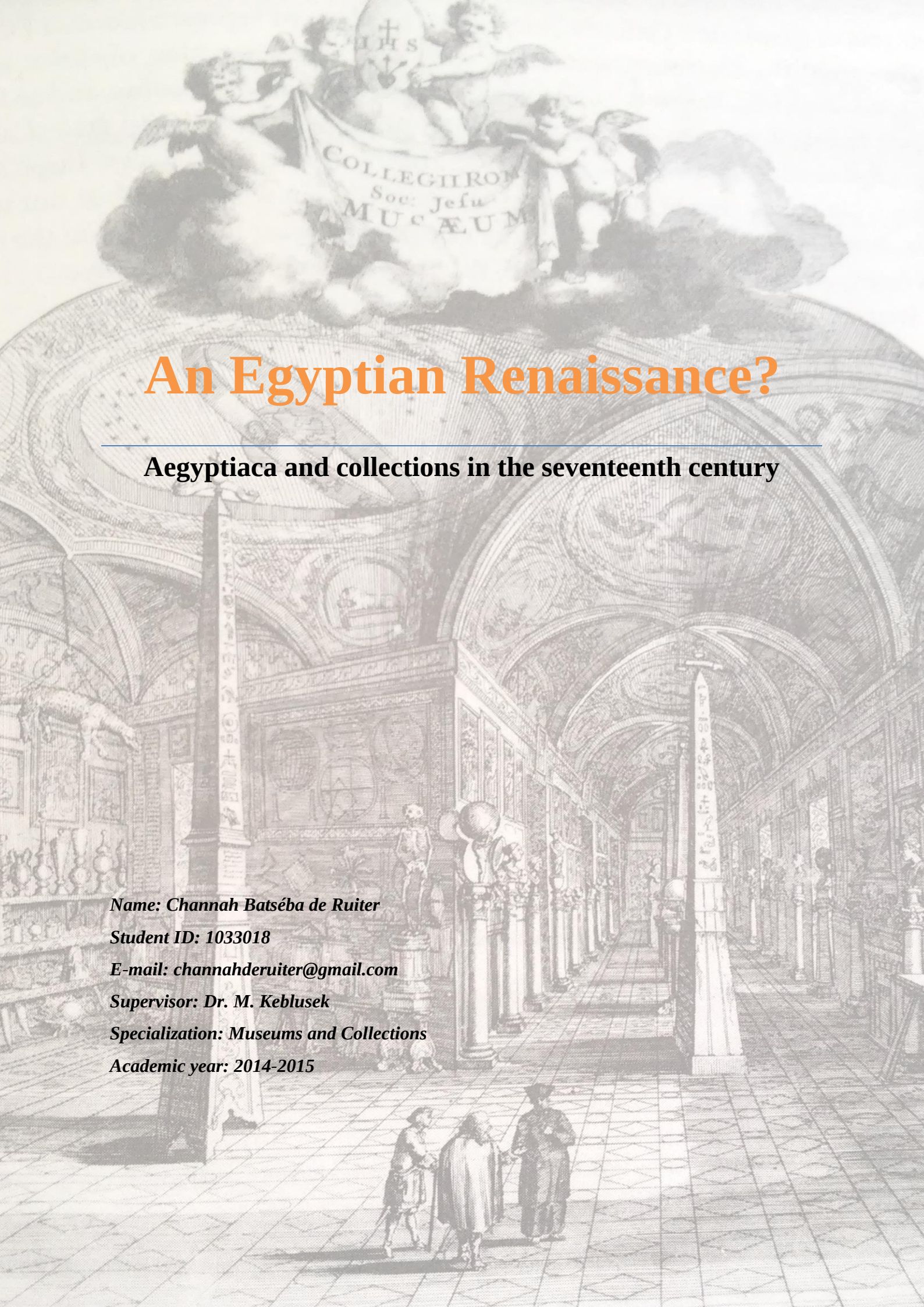




An Egyptian Renaissance?

Aegyptiaca and collections in the seventeenth century

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Introduction: An Egyptian Renaissance?

The Egyptian Renaissance centred around the revival of Egypt in the period between the sixteenth and eighteenth century.¹ Somehow Egypt had lost its meaning and legacy throughout the ages and whilst the Classical writers had been inspired by Egypt, there was loss of interest in it after them. As such through the years Egypt became a distant land covered in mystery and misconception and slowly began to balance on the fringes of reality. To be fair, Egypt's legacy was already built upon myths and theories by the Classical writers and when their scripts were rediscovered during the Renaissance, it enhanced Egypt's mythological character even further. Herodotus (485-425 BC), who dedicated part of his *Historia* to Egypt had already written a lot about its flora and fauna and he even discussed the mummification process. Especially during the sixteenth century the knowledge of Herodotus and other Classical writers such as Plato and Diodorus Siculus was the main source on Egypt. However it is still peculiar how Egypt 'vanished' between then and the sixteenth century. Peculiar because Egypt, praised for its ability to still be remembered after all those years for its pyramids and pharaoh's, had already earned the respect of the Romans and the Greeks. When Egypt finally became a province of the Roman Empire in the first century AD, emperor Augustus looted many obelisks and sphinxes from Egypt. Through this the architecture in Rome became madly inspired by Egyptian elements such as pyramids, obelisks and hieroglyphs. Egypt, though it was a far cry from the empire it once had been, still lived on in the history of the Roman empire and represented a remarkable cultural continuity.

When or how Egypt started to lose its importance is quite unclear, though needless to say the rise of Christianity must have had a part in it. Egypt with its multiple gods and its tendency to worship animals was the synonym of heretic thoughts. The Christian Church fathers condemned Egypt's culture and this in combination with curiosity declining starting from the Dark Ages, created disinterest in Egypt. Be that as it may from the Renaissance onwards, the texts of the Classical writers were read once again and Egypt hence profited from this development. During the Renaissance curiosity was encouraged and travelling to see God's creation with one's own eyes became highly popular. Egypt, versatile as it had been in its own golden years, raised as well as answered many questions of that time. Historically, religiously, philologically and medically, Egypt had many aspects which intrigued the Early Modern scholar. Especially the hieroglyphs inspired many, bold theories to develop over time and since their decipherment still had to wait a few centuries, the sky was the limit. Egypt was thought to have owned such an amount of wisdom that it had even surpassed the Classical writers. Older manuscripts such as that of the *Corpus Hermeticum* featuring the Egyptian sage Hermes Trismegistus and the *Hieroglyphica* written by the Egyptian priest Horapollo became immensely popular during the sixteenth and seventeenth century.² The Early Modern scholar was convinced of

¹ Curran 2007, 2.

² Curl 1982, pp. 68-70.

the authenticity of the manuscripts and believed that the theories on hieroglyphs and Egyptian wisdom in them outdated the Classical writers. Needless to say these manuscripts inspired many scholars and especially during the seventeenth century their popularity peaked.³ Nonetheless Egyptian objects still endured many hardships, showing the paradox of the Early Modern period. Politically, the land itself struggled with corruption and instability of the government and as such it was far from an ideal trading partner. Aside from that Egypt's legacy still conflicted with the Christian faith and while the Early Modern period was an age of curiosity and new discoveries, one still had to mind his tongue. Copernicus and Galilei for that matter showed enough proof of the conflicted views of the world at the time.

Today the Egyptian Renaissance is well researched. Researchers like Brian Curran, James Steven Curl and Erik Iversen focused on the renewed popularity of Egypt during the Early Modern period. All of them saw Rome as the nexus of the Egyptian Renaissance and especially the restoration projects in Rome of the obelisks and the reinvention of Egyptian elements in contemporary styles was researched by them. Curl named the renewed popularity of Egypt during the Renaissance and during the nineteenth century, the period of *Egyptomania* in which Egyptian symbols and objects were extensively used in architecture, sculptures, piazzas and so on.⁴ Curran even called this style the 'Frankenstein's monster' of art referring to the random Egyptian fragments being used in new compositions which held its own distinctive, non-Egyptian(!) meaning.⁵ It is fascinating to see how even the art style changed under the influence of Egypt and in this light Egypt seemed to have had inspired many and its mythological character was exploited to the fullest. The role of Egypt in the forming of Christianity is also a popular research subject. Theologian/researcher Tjeu van den Berk even believed that Christian values and traditions have been completely dependent on Egypt.⁶

The Egyptian Renaissance and its connotations with Christianity have been thoroughly researched and the same can be said about the effect of its popularity on (art) styles and such. The effect of the Egyptian Renaissance on *collections* however is quite overlooked in all the available research. Whilst one could say that an effect on collections should be considered logical and unavoidable, I am not too sure about this. Simply because Egyptian objects –*Aegyptiaca*– were present in collections but the amount of these collections or the collected *Aegyptiaca* do not seem to reflect the Egyptian Renaissance. In a way collections with *Aegyptiaca* even seem to have stood apart from other collections and therefore there is relatively little evidence to a new collecting trend resulting from the Egyptian Renaissance. How can this difference be explained then and can we really speak of an Egyptian Renaissance? Was popularity simply not translated in collections? An odd assumption because especially the Early Modern period is known for its extensive collections and it seems likely

³ Ibidem, pp. 48-49.

⁴ Curl 1994, 130. Under influence of Napoleon's conquest of Egypt, art and architecture became heavily influenced by Egyptian elements.

⁵ Curran 2007, 3.

⁶ Van den, Berk 2011, 17.

that Egypt should have had a place in them. Was the material culture of Egypt then a separate aspect of the Egyptian Renaissance? Possibly, since the reasoning behind the collecting of Aegyptiaca is often not given by the collectors themselves. An example of these independent collections which held Aegyptiaca in them, is the collection of Bernardus Paludanus (1550-1633), a doctor who lived in Enkhuizen. His extensive collection had worldwide fame and scholars from all over the world came to admire his collection. Paludanus, who had also visited Egypt in 1578 must have been inspired during his travels since his collection also held a considerable high amount of Aegyptiaca in them, even including three intact mummies.⁷ Another renowned collector or rather Egypt-fanatic was Athanasius Kircher (1602-1680). Kircher, born in 1601 in Germany and educated at a local Jesuit College, came in contact with Egypt and its mysterious script in 1628 after which he was immediately inspired and driven to decipher these mystic signs.⁸ He dedicated his life to the decipherment of hieroglyphs and played an important part in the renovation of the Egyptian parts in Rome.⁹ Kircher's collection or rather museum attracted many visitors and centred around his belief in the Corpus Hermeticum and obelisks, pyramidions, reconstructions e.g. were all numerous present in his collection. So can we then for that matter consider the collections of Paludanus and Kircher exceptional? Or was the collection of Paludanus at the end of the sixteenth, beginning of the seventeenth century only the start of a new trend of which Kircher's collection was the peak? All these questions have led me to my research question, which is:

In what way was interest in Egypt reflected in the collections of the seventeenth century?

In order to answer my research question, my sub question is whether in this light the collections of Paludanus and Kircher can be considered exceptional or trendsetting. Since both collections can be dated to the seventeenth century, I have chosen to limit my research to this period. Since there is not a lot of research on the collections with Aegyptiaca for this timeframe, I will have to rely mostly on sources such as inventories and the available literature. The research done by Curran (*The Egyptian Renaissance* 2007), Curl (*The Egyptian Revival* 1982 and *Egyptomania* 1994) among others provide an adequate image of the Egyptian Renaissance. I have used the research done by Paula Findlen (*Athanasius Kircher: The Last Man who knew Everything* 2004) and Iversen (*The Myth of Egypt and its Hieroglyphs* 1993) to form an adequate image of the collections with Aegyptiaca in the seventeenth century.

⁷ Smits 1988, 73.

⁸ Buonanno 2014, 90. and Ucko, Champion 2003, 124.

Kircher stated himself that the book which inspired him to pursue the hieroglyphs was a book containing all the Roman obelisks. Because he did not mention any author or publishing date it is a guess which book he read at the time, though some are convinced that it must have been Hohenburg's *Thesaurus* or Domenico Fontana's treatise on the moving of obelisks.

⁹ Buonanno 2014, pp.138-139.

My research also raises the question of what was actually considered to be Egyptian during this period. Safe to say, what is considered Egyptian nowadays does not apply to what was defined as Egyptian in the seventeenth century and our knowledge about the history, culture and art styles of Egypt all helped with our modern definition. But what did the seventeenth century collector, scholar e.g. consider to be Egyptian? Did their concept of Egyptian objects extended to everything which derived from Africa or 'exotic' looking? I hope to answer this question to a certain degree since it does lay in the extent of my research and although it is not the main goal of my research, I do believe that with the aid of my research this question could be answered in the future. To help sketch an overall idea of research to Egypt, I have added a list of manuscripts used and written during the seventeenth century as appendix I. A few of these manuscripts will be addressed throughout my research but aside from that the list provides most of all a good overview of research to Egypt at that time. In order to sketch an adequate overview of the collections with Aegyptiaca in the seventeenth century, I have divided my research into three chapters. The first chapter addresses the changing worldview in the course of the seventeenth century and how Egypt was affected by it. My second chapter addresses the collections of Aegyptiaca in the first years of the seventeenth century whereas my third chapter looks into the collections in the course of the seventeenth century and the research to Egypt during this period. In the light of the Egyptian Renaissance, I hope to determine whether a new collecting trend was indeed constituted in the seventeenth century at the end of my research.

Chapter 1 Egypt and the worldview of the Early Modern period

The seventeenth century was an interesting and turbulent period which is demonstrated by its changing worldview. On the one hand there was the rediscovery of the Classical writers and they were 'baptised' into a new world in which the knowledge of God was deemed to be found in every phenomena.¹⁰ At the same time it was the period in which the knowledge of writers such as Galenus, Aristotle, Ptolemaios began to be questioned, challenged by new insights which were nurtured by the knowledge that the Ancients could not have known everything. It was the period in which Descartes, Bacon and others led the way to the scientific revolution and in which the world began to be explored far beyond the set boundaries. In other words the seventeenth century was a turbulent period in terms of progress and ideologies both colliding and coinciding at the same time. So what did this progress mean for the image of Egypt? How did Egypt fit in the renewed image of the world in which both the Bible, the Classical writers and mankind were looked upon for answers? In order to gain a complete image of the value of Egypt, this chapter focuses on the changing worldview during the sixteenth and the seventeenth century and the place Egypt had in it all.

During the sixteenth century there was an almost unshakable believe that the past held the answers to the questions of the present. It was called the *sapientia veterum*, the *true* wisdom and it was believed that if the Classical texts were studied, the Classical times would be reborn.¹¹ Needless to say the Classical writers weren't literarily adopted since they collided too much with the Bible and as such were adjusted in such a way that they could go hand in hand with the Bible.¹² This combination of sources caused the world to be set in stern rules with the Bible forming the basis of the world and the Classical writers its strongholds. The creation of the earth was said to have been completed at the 25th of October in 3950 BC in which ultimately mankind functioned both as the centre of creation, as well as the object that had to acknowledge all of God's creations.¹³ Since the Bible proclaimed the creation but not the process, scholars had to rely on the knowledge of the Classical writers to find these answers. Aristotle went perfectly with the idea of stern and set laws which ruled nature. He stated that every object was born with its own purpose because God had decided so, after all a plant grew simply because it was set to be a plant from the beginning. Nature and all its magnificent, exotic events and objects were then demonstrations of God's creation and as such people felt the need to honour these creations in collections. Complete collections were established as a form of dedication and recognition of the power of God and these cabinets of curiosities -the more unique or the magnificent the objects in it, the better- were rapidly formed. It was not strange that Egypt with its mysterious hieroglyphs and mummies was revalued in this perspective. Under the influence of the Classical writers, who had felt

¹⁰ Jorink 1999, 12

¹¹ Ibidem, pp.10-11

¹² Ibidem, 12.

