Egypt beyond representation : materials and materiality of Aegyptiaca Romana

Müskens, S.W.G.

2. Discussion

We have seen that certain object types in the studied sample tend to be executed in particular materials and styles. Broadly speaking, we have two dominant groups, the first in conceptual styles and coloured Egyptian materials, the second in white marble and naturalistic styles. These groups largely correspond to these objects' respective dates of manufacture. The first material and stylistic configuration mainly applies to pre-Roman artefacts, while the latter is characteristic for objects of Roman Imperial age. This section discusses some of the observed patterns in greater detail, in order to assess the relevance of material use and choice in Roman engagements with and understandings of so-called Aegyptiaca, and to elucidate the role of the studied materials in relation to these objects' other object parameters. On the basis of a discussion of Egyptian imports, the first part evaluates Roman selection criteria by focusing on which objects were transported to the Roman world and, importantly, which were *not*. The second part focuses on Roman Imperial productions. On the one hand, a clear continuation of the production of objects with conceptual styles in naturally coloured hardstones from both Egyptian and non-Egyptian origins is observed, thereby strengthening the idea that certain material properties are important in stone selection. On the other hand, in contrast, Egyptian-looking objects carved out of white marble and executed in naturalistic styles may have to be attributed a different role in the Roman world.

2.1 EGYPTIAN IMPORTS

The results from this research demonstrate that Egyptian imports are highly varied in nature as far as their object types and subject matters are concerned. Hence, we find obelisks that were originally dedicated to deities like Re-Harakhte and Atum, zoomorphic sculptures of gods including Hathor, Horus, and Thoth, anthropomorphic statues of various Egyptian kings, queens, and private individuals, sculptures of lions and sphinxes, decorated wall-reliefs depicting offering scenes, and waterclocks showing a range of Egyptian deities. This heterogeneity has been repeatedly mentioned in previous studies, and most authors agree that no coherent, religiously motivated background can be discerned in the selection of imported 'Aegyptiaca'.[371] This, in combination with the acknowledgement that several Egyptian imports functioned in essentially non-cultic contexts, is generally regarded as conclusive evidence that these objects were not primarily selected for their religious content or significance; instead, most authors argue that they mainly served to create an exotic atmosphere.[372]

If not primarily cultic, then how can the selection of Egyptian imports in Rome be understood? Were there any particular criteria by which Romans selected these objects, and if there were, what did they entail? Several scholars have addressed this question and forwarded many different motivations. Alfano basically considers the corpus of imports as a random collection of Egyptian artefacts that resulted from casual collection without any particular underlying selection criteria.[373] Random

371. See for instance Lembke (1994, 35) on Egyptian imports in the Iseum Campense: "Im Sinne der Gestaltung ägyptischer Kultanlagen fehlt den Objekten jede Homogeneität, die auf ein geschlossenes Ausstattungsprogramm hinweisen könnte".

372. Some authors go further in their rejection of religious connotations underlying the selection of Egyptian imports than others. For instance, Alfano (2001, 287) dismissed the choice for Egyptian imports as altogether illogical, and she essentially considered the assemblage of objects as an indication of the Roman misunderstanding of Egyptian art and religion that would have nothing to do with Egyptian cults. A similar forceful dismissal of cultic connotations associated with the selection of Egyptian imports in favour of a strong emphasis on exoticism is forwarded by Ziegler (1994, 18), Egelhaaf-Gaiser (2000, 179), and Parlasca (2004, 406). More nuanced views can be found in Lembke (1994, esp. 136), Versluys & Meyboom (2000, 127), Versluys (1997; 2002, 355), Malaise (2005, 204-210, including a review of previous interpretations), Swetnam-Burland (2007, 114; 2015, 30), and Bommas (2012, 195-200). For a radically different view in defense of a meaningful Egyptian religious understanding of the sculptural decoration of the Iseum Campense see Quack (2003); partially similar explanations are given in Sist (2008).

373. The following quotation is particularly illustrative of Alfano's understanding (2001, 287): "sphinxes were brought to Rome in large quantities without selective criteria, based on casual

choice is also mentioned by Roullet; furthermore, she notes the disproportionate representation of artefacts from the reign of particular pharaohs in the corpus of Egyptian imports in Rome and suggests that this may be indicative of a deliberate selection strategy.[374] Based on the observation that a majority of imports originate from sites in the Delta region, Lembke emphasises accessibility and ease of transport to Rome.[375] Others note the frequency with which particular object types and subject matters, like obelisks and sculptures of lions and sphinxes, occur in the corpus of imports, and thereby seem to suggest that the selection may have primarily been determined by a preference for 'typically Egyptian' objects.[376] Most recently, the question of selection was addressed anew by Swetnam-Burland, who effectively expresses the difficulties in getting a better grip on the corpus of Egyptian imports: "Romans living in Italy were drawn to pieces with iconography or texts that drew on Egypt's Pharaonic past or spoke of its traditions. Yet beyond this, it is difficult to identify patterns in the materials except in a broad sense".[377]

However, as the analysis of Egyptian imports in this study shows, a very specific and remarkable consistent pattern is evident concerning the material and stylistic characteristics of these objects. The studied imports are nearly always executed in conceptual styles, and they are invariably carved from naturally coloured stones of Egyptian origin.[378] These appear to be the two factors that all the "anonymous and historically important sphinxes", which, according to Alfano, were taken to Rome "without selective criteria, based on casual collection", have in common, and these aspects connect *all* the otherwise widely diverse Egyptian imports.[379] Could it be, then, that Romans considered particular material and stylistic properties to be significant aspects of Egyptian imports, and that these properties were part of a deliberate Roman selection strategy? Although they were not necessarily the only aspects involved in a possible selection procedure, given the consistency of this observation it deserves further attention. In what follows I will essentially focus on material properties. After that, stylistic and material properties will be discussed together in order to assess the possible agency of Egyptian imports.

It should not be surprising to find that the materials of all imports originate from Egyptian sources, given the rich and varied geology of Egypt.[380] Perhaps more surprising is the fact that these Egyptian stones are all naturally coloured types. None of the Egyptian imports in the studied sample are made from lime- or sandstone.[381] This is particularly interesting considering that these softstones were quarried in much larger quantities than coloured hardstones.[382] Estimations of the total extracted volumes of lime- and sandstone in ancient Egypt are in the order of 20 and 15 million tons,

collection, which included indiscriminately anonymous sphinxes and historically important sphinxes representing pharaohs from different epochs […]".

374. According to Roullet (1972, 14-16), these pharaohs (Ramesses II, Psamtik II, and Nectanebo I and II) would have been of special importance to Romans. Alternatively, she proposes a more pragmatic explanation for the large number of objects from the reign of these kings in the corpus of Egyptian imports in Rome: "the delta temples (Tanis, Bubastis, etc.) were full of Ramesses II's monuments which were moved to Alexandria". These ideas are repeated in Capriotti Vittozzi (1990, 53 n. 17); see now also Swetnam-Burland (2015) 31.

375. Lembke (1994) 35.

376. Sist (2008, 67-69) notes a particular preference for obelisks, lions and sphinxes; see already the remarks by Roullet (1972, 13) and Lembke (1994, 36).

377. Swetnam-Burland (2015) 30.

378. A brief note must be added on the burning of limestone in limekilns and its possible distorting effect. This practice has been widely attested in Rome: the so-called *calcararii* were active well into the Renaissance (Lanciani 1980, 190-197; cf. Caldwell 2011, 3 and n. 12). This may distort the picture presented here. That said, modern, well-documented excavations in Rome have not yielded any 'Aegyptiaca' in limestone, nor have imports from sandstone (which was not burnt for lime) been found; instead, recent finds fit well with the trend outlined here. For lime burning in Egypt, cf. *infra*, n. 468.

379. Cf. *supra*, n. 373.

380. The materials in the studied sample present a good cross-section of the most extensively employed stone types in Egypt for sculptural and architectural purposes, including especially granite and granodiorite from Aswan, greywacke from the Wadi Hammamat, Egyptian travertine, and steatite. In addition to these frequently used stones, the sample also includes less common materials, like dolerite porphyry and diorite. For a selective bibliography on the geology of Egypt, with a particular focus on archaeologically relevant stones and their applications in Antiquity, see *supra*, n. 299.

381. Although strict criteria were maintained in this study for the selection of objects, this has not influenced the observed pattern in any way: there are no Egyptian imports from lime- and sandstone in the entire corpus of so-called Aegyptiaca from Rome.

382. This was already briefly noted in specific connection to the Egyptian imports in the Iseum Campense: see Lembke (1994) 35-36; cf. the remarks by Swetnam-Burland (2015) 30.

respectively.[383] In contrast, the total quarried volume of granite and granodiorite from Aswan – the only stones "that were used […] on anything like the scale of limestone and sandstone" – is likely to be in the range of some million tons only.[384]

A survey of Egyptian imports that have been discovered at sites in the Roman world other than Rome indicates that the imports found in Rome by no means constitute an isolated example. As Table 4.2.1 shows, these other imports reveal a similar pattern with regard to the selection of materials.[385] The large majority of these artefacts are made from naturally coloured stones.[386] While imports from sandstone are altogether absent, a mere two of 59 listed imports are made from limestone.[387]

383. Klemm and Klemm (2001) 638-639; cf. Aston *et al*. (2000) 6.

384. Aston *et al*. (2000) 6; cf. Lucas – Harris (1962) 57-59, Arnold (1991) 36, Klemm and Klemm (2001) 635, and ibid. (2008) 236.

385. See Table 4.2.2 for an explanation of the used abbreviations. The overview does not claim to be exhaustive; rather, it serves to give a good idea of the characteristics of Egyptian imports discovered at sites in the Roman world other than Rome. Material characterisations were mainly made on the basis of colour pictures and indications in the consulted literature; in some cases materials were examined in person. Bricault (2001) and Kleibl's inventory of Isis sanctuaries (2009) served as the main sources for the subsequent overview.

386. Moreover, the range of stone types and the distribution of these materials are largely similar to those of imports in Rome. Like in Rome, Aswan granite and granodiorite prevail; stone types that are not present in Rome include anorthosite gneiss from Chephren's quarry near Gebel el-Asr (see Harrell and Brown 1994), and dark-brown (nummulithic?) limestone: although previously characterised as greywacke, the rock of an Atum statue from Herculaneum is full of forminafera (up to ca. 7 mm), which are indicative of its sedimentary origin.

