egypt cannot be interpreted as free-value entities referring only to whatever its context would require of it.⁶⁵⁶ If anything, their diversity of appearance and integration into Roman objects and contexts can be regarded as part of the typical layered and flexible nature of material culture on a macro-level, which appears to have been particularly true for Augustan culture in general. This has already been effectively observed in relation to Greek influences as part the Augustan material culture repertoire; in line with the works of Galinsky and Wallace-Hadrill, ‘the Augustan age produced a culture that was remarkable for its creativity’ and its manifestations were far from uniform,

⁶⁵⁶ As suggested by Hölscher’s visual semantics theory, whereby elements from different cultural backgrounds were regarded as value-free entities to be ‘filled in’ and used as means of communication by Romans, within Roman contexts. See; Hölscher 1986 (discussed in paragraph 3.2.2.).

which is all the more reason to closely study them and the ‘creative tensions that gave rise to them’ as integral part of Augustan Rome.⁶⁵⁷ Likewise, Ganzert observed: ‘What is typical of the Augustan age seems to be that it was not the end of a fixed line of development, but that it comprises several of these and produces appropriate new formulations.’⁶⁵⁸ This thesis’ overview of manifestations of Egypt within their various contexts of Augustan Rome has demonstrated exactly that. The Augustan cultural revolution in many ways relied on the preceding age of civil war: with the restoration of peace, Rome expanded in terms of prosperity and its demographic and cultural diversity. Augustus set out to transform the city of Rome in accordance with these changes – in order to reflect not only a city but an Empire that was becoming more and more diverse, more layered and flexible and, as a result, increasingly prosperous. Therefore, as this thesis’ overview has demonstrated, the integral incorporation of so many diverse manifestations of Egypt into the material culture of this renewed Augustan capital, in both its public and personal spheres, can be seen as a distinct characteristic of how the Augustan cultural revolution transformed the city. From their earliest appearance in Augustan Rome, manifestations of Egypt are not merely references to Augustus’ military victory or to his enemies Cleopatra VII and Marc Antony, nor are they isolated examples of exoticism or a temporary fashion often set aside as ‘Egyptomania’.

Manifestations of Egypt in Augustan Rome not only became incorporated into the material culture repertoire in terms of theme and style as well as meaning. More than anything, they reflect the flexibility inherent to Augustan culture, rather than any specific, isolated reference to Egypt as something outside of Rome. However, the manifestations of Egypt found in Augustan Rome were not reduced to value-free entities and thus did not become absorbed entirely into a new Roman identity, either. The far too general label ‘Roman’ would be as much an empty container as the labels ‘exotic’ and ‘Other’ that scholarship has predominantly applied to manifestations of Egypt, as if by definition. As the diversity of examples from this thesis’ overview has shown, these manifestations of Egypt in Roman material culture can only be properly understood when approached without predefined containers; instead, it should be asked how they functioned and what meaning(s) they thus held within their Roman contexts. As we saw above, those layers of meaning appear to have been as diverse as the manifestations of Egypt themselves, ranging widely, from political propaganda, to religious associations, to current fashion trends and even personal tastes.

In this light, it is interesting to conclude that based on this overview of the archaeological record from

⁶⁵⁷ Galinsky 1996, 4; Wallace-Hadrill 2008, 406, 435.

⁶⁵⁸ Ganzert 1985, 215-216.

Augustan Rome, it is impossible to define a specific concept of Egypt (or even a certain number of concepts of Egypt) that functioned within Augustan culture. And yet, many meanings can be derived from specific manifestations of Egypt within specific Augustan contexts, as every different case study from Chapter three has shown. Rather than becoming a specific concept that functioned within Augustan culture, Egypt became integrated into the diversity and the flexible structure of the Augustan material culture repertoire as a whole. As such, these manifestations of Egypt in Rome played an active part in how the Augustan cultural revolution transformed the Roman capital, and likewise became a direct result of that process. This contrasts how the majority of scholarship has so far interpreted the appearance of Egypt in Augustan Rome as a form of isolated exoticism, or as (political) expressions of the ‘Other’. In contrast to such views, the present study has shown that manifestations of Egypt were diversely and integrally incorporated into the Augustan material culture repertoire and, as such, exhibited flexibility and layers of meaning as part of that repertoire. The approach to focus on the archaeological record, in particular, enabled this research to demonstrate that isolated and compartmentalised interpretations, such as ‘exotic Other’ or ‘political propaganda’ alone, do not suffice and, in fact, constitute a misinterpretation of the archaeological record. Instead, the case study of Egypt in Augustan Rome provides remarkable insight into the workings of Augustan culture on a wider scale. In other words, when studying Egypt in Rome, the nature of Roman culture itself becomes evident: by not only conquering but also actively incorporating a diverse world, Rome itself appears to have become no less diverse than that world.

