

Editorial Note

This fifth edition of *Aegyptiaca* is the most comprehensive so far, with more than 600 pages. It will certainly find a similarly large readership as the four previous issues, which have already achieved over 30,000 downloads and whose papers have found their way into the scientific literature of various disciplines. Two focal points have developed over time and characterize this journal: On the one hand, the detailed examination of individual reception cases; on the other, the reflection on what the encounter with history and its prehistory means. Both topics are closely interwoven. Theory and method must be measured by the extent to which they are able to present history and its meaning in a lively and original way. Without a reflective approach to history, however, it cannot be understood properly in its cultural-historical meaning, and research into the history of the reception of ancient Egypt would remain what it has sometimes been: self-sufficient escapism and a cabinet of curiosities.

From the beginning *Aegyptiaca* was also intended to be a forum for reflection on the possibilities and limits of the history of reception, research into the afterlife and cultural memory. In order to enable a methodical reflection appropriate to the subject, it is necessary to look beyond the limited circle of those who are concerned with the reception of Pharaonic Egypt in the narrower sense. Thus, this issue contains essays that methodically and philosophically deal with reception and afterlife without specifically focusing on ancient Egypt. The contributions by Dieter Borchmeyer, Peter Gülke, Andreas Kablitz, Michael Neumann, Wilhelm Schmidt-Biggemann and Monika Schmitz-Emans offer important considerations not limited to the examination of the reception of ancient Egypt. Without such highly-reflective contemplations, the study of the topic would indeed run the risk of remaining in the realm of Egyptomania; a form of eccentricity without any cultural-scientific significance.

The reciprocal nature of methodological reflection and the sensitive analysis of reception cases is made clear in the papers of this issue, which explicitly address the connection in methodological-philosophical considerations and historical analysis; the essays by Jan Assmann, Katja Lembke and Thomas Leinkauf provide excellent examples of this. The extent to which the history of reception and the history of Egyptology are closely interwoven and cannot be clearly separated is demonstrated in the articles by Julia Budka, Jan Moje and Jakob Schneider, which are likewise well worth reading. Moreover, this issue of *Aegyptiaca* also offers

numerous excellent analyses of cases of reception, situating them in their broader cultural-historical context or as part of a *longue durée*; they all connect the individual case with the big picture, trying to understand the particular testimony of reception as part of a comprehensive narrative. The sheer variety of these encounters with Egypt can be observed in the papers by Tobias Bulang, Edward Chaney, Tamara Berger, Sara E. Cole (together with Erik Risser, William Shelley), Chris Elliott, Alfred Grimm, Susana Mota and José des Candeias Sales.

The establishment of *Aegyptiaca* has so far been accompanied by two conferences. The first one took place in December 2018 at the Warburg Institute in London. It focused on the differences between reception studies, “Nachleben” in the sense of Aby Warburg, and mnemohistory developed by Jan Assmann. The papers are published in the fourth issue of *Aegyptiaca*: <https://doi.org/10.11588/aegyp.2019.4>. At the same time, this conference revealed the need to further examine the connection between reception studies and mnemohistory as investigations of the modes in which history is encountered on the one hand and history of events (*Ereignisgeschichte*) on the other. In the research and documentation of the history of reception, an attempt at a historically detailed analysis is combined with the focus of intentions, motives, traumas and prejudices that stimulate the encounter with one’s own past. The cultural-historical environment of a reception testimony must be described in detail and be as multi-layered as possible; the historian should be aware of his/her preconceptions and biases, but nevertheless remain committed to factual documentation. The object of his/her research, however, namely the conception of Pharaonic Egypt, should not be measured by whether it met the standards of rationality of the time. It was not until the eighteenth century that an understanding of the characteristics of Egyptian aesthetics developed, and only the nineteenth century offered the possibility of reading ancient Egyptian sources, thus granting the sources a veto right. In order to better understand this connection, a conference entitled “Rezeptionsgeschichte und kulturelles Gedächtnis/ History of Reception and Cultural Memory” was held in December 2019 at the Herzog August Bibliothek in Wolfenbüttel. The papers from this conference form the first part of this issue of *Aegyptiaca*.

Since the connection between reception research and cultural history was discussed in London, and the relationship of history proper (*Realgeschichte*) and mnemohistory was the subject of discussion in Wolfenbüttel, a third meeting will now focus on the question of which extensive narratives, *topoi*, or traces of memory made Pharaonic Egypt the subject of discussion in the West. To what

extent can these be understood as intertextualities, quotations of images or objects, and how are they interlinked? Moreover, is there a latency of Egypt, that is to say blurred traces that haunt us or show themselves as the return of the repressed?

Significant modifications and improvements are planned for *Aegyptiaca*. The journal will shortly move from Heidelberg University to the LMU Munich, Faculty for the Study of Culture, Division of Egyptology and Coptology. I would like to thank Joachim Quack for the positive cooperation that has made it possible for *Aegyptiaca* to start so successfully. Joachim Quack will remain on the advisory board and as such will continue to be an important advisor.

Julia Budka, Professor of Egyptian Archaeology and Art History at LMU, will become more involved in *Aegyptiaca* and will publish the journal together with me going forward. Together we will try to structure the work processes of *Aegyptiaca* more effectively to prepare it for the future.

Technical changes are also on the way: *Aegyptiaca* will be published as an html version in the future, so that the articles can be quoted precisely to the page, and with a particular view to integrating digital media into the articles. For this purpose, digital media will be made available on the servers of the Heidelberg University Library in such a way that they can be easily and sensibly embedded in the documents. We started with 100 printed publications (texts in the public domain, first editions or the editions relevant for the reception), which can be considered classics in the history of Egypt reception. Images, audio and video files will follow.

In the course of the coming year the work will begin on a handbook on the history of the reception of Pharaonic Egypt. Together with Maria Effinger from the Heidelberg University Library (who will supervise the technical implementation of the work on the handbook) we have an ambitious plan: To begin with, microanalyses will be written (contributions to individual reception acts or to a specific topic, e.g. hieroglyphics/idolatry/obelisks) within a narrowly defined time frame. These will then be made available for discussion on PubPub.org (MIT) for those who contribute to the handbook. Comments and remarks would then be able to be incorporated by the authors. Finally, the editors will link the individual contributions to each other. The aim is not to create isolated case studies, but rather a structure that is interwoven in as differentiated a way as possible. In our work we will use the database of the most important texts, images, video and audio data, which as noted above will be created in parallel. The individual entities (texts or text segments, images, objects, audio and video data) will be processed with the

software WissKI (Scientific Communication Infrastructure) as semantic triples in RDF format and are thus open for further analysis. How these details then reconnect with the great narratives, traces of memory and topoi will be discussed at the conference in Munich.

The next issue of *Aegyptiaca* will be published in summer 2021; the editor is looking forward to all papers that will be submitted for review.

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