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**Author:** Mol, Eva Martine  
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CHAPTER 2: HISTORIOGRAPHICAL ANALYSIS AND VISUAL RECEPTION HISTORY OF AEGYPTIACA: FROM ARTEFACTION TO PERCEPTION

2.1 Introduction
This chapter presents a historiographical analysis of studies focusing on Egyptian artefacts in the Roman world and a reception history of Aegyptiaca. How did scholars interpret Aegyptiaca and on which foundations were the interpretations and classifications based? The purpose of this chapter is to obtain a clearer view on what has previously been done on the subject and how thoughts on Egyptian artefacts have developed through time. This will not only lead to a refinement of the scope, but also to a historiographical framework in which the research issues can be positioned. In addition to a brief overview of Egyptian finds attested outside Egypt during the pre-Roman period and their problems with regards to interpretation and classification, previous studies dedicated to Aegyptiaca in Roman Pompeii and Rome will be discussed. Although the present thesis describes the way in which Aegyptiaca functioned in Pompeii (historiographically, research on Pompeii has always been intimately linked to the capital of the Roman Empire), examples from Rome shall also be included in this chapter. First a brief diachronic overview of the appearance of Egyptian artefacts in contexts outside Egypt will be presented in order to illustrate the variety of objects and dealings with Egyptian artefacts as well as the difficulty that arises when interpreting such artefacts and how it can benefit the present inquiry. An overview of the study and the reception of Aegyptiaca artefacts will follow.
2.2 Historical context: tracing Egypt outside Egypt

2.2.1 Aegyptiaca outside Egypt: mapping issues in interpretation and classifications of exotic objects

By way of an introduction to the historical context of Aegyptiaca, the distribution of Egyptian objects outside Egypt will now be briefly charted while focusing on issues of interpretation concerning culturally defined objects. Egyptian objects (as imports or in the form of locally produced artefacts with an Egyptian style) can be found in a large number of contexts outside Egypt and are geographically and chronologically widespread. It is therefore valuable to demonstrate the variety of the cultural biography of Egyptian material culture outside Egypt. Due to the scope of this dissertation it cannot be an inclusive overview. It is believed however that, by discussing the history of appearances of Egyptian artefacts on the Italian peninsula and their reception among scholars, a broader framework can be created in order to contextualise the dataset and its studies. Moreover, by illustrating the interpretations and classifications scholars applied when interpreting Egyptian artefacts from pre-Roman contexts, it becomes possible to create a deeper understanding of the problem regarding the present case study. The reason for this is that Egyptian artefacts and Egyptian styled objects outside Egypt can be attested as early as the Bronze Age, as for instance, close to Egypt, in Kerma.\footnote{E.g., the finds of Egyptian objects in Nubian Burials of the Classic Kerma Period as published in Minor 2012.} But also in the Bronze Age Aegean, Syria (especially Byblos in Dynasty XII) and the Mittanian State. Even in Egypt itself earlier styles and objects have been observed that were re-used in later dynasties.\footnote{In the Aegean, for instance, Egyptian objects are found on Crete and Thera; however, also on the mainland of Greece these objects were frequently attested (Brown 1975; Crowley 1989; see Lambrou-Phillipson 1990 for a specified catalogue of Egyptian and Egyptianising artefacts found in Greece). In Palestine, scarabs were imported from Egypt but were also locally produced in unparalleled quantities during the Middle Bronze Age. Interestingly, while this period mainly counts locally produced scarabs, the following period (19th Dynasty) witnessed an increase in imported scarabs from Egypt (Ben-Tor 2011, 29-30). During the reign of Ramses II, too, an intensification of Egyptian cultural influence, not only in the Palestine region, but also in Southern Canaan could be witnessed. It is argued that ‘Egyptianisation’ reflects the adoption of Egyptian culture by local elites and an influx of Egyptians in these regions (Weinstein 1975, 1-16; 1981, 18-22; Killebrew 2004, 309-43). For more information on the Egyptian influence in Byblos, see Smith 1969, 277-81. On the re-use of pharaonic material and objects during later periods in Egypt, see Ashton 2001, 16-9; Savvopoulos 2010, 84.} For example Mycenae in the Late Bronze Age has yielded a multitude of imported objects from Egypt and as well as the Levant (Syro-Palestineia, Cyprus), Mesopotamia, and Anatolia; which in this
period are commonly referred to by scholars as *Orientalia*.\(^{12}\) Looking more closely at the choices made for Egyptian ware in Mycenae, it can be observed that, although faience objects in this case are the most frequently attested material, no particular object dominated the dataset.\(^{13}\) The objects furthermore are mainly found in funerary contexts. They represent small items (e.g., beads, seals, and scarabs) and now and again objects made of ivory or glass.\(^ {14}\) Minoan Crete holds another example of importing and local re-interpreting of Egyptian artefacts. For instance, the Egyptian Middle Kingdom statuette of User found in the northwestern area of the Central Court at Knossos testify of this.\(^ {15}\) All the contexts include a very specific adaptation and adoption of artefacts from abroad. The objects vary, as does the interpretation and the reason why they ended up in their specific contexts. Scholars have proposed three explanations as to why particular objects were imported and for the specific appropriation of eastern motifs in the Late Bronze Age Aegean: artistic usefulness, novelty appeal, and compatibility of symbolism.\(^ {16}\) It is interesting to observe that the objects and the contexts differ greatly with respect to what is attested in Rome and Pompeii in the Roman period. It can therefore be argued that studying such dissimilarities is significant in order to learn more about the use of objects as well as the ideas behind the choices for certain objects or material. However, while these Bronze Age contexts seem to comprise of a rather uncomplicated case with respect to Egyptian artefacts and their utilisation and appreciation, it is difficult to establish the nature of *Orientalia* from an emic perspective; the circumstances of appropriation may have been much more complex. The issue of establishing what is (perceived as) foreign and how this is historiographically dealt with becomes much clearer when considering examples from later periods. To establish this, three cases from pre-Roman contexts were selected: (1) the Archaic period and the issue of Oriental artefacts, (2) the Punic world and the classification of Phoenician style, and (3) the Hellenistic period and Aegyptiaca. Each will be discussed in order to clarify the intricacies met when interpreting exotic artefacts.

\(^{12}\) On the problem with the terms Orientalising and Orientalia, see Purcell 2006, 21-30.
\(^{13}\) See Cline 1995, 91.
\(^{14}\) It is suggested that the imports of Aegyptiaca to Mycenae were mainly remnants from principal trade in for example wine, oil, grain and textiles, Cline 1995, 92.
\(^{15}\) See Gilla and Padgham 2005, 42-59. Such finds in Nubia, the Levant, and Anatolia are interpreted as part of an elite gift exchange system, dedications in sanctuaries, the movement of specialised Egyptian workers, portable funerary statues and looting. Minoans made choices not only regarding the Egyptian goods but also which elements of such goods they applied to their individual Egyptianising objects Phillips 2006, 297-9; Phillips 1991.
The Archaic period and Orientalising objects

During the period following the Bronze Age a disruption in cultural contact and the influx of Egyptian objects could be witnessed. From the 10th to the 9th century BC onwards, one can slowly and in small amounts observe Aegyptiaca again outside Egypt on, for example, the Greek mainland (e.g., at Lefkandi and Fortetsa). Following the Dark Ages i.e., the Archaic period from c.800 BC on, the influence of Egyptian artefacts starts to become more common as imports at the Isis grave at Eleusis, Eleutherna, Kommos indicate. During the Late Geometric Period (760-700 BC) a substantial number of imports could be attested, which were subsequently distributed further afield. This was caused by an increase in cultural connectivity and by intensified east-west relations between Neo-Assyria, Egypt, and the Aegean. And not only in the Aegean, but also in Euboea, Campania and northern Greece an increase in the number of Aegyptiaca can be witnessed. In the Neo-Assyrian Kingdom imports from Egypt are frequently attested, pointing to economic relations between the two empires. In addition to gold, which was their main interest, the Assyrians seem to have been attracted to other Egyptian luxury items, which were imported to the benefit of the Empire's ruling class. Especially linen became a popular export product. The Egyptian objects imported from Egypt during this period in the Aegean consisted mainly of scarabs and faience figurines in the shape of Egyptian divinities and symbols, as well as faience vases. The influence of the presence of these objects in the Aegean was significant, as it inspired the incorporation of Egyptian techniques and forms to create local products. For instance imported Egyptian faience beads in the area seemingly stimulated the production of Archaic Greek faiences. At the end of the 8th up to the 6th century BC this subsequently resulted in a Greek Orientalising genre of art. This was not only attributable to Egyptian artefacts; the Archaic period experienced a general intensification in the presence and production of

19 According to Elat (1978), it is due to Egypt's geographic isolation that the Assyrian kings could not base their economic relations with Egypt solely on tribute and booty, as they did with other lands under their domination. The need to import goods (e.g., gold, fine linen garments, minerals, papyrus, etc.) made them, in turn, dependent upon the cooperation of Arab tribes in southern Philistia and northern Sinai, and upon Philistine cities trading with Egypt by sea or land routes, see Elat 1978, 34.
20 See Helck 1979, 77-80, 105, 124, 128.
21 See Helck 1979, 172-82.
oriental and orientalised artefacts, which also occur in Italic contexts.\textsuperscript{22} Precisely the denomination Oriental, which serves to characterise the intensification of goods and to classify a visual defined category of non-Greek objects, is relevant to the present case study. The term ‘Oriental’ when applied to the Greek world has recently been carefully deconstructed in Ann Gunther’s \textit{Greek Art and the Orient} (2012). In it the categories Greek and Oriental are questioned and the emphasis is shifted to modes of contact and cultural transfers within a broader regional setting. Furthermore, Greek encounters with the Near East and Egypt are placed in the context of Neo-Assyria and it is attempted to provide both a social and a cultural embedding for the application of Oriental styles as meaningful in transfer, ownership, and display.\textsuperscript{23} Because if Greek culture shared that widely and deeply with its Oriental neighbours, can we continue to classify objects as ‘exotica’ or ‘novelties’, when imported and transformed into a Greek idiom?\textsuperscript{24} This very relevant issue, as discussed below, also counts towards the Egyptian artefacts on the Italian peninsula.

This example demonstrates problems that also occur within interpretation of Aegyptiaca in Roman contexts. For instance, between the 8\textsuperscript{th} and 6\textsuperscript{th} century BC, it has become notably difficult to separate Egyptian imports from locally produced Oriental wares, or from imported Oriental wares from outside Egypt. When interpreting objects from Italic and Etruscan contexts dated to the Orientalising period, ‘Egyptian’ turns into a difficult term, as the objects frequently display a generic ‘Eastern’ style which could rather be classified as Phoenician or Phoenician-inspired work than Egyptian. A well known example of such an item is the Bocchoris vase (fig. 2.1), found in a tomb at the Etruscan site of Tarquinia, which is an imported faience vase displaying the cartouche of the pharaoh Bocchoris (c.720-715 BC).\textsuperscript{25} Although the item was clearly imported, and judging by its detail and material a very precious

\begin{itemize}
\item\textsuperscript{22} Surprisingly little has been published on Aegyptiaca dating from this period. However, for a description and analysis of Aegyptiaca with regard to Sardinia, Malta, Turkey and Greece, see Höbl 1985; 1986; 1980; 1978. For a general overview on the Orientalising period in Etruria, see Riva 2006.
\item\textsuperscript{23} Gunther 2012. Although historiographically the studies on Orientalia during the 8\textsuperscript{th} and 7\textsuperscript{th} period and on Aegyptiaca from the Roman period are comparable, information can be acquired by comparing its appropriation strategies. The study of Aegyptiaca in the Roman period and Orientalia are separate disciplines. An increase of cultural contact lead to a larger transference and exchange of cultural goods, followed by an ‘internationalisation of art’. In the course of history such ‘hubs’ can be observed. Of relevance is the information it provides us on the perception and use of objects, and even more interesting, on their contexts.
\item\textsuperscript{24} See Gunter 2012, 3.
\item\textsuperscript{25} A similar vase was found on Motya (Sicily), see Turfa 1986, 66-7; Höbl 1981.
\end{itemize}
item in this context, it cannot be established with certainty whether the vase was derived from Phoenicia or from Egypt. The same holds for the example of the Egyptianising material in the so-called 'Isis Tomb', at Polledrara cemetery in Etruscan Vulci.26

Because of the increased connectivity witnessed during the Orientalising period, style can no longer be considered a leading argument in order to establish the provenance of an artefact. As to Egyptian artefacts, this can be well demonstrated by means of the numerous objects spread throughout the entire Mediterranean produced in Greek factories located at Naukratis (Kom

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26 The grave was named after Isis because of the find of a hammered bronze statue, which was thought to portray her, which was found together with objects of an Egyptian character (e.g., alabaster bottles, four engraved ostrich eggs, faience flasks with hieroglyphs, Egyptian-styled terracotta figurines), see Haynes 1977, 20-3. However, the statue is more likely to represent a native fertility goddess or priestess. Ostrich eggs were also attested at the Bocchoris grave, and in other Etruscan graves (e.g., Cerveteri, Populonia, and Vetulonia), see Martelli, 1984, 172; Haynes 1977, 17-29.
Ge'if) in Egypt. This Greek colony was founded in the 7th century BC and traded and produced Greek as well as Egyptian goods. Not only linen, papyrus, and grain were traded through Naukratis, but also luxury items (e.g., ebony, ivory, minerals, beads, scarabs). They can be found all around the Mediterranean area as well as within Italic contexts (Etruria, Latium, Sicily, and Campania) as the sites of Palestrina and Satricum for instance testify of. Naukratis caused ‘Greeks’ to now become responsible for the production and distribution of Aegyptiaca in the role of “Egypt’s external traders.” The example of the scarabs from Naukratis is indeed telling and illustrates well the complexities of material culture, people, and cultural labels. These objects were traded and manufactured by the Greeks; Naukratis even had its own scarab producing factory. Moreover, these scarabs are said to be created especially to allude to a foreign taste. For this phenomenon scholars have in fact adopted the term ‘Egyptianising’ as opposed to ‘Egyptian’, implying that although made in Egypt, they are not considered to be genuine Egyptian. However, whether this was perceived as such by the foreign non-Egyptian audience that acquired the objects remains a legitimate question. As with the example of the Bocchoris vase, it remains unclear whether the manufacturers of the scarabs (albeit obviously especially produced for a Greek market) were Greek, Egyptian, or Phoenician.

