

LUDWIG VOLKMANN. *Hieroglyph, Emblem, and Renaissance Pictography* [*Bilderschriften der Renaissance. Hieroglyphik und Emblematik in ihren Beziehungen und Fortwirkungen*]. Trans. and ed. by Robin Raybould. Brill's Studies in Intellectual History 281/Brill's Studies on Art, Art History and Intellectual History 28. Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2018. Pp. xxiv + 307 pages, 118 b/w ill. Hardback ISBN 978-90-04-36093-8. €127.

Almost 100 years ago the Leipzig publisher, art historian, and Dante scholar Ludwig Volkmann (1870-1947) published a slim volume on the reception history of hieroglyphics in early modern Europe.¹ The centenary commemoration of the decipherment of hieroglyphic writing by Jean-François Champollion was the occasion for the publication. *Bilderschriften der Renaissance. Hieroglyphik und Emblematik in ihren Beziehungen und Fortwirkungen* was published in 1923 by Hiersemann in Stuttgart, reprinted several times, and now translated into English by R. Raybould. Another conceptually connected study by Volkmann on the Ägypten-Romantik in der europäischen Kunst, although still printed in Leipzig in 1942, was lost in the chaos of the war which only few proof copies survived. This text has only recently been made accessible again.

Bilderschriften der Renaissance belongs to the foundational texts of the interdisciplinary research into the early modern period and is equally important as the work of Aby Warburg's research circle. Beginning with the *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili* (Venice 1499), Volkmann analyzes the humanist interpretation and further development of Egyptian hieroglyphic writing

1. Raybould remarks on Volkmann's background: "Ludwig Volkmann (1870-1947) was a distinguished academic from Leipzig, who held teaching and administrative positions in both Germany and the United States" (XVIII). In order to place Volkmann's academic work more accurately, his professional background should be given in more detail. His mother was from the Härtel family; in 1893, Ludwig Volkmann followed the wishes of his family and joined the world's oldest music publishing house "Breitkopf und Härtel" after having been trained in the book trade and studying art history and economics at the universities of Bonn, Leipzig and Munich. He became a shareholder and was active in company management until his death in 1947. His works on art and book studies were produced in the shadow of his work at the publishing house. The "positions" Raybould mentions in the United States are probably referring to the fact that Volkmann also took on international representational work within the book trade, among other things, he was a judge in the St. Louis World's Fair (1904).

in Italy as well as north of the Alps. He paves the way for recognizing characteristic art forms of the early modern age such as devices, *imprese*, printer's marks, and emblems as results of a hieroglyphically-influenced conception of signing (marking). As the 1962 and 1969 reprints indicate, the *Bilderschriften* have been—and still are—very influential. They are often discussed in context with Giehlow's thematically close *Hieroglyphenkunde*. Today, a digitized copy of Giehlow's text is accessible from Heidelberg University as well as an annotated English translation which is also due to Raybould.¹ Volkmann's *Bilderschriften*, on the other hand, is currently neither available in print nor digitally; a reprint, however, has been announced recently. Thus, both of these essential texts will be hopefully accessible in the German original as well as in an annotated English translation in the foreseeable future.

These texts are foundational for the humanities as well as cultural studies. The dedicated endeavor of both translator and publisher to make them accessible is very much worth supporting. At the heart of their work lies the not always comfortable realization that—especially in the humanities—though dated studies often do not lose in weight, they do lose the possibility to impact: the engagement with them asks for the fulfilment of more and more prerequisites and thus becomes increasingly difficult from the viewpoint of the modern reader; language, research and citation style are considerably different from current forms of scientific publication. Today, German is of less importance as an international language of science, and the classical languages Latin and Greek, which still play a natural and substantial role in these texts, too, are less familiar to many readers. The translator and publisher's most important decision then—which is worthy of support in all respects—lies in addressing this problem and in making texts that are of established and continuing relevance for the research into the early modern period, especially for the history of symbolic thinking, accessible once more.

