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**A Companion  
to Warburgian  
Studies**

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# A Companion to Warburgian Studies

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and Giulia Zanon

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Bernardino Branca

# A Companion to Warburgian Studies

## Engramma 199, Editorial

Ilaria Grippa, Ada Naval, Giulia Zanon



*A Companion to Warburgian Studies*: this issue of *Engramma* constitutes a diptych with the previous issue *Warburg Bibliothek* (n. 198, gennaio 2023), in which we have published a collection of unpublished writings, sources and studies on the Warburg Library. This new issue aims to pick up the thread by offering a review of the studies that have been devoted to Warburg in recent years at various cultural latitudes: from Italy to Brazil, from Germany and Russia to Australia.

Today, the question about Warburg's legacy requires us to keep a fixed gaze on the present and at the same time to look around with intensity and commitment. On the cover of *Engramma* 199, Warburg's portrait sculpted by Mary (Hertz) Warburg reminds us of Warburg's gaze—deep and intensely pointed on the world— but also the three-dimensionality of his thought, his ability to twist into life, not without irony. Hence, the features of Warburg's face sculpted in bronze by his wife Mary contain a playful quality; as Gertrud Bing explained in the lecture she delivered on 31 October 1958 on the occasion of the bust's placement in Hamburg's *Kunsthalle*:

With regard to this bust, modest though dignified, which is now part of a group of portraits of his city's notables, I would like to recall one of those



cheerful sayings, by Warburg, often ironic towards himself, that made his company such an enchanting experience. The bust was only modelled after his death because his wife, although an accomplished sculptor, had never managed to induce him to pose. At most, Warburg used to say, it would fit if she had wanted to make him a life-size equestrian monument (G. Bing, *Aby M. Warburg* [1958], in M. Centanni (ed. by), *Aby Warburg and Living Thought*, Dueville 2022, 61).

Warburg's bronze head was conceived for a non-fixed but mobile display: the work can be removed from the marble plinth and relocated in the room rotated by 90°, 180°, 270° (now thanks to the work of Martin Warnke, the original head and plinth have found a home in the restored building of the *Kulturwissenschaftliche Bibliothek Warburg*, Heilwigstraße 116, in Hamburg). Following the play on the self-deprecating cue recalled by Bing, we could say that Warburg never lent himself to pose for his portrait in order to avoid the crystallisation, and museification of his thought, making it an epistemic method imprisoned in the rigidity of a fixed pose.

In different ways, the authors of this issue take us on a tour around Warburg's thought, responding to the demand for its constant revision. The aim is to offer the framework of a rigorous and pondered scholarly research, in counterpoint to what has currently become a fashion, easy and superficial, of abusing Warburg's name, to the point that "on various fronts and in every field of knowledge of artistic expression there is no essayist, journalist, painter, anthropologist who [misses] a splash of Warburg" (*Warburg and Living Thought*, 319), aiming to continue to revisit, recover and re-study what Warburg has left us as a scholar.

This issue of *Engramma* also proposes an update of the important reconnaissance work inaugurated with *Engramma* 165, *Warburgian Studies* open to a *panorama* of studies dedicated to Warburg in the world. The issue brings together contributions from philosophers, anthropologists, art and architecture historians, comparatists and philologists, all of whom have set their sights on Warburg and his thought, inheriting his ability to interconnect different fields of knowledge, light years away from the action of the "policemen of disciplinary sectors" (as Gertrud Bing once again puts it).

*A Companion to Warburgian Studies* is divided into three parts: *Studies, Overviews, Presentations*.

### Essays

The section presents three essays and the re-edition of three texts on Aby Warburg's thought and intellectual legacy that have been recovered and re-published here in their first digital edition.