387. These are a sphinx inscribed for Amenhotep III (18th Dynasty) from Diocletian's palace at Split, and a stela, originally part of a back-pillar of an early Ptolemaic statue, from the Isis temple in Pompeii. The find circumstances of this 'stela', which was attached to a statue base so that the hieroglyphic writing with which it is covered was visible to visitors of the temple, seem to indicate that the selection of this stela was primarily determined by the hieroglyphic writing rather than by any material preferences. Pirelli (1998, 641-643) suggests that its selection may have been determined by a particular link between the contents of the inscription and the initiation of Pompeian members into the cult of Isis; cf. Malaise (2005) 207. A male torso from Aquileia is also made from limestone, but archaeometrical analysis has shown that the stone is of local Italian rather than Egyptian origins: Aquileia, Museo Archeologico, inv. 810 = Dolzani (1954) 3-6 no. 2, and fig. 2 (H. 24 cm). Moreover, two limestone statuettes of Apis were found at Citium (Cyprus), but these are not demonstrably imported: Kater-Sibbes (1975) vol. II, 4 no. 264. A 19th Dynasty statuette in limestone was previously said to originate from a tomb on the Maltese island of Gozo, where it would have been found in 1713, but recent studies have convincingly proven this assumption wrong, and instead argue that it was brought to the island somewhere in the 19th century: see Meza (2007), cf. Moss (1949).

388. See Harrell (2012a) 13-17 Table 1 and 17-19 Table 1 for lime- and sandstones quarries, respectively. For Egyptian limestone see

2.1.1 Alternatives and availability

The obvious predominance of coloured stones in the corpus of Egyptian imports in the Roman world suggests that material choice was indeed relevant to the Roman selection of Egyptian objects. However, only through an assessment of the existence and availability of alternatives in lime- and sandstone can we gain a better understanding of the importance of material aspects in the selection procedure. Were there lime- and/or sandstone alternatives to the wide range of Egyptian imports that have the fact that they are all carved from naturally coloured stones in common, and if there were, were these alternatives available for transportation to the Roman world? Or are the observed patterns logical outcomes of the relationships between the material properties and types of these objects? For instance, if all known clepsydras are made from coloured stones, the absence of specimens in other materials in Rome is of course not surprising. In such a case, the Roman selection procedure of Egyptian objects may have been primarily determined by other criteria like object type or specific subject matters, rather than by preferences for certain materials. On the other hand, if alternatives in lime- and sandstone exist, the absence of these materials in the studied sample and, more generally, in the Roman world, may point to a deliberate selection strategy for objects made from particular materials.

In order to explore this, we must turn to the use of lime- and sandstone in Egypt. Limestone is the fundamental stone of northern Egypt. Deposits of limestone occur almost continuously in the Nile valley, from just south of Esna to the Mediterranean coast and on to the adjacent desert plateaux; no less than 89 ancient limestone quarries have been identified. Sandstone, on the other hand, is the primary material of southern Egypt. Outcrops of sandstone occur almost continuously in the Nile valley and on the desert plateaux to the east and west from Esna, down southwards to northern Sudan. In total, 36 ancient sandstone quarries have been identified.[388] Because of their wide availability

Table 4.2.1. Overview of Egyptian imports in the Roman world.

Site	Material	Subject matter	Dating	Reign	Original context	Inscription
ITALY						
Aquileia						
(1): V.116	GD	ASP	P	?	?	-
(3): 1	GD	ASP?	LP	?	?	-
(3): 3	GD	V	LP	?	?	++
(3): 4	GD	V	LP	?	?	++
Benevento						
(4): 253	AG	ZS	LP	?	?	-
(4): 254	AG	ZS	LP	?	?	-
(4): 261	GD	ASD	P	?	?	-
(4): 266	GD	S	P	?	?	-
(4): 268	GD	ASR	MK/IP2	Mershepsesre Ini II	Karnak	+
(4): 269	GD	ZS	P	?	?	-
(4): 272	G	S	P	?	?	-
(4): 275	G	S	P	?	?	-
(4): 277	G	S	P-R	?	?	-
(4): 282	GD	ASP	NK-IP3	Ramesses II/ Sheshonq II	Memphis?	+
(4): 306	GD	S	P	?	?	-
(4): 39	G	S	P	?	?	-
(4): p. 111-2	GD	ASD?	P	?	?	-
Baia						
(2): II.15	GD	ASP	P	?	?	++
Chieti						
(1): V.154	GR	ASP	LP	?	?	++
(5): I.5	GD	ASR?	P	?	?	-
Cumae						
(2): II.12	GD	ASD?	P	?	?	?
(2): II.13	GD	ASP	LP	?	?	++
(2): II.14	?	ZS	P	?	?	?
Florence						
(1): V.141	GR	ASD	LP	Amasis	?	+

Table 4.2.1. *continued.*

Site	Material	Subject matter	Dating	Reign	Original context	Inscription
Grottaferrata						
(6)	GD	ASR	NK	Seti I	Heliopolis	+v
Herculaneum						
(2): II.82, (7)	LD	ASD	NK-LP-P	Amenhotep III?	Kher-Aha	+
Manfredonia						
(5): XVII	?	V	LP	Psamtik II	?	++
Ostia						
(1): V.30	?	ASD?	P	?	?	++
(1): V.35	GR	ASD	LP	?	?	++
Pompeii						
(2): III.108	GR	RE	LP	Psamtik II	Heliopolis	+
(2): III.118	L	V	P	?	Herakleopolis?	++
Puteoli						
(2): II.6	GD	ASP	LP	?	?	++
(2): II.7	GD	ASP	LP	?	?	++
(29): 73	TR	V	P	?	?	-
Sorrento						
(25): I	?	ASP	LP	?	?	++
(25): IV-VI	GD	ASR	NK	Seti I	Abydos	+
Syracuse						
(23): 17	GD	ASP	LP	?	?	++
(23): 19	?	V	NK	Ramesses II	?	+
Tivoli						
(28): 161 no. 1	D	ASR	NK	Ramesses II	Heliopolis	+
Torre di S. Giovanni di Sinis						
(9): 1	ST	V	P-R	?	?	++
Treia						
(1): V.184, (26): II.2.S	GD	ASR?	P	?	?	-
(1): V.185, (26): II.1.S	GD	ASR	P	?	?	-
(26): II.3.S	GR	ASR?	LP-P	?	?	-
Verona						
(1): V.87, (5): III.21	G	ASR?	P-R	?	?	-

Table 4.2.1. *continued.*

Site	Material	Subject matter	Dating	Reign	Original context	Inscription
Outside Italy						
Adana (Turkey)						
(16): 220, (17)	GD	ASP	MK	?	?	++
Antwerp (Belgium)						
(20-21), (22): 6	GD	ASP	LP-P-R	?	?	-
Beirut (Lebanon)						
(8): 27	GD	ASP	P	?	?	++
Cherchel (Algeria)						
(10): 94, (11-12)	GD	ASP	P	?	Memphis	++
(10): 95, (11-12)	GD	ASR	NK	Thutmose I	Abydos	+
Delos (Greece)						
(13)	GR	ASP	P	?	Sais	++
Ephesos (Turkey)						
(14)	G	V	P	Ptolemy II	?	++
Istanbul (Turkey)						
(18)	G	O	NK	Thutmose III	Thebes	+
Ohrid (Republic of Macedonia)						
Robevi House	TR	ASD	P	?	?	-
Petra (Jordan)						
(8): 26, (15)	GR	ASP	LP	?	Athribis?	++
Split (Croatia)						
(5): 54	GD	S	NK	Seti I/Ramesses II?	?	+
(5): 55, (27): 165 n. 55	L	S	NK	Amenhotep III	?	+
(5): 64	G	ASR	P	?	?	-
Thessaloniki (Greece)						
(19): 205	G	S	P	?	?	-
Vienna (Austria)						
(24): 47	AG	ASP	NK	?	Heliopolis	++

Table 4.2.2. Key to Table 4.2.1.

References			
(1)	*Iside* (1997)	(16)	Erman (1883)
(2)	*Egittomania* (2006)	(17)	Picaud & Podvin (2011)
(3)	Dolzani (1954)	(18)	Iversen (1972)
(4)	Müller (1969)	(19)	Kleibl (2009)
(5)	Budischovsky (1977)	(20)	De Wit (1964)
(6)	Capriotti Vittozzi (2010)	(21)	Rantz (1976)
(7)	Capriotti Vittozzi (2008a)	(22)	Rantz (1989)
(8)	Malaise (2004b)	(23)	Sfameni Gasparro (1973)
(9)	Malaise (1972a)	(24)	Hölzl (2007)
(10)	Gsell (1952)	(25)	Di Savoia-Aosta-Habsburg (1975)
(11)	El-Alfi (1978)	(26)	Capriotti Vittozzi (1999b)
(12)	Capriotti Vittozzi (2011)	(27)	Herrmann and van den Hoek (2013)
(13)	Leclant – de Meulenaere (1957)	(28)	Mari (2003)
(14)	Langmann *et al.* (1984)	(29)	*Augusto e le Campania* (2014)
(15)	Meza (1995)		
Stone materials		**Subject matter**	
AG	Anorthosite gneiss	ASD	Anthropomorphic statue (deity)
D	Diorite	ASP	Anthropomorphic statue (private)
G	Granite	ASR	Anthropomorphic statue (royal)
GD	Granodiorite	O	Obelisk
GR	Greywacke	RE	Relief
L	Limestone	S	Sphinx
LD	Limestone (dark-brown)	ZS	Zoomorphic statue
ST	Steatite	V	Various
TR	Travertine		
Dating		**Inscription**	
OK	Old Kingdom	+	Royal name
IP1	1st Intermediate Period	++	Inscribed, no secure dating
MK	Middle Kingdom	-	No inscription
IP2	2nd Intermediate Period		
NK	New Kingdom		
IP3	3rd Intermediate Period		
LP	Late Period		
P	Ptolemaic Period		
R	Roman Imperial		

and relative softness, which implies that these materials could be easily quarried and worked with, lime- and sandstone were extensively used for architectural and sculptural purposes throughout Egyptian history.[389]

Appendix D below presents an overview of the applications of these materials, focusing on parallels with the imports from Egypt in the studied sample (stylistically, typologically, thematically, chronologically, size-wise, etc.).[390] This makes it abundantly clear that there were alternatives available in Egypt for the various object types and subject matters of so-called Aegyptiaca that were brought to Rome in Roman Imperial times. Parallels in lime- and/or sandstone exist for practically every import in coloured stone. There appear to be certain tendencies in the relationships between the material (and stylistic) properties of objects and object types, as a result of which some parallels with other materials are more common than others. The majority of clepsydras are made from coloured hardstones, as are nearly all obelisks of monumental scale. It is therefore not surprising that the specimens of clepsydras and obelisks that were transported to Rome are consistently made from naturally coloured materials, although it should be noted that alternatives in lime-/sandstone also existed for these object types. Perhaps more surprising, and therefore significant, is the consistent occurrence in Rome of types of imports in coloured materials, for which alternatives in softstones could be readily found or even prevailed in Egypt. From the small Horus-stela, to naophoros statues, to statues of lions, to colossal royal sculptures in conceptual styles: all these themes and types of objects could be executed just as well in lime- or sandstone as in naturally coloured stones. Indeed, while sphinxes and temple reliefs in lime- and sandstone greatly outnumber specimens made from coloured hardstones, only specimens made from relatively less common naturally coloured materials were brought to Rome.