¹³ Ibidem, 13. This calculation was made by Joseph Justus Scaliger, a renowned French humanist and professor at Leiden University.

awe for the Egyptians and their ability to still be remembered after ages, interest in Egypt started to re-awaken during the sixteenth century.¹⁴ Diodorus Siculus and Herodotus were amongst the writers who had dedicated some of their work to Egypt, in which they praised the country for its stability and continuity.¹⁵ Diodorus Siculus for example stated that Egypt was the place “where mythology places the origin of the gods, where the earliest observations of the stars are said to have been made and where, furthermore, many noteworthy deeds of great men are recorded.”¹⁶ Even Plato, held in high account by the Early Modern scholar, had gone to Egypt in search of knowledge.¹⁷ The idea that Egypt possessed *the* wisdom was already suspected or at least appreciated by the Classical writers and this idea was reborn again in the sixteenth century. Spiked by the then undecipherable hieroglyphs, scholars started to suspect that the Egyptian script was the key to true wisdom or the *sapientia veterum* which was deemed the ultimate goal for scholars.

The texts written by the Classical writers had caused a renewed interest in ancient civilizations and simultaneously caused the need to see these phenomena's with one's own eyes. Magical creatures described by Herodotus were desired and sought-after and like Plato, scholars went to Egypt in hopes of adapting its wisdom for their own practices. These journeys undertaken by scholars were new phenomenas during the sixteenth century and differed essentially from the *peregrinate academica* which young students undertook as completion of their studies.¹⁸ Whilst scholars only started travelling to Egypt in this period, merchants among others had already trespassed Egypt many times. However the observations made by these (crafts)men were not considered ‘scientific’ during the sixteenth century.¹⁹ The travel journeys, ‘*itinerario*’ written down by scholars who had gone to Egypt, formed an important source of information about Egypt and its antiquities and contributed to its mythological and exotic character. While travel conditions were not ideal during this period -with piracy becoming a worldwide trade- touristic routes were still available for the traveller to Egypt, demonstrating its new popularity.²⁰

Though sources disagree about the hospitality of Egypt during the Early Modern period, political contact between Egypt and the Dutch Republic were not a priority during the sixteenth century. Only after Cornelis Haga (1578- 1651) regained the right to trade in the East under the Dutch

¹⁴ Curran 2007, 18.

¹⁵ Ibidem.

¹⁶ Ibidem.

¹⁷ Ibidem, 19.

¹⁸ Smits 1988, 17. Bernardus Paludanus for example undertook his *peregrinate academica* in 1578, in which he travelled from Padua (Italy), to Syria and Egypt.

¹⁹ Jorink 1999, 103.

²⁰ Smits 1988, 73. Compared to other destinations like France and Italy, Egypt was of course not as highly visited. The touristic route however went from Alexandria, to Rosette, to Cairo and its surroundings, to Damiate after which travellers crossed to the Holy Land. The Delta, the north of Egypt was in comparison to south Egypt less visited.

Republican flag in 1612, did the political relation between Egypt and the Dutch Republic change.²¹ Though political disquiets and corruption ruled Egypt it was said that after the Osman Sultan Selim I took possession of it in 1517 AD it caused Egypt, despite its hazards, to open up to the world again. Old treaties once made with the French and the Catalans were tightened again and merchants were granted religious protection when they resided in Egypt.²² It was under this religious protection that merchants, collectors and scholars went to Egypt to see the pyramids and mummies with their own eyes. The Sultan even granted them the right to dig for mummies and other mysterious, valuable objects in special excavation sites, causing the journeys to resemble grave robbing on a grand scale.²³ As such antiquarians and collectors as well went to Egypt to collect their 'own' mummies and by the end of the seventeenth century, Sakkara, the necropolis of Memphis, looted from most of its intact mummies was a far cry from its former self.²⁴

With the world being dominated by mystic, stern rules, diseases and natural disasters such as earthquakes and floods were seen as the effect to the disturbance of overall order. This sort of events could be traced back to disturbances in the positions of the stars and the planets and natural disasters and diseases were explained as such.²⁵ Diseases were, as Galenus had stated, the effect of the unbalance of the four humors, blood, yellow bile, black bile and slime in the body.²⁶ In order to cure this unbalance of humors, remedies were sought after in the stars but also in potions created with the help of mystical, healing ingredients. One of these ingredients was the usage of mummies, called *mumiya* when used in potions, in remedies for a wild range of diseases.²⁷ Though highly unsanitary and lugubrious, during this period every self-respecting doctor owned its own supply of *mumiya* or parts of mummies to crumble through their potions.²⁸ The popularity of this remedy can be illustrated by the fact that buyers had to be wary of possible forges and fraud by merchants. Only the *bitumen ex cranio cadaveris Aegyptiaci conditii*, balm originating from the body of a dried Egyptian would suffice as a remedy and other mummies from Persia or Arabia were ascribed lesser healing qualities.²⁹

²¹ Smits 1988, 14. It was said that the Sultan granted the Dutch Republic the right to trade in the East in favour of their support against the Spaniards. Unfortunately a few years before that the Dutch Republic had already signed its treaty with the Spaniards.

²² David 1974, 61.

²³ Ibidem, 62.

²⁴ MacGregor 2007, 180.

²⁵ Jorink 1999, 14.

²⁶ Ibidem.

²⁷ Dannenfeldt 1985, 16. *Mumiya* could for example be used to cure abscesses, eruptions, fractures, nausea and cases of poison.

²⁸ Ibidem, 16. The usage of *mumiya* can be explained by the fact that the outer appearance of *mumiya* and an already existing drug called *pissaphalt* were quite similar. When *pissaphalt* wasn't 'in store' one could resort to the usage of mummies. As the Arabic physician and historian Abd Allatif stated: even though these two differ immaterially, they were both nature's product hence the use of any of the two would suffice.

²⁹ Smits 1988, 165. The *mumia vera Aegyptiaca* which derived from the graveyards of Egypt were the only mummies which could be ascribed medicinal powers. The *mumia primaria*, mummies which originated from Persia or Arabia and false mummies were considered to be forgeries and did not possess any of the healing qualities of the Egyptian mummy.

The transport of these mummies did not go without struggle, superstition from both parties, merchants as well as the Turks, influenced the shipping of mummies to Europe. Merchants who believed the mummies to be cursed, were afraid of the consequences of shipping them to Europe. Horror stories of ships vanishing or enduring fierce storms when carrying mummies made them less favoured export objects. The Turks on the other hand –despite of the Sultan granting rights of excavation- were afraid of a conspiracy of the Christians in Europe. They believed that the mummies would be used in Christian rituals to curse the Turkish rule and eventually it was forbidden to export mummies from Egypt.³⁰ Whilst forbidden, the market for mummies still continued, be it more secretive. The main harbours for the import of mummies were Marseille and Venice from where they were shipped throughout Europe.³¹ Egypt itself also profited from the relatively high prices mummies brought up at the market, with Cairo being the main monopoly of the sale of mumiya to European buyers.³² Overtime the prices for mummies sky rocketed though prices in Egypt differed from Europe: complete mummies in Europe were sold off for 400 to 500 gold pieces against the price of a few piasters when they were bought in Egypt.³³ With prices like these it seems obvious that buyers had to be wary of forgeries or ‘wrong’ sorts of mummies.

By now it is clear that the ideas of the Classical writers about Egypt had inspired scholars and collectors and theories by Aristotle, Galenus and others were adapted to everyday life. But how did Egypt coincide with the Bible? It seems like a recipe for disaster with Egypt being the land of idolatry and animal worship however this idea denied the role Egypt had played in the forming of Christianity. After all Egypt was the land in which Moses was raised and also the country through which Abraham had travelled. Of course the Christian Church fathers had been against Egypt because of its polytheism and animal worship but Christian apologists actually thankfully made use of Egypt’s polytheistic tendencies. As Diodorus Siculus had stated the Egyptian deities “having once been mortals, but who, by reason of their sagacity and good services they rendered to all men, attained immortality, some of them even been kings in Egypt” simply came forth from extraordinary human beings.³⁴ Hence the Christian apologists explained how God could have been overruled by other ‘deities’ and their powers, they were simply mere humans who had done great things for their people and under their influence had become gods. As such these theories made the role Egypt had played in the forming of Christianity easier to take in.

The possibility that Egypt had played an even bigger role in the forming of Christianity was fuelled by the idea of the Egyptians possessing the true wisdom which was now lost in translation. The true wisdom which they possessed, was thought to have derived from God and the fact that the

³⁰ Ibidem.

³¹ Ibidem.

³² Ibidem, 166.

³³ Ibidem. The usage of mummies in remedies was practiced throughout the sixteenth and the seventeenth century. Only after the second half of the seventeenth century the practice started to be rejected.

³⁴ Curran 2007, 19.

Egyptians had possessed His wisdom, fuelled the idea that perhaps the hieroglyphs had been the first, true language of God. Egypt in this theory was seen as the Holy Land and as such as the beacon of Christianity. This idea was strongly influenced by Neoplatonism and was built upon the *Corpus Hermeticum* which had as its key figure Hermes Trismegistus, the mythological sage of the Egyptians. Hermes Trismegistus was said to have been a priest or a teacher in Ancient Egypt, having granted the Egyptians their laws and religious and scientific doctrines. He was seen as a contemporary or even predecessor of Moses and possessed knowledge which went beyond the prophets and thus was only comparable to that of the Evangelists.³⁵ The *Corpus Hermeticum* consisted of religious and philosophical texts written by Greek writers in which Hermes Trismegistus demonstrated his knowledge about astrology, Gnosticism and Neoplatonism.³⁶ However it was not known by the Early Modern scholar that the *Corpus Hermeticum* was written by several Greek writers and to them the *Corpus* was translated from hieroglyphs to Greek but written by Hermes Trismegistus. Curiously among the *Corpus*' teachings was the proclamation of Hermes Trismegistus that Egypt would lose all its importance over time and that its knowledge and religion would be lost to the people. Since the *Corpus Hermeticum* was translated/composed during the first to third century AD, this prophecy was quite accurate.³⁷ It was during this period that Egypt declined and its religious practices and hieroglyphs were slowly forgotten.³⁸

Since the *Corpus Hermeticum* reminded of the teachings of Plato, it played an important role in the revival of Neoplatonism during the Early Modern period. It was even believed that Pythagoras, who had been acquainted with Hermes Trismegistus' teachings, had transmitted Hermes' knowledge to Plato hence the similarities between the two.³⁹ Plato who believed in a higher and elevated world beyond the observations of man, fit perfectly with the idea that God's power could only be seen when looking at the idea behind nature and all of Gods creations. Both the *Corpus Hermeticum* as well as Neoplatonism were used as theories to underline the search for the knowledge and revelations of God.⁴⁰ The older the text, the more 'unspoiled' and thus truer to God the wisdom was. Yet again it goes back to the earlier described *sapientia veterum*, though instead of this, the term *prisca theologia* was now applied. Though both terms indicated the search for wisdom, the *prisca theologia* was more precisely the search and theory for the one, universal wisdom from which Christianity and all other religions had sprouted. During the Early Modern period, theologians therefore used the *Corpus Hermeticum* to proof that Christianity was already preached by heretic priests. Proof which was

³⁵ Iversen 1993, 60 and Curran 2007, 23.

³⁶ Iversen 1993, 61. Ficino's translation of the *Corpus Hermeticum* had at least 22 edition between the period of 1471 and 1641, indicating its popularity throughout the Renaissance.

³⁷ Curran 2007, 26. O Egypt, Egypt, of your religion will remain but fables, which your own children will not believe. Nothing will be left but words engraved on stones to tell of your pious works... For divinity goes back to heaven, and all the people will die, abandoned, as Egypt will be widowed and deserted by god and man: Hermes Trismegistus In Asclepius 3-24.

³⁸ Ibidem, 23.

³⁹ Iversen 1993, 60.

⁴⁰ Ibidem.

necessary to demonstrate that Christianity had roots in ancient civilizations such as that of Egypt and was thus contrary to outed critique not a 'new' religion.⁴¹ As such Egypt was for many proof of this theory and the idea of true wisdom residing here was only a logical conclusion.

Aside from these theories there was the 'physical' evidence of Biblical events happening in Egypt, found in towns for example and pilgrimages to Egypt started to take place from the sixteenth century onwards.⁴² *Piramesse*, a city in the Delta, Lower Egypt, was hence frequently visited by pilgrims who were convinced that it had been the hometown of Moses.⁴³ The belief that *Piramesse* had been the town of Moses was combined with the belief that Ramses II had been the nameless pharaoh who had enslaved the people of Israel and from whom Moses had to flee. A plausible theory and it was indeed Ramses II who had constituted *Piramesse* during his reign (19th dynasty) between 1279-1203 BC. The Exodus also spoke of a city called '*Raamess*' which had been one of the cities in which the people of Israel had to endure their slavery, hence the correlation with *Piramesse*.⁴⁴ Be that as it may, the city of *Piramesse* was constituted between 1279 and 1203 BC whilst the Exodus dates approximately to 1500-1450 BC which makes the assumption of both Ramses II and *Piramesse* as pharaoh and slavery city highly unlikely.⁴⁵ Though in terms of chronology this theory is condemnable, I find it interesting that it does indicate a certain amount of knowledge of both pharaoh's and cities of Egypt.

With the undertaking of a pilgrimage to *Piramesse*, a visit to the Sinai desert could not be overlooked. After all this was the desert in which Moses was said to have presented the Ten Commandments to his people and also the place of the devoting and destroying of the golden calf. Clearly Egypt must have formed a dilemma for most Christians. How could one cope with a country that had both threatened and benefited Christianity? Kircher had an interesting theory combining these two conflicting persona's with another theory inspired by the Bible. He stated that Egypt could be seen as the land of the first generations of Adam and Caïn. Adam who had brought the arts and sciences to mankind and Caïn who had brought black magic and idolatry to it were combined in Caïn's son Cham and his combination of both legacies was exactly from which Egypt had originated.⁴⁶

So was this theory enough to ease the discomfort which understandably could be felt amongst Christians? On the one hand it did. For some Christians, The Egyptian contribution to the forming of Christianity and hieroglyphs containing Gods wisdom was the reason Egyptians objects were even collected. On the other side we see the repercussions of the belief in Egyptian wisdom and in their religion surpassing the Christian, orthodox religion. Giordano Bruno (1548-1600), among others a

⁴¹ Broek, van den 2006, 77.

⁴² Smits 1988, 17.

⁴³ The Delta, Lower Egypt is the Northern part of Egypt. In comparison with Upper Egypt (South) the climate was more moist and 'swamp'-like due to the many small rivers present in the landscape which caused the land to be easily flooded during the inundation of the Nile.

⁴⁴ Dannenfeldt 1985, 24.

⁴⁵ Exodus.