Daniela Sacco's essay, *Forma Atlante e storiografia teatrale*, questions whether the *Bilderatlas* may be considered as a useful reference text for investigating the methodology of twentieth-century Italian researches on Theatre, in particular starting from the studies of Ludovico Zorzi and Fabrizio Cruciani, two authors who, in their interest in Renaissance culture, place themselves in continuity with Warburg's main lines of research. Raoul Kirchmayr, in *Per una semantica del Nach. Osservazioni di metodo su Warburg, Freud e Benjamin*, analyses the meanings of the term *Nachleben*, highlighting the definition of a singular relationship between image and time in the work of Warburg, Benjamin and Freud. In his essay, Raoul Kirchmayr takes us on a dense and illuminating journey into what *nach-* has meant for the philosophical status of images in close relation to their historicity. In "A small academy in a small town". *Anglo-italian scholarship on the Teatro Olimpico in the immediate post-war period*, Chiara Velicogna opens the research field on Warburg's imprint on the fertile *humus* of cultural relations between Italy and Great Britain, through a critical reading of two writings on the Teatro Olimpico in Vicenza: *Academicians Build a Theatre and Give a Play* (1966) by Donald Gordon (see: "Bellezza!" *On Donald Gordon - or a Warburgian Bridge between Italy and England*, "Engramma" 184, settembre 2021, 31-60) and *The Genesis of the Teatro Olimpico* (1951) by Licisco Magagnato. Archival findings show that the two essays are tuned to the same line of research, informed by the methods of the Warburg Institute.

As for the reissues, we republish the pioneering —and strangely forgotten— contribution by Arturo Mazzarella, *Aby Warburg. Per una genealogia del Rinascimento*, already published in "il Centauro" in 1982 —thus before the fundamental issue 199-200 of "aut aut" that marked a watershed in the history of Warburg studies. According to Mazzarella, against the prevailing rhetoric of 'harmony' as the main figure of

Renaissance philosophy, Warburg's surveys trace an interpretative hypothesis capable of placing the accent rather on the dissonances, on the bitterest and most incomprehensible conflicts, always held together by the oxymoronic bond, that invest both models of thought and stylistic paradigms of Renaissance culture.

The 1993 edition of the Garzanti *Enciclopedia della Filosofia*, edited by Gianni Vattimo, presents, under the headword *Warburg, Aby* a concise yet valuable entry by Alessandro Dal Lago, which comes to light again after having been, in fact, dispersed in the ever-widening sea of Warburgian Studies bibliography. Dal Lago rejects the title of 'art historian' for Warburg, emphasising how he extends his research to Anthropology, the History of religions and the Science of culture. The short text also contains a valuable and early reference to the undertaking of the *Mnemosyne Atlas*—when the season of the Atlas's fortunes was still in its auroral era— as a grand project that remained unfinished, in which Warburg "was to identify the classical symbols that, through secular transformations, manage to influence modern art".

### Overviews

The section takes stock of the state of Warburgian studies in three different cultural, geographical and linguistic poles: the Lusophone countries, Russia and Australia. *Livros e artigos sobre Aby Warburg em língua portuguesa* (2018-2023), edited by Ianick Takaes presents an update of the texts on Warburg in Portuguese, the second chapter of the survey completed by Cássio Fernandes in Engramma 165. An update that "seeks to capture only those works that directly dialogue with Warburg's thought, from which a significantly larger number of texts in which Warburg figures as an auxiliary theoretical line can be deduced".

Ekaterina Mikhailova-Smolniakova's contribution, published both in the original Russian and in Italian version, updates the state of art of Warburgian Studies between 2019-2022 in Russia with a brief and interesting note on the context in which the line of enquiry develops: the author dwells in particular on the Russian translation of the Introduction to *Bilderatlas Mnemosyne*.

*Warburgian Studies in Australia* is an extensive review edited by Jaynie Anderson of the studies of the scholar herself, of Robert Gaston and of Charles Green: by retracing the 'intellectual biography', and bibliography, of the most important Australian scholars of the classical tradition, we can at the same time reconstruct an important branch of the history of studies on the figure of Aby Warburg and of one of the main intellectual heirs of his method and thought —Edgar Wind, of whom Anderson was the last student.

