

gen Regulus, der Sakramentsaltar und die Chorschranken, Kanzel und Weihwasserbecken sowie die Kapelle des hoch verehrten Volto Santo, die alle im Katalog ebenfalls aufgeführt werden – zusammen mit weniger bekannten, aber herausragenden Werken wie der blutvergießenden Halbfigur des eucharistischen „Christus“ am Sakramentstabernakel von SS. Iacopo e Maria in Lammari (S. 272–275).

Wie schon in der Ausstellung, so ist auch in der Dokumentation des Katalogs die Skulptur der eigentliche Star. Matteo Civitalis Büsten, Ganzfiguren und Reliefs entfalten in ihrer Zusammenschau und in der vergleichenden Betrachtung mit zeitgenössischen Florentiner Werken hier erstmals ihre spezifische, auf klare, bisweilen kristalline Formen (in der Ornamentik) und einen überzeugenden Realismus der Darstellung gründende, künstlerisch eigenständige Qualität. Allein dies schon wäre Grund genug, die bisweilen doch recht hybrid gestalteten Sektionen und ihre etwas uninspirierte „Aufhängung“ an Künstlernamen zu entschuldigen – ebenso wie den anachronistischen (kaum zu glauben!) Titelbaustein „e il suo tempo“. Überzeugend sind darüber hinaus in nahezu allen Fällen Francesco Cagliotis stilkritische Einlassungen, die das plastische Oeuvre Matteos deutlich präziser – und breiter – definieren, und sein Textbeitrag (S. 29–78) stellt denn auch das Herzstück des Aufsatzteiles der Publikation dar. Insgesamt hat der Katalog ein solides Fundament für vertiefende Forschungen zu Matteo Civitali, seinem Oeuvre und der Renaissance in Lucca geschaffen und einen entscheidenden Beitrag zur Rehabilitation eines Künstlers geleistet, dem noch 1958 von John Pope-Hennessy wenig mehr als eine „bemerkenswerte Tüchtigkeit“ attestiert wurde.

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Florian Weiland-Pollerberg: Amor und Psyche in der Renaissance. Medienspezifisches Erzählen im Bild (*Studien zur internationalen Architektur- und Kunstgeschichte*, 20); Petersberg: Michael Imhof Verlag 2004; 144 pages, 78 + 32 illustrations in black and white; ISBN 3-937251-16-2; € 49,40

The year 2002 was a major boost for those who study the *Nachleben* of Cupid and Psyche in Renaissance art. Either by sheer coincidence or for reasons that escape me, several serious studies on this topic appeared in print. First of all, mention should be made of the two comprehensive books by Sonia Cavicchioli, which are not confined to Renaissance art: one in Italian (*Le metamorfosi di Psyche. L'iconografia della favola di Apuleio*; Venice: Marsilio) and the other in English, with the same text in a more condensed form and good color photographs (*The Tale of Cupid and Psyche. An Illustrated History*; New York: Braziller). Secondly, Rosalia Varoli-Piazza edited a beautifully illustrated book on the restoration of Raphael's Cupid and Psyche-paintings in the Villa Farnesina in Rome (Raffaello. *La loggia di Amore e Psyche alla Farnesina*; Milan: Silvana). Moreover, Michael Rohlmann published an article on the interpreta-

tion of Raphael's paintings (Von allen Seiten gleich nackt. Raffaels Kompositionskunst in der Loggia di Psiche der Villa Farnesina, in: *Wallraf-Richartz-Jahrbuch* 63, 2002, pp. 71–92)¹, while in the year before Hubertus Günther had written a paper on the same topic (Amor und Psyche. Raffaels Freskenzyklus in der Gartenloggia der Villa des Agostino Chigi und die Fabel von Amor und Psyche in der Malerei der italienischen Renaissance, in: *Artibus et historiae*, Nr. 44, 2001, pp. 149–166). Also in 2002, Florian Weiland-Pollerberg finished his dissertation on Cupid and Psyche in the Renaissance at the University of Constance, Germany. Two years later his Ph.D. thesis was published by Michael Imhof Verlag in Petersberg.