4.2. Research continuation

This study’s focus on the archaeological record, in order to come to new insights and avoid misinterpretations, has stressed once again that it is necessary to take apart in order to assemble a whole; namely, to achieve a comprehensive perspective on a subject matter as complex as Augustan culture and Egyptian manifestations. Categorisation is inherent in archaeological studies, but as this research has brought home to me, it should be approached as a means to gain understanding of the data, and not as a presupposed academic perspective. This nuance may seem semantic, but lays at the core of many misinterpretations, such as the often stubborn compartmentalisation of Egyptian ‘exoticism’ in Rome. In

other words, it is most important to realise that the interpretation of ‘exocitism’ *alone* is not an actual reflection of the archaeological record. By taking the data as starting point for analysis, the flexibility of the Augustan material culture repertoire and the way in which Egyptian elements functioned as integral parts of it, became evident as a result; one might almost say automatically.

As mentioned in the introduction chapter, the choice to present the overview of Egypt in Augustan Rome in such a way, chronologically instead of divided by category, was a necessary step towards this focus on the data, and as such it has helped to form a new understanding of the archaeological record that was studied for this dissertation. But this has been very much a stepping stone. The diversity and flexibility that became evident from this overview, implies that manifestations of Egypt throughout Augustan Rome can indeed be regarded as part of certain types of material culture, such as architecture, wall painting, glassware, etc. Moreover, they appear throughout public and private spheres, which mutually seem to influence one and other. These insights, however, could not have been gained if such categories had been presupposed prior to the actual compilation and analysis of the overview. Therefore, a next step is now possible –and required– to expand our understanding of Augustan material culture, and the ways in which Egypt took part in it.

This leads to a second nuance that this preliminary study now requires; namely, the question of terminology in regard to ‘Egyptian’ and ‘egyptianising’. This issue has been necessarily simplified in this study to arrive at its core overview. But now, new insights and hopefully more clarity may be gained from that overview in regard to this form of academic categorisation, as well.

Simply put, this study now can be, and needs to be, expanded and most likely restructured, as a result of the overview that it was able to create by focusing on the archaeological record. For me, as a researcher, this study has been an important first step towards a more comprehensive understanding of cultural interaction in the ancient world, by demonstrating (through trial and error) how important it is to become aware that presupposed perspectives and compartmentalised thinking very often lead to misinterpretation of the data. It has demonstrated, to me, that the co-existence of and interactions between diverse cultures in the ancient world was a much more flexible, fluent, and complex process than academic interpretations and compartmentalisations frequently have made us believe. Especially in the context of global archaeology, this change of perspective may lead to many new insights that can straighten out still prevailing misinterpretations, such as was the case for Egypt in Augustan Rome.

As mentioned above, this dissertation should be regarded as first step towards a more comprehensive

and representative understanding of Egypt in the Roman world, and Augustan Rome, in particular. Outlined below are several angles and topics that would benefit from further study. With this overview now available, comparisons between the workings of manifestations of Egypt and Greek influences in Augustan Rome have become a possibility. There has been an already predominant focus on Greek influences in Augustan scholarship, but in none of these studies such *on par* comparisons are made. Greek influences in Augustan Rome were more widespread than manifestations of Egypt, but they also appear quite different in character. Interesting here especially will be the question of copying and emulation. As we saw in the case of manifestations of Egypt, there are virtually no actual copies of Egyptian artefacts, but rather an incorporation of certain Egyptian elements into the available repertoire. As explored in Chapter two, Greek copies and emulations held a significant place in Roman material culture, and continued to do so in the Augustan era – while, at the same time we see how Greek elements become incorporated into the overall material culture repertoire quite similarly to how the Egyptian elements explored in this thesis were incorporated. For example, in typically Augustan monuments such as the Ara Pacis and the Augustan Forum, we find Greek and Egyptian elements side by side – and both, as such, seem to have been specifically Augustan. Neither these differences (mainly in terms of copying and quantity) nor these similarities (incorporation in typically Augustan manifestations) between Greek and Egyptian elements in Augustan Rome have so far been explored in a comprehensive comparison. This research has aimed to provide a step into that direction – namely, into the direction where Augustan culture can be studied as a whole more effectively, without the singling out of any particular inherent cultural influence, be that Greek or Egyptian.