### **Presentations and Reviews**

In the third section of Engramma 199, Presentations, we present a selection of some recent publications for 2021-2021. The section opens with *Aby Warburg. Ein Porträt aus Briefen*, a cura di Michael Diers e Thomas Helbig, l'introduzione a *Briefe*, edited by Michael Diers and Thomas Helbig, the introduction to *Briefe*, edited by Michael Diers and Thomas Helbig and published for De Gruyter's *Gesammelte Schriften, Studienausgabe* series: the volume, published in two volumes, presents a selection of around 800 of Warburg's letters, accompanied by a commentary that provides glosses and contextualisation. This selection of Warburg's epistolary constitutes a kind of indirect biography, in which Warburg's life and work is documented from the beginning of his studies in 1886 to his death in 1929.

Victoria Cirlot's note, *En el Archivo Warburg. A propósito de: A. Warburg, Per monstra ad sphaeram. Terror y armonía de las esferas*, discusses the Spanish translation of Aby Warburg's *Per monstra ad sphaeram*, an important step towards disseminating Warburg studies in Spanish-speaking culture. Cirlot's article collects the most important sections of the text published by the publishing house Sexto Piso in 2022 and, in the footnote, highlights the need to delve with philological care into the materials of the Warburg Archive, which "it is necessary to relocate [...] with their respective variants, Warburg's manuscript corrections, Saxl or Bing's interventions, etc."

In the field of Italian studies we point out the new work by Maurizio Ghelardi *Aby Warburg. Uno spazio per il pensiero*, a collection of essays that, as the Author writes in the volume's Introduction, "represent surveys in the vast and variegated corpus of Warburg's research, whose reflection

is similar to the web woven by a spider, a web that spreads out in different ways, radiating the dense weave of his thought”.

Following the thread of Warburg’s “web of thought”, we present in this issue the revised and expanded edition of Marco Bertozzi’s valuable volume, Marco Bertozzi, *La tirannia degli astri*, published in a third, revised, edition by Sillabe in 2022: an in-depth investigation of the *Salone dei Mesi* in Palazzo Schifanoia, a secret symbol of the Italian Renaissance thanks to the astrological representations whose genealogy Aby Warburg first attempted to trace. The new edition features an expanded bibliography and images from a valuable new photographic campaign.

In *Expanded Warburg*, Gabriele Guerra presents his brilliant critical reading of the two volumes edited by Monica Centanni *Aby Warburg e il pensiero vivente e Aby Warburg and Living Thought*, published by Ronzani editore. The eleven essays collected by Centanni, all from the Italian cultural *milieu*, constitute a tracer of Warburg’s ‘living thought’. Giorgio Pasquali, Mario Praz, Gertrud Bing, Arsenio Frugoni, Giorgio Agamben, Guglielmo Bilancioni, Alessandro Dal Lago, Gianni Carchia, Salvatore Settis, Kurt W. Forster, Maurizio Ghelardi: the polyphonic dialogue, from near and far, between scholars of different backgrounds casts a new beacon of light that clearly and precisely illuminates Warburg’s personality and intellectual legacy.

The issue of Engramma closes with the presentation of “The Edgar Wind Journal”, an international and interdisciplinary journal, in open access format, edited by Bernardino Branca and Fabio Tononi, which aims to develop research and debate on Edgar Wind and his themes of investigation. This contribution presents a summary of the first three issues of the journal, with full summaries available on line for consultation.

Aby Warburg’s thought continues to receive light, through translations of his work in different languages, new editions and publications of critical contributions. One aim of Engramma n. 199, *A Companion to Warburgian Studies* is to offer a map of these researches that can guide and direct scholars and readers, so that the themes and questions arising from

Warburg's thought continue to circulate and stay alive, always invigorated by new lifeblood. Follow, therefore, the good lesson of Warburg:

To understand, to shed light on, to recognise laws in the mechanisms of cultural history, to include irrational instincts within the scope of historical investigation: this was the aim of my work (Aby Warburg, *Lettera del 26 dicembre 1923*, in *Introduzione ad Aby Warburg e all'Atlante della Memoria*, a cura di M. Centanni, Milano 2002, 20).

Et fiat lux!

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## Abstract

This issue of Engramma is intended as an update of the overview of studies dedicated to Warburg in the world: an important work of reconnaissance inaugurated with Engramma 165, Warburgian Studies. The issue brings together contributions from different scholars, sharing a common vision of Warburg and his thought. *A Companion to Warburgian Studies* is divided into three parts: I. Essays; II. Overviews; III. Presentations and Reviews.