In the ‚Einleitung‘, the author does not say whether he reworked the text of his 2002 dissertation in the two years before it was printed. One could think of various valid reasons or excuses why he decided not to, but it is a serious omission that he did not even update the bibliography with the publications summed up above (all the more since he did include other publications from 2002) or at least make a special mention of them. It is, more in general, quite odd that five scholars are simultaneously studying the same topic without being aware of each other's work. Did they never run into each other, while they were staring at Raphael's paintings in the Villa Farnesina?

Weiland-Pollerberg covers to a large extent the same material as the other authors, but he claims to distinguish himself by his specific approach. In chapter 1, „Medium, Dispositiv und Rezipientenstruktur“, he explains what his research method involves, stating that, „Die Frage nach einem medienpezifischen Erzählen in der Kunst der Renaissance ist neu. Die bisherigen Forschungen zu den im Anschluss vorgestellten Kunstwerken befassten sich nahezu ausschließlich mit ikonographischen und kennerschaftlichen Fragen“ (p. 9). Weiland-Pollerberg's study of ‚medienpezifisches Erzählen‘ does not exclusively concentrate on the medium in which the Cupid and Psyche scenes were represented, nor on their ‚reception‘ (‚die mentalen Prozesse, welche sich beim Anschauen beim Betrachter abspielen“, p. 7). Instead, it focuses on the interaction between the medium and the ‚meaning‘ of the pictures; „[...] ich möchte zeigen, dass die verschiedenen künstlerischen Darstellungen jeweils eine bestimmte Deutung des Mythos unterstützen, die wesentlich von der Wahl des Bildträgers abhängt. In meiner Fragestellung verbindet sich damit – und das ist entscheidend – der Medienbegriff mit Überlegungen zur Erzählstruktur“ (p. 8). One more quote may help to further explain this approach. „Bei der Untersuchung unserer Beispiele werden wir sogar feststellen, dass zwischen den Szenen, die auf den unterschiedlichen Bildträgern zu finden sind, zum Teil überraschend große Unterschiede bestehen. Lassen sich für die Komplexitätsreduktion neben narrativen auch pragmatische Gründe finden? Werden beispielsweise erotische oder soziale Beziehungen zwischen den Figuren besonders herausgestellt? Warum tragen in der Cassone-Malerei die Figuren zeitgenössische Kleidung, während in den meisten anderen Bei-

1 Rohlmann has repeated the argument of his article in: JULIAN KLIEMANN and MICHAEL ROHLMANN: *Italian Frescoes. High Renaissance and Mannerism 1510 – 1600*; New York / London: Abbeville, 2004, pp. 194 – 312.

spielen die Maler größten Wert darauf legen, den antiken Charakter der Geschichte zu betonen? Was ist im Rahmen eines Mediums überhaupt möglich, zu erzählen, was nicht?“ (p. 8).

In chapter 2, Weiland-Pollerberg first relates the tale of Cupid and Psyche and then describes the history of Apuleius' „Metamorphoses“, which includes the most extensive and famous version of the story. Next he discusses the reception of the tale in the Renaissance and the various ways it was interpreted, with a special paragraph on its possible Neoplatonic significance. The following chapters are dedicated to representations of Cupid and Psyche in different artistic media. Chapter 3 focuses on 15th century *cassoni* (marriage chests), and chapter 4 on wall and vault paintings. Instead of giving an overview, the author discusses two examples in depth: Raphael's unfinished Farnesina frescoes (1517 – 1518) and the extensive series of Giulio Romano in the Palazzo del Tè, Mantua (1526 – 1528). Chapter 5 is dedicated to prints and books, but includes, surprisingly, also a discussion of Perino del Vaga's frescoes in the papal apartment of Castel Sant'Angelo in Rome (1546). The prints discussed are those published by Antonio Salamanca in 1532, and the (rather crude) woodcuts illustrations of Matteo Maria Boiardo's „Apuleio Vulgare“ of 1518 (Venice). Besides the discussion of Perino's frescoes, this chapter holds another surprise: without any explanation the focus suddenly shifts from Italy to the North, to the woodcut illustrations of Johann Siedler's first translation of Apuleius' „Metamorphoses“ into German (Augsburg, 1538). Chapter 6 is the conclusion of the book, and is followed by three appendices: a discussion of *cassone*-panels that are derived from those by Jacopo del Sellaio, studied in chapter 2; an attempt to reconstruct the program of Raphael's unfinished Farnesina frescoes; and the illustration of all 32 prints of Antonio Salamanca's Cupid and Psyche-series.