⁴⁶ Findlen 2004, 33.

philosopher was strongly influenced by the Corpus Hermeticum and Neoplatonism. Although he was a friar, he preached for the reformation of the world by the Egyptian wisdom and religion and in which mankind would be taught according to the Hermetic tradition. His belief that Christianity came to existence under the strong influence of Greek-Roman and Egyptian culture, implied that Christianity was not unique hence his preaching was accused of heresy.⁴⁷ As such the Church demanded his revoking of these proclamations in the same way as they would demand from Galileo Galilei (1564-1642) years later, but Bruno declined and was sentenced to death in 1600.⁴⁸ Though other executions regarding the perception of Egypt did not take place further in the seventeenth century, Bruno's conviction does demonstrate the difference in attitudes towards Egypt during the Early Modern period. Especially under the influence of the Protestant Reformation in the sixteenth century, which meant that not only clergyman but also the everyday Christian was permitted to read the Bible, critique on the interpretation of the Bible must have been outed more frequently.⁴⁹ With the Protestants encouraging their people to behold God's creations with their *own* eyes, new theories such as that of Bruno were bound to be formed.

New, alternative theories were precisely which caused the seventeenth century to become a turbulent period. Under the influence of the Reformation, voyages to new worlds were undertaken and the invention of the printing press in the fifteenth century made sure that science, philosophy e.g. were able to reach a bigger and more diverse audience than before. These *new* inventions emphasized the fact that the Classical writers had not known everything. The ease with which theories and observations were spread out into the world also meant that more people could verify faster or correct them and as such progress of new theories henceforth was faster than it did before.⁵⁰ As stated before it was encouraged to see the world with one's own eyes under influence of the Reformation and this combined with the wanderlust arising in Europe caused the realization that there had been a lot unknown to the Classical writers. New worlds and species not known to them and therefore the Ancients were discovered during their voyages. This meant that with the Classical writers no longer blindly trusted, the question arose on what or whom knowledge now could be based on? It is precisely this shift in attitude which marked the seventeenth century and also formed the basis of the scientific revolution.

Contrary to the sixteenth's century belief of answers being hidden in the past, we see a shift at the end of the sixteenth to the seventeenth century of a well-grounded trust in the future and its prosperity.⁵¹ Scholars were encouraged to experiment and leave their desks to observe and research in order to create theories based on their own observations but *still* with the aid of the classical literature. Francis Bacon (1561-1621), who had abandoned the teachings of Aristotle and Plato, also proclaimed

⁴⁷ Curl 1994, 61.

⁴⁸ Ibidem, 61. Giordano Bruno was sentenced to be burned at the stake.

⁴⁹ Jorink 1999, 19.

⁵⁰ Ibidem.

⁵¹ Ibidem, 103.

empirical research undertaken by oneself but foremost proclaimed that science should not be left *only* at the hands of an elite few.⁵² Science was for everyone who was interested and frankly it could use all the help it could get in uncovering all the new mysteries. Quite the opposite of the early sixteenth century science during which the observations made by non-scholars were not even considered scholarly and at the least scientific. Though in terms of scientific discoveries, Bacon had not accomplished much, his scientific method of induction, generalising on basis of results and empiric research, had certainly left their marks in the forming of the new science.

Johannes Kepler (1571-1630) and Galileo Galilei as well marked the parting with the knowledge of the Classical writers and the Bible. The perfect harmony of the stars and the planets started to 'crumble' when Kepler in 1604 published a book based on a new star, the supernova. Though Kepler had denied its presence at first (indicating the firm belief in the stern and static universe and nature) he had to revise his opinion when he observed it with his own eyes. When in 1609 he published his book *Astronomia nova seu physica coelestis* about the ellipse of the planets and the stars in two separate orbits, he undermined the previous Classical theory that the planets and stars travelled in circles around the earth.⁵³ Galilei who peered at the skies through the newly invented telescope (around 1610 invented in the Dutch Republic) also had to come to the conclusion that Copernicus was right when he proclaimed that the sun and not the earth was the centre of the universe. Since this collided with what was preached by the Bible, Galilei was forced to revoke his proclamations in 1633.⁵⁴ Though the worldview was changing, it did so at a slow pace and as is indicated by Bruno and by Galilei, one did have to watch his tongue.

With René Descartes (1596-1650) the Classical writers were thrown overboard. He stated that there was no such thing as an universe ruled by hidden powers and instead the universe was ruled by set laws of nature. Scholars for that matter should not rely on their senses but on their mind and reason to come to true scientific conclusions. According to Descartes there was and should be a clear division between the body and the spirit.⁵⁵ He was also a firm advocate of the division of religion/faith and science, stating that one had nothing to do with the other therefore clearly breaking with the worldview handled in the sixteenth century. Though inspired by Bacon, Descartes held on to the theory of deduction which was in line with his belief to doubt everything.⁵⁶ What was seen solely accounted for that specific object on that specific moment. Descartes is often called the key figure in the forming of the scientific revolution and especially his need to split religion from science, paved the way for the forming of disciplines.⁵⁷ Needless to say Descartes, aside from his followers also received a lot of critique from the theological corner and in some cases his work was even banned. Still

⁵² Ibidem, 21.

⁵³ Ibidem, 23.

⁵⁴ Ibidem .

⁵⁵ Cogito ergo sum.

⁵⁶ Jorink 1999, 66.

⁵⁷ Ibidem, 108.

Descartes' theories became highly popular throughout Europe and were said to have inspired Newton's theories.⁵⁸ As it would happen at the end of the seventeenth century there was a clear indication that theory had to be connected with practice, reason to faith and faith and experiments to descriptions. But foremost scientific knowledge had to be open and monitored.⁵⁹ Science was no longer for the elite and neither as intertwined with the Bible and the Classical writers.

So what did this progress mean for Egypt? Despite these changing worldviews, the need to collect and the search for true wisdom in Egypt still continued. Frankly I think that until the decipherment of hieroglyphs by Jean-Francois Champollion (1790- 1832) in the nineteenth century, the belief that hieroglyphs concealed the true wisdom was still held on to. The popularity of the Corpus Hermeticum throughout the seventeenth century and the overall allure of hieroglyphs encouraged by scholars such as Kircher, certainly ensured this. Under the lead of scholars like Kircher, the research into the history of Egypt took flight. Kircher with his extensive collection ‘‘My gallery or museum is visited by all the nations of the world..’’, possessed a remarkable amount of knowledge about Egypt.⁶⁰ Being both a Jesuit and follower of the Hermetic tradition, he was the perfect example of the different worldviews co-existing during the seventeenth century. He devised all sorts of theories on the Egyptians, including one of Hermes Trismegistus being Moses and the hieroglyphs having been the language of Adam and Eve.⁶¹ Seeing these theories, one can say that they were still quite in line with what was presumed about Egypt in the sixteenth century and only the angle from which Egypt was perceived had shifted.

Though much about Egypt was still unknown, progress in the translation of hieroglyphs and the research of its history paved the way to the Egyptology as we know now. Though Kircher was confronted with censorship in his book about Egypt, *Oedipus Aegyptiacus*, he clearly lived under ‘less’ restricting circumstances in comparison to the unfortunate Bruno in 1600.⁶² We see despite shifting worldviews, ‘only’ the apprehension of Egypt changed: the antique value came more to the front in favour of the mythical usages of Egyptian objects. The perception of Egypt as mythological country which balanced on the fringes of the real world, found itself as the subject of Christianity, the Classical texts and science. As such theories revolving around Egypt formed an excellent example of the seemingly conflicting worldviews during the Early Modern period.

⁵⁸ Ibidem, 72.

⁵⁹ Ibidem, 104.

⁶⁰ Findlen 2004, 52. Kircher went to Rome in order to write a book about Egypt which he did the *Oedipus Aegyptiacus* was published between 1652-4.

⁶¹ Ibidem, 161.

⁶² Ibidem, 52.

Chapter 2 Collectors of *Aegyptiaca* during the first years of the seventeenth century

As discussed in chapter 1, Egypt was clouded in a wide range of theories that demonstrated the changing worldviews during the seventeenth century. With the rational side of science and mankind evolving, the Classical writers were slowly abandoned. In search of the knowledge of the Classical writers, one had to come to the conclusion that these wise men had not known everything and compared to all that still had to be discovered, barely had scratched the surface. The very writers who had caused interest in Egypt to flourish again in the sixteenth century were no longer the ultimate striving of the scholars of the seventeenth century. This did not mean that the Classical writers were suddenly abandoned –despite Descartes’ ‘encouragements’-, instead ways of compromising the newfound knowledge with the known were searched. As chapter 1 discussed the role of Egypt within the changing worldview, this chapter looks into the effect on the collecting of *Aegyptiaca* during the first years of the seventeenth century. Who collected these items and did their reasons coincide with the worldview previously described or can they be considered to be exceptional? In order to fully comprehend the idea behind the collecting of *Aegyptiaca*, the role of the merchant in it will be first addressed as well as the perception of what was Egyptian during this period.

Influenced by the ideas of Bacon and Descartes, science and knowledge slowly began to be associated with a larger audience. Merchants and other ordinary (crafts)men were encouraged to challenge what they knew and were pressed to travel in order to discover the truth of the world. As Justus Lipsius (1547-1606) once wrote in a letter, travelling was as Homer’s Odysseus, it enriched the insight, knowledge and character.⁶³ Wanderlust also caused the development of global trade which thrived in the seventeenth century and with the world growing and new cultures being discovered, curiosity for exotic goods and proof of these alien cultures grew in demand. Especially the Iberian Peninsula played an important role in fulfilling this rise in demand, connecting Europe with the New World and Asia, long before the VOC sailed the oceans.⁶⁴ As Sven Dupré and Christoph Lüthy stated in ‘Silent Messengers’, long before globalisation it was global trade which turned cities in the Netherlands and Antwerp into cosmopolitan centres.⁶⁵ The merchants who travelled and returned with the desired commodities fulfilled the demands of these consumer societies. While these merchants were often seen as mere transporters, nowadays a new approach to them is used. The seafaring merchant who ‘travelled abroad, saw things afresh, exchanged this newfound information and added

⁶³ Cook 2008, 48. Lipsius wrote this letter in 1578 to Philippe de Lannoy.

⁶⁴ Dupré, Lüthy 2011, 3. The VOC gained patent in March 22nd 1602.

⁶⁵ Ibidem, 2.

to physical ‘evidence’ of it in plain and understandable language’’ was the perfect example of the new, ‘open’ attitude in science.⁶⁶

The humanist scholar Caspar Barlaeus (1584-1648) stated in 1632 that merchants who could hold their own in a discussions amongst scholars, should be called *Mercator Sapiens*, ‘the wise merchant’.⁶⁷ With this he underlined a bond which Plato and for that matter the Greeks had already appreciated, commerce and the studies of philosophy and humanities were distributed as a pair.⁶⁸ Had the Classical writers spiked interest in Egypt, merchants further developed this interest and functioned as intermediaries in the realization of this possible new trend. They functioned as commercial representatives, financial middlemen and business correspondents in the process of accumulating objects for collections.⁶⁹ They worked at the hand of the demand of the collector but they were still expected to understand what they collected in terms of quality and rarity.⁷⁰ Merchants clearly played an important part in the collecting and consuming of the seventeenth century however what can be said of the objects that they brought with them? Obviously these objects not only indicated the interest of the owner but also the contemporary trends. As Dupré and Lüthy called them, they were the silent messengers of the Early Modern period and even though the objects could not talk they did convey context, importance and the interest of the owner. It were the objects which, according to Dupré and Lüthy, caused research and the production of texts and theories instead of the other way around.⁷¹ As such can the merchants in this context be seen as the ones who decided what was ‘Egyptian’?

Today we have a clear understanding of what is considered Egyptian: Ancient Egypt is divided in 31 dynasties and objects which can be traced back to these dynasties can be considered Egyptian.⁷² Needless to say this definition of what is Egyptian cannot be applied to the Early Modern definition and when Egypt’s style was adapted into crafts it became harder to tell the difference between an Egyptian object and an object which was *Egyptianised*, both in earlier times as the contemporary one. To be fair with objects being torn from their context there was no such thing as a solid (material) culture study and aside from retrieving the objects personally from Egypt itself, one had to rely on their merchants for the identifying of Egyptian objects. Much like the translation of the

⁶⁶ Ibidem, 4. and Cook 2008, 47. ‘I have recognized through my travels that these views quite contrary to ours are not on that account barbarians or savages, but that many of them make use of reason as much or more than we do.’ Descartes.

⁶⁷ Keblusek, Cools, Noldus 2006, 96.

⁶⁸ Ibidem, 95.

⁶⁹ Ibidem.

⁷⁰ Ibidem, 102. As stated in Marika Keblusek’s article *Mercator Sapiens: Merchants as Cultural Entrepreneurs*, though merchants often were required to make financial investments in the purchasing of objects for their clients, this did not mean that they had a blank cheque to purchase what they deemed necessary. They were not independent in their search of objects and had to follow the demand of the client. Though their personal financial investment would often take years to be repaid.

⁷¹ Dupré, Lüthy 2011, 1.

⁷² After Alexander the Great conquered Egypt in 332 BC, the power and culture of Ancient Egypt which was already diminishing, faded even more. When Alexander the Great took possession of the country it was no more than a granary for his empire and a land which was covered in old myths however he did crown himself as pharaoh when he was in Egypt.

hieroglyphs, the identification of Aegyptiaca fell into a wide range of interpretations. One could say that in terms of determining the value and identity of Aegyptiaca a role for the Mercator sapiens was indeed inevitable.

The difficulty in the identification of Egyptian or Egyptianised objects is best illustrated by the *Mensa Isiaca*. The *Mensa Isiaca* is a bronze tablet inlaid with silver on which Egyptian gods and rituals are depicted and which was unearthed in the sixteenth century.⁷³ (See appendix II) Curl even claimed in 'The Egyptian Revival' that the renewed interest in Egyptian objects was mostly due to the unearthing of the *Mensa Isiaca* or its Italian name: the Bembine tablet of Isis.⁷⁴ When the *Mensa Isiaca* was unearthed, the world was convinced that it was truly an Egyptian object since the scenes on the tablet and the addition of hieroglyphs added to its overall Egyptian character. Kircher further proclaimed its authenticity when he based most of his research on hieroglyphs on this specific tablet.⁷⁵ Only in the nineteenth century it was discovered that the *Mensa Isiaca* was in fact a lot younger than once thought, dating to the reign of Tiberius Claudius (41-54) in the first century AD.⁷⁶ Though it is an understandable mistake, one can wonder what was considered to be Egyptian during the Early Modern period. Was anything with hieroglyphs on it considered Egyptian? We see that the Egyptianising of furniture (tables with sphinxes as legs e.g.) and architecture did take place in the Early Modern period, so there was clearly an idea of what was Egyptian.⁷⁷ But when was something really considered to derive, both in context as time, from Egypt? I think that for now it is safe to say that anything which reminded one of Egypt, be it in the form of hieroglyphs, mummies, pyramids and other significant symbols was considered Egyptian and with history not yet being researched, Egypt, both in terms of outer appearance and chronology was loosely interpreted.⁷⁸

Otho van Heurne (Otho Heurnius) (1577-1652) is the best example of the collaboration between merchants and collectors of Aegyptiaca. Heurnius started his student life at the Leiden university's Art faculty in 1590 from which he graduated in 1599. Due to the death of his father Johannes Heurnius, professor of medicine, Heurnius career took a shortcut and he was given the position as professor of medicine in 1611. With the passing of the professor of anatomy Petrus Pauw (1564-1617) in 1617 he was appointed as his successor at the anatomical theatre.⁷⁹ As professor in anatomy, Heurnius acquired a large amount of surgical tools, books and other rarities for the collection

⁷³ Nowadays the *Mensa Isiaca* can be found in the collection of Museo Egizio di Torino.

