

## Editorial Note

Julia Budka & Florian Ebeling

Although *Aegyptiaca* is the first academic journal dedicated to the study of the reception of Ancient Egypt, we can still rely on over 100 years of research in this field. It began with the outstanding studies of Karl Giehlow and Ludwig Volkmann, which were primarily intended as contributions to art and literary history. Many excellent studies followed, but these were not strictly understood as contributions to the history of the reception of Ancient Egypt. Siegfried Morenz's approach in the 1960s aimed to grasp the subject as a whole and to postulate the question of the reception of Ancient Egypt as a leitmotif, from today's perspective, this appears to have turned out to be a failed attempt to universalise the perspective of an Egyptologist. As a result, case studies with different disciplinary backgrounds remained the norm. An impressive testimony of this research is the eight-volume *Encounters with Ancient Egypt*, published in 2003. With almost 100 essays, it offered an extensive summary of the research but remained silent on the question of what the reception of Ancient Egypt means for cultural history beyond the individual case studies. There was no discussion of theory and method that could have provided a framework for the individual cases. This kind of holistic approach only emerged at the turn of the millennium with Jan Assmann's studies. He systematically regarded the reception of Egypt as a cultural studies topic, with methodological distinction and theoretical awareness. His approach provided the individual case studies with a framework that made the relevance at their time of publication transparent, why we are interested in them, and what connects the many individual cases. This has not changed the entire field of research, but it has provided a new perspective.

It was in this spirit that *Aegyptiaca* was founded, in the hope to provide a forum for academic discourse and to combine sound and detailed academic research with an awareness of cultural studies. This is also the background to a new project researching the reception of Ancient Egypt. Work began in September 2025 on an online open access encyclopaedia on the history of the reception of Ancient Egypt. ERAE (Encyclopaedia of the Reception of Ancient Egypt) is funded by the German Research Foundation (DFG), supported technically and conceptually by Heidelberg University Library, as is *Aegyptiaca*, and edited by Julia Budka, Florian Ebeling and Miguel John Versluys. ERAE and *Aegyptiaca* will complement each other perfectly. ERAE serves to document the current state of research and explores the cultural studies question of the whole; what Egypt

means in cultural history beyond individual cases. *Aegyptiaca*, on the other hand, is intended to serve contemporaneous academic discussion and provide a forum for innovative or as yet insufficiently researched topics.

One initial consequence for *Aegyptiaca* is that more space is being given to reviews. This issue contains a total of five reviews, which clearly demonstrate the wide range of topics related to the reception of ancient Egypt: from [Herodotus' Histories](#) to [Coptic culture](#) and [Egypt as a space of imagination for European cultures](#), to the [UNESCO campaign to save the monuments of Nubia](#), and to 'alternative Egyptology'. There are also highly original essays in this issue: [Joachim Quack](#) wonders whether the story "The Curse of Vasartas" was written by Henry Rider Haggard, [Gabrielle Charrak](#) considers whether Hegel's philosophy can also be understood as a response to the Enlightenment's engagement with Ancient Egypt and its artistic traditions, and for the first time [Reuben Hutchinson-Wong](#) analyses the public reception of Egypt in 19th-century New Zealand.

This slight reorientation of *Aegyptiaca*, and above all its fruitful combination with ERAE in the years to come, will hopefully provide our readers with exciting reading material and further stimulating discourses on the reception of Ancient Egypt.