Weiland-Pollerberg presents his material in a clear and well-written manner. Better illustrations (in color!), however, might have helped to cut down the lengthy descriptions of the pictures. The author relies heavily on earlier studies of the *Nachleben* of Cupid and Psyche and does not come up with any substantial new data. This means that the main contribution of the book consists in the author's specific approach. So what new insights does his study of „medienspezifisches Erzählen im Bild“ lead to? In the final paragraph of the book (p. 111), Weiland-Pollerberg concludes that „Der Bildträger bestimmt die Adressierung des Betrachters und beeinflusst auch die innere Erzählstruktur. Zwischen Form und Funktion der Kunstwerke besteht ein enger Zusammenhang. Wir haben bei unserer Deutung der Amor und Psyche-Darstellungen die Medienmerkmale des jeweiligen Bildträgers im Auge behalten, und konnten dadurch zu teilweise neuen Interpretationen kommen oder bereits vorgeschlagene Interpretationsansätze stärker machen“. The first two sentences contain quite obvious truths, and the following one is actually rather modest. And that is true for the whole book, for although the author keeps insisting on the specificity of „medienspezifisches Erzählen im Bild“, he never really gets beyond the point of discussing the pictures in relation to their function and/or the person who commissioned them (if (s)he is known).

This leads to conclusions which hardly add anything to earlier interpretations (chapter 2 and 3) and to general truths which makes one wonder who the target public of this book is. Do art historians really have to be told that prints are smaller than monumental works, that they reach a wider public and that, therefore, they are less ‚personalized‘ than paintings made for one specific patron? (p. 104–105). Is it really necessary to state that the story of Cupid and Psyche always allows an allegorical-philosophical reading, regardless of the intended meaning of the picture(s)? (p. 110) In some cases the author has to make strange moves to come to an interpretation at all, as for instance in the discussion of Perino del Vaga’s fresco series in Castel Sant’Angelo. His painted frieze with Cupid and Psyche-pictures is situated in a small room, which is part of the apartment built for Pope Paul III. The ensemble to which this series of pictures belongs consists of paintings of Alexander the Great in the audience room, and pictures of Perseus and Cupid and Psyche in the two small adjoining rooms. The connection between these three themes – if there is any – has never been adequately explained. Weiland-Pollerberg, however, largely ignores the decoration of the other rooms and tries to explain the Cupid and Psyche-pictures in relation to the function of the chamber as bedroom (pp. 85–90). His first conclusion is that ‚sich in den Malereien der Engelsburg keinerlei Hinweis auf eine bestimmte Lesart des Mythos findet‘ (p. 89). But after that finding he connects the theme of Psyche to the life and career of Paul III: „[...] eine Hochzeit, wie sie auf den Fresken zu sehen ist, war Paul in der Wirklichkeit unmöglich. Er musste seine Liebesbeziehung seiner kirchlichen Karriere opfern. Die Geschichte von Amor und Psyche wird zu einer unmöglichen Liebesgeschichte, die erst im Himmel eine Art ‚Happy End‘ findet. Es ist damit durchaus möglich, in dem Wandfries des Schlafzimmers einen Bezug zu Pauls weltlichem Lebenswandel zu konstruieren“ (p. 89). But there is more: „Das Bildprogramm in der Sala di Amore und Psyche erlaubt meiner Ansicht nach darüber hinaus einen Rückgriff auf die naheliegendste allegorische Lesart des Psyche-Mythos“, i. e. a (Neo Platonic) allegory of the ascension of the soul. „Der Wandfries zeigt damit eine antike Erzählung, die weitergehend als Allegorie der Annäherung und schließlichen Vereingung der Seele mit Gott gelesen werden kann. Der Psyche-Mythos hätte damit der Erbauung des Auftraggebers gedient“ (p. 89). One little painting above the window of the room, which is not included in the painted frieze, supposedly underscores this interpretation. According to Weiland-Pollerberg, it represents Psyche sleeping in a landscape, before she is transported to Cupid’s castle. „Die schlafende Psyche, d. h. die schlafende menschliche Seele spiegelt sich in dem in diesem Zimmer Schlafenden (sei es der Papst oder sein Burgherr). [...] Psyches Schlaf weist darauf hin, dass das Zimmer als Rückbezug des Papstes oder seines Burgherrn dienen sollte, als ein Raum, in dem die Seele zur Ruhe kommen, Schlaf und Erholung finden konnte“. This kind of reasoning raises more questions than it answers. Should we really assume that the 80-year-old pope was referring to his frustrations (if he ever had any!) of sacrificing a ‚normal‘ married life to an ecclesiastical career? How exactly did a bedroom function: exclusively as a private place to sleep, or also as a room to receive guests? Apart from these and similar questions, there are some factual problems. The identi-

