



The Egyptian Renaissance: The Afterlife of Ancient Egypt in Early Modern Italy

Brian Curran

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Fascination with ancient Egypt is a recurring theme in Western culture, and here Brian Curran uncovers its deep roots in the Italian Renaissance, which embraced not only classical art and literature but also a variety of other cultures that modern readers don't tend to associate with early modern Italy. Patrons, artists, and spectators of the period were particularly drawn, Curran shows, to Egyptian antiquity and its artifacts, many of which found their way to Italy in Roman times and exerted an influence every bit as powerful as that of their more familiar Greek and Roman counterparts.

Curran vividly recreates this first wave of European Egyptomania with insightful interpretations of the period's artistic and literary works. In doing so, he paints a colorful picture of a time in which early moderns made the first efforts to decipher Egyptian hieroglyphs, and popes and princes erected pyramids and other Egyptianate marvels to commemorate their own authority. Demonstrating that the emergence of ancient Egypt as a distinct category of historical knowledge was one of Renaissance humanism's great accomplishments, Curran's peerless study will be required reading for Renaissance scholars and anyone interested in the treasures and legacy of ancient Egypt.

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