The Design of a New Hieroglyphic Typeface: The Project ANRT-VÉGA

Between 2015 and 2019, a new hieroglyphic typeface was designed in collaboration between the LabEx Archimede (UPVM) and the National Institute for Typographic Research (ANRT, ENSAD Nancy, France), under the supervision of Professor F. Servajean. Every type of this fount is the synthesis of various paleographic references, selected by egyptologists of the LabEx. In the meantime, the graphic identity of the typeface cannot refer to an identifiable style of egyptian epigraphy, in order to transcribe texts from any period of Egyptian history.

C. Cassier, F. Rouffet, M. Massiera selected the references, corrected and validated the types according to bibliographic and paleographic references. The types are mostly from A. Gardiner’s Sign List. It was designed to be legible in the VÉgA dictionary, but also can be used in publications, thanks to the various sizes of inner details. This research, an ongoing PhD, raises issues about the epistemological structure of egyptology through the prism of hieroglyphic typefaces. The history of those publishing tools is questioned in order to enlighten the building of hieroglyph’s taxonomy, and the use of typefaces as model of representation. The aim of this PhD is to understand how design can be a prism for understanding egyptology, through a study of 1980’s experiments around digital typefaces, the central position of A. Gardiner’s works, and an analysis of the Impériale nationale’s typeface (1842-1852), reworked at IFAO (1898-1983).