In sum, the studied sample of Egyptian imports is not representative of the repertoire of stone objects in Egypt, at least not in terms of its material make-up. The consequent absence of imports in lime- and sandstone suggests that objects with specific material properties were preferred. However, before formulating such a conclusion, the availability of alternatives should be considered. The parallels discussed in Appendix D were found widely across Egypt, including several sites in Upper Egypt (Thebes and its surroundings in particular, as well as El Kab), the Faiyum Oasis (Tebtunis and Medinet Madi), and Lower Egypt (Memphis, Heliopolis, and Saqqara). Were these sites accessible for Romans and were their objects available for transportation to Rome? Or were there only objects in coloured hardstones to choose from, if there was any choice at all? The short answer is that there is little direct information on this aspect of the objects that we call Aegyptiaca.[391]

also Aston et al. (2000) 12-15 Table 2.1, Harrell (1992), Klemm and Klemm (2008) 23-145, ibid. (2010), De Putter – Karlshausen (1992) 63-64, Arnold (1991) 27-29, and the geological map in Harrell and Storemyr (2009). On sandstone see Aston et al. (2000) 12-15 Table 2.1, Klemm and Klemm (2008) 167-213, Arnold (1991) 27-30, and De Putter – Karlshausen (1992) 92.

389. It is often assumed that lime- and sandstone were especially used for non-architectural purposes when more attractive and more costly 'ornamental' stones were not available or unaffordable (see, e.g., Harrell 2012b, 9). Artefacts in these materials were often, if not nearly always, painted "to conceal [their] bland appearance" (Aston *et al*. 2000, 42; cf. Harrell 2012a, 3-4: "the otherwise drab-looking building stones were usually painted in bright colors"). On the polychromy of Egyptian sculpture see Reuterswärd (1958). Statues of limestone (and sandstone) were usually entirely painted, whereas particular details, such as hair, jewellery, or eyes, of statues in hard-stones like granite and granodiorite could be painted, as well: see, e.g., the 5th Dynasty statue of Sekhemka from Saqqara, now in Paris, Musée du Louvre, inv. A 105: Andreu *et al*. (1997) 58-59 no. 15 (C. Ziegler), and a granite sphinx inscribed for Hatshepsut from Deir el-Bahari, now in Berlin, Ägyptisches Museum und Papyrussammlung, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, inv. 2299: *Hatshepsut: from queen to pharaoh* (2005) 164-165 no. 88b (C.A. Keller).

390. In order to prevent long lists with references in the main text, the results of the survey have been collected in a separate appendix. Naturally, this overview is not exhaustive. As indicated above, it serves to give a general idea of the existence or absence of alternatives in lime- and sandstone.

391. Besides the availability of so-called Aegyptiaca, the logistics of their transportation to Rome also remains poorly understood. Except for some exceptional cases, like the transport of the Vatican obelisk under Caligula from Alexandria to Rome, we do not know under which circumstances these objects reached Rome; cf. Swetnam-Burland (2007) 124 with n. 24-25 (on the Vatican obelisk, cf. *infra*, Appendix C). Roullet (1972, 17) suggests that Egyptian priests functioned as middlemen and that they were charged to order statues and reliefs for temples in Europe, as they would have been "able to maintain the links between the old pharaonic land and the Roman Empire outside"; cf. Quack (2003) 64-65. However, there is no evidence to support this assertion. It is usually assumed that the importation of monumental objects from Egypt was an Imperial privilege (see, e.g., Lembke 1994, 135: "Die Export großer Mengen von Kunstobjekten aus der kaiserlichen Provinz Ägypten, die in

In terms of the geographical and chronological distribution of objects in lime- and sandstone, we can only determine that there were no regions or periods in Egypt where and when artefacts in these materials do not occur, which makes it unlikely that objects in these softstones would not have been available for Romans.[392] In fact, the only concrete evidence for the availability of so-called Aegyptiaca is the corpus of Egyptian imports that have been rediscovered in Rome and at other Roman sites. Some of these objects carry hieroglyphic inscriptions with indications about their original Egyptian provenance, and this information is often used to assess the question of availability. As several authors have noted, the majority of inscribed imports originate from sites in Lower Egypt, in particular from Heliopolis.[393] We know from Strabo that Heliopolis was sacked in 525 BC by Cambyses' army, and, against this background, the author incidentally notes that obelisks from Heliopolis were taken to Rome and Thebes.[394] Based on this, should we imagine the Sun City entirely in ruins after it was sacked and, if that were the case, could this help explain the large number of imports that have been found in the Roman world and that originates from this city? In other words, were these objects readily available for transportation *because* that city was in ruins? This is what Paul Stanwick suggests by observing that the sack of Heliopolis by the Persians created an "ample quarry for *aegyptiaca*".[395] These are interesting questions that cannot be easily answered, but it is a fact that a particular geographical tendency towards the northern regions of Egypt can be observed among the imports in Rome. Therefore, we can only go as far as asking more specifically whether or not alternatives in lime- and sandstone were available at the *specific* sites where objects that ended up in Rome originated from. As we have seen, the available indications suggest that there were indeed alternatives at these sites. Parallels in softstones have been found at the sites of known suppliers of imports in the corpus of Rome, including Memphis, Thebes, and especially Heliopolis.

However, while inscriptions are a useful source of information for the places of origin of Egyptian artefacts – that is, the sites where they were *first* used – it is important to consider that these are not necessarily

die Iseen von Rom und Benevent gelangten, ist mit Sicherheit nur einem Princeps vorbehalten gewesen"). The available information on the transportation of obelisks seems to confirm that this was indeed the case. However, if we consider the corpus of imports as a whole, there are large differences between the various objects, also in terms of dimensions. Hence, while the transport of huge monolithic obelisks, ordered by emperors, necessitated the construction of large ships, as we know from literary sources, the portability of other objects in our sample is much greater. Therefore, these objects may have reached Rome in a range of different manners. In other words, imports were not necessarily part of the same supply network. See also the comment by Müller (1969, 67) on the importation of a small statue from Egypt to Benevento: "Die kleine Statue wurde vermutlich von einem Privatmann aus Ägypten nach Benevent gebracht […]".

392. However, some geographical and chronological trends emerge. Although objects in lime- and sandstone have been found all across Egypt, the geographical distribution of objects in these materials generally follows the geological division of a limestone region in the north and sandstone deposits in the south. In addition, while coloured hardstones were much less used overall than softstones, the Late Period marks a notable exception, particularly the 26th and 30th Dynasties, as has been noted by many authors: Bothmer (1960) 5, Silverman (1997) 117, Quack (2003) 59, De Putter (2006) 89, and Russmann (2010) 944; cf. *infra*, 361-362 with notes. Due to the establishment of political authority in the Delta region at that time, most construction work focused on the northern regions of Egypt. As a result, coloured hardstones figure disproportionately in the archaeological record of northern Egypt in the Late Period.

393. As confirmed by the site distribution of the (defined or presumed) original provenance of Egyptian imports in Roullet's study (Roullet 1972, 153-156): Heliopolis 10; Alexandria 6; Memphis 3; Thebes (including Karnak) 3; Sais 2; Behbeit el-Hagar 2; Hermopolis Parva 2; Elephantine 1; Akhmim 1; Hermopolis Magna 1. Lembke's hypothesis that easy accessibility would have been one of the determining criteria for the Roman selection of Egyptian imports is based on the observation that the majority of these objects originates from sites in Lower Egypt (cf. *supra*, 322). A similar but less distinct pattern emerges from Egyptian imports at other sites than Rome (based on the information in Table 4.2.1 above): Heliopolis 3, Memphis 2, Kher-Aha (near Heliopolis) 1, Sais 1, Athribis (modern Tell Atrib) 1 (all Lower Egypt); Thebes (including Karnak) 3, Abydos 2, Herakleopolis 1 (Upper Egypt).

394. *Geography* 17.1.27; cf. *infra*, Appendix B.

395. Stanwick (2002) 19; for a similar notion see now also Swetnam-Burland (2015) 31. Would this, in turn, imply that objects from sites that were still in function were not available for transportation to other sites? According to Yoyotte, this was not necessarily the case. He sees no reason to believe that the transportation of *pharaonica* from Heliopolis caused the cessation of cult practices in that city: "Colonnes et architraves, montants et linteaux de porte étaient autant de monolithes rapportés, de caractère, peut-on-dire, « semi-mobilier », dont le démontage n'entraînait pas la démolition de tout l'édifice. Rien n'interdit de croire que le culte pouvait encore être rendu dans la Ville du Soleil à l'époque romaine au milieu d'édifices mutilés" (Yoyotte 2003, 235 n. 69). See also, in general, Capriotti Vittozzi (2013) 111.

the places where the Romans took them from. Although it is of course possible that the Romans visited sites like Memphis or Heliopolis to select pieces for transportation to Rome, there is no evidence to confirm this. Consequently, the information from inscriptions is no straightforward indicator of the extent of the Roman exploitation of Egypt.[396] Additionally, there are some indications that Egyptian objects that ended up in Rome were already on the move before they were transported to the other side of the Mediterranean. We will now turn to this circulation in order to explore an alternative possibility for the Roman selection of Egyptian objects. Filtering, particularly of specific material properties, will be a key concept in this.