The Punic world and Phoenician objects
Comparable difficulties in the interpretation of style, provenance, and perception can be observed when considering artefacts disseminated through Punic networks. The label ‘Phoenician’ in fact comprises an analogous case to ‘Egyptian’ worthy of a discussion here. Objects connected

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27 On the site of Naukratis as a trade centre and its connection to the Mediterranean, see Villing and Schlottzhauer 2006; Möller 2006.
28 Although it is often assumed that Egyptians, Phoenicians and Cypriots also traded at Naukratis, Möller believes it was a pure Greek settlement with only few Egyptians. Nonetheless, a large quantity of Egyptian material and objects could be attested to this site, see Möller 2006, 203.
29 Scandone 1971; Gnade et al. 2007.
30 See Möller 2006, 214.
31 See Gorton 1996, 80.
32 “That the Factory was producing for a Greek market seems likely, as apparently Naukratite scarabs have been found on Rhodes and elsewhere in the Aegean. But that does not tell us that the scarab-manufacturers were Greeks. Hogarth argued that they Phoenicians – rather than the Greeks - were experts in producing egypitanising artworks, replete with imperfect hieroglyphics. Gorton has identified a number of Phoenician scarab workshops (e.g. in the Levant, Carthage, Sardinia) producing similar product to those of Naukratis.”, see James 2003, 256; Gorton 1996, 43-62; 132-7.
to the Punic world are likewise said to display Orientalising or Egyptianising styles.\textsuperscript{33} The most illustrious items of this category which will serve as an example consists of a category of either silver or bronze bowls depicting fantastic creatures (e.g., sphinxes, griffins, floral motifs, human figures). These bowls were widely distributed throughout the Mediterranean world and also attested in Italian contexts. This group of objects demonstrates an illustrative example of the problematic predicament ‘Oriental’ in connection with provenance and perception and is therefore of significance to discuss in this context. The style of these bowls is ‘Oriental’ in the most elusive sense of the word and just as the previous examples it is impossible to ascribe clear cultural influences to them. They are reminiscent of the Assyrian style of Nimrud, Egyptian style, or Cypriot style. Moreover, the metal bowls - numbering approximately ninety in total - are found in Assyria, Cyprus, Crete and Etruria (for instance in Cerveteri and the Bernadini tomb in Praeneste). As to the interpretation of these bowls, an impressive quantity of cultural influences and subsequent labels in order to define the bowls are invariably used: Phoenician, Cypro-Phoenician, Etrurian, North Syrian, Cypriot, and Oriental.\textsuperscript{34} However, comparable to Egyptian style as a classification, to stylistically designate the bowls as Phoenician seems to be highly problematic too. When applying ‘Egyptian’ in the case of the Bocchoris vase and the objects from Naukratis, and when using the name and style of Phoenician to categorise these metal bowls, is a scholarly construction based on a visual defined label which is unrelated to how these objects were perceived by a local population. Again very little can be said with any certainty on the origin, dissemination, or production of the bowls. There are no remains of metalworking on Phoenician sites. Numerous scenarios may explain their shape and distribution. For instance, the bowls could have been produced somewhere in the East from where they were spread out, they could have been manufactured by itinerant craftsmen in various places at various times; they may even have been made by local artisans at the same location the artefacts entered the archaeological record.\textsuperscript{35} Vella’s argument regarding the Phoenician bowls is therefore not only comparable to Egyptian artefacts outside Egypt, but may also be useful to keep in mind when

\textsuperscript{33} See the Introduction in Riva and Vella 2006.
\textsuperscript{34} See Vella 2010, 23. The term Phoenician as a style seems to have been invented after H. Layard's discovery, on January 5, 1849, of a hoard consisting of bronze bowls in the ruins of the palace of the 9th-century BC Assyrian king Ashurnasirpal II at Nimrud, see Riva and Vella, 2006, 4-10.
\textsuperscript{35} A fourth scenario is: the bowls were made in one place but then travelled, possibly more than once, as war booty perhaps, or in exchange mechanisms, see Vella 2010, 24-5.
starting to interpret Aegyptiaca for a Roman context, as Vella states: “Calling the metal bowls “Phoenician” should only serve as shorthand to understand the mobile and mutable world that was the Mediterranean in the Archaic period.” Aegyptiaca inform about the context they are found in, rather than that they inform about the category of Aegyptiaca. How this will serve the present case study will be discussed in more detail below. However, a look at the predicament Egyptian, Oriental, and Phoenician as interpretative labels in the Archaic and Oriental period not only clearly illustrates the complexities involved but also the need for breaking down the terminology.

The Hellenistic world and Aegyptiaca
The Hellenistic world displayed a variety of Egyptian objects and Egypt-inspired objects outside Egypt. Interestingly the dynamics of distribution as well as the range, number and types of objects, and influences changed significantly in the course of this period. A major player within these new dynamics and networks with regards to Aegyptiaca is of course the Ptolemaic Kingdom in Egypt, which introduced innovative changes to the material culture and life to Egypt as well as to the way in which ideas and material culture were spread, used, and perceived within the wider Mediterranean area. One of the so-called innovations - although their popularity really took off during the Roman period - important to discuss in this context are the Hellenistic cults of Isis and Serapis. They not only became an important Egyptian influence in Roman Italy, their distribution and reception also again poses interesting questions with regard to Egypt as a cultural label. Although it is not justified to say that Ptolemy I (Soter) created the god Serapis in Alexandria, the deity is indeed foremost connected to the Ptolemies, who introduced the Hellenised image of the deity and gave shape to its cult. His Hellenised image and iconography, and with characteristics derived from Osiris and Zeus Serapis united aspects from Greek and Egyptian religion, became a popular cult in both in and outside Egypt. Within the same context, Isis became his consort and eventually one of the

36 See Vella 2010, 32.
38 Sfaméni Gasparro 2007, 40-72, Stambaugh 1972, 12-3; Moyer 2011, 145-7; Clerc and Leclant 1994 666-92 and Merkelbach 1995
39 He was especially revered as a patron of the Ptolemaic dynasty and the city of Alexandria, but his power also extended to fertility. Stambaugh 1972, 1. For the spread of Serapis monuments and objects see Kater-Sibbes 1973
most popular export products of Hellenistic Egypt. In the early Hellenistic period Isis reaches the shores of the Mediterranean world, where her image soon establishes in the form of numerous sanctuaries and a vast growing number of devotees, in both town and country. During the 4th century BC Isis and Serapis cults diffuse from Alexandria to Delos. Next, in the course of the late Hellenistic period, the cults expand further and reach the Italian peninsula via the harbour of Puteoli in Campania where it is suggested that Italic merchants instigated them here. The success of the Isis cult in the Roman Republic, especially during the Empire was huge. Devotees considered Isis as one of the most powerful member of the pantheon. She was known and worshipped as a mother, a sister, a grieving wife, and was linked to the concept of resurrection and rebirth. Isis was equalled to Fortuna or Venus, and was venerated for many capacities, such as being able to help with procreation, childbirth, and other medical matters. As to the site of Pompeii it is assumed that the cult of Isis was instituted during the 2nd half of the 2nd century BC, not long after the cult had reached Puteoli. It became a very popular cult, counting among its initiates not only freedmen and women (as was long assumed), but also members of the local elite. For the first time the Mediterranean witnessed a wide diffusion of Isis and her consorts in a Hellenistic form. Interesting in terms of objects, is that the dissemination of cults once again catered for various dynamics.

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40 For a survey of Egyptian religion in Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt, see Bommas 2012; Dunand 2000; Pakkanen 1996; Merkellbach 1995; Huss 1994.
41 Italy was first exposed to the cult of Isis when trading with the Eastern part of the Mediterranean on Delos. This isle maintained economic ties with Southern Italy. Cults were brought from the various regions one traded with and travelled to, see Malaise 1972; Tackacs 1997, 29-30; Bricault 2001. The centre of the cults of Isis and Sarapis after Alexandria was said to be Delos where three successive Serapea were built. Through their contact with the other large international port of Puteoli the cults reached the Italian peninsula where during 2nd century BC the first temples dedicated to Sarapis and Isis were erected. On the dissemination of the Isis cult through the Mediterranean, see Bricault 2013; 2006; 2004, 548-56; 2001. Malaise 2007, 19-39; Solmsen 1980; Dunand 1973. On the Campanian region, see Tran tam Tinh 1964; 1971; 1972.
42 Malaise 2005; Tran tam Tinh 1964, 10-11; Vittozzi 2013, 45-74.
43 The most common Greek interpretations of Isis are: Isis-Tyche, Isis-Aphrodite, Isis-Demeter Isis-Hecate, and Isis-Panthea, see Malaise 2000, 1-19. On the various forms of veneration of Isis, see Sfameni Gasparro 1999, 403-14; Tran tam Tinh 1973.
44 It is not exactly clear when the first sanctuary was built but this must at least have occurred before Pompeii became a Roman colony in 80 BC, see Gasparini 2011, 67-88; Versluys 2002; De Caro 1997, 338-43; Tran tam Tinh 1964, 9; Zevi 2006, 66-76.
45 See Tran tam Tinh 1964, 31; Tackacs 1995. An inscription teaches us that a member of the Popidius Celsinus family funds the rebuilding of the temple, which was damaged after the earthquake of 62. This also indicates that, during the 1st century AD, the Isis cult of Isis becomes rather popular, for this shrine is one of the few monuments rebuilt after the above mentioned earthquake. For further reading on the wall paintings, see Moormann 2007 (in Bricault et al.), 137-54; Petersen 2006; Gasparini (forthcoming 2015).
46 Bingen 2007; Stambaugh 1972.
concerning Aegyptiaca in the shape of locally produced terracotta statuettes serving within the context of domestic religion. On Delos, for instance, many statuettes were found representing deities which can be traced to an Oriental origin.47

With regard to the study of this particular period of Mediterranean history, it is interesting to note that the classification and interpretation is notably different in comparison with the previously discussed periods. Prior to the Hellenistic world, Egypt as a stylistic and material influence was seen by scholars as a part of a larger category of Oriental influxes, while the classification Egyptian and the term Aegyptiaca becomes separated and much more prominently and uncritically employed for the Hellenistic period, in which they seem to function as a culturally bounded categorisation and as an artefact category. Was there less fusion between styles or provenance during this later period allowing scholars to better separate Oriental styles and name them accordingly or is the use less critical because of an increased historical knowledge? Although the way in which Orientalia as a broader category were part of Bronze Age and Archaic Mediterranean changes from the Hellenistic period onwards, the manner in which scholars adopted them with regard to the Hellenistic world is notably different too, as cultural categorisations and the way they are interpreted in terms of function and meaning is much more static and solid. The way it becomes employed with respect to the Hellenistic period had a profound effect on the way Aegyptiaca are dealt with in the Roman world, in which Egyptian has become a unilateral and genuine cultural style denomination. Realising that the study of the Hellenistic period may in some fashion have affected this, and in an attempt to return partly (at least in the sense of critically dealing with categorisations) to the way in which Egyptian objects were handled in a pre-Roman context, can perhaps contribute to explaining the Roman context.

Remarks
This overview of testimonies of Aegyptiaca outside Egypt from the Bronze Age to the Hellenistic period presents an impression of the most common Egyptian finds and find contexts in the Mediterranean as well as the way in which labels were applied in order to interpret and classify these objects. These observations lead to a broader image of the diachronic diversity in appropriations, adoptions, and re-inventions of ‘Egypt’. Several relevant

47 Barret 2011.
points could be made with regard to the present inquiry: firstly, it is obvious that even before the analysis of the present case study commences, one finds a significant number of highly varied Aegyptiaca or Egyptian influences in the Mediterranean. Secondly, it can be observed that even prior to the Roman period it is notably difficult to distinctly separate provenance, styles, objects, and people in a cultural sense, and thirdly, with regard to the versatility of objects - on a contextual and an artefactual level - all contexts from the overview seem to have incorporated, rejected and adapted very specific motifs, styles, and objects. Studying such decisions more closely, meaning the presence as well as the absence of certain styles, objects, and motifs, can be a useful exercise in order to improve the grip on adoption strategies within societies. Moreover, it can provide a valuable insight in the way in which one cognitively relates to certain styles and artefacts and on which grounds one bases one’s choice for certain products. Questions posed in this respect are for example whether objects were mass produced or only distributed on a very small scale. In which contexts were they used and by whom? What is adopted and what rejected? On which basis? To which other non-exotic artefacts can such adoptions be related? How do they transform in a new environment? An attempt to answer these questions with regard to the case study of Roman Pompeii can be considered a fruitful undertaking, because it is able to provide insights into the way Egyptian artefacts were used and reveal the mechanisms behind their integration and choice. Studying Egyptian artefacts in a horizontal manner can thus become a device with which to study specific social and cultural contexts and by looking at the category of so-called exotica i.e., objects that notably differ in style or provenance from their local material culture (for example Egyptianised scarabs or Phoenician metal bowls) in a broader perspective, it has become clear how indefinable they are as a category concerning cultural labels. However, while this issue has been acknowledged with regard to terms such as Phoenician, Oriental, and Orientalia, using the term Aegyptiaca in order to interpret and categorise the finds of the Roman period is still often done unproblematically. Is this justified? Where are those classifications derived from? What exactly is traced? All this will be further explored in 2.5. For the next part it is important to map the presence of

48 This cannot be carried out by merely observing the cultural biography of a style. This horizontal approach takes into account that all other styles, motifs, and objects within a certain society should be studied carefully in order to reconstruct the way in which integration of Egyptian style works and from where the choice for a specific Egyptian object or motif is derived.
Egyptian artefacts within Roman contexts in more detail to discuss their specific problems with regard to their interpretation.