fication of the little painting as „Psyche asleep“ is not certain, while there is no evidence whatsoever that the chamber was indeed a bedroom!²

The „medienspezifische“ dimension of this interpretation is not clear to me, but the curious combination of Alexander the Great-, Perseus- and Cupid and Psyche-pictures points to a phenomenon that, in my opinion, runs completely counter to „medienspezifisches Erzählen“ and might be termed ‚Procrustean painting‘. The same combination of the three subjects was repeated eight years later, around 1555, in the Roman palace of a cardinal from Pope Paul III's inner circle, Girolamo Capodiferro³. The unknown painter reduced the Cupid and Psyche-series to four pictures and thus cut off the story in the middle. The final scene shows the moment when Psyche discovers that her invisible lover is Cupid. A few years later, around 1560, Cardinal Tiberio Crispo, who had been responsible for the construction and decoration of the Castel Sant'Angelo apartment, had the same combination of themes painted in his own palace in Bolsena⁴. His Cupid and Psyche-series does end with the banquet scene, but this time practically the complete first half of the story has been omitted. More or less at the same time, Taddeo Zuccaro painted Alexander the Great and Cupid and Psyche-pictures for Paolo Giordano Orsini in his castle in Bracciano. For some reason, the Perseus-theme was abandoned and the number of Cupid and Psyche-pictures reduced to five⁵. The final scene, on the ceiling of the room, is heavily damaged and therefore hard to identify, but does not show the wedding banquet which is the traditional happy end of the story.

These three examples show that for people from the circle of Paul III pictures of Cupid and Psyche, in combination with paintings of Alexander the Great and Perseus, had some special meaning. However, these themes could easily and – it seems – at one's discretion be ‚procrustated‘ to fit the specific place where they were painted. One may even wonder if the Cupid and Psyche-theme in itself still had a special meaning. How far this process of ‚iconological erosion‘ had proceeded in the 1580's appears from an account by Giovanni Battista Armenini, about a painter in Lombardy who was given full freedom to paint the loggia of his patron's villa, as long as the pictures would have nice colors. The artist decided to paint the story of Cupid and Psyche, after prints of Raphael's Farnesina frescoes. When the patron came to see the work and asked the painter what he was making, ‚he [the painter] replied that it was

2 B. DAVIDSON: *Perino del Vaga e la sua cerchia* (Cat. exh. Florence, Uffizi, Gabinetto disegni e stampe); Florence 1966, p. 58: „In genere le guide indicano questa stanza come la camera da letto di Paolo III, con l'unica giustificazione, sembra, di stuzzicare la fantasia del visitatore. Non troviamo descritte in alcun documento le funzioni delle stanze del castello e nemmeno i soggetti degli affreschi“.