The circulation of Egyptian objects started long before the Roman Imperial period.[397] An intensification of this practice can be observed during the 1st millennium BC, in particular in the northern Delta region.[398] Especially Alexandria participated in this network of Egyptian objects in motion. Considerable numbers of Egyptian imports, dating from the Middle Kingdom up until the Late Period, have been found in this city. Until recently, most of these so-called *pharaonica*[399] came from the Serapeum, but underwater explorations off the coast of the city since the early 1990s have substantially enriched the corpus of Egyptian imports.[400] The overview of *pharaonica alexandrina* shows a notable scarcity of artefacts in lime- and sandstone. Instead, naturally coloured types predominate, particularly granite, granodiorite, and greywacke.[401] Object types include anthropomorphic royal and private sculpture, zoomorphic sculptures of deities (e.g., of Horus in falcon-form and Sekhmet),

396. Scholars have often regarded it as such: Heinz (2010, 26) recently used the data on the original provenance of Egyptian imports in Rome to illustrate the "penetrating exploitation of Egypt by the Romans". In similar vein, Bommas (2012, 195) speaks about "the fact that several Egyptian sites were deliberately exploited to furnish the Iseum [Campense] at Rome".

397. On the reuse of Egyptian artefacts in Egypt see Brand (2010) with relevant literature. For a concise overview of the circulation of so-called Aegyptiaca outside Egypt, a process that can be attested at least since the Bronze Age, see Mol (2015a) 14-25. An early example of Egyptian sculpture in motion across the modern borders of Egypt comes from Kerma in Upper-Nubia, where several centuries-old Egyptian statues were reused in funerary contexts during the 17th-16th century BC: Valbelle (2011).

398. A good example is the large-scale reuse of statues, sphinxes, obelisks, columns, and other objects from Pi-Ramesses, the capital built by Ramesses II during the 19th Dynasty (early 13th century BC), at sites like Leontopolis, Bubastis, and, most notably, Tanis, during the 21st and 22nd Dynasties (ca. late 11th – late 8th century BC). The large quantities of objects dating from the reign of Ramesses II at Tanis initially even led excavators to erroneously believe that Tanis actually was Pi-Ramesses (Shaw and Nicholson 1995, 282-283). On the reuse of Egyptian objects at Tanis see, e.g., Montet (1966) 9-11, Zivie-Coche (2008) 2-4, and Brand (2010) 5; cf. Yoyotte (1998) 201, and 206 n. 30.

399. This term is often used to describe the totality of so-called Aegyptiaca from Alexandria, and it covers both imports from other Egyptian sites that pre-date the Ptolemaic and Roman periods (and hence the foundation of the city), as well as objects that date from the Ptolemaic and Roman periods (e.g. Yoyotte 1998, 199; cf. Malaise 2005, 204-210 for an extensive overview of the various understandings and applications of this term). I use the term here to refer to the first group only, namely, pre-Ptolemaic artefacts that were reused in Alexandria: Ptolemaic and Roman 'Aegyptiaca', which have been discovered in Alexandria, were not necessarily brought from other sites to Alexandria, but they may have originally functioned in the city instead.

400. Tkaczow's catalogue, which does not include the underwater finds, contains 40 entries of pre-Ptolemaic imports in Alexandria, most of them from the Serapeum (Tcakzow 1993, 230-242, no. 119-152; cf. Savvopoulos and Bianchi 2012, 177-187 and the bibliography in Yoyotte 1998, 212 n. 59; on the Serapeum see, *in extenso*, Sabottka 2008; cf. McKenzie 2007, 53-55). The findings from Alexandria's eastern harbour and fort Qa'it Bey have substantially enlarged the corpus of pre-Ptolemaic Aegyptiaca from the city. By 1997, the list of so-called Aegyptiaca from Alexandria included some 600 items (Gallo 1997b, xxiii-xxiv n. 18). No synthesis has been compiled thus far. Grimal has published brief reports with inventories of a selection of the finds (Grimal 1995, 596-600, 1996, 563-567, and 1997, 376-377), while several other articles discuss one or more artefacts (not necessarily from underwater excavations): e.g., Abd el-Fattah and Gallo (1998) and Gallo (2002). Moreover, some of the recent findings have been published by Corteggiani (1998) and in *Egypt's Sunken Treasures* (2008): 355 no. 451-452, and 358-360 no. 461-466 (all entries by J. Yoyotte). Finally, Savvopoulos (2010b) contains some pictures of unpublished pre-Ptolemaic imports in Alexandria: 147-149 (sculpture) and 163-164 (architecture and obelisks). The article by Yoyotte (1998) provides some preliminary reflections on Alexandria's (pre-Ptolemaic) *pharaonica* on the basis of hundred dateable items with inscriptions.

401. The material distribution of the 40 pre-Ptolemaic entries in Tcakzow (1993) is as follows: grey and black granite (all granodiorite?) 16; red granite 10; basalt 5 (including greywacke?); sandstone (presumably including quartzite) 4; granite (undefined red or black) 1; 'spath calcaire' 1; no data 1; Pharaonic blocks in sandstone, travertine, and granite (entry no. 137). The image that emerges from the recent underwater finds is consistent with this pattern. The published material invariably concerns objects made from coloured hardstones, and the same stone types are predominant in the record of unpublished objects (Empereur 1995, Corteggiani 1998, 28-29 with n. 9, and Yoyotte 1998, 201: "there were few limestone blocks compared to an abundance of those of hard rock", and 203: "The sculptures and blocks are in granite or granitoïd Aswan stone, some others come from the greywacke of Wadi Hammâmât").

sphinxes, (fragments of) obelisks, and architectural elements. These objects, executed in conceptual styles, cover the period between the 12th and 30th Dynasties; the majority of them date from the New Kingdom, and from the reign of Ramesses II in particular.[402] Lastly, several authors have noticed that the majority of these imports originate from Heliopolis. The disproportionate representation of Heliopolitan objects in Alexandria has even led Paolo Gallo to wonder if any structures in the Sun City were left untouched.[403]

It is clear that the importation of *pharaonica* to Alexandria started in the Ptolemaic period, but the debate about when the majority of these objects were first erected in Alexandria is ongoing.[404] Interestingly, artefacts with conceptual styles from Alexandria, which date to the Ptolemaic and Roman periods and which therefore may have originally functioned in the city,[405] also fit this pattern of characteristics. They are typologically and thematically varied, as well, and likewise show a notable lack of lime- and sandstone.[406] The geographical distribution of Ptolemaic royal sculptures with conceptual styles in Egypt demonstrates this particularly clearly. As Stanwick's research has shown, these sculptures are as often made from limestone as from granite.[407] However, although royal sculptures in limestone have been found widely across Egypt, none of the fourteen specimens from Alexandria are made from limestone; they are all are sculpted out of granite instead.[408]

402. The chronological distribution of *pharaonica* in Tcakzow (1993) is as follows: Middle Kingdom 1; New Kingdom 21; Late Period 12; no specific date 5; the remaining entry (no. 137) contains several blocks from the period between the 12th and 26th Dynasties. A similar date range is given for the underwater findings: Yoyotte (1998) 203; cf. Savvopoulos (2010a) 84.

403. Gallo (1997b) xxiv: "Il numero di monumenti eliopolitani rinvenuti nei *serapea* della metropoli alessandrina e della Capitale dell'Impero è tale che ci si chiede se nell II sec. d.C. l'antica città del dio Sole potesse vantare l'esistenza di qualche tempio ancora intatto". In similar vein, Yoyotte (1998, 203) has stated that "unless the still ongoing evaluation of the entire corpus [of Alexandrian *pharaonica*] radically changes matters, it looks very much as if the vast temples of the sun complex had at one time constituted the main – if not the only – reserve from which to draw obelisks, statues, sphinxes, and was likewise the main reserve of prefabricated architectural elements for building and fitting out Alexandrian temples in the ancient style"; cf. Abd el-Fattah and Gallo (1998) 11, Ashton (2004) 18, McKenzie (2007) 55, and Goddio and Yoyotte (2008) 267.

404. It is certain that Ptolemy II (285-246 BC) erected an obelisk from the 30th Dynasty in the Arsinoeion (*infra*, n. 412). However, there are two prevailing opinions concerning the importation of the other *pharaonica*. Some authors date this practice essentially to the Roman Imperial period, while others believe that it started in the (early) Ptolemaic period. The "Roman Imperial" thesis is supported by the work of Paolo Gallo and Kyriakos Savvopoulos: Gallo (1997b) xxiii-xxv; Abd el-Fattah and Gallo (1998) 11, and Savvopoulos (2010a) 83-85. See also Savvopoulos and Bianchi (2012) 21-22, who argue that this "Egyptianization of Alexandria's cultural character" through the incorporation of pre-Ptolemaic 'Aegyptiaca' was a deliberate attempt to "promote continuity". For the "Ptolemaic" thesis see Empereur (1995), Corteggiani (1998) 28-30, Arnold (1999) 308-309, Versluys (2002) 328-329, McKenzie *et al*. (2004) 100-101, Abd el-Gelil *et al*. (2008) 8, and Swetnam-Burland (2015) 31. On the question when the importation of Egyptian objects to Alexandria took place, see *in extenso* Yoyotte (1998); cf. Ashton (2004) 18-19. The available indications to date this relocation of these artefacts are scarce. It has been argued that the submerged pre-Ptolemaic 'Aegyptiaca' from the waters near fort Qa'it Bey were deposited there due to the collapse of an early Ptolemaic lighthouse, which would provide an early Ptolemaic terminus ante quem for the presence of imports in Alexandria, but this thesis is difficult to prove (see Yoyotte 2003, 203-204 with n. 16; cf. Savvopoulos 2010a, 84 n. 28, who mentions the Ptolemaic reuse of a small group of objects from the city's royal quarters from the 30th Dynasty).

405. See also Corteggiani (1998) 35, and 39.

406. Tcakzow (1993) 183-229 no. 1-118 (Ptolemaic period), and 243-284 no. 153-268 (Roman period). Sandstone is altogether absent from the corpus of Ptolemaic and Roman Imperial artefacts. Ptolemaic examples in limestone mainly concern sphinxes (from the Serapeum and other mainland Alexandrian sites: Tkaczow 1993, 189 no. 11a, 192 no. 17, and 197 no. 30-32), as well as a pair of statues of the Memphite priest Psenptais I from the Serapeum (Tcakzow 1993, 188 no. 9: reign Ptolemy X; *contra* Savvoupoulos and Bianchi 2012, 116-119 no. 34: reign Ptolemy III). Besides coloured hardstones and limestone, marble frequently occurs in the material record from Ptolemaic and Roman Alexandria. However, this material was mostly used for objects in naturalistic styles, which suggests that a correlation existed between marble and stylistic properties of objects made from this material (similar to so-called Aegyptiaca of Roman age in marble!). Ptolemaic royal sculptures clearly show this. Statues of Ptolemaic kings and queens in marble are nearly always executed in naturalistic styles: the "Greek-style royal representations" in Ashton's Appendix 1 are almost invariably made from marble (Ashton 2001, 54-58). See also De Putter (2000, 96), who notes that "œuvres de pur style pharaonique en marbre" and "œuvres de style « mèlange » en marbre" are almost non-existent, and hence concludes that "les marbres d'importation n'ont quasiment servi qu'à la sculpture de pur style hellénistique". The statue of a less than life-size Ptolemaic king (Ptolemy VIII?) marks a notable exception (now in Amsterdam, Allard Pierson Museum, inv. 7780): see Stanwick (2002) 114 no. C12 with fig. 98-99.