2.2.2 Aegyptiaca within Roman-Italian contexts

The Aegyptiaca found within Roman contexts on the Italian peninsula are as versatile as the objects from the previous periods described above. They do not continue a tradition of pre-Roman Italian and Etruscan use, nor do they strictly follow the Hellenistic Ptolemaic progressions; instead they develop an innovative and unique way of use. With the Battle of Actium in 31 BC as the final confrontation between Octavian and Marc Anthony and decisive factor in the fall of Republican Rome and following birth of the Roman Empire, the relation between Egypt and Rome as well as Egypt's position in the Mediterranean again changed significantly. Egypt now became a province of the Roman Empire, introducing a new role for the Roman emperor: that of pharaoh of the Province of Egypt.49

Although Actium and the subsequent annexation of Egypt can be considered a watershed with regard to the intensity of contact between Egypt and the Italian peninsula, the cultural influence of Egypt goes back much further, as could be seen above. When Rome had matured as a state and as a Hellenistic supremacy in the course of the 3rd and 2nd century BC, its contacts with the Ptolemaic realm mainly consisted of political affiliations and trade. The famous Nile Mosaic of Palestrina predates Augustan Rome, as well as the Nilotic mosaic in the Casa del Fauno, and a marble head of Cleopatra; even the Iseum Campense might predate 31 BC.50 Although

49 To wit as a continuation of the Ptolemaic system, see Ellis 1992, 13-4; Herklotz 2012, 11-21. The conquest of Egypt in 30 BC results in a province being added to the Roman Empire as well as a new role for the emperor: pharaoh of the Province of Egypt. The incoming pharaoh immediately ordered a decree that prohibited any member of the Senate or of the military to enter the province of Egypt without permission, thereby preventing a large scale contact between the two cultures. In addition to the restrained contact, another remarkable development to be witnessed in Egypt after the Roman conquest is the continuity of the indigenous Egyptian traditions. Following the demise of Cleopatra and Marc Anthony and the subsequent fall of the Ptolemaic Kingdom, Egypt needed to restore the ancient order of the world. Here the Pharaoh acted as a middleman between the gods and the people. See Bowman 1986; Lewis 1983; Peacock 2000, 422-45.

50 It is unclear whether the Iseum Campense was built before Caligula. However, the triumvirate (Mark Antony, Octavian, Marcus Aemilius Lepidus) of 43 BC promised to consecrate a temple dedicated to Isis at the Republic's expenses; we know it was rebuilt in 89 AD by Domitian, while at the time of Vespasian the cult of Isis was a sacrum publicum, which had received an officially sanctioned residence in the Campus Martius either towards the end of Gaius' (Caligula's) or at the start of Claudius' reign. Nothing, however, seems to speak against the hypothesis that there might have been a temple/shrine within the Campus Martius prior to Gaius' and Claudius' reigns, see Takács 1995a, 274; Wissowa 1902, 353; Barret 1989, 220-1. As to numerous other objects, both in Rome and Pompeii, it
Augustus had conquered Egypt and prevailed over the reign of the last Ptolemaic queen Cleopatra, his intention was not to diminish the country to a minority and insignificant part of the Roman Empire. This can be clearly observed when he started to incorporate Egyptian material culture into the city of Rome not long after his victory. In 10 BC, for example, Augustus brought two obelisks from Heliopolis to Rome. One was placed on the spina of the Circus Maximus, the other on the Campus Martius near the Ara Pacis Augustae which probably served as a gnomon for a ‘horologium’ (nowadays interpreted as a meridian). Both obelisks were dedicated to the sun. Not only Augustus’ victory, but also his admiration for Alexandria, Egypt’s history, its riches, and his ties to the Hellenistic ruler Alexander the Great may have been important reasons for these actions. These historical and religious developments (the Isis cults mentioned in the previous paragraph) resulted in a very specific corpus of what scholars nowadays call Aegyptiaca. They consist of a heterogeneous group of objects, found in a great variety of contexts. In the city of Rome temples and altars dedicated to Isis and Serapis were found on the Campus Martius, the Capitol, the Caelian hill, Aventine, the Quirinal, on the Esquiline, and in the harbours of Ostia and Portus. The most important temple, the Iseum Campense, was (re)built and notably refurbished under Domitian during his renovation of the Campus Martius area. Under his auspices the sanctuary not only witnessed the erection of a multitude of obelisks, imported statues of Egyptian deities and animals came to adorn the sanctuary, too. Obelisks, in addition to those Augustus had placed were abundantly present; more obelisks can nowadays be attested in

remains unclear whether they can be dated before or after Actium. Archeologists date many artefacts on historical grounds to be post 31 BC, because of Egypt’s annexation.

52 The obelisk is considered to be erroneously mistaken for a sundial, while in fact it served as a meridian. “namely to cast a shadow and thus mark the length of days and nights. A paved area was laid out commensurate with the height of the monolith in such a way that the shadow at noon on the shortest day might extend to the edge of the paving. As the shadow gradually grew shorter and longer again, it was measured by bronze rods fixed in the paving.”, see Heslin 2007, 4. For a reaction hereto, see Journal of Roman Archaeology 2011 (no. 24).
53 Both carried the same inscription on its base: "Caesar Augustus, imperator, son of a divus, pontifex maximus, imperator 12 times, consul 11 times, with tribunician power 14 times. With Egypt having been brought into the domain of the Roman people [aegypto redacta in potestatem populi Romani], Augustus gave this gift, to the sun" CIL VI.701-702.
54 Both Plutarch and Cassius Dio report the speech Octavian delivered in the Alexandrian gymnasion anno 30 BC following the demise of Cleopatra and Antony. In it he said he partially pardoned the Alexandrians and Egyptians because he admired the ‘beauty and size’ of Alexandria. Source: Plut. Ant. 80.1; Cass. Dio 51.16.4.
55 See Roulet 1972, 23-42 especially for the Iseum Campense; The Iseum attested at the Esquiline hill is elaborately dealt with in de Vos 1997, 99-141.
the city of Rome than in the ancient site of Egyptian Karnak.\(^57\) In terms of resources Egypt not only supplied Rome with grain, several kinds of stones (e.g., Aswan granite, *Wadi Hammamat* stone, porphyry from *Mons Porpyritis*) were shipped to Rome in order to create Egyptian and non-Egyptian products on Italian soil. Even pyramids could be found in the city of Rome, for instance, Caius Cestius’s renowned tomb still visible today at the Via Ostiensis. Other pyramids are known only by tradition or myth, such as the one at the site of the Church of Santa Maria dei Miracoli on the southern side of Piazza del Popolo, or the one known as the ‘Tomb of Romulus’, once located between the Vatican and the Mausoleum of Hadrian.\(^58\) Egyptianising elements furthermore became popular in garden decoration. In Rome, the Gardens of Sallust on the Pincian hill not only included an obelisk (a smaller copy of the Flaminio Obelisk from the Circus Maximus), but also imported statues portraying the Egyptian Queen Touya (wife of Pharaoh Seti I), Queen Arsinoe, the baboon headed deity Hapy, and several Ptolemaic kings.\(^59\) The Emperor Hadrian, presumably the most dedicated aficionado of the ‘Egyptianising movement’, adorned his villa lavishly with Egyptian statues and imagery.\(^60\) Lastly to mention, so-called ‘Egyptianising’ motifs (e.g., Egyptian deities, pharaohs, sphinxes) were incorporated into Roman wall painting within Augustus’ inner circle (for example, the ‘black room’ in Agrippa Postumus’s villa at Boscotrecase which imitates Pharaonic style), as well as in wider domestic contexts, of which the houses of Pompeii outstandingly testify. Egyptian themes were a popular domestic decoration especially in the form of Nilotic imagery, which arise in particular during the 1\(^{st}\) century AD.\(^61\)

Interestingly, when the focus is moved from the city of Rome to the Roman town of Pompeii in Campania, a similar variety and number of Egyptian influences can be found. Nevertheless, the objects are very different from that which is attested in Rome. There are no large or imported statues, no obelisks, and no pyramids in Pompeii.\(^62\) This has, of course, for a great deal

\(^{57}\) For recent surveys on the obelisks of Rome, see Curran 2009; Vittozzi 2013, 157-68.

\(^{58}\) Pope Alexander VI dismantled the latter pyramid during the 16\(^{th}\) century. The marble was used in the steps of St. Peter’s Basilica, see Roullet 1972, 42-3; Ridley 1992, 13-4; Humbert 1994, 16-7; Vout 2003, 177-9.

\(^{59}\) See Hartswick 2004, 52-7 (obelisk), 130-8 (sculptures).

\(^{60}\) See Mari 2008, 113-22; Aurigemma 1961, 100-33; Grenier 1989, 975-7.

\(^{61}\) Versluys 2002. For the paintings in the Villa of Agrippa Postumus, see Pappalardo 2009, 132-5.

\(^{62}\) The only Italic context in which an obelisk is attested outside Rome at the the so-called *Iseum* of Benevento. The fact that even this obelisk is dedicated to Domitian again establishes a strong link to an Imperial context.
to do with the difference in size and importance, but also with preservation. Rome is a palimpsest of centuries of occupation, while Pompeii meticulously preserves a very specific point in time, rendering the two sites an interesting complementary comparison. Pompeii yields much more wall paintings and small items than Rome. Briefly charting the diversity (for a full analysis of the artefacts see chapter 4) within Pompeii: we find an abundance of Nilotic scenery within domestic contexts, in all kinds of rooms. Egypt-styled paintings remind of those seen at Boscoreale. Some objects are obvious imports, such as the greywacke slab with hieroglyphs once belonging to a dedication of the sacred banquet of Psammetichus II (594-589 BC) which was re-used as a threshold. There are also objects produced locally but specifically made to look Egyptian, such as a terracotta sphinx statue from the Iseum. Numerous objects linked to Egypt originate from the sanctuary of Isis. Sistra, statues, paintings, busts, and many other artefacts associated with Isis again are found inside houses, such as statuettes and paintings of the Egyptian deities. The contexts in which they are found do not seem to point to any social differentiation between their users. Shops, small houses, and very large villa estates housed objects (such as the obsidian cups with Egyptian iconography found at the Villa San Marco at Stabia) somehow related to Egypt. It is hard to say anything concrete about the people visiting from Egypt (and vice versa) next to objects that we see. Since Actium, a direct trade route existed between Puteoli and Alexandria for the grain trade, and Pompeii and Puteoli were known to be well-connected communities.

We know of some local people to be involved with this trade, however, these are mostly in the form of storing the material from Alexandria in Puteoli and in keeping the merchant relations with Rome. People that would have travelled from Pompeii to Alexandria were therefore presumably only few, and either stem from a mercantile or (high) elite background. Egyptians of course could have occasionally visited or passed through Pompeii, but probably not to the extent as would happen in Puteoli or Rome.

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64 Two men from Puteoli for instance, L. Marius Iucundus and C. Novius Eunus are found storing tons of Alexandrian wheat, were almost certainly local grain traders (Terpstra 2013,21). Known through the find of the so-called Sulpicii archives or Murecine tablets, found in a villa (or hospitium) just outside Pompeii. The tablets consisted of 127 documents concerning business transactions belonging to the banking house of the Sulpicii. See Terpstra 2013, 11-15.
65 Most graffiti and inscriptions are written in Latin and connected to local Pompeian citizens not to Egyptians, such as for example the two Isiaci (self-acclaimed titles probably referring to the fact that they were initiated, not that they were priests), candidates of aedile asking for support in the elections. CIL IV.6420b and CIL IV.1011. However, occasional
from Egypt (and from many other regions in the Mediterranean) however, travelled extensively through these same relations between Puteoli, Egypt, and Pompeii and the presence of connections to Egypt and the formation of knowledge on Egypt would therefore have been largely object-based.

In addition to the differences we come across when comparing Rome with Pompeii, the overview of Egyptian artefacts in Rome indicate the following noteworthy observations concerning the present investigation. First of all, from the onset of the incorporation of Egypt as a province Augustus allowed Egyptian material culture to play a role in his Roman reconstruction program. Moreover, with the obelisks, he applied Egypt as a symbolic legitimation of his power.66 This became such a strong symbol that, within several generations, the connotation of the obelisk to Egypt and Roman domination transformed into a symbol of imperial power. Later it even became an allusion to the Emperor Augustus himself.67 Furthermore, although some continuation of use and meaning can be witnessed, such as a dedication to the sun, Augustus adapted the obelisks he had brought from Egypt to Rome, substantially altering their significance and function.68 Regarding the Isis cults, this example shows a mental difference between the concepts of Egypt linked to the history and country, and the concept of Egypt associated with the Isis cult. It can be observed for instance that although Augustus bans the Isis cult from the pomerium in 28 BC (recently contested as a direct sign of antipathy towards the cult)69, he does use Egyptian motifs in order to adorn his own home without any explicit political references, and uses Egyptian obelisks as an instrument to demonstrate his imperial power.70 A multitude of concepts of Egypt can be seen to be present already in the time of Augustus therefore, and moreover, those concepts did not have a straightforward and uncomplicated relation with Egyptian material culture, which is an essential realisation especially when reviewing the material from Pompeii. In this respect it must be noted that when discussing the historical contexts, attention has to be paid to the difference

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67 As observed with Constantius, Pope Sixtus V, and Mussolini, see Donadoni 1992, 27-36; Curran 2009.
70 See Takács 1995b, 268.
between the site of Rome and Pompeii apart from their preservation. Albeit interchangeably used within the context of Egyptian influence (for instance de Vos in ‘L’egittomania in pitture e mosaici, treats material of both Rome and Pompeii, but never differentiates between the two sites), Rome and Pompeii in terms of the use and appropriation of Egyptian artefacts were notably different. They knew a different variety of objects (and cultural) influxes, they had a different population, a different sphere of influence, and the physical outlook of Egyptian artefacts took notably different forms indeed.71 Variations between the two sites become especially clear with regard to Aegyptiaca, for instance when looking at obelisks or pyramids, which are only attested in Rome. Of course as was noted, these were closely linked to the Emperor and his power. However, it is interesting to observe that not even the motif of the obelisk was adopted outside Rome.72 Investigating relations between specific concepts and objects should be analyse for a specific context, which will add a deeper, more complex layer of understanding to the category of Aegyptiaca. However, before this takes place it is necessary to comprehend the reason why Aegyptiaca in the Roman period are interpreted the way they are by scholars first.

2.3 Traditional Aegyptiaca studies

The most important and influential studies on Aegyptiaca in Italian contexts have been presented by Malaise, Roullet, Tran tam Tinh, and de Vos.73 The latter two have focused on Pompeii and Campania specifically. As a clear break can be witnessed between recent approaches to Aegyptiaca analysed within a broader cultural context (in the light of developments in Romanisation and globalisation theory) and the more traditional studies that predominantly explained Egyptian artefacts within the context of religion and the Isis cult, it was decided to divide these approaches and discuss them separately. With respect to the earlier approaches to Aegyptiaca Romana, two main lines of thought can be discerned: first, the religious paradigm, the most influential in which Isis played a dominant role in explaining Aegyptiaca in Roman contexts and second, the first opposing force against this religious explanation, to wit the interpretation of Aegyptiaca as exotic artefacts within the framework of so-called Egyptomania.