Raybould addresses his task on several levels: he has not only translated Volkmann's work, but he has also written an introduction as well as further excursus, added a commentary and a bibliography and reworked and supplemented the illustrations. Each of these areas deserves to be critically assessed. In the following, the German original is cited as "Volkmann," the translation as "Raybould."

1. See Giehlow 2015.

Text and Translation

Raybould's English translation is factually accurate throughout and—as far as I can assess this as a non-native speaker—readable. It caters more to the English-speaking reader than to the German original. Sometimes, however, difficulties arise when Volkmann condenses his wording extremely or follows the characteristic style of the language of the early twentieth century. This difficulty becomes clear, for example, where Raybould assumes to discover mistakes in Volkmann: thus, according to Raybould, in a citation from a letter of Calcagnini concerning Horapollo and contemporary hieroglyphics, Volkmann had misunderstood the Latin subset *ceterum ex aliorum traditionibus* as [Horapollon] “is further from the tradition than others.” Whereas the correct meaning, Raybould argues, would be “the remainder is from other sources.”² The latter, however, is exactly what Volkmann's translation means.³ Raybould's reproach, then, has no foundation in a mistake made by Volkmann but is probably due to comprehension problems on the side of the otherwise quite adept translator.⁴

2. “This is borrowed from Horus, even though the little book [of Horus] which is being circulated, is in no way worthy of so great a name and is further from the tradition than others.’ There follows a further list of hieroglyphic signs, which are taken from Ammianus Marcellinus, Servius, Diodoros, Rufinus, Eusebius, Jamblichus and Plutarch . . .” (Raybould, 59–60). He notes on page 60, note 136 that “Volkmann mistranslates this last phrase which in the original is *Ceterum ex aliorum traditionibus*, that is ‘the remainder is from other sources.’”
3. (End of the Calcagnini quote): “Dies ist von Horus entlehnt, wenn auch das Büchlein, das man verbreitet, eines so großen Namens keineswegs würdig ist. Ferner aus der Überlieferung von anderen; darauf folgt ein weiteres Verzeichnis von 23 hieroglyphischen Zeichen, die aus Ammianus Marcellinus, Servius, Diodor, Rufinus, Eusebius, Jamblichus und Plutarch zusammengestellt sind” (Volkmann, 31).
4. Similar comprehension difficulties appear in Raybould, 76, n. 168: “In several passages in his text Valeriano uses the word *juniores* which Volkmann translates literally as ‘younger men,’ but I take to mean ‘more recent authors.’” Volkmann, on page 39, translates: “Auch die Jüngerer haben manche hieroglyphischen Zeichen erdacht, die ich mich nicht scheute, jeweilig anzuführen . . .” In the academic German of the time, however, “die Jüngerer,” too, had exactly the meaning that Raybould offers in his suggested correction, i.e. ‘more recent authors.’ Volkmann points out that the symbol of the Janus face was also used as a printer's mark: “An Stelle zweier Köpfe, eines männlichen und eines weiblichen, die sich ansehen, steht hier ein Kopf, der janusartig ein männliches und ein weibliches Gesicht hat, wohl eine Erinnerung an eine ähnliche Darstellung bei Alciati <Prudentia>, die auch in Büchersigneten wiederkehrt” (79). Raybould understands the latter part of the sentence in the following way: “perhaps a reminder

The translation issues multiply where the original already contains translations, as is often the case in Volkmann. He not only skillfully navigates the classical Greek and Latin literature, but also that of the medieval and the early modern age. An important aspect of his significance for the history of science lies in the fact that he has spent many years making numerous source texts accessible, the exact knowledge of which still opens up new perspectives. The “translation in the second degree,” however, as well as the identification of the sources in the commentary, poses a challenge to every modern scientific commentary. Sadly, this challenge has not yet been met in the way it would have been necessary in this instance. Two examples shall illustrate the basic problem and the handling of the same. The first case deals with the difficulty of identifying and accordingly classifying the translated text; the second deals with the perpetuation of misunderstandings.