⁷⁴ Curl 1994, 51.

⁷⁵ Stolzenburg 2013, pp.145-146. Kircher actually never saw the *Mensa Isiaca* with his own eyes, his assumptions were merely based on copies given to him and he stated that the object was Egyptian rather than something deriving from the Roman period. He felt that if the object had derived from the Roman period, some form of Latin or the alphabet would have been present on the tablet. He ascribed the tablet to a temple of Isis, with the tablet having functioned as a religious altar.

⁷⁶ Curl 1994, 51.

⁷⁷ Curl 1994, 63.

⁷⁸ The painter Jan van Kessel painted a series called *Die Vier Erdteile*, dedicated to the four continents of which one was Africa. On the Africa piece the pyramids of Gizeh and the Nile can be seen in one of the side sceneries which at the least indicates that geographic wise that what was Egyptian had to derive from Africa and not from Asia for that matter. Not everything exotic for that matter could be considered Egyptian.

⁷⁹ Huisman 2008, 42.

of the theatre although this was often frowned upon by the Curators of the university.⁸⁰ Be that as it may, it was under his influence that the theatre evolved into a true academic museum and became subject of many peregrinate academica undertaken in the seventeenth century.⁸¹ Heurnius, in search of firm proof of the descriptions made by the Classical writers, was interested in the most exotic and rare objects because he saw the mythological creatures from the past in them. Every object which could function as a tangible representation from reports of the Classical writers or the Bible for that matter were desired by him.⁸² Through his collecting practices he strived for the one, universal knowledge and understanding of God and as such he represented both the teachings of the Corpus Hermeticum as well as that of the humanists. Heurnius also held a specific interest in Egypt and its objects and in them he saw their the Biblical, medical and antique value at the same time. The *trochilos* for example, a bird which was often found cleaning the teeth of the Egyptian crocodile was desired by him because it was once described by the Classical writers. He received help in acquiring these Aegyptiaca from David Le Leu de Wilhelm (1588-1658), a merchant in both Syria and Egypt, educated in arts, Eastern languages and law and also brother in law of diplomat Constantijn Huygens (1596-1678).⁸³ Le Leu de Wilhelm had an extensive network of contacts in Egypt and with his political contacts he proved to be of great value to Heurnius and his collection.

On June 14th 1620, the first shipment of Aegyptiaca arrived in Leiden containing half a mummified arm, two stone shabtis and one complete mummy in its sarcophagus.⁸⁴ Especially the mummy in its sarcophagus drew worldwide attention, it was baptised '*Groote mummie*' and was displayed at the anatomical theatre whilst it was partially unwrapped.⁸⁵ Heurnius praised the healing qualities of mummies and preferred the Egyptian mummy above any other sort of mummy. He stated that the mixture of spices used for the Egyptian mummy brought about under the power of the sun, conveyed the Egyptian quality of longevity to patients who drank mumiya.⁸⁶ Also the mummified arm, which was said to have "been absolutely dry for a long time, without spots of decay or strange odours" must have been used and collected for medical purposes and thus referred to Heurnius medical interest in Egypt.⁸⁷ Contrary, the stone shabtis must have functioned as the most clear example of collecting 'witnesses' of an era in which had Moses lived. Heurnius must have been over the moon with Le Leu de Wilhelm's acquisition as underlined in his thank you letter dating to October 8th 1621. Aside from his gratitude, he eloquently described in this letter what more he desired from Egypt: Large, wooden, stone and bronze statues, preferably of humans with animal heads, gravestones,

⁸⁰ Ibidem, 47.

⁸¹ Ibidem, 48.

⁸² Ibidem, 50.

⁸³ Ibidem, 46.

⁸⁴ Ibidem.

⁸⁵ Raven 2005, 20

⁸⁶ Huisman 2008, 50.

⁸⁷ Ibidem, 75.

the head and genitals of a hippo, arms, feet, jaws of mummies which could be found nearby the pyramids and papyrus among others formed a seemingly endless wish list.⁸⁸

Over the years Le Leu de Wilhelm send Heurnius various, requested objects and eventually a stuffed crocodile, a scarab, three stones with hieroglyphs, images of Isis, small godly figurines and another mummy became part of the anatomical theatre's collection.⁸⁹ To Le Leu de Wilhelm, Heurnius mentioned that Egypt was the 'ancient tutor in every branch of science' with which he obviously stated his belief that hieroglyphs concealed the 'real' wisdom of God. He even believed that the mummies in his collection had been contemporaries of Hermes Trismegistus and therefore witnesses of the true knowledge existing then.⁹⁰ In other words the Corpus Hermeticum and the prisca theologia were also present in Heurnius' motives although it were the Classical writers and the Bible which proved most important to him. In the Republic, Heurnius was one of the few (known) followers of the Corpus Hermeticum and he even published in 1619 a book concerning his hermetic findings: *Babylonia, Indica, Aegyptia etc. Philosophiae Primordia*, however he never performed any new or other research into his Aegyptiaca.⁹¹

But what can be said about Heurnius' religious reasons behind his collecting of Aegyptiaca? Heurnius was a Reformed Protestant and the religious resistance against Egypt seems to not have been as present as it was with the Catholics. As addressed before, Catholics learned the Bible through their priests and during the first years of the seventeenth century, travelling was also discouraged out of fear that they would come into contact with other, 'barbarian', practices. However during the Reformation, self-study and travelling was actually encouraged, in order to see the world and the creations of God with one's own eyes. Heurnius, from a religious point of view did exactly that in the form of collecting –rather than travelling- commodities which functioned as testimonies to God's power. The objects he collected did after all refer to the Biblical happenings aside from the Classical references. So did Heurnius function as the 'typical' collector of Aegyptiaca in the Early Modern period? Was the collector of Aegyptiaca a (humanist) scholar, Protestant and in some way connected to the medical field? Perhaps, at least we have seen that with Heurnius, his objects solely functioned as representations of a forgotten knowledge rather than something which could be used for new research.

Berend ten Broecke (Bernardus Paludanus) (1550-1633), was another well-known collector of Aegyptiaca during his lifetime. Bernardus Paludanus, a practising doctor in Enkhuizen, was renowned for his collection which attracted many visitors from all over the world. His collection was inspired by the collection of Ulisse Aldrovandi (1522-1605), the creator of the botanical garden in Bologna. Like many others Paludanus studied medicine and philosophy in Padua and he visited many places such as Italy, France and even Egypt. In July 1578 he visited Egypt and though his stay was short, he travelled through the Sinai dessert to Damatie, Alexandria and Cairo which was at the time the 'touristic' route

⁸⁸ Ibidem, 51. Human statues with animal heads are often statues of gods such as Anubis, Hathor or Seth.

⁸⁹ Dupré, Lüthy 2011, pp.166-167.

⁹⁰ Ibidem.

⁹¹ Huisman 2008, pp.63- 64.

for scholars travelling through Egypt.⁹² Clearly Paludanus must have held the idea of gaining knowledge and understanding by travelling in high account and all his voyages must have formed a source of inspiration for his later impressive collection. His collection must have contained up to 16,500 objects of which circa 300 were of ethnographic nature, 130 antiquities and around 150 relics and objects with biblical connotations.⁹³ Just like Heurnius, Paludanus strived for the understanding of God through collecting all His marvellous creations and through his search for objects with connotations to the Bible or the Classical writers, he acquired the most rare and unique objects. Though Heurnius found one vast supplier of his objects, Paludanus seemed to have gone about it in a completely different way. Because he lived near the harbour in Enkhuizen, Paludanus assured himself of a secure flow of objects being brought in by the VOC which often moored at the docks. His friend Jan Huygen van Linschoten (1563-1611), an explorer and merchant was of great importance to Paludanus and provided him with more information and rarities from and about all the newly uncovered cultures and species from his voyages, thus functioning as a true Mercator sapiens.⁹⁴ Together with Lucas Janszoon Wagenaer (1533-1606) a cartographer living in Enkhuizen, they formed a trio which held a firm network of contacts worldwide. A network which clearly was impressed by Paludanus' collection as the University of Leiden for example tried to sway him into moving to Leiden to design a botanical garden. The fact that it would have meant the transportation of Paludanus' collection to Leiden must have been a prior motive as well. While he declined the offer, he did send his colleague, and acquaintance Carolus Clusius (1526-1609), appointed as designer of the garden in Leiden, various sketches as suggestions for the botanical garden.

Paludanus' network reached further than the Republic and he was acquainted with different political figures such as the ambassador of Constantinople and other explorers. As such Paludanus received a complete mummy as a gift from the brother of Haga – the same who had also acquired the right to trade in the East in 1612. Since Paludanus had his background in medicine, the gift of a mummy seems fitting and aside from this mummy, he also possessed two other mummies. He seemed to have possessed a fair amount of knowledge about the mummification process and his collection even held some of the 'ingredients' for the process itself, such as natron which was used to dry the body.⁹⁵ Though it is still uncertain what the Early Modern scholar knew of Egypt, it is safe to say that they –seeing Paludanus' descriptions- were not completely clueless. How and where Paludanus gained his knowledge about mummification remains uncertain but it was likely inspired by Herodotus descriptions of Egypt and its practices in the *Historia*. Still it is peculiar that despite all these voyages to Egypt, knowledge of the history and culture of Egypt was underdeveloped.

⁹² Smits 1988, 73.

⁹³ Jorink 2006, pp.277-278.

⁹⁴ Ibidem, 277.

⁹⁵ Hunger. BPL 2596: 9. Catalogue III- 93. In the inventory of Paludanus is described how the body of Egyptian was to be dried for forty days in a bath of salt water after it had been deprived of his intestines. Astoundingly accurate for the amount of knowledge about Egypt available then.

So what other Aegyptiaca did Paludanus own aside from his mummies?⁹⁶ A combination of papyri, small god figurines, Egyptian marble, and pyramidions were present in Paludanus' collection. Crocodile eggs from Egypt and the skeleton of a crocodile, not specified as Egyptian, could also be found in his collection. Just like Heurnius, Paludanus seemed to have possessed an amount of interest in crocodiles which specifically derived from Egypt. A specific reason of this fascination is not given however I think that since the crocodile was used as a fertility symbol of the Nile and represented the god Sobek, that it was likely perceived as an Egyptian symbol. Herodotus and Aristotle among others described the crocodile when Egypt was concerned and strongly linked its presence to the Nile and its flooding in the summer.⁹⁷ I think that somewhere between the Classical writers and the Early Modern period, the crocodile had become a symbol of Egypt just like hieroglyphs had.

Since Paludanus' collection of Aegyptiaca showed similarities to Heurnius' Aegyptiaca, can the same be said about Paludanus' reasoning behind their collecting? We can at least partially assume this. Much like Heurnius, Paludanus' background in the medical field explained his interest in mummies and though his mummies probably were not used as remedies it can explain the exceptional amount of three in his collection. Likely Paludanus visited Egypt in search of the knowledge the Egyptians had possessed in the field of botany and medicine and some even went so far as to conclude that Paludanus' collection completely stood upon his medical background.⁹⁸ However stating this almost seems degrading to the character and quality of Paludanus' collection. Others, such as Eric Jorink in 'Reading the book of nature in the Dutch Golden Age, 1575-1715' undermined such statements. They stated that it was religion and not medicine which functioned as prime motive for Paludanus' collection of Aegyptiaca and his mummies acted as references to the Bible: 'So Joseph died, being a one hundred and ten years old: and they embalmed him, and he was put in a coffin in Egypt.'⁹⁹ All these Aegyptiaca were clear allusions to the *prisca theologia* and Hermes Trismegistus who was believed to be its founding father, sketched the décor of this one truth: Egypt.¹⁰⁰ Paludanus in search of the true knowledge and understanding must have collected Aegyptiaca because they had been 'witnesses' of this one truth and just like Heurnius he must have been influenced by the *Corpus*

⁹⁶ Luckily most of Paludanus' collection could be reconstructed thanks to the inventory made by Wilhelm Friedrich Tobias Hunger (1874-1952) in the twentieth century. Paludanus' collection is brought back to seven notebooks, handwritten in German and Latin and divided in Paludanus' division of the collection.

⁹⁷ Hunger, BPL 2596: 9. Catalogue II-44. Every year the inundation of the Nile caused the land to be fertilized and enabled vegetation to grow on the otherwise dry land and. In Paludanus' inventory it is described how the Egyptians used crocodile eggs to determine the height of the coming inundation. Since crocodiles do wittingly place their eggs deeper in the sand according to the temperature of the land, this theory does not seem as farfetched, though any usage of Egyptians using this method has never been mentioned in any ancient text.

⁹⁸ Smits 1988, 19. Smits was convinced that Paludanus collected Aegyptiaca solely out of a medical point of view, stating thereby that religion had nothing to do with his interest. Instead he called Paludanus a medical historian, wittingly avoiding the label of 'antiquarian' whom he saw as mere hoarders. Historians could be recognized by their classic and scientific approach and religion did not play any part in this.

⁹⁹ Jorink 2006, 270.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibidem*, 271.

Hermeticum. Since Paludanus collected papyri which were decorated in an undecipherable script, it does plead for the case of him seeking and hoping for any hidden wisdom of God in those signs.¹⁰¹

Though Paludanus was thus in search of true knowledge and understanding, I would not go as far as to rule out his personal preferences in his collecting practices. Paludanus, raised a Catholic, seemed to have changed religion somewhere between his youth and his marriage to his first wife Mechtelt van Twenhuizen since their marriage was recorded in the archive of marriage registrations of the Reformed.¹⁰² As a Reformed Protestant, Paludanus seemed to have had more in common with Heurnius then thought at first. Both had a medical background, were scholars and Reformed Protestants and the difference between them was the amount of travelling they undertook. Aside from that Paludanus did come across his objects from a wider network than Heurnius had. Political gifts, living next to the harbour, his friendship with merchants and explorers like Van Linschoten all stocked his collection. Unfortunately no correspondence or texts of Paludanus about his voyages have been passed on through the ages and all that remained of the correspondence of Paludanus did not explicitly stress Egypt or any Hermetic thought. A contribution of Paludanus his voyages can be found in Van Linschoten's *Itinerario* but the gap between publications is peculiar. However one can wonder whether Paludanus would have written a lot about Egypt. The total amount of Aegyptiaca in Paludanus' collections was circa 33 objects and whilst it seemed a lot at first, it does not really add any significant part to the total of 16,500 objects. In this sense the amount of Aegyptiaca did not indicate any particular interest of Paludanus in Egypt, it merely demonstrated how his medical and religious background was reflected in it. Be that as it may, Paludanus and Heurnius did share characteristics and though their angles differed in some ways, they both had a form of interest in Egypt, deeming it relevant enough to collect from it. Safe to say even though Heurnius did publish some texts concerning Egypt, none of them provided any new research into hieroglyphs or Egypt. Both still used the information of the Classical writers as their source of knowledge of Egypt.