72 In Rome obelisks occur outside a public imperial context e.g., in the Horti Sallustiani, see Iversen 1961, 53-4; Hartswick 2004, 52-7.
73 Tran tam Tinh 1964; Malaise 1972; Roullet 1972; de Vos 1981.
2.3.1 Aegyptiaca as a cultic expression and the division between Egyptian and Egyptianising artefacts

The historiography of the study of Aegyptiaca in Roman contexts is closely linked to developments in the field of Roman religion and in particular to studies of the Isis cult. While it was the research field of Roman religion that first became involved with the study Aegyptiaca found in the Roman world, objects connected to Egypt from these contexts were automatically defined as cultic expressions of the goddess Isis. When the Egyptian cults outside Egypt began to become a topic of research at the end of the 19th century, Egyptian material culture was a priori associated with religion, without any consideration for alternative explanations.\footnote{Lafaye 1884.} The Egyptological tradition (then also principally focused on religion) and the finds generated from the Iseum in Pompeii, Iseum Campense, and Beneventum, formed an extra stimulus to link Egyptian material culture directly to cult behaviour. Therefore the paintings in houses, Nilotic mosaics, and statues of Egyptian animals were automatically explained as a form of Isis veneration. This link between Egyptian artefacts and the Isis cults was maintained by means of the ÉPRO series (\textit{Études préliminaires aux religions orientales dans l'Empire romain}), later incorporated into the RGRW series (\textit{Religions in the Graeco-Roman World}), which primarily focused on the study of Oriental cults in the Roman world.\footnote{Although the paradigm was also supported by the fact that the research of Egypt outside Egypt was carried out by Egyptologists whose discipline also has a strong religious focus, see Versluys 2002, 22.} Through this series, the religious model was developed further by scholars such as Cumont, Vermaseren and Leclant, and matured in Malaise’s ‘\textit{religion égyptienne isiaque}’.\footnote{Cumont 1929; Leclant 1984; Malaise 1972; 2005.}

As to the Aegyptiaca of Rome, two volumes are of special importance, both published in 1972: Michel Malaise’s \textit{Inventaire préliminaire des documents égyptiens découverts en Italie} and Anne Roullet’s \textit{The Egyptian and Egyptianising monuments of imperial Rome}. Malaise mapped every object in accordance to the religious explanatory framework as described above for the entire Italian peninsula, while Roullet attempted the same in bringing together Egyptian and Egyptianising monuments, this time restricted to Imperial Rome.\footnote{Although the title does not explicitly mention that all the objects belong to cultic contexts, the presence of objects from the same interpretative parameters are are explained to be testimonies of the presence of Alexandrian cults in the Roman Empire, see Roullet 1972, xv (Introduction).} The two above-mentioned studies, together with other
works published within the ÉPRO series, have generated such a common sense atmosphere of Aegyptiaca being religious artefacts, that independent voices critical of the interpretation of Aegyptiaca as expressions of cult behaviour hardly had any influence. It is for instance as early as in 1952 noted by Schefold that: “Gewiss können nicht alle Bewohner der Häuser mit Isissymbolen Anhänger dieser Religion gewesen sein... Diese Symbole meinen nicht eine bestimmte Lehre, sondern allgemeiner Weihe, Unsterblichkeit.”78 The vast number of publications on Egyptian artefacts in the light of Roman religion and the Isis cults and the influence of ÉPRO-publications have seemed to have overshadowed this nuance.

**Egyptian and Egyptianising**

In the case of Roullet, the issue concerning the (historiographical) difference between Egyptian and Egyptianising material culture with regard to the Roman period becomes apparent. Here Egyptian refers to the proper religious items imported from Egypt and the Egyptianisation of these objects as local copies.79 However, a problematic matter is that this distinction between Egyptian and Egyptianising and between copy and import, was not only made as a stylistic classification, but was also meant exist in function and aesthetics. Proposing this distinction as an Roman value is notably risky, because of the already mentioned difference between the way in which a Roman audience reacts to statuary and stye, and the interpretation done by scholars. It puts a claim on authenticity which stems from particular modern ideas about objects.80 While the sculpture might represent a more Roman style to (art)historians, it could well have been experienced as Egyptian by its contemporary viewers just as much as imports would. In any case, it is argued to be ineffective to *a priori* ascribe different values to genuine imported Egyptian objects in comparison with Egyptianising examples and copies. Again, a bottom-up approach as proposed in this research might give a more nuanced view on this matter, by looking carefully

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78 See Schefold 1952, 58.

79 The distinction is made according to a careful stylistic analysis, such as described in the following section: “The copy gradually showed the marks of Roman realism. If copies of standing figures are considered in profile, it is noticeable that the statue is no longer resting on its spine and heels as in Egyptian representations but actually steps forward and rests on its toes... The statue has, moreover, lost the inner tension which characterizes Egyptian figures...”, see Roullet 1972, 21.

whether this distinction was maintained by Pompeians and in which context and by which form.\textsuperscript{81}

\textit{Pompeii}

As to the site of Pompeii, even prior to Roulette and Malaise, Victor Tran tam Tinh published his \textit{Essai sur le Culte d’Isis a Pompéi} (1964) which still is one of the most influential studies of Aegyptiaca in Pompeii. Being one of the first studies on Isis to explicitly deal with the material culture connected to Egypt, it had a profound impact on the interpretation of Egyptian objects. As a consequence, since Tran tam Tinh’s \textit{Essai}, scholars seem to have automatically classified images and objects linked to Egypt within and outside the context of Pompeii as signs of cult activity.\textsuperscript{82} The reason of a cult focused interpretation of Aegyptiaca seems to have been closely connected to the discovery of the Isis sanctuary of Pompeii in 1769.\textsuperscript{83} Its discovery and excavation of the temple, its central setting in the town, its swift restoration after an earthquake in AD 62, and its remarkable preservation contributed to the idea that Pompeii held a leading position with regard to Isiac worship in Campania.\textsuperscript{84} As a result, the Isis cult in Pompeii received much scholarly attention. Tran tam Tinh’s catalogue comprises a description and interpretation of all the objects, inscriptions and wall paintings that he linked to Isis. It consisted of seventy-one wall decorations, fifty statues, statuettes and busts, thirty-three small objects (e.g., reliefs, jewellery, cult mobilia, sculptures), and twenty inscriptions and graffiti. Sistra are treated as separate category of which twenty-one are listed to be found throughout the town. This inventory included all objects depicting Egyptian imagery or Isis and her entourage. It interpreted everything as some form of cult expression, without regarding the context in which the objects were found, the remaining wall paintings on which the Egyptian figures were portrayed, or the function and form of the objects. Lamps, architectural fragments, statuettes and bracelets were all considered to be cult objects. Any image or attribute of Isis on both iconographic and stylistic grounds, and regardless of

\textsuperscript{81} The notion Egyptian versus Egyptianising and the concept of authenticity will be discussed in part 4.5.2 through the example of wall paintings versus objects in the temple of Isis in Pompeii and in part 5.2 through the case study of the Casa degli Amorini Dorati.

\textsuperscript{82} Tran tam Tinh also clearly struggles with structuring all the finds into categories that fit a cultic interpretation which makes both the catalogue and the story now and again appear somewhat artificial. For example, statuettes of Horus are categorized as ‘Horus’ instead of ‘statuette’.

\textsuperscript{83} See Zevi 1994, 37-56.

\textsuperscript{84} In effect, the cult was ubiquitous in the region.
context, provided evidence of worship of the goddess.\(^{85}\) Beyond any doubt it can be stated there were followers of Isis present in Pompeii. Nevertheless it seems a premature conclusion to herald all Egyptian objects as Isiac, and everyone who possessed such objects as initiates of the Isis cult.\(^{86}\) A problem with such an interpretation, apart from the disregard of form, function and context, is that it is not a legitimate claim to consider everything ‘Isiac’ without taking the wider range of cult images and their interpretations into account. Greek mythological scenes, Roman deities and accompanying attributes could creatively be deployed within a large variety of contexts and forms, Therefore their uses, values, and meanings were innumerable more complex than being of merely cultic nature, something which is acknowledged by scholars for many Roman deities, but not for Isis. Although there were perhaps dissimilarities between different Roman deities, the study of Egyptian items and artefacts related to Isis should be reviewed in similar frameworks. Moreover, issues such as the above can only be resolved by excluding an a priori cultic interpretation and by viewing the objects as part of a totality of objects, contexts, and cultural and cultic expressions. It is therefore argued that studying Egyptian artefacts as an isolated category of material culture does not contribute to the explanation of their significance and functioning in Roman Pompeii.

### 2.3.2 Egyptomania

A second way of interpreting Egyptian objects in Rome, which has not replaced the religious explanation but actually runs parallel to it, is to explain Aegyptiaca in the Roman world within a framework of so-called Egyptomania. Within this perspective, the fascination for ancient Egypt forms the main motivation to incorporate Aegyptiaca and Egyptian elements into non-Egyptian contexts. Scholars have argued that during the Augustan Age, after the annexation of Egypt, the predilection for ‘things Egyptian’ increased dramatically. Its popularity grew to such an extent that the term Egyptomania, which is an 18\(^{th}\) century term, has also been applied to this period.\(^{87}\) The concept was initially developed in order to explain the Western fascination with Pharaonic Egypt during the 18\(^{th}\) and 19\(^{th}\) centuries. After Napoleon’s conquest of Egypt (1789-99), Europe started to massively acquire

\(^{85}\) “...à Pompéi, les tableaux, les frises, les statuettes, les symboles et mobiliers rituels dont les maisons sont ornées, experiment d’une manière plus éloquente l’âme religieuse du people.” see Tran tam Tinh 1964, 9.

\(^{86}\) From this point of view almost half of the city should have been engaged with the Isis cult.

objects from Egypt and adopt Egyptian style as domestic ornamentation.\textsuperscript{88} During the 19\textsuperscript{th} century, Egyptian motifs and themes in art and architecture became such a popular means of decoration that the term ‘Egyptomania’ and ‘Egyptian renaissance’ was invented.\textsuperscript{89} Later, Egyptomania also served to describe an earlier context, namely in the reappraisal of Egyptianised styles witnessed in renaissance art and Egypt’s influence on Renaissance and post-Renaissance thought.\textsuperscript{90} In the same line it was supposed that the concept could also be applied to even earlier periods and to antiquity where ‘Egyptomaniac practices’ such as copied and adapted Egyptian designs in contexts outside Egypt also occurred frequently.\textsuperscript{91} Although Egyptianising features as object of western fascination was the defining characteristic of the process of Egyptomania during the 18\textsuperscript{th} and 19\textsuperscript{th} centuries, it was not considered to be merely a static copy of Egyptian culture. As Humbert observes: “… every Egyptianizing object has at least one other dimension – religious, esoteric, political or commercial – that is not Egyptian.”\textsuperscript{92} An interesting point raised here is that Egyptian objects are more than merely Egyptian. They have also evolved into being an intricate part of the adopting culture. It may indeed be relevant to investigate the way in which ‘Egyptianised’ objects became part of a society within the context of the Roman world. At first sight therefore the concept of Egyptomania seems to be valid to apply to the context of Roman antiquity. However, on further contemplation, it includes difficulties and drawbacks which in fact render it a highly problematic term. Firstly, the integration processes and appropriations of Aegyptiaca in the Roman world and the term Egyptomania are rather conflicting concepts, because Egyptomania implies that Egypt and Egyptian material culture are always recognised, set apart and \emph{a priori} considered to be different and exotic. The adoption strategies and underlying concepts used in the Roman world seem to present us with a much more fluid and dynamic picture, while Egyptomania implies that the presence of Egyptian objects within a certain context is all part and parcel of the same process.

\textsuperscript{88} It became popular, for instance, to embellish villas and elite houses with ‘Egyptian rooms’ (\textit{Sala Egizia}), as can be attested in the Galleria Borghese (1780), Palazzo Braschi (a room especially designed to house objects brought from Egypt by Napoleon), Villa Torlonia, and Villa Poniatowska.


\textsuperscript{90} Curran 1997; Rowland 1998; Dannenfeldt 1959; Humbert 1994, 21-26.

\textsuperscript{91} See Price and Humbert 2003, 9. For a survey of ‘Egyptomania’ from its conception to modern-day, see Humbert 1996 (ed.)

\textsuperscript{92} See Humbert 1994, 25.
In spite of these objections, and notwithstanding the limited explanatory and interpretative values of a mania in general; the expression has served to explain a multitude of Egyptian objects and concepts within the Roman world, such as Isis in the Graeco-Roman world, Hadrian’s Canopus, obelisks in Rome, and wall paintings in Pompeii. These markedly different objects and contexts however, each had their own historical backgrounds, unique development, diffusion, and integration process. It can furthermore be observed that Egyptomania has been rather uncritically applied in order to attribute Egyptianising features within the material culture of antiquity. The explanatory framework was adopted without ever questioning the term or the value as an interpretative tool. For instance De Vos adopted the term ‘Egittomania’ as a title for research on Aegyptiaca only in order to note the presence of the numerous Egyptian themed scenes on the walls of Pompeii and Rome. Except for the title, de Vos never properly scrutinises the terminology or applies it as an analytical tool in the way Humbert envisioned it in the above quote. In fact, it seems that, with regard to the Roman world, the term *Egittomania* might do more harm than good, because it places Egypt as a Roman phenomenon outside the Roman repertoire of visual language. Moreover, applying the term Egyptomania causes the objects found within Roman contexts to become generalised as one monolithic category of exotic objects with a singular origin and similar meaning. Therefore it seems that when explaining Aegyptiaca in the Roman world, Egyptomania is in fact the problem, not the solution. Present-day Egyptomania in the form of a fascination with Egypt turns modern recognition into a projection. Scholars should be open to the idea that in the past Egypt as a concept and as an object was experienced in various ways. By adopting the term and using Egyptomania without historical evidence and without historical contextualisation one only transposes a modern concept directly onto the past. This issue will be further discussed in 2.5.

