

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The present volume is the result of an expert meeting held at the National Museum of Antiquities in Leiden, January 2016. The symposium was organised by Caroline van Eck (then Leiden, now Cambridge) and myself. It was part of a series of activities that we launched, together with Pieter ter Keurs, then Professor of Material Culture at the Department of Anthropology of Leiden University and head of the department of collections and research of the National Museum of Antiquities, in the framework of the *Material Agency Forum* (MAF); an interdisciplinary podium for the study of material agency at the intersection of the disciplines of Art History, Archaeology and Anthropology, which the three of us initiated in 2014 and was supported by the Leiden University Profile Area *Global Interactions* (LGI).

The Leiden meeting in 2016 was the outcome of a long process of preparation, initiated by an explorative workshop in 2012 (prudently entitled *Beyond Egyptomania?*), which I organised together with the Royal Netherlands Institute (KNIR) in the city of Rome. My meeting with Florian Ebeling at that occasion has been vital for the further development of the project. Rethinking the rich trajectory of adaptation and interpretation of »Aegyptiaca« was particularly central to my research at that time, because of The Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO) VIDI program *Egypt in the Roman world*, which I coordinated from 2009 to 2014 at Leiden University. I have greatly profited from the input of the VIDI PhDs, also in preparation of this book, and I would like to thank Eva Mol and Marike van Aerde in particular.

Joining forces within MAF has been extremely fruitful for the 2016 conference and this subsequent book in many respects, as the concepts of *object*, *style* and *agency* now decisively

moved centre-stage in my rethinking of Egyptomania. Moreover, many of the authors of this volume were invited to Leiden already in 2014 and 2015, in the framework of our MAF lecture series, to present their work and discuss its feasibility for the planned expert meeting.

The »survival« of ancient Egyptian cultural forms beyond the realms of the Nile is a huge topic in terms of both chronology and subject matter. The Leiden symposium brought together, for the very first time, specialists from all these different periods and domains for discussion. The meeting therefore started out with, perhaps, a certain uneasiness about what exactly was at stake (the apologetic »I am not an Egyptologist« with which several participants started their lecture gradually became our proud motto), but soon developed into a fascinating discussion that yielded a bewildering variety of fruitful directions. I sincerely hope that this book testifies to that rich debate, its great potential as well as the (conceptual) difficulties involved.

Concerning the latter, I first would like to thank Caroline van Eck: her role in conceptualising the conference as well as this volume has been crucial – and I am very grateful that this book is part of the *Studien aus dem Warburg-Haus*, the series in which it truly belongs. Secondly I would like to thank the authors of the volume for their intellectual adventurousness and eagerness to come to Leiden and participate in this project. All papers have been substantially revised after the Leiden meeting with the idea that, although dealing with different periods and different objects *and* subjects, they are in fact all in dialogue with one another. Thirdly I am grateful to the discussants, only one of whom was present at the symposium itself. Their critical evaluation, from different disciplinary perspectives, of the attempt in (material) *mnemohistory* that this book represents, I consider to be an enormous asset to the volume and the debate as a whole.

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