At the beginning of *Bilderschriften* Volkmann recapitulates the humanist’s knowledge of hieroglyphics by analyzing the classical texts that were available to them. In this context, he also paraphrases the description of hieroglyphs in Apuleius’s *Metamorphoses*.⁵ As the line between paraphrase and commentary between Apuleius and Volkmann is not quite clear, the translation faces difficulties.⁶ Raybould omits a

of a similar instance in Alciato (Prudentia), which recurs in his mark” and, based on this misunderstanding, comments: “It is not clear what Volkmann is referring to here. Prudence was not Alciato’s printer’s mark (he did not have one) nor part of his device nor his coat of arms. The Janus head is said to be the printer’s mark of Jakob Secenius [lege: Johann Secerius vel Setzer, AW] around 1530” (175). But Volkmann never mentions a printer’s mark of Alciato’s. For the Janus marks in Setzer and others from 1523 onwards, see Wolkenhauer, 262–70.

5. “Über den ägyptischen Mysteriendienst hat sich ausführlich Apulejus verbreitet, dessen Metamorphosen in der besonders beliebten Geschichte vom “Goldenen Esel” eine eingehende Schilderung der in Prozession herumgetragenen Symbole enthalten <Buch XI, Kap. 10>; man entnahm diesen z.B. die offene linke Hand als Bezeichnung der Billigkeit. Die bedeutsame Stelle über die aus dem Tempel herbeigeholten heiligen Bücher hat man freilich erst später ganz richtig zu erklären vermocht. Apulejus nennt sie: Bücher, mit unverständlichen Buchstaben beschrieben, die teils in Tierfiguren gefaßte auszuspitzen Zeichen trugen, was offensichtlich auf Papyrusrollen mit teils hieroglyphischer, teils hieratischer Schrift zu beziehen ist <Buch XI, Kap. 22>” Volkmann 2008, 6.
6. “Apuleius was also someone who explicitly expounded upon the Egyptian mystery rites. His *Metamorphoses*, the famous history of the Golden Ass, contains an extensive description of the symbols carried by the priests in procession; for example, as he says (bk. XI, ch. 10), the open left hand is a sign of fairness. Later he describes very accurately the relevant passages on the sacred books deposited in

sentence by Volkmann and replaces it with his own introduction to the Apuleius text, maybe based on an misinterpretation of Volkmann. Subsequently, he gives a typographically emphasized quotation from Apuleius which closes with the sentence “They are clearly visible on rolls of papyrus both in hieroglyphs and in sacred script.” This sentence—which Raybould wrongly ascribes to Apuleius—is, in fact, Volkmann’s conclusion.⁷

As Volkmann develops his argument further, he shows how a consistent idea of hieroglyphics gradually emerges in the sixteenth century which equally incorporates the ancient writing system as well as its early modern reproductions. This, he claims, is achieved through the ongoing discussion of Horapollo’s catalogue of hieroglyphs and the Roman obelisks. In the process, Volkmann also discusses the Latin translation of Horapollo by Filippo Fasanini. Published in 1517 in Bologna, it contains a treatise on hieroglyphics (*Declaratio sacrae litterae*) in its appendix which was edited and provided with a commentary by Dennis Drysdall a couple of years ago.⁸ Volkmann translates and cites from Fasanini: “Wir sahen auch außer jenen Figuren von Tieren, Gefäßen und Instrumenten, deren man sich an den in Rom vorhandenen Obeliskten an Stelle der Buchstaben bediente, ein Bild, auf welchem zuerst ein Kreis, sodann ein Anker war, den inmitten ein Delphin mit gewundenem Körper umschlingt.”⁹ In his translation, Raybould has overread the important distinction “außer” [apart] and thus assumes that Fasanini also claims to have seen the modern dolphin-anchor hieroglyph on the obelisks, which is hardly possible. He notes his irritation

the temple. Apuleius describes them as: ‘books written in an incomprehensible script revealing elaborate sayings depicted partly in animal figures, partly also in knot or wheel shapes, twisted or horn shapes and pointed signs. They are clearly visible on rolls of papyrus both in hieroglyphs and in sacred script.’ BK 11, CH 22” (Raybould 13).