94 Although the number of Aegyptiaca in fact is quite small, scholars repeat each other in adopting Egyptomania in order to explain Egyptian artefacts in a Roman context. For instance on people of the Roman world we read: “At the same time, however, Romans and Italians – particularly in and around the capital city and the Bay of Naples – evinced such growing fascinations with Egypt, the Nile, and Egyptian gods that some have now called it *Egyptomania*.”, see Boatwright 2012, 106.
95 de Vos 1980; 1991, 121-43.
Both lines of interpretation, either those based on a religious paradigm or from the perspective of Egyptomania, can be deemed unsatisfactory with regard to explaining the presence, meanings, and the use of Egyptian material culture in Roman contexts. In addition to the dominant focus on religion, such approaches made one simultaneous and problematic error: the isolation of Egyptian artefacts from Roman material culture. When treating material culture, scholars tend to set Egyptian apart as a separate group of artefacts placing it aside from Roman traditions and other non-Roman influences. Traditional studies, even if they allow interpretations beyond the religious sphere, were therefore unable to let go of the exoticising characteristics of the objects. If the categories Greek and Egyptian are compared in a historiographical sense, we can observe that the difference in approach and consequences concerning interpretations are astoundingly different. Scholars never considered Greek material and visual culture to be exotic. Greek art was immersed as a Roman phenomenon, was integrated, while Egypt never seemed to have been absorbed in the same way nor it was able to discard its exotic features. This does not mean that Greek cultural influences and Egyptian cultural influences should be put on equal footing, however, the study to those influences should in order to be able to see the differences. As Gunter has argued with regard to Oriental features in Greek art, this should also be the case for Egyptian features in Roman art. They should be seen as functioning in a wider framework than merely ‘Egyptian’. The problem is well expressed by Davies: “By contrast, Egyptian and Egyptianizing art, as described by modern scholars, seems to have existed within Rome without becoming Roman and without shaping Roman art; it remained distinctly other." Although Egyptian artefacts still suffer from the limited attention they received as Roman objects, recent studies on Aegyptiaca attempt to extract the artefacts from their restraining framework and allow various interpretations to be carried out from a broader socio-cultural perspective. Aegyptiaca do no longer solely belong to the domain of religious studies or to Egyptologists, but have become ‘acknowledged’ as a source of Roman inspiration by those who study Roman culture and slowly but surely regarded a part of the Roman world as to material culture, history, and historiography.

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96 See Davies 2011, 354.
2.4 Recent approaches to Aegyptiaca

2.4.1 Aegyptiaca within wider cultural frameworks

Aegyptiaca remained the territory of religion and Egyptomania for a lengthy time. Only in the late 1990s and beginning of the 2000s do various voices argue for a broader understanding of Aegyptiaca. Although Egyptomania or cultic expressions are not abandoned as interpretations of Aegyptiaca in academic writing, recent approaches focusing on Egypt in the Roman world and Egyptian artefacts as Roman material culture have successfully attempted to pull Aegyptiaca out of their restraining and isolated interpretative frameworks by trying to analyse them as a Roman phenomenon. The main propagators hereof are Swetnam-Burland and Versluys, who both carried out a study on Aegyptiaca in order to review them within wider social and cultural contexts. Beside these monographs, further studies have adopted new strategies in order to interpret Aegyptiaca: Meyboom presents a strong statement against formerly religious interpretations of the Nile mosaic of Palestrina, while Davies tries to argue that the focal point of the study of Aegyptiaca Romana should be situated in a wider cultural perspective by comparing the integration of Greek styles in Rome with the incorporation of Aegyptiaca.97 From the context of Roman religion Bragantini nuances the religious interpretation of Egyptian motifs on wall paintings, while Söldner rejects religious explanations of Egyptomania altogether, and instead favours a political interpretation of Egyptian motifs in Roman art in Augustan Rome.98 A recent work summarising the above-mentioned ideas which embodies the incipient paradigm shift is titled La terra del Nilo sulle sponde del Tevere by Vittozzi in which the entire corpus of Egyptian material culture in the city of Rome is placed within a Roman context.99

Swetnam-Burland and Versluys added important arguments to the discussion concerning Aegyptiaca Romana.100 Swetnam Burland’s thesis entered the long-term debate on the Egyptian versus Egyptianising objects, arguing that no large difference could be discerned in terms of Roman receptions between imported Egyptian material and Egyptianised material.101

97 Meyboom 1995; Versluys 2002; Davies 2011.
98 See Bragantini 2006, 159-67; Söldner 2000, 383-93.
99 Vittozzi 2013.
100 Swetnam-Burland’s Ph.D. dissertation is unpublished. For the nucleus hereof, see Swetman-Burland 2007.
101 More prominently postulated in Bricault et al., 2007, 113-36. For an example of the statue of Isis in the temple dedicated to her at Pompeii including an ‘archaizing’ hairstyle, facial expression, pose and ‘Classical Greek’ drapery could have well appeared Egyptian to
In many cases creating an Egyptian atmosphere was more important than reproducing the exact styles of ancient Egypt. In *Aegyptiaca Romana, Nilotic Scenes and the Roman Views of Egypt* (2002), Versluys views Aegyptiaca and Nilotic scenes in particular as a distinct Roman development stressing a contextual and more holistic approach to Egyptian artefacts. In his dissertation he arrives at a multi-leveled culture embedded conclusion on the way in which a Roman audience looked at Nilotic scenes. Indeed Versluys and Swetnam-Burland present us with a significant addition to the studies carried out by Tran tam Tinh, Roullet, and Malaise, by giving room to the Roman perception of these artefacts.

Because of this development, together with an improved embeddedness within the wider study of Roman religion, Isis is also studied from within wider frameworks than merely Egyptian religion. Recent studies dwell more on the social aspects of the cults (supported by progress made in the field of Roman religion itself by for example North, Beard, Gordon, and Rüpke). A move from Isis as an Egyptian deity and cult to a Roman one can also be witnessed. This resulted in a significant development with respect to the material culture in the sense that Aegyptiaca could no longer *a priori* be considered expressions of devotion to the Isis cult. Alvar, takes a next step in reviewing Isis as Roman phenomenon. When discussing ‘Oriental’ deities (such as Mithras, Isis, and Cybele) he stresses the Roman influence on the cults which transformed them from foreign cults with an origin outside Rome into something that fitted into the Roman religious system. Although Alvar did not necessarily mean that ‘Oriental’ pointed to an exact origin, he did imply that the cults were viewed as a separate category by stating: *It captures the appropriate ideological connotations of claimed*

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102 Versluys 2002.
103 Nilotic scenes are defined as imagery that somehow refers to the life on the Nile. Found throughout the Roman Empire, they chronologically range from the 2nd century BC to the 6th century AD and depict landscapes with an Egyptian genre associated with the (overflowing of the) Nile. They often include exotic flora and fauna (e.g., lotus flowers, ibises, hippopotami, crocodiles, dwarfs, or pygmies), see Versluys, 2002.
105 It is stated that the symbols of Isis could have been removed from their original context and were subsequently integrated into Roman art in order to serve as domestic decoration, where they would retain their original meaning only to the initiated audience, see Tackács 1995, 33-4.
106 Applying the term ‘Oriental’ was justified on more than historiographical considerations. They had ‘sufficient common features to justify their being taken typologically as a group.’, see Alvar 2008, 6.
By propagating Isis as a Roman phenomenon, the Isis cults in particular were able to receive a more social and cultural inclusive understanding. Other scholars within the field of Isis studies resonate this e.g., Bricault (in general), Bonnet (who criticises the term Oriental) and Beaurin (as to Pompeii in particular); all describe the successful integration of Isis within Roman contexts and of the Egyptian lares found in the houses of Pompeii. The distribution, iconography and the presence of Isis together with all kinds of other Roman deities in houses convincingly argue for a Roman conception of Isis. Moreover, not only the appearance of the ‘Alexandrian’ gods in material categories, but also the presence of the Isis cult firmly embedded in social strata argue for a Roman interpretation of Isis. Monographs on the most important Isis sanctuaries are now published in which the Egyptian outlook and nature of the deities as well as practices are critically re-evaluated. In certain cases they take in more nuanced positions with regard to their Egyptian appearance. Nevertheless traditional narratives in which Egyptian material culture is automatically considered a sign of worship of the Egyptian gods are still present too. Furthermore, despite these more nuanced visions on Isis in the Roman world and Aegyptiaca, a detailed contextual study which takes into account the diversity of meanings Egyptian objects could have to the various inhabitants of Pompeii is as yet lacking.

Reviewing the discussion two important observations can be made: Aegyptiaca are no longer regarded as something purely religious and they cannot be studied when isolated from Roman material culture. Recent approaches, moreover, were able to bring the studies of material culture and those of Egyptian religion closer together, although a historiographical gap

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107 See Alvar 2008, 3 note 5.
108 See Beaurin 2008, 267-94; Bricault 2013; 2006; Bonnet 2006; Bonnet and Bendlin 2006. For the discussion on Oriental cults discussion, see Beylache 2000, 1-35.
109 Bricault 2013.
110 Lembke 1994 (on the Iseum Campense); Dardaine et al., 2006 (on the sanctuary of Baelo); Kleibl 2009 and Bricault 2013 (on Isis cults and sanctuaries in general); Versluys 1997 and 2004 (on sanctuaries in Rome).
111 DeCaro 1992; Arslan 1997, 2006; Barret 2011.
112 As Petersen notes: “Lacking is a critical investigation of the meanings of Isis in Pompeii. After all, Isis did not have to mean the same thing to all Pompeian’s, and we would do well to consider how Isis might have been part and parcel of the Roman insatiable desire for Egypt and things Egyptian, an Egyptomania- as the numerous images of her testify. A brief examination of the physical contexts in which Isis and entourage are found can reveal varying attitudes about Isis and Egypt, as well as illuminate both the social and political importance of the rebuilding of the Temple of Isis at Pompeii.”, see Petersen 2006, 40-3.
can still be witnessed. However, the afore-mentioned problem concerning Egyptomania is as yet not entirely solved; the category Egyptian, although no longer ubiquitously defined as exotic, religious or Oriental, is still unquestionably and uncritically adopted as a conceptual category. In fact, in spite of the recognition of Egypt as a Roman phenomenon, the category is still studied as an isolated group. They are defined as Nilotica, as Aegyptiaca, and as an Oriental religion, while the conceptual parameters on which this categories were once constructed have never been properly questioned or discussed. Furthermore, the relation between material culture and concepts of Egypt should be carefully scrutinised before they can be connected to any concept (the ‘exotic Other’, Isis, or politics etc). Is Egypt really always the ‘Other’? Even if this was the case, it does not account for every object that looks Egyptian. Vout asks: “How many Romans berated Egypt and all it stood for, but yearned for its textiles and coloured granites in their homes?” Although not meant in this way, Vout’s statement is a telling argument in the sense that a direct line cannot be drawn between Roman perception of Egypt and Egyptian material culture. These are still issues that need to be dealt with in order to really give Egyptian artefacts a proper place as a Roman phenomenon.

2.4.2 Romanisation, globalisation, and connectivity studies
The recent perspectives forwarded by Swetnam-Burland and Versluys advocated the view that Egyptian objects and concepts comprised a Roman phenomenon. The next step within research is to bring these studies to the wider debate of identity and cultural influence within the Roman Mediterranean. Whatever can be stated on the influence that Egypt and Egyptian material culture may have had on Roman culture, Egypt at least did not form a very substantial part of the Romanisation debate. Part of the outset of the general project entitled Cultural innovation in a globalising Society, Egypt in the Roman world to which the present dissertation contributes therefore, tries to provide Egypt with a place within this discussion. It was argued that the romanisation debate was either centred on core-periphery models in which the focus was placed on cultural identity of Roman versus native and Rome’s influence on the provinces, or, when approaching the subject from a mutuality perspective (implying it is

113 This may be due to the two separate research schools with different approaches: the French tradition of Isis cult studies and a more Anglo-Saxon school focussing on cultural studies.
114 See Vout 2003, 183.
acknowledged that Rome also became culturally affected by the provinces), that the focus was mainly placed on Greek influences.\textsuperscript{115} Egypt’s role, although from a material culture perspective omnipresent in Rome and Italy, was left out of the debate. An explanation for this might have been the nature of the romanisation debate itself, which has not been seriously approached from a material culture perspective until recently. The fact that Egypt has seemingly manifested itself largely through this medium perhaps explains the marginal role Egypt played historiographically. In trying to change this perspective, the \textit{cultural innovation}-project proposes that a constant circularity of material culture, ideas, and people can be studied as a form of globalisation, and that this circularity did not only contain Greece and Rome alone; Egypt played an important role too.\textsuperscript{116} Of course, instead of merely mentioning it was an important force in the creation of Roman identity, Egypt’s exact role and relevance should be investigated first. Therefore the true aim should not be propagating Egypt’s importance as a cultural and material influence in Rome, but to reach a better understanding of the integration of Egyptian cultural influences within the Roman Empire. However, on a methodological note, it is argued that studying so-called ‘forces from outside’ such as those from Egypt may provide a valuable addition to the romanisation discussion.\textsuperscript{117} In order to achieve this goal however, the Romanisation debate itself should be removed from its postcolonial frameworks (which still excessively lean on colonial constraints). The most important step forward is to refrain from thinking in terms of Romans and natives, at least when studying material culture, and to discard the provinces as an anti-Roman backdrop of the Roman world in general. The Roman world should instead be viewed “as one single cultural container” as this will be able to regard cultural and social interactions as within the same group.\textsuperscript{118} Whatever the historical objections against globalisation as a new explanatory framework may be, approaching the Roman world from a globalisation perspective has methodological benefits concerning

\textsuperscript{115} The discussion on Romanisation (ranging from debates on cultural identity, material culture, to Roman imperialism and colonialism) includes an extensive body of literature with wide takes and ideas. For key publications and recent summaries of the debate, see Millet 1990; Hoff and Rotroff 1997; Woolf 1998; 2004, 417-28; Häussler 1998, 11-19; Mattingly 1997; 2010; Alcock 2001, 227-30; Keay and Terrenato 2001; Terrenato 2005, 59-72; Van Dommelen and Terrenato 2007; Gardner 2013, 1-25; Versluys 2014, 1-20.

\textsuperscript{116} See Versluys 2010, 7-36.

\textsuperscript{117} For a recent discussion concerning a method one should carry this out and the way in which material culture could feature in the romanisation debate, see Versluys 2014b, 1-20.

\textsuperscript{118} Versluys 2014b, 10. See also the contribution by Versluys and Pitts in \textit{Globalisation and the Roman world, world history, connectivity and material culture} (forthcoming 2014).
archaeology. While romanisation still assumes that either something travelled from Rome or to Rome, thereby enforcing a centre-periphery approach, globalisation theory concerns investigating diversity from within a single cultural framework. Power structures between various groups and the dynamics of shifting goods, ideas, and people are studied as one system. This means it has the advantage of dissolving top-down explanatory frameworks, while it is aimed at studying the structural dynamisms of (material) culture instead of seeing them as a static and bounded entity. The perspective therefore, can also be described as complex connectivity. In this guise, it can well be applied to all those regions that witnessed increased contact in the past resulting in the movement of goods, people, and ideas. A clear methodological benefit can be observed in that, by means of this vision, objects can be separated from cultural classifications and categorisations invented by scholars. This is very helpful indeed as a perspective in order to study the dataset of the present research.