“Treasury and compendium of the whole world. Ark of the universe, sacred storehouse of nature” is what Hugo de Groot (Grotius, 1583-1645) wrote after his visit to the collection of Paludanus. Together with Scaliger – who had been de Groot's teacher at the Leiden University- he held a great interest in the mummies of Paludanus which had been the contemporaries of Moses in their eyes.¹⁰³ Interestingly Scaliger, who had studied the pagan histories alongside the Bible found out that his calculation of earth its age didn't cover Egypt's history.¹⁰⁴ Through reading the *Aegyptiaca* written by Manetho -an historian and priest who lived under the rule of the Ptolemaic era- he found a

¹⁰¹ Hunger. BPL 2596: 9. Catalogue I- 208.

¹⁰² On November 24th 1583 Paludanus married Mechtelt van Twenhuizen. Since his second marriage was solemnized in 1585, his first wife must have passed away quite early in their marriage.

¹⁰³ Jorink 2006, 267.

¹⁰⁴ Ibidem, 103.

list of Egyptian dynasties and their ruling pharaoh's which obviously outdated earth's age.¹⁰⁵ Scaliger realised that these dynasties surpassed his calculation with leaps and though he never published any of these assumptions, he went further into his search for 'evidence'.¹⁰⁶ Would Scaliger have refrained from publishing these facts due to heresy? Not to mention the devastating effects it would have had on all assumptions about the world at the time, cultures outdating Adam and thus Christianity would have certainly tested faith in Christianity.¹⁰⁷ The fact that Scaliger never published any of these findings demonstrated the fine line on which Egypt and the Bible still balanced during the seventeenth century. A fine line which with the help of the new science slowly began to crumble even further at the end of the seventeenth century.

However during the lifetime of Paludanus, the status quo remained and a dear friend of Grotius, Nicolas-Claude Fabri de Peiresc (1580-1637), a French antiquary who had a collection in Aix-en-Provence also proved to have been inspired by Egypt.¹⁰⁸ Peiresc who had encouraged Grotius to continue his work in the field of law, became inspired by Egypt after he received a drawing of a mummy from Pieter Paul Rubens (1577-1640).¹⁰⁹ In 1630 he dispatched his personal agent to Egypt to retrieve some Aegyptiaca for his own collection after which the agent returned from Egypt with two mummies.¹¹⁰ Peiresc took the first steps towards a new research into Egypt and his interest reached further than just the material aspect. He corresponded with others about for example the image and origin of the goddess Isis and tried to decipher the hieroglyphs through his research in the Coptic language, a tactic which his acquaintance Kircher also applied in his research on hieroglyphs.¹¹¹ Both theories were not farfetched since the Coptic language does have influences of the hieroglyphic script in terms of vocabulary as well as grammar. More proof of Peiresc his influential network was the fact that he was acquainted with the Cardinal Barberini in Rome who also held a great interest in Egypt.¹¹² Although Peiresc did not go to Egypt for himself he did make sure that he had enough correspondents within the country to secure himself of the Aegyptiaca for his collection and research. Some even went as far to state that Peiresc had brought Egypt back to France.¹¹³

With Peiresc we see how the changing worldview also changed the purpose of collecting and though it is safe to say that the Bible and the Classical writers still played a role in Peiresc's life, it was research and not 'proof' that made him collect. Peiresc's enormous network and his vivid correspondence concerning Egypt, demonstrates how his interest in Egypt went further than just

¹⁰⁵ The Ptolemaics were the last rulers of Egypt before it became a Roman province through the battle of Actium in 31 B.C. Their rule dated to roughly 300-31 BC and held the famous Cleopatra VII as its last queen.

¹⁰⁶ Jorink 2006, pp.103-104.

¹⁰⁷ Ibidem, 104.

¹⁰⁸ MacGregor 2007, 29.

¹⁰⁹ Ibidem, 181.

¹¹⁰ Ibidem.

¹¹¹ Curl 1994, 134. Peiresc corresponded among others with Lorenzo Pignorius, who in 1609 published a new edition with descriptions and illustrations of the *Mensa Isiaca*.

¹¹² MacGregor 2007, 181.

¹¹³ Hosford, Wojtkowski 2010, 112.

collecting. Peiresc's manner of collecting seemed to have a much more 'systematic' approach than the collecting ways of Paludanus and Heurnius which felt more out of the blue. No wonder that he was called a huge contributor to the new scientific, systematic approach in collecting.¹¹⁴ Peiresc can thus be seen as the 'new' collector of Aegyptiaca who followed a new, more systematic form of collecting and a more practical and scientific approach to Egypt. An approach which excluded the need to demonstrate the universe and the knowledge of the Classical writers with Aegyptiaca and overruled the medical value of Egypt.

However the 'old' collector of Aegyptiaca still lived alongside Peiresc, be it in an adjusted way. Ernst Brinck (1582-1649) is the best example of this. Brinck who held a great interest in antiquities, naturalia and Eastern languages, had studied in Paris and had travelled a few years before he became Cornelis Haga's secretary in 1612.¹¹⁵ As a secretary he often travelled to Egypt by ship and carried gifts for Sultan Ahmed I, a fruitful expedition since in that same year the way to the East was opened to the Republic. After his work under Haga, Brinck returned to the Republic -via Naples, Padua and perhaps Bologna- where he fulfilled various administrative functions and eventually became mayor in Harderwijk in 1620.¹¹⁶ It was in Harderwijk that Brinck formed his collection and although it was not as grand as that of Paludanus it was its equal in grandeur and even resembled the classical concept of the musaeum. His collection consisted out of *res verbae* and *res naturae* in which he strongly resembled the collection of Ferrante Imperato (Naples 1525-1615) and that of Paludanus.¹¹⁷ Just as Paludanus' collection, Brinck's collection held a large part of manuscripts and notes in foreign languages which obviously raised the question of a possible presence of hieroglyphs in his collection. While that is unclear Brinck did possess some other Aegyptiaca, including a small Egyptian figurine that he received as a gift from Paludanus himself.¹¹⁸ Brinck also had a crocodile and the teeth of a hippo in his collection and although not qualified as Egyptian, I think that it is likely that both originated from Egypt. After all Paludanus possessed Egyptian crocodiles and Heurnius' also requested specifically hippo's and crocodiles from Egypt.

So why would Brinck have collected these Aegyptiaca? Of course his interest in antiquities explained the basics of his interest but what further led Brinck in his interest? He was a humanist, so knowledge and understanding must have been high on his list but whilst he read many of the Classical writers, he was known for his critique on them.¹¹⁹ As such Heurnius and Paludanus' point of view was not echoed in Brinck's collection. Like Bacon, Brinck saw the importance of one's own observations and combined with his interest in all things remarkable, saw to it that all perceived by him was

¹¹⁴ Iversen 1993, 91.

¹¹⁵ Jorink 2010, 299.

¹¹⁶ Ibidem, 302.

¹¹⁷ Ibidem.

¹¹⁸ Ibidem, 303.

¹¹⁹ Ibidem, 302.

documented.¹²⁰ In this light, Brinck represented the slow change of worldview in the seventeenth century and in the collectors of *Aegyptiaca*. Whilst his collection still strived to represent the universe and the understanding of it, he did so with a rational thought in mind, believing that science was the ‘‘mother of all sciences’’.¹²¹ A network filled with critical scholars proved Brinck’s take on his collection and Egypt for that matter and Galilei for example, could be counted to Brinck’s circle of intimates and he even signed Brinck’s *Album Amicorum*.¹²²

Brinck was like Heurnius and Paludanus, a Reformed Protestant, so did this not proof the old profile of a collector of *Aegyptiaca*? I would say not and proof of this is for example the contemporary of Brinck: Andreas Colvius (1594-1671). Colvius was a preacher in Dordrecht and it is with him that we see the unease with which the collecting of Egyptian figurines was still approached, he even tentatively correlated it with idolatry! Though it diminishes one of the characteristic of collectors of *Aegyptiaca*, it does tell us something about the conflict of the religious value of Egypt during the seventeenth century. Whilst Brinck still tried to convey a complete overview of the universe and Heurnius referred back to a period of true wisdom, the religious question regarding Egypt changed. Did Egypt knew God and for that matter did any foreign, ‘barbaric’ culture which did not know God, did perhaps knew Him through contemplation and nature? Where Colvius and other opponents had wondered if Egypt had known God, others wondered how they could recognize God’s presence in these heretic cultures. In other words the question of the origin of the wisdom of God, thus the *prisca theologia* became more outspoken throughout the beginning of the seventeenth century.

Whilst interest in foreign cultures thrived and *parochialism*, staying put in one’s own parish became a negative characteristic, the collecting of *Aegyptiaca* seemed to have been limited to a few interested during the first years of the seventeenth century.¹²³ Though the *Corpus Hermeticum* and the *prisca theologia* gained popularity in the seventeenth century and Egypt with its hieroglyphs certainly boosted this phenomena, it did not seem to have any major effect. It is peculiar that the popularity of the Hermetic thought was not visibly translated in collections, one would assume that more collections than just the latter would have contained a considerable amount of *Aegyptiaca*.

Over time we see that a new collecting trend is not created in these years, merchants for that matter did enable the collecting of *Aegyptiaca* but they did not inspire it. Much like Peiresc’ agents and Le Leu de Wilhelm, they were required to know enough about Egypt to work independently but they still remained dependent on the collector’s interest. However a shift in the character of the *Aegyptiaca* collectors was noticeable. Heurnius and Paludanus formed the ‘old’ style of collecting *Aegyptiaca* in which the medical value was still of importance and foremost *Aegyptiaca* were seen as testimonies to the knowledge of the Classical writers and the Bible. Any new research to these objects was not undertaken by them and instead they still relied solely on the knowledge of the Ancients.

¹²⁰ Ibidem.

¹²¹ Ibidem.

¹²² Ibidem, 303.

¹²³ Cook 2008, 48.

Contrary Brinck and Peiresc represented the 'new' style of collecting of Aegyptiaca which held new research to Egypt as its main purpose. Brinck who included Aegyptiaca in his collection due to their antique value, saw his collection as a testimony to the world which he had encountered through his voyages. The shift to empirical research and the need to discover the world to see God's wonder with one's own eyes was represented by Brinck. Peiresc represented the complete transition of the old manner of collecting Aegyptiaca to the new and he collected with solely research and the *prisca theologia* as motives.

As such the shift in the collecting of Aegyptica had gone hand in hand with the changing worldview, after all research into the hieroglyphs and the *prisca theologia* began to be undertaken and no longer the knowledge of solely the Classical writers was relied on. In this sense Dupré and Lüthy were right and the Aegyptiaca did indeed cause the forming of theories instead of the other way around. Though it has to be said that when it comes to the collectors of these Aegyptica, they do show some similarities. All of them were educated, well-travelled men who showed a great interest in the disclosure of *the* wisdom –be it God's or science- via Egypt. Heurnius, Paludanus, Brinck, Scaliger, Colvius, Peiresc, all were part of each other's network in some way and somehow their conflicting ideas about the world and Egypt, could peacefully co-exist next to each other without any resentment whatsoever.

Chapter 3 Collectors and researchers of Aegyptiaca in the course of the seventeenth century

As discussed in chapter 2 it is difficult to speak of a new collecting trend featuring Egypt. It is obvious that Egypt held a certain allure but it did not encourage any great change in the collecting behaviour and the previously discussed collectors have proven that the amount of collectors of Aegyptiaca was small. The Corpus Hermeticum and the *prisca theologia* gained popularity during the seventeenth century but its popularity was not –as expected- translated in collections. Contrary to the Corpus’ popularity there was also a decline in the faith of its authenticity in the course of the seventeenth century. Due to the publication of the *Rebus Sacrus et ecclesiasticis* in 1614 by Isaac Casaubon (1559-1614), the authenticity of the Corpus was eventually questioned. While Casaubon’s script focused mainly on his critiques against the beliefs and statements of Cardinal Cesare Baronio (1538-1607), a few of the pages of his book were dedicated to his doubts about the Corpus Hermeticum.¹²⁴ The fact that the Corpus Hermeticum, in all its importance, had never been mentioned by any Classical writer and that its concepts were based on Plato thus *not* outdating Moses, made Casaubon believe that the script actually dated to the first centuries AD.¹²⁵ Yet again the contradictions of the seventeenth century are demonstrated by this. On the one hand there was an unquestionable believe in the truth of the Corpus Hermeticum whilst on the other hand the upcoming ratio proved that it was not infallible. The new science aimed for objectivity and rationality whilst the neighbours – in a manner of speaking- still believed in the knowledge conveyed to them by the Classical writers, the Bible and other mystical texts. In short, the seventeenth century was an age in which ‘‘philosophers, scientists, artists, religious and powerful men’’ found themselves at a crucial crossroad which ultimately led to a complete new science and worldview.¹²⁶ As for Egypt, this crucial crossroad would eventually lead to new motives in collecting and travelling.

Chapter 1 and 2 already showed that Aegyptiaca were collected for their antique, biblical and philosophical values in which Hermes Trismegistus and the *prisca theologia* were both frequently mentioned as prior influences. However the balance between these value changed with Brinck and Peiresc towards a more historical and almost academical purpose of collecting Aegyptiaca. To me Peiresc is the best example of the changing attitude towards Egypt, a change which meant the transformation from just an exotica towards an research/study object. This chapter focuses on this shift in attitude of the seventeenth century as well as what influence it had on the collectors. Aside from who collected Aegyptiaca and their reasoning behind it, this chapter will also address possible

¹²⁴ Grafton 1983, 78. Casaubon’s critiques were against Baronius book ‘*Annales Ecclesiastici*’ in which he rewrote history strictly chronological against a theological background.

¹²⁵ Buonanno 2014, 132.

¹²⁶ Ibidem.

merchants of Aegyptiaca and their know-how. In other words did the search for new knowledge of Egypt then perhaps started a new collecting trend?

In light of Egypt becoming a true research subject, Pietro della Valle (1586-1652) is one of the first collectors who can be mentioned. Della Valle was a Roman patrician, part of Rome's most influential circles and was as Iversen stated 'the first true traveller of leisure in the western world'.¹²⁷ Della Valle, who due to heart break had chosen to travel instead of committing suicide, visited many countries such as Persia and India during his lifetime.¹²⁸ As a self-proclaimed 'pilgrim' on a pilgrimage of curiosity he formed an excellent example of the extensive travelling which was encouraged during the seventeenth century. As such his travel accounts were great contributions to the travel genre of this period.¹²⁹ Needless to say he also travelled to Egypt where he spent the autumn and winter of 1615-1616 and wrote many reports on his findings.¹³⁰ Della Valle's travel account on the excavations and mummies can even be considered to be one of the earliest Egyptological excavation reports in Europe and he was praised during his lifetime for its details.¹³¹ In Egypt, della Valle travelled to Cairo to visit Giza where it was said that he wandered through the interior chambers of the Great Pyramid.¹³² The fact that he could enter the pyramids is interesting because that would mean that the pyramid was easily accessible and since pyramids and the interior chambers were –and are– often only accessible via one 'main' steep, small vault downwards, the possibility of it already existing in the seventeenth century is quite impressive. It would mean that a ladder or a similar construction must have been permanently present at the time to ensure that tourists, merchants and others could see the wonders of the pyramids for themselves whenever they desired.