3 L. NEPPI: *Palazzo Spada*; Rome 1975, p. 85; R. CANNATÀ (ed.): *Palazzo Spada. Le decorazioni restaurate*; Milan 1995, pp. 21–22, 39, and 90–95.

4 A. DE ROMANIS: *Il Palazzo di Tiberio Crispi a Bolsena*; Rome 1995, pp. 8–9.

5 J. A. GERE: *Taddeo Zuccaro. His Development Studied in his Drawings*; London 1969, pp. 95–95; CRISTINA ACIDINI LUCHINAT: *Taddeo e Federico Zuccari fratelli pittori del Cinquecento*; Milan/Rome 1998, I, p. 116–123.

the *storia* of Psyche; the master said, „Don't make too many of those *psighi* for me, because the fine colors do not come out well there“⁶.

While these examples may contradict the author's ideas about ‚medienspezifisches Erzählen im Bild‘, the stained glass windows now in the Musée Condé, Chantilly, do seem very relevant. Yet they are also ignored. Ordered by Anne de Montmorcency for his Château d'Écouen around 1545, it is true that these windows were not made in Italy, but since Weiland-Pollerberg also discusses German woodcut illustrations, this can not be a valid criterion for disregarding them.

A final word should be said about the second appendix, which is an attempt to reconstruct which scenes were planned for Raphael's unfinished loggia in the Villa Farnesina. Several scholars before Weiland-Pollerberg have come up with suggestions about the pictures in the lunettes, and some have even speculated about paintings or tapestries on the walls, but attempting a detailed reconstruction of all the lunettes and walls of the loggia is a pointless enterprise. Would anyone take me serious if I suggested that the walls were not to be decorated with Cupid and Psyche-pictures, but instead with episodes from Ovid's ‚Metamorphoses“ or Philostratus' ‚Imagines“? Yet this is exactly what Giulio Romano did in the Palazzo del Tè. It just shows that Renaissance painters and their patrons did not always think along the ‚logical‘ lines that we expect (or wish for), and that it is futile to make reconstructions on the basis of our own outlook.

I read Weiland-Pollerberg's book with pleasure, because it is well-written and presents a good state of the research up to 2002, but I am afraid that this is not enough to compensate for its shortcomings. It is a serious flaw that the author chose not to update his dissertation before it went to press in 2004, and his approach of ‚medienspezifisches Erzählen im Bild‘ does not progress beyond the point of questions of decorum, which means that the subject of a painting was chosen (and consequently should be studied) in connection with its function, its place and the status of its commissioner. That insight, however, has long been known, and Cupid and Psyche paintings have already been explained accordingly. Thus the final sentence of the book leaves me with an unsatisfied feeling: „Es hat sich gezeigt, dass es sinnvoll ist, die Frage nach einem medienpezifischen Erzählen in die Interpretation einzubeziehen“. Perhaps the second part of this phrase is true, but I am not so sure of the first four words.

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6 GIOVANNI BATTISTA ARMENINI: *De' veri precetti della pittura*; Ravenna 1587, III, xv, p. 222; quoted after the translation by E. J. Olszewski: *Giovanni Battista Armenini: On the True Precepts of the Art of Painting*; s. l., 1977, p. 290. – *Psigho* is dialect for bladder. A similar development of ‚iconologic erosion‘ seems to have occurred in *cassone*-painting, according to SONIA CAVICCHIOLI: *The Tale of Cupid and Psyche. An Illustrated History*; New York 2002, p. 73: „the meaning of Psyche's story seems to be reduced to decorative elements with little iconographic weight“.