However, as solid as this perspective sounds when explaining the move of objects around certain areas in a wider perspective, the question of what globalisation has to offer to the study of Aegyptiaca from a bottom-up perspective and from specific context such as Pompeii, still needs to be answered. A gap seems to exist between the large, overarching narrative which current romanisation and globalisation theories offer on the one hand and the study of objects and their meaning in a local context on the other hand. The problem can be approached from two perspectives, reflecting the issue of labels quite clearly. Firstly, scholars have made an effort in breaking down the boundaries of Roman cultural identity and material culture and argue for a more complex and more dynamic picture of the way in which the Roman world and its connectivity functioned on a large-scale. On a small scale, nevertheless, when studying objects, classifications such as Roman and Egyptian, Greek, Dacian, or Gaul, remain incontestably used. It seems that when we really wish bring together the study of objects and take globalisation theories seriously, such classifications are no longer tenable. A second aspect of the above gap is formed not only by means of globalisation as an overarching theory itself, but also by means of its inability to assist the study of local communities and complexities, because it does not provide clear methods or an empirical toolbox. Therefore, while globalisation

\[^{119}\text{For globalisation perspectives applied to Roman contexts, see Hingley 2005; Pitts 2008, 493-506; Pitts and Versluys 2014; Versluys (forthcoming2014).}\]
\[^{120}\text{See Nederveen-Peterse 2012, 1.}\]
\[^{121}\text{See Tomlinson 1999, 2; LaBianca and Scham 2006.}\]
provides a way for archaeologists to study and understand the objects’ movement in a period of increased connectivity, is it as yet really useful when studying material culture from specific contexts? While globalisation explains the availability of different material culture, if it is the objective to learn about how a society deals with cultural change and how not only objects but also ideas relate to people’s internal reference frames, globalisation might not be sufficient when serving as an interpretative framework. The parameter choice, next to availability explained by means of an increase of cultural contact, should be introduced in order to scrutinise the reason why objects end up somewhere and how this can inform scholars about a certain context. The way Pompeians dealt with foreign artefacts, or artefacts produced in a foreign style, in all their diversity can tell us about choices people made. This is of crucial significance simply because the availability of that what could be imported is larger than that what was imported. This implies that everything that was chosen, adapted, and rejected from the available repertoire can teach us something valuable about a society. It deals for instance with the way in which a part of a larger available repertoire (the entire network of the Roman world as a cultural container) is able to integrate into a new environment, such as in a smaller hub such as Pompeii. It thereby explores the prerequisites for integration and embeddedness of the integration of ‘foreign’ objects. The empirical way to study Roman material culture on this level, to rethink so-called Egyptian objects in a Roman context and to render the benefits of thinking in terms of complex connectivity on a structural level for object studies (as will be discussed in chapter 3), shall therefore become an important directive of this research.

2.4.3 Incorporating Egypt into the history of Rome

Not only those dealing directly with Egyptian material culture in the Roman world have tried to place the category in a wider framework of Roman material culture. The other way around archaeologists and (art) historians also had to deal with ‘Egypt’ as a presence in their studies on the Roman world and material culture. Reviewing some is of interest in order to achieve a better perspective on the relative influence of Egypt on the Roman world, both in a historiographical sense in order to observe the way the concept is dealt with, and to shape a broader cultural context in which to assess Egyptian material culture. As stated above, it is difficult to gain a proper grip on the functionings of Egypt in the Roman world when merely focussing on
Egypt. How are Aegyptiaca incorporated in the various study areas of the Roman world? As an influence within material culture that is notably observed in the Roman world by scholars, Aegyptiaca regularly feature in studies on Roman art, Roman houses, or Roman gardens. When regarding these studies in terms of the way in which they deal with Aegyptiaca, however, scholars mostly fall back on traditional readings of the objects, implying they are either considered to be cult objects or part of a wave of Egyptomania. Examples hereof can be found in Jashemski (on Roman gardens), Clarke (on Roman houses), Leach, and Ling (on Egyptian influences in Roman art).122 Jashemski for instance refers to the Egyptian style of painting in the cubiculum of the Casa del Frutteto as a desire for the exotic, while Ling explains it as a similar desire prompting a taste for Chinoiserie in the European decorative arts of the 17th and 18th centuries.123 Regarding historically aimed studies this uncritical dealing with the concept of Egypt is also clearly visible.124 Looking at Andrew Wallace-Hadrill’s publication entitled Rome’s Cultural Revolution, which can be considered the most influential work on the development of Roman identity of recent years, it can be observed that Egypt is not described as a serious possible source of influence on the Roman world besides the presence of objects.125 One gets the idea that Egyptian influence was limited to material culture only. Is this justified? It is of relevance, as to the scope of the present research, to view Egypt in the light of all cultural influences on Roman culture, in order to gain any sense of the position it took in among them. Moreover, it is certainly arguable whether the influence from the Greek world should be regarded similar in form and intensity to the Egyptian. However, while its influence seems to have been 'restricted' to material culture and seems to have taken a marginal position within Roman literature (which is why historians such as Wallace-Hadrill automatically have marginalised the influence of Egypt), it does not mean that as a physical presence it played no role in the development of what might be called a ‘Roman identity’.126 How did Egypt play a role in the revolution Wallace-Hadrill writes about? The Roman cultural revolution he proposes was a social one i.e., ‘a consumers

123 See also 4.5.
124 It is, for instance, not mentioned in Wallace-Hadrill, 2008.
125 For more information on lacunae in the cultural forces within Rome’s development, see Van Aerde 2015.
126 The concept of Egypt took up a far more complex space within Roman literature than previously assumed, see Leemreize 2014, 56-82.
revolution’, but with huge consequences with regard to the treatment and availability of material culture. Although Wallace-Hadrill does not at all hesitate to also use Egyptomania as an explanatory framework for the presence of Aegyptiaca, he does incorporate the category as a whole when discussing material culture. Egyptianising styles and motifs were incorporated into the city abundantly, something that Wallace-Hadrill calls ‘the outbreak of Egyptianising motifs’, a style which found lavish expression in local art, and was adapted to local tastes and modes of production, accompanied by a rapid social diffusion among Roman social strata.\(^{127}\) However, this does not only count for Egypt. Wealth was generated in combination with the availability of luxury goods of the connected Mediterranean, which allowed for a vast incorporation of especially eastern ‘exotic’ luxury items. The appropriation and local production of these objects followed, which begin to spread again across the same regions. It finally resulted in an extraordinary innovative cultural blend (\emph{koinē}) consisting of Hellenistic, Eastern, Italic, and Egyptian styles which can be called Roman material culture.\(^{128}\) Although these flows of appropriation and perception, and adoption of exotic motifs may be more complex than Wallace-Hadrill accounts for, the idea clearly fits in with the connectivity paradigm sketched above.

Within art historical approaches to the Roman world, Egypt, being such a recognisable visual presence in visual material culture, is an inevitable issue for scholars to discuss. Even in these contexts, however, this subject seems only slightly assessed. Elsner analyses Egyptian material culture as a part of classicism in Roman art.\(^{129}\) He considers the use of Pharaonic Egyptian images as a reference to a past, similar to the way that classical Greek imagery was put to use. In his view Egyptian style could serve in the Roman Empire (as opposed to Hellenistic styles) in order to convey specific cultural messages.\(^{130}\) In the first case Rome is taken as an as example: many antique objects were imported from Egypt to be displayed as trophies, as dedications at Isaea, or in order to enhance elite settings. According to Elsner, the collection and exhibition of such objects resembled that of original Greek art.\(^{131}\) This is the first time that not only the cultural influences of Greece and Egypt are compared, but also the first time that they are treated as

\(^{127}\) See Wallace-Hadrill 2008, 357.

\(^{128}\) See Wallace-Hadrill 2008, 360-1.


\(^{131}\) See Elsner 2005, 276-7.
equal forces. Elsner’s ‘classicism’ proposition does not exclude Egypt as a player in the process of multiculturalism of the Roman world. His arguments work especially well with regard to the Greek part, as they refer to a Greek past (in fact to a Roman vision of the Greek past) rather than the contemporary Greek world. Although Egypt forms a less sophisticated argument than Greece in his central thesis, the way in which Elsner envisions artistic Classicism’s appropriation of Egyptian themes (as well as other ‘Oriental’ visual forms as the author stresses\textsuperscript{132}) being equal to Greek cultural traditions is certainly an interesting take.

In \textit{The Social History of Roman Art}, Stewart discusses Egyptian art within a broader frame of material culture and Roman art, arguing that the fact that sanctuaries dedicated to Isis (e.g., the Iseum Campense in Rome) which made extensive use of real and imitated Egyptian themes, self-consciously applied art in order to invent \textit{‘a little bit of Egypt in Rome’}.\textsuperscript{133} This is indeed a significant notion, however, it is difficult to universally ascribe such a phenomenon to all Egyptian artefacts in all Isis sanctuaries as Stewart seemingly does. His notions would imply that the Romans were always aware of the ‘Egyptianness’ of a style or theme. In addition, people would also have intentionally used objects in order to recreate Egypt. As mentioned above, Egypt is not a single phenomenon but has numerous complex social understandings. Stewart therefore makes an important point in arguing that the concept of Egypt could be intentionally used, not only serve to evoke an atmosphere but also to convey a certain message, however, prior to adopting this as an explanation the contexts of the places as well as the artefacts themselves should be carefully compared.

The accounts of Aegyptiaca as approached ‘from the margins’ of Roman historiography has brought the understanding that Egypt as a cultural force can only be seriously understood when it is analysed together with all other cultural and material influences in the Roman world. Only in this way it is possible to comprehend the role Egypt played as a material and cultural

\textsuperscript{132} See Elsner 2005, 293. Of course, oriental is a simplified term for very complex cultural influences which is also applied to influences other than originating from Egypt. In this context we may refer to for example Celtic traditions or even Indian themes (Parker 2008). To which extent this influence pertains to the nature of cultural contact Rome maintained with specific societies (trade relations versus province) may not always have had the kind of influence scholars expected. India was indeed never a Roman province, Indian cultural traditions were known and adopted within the Roman Empire. As with Egypt, India was appropriated as a cultural concept with subsequent adaptations and imports of material culture.

\textsuperscript{133} See Stewart 2008.
agent. It also, however, illustrated the historiographical marginalisation of material culture itself as opposed to for instance literature in the study of Roman culture. Scholars have never dealt with Egypt critically when analysing Roman culture. Although Egypt may well have been more present visually than, for instance, in philosophy, literature, theatre, language, myth, or mode of dress (as opposed to Greece), its objects, materials, and stylistic appropriation must in a way have influenced the way Romans thought and behaved. Taking this process seriously, and studying the manner in which it took place when compared with other cultural appropriations, is one of the fundamental goals of the present dissertation.

2.5 Perception of the Roman, the Egyptian, and material culture

2.5.1 Visual reception history of Egypt and the role of Aegyptiaca

While reviewing the previous historiographical analysis of Aegyptiaca it appeared that modern concepts concerning ancient Egypt influenced the thinking and study of Egypt in the Roman world considerably, and should therefore be more carefully examined. It has already been argued that this may have played an influential role in the interpretation of Egypt and Egyptian artefacts for a Roman context. Although the Romans also had visual concepts of Egypt and although it seems they now and again reapplied Pharaonic Egypt and Egyptian style in a comparable way to which it still occurs nowadays, it cannot automatically be assumed that these emerged from similar conditions, and that concepts were employed in an identical fashion. Firstly, the Roman concepts of Egypt were not only created from a notably different historical background, but were also connected to visual and material culture in a completely different way compared to modern society.\(^\text{134}\) Therefore, it is of importance to study the way in which the selections, classifications, and interpretations (as forwarded by Tran tam Tinh, de Vos, Versluys and Swetnam-Burland) came about, and to discuss how present-day scholars arrived at comprehending the concept of Egypt as well as studying the way in which it influenced their work. The creation of a full reception history of Egypt as material agent would require much more space and attention than the present dissertation allows for, however, in the context of this thesis it is important to study and discuss how Egypt became

\(^{134}\) For the reception of Egypt in Graeco-Roman literature and its connection to Roman material culture, see part 3.4.
visually known to people. How and when was the visual image created and what were the key factors of its development? In order to show how the reception of Egypt relates to material culture and how the current dataset of Aegyptiaca have been categorised up to now it is valuable to briefly point out some important factors that were significant in this respect. As discussed with regard to the application of the model of Egyptomania as a framework, the effect of a priori interpretations originating from present-day dealings with ancient Egypt is quite precarious. However, it seems the modern visual concept of Egypt and its material culture have been created and continuously influenced by a few specific phenomena and events: Napoleon Bonaparte’s campaign in Egypt, the political and historical developments of the relationship between the East and the West, the birth of Egyptology as a discipline, important discoveries such as the Rosetta Stone (in 1799, followed by the deciphering of hieroglyphs) and of Tutankhamun’s tomb (Thebes, 1922), the establishment of museum collections, and the increasing travel to Egypt and equally increasing number of books, movies and television programmes on the subject. All these varied phenomena eventually created a memory of ancient Egypt within the European mind which notably differed from those experienced by the ancient Romans. Furthermore, it should be noted in this respect, that the majority of these direct influences with regard to the visualisation and conceptualisation of ancient Egypt sketched above have a visual basis.