7. The cited passage from Apuleius here given at length from the original in order to make the context clear: “de opertis adyti profert quosdam libros litteris ignobilibus praenotatos, partim figuris cuiusce modi animalium concepti sermonis compendiosa verba suggerentes, partim nodosis et in modum rotae tortuosis capreolatimque condensis apicibus a curiositate profanorum lectione munita” (Apuleius, 11.8).
8. See Drysdall. This was further developed in regard to Aldus Manutius in Wolkenhauer 176–77. Neither texts seem to have been consulted at this point.
9. “Apart from those figures of animals, containers and instruments that were employed instead of letters on the obelisks found in Rome, we also saw a picture on which there was first depicted a circle, then an anchor whose center is held in an embrace by a dolphin’s coiled body” Volkmann 2008 29–30 (My translation).

about this in an annotation and consequentially consults the Latin original to solve the problem.¹⁰ But here, too, he overreads the decisive word *praeter* (= ausser, apart) and omits part of the sentence in his transcription. Without *praeter*, however, the closing bracket is hardly understandable which—despite the opening bracket missing—clearly separates the *praeter*-insertion. As it happens, Fasanini is not concerned with the ancient hieroglyphs (*praeter!*), but with the “modern” hieroglyph of circle, dolphin, and anchor as it is known from the *Hypnerotomachia*. As he explains in the following, he would have liked to have decorated his book with similar hieroglyphs. A more attentive reading of all three texts would have avoided this chain of misunderstandings which has a lasting effect (Raybould, 222, note 207).

The uncertainty regarding the authorship of individual sentences and the misinterpretation of repeatedly translated passages are basic problems that face not only but also Raybould in his translation work. They could be alleviated or eliminated by consulting the original quotations, and printing them in the commentary: thus, the text’s journey through two translations and its respective reinterpretations would become transparent. In the discussed examples, Volkmann is, on the one hand, wrongly accused of a philological mistake and, on the other, the sentences in which he formulates his philological judgement on Apuleius are taken away from him. The criticism Volkmann faces in the commentary—pointed out above as well as in the other cases outlined in the footnotes—proves to be unfounded at closer inspection, nevertheless they unintentionally contribute to make Volkmann’s considerations appear to be less reflected and knowledgeable than they are.

Commentary and Excursus

Raybould has annotated Volkmann’s text with more than 600 footnotes throughout. In his intelligent and concise introduction concerning the history of the symbolic interpretation of language and pictures, which owes

10. “Such a hieroglyph has never to my knowledge been identified but there seems no other possible translation of Fasanini—in spite of the mysterious parenthesis. I set out his original Latin: ‘Vidimus et nos picturam quaedam [lege: quandam, AW] praeter figuras illas animalium vasorum [adde: instrumentorumque formas, quibus pro literis utebantur, AW] in obeliscis Roma existibus) [lege: existentibus, AW] in qua circulus primo, mox anchora inerat, quam media Delphinus obtorto corpore circumplecit [lege: circumplectitur, AW].’” Raybould, 57, note 128. The reading was checked on the digital version of the BSB, permalink <http://mdz-nbn-resolving.de/urn:nbn:de:bvb:12-bsb10150820-0, fol. 49r>.

much to his 2005 book, he briefly comments on his annotation method. Raybould has added his notes underneath the text to the few footnotes by Volkmann and has marked the original author's text in each case with a V set in bold. Though this makes the text more readable, the allocation of the notes becomes more difficult. Here, I would have wished for a clearer distinction between the notes of the author and those of the translator/editor, i.e. preferably the division into two apparatus. Furthermore, a detailed account of the guiding principles for the annotation would have been desirable: what are the annotations (not) supposed to accomplish? Does the focus of the commentary lie on semantic and stylistic questions, or on the verification of citations, names and objects? Why are exact references given only occasionally, why are texts cited in different ways, when are Latin texts italicized, when are they not, when are Greek texts transliterated, when are they not?¹¹ The consistent decoding of the classical, medieval, and early modern texts cited by Volkmann according to modern bibliographical criteria would be of great value to the international scholarly use of the book; sadly, this is not always—and moreover rather unsystematically—implemented. There is a lot of room for improvement in this area for a second revised edition.