407. Each of these materials account for 30% of the entire corpus: Stanwick (2002) 34.

408. The fourteen specimens from Alexandria constitute the single largest concentration of these sculptures with known context (49 in total); based on information from Stanwick (2002) 214 fig. 198, and 11 with Table 2.2.

2.1.2 Alexandria: a comparative model?

When we compare the Egyptian imports in Alexandria to those in Rome, striking similarities become visible. First and foremost, both corpora share a similar, atypical material profile, which is not representative for the repertoire of stone objects in Egypt as a whole. Artefacts in coloured hardstones clearly outnumber those made from lime- and sandstone. Moreover, similarities exist between stylistic properties, object types, chronological aspects, and original provenance. Like in Alexandria, the largest number of imports in Rome with a presumed or defined original provenance comes from Heliopolis. The chronological profiles of the *pharaonica* of Alexandria and those of Rome are also comparable: both corpora mainly contain objects dating from the New Kingdom (in particular 18th and 19th Dynasties), and the Late Period (especially 26th and 30th Dynasties). The object types of the collections of imports in Rome and Alexandria are equally diverse and generally well comparable. These collections contain a similar range of object types, including royal and private anthropomorphic sculpture, zoomorphic sculpture, sphinxes, obelisks, and so on.[409] Lastly, most, if not nearly all artefacts are executed in conceptual styles.

The parallel between Egyptian imports in Rome and those in Alexandria has been drawn before. Several authors have wondered whether or not, and if so, to what extent Alexandria served as an example for Roman engagements with Egyptian objects. Gallo has even stated that nearly all Egyptian imports that have been discovered in Rome reached that city *via* Alexandria: "lo studio [of the pre-Ptolemaic Egyptian imports in Alexandria] rivela anche come la quasi totalità dei monumenti egiziani ritrovati a Roma e provenienti dalle varie località del Delta raggiungesse la Capitale dell'Impero *via* Alessandria".[410] While this statement is not further explained, there are indeed some indications that Egyptian imports that were rediscovered in Rome had been in Alexandria before they were despatched.[411] Based on a reconstruction of its original Latin inscription, we know that the obelisk that is now in St. Peter's Square stood in the Forum Julium in Alexandria before Caligula ordered its transportation to Rome.[412]

409. There is, however, one important difference between Alexandria and Rome with regard to the object types of imports. While imported architectural elements are rare in Rome and the Roman world – the studied sample contains only two decorated relief slabs – numerous examples have been found in Alexandria. Besides relief-covered blocks, architectural imports in Alexandria include columns and column drums, architraves, door posts, lintels, and naoi. See, for instance, five architectural elements inscribed for Apries in granite (26th Dynasty; *Egypt's Sunken Treasures* 2008, 359-360 no. 462-466), and bundled columns inscribed for Tuthmose IV (18th Dynasty; Yoyotte 2003, 214-215).

410. Gallo (1997b) xxiii-xxiv n. 18; and, again, in note 20: "probabilmente fu portata a Roma da Alessandria, dove già si trovava in epoca imperiale". Similar ideas are forwarded by Ensoli (the sphinx of Amasis from Sais was transported to Rome "forse da Alessandria come molte altre sculture saitiche"; in *Iside* 1997, 391 V.8; for the sphinx cf. *supra*, 246-247 no. 117) and Baines and Whitehouse, who wonder "inwieweit Alexandria als Vorbild für die demonstrative Zurschaustellung von Obelisken seitens der Römer gedient hat und ob nicht einige Denkmäler von dort stammen" (Baines – Whitehouse 2005, 408-409). In a more general sense, Lembke (1994, 55) notes "bauliche und gestalterische Tendenzen […] die einen Einfluß des ptolemäischen Baus [i.e., of the Serapeum in Alexandria] auf die Gestaltung des Iseum Campense in Erwägung ziehen lassen"; see also Raue (1999) 16-17. Yoyotte (1998, 205) disagrees with the assimilation between *pharaonica* from Rome and Alexandria, because the imports in Rome would "come from the most diverse locations" in Egypt, as opposed to Alexandrian *pharaonica* that largely originate from Heliopolis; see also Malaise (2005) 204-205.

411. Alexandria does not emerge as a major supplier of so-called Aegyptiaca for transportation to Rome on the basis of inscriptions. None of the six objects in Roullet's Appendix III that according to Roullet would originate from Alexandria are confirmed through (hieroglyphic) inscriptions; cf. *supra*, n. 393. Rather, she attributes them to that city on the basis of presumed Alexandrian workmanship (Roullet's catalogue numbers 144b and 147), or bases the attribution on written evidence (which informs us that the relevant object, the Vatican obelisk, was *re*-used in Ptolemaic Alexandria and did not originate from that city; Roullet's catalogue number 68). Finally, in the case of the three lions no arguments are given to support the attribution to Alexandria (Roullet's catalogue numbers 268-270).

412. The inscription records that the obelisk was erected on the Forum Julium by Cornelius Gallus, prefect of Egypt under the first years of Augustus' reign (see Iversen 1968, fig. 1). However, scholars disagree about the earliest history of the obelisk. Some believe that it was originally erected on the Forum Julium around 30 BC (McKenzie 2007, 79, and Curran *et al*. 2009, 44-46), while others identify the Vatican obelisk with the uninscribed obelisk that is described by Pliny (*Natural History* 36.14.67-69) and erected by Ptolemy II (285-246 BC) in the Arsinoeion, the sanctuary Ptolemy built in Alexandria in honour of his deceased wife, Arsinoe II, around 270 BC (Roullet 1972, 67-69 no. 68, and Baines – Whitehouse 2005, 409). The Arsinoeion obelisk, Pliny adds, was originally erected during the reign of Necthebis/Nencoreus, whom most scholars have identified as the 30th Dynasty king Nectanebo I or II (e.g., Roullet 1972, 67-68 no. 68, and McKenzie 2007, 51-52), perhaps at Heliopolis (Stanwick 2002, 19). According to McKenzie (2007, 51-52) the Arsinoeion

One of the two decorated relief-blocks in the studied sample from Rome may provide another indication of the circulation of Egyptian objects via Alexandria. The slab belongs to a series of six similar relief-blocks in greywacke that originate from the temple of Atum in Heliopolis, as can be inferred from the hieroglyphic inscriptions. Together, these six slabs are the only known remains of what appears to have been one or more gateways of this Heliopolitan temple. The block in our sample was discovered in 1709 on the Aventine Hill in Rome; all other reliefs were discovered in Alexandria between the 18th and 19th centuries.[413] This may indicate that the block in Rome was only brought to that city after its reuse in Alexandria; this possibility is also noted by Jean Yoyotte.[414]

The similarities between the corpora of Egyptian imports in Alexandria and Rome, in particular with regard to their distinct, non-representative material make-up, and the available indications for the presence in Alexandria of Egyptian artefacts before they were brought to Rome, lead to the following questions. Could it be that the imports that ended up in Rome and at other sites in the Roman world are a selection of what was available in Alexandria? Or is it possible that Alexandria more generally served as a model, functioning as a kind of filter, for the Roman selection of and ideas about Egyptian objects, in which the materials used evidently played a crucial role?[415] This may suggest that the studied Egyptian imports are an outcome of ongoing processes of selection and filtering that had perhaps started even before the Roman annexation of Egypt.[416]

2.1.3 Conclusions

The discussion in this section demonstrates that Romans targeted objects with specific material properties when selecting them for transportation from Egypt to Rome. It is difficult to tell whether this was part of a deliberate Roman selection strategy, or whether Romans capitalised upon an already pre-established tradition, or whether this resulted from a combination of these two, but it is evident that objects in coloured hardstones were preferred over those in softstones. Besides material properties, the stylistic characteristics of these objects stand out clearly, as nearly all imports in Rome (and Alexandria) are executed in conceptual styles. This contradicts the previously forwarded hypothesis that the corpus of Egyptian imports would have resulted from random collection. Of course, this does not necessarily imply that other criteria played no role in the Roman selection of Egyptian objects, including other object parameters like typology or specific subject matters, and practical aspects like accessibility and transportability; they may well have. Yet, if we consider Egyptian imports as a group, it becomes clearly evident

obelisk was moved to the Forum Julium in ca. 12/14-15 AD because it was in the way of the dockyards; this would contradict the identification of the Vatican obelisk as the obelisk erected by Ptolemy II in the Arsinoeion. Cf. *supra*, 188-189 no. 088.

413. Yoyotte convincingly argues that the presumption that two of these blocks were unearthed in Rosetta is wrong. Instead, all blocks were discovered between 1764 and 1870 in Alexandria (Yoyotte 1998, 215 with notes, and 2003, 220-221 no. a-f); on the relief-block from Rome see also *supra*, 248-249 no. 118. Yoyotte suggests that these slabs were originally part of gateway(s) in front of the temple that separated profane from sacred space rather than intercolumnar walls, as they are usually interpreted: ibid. (2003) 230-240; see also Lucarelli 2010.

414. The date of these blocks' transportation from Heliopolis to Alexandria remains unclear, as does their Alexandrian use-context. Therefore, while it cannot be excluded that the slab from Rome was taken from Heliopolis and brought directly to Rome, "one may just as well imagine that a piece was taken out of a recycled structure in an Egyptian or Egyptianising sanctuary in Alexandria at the time when the authentic witnesses of the Isis mysteries swarmed into the empire's capital" (Yoyotte 1998, 217; for a similar view, see ibid. 2003, 235). An examination of the slab found in Rome, which was unfortunately not possible for the present study, might clarify the situation. It is clear that some of the greywacke blocks underwent modifications before they were incorporated in their supposed new structure in Alexandria; these include the addition of a dedication in Greek on one of the blocks, the drilling of holes in at least two others, and cropping (Yoyotte 2003, 219-220). The hypothesis that this slab was transported to Rome after it had been reused in Alexandria would therefore be strengthened if the Roman slab showed traces of modifications similar to the other preserved specimens.