As mentioned above, of vital importance to the founding of the formation of our contemporary concept and visual memory of ancient Egypt was Bonaparte’s expedition to Egypt (1798-1801). It can be considered a watershed in the rise of Egyptology as a discipline and the increasingly leading role Egypt and its culture played in the international politics of the 19th century. The discovery and translation of the Rosetta Stone furthermore contributed to the fascination with a distant land of which its hieroglyphs could now be deciphered. However, probably even more important in this context of Egypt as a visual memorable impression, was the creation of the Description de l’Égypte. This massive undertaking comprised the

135 For surveys on the perception of Ancient Egypt and its various ways of influence on the thinking and culture of present-day societies, see Said 1978; Bernall 1987; Assmann 1997; 2003; Meskell 2000; Jeffreys 2003.
136 Description de l’Égypte consists multi-volume publication created after Napoleon’s expedition in 1798, offering a detailed scientific description of both ancient and modern Egypt as well as its natural history. Publication commenced in 1809, and continued until the final volume appeared in 1829.
manufacture of hundreds of engravings depicting ancient Egyptian monuments and the everyday life in contemporary Egypt. Prior hereto, the country and its antiquities were only visited by elite travellers such as Pococke or Norden; now images of ancient Egypt became accessible for all to see.\textsuperscript{137} For some decades, the images published in the \textit{Description de l’Égypte} were the only means of visual access to Egypt known to the West.\textsuperscript{138} Soon however, objects themselves became transferred from Egypt to European museums. This event was of profound importance in bringing ‘reality’ of ancient Egypt to the academic world and to the public.\textsuperscript{139} It can thus be stated that the Napoleonic expedition brought Egypt visually to Europe (especially to France and Britain), which has controlled the cultural productions about it ever since. Moreover, Egypt arrived at these countries at a very critical moment, to wit during the rise of nationalism in Europe. National awakening evolved from an intellectual reaction to the Enlightenment, which emphasised the creation of a national identity and developed a romantic view of cultural self-expression through nationhood. Visual imagery related to Egypt, and the founding of national museums procuring objects, brought to Europe after the Napoleonic expeditions in Paris, London, and later also to other European cities, contributed to shape these fresh national identities in giving a face to the ‘eastern-cum-exotic Other’. Moreover, by incorporating them into the hearts of their countries, they assisted in enriching and even shaping the nation itself (albeit in a very particular fashion).\textsuperscript{140} By means of these events in a way, ancient Egypt became part of the French and British past.\textsuperscript{141} In addition to the expedition and museum contexts, the discipline of Egyptology which developed during the 18\textsuperscript{th} and the 19\textsuperscript{th} centuries was an important factor in not only giving shape to the concept of Egypt, but also providing ancient Egypt with a face.

\textsuperscript{137} Pococke 1743-1745, 2 vols. and Norden 1755. Pococke was an English prelate and scholar travelling the East between 1737 and 1741. He visited Lebanon, Egypt, Jerusalem, Palestine, Asia Minor and Greece. These travels were later published in his \textit{A Description of the East, and Some Other Countries}, 1743-1745. The King of Denmark sent the Danish naval captain-cum-explorer Frederick Ludvig Norden (1708-1742) with the request to make drawings and observations about Egypt’s ancient monuments. His 200 ‘on the spot’ illustrations dating from his 1737-38 travels were later published in the \textit{Voyage d’Egypte et de Nubie} (1755).

\textsuperscript{138} See Jeffreys 2003, 1-2; Scham 2003, 173.

\textsuperscript{139} Rice and MacDonald 2003, 6

\textsuperscript{140} For more information on the connection between museums and 18\textsuperscript{th} and 19\textsuperscript{th} century nationalism (and to the concepts of colonialism and nationalism) see Kaplan 2006, 152-69.

\textsuperscript{141} Perhaps little has changed since Balfour declaimed to the House of Commons the necessity of the British occupation of Egypt: "We know the civilization of Egypt better than we know the civilization of any other country. We know it further back; we know it more intimately; we know more about it.", see Scham 2003, 173.
Whereas initially predominantly British and Italian explorers had set off on adventurous, explorative pursuits to Egypt, ancient Egypt had now become a professional academic discipline accompanied by a wide range of publicity and influence.

All the afore-mentioned events had a fundamental consequence on the perception of Egypt. Its nature was now twofold: ancient Egypt became removed from the Islamic world as it evolved into the preserve of western scholarship; while at the same time this scholarship (within a context of colonialism and orientalism) created a gap between Egypt and the West. Western civilizations did not look to Ancient Egypt for its roots any longer, instead Egypt become more and more epitomised as the ‘Other’. To the present-day this has continued to influence the western perception and study of Egypt as Assmann states: “Even today, some 160 years after the decipherment of Egyptian hieroglyphs by Jean-François Champollion the intellectual heritage of Ancient Egypt can hardly be said to have become part of our cultural memory. It is a subject of fascination, not of understanding.”

As was said, in addition to the engravings included in the Description de l’Égypt as a visual representation of Ancient Egypt, national collections of art and archaeology founded during the 18th and 19th centuries began to acquire artefacts from Egypt. These objects started to play a leading role in the formation of a collective history as well as a collective vision of things Egyptian. On his return to France from Bonaparte’s campaign, Vivant-Denon was appointed Director-General of Museums and the museum was renamed Musée Napoléon; it started to house the spoils of the expedition. A renowned example of one of the first exhibited objects from ancient Egypt in Britain was the colossal Memnon head (collected from the Ramesseum at

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142 See Jeffreys 2003, 4; Bernal 1987; Said 1978; and Moser 2006.
143 See Assmann 1984, 1. This statement also refers to the notion made with regard to Egyptomania in 2.4.2. It is argued here that modern scholars transpose their own fascination with Egypt - in the form of Egyptomania - as a concept also present in antiquity.
144 On the development of European museum collections and the shaping of a collective history and memory, see Paul 2012.
145 Later obtained by the British after the defeat of Napoleon. During the French Revolution the Louvre was transformed from a palace into a public museum which became declared in May 1791 (Wyn 2007). Under Napoleon the collection grew considerably through the military campaigns and following the Egyptian campaign of 1798–1801, Napoleon appointed the museum’s first director, Dominique Vivant Denon, who renamed the museum Musée Napoléon in 1803. Vivant-Denon published his Voyage dans la Basse et la Haute-Égypte pendant les Campagnes de Bonaparte in 1802 (Strathern 2009). In 1822, after the translation of the Rosetta Stone, King Charles X decided that a special Egyptian Antiquities department should be created, with Champollion as new curator. For a general history of the Louvre, see McClellan 1999, for the Egyptian antiquities in particular see Buhe 2014.
Thebes), which became displayed in 1819 in the Egyptian Sculpture Room in the British Museum in London, while the Louvre’s antiquities department Musée Charles X created a whole Egyptian section, opened by Champollion in 1826. The display of objects such as the Memnon Head in the British Museum and the elite burial objects displayed in the sale funéraire of the Musée Charles X meant that any citizen and scholar could now finally stand face to face with what seemed the real ‘Ancient Egypt’. Each exhibit was therefore of crucial importance. The consequence was that the curators and Egyptologists who assembled or designed the rooms and exhibitions played a pivotal role as active agents in not only the reinvention of those objects, but also in shaping a communal perception of Egypt.

How was Egypt than captured in these first presentations? In the case of the British Museum, the Egyptian antiquities were initially (in the beginning of the museum’s history in 1753 there were 160 objects) staged as curiosities and sometimes monstrosities, even though serious antiquarian studies of the objects were also undertaken. They were valued in the same context as other curiosities such as tusks, narwhals, and crocodiles, as ‘objects deemed appropriate for superficial consumption rather than deeper intellectual contemplation’. This thought prolonged into the 19th century, aided by Winckelmann’s publication of Geschichte der Kunst des Altertums in 1764 stating Egyptian art as primitive by its Africanness, and by being static, unable to innovate, and inferior to Graeco-Roman art. The addition of the French collection of Egyptian artefacts in 1802 after the victory of Aboukir Bay did not change this view. It was stated that the Egyptian objects were only definable as art when they were displayed together in the company of other Egyptian antiquities.

146 Colla 2007, 16-8.
147 See Wengrow 2003, 183.
148 For a history on the British Museum and its collections, see Wilson 2002. For a detailed analysis of the Egyptian collection, see Moser 2006.
149 Moser 2006, 41.
150 Winckelmann 2006 translation (with an introduction by Potts), 128-58. Followed by other scholars such as Quatremère, who wrote: “even among so many examples of Egyptian sculpture the highest degree of uniformity reigns between, which show no perceptible signs of advancement despite the immense intervals of time during which they were produced“.
151 It however, added a layer of meaning in which the antiquities took on the symbolic role of trophies connected to the victory of Britain over the French. Whitehead 2009, 85.
152 Moser 2006, 115. In fact, although the Memnon-head was artistically praised, the curator at the time Joseph Banks stated in a letter to the British consul-general of Cairo Henry Salt that: “Though in truth we are here much satisfied with the Memnon, and consider it as a chef-d’oeuvre of Egyptian sculpture, yet we have not placed that statue among the works of Fine Art. It stands in the Egyptian Rooms. Whether any statue that has been found
In Paris, the collection was initially formed by the royal collection, which was amplified by the spoils brought back from the expedition of Napoleon. The collection as it was exhibited in *Musée Napoléon* took similar forms as those on display in the British Museum, as trophies and curiosities. A similar nationalistic undercurrent to obtain objects for the French Republic in the first displays could also be detected. However, the attitude towards the Egyptian art changed due to historical events and to scholarly perception. After the loss of the Napoleonic collection to Britain, the Egyptian art collection was restocked in the 1820’s through three large acquisitions by the French king Charles X, convinced and advised by Champollion. While Denon himself already seems to have been taking a more empirical approach to Egyptian art, a study by Buhe shows that Champollion as curator was deeply investing in providing a basis the understanding of Egyptian art in its own context. Champollion took care to show Egyptian objects together with objects from the same period and to shape a picture of Egyptian society and its customs (the funerary hall is an example of this).

Notwithstanding this care for context however, the effect on the viewer is bounded by the museum itself. Exhibiting Egyptian antiquities in these museums took on a special social significance with far-ranging consequences for the reception of Egypt. The impact of the display in a museum should not be underestimated, no matter the ‘objective’ empirical intentions of the curators and Egyptologists involved. The assemblage of material culture, the physical spaces of the British Museum and the Charles X, the routes, the lighting, the arrangement of the objects and the organisation is essentially discursive and involves a social construction of

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153 For the display of Egyptian artefacts during *Musée Napoléon* see Malgouyres 1999 and Gallo 1999, 182-94.

154 Through Champollion as curator, three major Egyptian collections were purchased in relatively quick succession: that of Edmé-Antoine Durand in 1824, Salt in 1826, and Bernardino Drovetti in 1827.

155 Buhe 2014, 5. Although Champollion agreed with Winckelmann and Quatremère (and Hegel) that Egyptian art did not belong within the concept of ideal beauty (which was Greek art), he tried to argue that Egyptian art did not share the same functions of Greek art did and therefore could not be evaluated on the same grounds. Buhe 2014, 10.

156 Even today, this is a noted problem in museums. Macdonald (using a study of Fisher on the modern perception of ancient Egypt in museums) argues that many museums have difficulty to convey a sense of chronology of ancient Egypt and properly communicate this to the public: “Ancient Egypt is a sealed bubble in which pharaohs, pyramids, tombs and Cleopatra float around in a rich soup.” Macdonald 2003, 92; Fischer 2000a and 2000b, chart 17.
Museums, as suggested by for instance Whitehead, MacDonald and Staniszewski, are not reflections or representations of theories, but are an active forming agency, because the activity of physically assembling and displaying objects for presentation to a public is inherently heuristic and structuring. It is therefore through a particular type of knowledge production, called *musealisation* that the principal ‘understanding’ of Egypt was formed. In the case of Egypt this included the sensory learning (visual and physical confrontation) of a culture through showcases and objects devoid of their cultural context (also in the case of Champollion’s collection), creating a static image of the culture and the feeling that time had stood still. It is argued that musealisation is especially treacherous when it tries to inform people on cultures far removed from the known culture. The re-made objects in museums therefore moved from their original contexts to exhibition contexts, and were removed from ancient Egyptian culture into artefacts on display. This was a decisive turn in their cultural biography and a radical alteration of their very being. The exhibited objects became understood in the collective memory as isolated and strange artefacts, cut loose from their original context and ‘colonised’, but without integrating into their new environment because they were bounded by a museum exhibition space. Hereby an unbridgeable distance was created between Ancient Egypt and the modern viewer. The fact that museum visitors came to learn about Egypt by means of isolated showcases was therefore vital to their perception of the objects. It was also vital to the wider sense of the origin of these objects as the concept of Egypt itself was re-invented by means of this event. The term adopted for this process, the transformation from material culture belonging to a certain cultural context to the perception of static, isolated and individual artefacts, an ‘objectification’ so to say, was defined by Colla as ‘*artefaction*’. The process also links to Bourdieu’s ‘cultural consecration’, the social process (and the power of institutions herein) that creates cultural symbols as the culmination of canonisation in the wider field of cultural

159 Modern surveys of the perception of Egyptian collections, showed that it presents the average visitor the feeling that this ancient civilisation has stood still, Naguib 1993.
161 Mitchell 1991; Colla 2007, for objectification, see Tilley 2006, 60-73.
It was this process of changing a culture into an artefact and into a symbol which had a crucial impact on the way in which the public and also scholars have become to observe ancient objects and Egypt. In addition to being instruments by means of which colonial power and Otherness were (and in a way still are) communicated from the curator’s mind to the public, the object as an artefact created, sustained, and enforced this. But not only in the way how the objects were displayed in museum context, but also the very fact that they were objects that became known to the western world through museums is of importance. Because not being an idea, or a story, or a person but an actual object that people could see carried with it a visual presence and connected sense of reality, making objects in particular very powerful knowledge producers. The objects thus in fact widened the gap and strengthened the thought of ancient Egypt as something exotic, now accompanied by a clearly recognisable visual support. It can be argued therefore, that the present-day public has formed its view on Ancient Egypt predominantly on the base of such museum showcases, as these are the only way of a direct physical (and therefore realistic and true) confrontation with Egyptian culture. While the curators played a substantial role in shaping the concept, Egypt as artefact was the force that canonised this connection: “…because artefacts are not just products of human agency but also constitutive of it, they are not merely inert or detachable from the kind of knowledge and power which comes into being through the interaction of scientists and their objects of study.” It had its resonance on Egyptology as well, for artefaction caused Egypt to be represented in the majority of the standard histories as a self-contained and static culture, isolated from its neighbours in the Eastern Mediterranean and the Near East. Egypt appeared to be a civilisation devoid of dynamics and innovation. As this part illustrates, artefacts are ‘entangled’ with the sciences that take them to be

162 Bourdieu 1993, 1-34 (‘The market of Symbolic goods’, chapter 1 from The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature) originally published in 1971, as Le marché des biens symboliques, L’année sociologique, 22, 49-126.
163 For the role of object shaping colonial pasts and presents see Edwards, Gosden and Phillips 2006.
164 See Colla 2007, 17.
165 It is argued here that Egypt does not express its common features but its diversity by means of: (a) a complex society with multiple cultural codes, (b) a plurality of cultural phenomena, (c) an ongoing change caused by innovation which to a considerable extent consists of appropriation from abroad. Moreover, it pleads in favour of describing Egypt as a culture that changed markedly through time by means of continuous reconfiguration. Modern historiography of Ancient Egypt faces the challenge of describing not one single Egypt, but a sequence of different Egypt’s each with a different Egyptianness, see Schneider 2003, 155.
their objects, they shape each other. Moreover, artefacts are significant visual building blocks of human perception in general.\textsuperscript{166} The manner in which the so-called Aegyptiaca Romana have been studied has to a large extent been influenced by the way of viewing, and by the selection of objects from ancient Egypt as made in the European mind.