Illustrations & Bibliography

The volume provides all of the illustrations included in the original text as well as a few additional ones. This leads to a difference in the numbering in the German and the English version. The illustrations are printed on art paper in adequate size and good quality throughout; it is a pleasure to leaf through the pages. Especially those who have worked with the reprints will be able to appreciate this a great deal. The more irritating it is that the captures are given in the List of Illustrations (XXI–XXIII) but without any exact indications of origin. This list does not meet the requirements of a modern scholarly edition.

Raybould has meritoriously added a bibliography to the work whose original edition is missing a separate bibliography (278–90). It comprises the primary and secondary texts used by Raybould, including publications in Latin,

11. Examples for the switch between English and Latin titles, partial italicization and variable numbering: *Tusculan Disputations V*, 64–66 (Raybould 22, n. 47; V is bold), Horace's *Seventh Satire* (Raybould 77, n. 170, without a line); Erasmus *Adagia* 1.2.53 (Raybould 100, n. 39), but *Adage II, I, 1 Festina Lente* (Raybould 221, n. 206). Latin terms and titles are mostly italicized, but not always, cf. Raybould, 23, n. 49; p. 60, n. 137; on p. 223 it's mixed: "*Scriptores astronomici veteres*." The Greek text is sometimes transliterated, sometimes not (cf. Raybould 45, n. 94 with p. 54, n.120).

French, Italian and German. What seems problematic to me is the way digitalized works are cited: whereas the running commentary frequently gives Google links—which can be several lines long and are neither practicable nor of the necessary stability¹²—the bibliography often refers to digitalized works via short titles without giving a permalink. In order to make a reliable identification of the text possible either library and signature of the cited work or, alternatively, a permalink should be the norm here.

Conclusion

The translation and interpretation of a complex scholarly work is a great challenge. Raybould has faced this challenge and has made an important foundational cultural studies text accessible to English readers for the first time. We owe much gratitude to him and the publisher for this. For future editions and further projects, however, a number of points should be considered so that the translation can indeed fulfil its task in the academic world. I have tried, with the aid of examples, to make clear some deficiencies and their consequences. Moreover, it would be desirable if the author and title of the translated work would be indicated in the preliminary matter. In the apparatus, the annotations by author and commentator/translator should be clearly separated; quotations have to be checked and where possible given in their original language in the apparatus. For further editions and projects, additional intensive editing would be of merit; this is especially true for proofreading¹³ as well as the amendment of bibliographical references and the list of Illustrations. As of yet, Volkmann's German text has to be consulted in addition to Raybould's translation for any scholarly debate; the

12. For example, See Raybould, 85, n. 6.

13. Here, only in examples: "ora et labora" does not mean "prayer and work," but "pray and work" (Raybould, 33, n. 75). Instead of "justitia recta amicitia et idui evaginata et nuda" we should read "Iustitia recta amicitia et odio evaginata et nuda" (Raybould, 39). "Ad studiosus" has to be changed to "ad studiosos" (Raybould, 57). Instead of "Temeriem cunctis adhibe, remoram injie" we should read "Temperiem cunctis adhibe, remoram iniice" (Raybould, 97). "Grues lapidem deglutientes" should not be translated as "cranes holding a stone" but as "cranes swallowing a stone" (Raybould, 164). The famous Horatian line is not "ut picta poesis" but "ut pictura poesis" (Raybould, 220, n. 203); and "Vetustissimae tabulae aeneae . . . explicatio" does not mean "explanation of the very ancient tablet of Aeneas" but "explanation of the very ancient tablet of bronze," usually called the mensa Isiaca (Raybould, 251).

laudable work of Raybould, however, does play an important role in making the engagement and the critical analysis of this important text easier in the future.

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