415. Besides the literal transportation of Egyptian objects to Rome from Alexandria, developments in Alexandria may also have influenced Roman engagements with Egyptian artefacts in a more figurative sense, as that city provided a model for the Roman selection of objects for transportation to Rome. This might explain the more varied Egyptian origins of imports in Rome relative to those in Alexandria, as noted by Yoyotte (1998, 205) and Malaise (2005, 204-205); cf. *supra*, n. 410.

416. For a similar view that emphasises Roman engagements with Egyptian material culture as a continuation of ongoing processes see now also Swetnam-Burland (2015) 31: "The Romans were […] the inheritors of long-standing traditions in which conquerors manifested their control of Egypt through the manipulation of its pre-existing material culture, whether by reinstalling monuments in new locations within Egypt, removing the names of Egyptian kings, or carting materials away to their capital cities".

that specific material and stylistic properties are the two constant, and therefore important, characteristics that all these objects have in common.

How can this evident preference be understood, and what can it possibly tell us about Roman understandings of these objects? The predominance of coloured hardstones in the corpus of Egyptian imports in Rome and other Roman sites has on occasion been noted before, and has been explained in very general terms as a Roman predilection for such materials, or is considered to be a result of the higher quality of these materials in comparison to softstones.[417] Alternatively, it has been suggested that the visual appearance of these materials emphasised the alterity of 'typically Egyptian' object types and subject matters, like obelisks and sculptures of animals, either as part of intentional or unintentional Roman strategies of 'othering'.[418] It is not inconceivable that the aforementioned considerations contributed to the ways in which Roman viewers would have perceived these objects, since the Egyptian imports were able to evoke different kinds of associations through their specific characteristics, including particular material and stylistic properties.

As the discussion in Part II has demonstrated, stones came with all kinds of associations in the Roman world. Specific types, in particular those with distinct visual characteristics, were especially desirable because they could be easily identified and thus spoke of distant sources, including all the notions of luxury, prestige, and strangeness or exoticism that this entailed. Lime- and sandstone were generally less suitable for such purposes, because they have less distinct visual characteristics, and hence they are less easily identifiable. As a result, the presence of these materials, or their capacity to evoke the aforementioned kinds of associations, is less strong in comparison to the stones from which the Egyptian objects that were selected for transportation to Rome are carved. Pink granite and grey granodiorite from Aswan, from which the majority of Egyptian imports in the studied sample are made, are good examples of Egyptian materials with distinct visual qualities, which, for that reason, were among the most sought-after materials in the Roman world.

However, besides the specific materiality of Egyptian imports, which resulted from their particular material properties, these objects were able to do much more, in particular through the combination between their material properties with distinct stylistic characteristics and other object parameters. As we have seen above, notions of imperial dynastic belonging may have come to reside in greywacke through its repeated use for imperial portraits.[419] In a similar vein, a cognitive link may have been created between Egypt and coloured Egyptian hardstones.[420] This may have come to exist through the repetitive co-occurrence between Egyptian imports and these materials, in particular since the objects that are carved out of these materials combine their specific material properties with other distinctly 'un-Roman' object parameters, such as conceptual styles, subject matters like sphinxes and pharaohs, object types like obelisks and clepsydras, and hieroglyphic inscriptions.[421] The specific object parameters of Egyptian imports enhanced one another and made the presence of these objects as strong as possible. As a result, Egyptian objects that were selected by Romans for transport to Rome stand out in otherness, and possibly entailed specific notions of Egypt as well. The atypical material make-up of Egyptian imports in Rome may indicate that these particular connotations were important motivators for Roman engagements with Egyptian objects. As the previous discussion has demonstrated, the artefacts in coloured hardstones that ended up in Rome are not typically Egyptian, since there were many (and sometimes many more)

417. Müller (1969) 38 and Lembke (1994) 53, respectively.

418. On the reinforcement of the exotic character of typically Egyptian sculptural types and themes through naturally coloured stones see Lembke (1994) 36. On material use as part of a deliberate Roman strategy of 'othering', aiming in particular at a certain 'distinct Egyptianness', see Versluys (2013a) 250-257, esp. 256. On 'othering' as a universal and essentially unconscious concept within religious practices, and the role of materials and material properties in this see Mol (2015b) 97-104, esp. 102-104.

419. *Supra*, 60.

420. Since this cognitive link may already have existed before the Roman Imperial period, as the discussion in section IV.2.1.2 has suggested, it is possible that Romans capitalised upon a pre-established tradition and thereby further strengthened the mental association between the material properties of Egyptian imports and notions of Egypt.

421. Through the repetitive co-occurrence between, on the one hand, these parameters, by themselves and in relation to one another, and, on the other hand, Egyptian imports, a complex and dynamic web of object parameters and cognitive links may have been created, in which notions of Egypt will have always been more or less prominently present; cf. Versluys (2016), esp. 85. On the enmeshment of cognitive links between so-called Aegyptiaca and notions of Egypt, which may involve concealing and subsequent revealing, see Mol (2013).

typologically and stylistically similar alternatives in lime- and sandstone. However, the efficacy of parallels made from these softstones would have been less strong due to these materials' less potent material properties to signal something 'different' or 'Egyptian'. Hence, the persistent selection by Romans of Egyptian objects for transport to Rome in coloured hardstones, which emphasised their presence as something distinctly different and possibly specifically Egyptian, may indeed indicate that (intentional or unintentional) 'othering' was considered as an important aspect of these objects by Romans.

2.2 ROMAN IMPERIAL PRODUCTIONS

Among the objects of Roman Imperial date in the studied sample that were not evidently imported as finished objects from Egypt, lime- and sandstone are again altogether absent. The majority of Roman Imperial objects are carved from white marble. Other frequently occurring materials are naturally coloured stones of Egyptian origin and some with non-Egyptian origins. The dating of these objects is not always clear. As the entries in this study's corpus and Table 4.1.7 in the previous section have demonstrated, this mainly results from the current state of preservation and the absence of inscriptions. If we only take those objects into account that are invariably dated to the Roman Imperial period, the sample contains white marble, granite, granodiorite, travertine, and *bigio antico*. With the exception of the statue of a baboon in *bigio antico* (no. 129) and four relief columns in granodiorite from Elba Island (no. 113-116), the materials are all of Egyptian origins.

The observation that Egyptian materials were used in Roman Imperial times for the production of objects with conceptual styles and/or originally Egyptian subject matters deserves closer attention. As we have seen above, in particular granite and granodiorite from Aswan were extensively used for the fabrication of statuary and other objects in Pharaonic times, and it appears that their popularity continued in Roman Imperial times, both within and outside Egypt, for the production of so-called Aegyptiaca in Rome. This is clearly reflected in the example of the two over-life-size statues in the Vatican Museum, which were found together with other 'Aegyptiaca' in the Horti Sallustiani.[422] One of them is a Ptolemaic 'original' that represents queen Arsinoe II. The identification and dating of the other sculpture are disputed, but according to a recent hypothesis it appears to be a Roman emulation based on the Ptolemaic statue of Arsinoe II. Indeed, there are striking similarities between the two statues with regard to their iconographical scheme, stylistic execution, and dimensions. Furthermore, the materials from which the sculptures are carved are comparable, as both statues are made from granitoid stones from Aswan. However, whereas the Ptolemaic statue is made from pink granite, its emulation is carved from a stone that is gradational between granite and granodiorite, and which may even classify as granodiorite proper. In other words, the materials used are comparable but not identical. It is evident that the two blocks of stone were not extracted from the exact same quarry location. This can hardly be surprising when we consider the chronological distance between the extraction of the blocks and the large variation of granitoid stones at Aswan.[423] Nevertheless, if the Vatican sculpture is indeed a Roman emulation made after the Ptolemaic statue of Arsinoe II, the similarities between the materials used do suggest that care was taken to select a block of stone that closely resembled the material of the Ptolemaic model. Of course, we do not know whether the emulation was carved from a block of imported raw material that was locally available in Rome, perhaps in one of the city's stone repositories, or whether it was obtained directly from the quarries at Aswan on special commission, which might attest to a specific knowledge of where to obtain stones with particular material characteristics. However, it is a fact that the

422. See *supra*, 166-167 no. 077 and 202-203 no. 095.

423. The block used for the statue of Arsinoe II was most likely quarried in the early 3rd century BC, while that of the emulation may have been obtained in Roman Imperial times. Since the quarries at Aswan were continuously worked between the Ptolemaic and Roman periods, and considering that they comprise an area of 20 km^2 in which large variations naturally occur, it would have been exceptional, if not impossible, to find two exactly identical blocks of stone, in particular when the moment of extraction is separated by several centuries. Even blocks of stone that were likely extracted at the same time and from the same quarry location, as may be suggested, for instance, for the blocks of the contemporaneous sculptures in granite of Arsinoe II and Ptolemy II (*supra*, 164-165 no. 076) or the two granodiorite statues of Thoth of Nectanebo II (*supra*, 152-155 no. 070-071), are not entirely identical in textural and structural terms.

sculpture is carved from granitoid stone from Aswan, like the Ptolemaic model on which it was likely based. Therefore, the material selection was presumably determined by a desire to recreate the sculpture after a particular model.

This is consistent with the commonly held assumption that Egyptian-looking artefacts of Roman manufacture were often based on Egyptian imports,[424] and it shows that material choice was an integral part of this process of emulation. Moreover, there are some indications to suggest that a development in material use for the production of so-called Aegyptiaca took place *within* the Roman Imperial period. The statue of a baboon from the Iseum Campense is one of the few Roman Imperial objects in the studied sample that can be precisely dated.[425] The consular names in the Latin inscription allow the sculpture to be dated to the year 159 AD. Like the previously discussed emulation of Arsinoe II, this statue was likely made after the example of Egyptian imports. Two Late Period sculptures of Thoth were found in proximity to this Roman baboon, and all three were likely on display in the Iseum Campense, albeit perhaps in different parts of the sanctuary.[426] A comparison between these three sculptures reveals close iconographical and stylistic similarities. All three show a squatting baboon on a rectangular base, sitting with its front paws perched on bent knees and with its tail resting to the right side of its body. The sculptures are also comparable in terms of their dimensions; the figures of the baboons are just over one meter tall. Based on these resemblances, the Roman baboon is usually considered to have been modelled after the two Egyptian imports, which were likely on display in the Isis sanctuary at the time when the Roman baboon was manufactured.[427] However, there is a notable difference between the materials from which the three sculptures in question are made. Although the stone of the Roman baboon generally resembles that of the two Egyptian imports, particularly in terms of the medium grey colour that it shares with the Aswan granodiorite of the Late Period baboons, the *bigio antico* from which it is carved is one of the very few naturally coloured materials in the studied sample that do not originate from an Egyptian source.[428]

Interestingly, a similar phenomenon can be observed at the Villa Hadriana near Tivoli. The sculptural decoration of the so-called Canopus[429] included a group of at least six statues in conceptual styles, representing various Egyptian deities and other subject matters.[430] These sculptures are dated to the Hadrianic period,[431] and they are invariably made from black and grey limestones, of which some exhibit extensive white veining. These are

424. Swetnam-Burland (2015) 60; cf. Roullet (1972) 18 and Lembke (1994) 41-42.

425. Cf. *supra*, 270-271 no. 129.

426. This might be indicated by the respective find locations of these three sculptures; for the Late Period statues of Thoth, see *supra*, 152-155 no. 070-071.