I. Essays. Daniela Sacco in her *Forma Atlante e storiografia teatrale* offers us a reflection on the possibility of considering the 'atlas form', deduced from the thought of Aby Warburg, as a model for investigating the methodology of twentieth-century theatrical historiography, and in particular in the pioneering studies opened by Ludovico Zorzi and Fabrizio Cruciani. Arturo Mazzarella, *Aby Warburg. Per una genealogia del Rinascimento* aims to highlight the profound innovations made by Warburg, compared to the most widespread interpretations of Renaissance artistic culture. Raoul Kirchmayr, *Per una semantica del Nach. Osservazioni di metodo su Warburg, Freud e Benjamin* analyses the semantics of the term *Nachleben*, which expresses the unique relationship between image and time in three authors that the history of scholarship has often juxtaposed: Warburg, Benjamin and Freud. The point of reference from which the reflection starts is the interest of all three in the epistemological status of images in relation to their historicity. Alessandro Dal Lago, *Voce dall'Enciclopedia Garzanti di Filosofia, a cura di G. Vattimo, M. Ferraris, D. Marconi, Milano [1981] 1993* rejects the definition of Warburg as an art historian, pointing out how he extends his research to Anthropology, History of Religions, and Science of Culture. Chiara Velicogna, "A small academy in a small town". *Anglo-italian scholarship on the Teatro Olimpico in the immediate post-war period* approaches two early post-war pieces of scholarship concerning the Teatro Olimpico: Donald Gordon's *Academicians Build a Theatre and Give a Play* (1966) and Licisco Magagnato's *The Genesis of the Teatro Olimpico* (1951).

II. Overviews. *Livros e artigos sobre Aby Warburg em língua portuguesa* (2018-2023): the bibliography edited by Ianick Takaes updates the review of texts on Aby Warburg in Portuguese by Cássio Fernandes published in "Engramma" 165, *Aby Warburg negli studi latino-americani*. Исследования о Варбурге в России by

Ekaterina Mikhailova-Smolniakova summarises the recent studies about Aby Warburg in Russia. Current researchers in Russia have access both to translations and original texts by Aby Warburg. *Warburgian Studies in Australia* edited by Jaynie Anderson, updates the history Australian studies about Warburg and his legacy are summarised by the intellectual and scientific history of the three most important and influential scholars in this field: Jaynie Anderson, Robert Gaston and Charles Green.

III. Presentations and Reviews. Micheal Diers in *Aby Warburg. Ein Porträt aus Briefen* presents here the Introduction to *Briefe*, edited by Micheal Diers and Thomas Helbig and published for De Gruyter's *Gesammelte Schriften, Studienausgabe series*. Victoria Cirlot, *En el Archivo Warburg. A propósito de: A. Warburg, Per monstra ad sphaeram. Terror y armonía de las esferas* presents the new Spanish translation of *Per monstra ad sphaeram*, the text of the lecture given by Aby Warburg in 1925 in memory of Franz Boll. Cirlot collects the most important sections of the text published by Sexto Piso in 2022. Gabriele Guerra in *Expanded Warburg reviews Aby Warburg and Living Thought*, edited by Monica Centanni and published by Ronzani editore. *Aby Warburg. Uno spazio per il pensiero*, edited by Seminario Mnemosyne publishes the Introduction to Maurizio Ghelardi's new book, *Aby Warburg, uno spazio per il pensiero*. Ghelardi's new edition thus emphasises the need to continue research into Warburg vast unpublished materials. Seminario Mnemosyne presents *La tirannia degli astri*, the new edition of Marco Bertozzi's volume on *Salone dei Mesi* in Palazzo Schifanoia, published by Sillabe in 2022. The new edition features an expanded bibliography and images from a major photographic campaign. Bernardino Branca in "*The Edgar Wind Journal*" presents a international journal, in open access format, with a summary of the first three issues.

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*keywords* | Aby Warburg; Warburgian Studies in Italy; Warburgian Studies in Germany; Warburgian Studies in Portugal; Warburgian Studies in Russia; Warburgian Studies in Brazil; Warburgian Studies in Australia.



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