As mentioned above, another interesting field of study would be the comparison between the appearance of manifestations of Egypt in Augustan Rome and their appearance in pre- and especially post-Augustan periods of the Roman Empire. For example, the appearance of the Iseum Campense in Rome, which flourished from the Flavian period, appears to have resulted in manifestations of Egypt (including many imported statues from Egypt) that are remarkably different from those found during the Augustan period. Also, the numerous manifestations of Egypt connected with the Hadrianic period (especially sculpture, such as the famous examples of Antinous statues from the Villa Hadriana) are remarkably different in style and execution from anything found in Augustan Rome. In depth comparisons of these very diverse manifestations of Egypt would be necessary in order to gain a long-durée perspective of the appearance (and incorporation) of Egypt in Roman material culture. An

overview of manifestations of Egypt in Augustan Rome, such as this dissertation presents, is required to form the basis of any such studies.

Another lacuna in Augustan scholarship remains the case of cameo glass. We now know that this type of glassware was unique to Augustan Rome, but while several recent catalogues have been compiled, so far these glass vessels have not yet been studied in context of Augustan Rome specifically. The present study has aimed to do so in the case of cameo glass that featured manifestations of Egypt – but a study of this kind which includes all known types of cameo glass would be a truly valuable contribution to our knowledge of Augustan material culture and its place as part of the Augustan cultural revolution. As mentioned above, the remarkable new (visual) properties and sudden popularity of cameo glass appears to demonstrate par excellence how the city's new Augustan elite and its contemporary material culture were inseparably connected. Moreover, in line with the above mentioned comparison between Egypt and Greece in Augustan Rome, these glass vessels provide many unique case studies of such a comparison – including examples where 'Greece' and 'Egypt' seem to appear side by side, or even interchangeable, as part of a single object. Thirdly, this will also provide interesting case studies in the light of creative emotion theory and Hölscher's original semantics system: Augustan cameo glass appears to have been a type where multiple elements from the then available material culture repertoire were freely used, merged and emulated to fit new designs, new demands, perhaps new contexts. Therefore an exploration of these glass vessels beyond simply cataloguing them and beyond focusing on manifestations of Egypt alone, would expand our understanding of Augustan Rome as a whole.

This dissertation's focus on Egypt has shown that its focus on the archaeological record, especially when combined with an interpretative framework in the light of the Roman material culture repertoire, indeed yields new insights and can further our understanding not only of the incorporations of foreign elements in Rome, but also of more widespread cultural interactions in the ancient world. While Egypt has been shown as quite specific for the workings of Augustan Rome, this kind of approach could also be applied to the study of other cultures manifest in Rome (for example, Celtic or Persian cultures), throughout different eras. Moreover, still prevailing categories that were originally based on presupposed interpretations of Roman and Hellenistic styles, such as 'Greco-Scythian' and 'Greco-Buddhist' art categories, could be reappraised extensively through a similar approach as demonstrated here: by focusing on the archaeological record, and letting go of presupposed academic compartmentalisations based on ethnic or predetermined cultural categories, misinterpretations can be straightened out and

avoided in further research. Studies of this kind would expand our understanding of the flexibility, diversity, and complexity of cultural processes, from a more comprehensive perspective, that not only reflects the actual archaeological record, but may bring us closer to understanding the workings of cultural interaction on a macro-scale, as opposed to our own categorisation and hence misinterpretation of it.

The case study of Egypt in Augustan Rome has already provided a first step into that direction, by demonstrating that manifestations of Egypt appeared and functioned within the flexible complexity that was Augustan material culture.