427. Lembke (1994) 238 E36; cf. Gregarek (1999) 210 no. C111 and Swetnam-Burland (2015) 60 and n. 138. The importation of objects from Egypt to the Iseum Campense is usually ascribed to the reign of Domitian who had the sanctuary restored and refurbished after the devastating fire in the Campus Martius of 80 AD: Lembke (1994) 92-92, and 135.

428. Other sculptures of baboons in *bigio antico* that reproduce a similar iconographical scheme in are in Rome, Musei Capitolini, inv. 2937/S (H. 75 cm; Ensoli Vittozzi 1990, 39 no. 6), and Liverpool, World Museum, inv. 59.148.57 (H. 46 cm; 2nd century AD or later; Roullet 1972, 126 no. 251, and Bartman 2011, 176 with fig. 12.8).

429. See Grenier (1989) for a reconstruction of the sculptural decoration of the nymphaeum as a monumental map of Egypt with religious underpinnings that focuses on the regenerative power of the Nile. For criticism on this reconstruction see Versluys (2002) 24-26 with n. 71.

430. These six statues were excavated in 1736 and are now in the Musei Vaticani, Museo Gregoriano Egizio, inv. 22801 (Isis/priestess), 22802 (Isis/musician priestess), 22817 (dedicant), 22815 (Ptah), 22816 (priest/young god: Nefertem?), 22807 (double-faced herm of Isis/Apis or Osiris/Apis) (see Raeder 1983, 115-119 no. I.137-138 and I.140-143, and Grenier 1989, 936-942 and 951-952). On the basis of similarities in dimensions, subject matters, and stone types, several other statues may be added to this group, although their provenance from the so-called Canopus is not secured. These include three statues in München, Staatliche Sammlung Ägyptischer Kunst, inv. Gl. WAF 32 (Min/Horus) and Gl. WAF 14-15 (Osirantinoos) (see Grenier 1989, 943-945, and Raeder 1983, 154 no. III.34 and 151-152 no. III.27-28, respectively), three fragmentarily preserved statues in Madrid, Museo Nacional del Prado, inv. 413E-415E (perhaps found in the Villa Hadriana around 1650?; Grenier 1989, 935 and 942, *contra* Raeder 1983, 183 no. IV.10-12), and sculptures of a male and female standing figure found in 1769 in the Villa Hadriana (Grenier 1989, 942-943 and 959-960, and Raeder 1983, 44 no. I.19-20). Grenier (1989, 945-946) adds another sculpture that is only known from an early 18th century engraving.

431. Malaise (1972a) 105-107 no. 3-8, Roullet (1972) 93 no. 126, 94 no. 128-129, 100 no. 149, 116 no. 205, and 118 no. 213, and Gregarek (1999) 195 no. C10-11 and 201-202 no. C48-49. The additional sculptures in München (Roullet 1972a, 96 no. 139 and 106 no. 168-169), Madrid (Roullet 1972a, 106 no. 167b and 117-118 no. 211-212) and the specimens found in 1769 (Roullet 1972, 123 no. 233-234) are also dated to the Hadrianic period.

so-called *neri (*and *bigi*?) *antichi*, which were obtained from several (non-Egyptian) sources across the Mediterranean, including Turkey, Tunisia, Greece, and Italy.[432] The use of naturally coloured stones from other than Egyptian sources for the production of objects with originally Egyptian subject matters and in conceptual styles in the Hadrianic and Antonine periods is evident here. This is particularly interesting in comparison to the dark coloured materials of so-called Aegyptiaca from the Iseum in Benevento of Domitianic age, which all originate from Egypt.[433] How can this apparent shift of material choice be understood?

While exploring possible explanations for this observed trend it is important to note that it was not limited to the production of objects that we call Aegyptiaca. Egyptian greywacke was among the most widely used dark coloured stones for Roman sculpture during the 1st and early 2nd centuries AD, particularly in the Flavian period. However, in the course of the first half of the 2nd century AD, its use started to wane and greywacke fell completely out of use around the middle of that century.[434] Harald Mielsch suggests that this development resulted from a shortage of workmen with the required skills to work hardstones like greywacke, but this is not very likely since the production of sculpture in other hard materials like granite continued over the course of the 2nd century AD.[435] Instead, the reason probably has to be sought in contemporary developments in Roman stone production and supply. The decrease in the use of dark coloured Egyptian stones like greywacke and granodiorite in the early 2nd century AD coincided with an increased use of other dark coloured stones, notably *nero antico*, *bigio antico*, and *bigio morato*, and by the mid-2nd century AD dark Egyptian stones were largely replaced by these coloured materials.[436] The motivations for this changed pattern of supply are not entirely clear, but it is possible that practical and economic considerations were involved. These marbles and limestones stones are considerably softer than hardstones like greywacke and granodiorite, which implies that they can be more easily dressed into the desired shape.[437] Moreover, as blocks of these softstones can be quarried with comparatively greater ease, these materials may have been supplied at lower prices.[438]

Yet, regardless of the specific reasons, it is a fact that in the course of the 2nd century AD, a certain number of sculptures were produced with originally Egyptian subject matters and in conceptual styles, but from non-Egyptian materials, whereas sculptures with similar thematic and stylistic characteristics were made from Egyptian stones earlier. This shift is part of a wider development in Roman stone supply and demonstrates to what extent the production of so-called Aegyptiaca had become an integral part of the Roman world. However, while no longer originating from Egypt, the selection of alternative materials retained the important aspect of visual appearance. *Nero* and *bigio antico* resemble

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432. The so-called Aegyptiaca in question are most likely carved from *nero antico* from Göktepe, Turkey: see Bruno *et al*. (2015) 463; on *nero* and *bigio antico* in general see *supra*, 76 and n. 318.

433. The studied sample is not of much help in this respect. The only two objects that have invariably been dated to the Roman Imperial period and that are made from dark coloured materials are two sphinxes in Aswan granodiorite. Of these, one has been dated to the first half of the 1st century AD (which fits the pattern described here), whereas the other specimen is dated to the Roman Imperial period without further specification (see *supra*, 204-207 no. 096 and 097, respectively). Domitianic 'Aegyptiaca' from Benevento in dark coloured stones are made from either Aswan granodiorite or greywacke from the Wadi Hammamat. In granodiorite: two baboons (Museo del Sannio, inv. 1893 and 1897: Müller 1969, 41-42 no. 252 and 48 no. 256, Gregarek 1999, 209-210 no. C106-107, and *Egittomania* 2006, 137 no. II.88); a falcon (Museo del Sannio, inv. 1896: Müller 1969, 47-48 no. 255 and Gregarek 1999, 209 no. C107); a statue of Domitian as pharaoh (Museo del Sannio, inv. 1903: Müller 1969, 55-56 no. 260 and *Egittomania* 2006, 138 no. II.92); an Apis bull (Museo del Sannio, inv. 1918: Müller 1969, 86-87 no. 280, Gregarek 1999, 209 no. C106, and *Egittomania* 2006, 141 no. II.98); a statue of an Egyptian deity with an *ankh*-sign (Museo del Sannio, inv. 1919: Müller 1969, 88-91 no. 281, Gregarek 1999, 193 no. C1, and *Egittomania* 2006, 141 no. II.100). In greywacke: royal head (Museo del Sannio, inv. 1901: Müller 1969, 60-61 no. 263 and *Egittomania* 2006, 138 no. II.93).

434. Belli Pasqua (1995) 52-56.

435. Mielsch (1985) 26; cf. Belli Pasqua (1995) 57.

436. Gregarek (1999) 37 and 112; on the increased use in the 2nd century AD of *neri antichi* from Tunisia and Turkey, especially from the reign of emperor Hadrian onwards, see Russell (2013a) 92 and Bruno *et al*. (2015), respectively.

437. See, e.g., Lazzarini (2002) 265 and Bruno *et al*. (2015) 467.

438. This may be suggested by the lower price of *marmor lesbium*, namely *bigio antico* from the island of Lesbos, in comparison to Aswan granite on Diocletian's Price Edict: see *supra*, 53 and Table 2.2.3. See also Roullet (1972, 19), who notes that "Roman Egyptomania inspired a new taste for coloured stones not used, or used only at an early period, in Egypt itself. The Romans were the first to use the Egyptian red porphyry, never worked in Egypt […] Dark coloured marble, from Greece or Italy, was much in favour, especially in Hadrian's time. It was a cheaper substitute for Egyptian stones and was easier to work"; cf. Müskens (2014b) 127-128 with n. 12.

Egyptian greywacke and granodiorite in general terms of colour, and more specifically the white and yellowish calcitic veining that is sometimes observed in these marbles is reminiscent of the feldspar phenocrysts that commonly occur in Aswan granodiorites. As such, the *bigio antico* from which the baboon from the Iseum Campense is made can probably be understood as a substitute for Egyptian granodiorite from which the two Late Period baboons were made, which likely served as a model for the former sculpture.[439]

2.2.1 Conclusions

The important question that follows from the preceding discussion is what the different material choices implied for Roman perceptions of these so-called Egyptian objects. For example, while all three sculptures of baboons from the Iseum Campense share iconographical and stylistic similarities, were the two Late Period baboons that represent Thoth in Aswan granodiorite regarded differently than their Roman Imperial counterpart in an Egyptian-looking stone that originated from elsewhere? Although not every Roman viewer would have had this particular knowledge, we can reasonably assume that Egyptian materials could be distinguished from those originating from elsewhere, at least by some viewers, as the discussion on Roman appreciations of stones has demonstrated.[440] Did this influence the way in which the objects in question were perceived?