From Giza, della Valle travelled to Sakkara where a group of local antiquities hunters guided him towards a few tombs 'stocked' with mummies. The mummies which della Valle eventually brought back with him were already excavated by one of the locals and he was so impressed with their condition and decoration that he bought them on the spot and shipped them to Rome.¹³³ The mummies he purchased could be dated back to the Roman period and despite the fact that the history and chronology of Egypt was not yet researched and he therefore could not know this, della Valle did presume them to be 'Romanesque'.¹³⁴ Mummies which date to the Roman period are quite recognizable because they were adorned with a panel on the head which showed the portrait of the deceased one. Aside from that some of these mummies showed clear traces of wear on the feet which indicated that for a period of time they must have stood somewhere before being buried in a grave. Going back to the portrait panels, della Valle strikingly remarked that the style of the portraits on his

¹²⁷ Iversen 1993, 91.

¹²⁸ Ibidem.

¹²⁹ Speake 2003, 326.

¹³⁰ Ucko, Champion 2003, 126.

¹³¹ Ibidem.

¹³² Ibidem.

¹³³ Ibidem.

¹³⁴ Ibidem.

mummies matched the style of the saints and ancient figures which could be seen on the walls of the older basilicas in Rome.¹³⁵ With this remark we see the first (art)historical remark and comparison of something Egyptian during the Early Modern period. Unfortunately a theory on chronology or who influenced whom we do not find with della Valle but if he had done that, it could have told us more about the knowledge of history of Egypt during the seventeenth century. Be that as it may, della Valle with his purchase or rather discovery of these mummies was the first European ever to have purchased and documented these Roman style mummies.

Just like most travellers, della Valle was a collector and he had bought many souvenirs during his stay in Egypt: the latter two matching mummy male and female couple, a cartonnage mummy-mask and a number of Coptic manuscripts which included five grammars and two extensive vocabularies in the Lower Egyptian- Bohairic- dialect.¹³⁶ With his purchases della Valle did not only collect for himself since he also acted as a supplier and some Aegyptiaca he purchased for other collectors who resided in Rome. The mummy pair for example he bought for the collection of Cardinal Flavio Chigi (1631-1693) and though the Coptic manuscripts were in his possession he entrusted them to others for their research and translation.¹³⁷ Although della Valle cannot be considered a merchant, he did in a way acted as one and it is interesting that he was also a supplier of Aegyptiaca aside from being a collector. Perhaps it was an indication that collectors of Aegyptiaca over time rather relied on travelling scholars/noblemen than on merchants. I think that it is likely that in light of research a trustworthy supplier was preferred above all and since della Valle did document the context of his Aegyptiaca he was just that. Especially in the course of the seventeenth century forgeries of Egyptian figurines and mumiya became more frequent and the only security a collector held, was the trustworthiness of the supplier.¹³⁸

Clearly della Valle was a trustworthy combination of an explorer, scholar (he was familiar with Latin and Greek among others), collector and thus also supplier. Whilst in the beginning of the seventeenth century mostly doctors and naturalists seemed to have collected Aegyptiaca, its public changed and varied from scholars to patricians etc. Also the status of some Aegyptiaca changed and specifically intact and/or painted mummies, slowly became categorized as more or less objects of art.¹³⁹ Though mummies were still used for medical research and usage, complete mummies were quite rare in Europe and it was no wonder that complete and decorated mummies were considered as art. Parts of mummies were still used as mumiya and it was only at the end of the seventeenth, beginning of the eighteenth century that its usage became reprehensible. For the better part of the

¹³⁵ Ibidem.

¹³⁶ Iversen 1993, 91. and Ucko, Champion 2003, 126.

¹³⁷ Ucko, Champion 2003, pp.126-127. The 'Chigi' mummies were sold off to the Duke of Saxony in 1728, nowadays they can be found in the State Museum of Dresden.

¹³⁸ MacGregor 2007, 180.

¹³⁹ Ucko, Champion 2003, 126.

century no one was really ready to part with the use of mumiya and only a handful dared to critique its use, stating that it was immoral.¹⁴⁰

As such aesthetics and research became the new values of Egypt and co-existed with its other values in the course of the seventeenth century. Della Valle's profile thus collided with the profiles of Heurnius and Paludanus and though all were educated, none of them had travelled the world and for that matter Egypt as the Catholic della Valle had. Where Paludanus and Heurnius had medical backgrounds and partial medical reasons of collecting mummies, della Valle showed no interest in the medical purposes of them. Though it has to be said that the Corpus Hermeticum did encourage della Valle in his travels and probably the same applied to his interest in Egypt since he wanted to contribute to the new research concerning it.¹⁴¹ The Corpus Hermeticum which played a lesser role in the collecting motives of Heurnius and Paludanus, became more prominent in della Valle's motives and the same applied the other way around with medical motives for instance. In other words della Valle's represented the new collector and supplier of Aegyptiaca and showed a more practical and academic use of collecting.

Upon della Valle's return to Rome, he entrusted his Coptic manuscripts to the Arabic scholar Thomaso da Novara (Thomas Obicini 1585-1632) for its research and translation.¹⁴² Coptic had already caught the eye of the collectors of Aegyptiaca because it was and still is spoken in Upper Egypt by the Christian population. Because of this it was ascribed a 'remarkable tenacity of life' and it was suspected that Coptic had formed the last stage of the hieroglyphic script and contrary to the hieroglyphs, Coptic was still understood. As such Coptic, as a language and its correlation with hieroglyphs became a new research subject in the course of the seventeenth century.¹⁴³ Unfortunately Obicini died in the process of his work and in the unfruitful search for a successor, surprisingly Peiresc presented the solution.¹⁴⁴ Though Peiresc was known for his knowledge, he remained quite unproductive as a scholar but he was as Iversen stated 'one of the most prolific letter writers the world has ever seen'.¹⁴⁵ His network thus spanned all over the world and he must have been informed on many discoveries and ensured a constant streams of antiquities and books for himself. All in all quite an impressive accomplishment for an unproductive scholar and he encouraged many to pursue their research. Della Valle for that matter also belonged to the network of Peiresc and though their

¹⁴⁰ Smits 1988, pp.167-168. In 1705 one of the first manuscript against the usage of mumiya was published. The polish Theophilus Murowsky wrote *De anthropophagia medica* in which he dismissed 'cannibalistic' medications such as that as mumiya. He stated that these medicines were simply the cause of superstitious beliefs and were therefore outdated and should be replaced by working ingredients.

¹⁴¹ Speake 2003, 326.

¹⁴² Iversen 1993, 91. Among others Obicini was assigned to the creation of a font of Coptic characters which could be used in printing.

¹⁴³ Ibidem, 90. The Arabian historian Al-Maqrizi already stated in the fifteenth century that Coptic was still used in Egypt by the Christian population.

¹⁴⁴ Ibidem, 92.

¹⁴⁵ Iversen 1993, pp.91-92.

contact proved to have been quite strugglesome at times, Peiresc was kept informed on della Valle's purchases, including his Coptic manuscripts.¹⁴⁶

Peiresc held a specific interest in the decipherment of hieroglyphs through Coptic and needless to say he was very interested in the Coptic manuscripts which della Valle brought to Rome. However Peiresc lived in France and did not have direct access to these manuscripts so in order to make himself less dependent on della Valle's manuscripts, he started to collect Coptic manuscripts for himself.¹⁴⁷ Thereby the same agents in Egypt who provided him with his mummies now provided him with Coptic manuscripts. He even encouraged a small group of scholars to divert their studies to Coptic and with a handful of Coptic scholars at his service, he saw an opportunity with the death of Obicini and formed the 'board of recommendation' of his replacement in Rome.¹⁴⁸ Although he first had another candidate in mind, it was Kircher whom he recommended and who went to Rome in 1633.¹⁴⁹ He had only just met Kircher in 1632-3 but he must have made a lasting impression on Peiresc when looking at the recommendation letters sent by him. In one of his recommendation letters to della Valle and Cardinal Francesco Barberini (1597-1679), the patron of Art in Rome, Peiresc wrote on Kircher: 'over and above his noble-mindedness, and his genius, which enabled him to gain an insight into the secrets of Nature and the ancient times, as well as to learn the main languages of the Christian world' which clearly and exaggeratingly stated Peiresc's admiration.¹⁵⁰ As such Kircher was offered the position of professorship in mathematics at the *Jesuit Collegio Romano* by Barberini in 1633 and was with this assigned to the translation of the Coptic manuscripts.¹⁵¹

Now we know that Peiresc's confidence in Kircher was likely based on Kircher's promise of handing Peiresc the key to the decipherment of hieroglyphs. Kircher stated that he laid his hands on a rare script written by a Babylonian rabbi, Barachius Nephi which formed the key to the decipherment of the script.¹⁵² Peiresc also held various Egyptian papyri in his collection and hoped for their translation with the aid of Kircher. However Kircher had his own reasons to stay in touch with Peiresc, besides his recommendation in 1633. As said before Peiresc stood in constant contact with his network which subsequently also reached to Rome and specifically to Cardinal Barberini and Cassiano del Pozzo (1588-1657) member of the *Accademia dei Lincei*.¹⁵³ The academy which was founded in 1603 by prince Federico Cesi (1585-1630) was one of the first science focused academies in Italy and it was

¹⁴⁶ Ucko, Champion 2003, 127.

¹⁴⁷ Iversen 1993, 92.

¹⁴⁸ Ibidem.

¹⁴⁹ Ibidem. Peiresc's initial candidate was the French historian Claude de Saumaise (1588-1653) though for some unknown reason he suddenly switched his recommendation to Kircher whom he had only met just before 1633. It is safe to assume though that religion played an essential part in the recommendation, de Saumaise was a protestant and Kircher as a Jesuit fitted more in the contra-reformation of the Catholic church in Rome.

¹⁵⁰ Buonanno 2014, 3. Peiresc wrote this letter to Cardinal Francesco Barberini in 1633.

¹⁵¹ Ucko, Champion. 2003, 127.

¹⁵² Buonanno 2014, 132.

¹⁵³ Ibidem, 3.

its member del Pozzo whom Kircher eagerly wanted to meet.¹⁵⁴ Cardinal Barberini, nephew of Pope Urban VIII was high on his list not because he could provide Kircher of a position but because he qualified as a new, wealthy patron.¹⁵⁵

Kircher's fascination for Egypt was mostly built on his belief in the *prisca theologia* and the *Corpus Hermeticum*. As a Jesuit and hermetic follower he believed –as shortly addressed in chapter 1– that the Egyptian wisdom led all the way back to Adam, the first man who had learned God's wisdom directly from Him. Via Adam's descendant Cham who travelled to Egypt, God's wisdom had come to Moses and so the Egyptian priests and the understanding and knowledge of All had been passed on to their initiates in the hieroglyphic script, concealing the truth from those who could not understand it.¹⁵⁶ Kircher henceforth believed like many in his time that the *Corpus Hermeticum* was based on the *prisca theologia* and that Hermes Trismegistus was its founding father.¹⁵⁷ He argued that the pyramids were created as the original carriers of the hieroglyphs but on the discovery that they were to oblique for this purpose, the Egyptian priests had to resort to the obelisks for the passing on of their wisdom.¹⁵⁸ As such Kircher held an enormous interest in obelisks and wrote various books concerning his theories about them, such as the *Obeliscus pamphilius* which he published in 1650 and the *Obeliscus Aegyptiacus* published in 1666.¹⁵⁹

Although Casaubon had outed his doubts about the authenticity of the *Corpus Hermeticum*, Kircher remained untouched by these critiques. He dismissed Casaubon's objections and stated that it was logical that there were 'modern' platonic concepts present in the manuscript. Due to the translation made of the *Corpus*, new elements would have been added to the translation and so it had actually improved itself by being adaptable to new, modern insights. In fact because of these improvements, the *Corpus* had ensured itself of a constant stream of followers. Furthermore despite Casaubon's statements, Kircher stated that Hermes Trismegistus was mentioned by the Classical writers, the only difference was that they referred to Hermes with different names: Thoth, Idris, Tauti all referred to the same Hermes Trismegistus.¹⁶⁰ A logical misconception of Casaubon if one would explain it as such.

In 1636, three years after his arrival to Rome, Kircher dedicated his *Prodromus Coptus sive Aegyptiacus* (Coptic or the Egyptian forerunner) to the Barberini family as gratitude for his admission

¹⁵⁴ Ibidem, 5. The academy strived for objective observations and named itself after the lynx (Linnei) whose sharpness in vision was strived for in their academy and science. Once again new steps towards the scientific revolution were made with the constitution of this academy and though the academy disappeared after Cesi's death in 1630 it was reconstituted again in 1847 and held Albert Einstein as one of its members.

¹⁵⁵ Findlen 2004, 53.

¹⁵⁶ Buonanno 2014, 4.

¹⁵⁷ Ibidem, 5.

¹⁵⁸ Ibidem, 4.

¹⁵⁹ Findlen 2004, 142. and Godwin 2009, 59.

¹⁶⁰ Buonanno 2014, pp.132-133. Idris is the Arab name for Hermes Trismegistus, Tauti the Phoenician name and Thoth his Egyptian name according to Kircher.

as professor at the Collegio Romano.¹⁶¹ During his three years translating the Coptic manuscripts of della Valle, Barberini had also appointed Kircher as head of a commission assigned to the interpretation of hieroglyphs. Barberini, clearly held the decipherment of hieroglyphs in high account and he acted as Kircher's patron until he had to flee town in 1644.¹⁶² All in all Kircher proved to have been essential because of his knowledge of hieroglyphs and Barberini even intervened when Kircher was appointed as the new imperial mathematician at the court of Emperor Ferdinand II. With the death of Kepler in 1630, Kircher was appointed as his successor and although it was an undisputable honour, his relocation would have meant that he had to abandon his research in Rome. Barberini therefore made sure that instead of Kircher, Christoph Scheiner, Maths teacher at the Collegio Romano was sent to the Emperor and ensured Kircher's stay in Rome.¹⁶³ Conveniently Kircher still remained under the protection of Ferdinand II, who proved to be an admirer of Kircher's work and Kircher dedicated his *Lingua Aegyptiaca Restituta* (The Egyptian Language Restored) to him.¹⁶⁴

During his stay in Rome, Kircher published various manuscripts about his theories concerning the translation of hieroglyphs. He was convinced that 'since he knows 23 languages very well and the lord always assisted him, he can try and translate the writing of the Ancient Egyptian scholars'.¹⁶⁵ Just as he had misled Peiresc into thinking that he held the key to the decipherment of the script, he boldly proclaimed that the decipherment of hieroglyphs was within reach.¹⁶⁶ Needless to say time would tell a different story and after many years and letters of begging from Peiresc for at least a copy of the script of Barachius Nephi, Kircher was left with no other choice than to show his 'key' to translation to him. Peiresc immediately discovered the manuscripts flaws and Kircher's mistake. The drawings to which Kircher referred to as hieroglyphs turned out to have been mere drawings by an artists who – considering that no one knew their translation- had designed some 'improved prettier' versions of them. Kircher therefore had studied and interpreted the wrong hieroglyphs for all those years but despite his mistake Peiresc still remained loyal and supportive of Kircher and never mentioned any of his doubts or Kircher's mistake.¹⁶⁷ As such for decades long, the world was convinced of Kircher's ability to decipher hieroglyphs and he seemed to have been seen as the authority on this area.¹⁶⁸ All of his work eventually led to the publication of the *Oedipus Aegyptiacus* in 1652-4 and contained Kircher's theories about Egypt and hieroglyphs. Curran even stated in his article on the Egyptian Renaissance that Kircher's *Oedipus* marked the climax and fusion of all the diverse underlying meanings Egypt represented: the historical, archaeological, philological and theological meanings

¹⁶¹ Findlen 2004, 53.