2.5.2 Enframing Egypt

A combination of the discoveries, the development of Egyptology in the light of orientalism as well as the specific way in which objects as exhibited artefacts became known to the public has created the ‘cultural memory of Egypt’ within the western mind. Because of its visual and physical presence, the objects in European museums had (and still have) a huge influence on the way in which Egypt is stored in the collective memory. In the modern mind, Egypt has become canonised as alien because of the use of these carefully displayed artefacts. Because what was on display in Paris, London, and in Cairo itself (and also later in Turin and Berlin), was the extraordinary ‘Otherness’ of Oriental civilization.\textsuperscript{167} A distance was taught through musealisation of Egyptian antiquities and Egyptian culture and this was emphasised by means of opera (Mozart’s \textit{Zauberflöte}), art (Robert Hubert, Piranesi, David Roberts), and Egyptomania in art and architecture of the 18\textsuperscript{th} and 19\textsuperscript{th} centuries, which endorsed the connection between a visual style, otherness, romanticism, mysticism, and Egypt. Within art and literature, through travelogues and poetry (Shelley), Egyptian objects were de-humanised; they became ruins, a romantic fascination, and not the representatives of an ancient culture within cultural memory. Egypt has therefore become cognitively ‘enframed’. This has had vast consequences with regard to the way in which artefacts in Roman context were subsequently dealt with and interpreted. Of relevance to the present thesis is the realisation that this enframing is an example of rather recently developed behaviour which should not incontestably be transposed to the past. The way in which the audience was visually introduced to Egypt by means of museum displays did not close the afore-mentioned divide; indeed it widened it, but now to a large public and with a clear visual image. It brought on exhibitions of carefully selected objects now considered as ‘Classic Egyptian’, which everyone can recognise. Exactly this current recognisability combined

\textsuperscript{166} For a discussion on entangled objects, see Thomas 1991.
\textsuperscript{167} Mitchell 1991.
with the present-day construction of ‘Otherness’ causes any research into Aegyptiaca within Roman contexts to be so complicated and elusive. By means of this brief discussion on Egypt’s visual reception history and observing the way in which Egypt was installed in the Western imagination it has not only become clear how important objects are in creating a cultural memory (defined as the phenomenon in which a cultural group collectively and individually remembers and becomes remembered as the basis of the forming of an identity), but also how influential and far-ranging the consequences are for perception and for modern scholarship. Furthermore, it is now quite easy to realise the danger in locating ‘materialisations of Egypt’ within a Roman context, because it is done so from a specifically situated mind. Egypt is recognised easily, but this cannot be equated with what Romans observed; not only does the recognisability notably differ, the way of viewing too has developed in a genuinely different environment, as one is currently trained to enframe objects as Egyptian, and enframe them as the ‘Other’. Especially with material culture therefore extreme caution should be taken in calling something Egyptian as being a Roman classification. Although recent research has refrained strongly from the phenomenon Orientalism following the writings of Edward Said (though it has not been ruled out completely), the first issue is still unquestionably taken for granted; scholars continue to enframe Egyptian artefacts within Roman contexts. The conclusion here should thus be that one cannot automatically assume that Romans recognised Egyptian style and Egyptian artefacts on the same grounds as people do nowadays. Furthermore it has become clear that if we wish to assess the interpretation and function of Egyptian objects it is necessary to solve this problem and seriously look into the double hermeneutics attested in the process of interpretation of Egyptian artefacts; the interpretation by Roman viewers and the interpretation by scholars. What should be done in order to overcome such problems therefore, is to carefully study the relationship between artefact and representation (or concept): to study perception in context.

2.5.3 The category of Aegyptiaca

A consequence of the above discussion is that it very clearly calls into question whether the entire category of Aegyptiaca consists of an existing conceptual category. Furthermore it demands a thorough revisit of the artefacts as a material culture group. Its assemblage was seemingly by and large based on the way scholars and contemporary society have learned to
recognise Egypt by means of cultural learning. One cannot assume that Romans interpreted Egypt on the same basis. Therefore the research needs to revisit a quite basic premise with regards to the way scholars acquired and interpreted Aegyptiaca as a category in contrast to a Roman audience. Interpreting Aegyptiaca is arduous and complicated, unattainable even when one tries to find the meaning of Egyptian objects. It is relative to the context in which certain objects are found, not only by way of its appearance, style or technique; the meanings of Aegyptiaca depend upon perception of the ancient viewer. It is embedded in the behaviour towards the object and becomes more lucid only when reviewed in its physical and social context. A Nilotic scene for instance, indicates something different within a domestic context than within a temple dedicated to Isis. A statue of an Egyptian sphinx in a garden setting might mean something other than a sphinx displayed on Third Style wall paintings. Nevertheless, the majority of studies on Egyptian material culture in the Roman world sought to find a general consensus with regard to the relevance of Aegyptiaca and Egypt to the Roman world. The various interpretations of Aegyptiaca to be observed in this historiography ran from religious, to a mania, exoticism and depicting the ‘Other’. The issue with many earlier interpretations (such as suggested by Tran tam Tinh and his successors, including for instance de Vos) is that they separated Egyptian imagery from the field of Roman art, as was once done with Classical Greek style. As with Greece, Egyptian artefacts manufactured and used in Rome are compared with their originals, or otherwise set apart as another cultural category. Considering Aegyptiaca as a Roman phenomenon, following Versluys, Swetnam-Burland, and Davies is a first step towards understanding the process of incorporation. The second step is to observe in which way Egypt acted as a Roman phenomenon and to study its perception within specific contexts such as domestic settings. Because Egypt in Rome is Roman, its meaning cannot be unambiguously Egyptian, as the manifestations are integrated in various ways in various complex social contexts. Extrapolated from the survey of previous research on Egypt in the Roman world it could be concluded that a specific contextual study is lacking. In order to provide this, Egyptian artefacts should be reviewed in conjunction with all other material and visual culture. Moreover, its physical context should be given a more prominent place within research. It is therefore argued that focusing on domestic contexts as carried out in the present dissertation results in a better general understanding of the use of Egyptian artefacts. Regarding Egypt as an inherent part of Roman
material culture is only the first step required in order to arrive at a coherent, holistic and meaningful interpretation of what scholars call Egyptian material culture in the Roman world. As point of departure it is proposed that Egypt in objects, as a part of a total of cultural influences contributing to the Roman world, could be something alien and exotic that was perceived as Egyptian, as well as that it could be regarded inherently Roman and only trained scholars would recognise it originated in Egypt. A contextual approach that takes account of the way in which Egypt is conceived, appropriated, and integrated into material culture is the only possible way to elucidate the significance of a certain part of the cultural conception of foreign influences. A multitude of explanations concerning the Aegyptiaca of Pompeii shall be reached, depending on the way objects were produced, circulated, and used. However, this multivocality is not the product of an inherent ambiguity of meaning which allows a constant expansion; it possesses more precise meanings, which shall be revealed by means of the context in which the object was used.

2.6 Conclusion: from artefaction to studying perception in context

The historiographical analysis undertaken in this chapter has clarified which approach to Aegyptiaca is desirable and which questions need to be asked to the dataset in order to not only get a grip on the subject but also to find a way to study of Aegyptiaca in the Roman world from a different perspective. The main question with regards to chapter 3 concerns the way in which to turn Egyptian objects into a useful instrument to study the Roman world. This implies that the present thesis includes a methodological as well as an analytical objective. The four main issues emerging from the above discussions will guide this approach to the dataset. They focus firstly on a solid contextual research and secondly, on the perception of objects (thereby critically questioning interpretations which have unconcernedly linked Aegyptiaca to Isis), third, taking Pompeii seriously as a site with its own socio-cultural development, and fourth, paying more attention to the way in which the modern concept of Egypt and the recognisability of Egyptian style and subjects has influenced scholars when dealing with Aegyptiaca. Especially the last issue was found to be problematic in the current state of research, because it has seriously affected the creation of the dataset as a

168 It could also be argued there is at present too much consensus on the meaning of Aegyptiaca which should be scrutinized first.
conceptual category. A modern perception of Egypt has been a primary guiding force in the interpretations regarding that category. The fact that the Romans now and again adopted Egypt as something exotic and isolated does not exclude that, in other instances, it was a deeply ingrained part of the Roman Empire. Multiculturalism has always been an important facet of a cultural identity, not only with regard to self definition. Egypt’s influence and the meaning of Egyptian objects should therefore be separately studied as to funerary, religious, urban, and domestic contexts without academically separating them from the Roman world and all its social, economic, religious and political movements.

It is important to consider the meaning and the change of meaning of the artefacts within their new context, while at the same regarding them as objects with a material presence and as active agents, as the above quote from Colla indicates. To return once more to the obelisk, Swetnam-Burland notes: “To fail to consider the origin of such an obelisk is to make the mistake of treating the act of appropriation as an irreparable break from the past, allowing the monument’s later life to eclipse its earlier history, thereby ignoring the object’s life (or lives) as accumulative of multiple and related layers of significance.”169 Its Egyptian origin is not capable of adding a meaning that ‘sticks to objects’ as they move to another context. What is of significance is that while a meaning is created, realities do ‘stick’ to the object. The obelisk Augustus transferred from Heliopolis to the Campus Martius in 10 BC was from Egypt, its hieroglyphs were Egyptian script, and its material was Aswan granite. These realities accompany the object no matter in which way it was used or interpreted. And it are these realities that need to be traced and studied in relation to their new context. In order to learn more about a certain context it is very useful to observe the way in which a specific object is dealt within its setting. With respect to the scope of this thesis what should be asked in relation to the obelisk is the following: why was it imported from Egypt and not, for instance, a statue? Why was it used within this context? How does that inform us of the way in which it was perceived? How could its realities (whatever their interpretations comprised of) and its presence in the centre of Rome influence the city, its inhabitants, and their choices? Being able to answer these questions implies that a fundamental insight into the Roman world and their thoughts has been achieved. The study on Aegyptiaca is especially well suited for this. The above questions exemplify that strange objects, ‘exotica’, are heuristically capable of telling

something fundamental about the context into which they are integrated. To redirect the question at the present context: the focus should not be on what Aegyptiaca are but on the way in which Egyptian objects can serve to learn about Pompeii. Attention should be paid to appropriation: how selection and use tell something significant about Roman society - as well as that attention should be paid to the active role of material culture. There can be intention present (when something was selected and used somewhere), but at the same time as soon as an artefact became used in a specific context the artefact itself affected the interpretation.

Studying perception and use in context requires a more dynamic approach that has to pay tribute to the constant changing nature of object-perception. To return to the example of the obelisks, although the first obelisks could be considered exotic by its material, Aswan granite soon became widely available and very popular in Rome, especially for large monoliths such as the columns of the Pantheon and those Michelangelo re-used in the Santa Maria degli Angeli, or those used on the Forum Pacis, the baths of Nero and the forum of Trajan. Over time, grey and pink granite were no longer associated with Egypt in a one-to-one relationship but took on a much more complex role in perception. Moreover, from the same period onwards, coloured stones became a normal feature within the public domain, as the Forum of Augustus illustrates. Might the obelisk be exotic within Rome? The chance exists that current scholarship again ‘made it exotic’, a result of the historical development and enframing as discussed above. Was Egyptian material culture considered exotic in Rome as a Roman phenomenon? Again, this calls for a contextual analysis which does not isolate Egyptian artefacts from the remaining material and visual culture present, but should do justice to the versatility of roles and realities an object has in perception.

Furthermore, on a larger scale, the role of material culture itself and the way in which archaeologists study these subjects will also be critically re-evaluated, because what counts for Aegyptiaca, counts for material culture in general too. Material culture has often been uncritically subjugated as a visual support of overarching narrative structures - especially in the case of Aegyptiaca - while the benefit with regards to archaeological research is the investigation of objects in a bottom-up perspective in order to establish their addition to contexts. The risk concerning Egyptian material culture applies

170 See Sear 1998, 85, see Ganzer 1996 for the temple of Mars Ultor on the forum and Geiger 2008 for the forum of Augustus and the use of statuary.
to material culture: it can become enframed and an easy subject for modern projections. This thesis therefore will attempt to state, by means of the case study of Aegyptiaca, that objects and cultural associations should not be connected too easily. A bottom-up approach with Aegyptiaca as a tool has the advantage of forming a heuristic isolated case in which these issues can not only be tested, it also allows objects and its conceptual associations to be properly problematised. The way, I believe, to translate these concepts into a method to study an empirical case study is to radically rethink the way artefacts, styles, ideas, and people relate. Instead of targeting the boundaries between them, it is necessary to focus on the way in which they constitute and affect each other, and cognitively connect to each other. The concept of Egypt should thereby be a heuristic instrument with which to investigate the emic dealings with objects. The way forward in my view is thus not the study of objects as Egyptian or as Egyptianised objects a priori, but a focus on the relation between objects and Egypt.

In conclusion, it can be observed that the questions, discussions and issues outlined in this chapter present the study of Aegyptiaca within domestic contexts of Pompeii with a clear direction. However, they also gave rise to an entirely new set of problems, on a methodological and an archaeological level. To place the defined directives and new scope to Aegyptiaca in a suitable framework and in order to design from them a proper approach to answer the questions proposed in this part, a solid methodology should be constructed in which dynamism should be processed as an intrinsic part of object-meaning. The way in which to move towards research into the perception of objects in context needs to be explained in a more refined and a carefully theorised framework, as it touches on a very intricate substance matter which has to be approached from an interdisciplinary angle. In order to move from Aegyptiaca to relationships between the classification of Egyptian and artefacts, and to move from artefaction to perception, a new approach should be designed that gives shape to these ideas, which shall be explored below in chapter 3.