Such questions are difficult to answer in the absence of contemporary Roman viewer responses. As demonstrated in section IV.2.1.3 above, objects carved from naturally coloured stones could signal ideas of otherness and perhaps Egyptianness, in particular in combination with other distinctly 'un-Roman' object parameters like conceptual styles and specific subject matters. It is evident that the Roman-made statue of the baboon *looks* distinctly Egyptian, as attested by the specific combination between, on the one hand, the natural colouration of the stone from which it is made, which, as argued above, resembles Aswan granodiorite in terms of colour and texture, and, on the other hand, its stylistic, thematic, and iconographical object parameters. Since the baboon in *bigio antico* from the Iseum Campense is part of a series of statues of baboons carved out of this stone, which were all manufactured at a later date than the two typologically and stylistically similar Late Period baboons in Aswan granodiorite,[441] it could be that the grey colour of *bigio antico* had become conceptually linked to the particular iconographical scheme of a baboon seated on a base executed in a conceptual style, and that the Egyptian background of the materials that previously had been used for the production of typologically and stylistically similar sculptures was gradually concealed. Since there are no indications to confirm that the Egyptian authenticity of stone materials played a role in Roman perceptions of the objects that we call Aegyptiaca,[442]

439. Cf. Gregarek (1999, 111): "In dieses Jahrhundert [i.e., 2nd century AD, Hadrianic and Antonine periods] datieren die meisten Darstellungen ägyptischer Gottheiten, die überwiegend die schwarzen „Ersatzmarmore" Nero und Bigio antico sowie Bigio morato verwendeten und damit, einfacher zu beschaffen und zu bearbeiten, den vorzugsweise im 1. Jahrhundert verwendeten Basalt und Granit ablösten". In similar vein, the occasional use of *rosso antico* (from the Mani Peninsula, Greece) for the production of objects that we call Aegyptiaca in the 2nd and 3rd centuries AD can perhaps be understood as a substitute for pink Aswan granite (or to imitate the effect of coppery bronze?: Gregarek 2002, 206, cf. *supra*, n. 255). Relevant examples in *rosso antico* include: 1). Statue of Antinous in Munich, Staatliche Sammlung Ägyptischer Kunst, inv. Gl. WAF 24 (reign of Hadrian; from the Villa Hadriana?; Grenier 1989, 966 with n. 78 and pl. 37; cf. Roullet 1972, 86 no. 98: "cut in red marble to imitate some Egyptian dark stone"). 2). A bust of an Isis priest in Rome, Musei Capitolini, inv. 1214/S (reign of Hadrian, from the Villa Hadriana?; *Iside* 1997, 418-420 V.39 [S. Ensoli]). 3-4). Two naophoros statues in a private collection, one of them inscribed with pseudo-hieroglyphs (3rd century AD, said to be from Rome, Campo dei Fiori; *Marmi colorati* 2002, 344-345 no. 46-47 [D. Del Bufalo]). On substitution stones, see *supra*, section II.2.2.2.

440. See *supra*, section II.2.2.

441. Cf. *supra*, n. 428.

442. According to recent translations, an inscription on the north face of Domitian's obelisk on Piazza Navona would add the word 'true', or 'real' to specify the granite from which it is made: "He [i.e., Domitian] has erected this obelisk in *real* granite for his father Re-Horakhty […]" (my italics). This translation was first suggested by Grenier (1987, 939 with n. 7), and it was later followed by Lembke (1994, 211) and Darwall-Smith (1996, 146). However, according to a recent reading by Prof. O.E. Kaper, the relevant passage is ambiguous and the suggested translation speculative (pers. comm. 5 April 2016). Kaper agrees instead with an earlier reading by Erman (1917, 19; later followed in Malaise 1972a, 205 n. 2), according to which the passage *m inr m3t* ("of granite stone") is followed by *mḥ*, which translates as "2 ¼ cubits high" and should be a reference to the dimensions of the obelisk. However, since the obelisk is ca. 16.5 m high, and the dimensions in the passage correspond to ca. 1.13 m, it cannot refer to the height of the obelisk, as Erman already observed;

and as the three sculptures were probably on display in the same use-context, is it possible, then, that the Roman baboon, like the two 'originals' from Late Period Egypt, evoked similar associations through their specific object parameters, regardless of the different geological provenance of the stones from which these respective statues were carved?

Moreover, if certain objects were able to evoke particular associations of otherness and Egyptianness through specific object parameters, what about artefacts with different properties? As the analysis in section IV.1.2.6 has shown, most objects depicting Isis and Sarapis contrast sharply in materials used and stylistic execution with Egyptian objects that were transported to Rome and the aforementioned Roman emulations. Because of the white marble from which artefacts portraying Isis and Sarapis are carved and their naturalistic stylistic execution, these objects have much in common with representations of other, 'quintessentially Roman' deities, like Venus or Jupiter. Indeed, it is often only through the presence of particular attributes or iconographical details that such statues can be identified as Isis and Sarapis with certainty.[443] Could it be, then, that the specific material and stylistic properties of objects representing Isis and Sarapis evoked associations that were not so much about the 'foreign' and the Egyptian 'other' as that they were about the 'familiar', essentially Roman 'self' instead, and that they were perceived accordingly by their Roman viewers? In other words, did these objects affect Roman viewers differently than the aforementioned Egyptian imports and Roman-made emulations *because* they were made from white marble and were executed in naturalistic styles (regardless of their originally Egyptian subject matters)?

In a recent contribution, Mol has pointed out that the emphatically Roman visual appearance of statues of the originally Egyptian goddess Isis was by no means exceptional in the Roman world.[444] The Roman pantheon included other 'foreign' gods, like Cybele and Ceres, and they too were often represented in white marble and naturalistic styles, that is, like essentially 'Roman' or 'familiar' deities. Mol hypothesises that this might be linked to the fact that such sculptures were actually venerated in religious practices, in contrast to the numerous Egyptian imports that, according to her, would have mainly served to create a distinctly Egyptian *decorum*. Therefore, while certain different, 'un-Roman' elements were retained, perhaps for reasons of what the author calls ritual necessity, the incorporation of non-local elements into the Roman cults of Isis would have had its limits. Considering this, Mol wonders if it "could be that this goddess [i.e., Isis] had to remain recognisable and accessible in order to be venerated by Romans, and that therefore she could not be portrayed in Egyptian granite and in an Egyptian style?".[445]

This cognitive approach is interesting to conclude the present discussion, not only because it provides a hypothesis for the striking absence of Isis statues in coloured hardstones and conceptual styles in Rome and the Roman world,[446] or because it may help in explaining the predominant material and stylistic

according to Kaper the relevant passage might refer to the width of the shaft's base. For an assessment of the relevance of concepts of authenticity for Roman understandings of the objects that we call Aegyptiaca in general, see Swetnam-Burland (2007), esp. 114-119; for Domitian's obelisk, cf. *supra*, 190-191 no. 089.

443. Consequently, problems arise if distinctive features are not available, as the problematic identification of the so-called Venus Esquilina effectively illustrates (*supra*, 110 no. 028, and n. 100).

444. Mol (2014), esp. 114-117.

445. My translation; original quotation in Dutch (Mol 2014, 117): "Zou het zo kunnen zijn dat deze godin [i.e., Isis] herkenbaar en toegankelijk moest blijven om echt aanbeden te kunnen worden door Romeinen, en dat zij juist daarom niet van Egyptisch graniet en in Egyptische stijl kon worden weergegeven?".

446. This observation, already made by Mol (2014, 115 and 2015b, 105), is supported by the results of this study. The sculptures in the studied sample that are invariably identified as representations of the goddess Isis are consistently made from white marble and in naturalistic styles. In the case of statues with other material and stylistic characteristics, the identification of the subject matter as Isis is either contested (*supra*, 262-263 no. 125; moreover, the dimensions of this particular statuette argue against a function as cult statue) or speculative, at best (*supra*, 280-281 no. 134). An Isis statue found in 1642 in the area of the Iseum Campense may be an exception: according to contemporary viewers, it was made of Egyptian stone, which, as Lembke (1994, 230-231 E23) suggests, may be Egyptian (coloured) hardstone. However, this suggestion cannot be verified since the present whereabouts of the statue are unknown. A similar trend can be observed at other sites than Rome. There are a few Egyptian imports that are believed to represent Isis in coloured stones and conceptual styles; however, like with the examples from Rome, the identification as Isis is not always evident. These examples include a small head of a statuette of Isis and a fragment of a statuette of the enthroned goddess (?) from Benevento (both Ptolemaic) (Müller 1969, 57-58 no. 261 and 111-112, respectively); a headless bust of Isis (?) from Cumae (late Ptolemaic) (*Egittomania* 2006, 83 no. II.12 [E. Nuzzo]), another headless bust of Isis from Ohrid (Ptolemaic), and a head of Isis from Florence, dated to the Late Period (*Iside* 1997, 483 no. V.141 [M.C. Guidotti]).

configuration of architectural elements in the studied corpus,[447] but also because it once more emphasises the way in which objects are capable of affecting their viewers in different ways, in particular through their material and stylistic characteristics. Therefore, while we often still categorise artefacts carved from white marble and executed in naturalistic styles that portray deities like Isis and Sarapis, who had become part and parcel of the Roman pantheon, as Aegyptiaca, or, more specifically, as Egyptianising artefacts, and thereby presume from the onset that such objects were perceived as quintessentially 'Egyptian' by Romans, a bottom-up, object-centred perspective indicates that they could signal many other things than 'Egyptianness' or 'otherness' to their Roman viewers, including notions about the (Roman) 'self'.

447. The analysis in section IV.1.2.5 has shown that the large majority of architectural objects is carved out of white marble and executed in conceptual styles, as opposed to marble statuary that nearly always occurs in combination with naturalistic styles. If the marble architectural reliefs were part of the walls of sanctuaries dedicated to Isis and Sarapis and therefore functioned in religious settings, as is usually presumed, and if they had to retain a certain familiarity to remain conceivable by Roman viewers, as Mol suggests, then their execution in coloured hardstones may have been one conceptual step too far away for Romans. This might help explain the scarcity of architectural elements in coloured materials of Egyptian origin and with conceptual styles, which is the most notable difference between the corpora of Egyptian imports in Rome and Alexandria (cf. *supra*, n. 409). The use of white marble for architectural elements may have prevented their agency from becoming too strong and hence inconceivable, while their execution in conceptual styles may have contributed to the religious apartness that is needed to enable religious experience (cf. Mol 2015b, 97-105). This notion warrants further research.