¹⁶² Ibidem.

¹⁶³ Buonanno 2014, 7.

¹⁶⁴ Findlen 2004, 53. and Godwin 2009, 15. The *Lingua Aegyptiaca Restituta* consisted out of a vocabulary of Coptic, Latin and Arabic which was inspired by the knowledge of della Valle.

¹⁶⁵ Buonanno 2014, 4.

¹⁶⁶ Ucko, Champion 2003, 127.

¹⁶⁷ Buonanno 2014, 137.

¹⁶⁸ Smits 1988, 81.

were all combined in his book.¹⁶⁹ Though it has to be said that the fact that Kircher could be misled by Nephi's manuscript and that Peiresc recognized its falseness, does tell us something about on the one hand their difference in knowledge but also what was really known about hieroglyphs. Though translation was still far from realistic, over time some at least started to recognize the script's outlook.

Kircher arrived in a Rome which was at the peak of its splendour and it functioned as the international and artistic base of Europe during the better part of the seventeenth century.¹⁷⁰ The Jesuit college which he joined in 1633, had also transformed into a group which now appreciated and interested itself in wealth, luxury, and political intrigue.¹⁷¹ As an effect to the Reformation, the contra-reformation of the Catholic church focused on the complete make-over of Rome, meaning that the city's former antique outlook including the Egyptian elements had to be restored.¹⁷² The anti-aesthetic approach to art in the period of the militant Reformation was now replaced by an aesthetic appreciation of artistic quality as Findlen described it in 'Athanasius Kircher: The last man who knew everything'.¹⁷³ An ancient interest in Egypt dating to the first centuries AD. was thus combined with the new found interest in Egypt and the Corpus Hermeticum of the seventeenth century. The authentic Egyptian elements such as obelisks and other Aegyptiaca looted by Augustus during his victory on Egypt, had at that time turned to ruins and Kircher eagerly helped in the replacement and restoration of the obelisks on various piazzas.¹⁷⁴ Especially during this period the restoration of obelisks and the application of Egyptian elements to architecture became popular, it was the Egyptomania as Curl had described it.¹⁷⁵ Obelisks which were seen as both the representation of Plato's cosmological world as well as the carriers of the true wisdom hidden by the hieroglyphs, were especially popular.¹⁷⁶ Interestingly the restoration of Rome went hand in hand with Egyptian or rather Hermetic influences and the Catholics now also applied the Corpus Hermeticum which was already read by the Protestant collectors (Heurnius, Paludanus among others). The fact that it was used by the Pope as part of the Counter Reformation is quite a paradox and although both the Protestants and the Catholics were inspired by the Corpus Hermeticum, their application differed. Where the Protestants collected, the Catholics seemed to have decorated and researched.

The most famous restoration/building project was of course the Piazza Navona.¹⁷⁷ When Pope Urban VIII passed away in 1644, Pope Innocent X (1574-1655) despite his legal actions against the Barberini's misappropriation of public funds, continued his restoration quest. As such he appointed Gian Lorenzo Bernini (1598-1680) to the decoration of the Piazza Navona with *la Fontana dei*

¹⁶⁹ Ucko, Champion 2003, 129.

¹⁷⁰ Findlen 2004, 52.

¹⁷¹ Ibidem, 53.

¹⁷² Ibidem.

¹⁷³ Ibidem.

¹⁷⁴ Ibidem.

¹⁷⁵ Curl 1982, 64.

¹⁷⁶ Buonanno 2014, 124. The top of the obelisk represented the *true* world, the reason of all things living and the bottom represented the world man observed every day.

¹⁷⁷ Curl 1994, 132.

Quattro Fiumi.¹⁷⁸ It goes without saying that in order to finance this fountain, still new taxes were introduced to the inhabitants of Rome, quite a paradox seeing the Pope's legal actions.¹⁷⁹ Kircher, whose reputation had remained untouched under the new Pope and despite his ties with the Barberini's, was appointed as Bernini's counsellor regarding the Egyptian elements of the fountain and his main responsibility was the obelisk which would adorn the fountain. At that time the obelisk for the Piazza Navona still laid scattered in pieces along the via Appia. It was once built as a celebration to the ascent to the throne of Emperor Domitian in the first century AD. and was decorated with a commemorative hieroglyphic text. Kircher was given the task of retrieving these fragments, to restore and replace its missing pieces after which he was required to translate the hieroglyphs on them. Needless to say this task was of the most importance to him and Pope Innocent X.¹⁸⁰ Kircher succeeded and translated the simple, commemorative text most elaborately and eloquently but his translation had nothing to do with Domitian's era and instead meant pages full of higher meaning and 'Egyptian' wisdom.¹⁸¹ Kircher was convinced that these symbols confirmed the Platonic concept that there was a hidden, deeper meaning behind everything and as such he translated them according to his belief that every sign stood for a higher, mystical meaning.¹⁸² The fountain itself represented the four river gods including one representing the Nile, his image showed a partially veiled man and was an indication to the mysteries in which Egypt at that time was still covered.¹⁸³ Since the fountain was presented to the public in 1651, it is safe to assume that despite Kircher's research and della Valle's journey's, there still was not much known about Egypt. Despite all the new research, real chronology and history of Egypt would still have to wait a few decades.

During these projects Kircher still remained active as a professor at the Collegio Romano and continued his active research into the decipherment of hieroglyphs. Needless to say apart from his research, Kircher also held a collection or rather museum on the side stocked with evidence from all sorts of mysterious cultures. Kircher's collection grew under the influence of his missionary brothers who send him objects from their travels over the world but also due to objects he received from others in his network. In Rome he was the most sought after scholar and he received many novelties from

¹⁷⁸ The Barberini's, Pope Urban VIII family, were after his death prosecuted for their misuse of public funds and fled the country in 1644 after which Pope Innocent X confiscated their land. Needless to say the fact that Pope Innocent X's residency looked over the Piazza Navona must have had some influence on the Pope's decision to continue Pope Urban VIII's plans.

¹⁷⁹ Buonanno 2014, pp.141-143. Part of the protests of the inhabitants was voiced by the first 'talking' statue Pasquino, a sort of announcement/bulletin board on which satirical messages contra politics were pasted. Satirical sentences such as 'That these stoned may become loaves of bread!' concerning the fountain were posted on it.

¹⁸⁰ Ibidem, pp.138-139. Years later Kircher noted in his autobiography how the Pope came to him: 'we have decided to raise an obelisk of remarkable dimensions: you will be in charge of giving life to those stones by interpreting what is engraved on them. Therefore we want that, thanks to the skills the Lord has given you, you bring to light the secrets and the innermost mysteries concealed in those pictures.'

¹⁸¹ Buonanno 2014, 145. Roughly the commemorative text came down to: 'In memory of Domitian who is loved by the gods'.

¹⁸² Ibidem, 5.

¹⁸³ Findlen 2004, 54

them.¹⁸⁴ His museum was connected to the Collegio Romano and in the first years of Kircher's stay in Rome it was limited by space shortage. The sparse available room the Collegio offered each year was taken up by students and Kircher eventually had to resort to transforming his own study into a personal museum.¹⁸⁵ A personal museum which grew at the hand of objects and new research.

The mathematician John Greaves (1602-1652) for example was part of his network. Although Greaves did not have a lot of knowledge about Egypt, he held a fascination for it and travelled to the country in order to take the measurements of the pyramids of Gizeh. His findings and theories on the pyramids were published in 1646 in his book *Pyramidographia* which was one of the first scientific researches concerning the pyramids. Though he was never able to date the pyramids and never believed in the connection between Coptic and the hieroglyphic script, he was convinced that the pyramid had functioned as a permanent threshold to the afterlife for the pharaoh.¹⁸⁶ A righteous assumption. Though Greaves had many descriptions and assumptions about Egypt and Aegyptiaca, it is not known whether he had a collection containing Aegyptiaca and I think that this is just another indication of the fact that the collecting of Aegyptiaca was no longer the priority but its research was. However Kircher's museum of course undermines this statement.

From the start Kircher's museum attracted many visitors and he had even felt the need to adjust a long pipe from his study to the porter's lodge to avoid the trip downstairs to guide the visitors up himself.¹⁸⁷ Kircher's museum changed drastically in proportions when Alfonso Donini, the secretary of the Capitol, consigned in his collection of ancient finds to the Collegio Romano in 1651. Upon which the Collegio decided to entrust Donini's collection together with the already present zoological and geological collections to Kircher's care and provided him henceforth with more space.¹⁸⁸ Because of this Kircher was relieved from his professor duties and spent the better part of his life to the expanding of the museum, later known as *Il Kircheriano*.¹⁸⁹ Il Kircheriano was extremely popular and attracted visitors from all over the world "My gallery or museum is visited by all the nations of the world and a prince cannot be better known in this theatre of the world than have his likeness here."¹⁹⁰ After a while though the constant stream of visitors worried Kircher and he complained that they interfered with his research.¹⁹¹

Through Kircher, the museum became a place of contemplation where one could understand the world and God but even though the museum was owned by a Jesuit college, no crucifixes could be found in the museum. Instead wooden obelisks, sarcophagi, Roman vases, coins, animals yet again we

¹⁸⁴ Ibidem, 19.

¹⁸⁵ Buonanno 2014, 121.

¹⁸⁶ Smits 1988, 55.

¹⁸⁷ Buonanno 2014, 123.

¹⁸⁸ Ibidem.

¹⁸⁹ Ibidem.

¹⁹⁰ Findlen 2004, 52.

¹⁹¹ Buonanno 2014, 124.

Egyptian crocodiles, and many manuscripts concerning Egypt could be found.¹⁹² With Kircher we see that his collection of Aegyptiaca truly represented the Hermetic thought and the prisca theologia and it almost seems as if it was his own divine mission to do so. Much like della Valle's, Kircher's collection was a far cry from the collections of Heurnius and Paludanus not to mention the fact that his collection was open to public whereas Paludanus' collection was restricted. Still Kircher must have been acquainted with Paludanus' collection and while he did not know him directly or visited his collection, he described the Egyptian figurines of Paludanus in his *Oedipus Aegyptiacus*. Aside from the differences, Kircher did acknowledge the medical values of Egypt in the end however it were research and the Corpus Hermeticum which were his main motives of collecting.¹⁹³ Supported by the various Popes and patrons of art in Rome he was able to transform his interest in Egypt into a museum and a reflection of his own personality.

Kircher embodied for many researchers of the Egyptian Renaissance the peak of interest in Egypt and having seen all his efforts it is safe to assume that there is some truth to this assumption. Curran and others see Kircher and the middle of the seventeenth century as the end of the Egyptian Renaissance.¹⁹⁴ Truth be told it does seem as if after Kircher, Egypt and the collecting of Aegyptiaca seemed to have lost its allure, though needless to say any researcher or collector of Aegyptiaca after Kircher must have seemed almost 'tame' in comparison to him. Influenced by Descartes and others, the Hermetic beliefs were slowly abandoned and since interest in Egypt mainly depended on this it is not strange that the angle and thus attention changed after the seventeenth century. This change of perception was for that matter already partially present from Peiresc' collection on, in which the reasoning behind the collecting of Aegyptiaca turned to more rational reasoning and collecting itself became more systematic. Although the Corpus Hermeticum was far from what was desired to the new science, it did ensure a more scientific approach concerning Egypt and changed the collecting behaviour of Aegyptiaca in the course of the seventeenth century.

The collecting of Aegyptiaca still seems to have been limited to a selected group of collectors and scholars like Greaves illustrate that interest in Aegyptiaca was not necessarily translated in collections. Barberini, Pope Urban VIII and Pope Innocent X for that matter translated their interest in Egypt by restoration projects of obelisks and providing funds for Kircher. The few collectors of Aegyptiaca did have common ground and all came about their objects via a network of trusted explorers and scholars, strived to the attribution of new knowledge concerning Egypt and saw in Egypt the Corpus Hermeticum and prisca theologia. Whilst a new collecting trend concerning Egypt is a hard bargain, a new trend in *research* actually proves to be quite an easy case.

¹⁹² Findlen 2004, 62.

¹⁹³ Ibidem, 71. During the last years of his life Kircher became more and more intrigued with medical alchemy and the working of the body according to magnetism. The medical practices of the Egyptians he henceforth correlated with this.

¹⁹⁴ Ucko, Champion 2003, 129.

Conclusion: An Egyptian Renaissance?

As we have seen interest in Egypt was not reflected in the collections of the seventeenth century. However through the collections which did contain Aegyptiaca, the conflicting worldviews have been illustrated most vividly by them. The 'old' collectors of Aegyptiaca, who collected their objects in the first years of the seventeenth century had been foremost doctors and naturalists. Through Heurnius and Paludanus, Egypt's old image of a mythical land which was characterised by its stability and ability to still be remembered after centuries, was reawakened again. Influenced by the Classical writers, Egypt's antique value became appreciated again and the texts by Herodotus and Diodorus Siculus among others caused a deep fascination for its hieroglyphs and mummies. Through the growing popularity of the Corpus Hermeticum, Egypt became the beacon of Christianity and Hermes Trismegistus its sage who had passed on God's wisdom to Moses. Contrary to the Christian Churchfather who condemned Egypt's polytheism, the Christian apologists now thankfully used the Corpus Hermeticum as proof that Christianity was not a 'new' religion and had roots which went back to the most ancient civilizations.

In the extent of his desire to understand the world, Aegyptiaca alongside tangible representations of the descriptions of the Classical writers and the Bible were collected by Heurnius. As such he often dispatched his agent Le Leu de Wilhelm to Egypt to retrieve all sorts of objects for him, varying from statues to hieroglyphic manuscripts. Whilst his Groote Mummie gained worldwide attention and was subject to many peregrinate academia's, the same could not be said about his other Aegyptiaca. While they obviously fulfilled Heurnius' goal of finding representations, they did not seem to represent any prestigious value on their own. In a way it tells us something about the value or rather prestige of owning Aegyptiaca in the first years of this century and where mummies were masterpieces, other Aegyptiaca seemed to have been reserved for the few interested. Heurnius valued Egypt as the ancient tutor and as a hermetic follower his interest in Egypt was also translated through the collecting of Aegyptiaca even though he never performed any new research to them. New research was after all not yet necessary since all the knowledge was provided by the Classical writers and his Aegyptiaca merely confirmed their wisdom.

Paludanus' collection of Aegyptiaca resembled the collection of Heurnius and in it a variety of mummies, Egyptian marbles and figurines could be found too. Just like Heurnius, Paludanus combined his medical background with a religious interest in the Corpus Hermeticum and the prisca theologia and his mummies were reviewed as the contemporaries of Moses. While Paludanus was familiar with Egypt's mummification process it is most likely that his knowledge derived from Herodotus and through his fascination for Egyptian crocodiles we see that his interest in Aegyptiaca was also mainly based on what the Classical writers had described in their texts.

What did become apparent through these collections was the definition of Egyptian in this period. Mummies, hieroglyphic texts and the pyramids obviously represented Egypt and through the collections with Aegyptiaca we have seen that crocodiles and hippos also became associated with the country. Brinck's collection of Aegyptiaca which consisted of a figurine, crocodile and the teeth of a hippo, demonstrated the typical Aegyptiaca which also could also be found in the collection of Paludanus and Heurnius. Since we can speak of typical Aegyptiaca perhaps we can even go as far to state that the lack of Aegyptiaca in collections was rather a lack of documented Aegyptiaca in them. It is possible that the popularity of Egypt was translated in collections however not as numerous or prestigious as one expected. The existence of forgeries clearly supports the frequent buying of at least some Aegyptiaca.

Be that as it may the collections of Aegyptiaca of Heurnius, Paludanus and Brinck seemed to have been individual cases in this period. While it is obvious that Egypt intrigued many, its popularity was not translated in collections and this disinterest is peculiar. While Heurnius was one of the few Hermetic followers in the Republic, it does not explain why there was such a lack of collections with Aegyptiaca simply because Egypt was also linked to other areas. Paludanus and Brinck, who strived for the representation of God's world and knowledge in a collection, demonstrated that Egypt was also a part of this marvellous world. Despite Colvius alignment of the collecting of figurines with heresy, I do not think that collectors refrained from collecting Aegyptiaca because of that, after all none of the latter collectors of Aegyptiaca had faced any repercussions. Perhaps it is likely that apart from mummies, owning Aegyptiaca was not as prestigious and it could be that many collections owned a few trinkets from Egypt but simply did not care to mention it. As such I do not think that the collection of Paludanus can be considered exceptional in the light of collecting Aegyptiaca. While the amount of 33 Aegyptiaca seems high at first, in the perspective of 16,500 objects it does not really call upon any favouritism whatsoever. To be fair whilst Paludanus' collection was exceptional, it was exceptional not because of its Aegyptiaca but through its quantity and quality. Despite the resemblance of his Aegyptiaca with those of Heurnius and Brinck, I think that the collections of Aegyptiaca in these few years were individual cases and did not follow any trend or correspondence between these collectors concerning Egypt or Aegyptiaca.

Through the course of the seventeenth century, the collections and collectors of Aegyptiaca evolved with the changing worldview. The 'new' collectors of Aegyptiaca were no longer just doctors or naturalists and they varied from scholars, antiquarians to patricians who were no longer satisfied with the amount of knowledge presented by the Classical writers. Under influence of the Reformation, travelling to enrich insight, character and knowledge became encouraged and no longer the past was solely looked upon for answers. Instead influenced by Bacon, Descartes and others empiric research became a new standard and the new discoveries clarified that the Classical writers had not known everything. While Egypt then remained a mythical land, Aegyptiaca were no longer only collected as acknowledgements of this fact but also collected to uncover these mysteries. Whilst the 'old'

collecting motives such as mumiya still remained popular throughout the century, we see that mummies were no longer collected solely out of medical reasons. Through the Chigi mummies we have seen that over time complete mummies even became objects of art.

Peiresc demonstrated the first changes in the character of the collectors of Aegyptiaca and through his collection he showed a more systematic and specialized approach to Egypt. While he owned two mummies, the rest of his Aegyptiaca were centred around his quest to decipher the hieroglyphs. Contrary to the old collectors which shared no correspondence concerning Egypt, Peiresc was able to stay in constant contact with other Egypt- fanatics such as Kircher and Barberini and while he remained quite unproductive as a scholar, he did enable more research to Egypt. Through della Valle we have seen that context became of more importance through the course of the century and that collectors rather relied on other scholars and explorers when it came to the collecting of Aegyptiaca. Aside from that the fact that the supplier was the only control one had on the authenticity of the Aegyptiaca, context of course also aided research. Della Valle showed a more conscience attitude towards what was considered Egyptian and through his remarks concerning the Chigi mummies we have seen that more actual attention to the Aegyptiaca was paid. Especially during the course of the seventeenth century the idea of Egypt became more defined and categorized through the collections with Aegyptiaca and research.

Kircher marked both the climax of the popularity of Egypt as well as the Corpus Hermeticum and where Peiresc had specialized parts of his collection, Kircher's museum was dedicated to his passion for Egypt. Through his extensive research to obelisks, Coptic, hieroglyphs and other aspects of Egypt, Kircher was seen as the authority on this area and for a while it was believed that he could truly translate the hieroglyphs. His museum welcomed visitors from all over the world and demonstrated that Egypt was still as popular as it had been at the beginning of the seventeenth century. In this light Kircher's collection of Aegyptiaca can then be considered exceptional, his amount of Aegyptiaca was equalled by no other before or after him in the seventeenth century and he truly represented the climax of the Egyptian Renaissance. Curiously enough the amount of collections with Aegyptiaca still remained low in comparison to the actual attention which Egypt received. While it is possible that the collecting of Aegyptiaca was still not as prestigious to be mentioned in inventories, one would assume that as a result of research more would be known about Aegyptiaca in collections. After all as Dupré and Lüthy stated, it were objects that caused research and the forming of theories which would mean that most collections with Aegyptiaca in them should be known to us since research was undertaken to them.

Of course there were other ways to express the popularity of Egypt and the restoration projects of the obelisks in Rome's architecture became the outlet of the interest of both Pope Urban VIII and Pope Innocent X had for Egypt. Barberini for that matter demonstrated his fascination for Egypt not through a grand collection of Aegyptiaca but through his patronage of Kircher and through scholars like Greaves we have seen that interest and research to Egypt did not necessarily mean that collections

with Aegyptiaca were kept. However through Peiresc, the work of della Valle, Kircher, Greaves and others became influenced by each other and in a way a community was created around Egypt. While the amount of collections with Aegyptiaca was still low and there is still no proof of a collecting trend, the quality of them did change. Through specialization and research, ownership of Aegyptiaca seemed to have become more prestigious and important to the collections which owned them. Where Heurnius' and Paludanus' Aegyptiaca added to their collection, the Aegyptiaca of Kircher and Peiresc defined theirs.

While Curran and other researchers speak with confidence of an Egyptian Renaissance, I doubt this in the light of the amount of collections with Aegyptiaca. While I do not doubt the popularity of Egypt throughout the seventeenth century it is strange that collections, which were in general of much importance during the Early Modern period, do not reciprocated the Egyptian Renaissance. While there were cases of collections which Aegyptiaca in them, they did not follow the trend which was obviously present concerning Egypt. Mummies of course formed the exception to this lack of collections and through the Chigi mummies, de Groote mummie and Paludanus' mummies, it has become clear that at least these Aegyptiaca were extremely popular and valuable. While then the quality of the collections with Aegyptiaca changed over the course of the century, the amount remained the same and as such I do not think that there was a new collecting trend concerning Aegyptiaca during the seventeenth century. Even if it is really the case that collections simply did not document their Aegyptiaca it would only underline that the collecting of them was not as prestigious as one would assume by its popularity.

In what way was interest in Egypt then reflected in the collections of the seventeenth century? The medical value and the antique value of Aegyptiaca were translated by the collecting of among others mummies/mumiya and in the beginning mostly Aegyptiaca as described by the Classical writers were collected. Through the course of the century research towards Egypt, was translated through more specialized collecting of Aegyptiaca. However in light of the amount of collections with Aegyptiaca we can't state that a new collecting trend was formed during the seventeenth century and Paludanus and Kircher for that matter were individual cases who demonstrated but not represented the Egyptian Renaissance in collections. While Kircher then is seen as the climax of the Egyptian Renaissance I do not think that it is right to justify this through comparing his collection with others since the low amount of collections simply do not make for a fair comparison. Kircher then to me is not the climax of collections but of interest to Egypt in the seventeenth century and in that sense he did form the peak of the Egyptian Renaissance. Concluding the popularity of Egypt was not translated in collections and an Egyptian Renaissance concerning collections is absent however an Egyptian Renaissance concerning the research to Egypt is an easy case to make. Through the efforts of Peiresc, della Valle and Kircher, the approach to Egypt changed and the first steps towards Egyptology were made but especially on the area of what was considered to be Egyptian and which objects were associated with Egypt in the Early Modern period further research can and should be undertaken.

Appendix I Important manuscripts about Egypt during the seventeenth century

Aegyptiaca and Egyptianised objects

Hypnerotomachia Poliphili (1499) Francesco Colonnas (1433-1527)

A wondrous story about Poliphilo's utopia in which he among other encountered obelisks and hieroglyphs. In the story an obelisk on an elephant is described and in 1667, Bernini adapted this image for his obelisk at the Piazza Minerva

De Medicato funere (1553) Petrus Bellonius (1517-1564)

Among others describes the mummification practices of the Egyptians

Codex Ursinianus (1560) Piro Ligorio (1515-1583)

Various drawings of Egyptianised architecture and objects in Rome

Arcana Arcanissima, Hoc est Hieroglyphica Aegyptia-Graeca (1614)

Among others the comparison and influence of Egypt's gods, myths and architecture on Greece

Sphynx Mystagoga (1676) Athanasius Kircher (1602-1680)

Kircher's theories on mummies and mummification and the Egyptians beliefs in the afterlife

Coptic and Hieroglyphic script

Mithridates (1555) Conrad Gesner (1516-1565)

Mentions Egyptian words as quoted by the Classical writers and the Coptic names of the months

Discours des Hiéroglyphiques (1583) Pierre L'Anglois (?)

On the association between emblems and hieroglyphs

LIV Tableaux Hiéroglyphiques (1583) Pierre L'Anglois

On the association between emblems and hieroglyphs including figurines and interpretations of the hieroglyphs

Hieroglyphica (publ. 1602) Pierio Valeriano Bolzani (1477-1558)

Dictionary consisting out of all existing symbols, including hieroglyphs

Characteres Aegyptii (1608) Laurentius Pignorius (1571-1631)

The translation and explanation of the Mensa Isiaca

Thesaurus Hieroglyphicorum (1610) Johann Herwarth von Hohenburg (1553-1622)

Various reproductions and interpretations of hieroglyphic engraved objects such as the Mensa Isiaca and various Egyptian monuments

Cinq Livres des Hiéroglyphiques (1614) Pierre Dinet (?)

The symbolic interpretation of the hieroglyphic script

De Symbolica Aegyptiorum Sapientia (1631) Nicolas Caussin (1583-1651)
Biblical and Christian sources in relation to Egyptian wisdom

Prodromus Coptus sive Aegyptiacus (1636) Athanasius Kircher
Grammar of Coptic

Lingua Aegyptiaca Restituta (1644) Athanasius Kircher
Concerning Kircher's theory that Coptic had been the last stage of hieroglyphs

Oedipus Aegyptiacus (1652-1654) Athanasius Kircher
Kircher's masterpiece, concerning foremost his theory on the translation of hieroglyphs as well as his Hermetic thoughts concerning Egypt

Monuments

De Gli Obelischi di Roma (1589) Michele Mercati (1541-1593)
Thirteen detailed reports on the shipment of Egyptian monuments to Rome between Augustus and Constantianus II

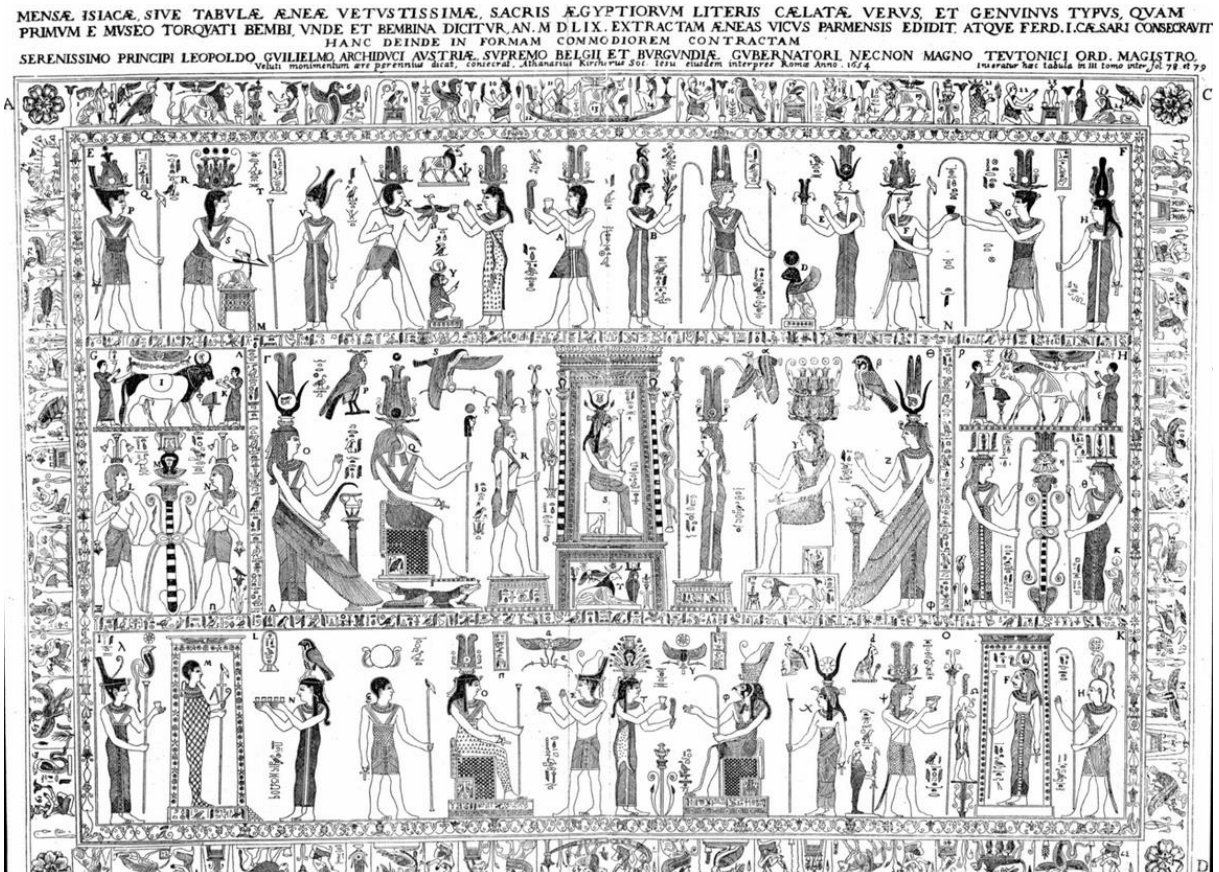
Pyramidographia (1646) John Greaves (1602-1652)
One of the first scientific studies on the pyramids of Gizeh, containing measurements and theories on them

Obeliscus Pamphilius (1650) Athanasius Kircher
Reconstruction and translation of the hieroglyphs of the Pamphilian Obelisk

Viaggi (1650) Pietro della Valle (1586-1652)
Della Valle's travel account of his journey to Egypt, consists out of all his remarks concerning the pyramids, cities and mummies

Obeliscus Chigijs (1666) Athanasius Kircher
The interpretations of the hieroglyphs of various obelisks in Rome

Appendix II Mensa Isiaca



Facsimile of the Mensa Isiaca as seen in Kircher's Egyptian Oedipus. The quality of the hieroglyphs and Egyptian deities clearly explain why this tablet was considered Egyptian in the beginning.

List of figures

Front page: Illustration from the work of Giorgi de Sepibus Romani Collegii Societatis Iesu Museum Celeberrimum. Of: P. Findlen, *Athanasius Kircher. The Last Man Who Knew Everything*. New York/ London: Routledge 2004. p.61.

Appendix II: Facsimile Mensa Isiaca from the work of Athanasius Kircher, *Egyptian Oedipus* Volume III. Of: J. Godwin, *Athanasius Kircher's Theatre of the World*. London: Thames and Hudson 2009. p.60.

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