# The Hierarchical Structure of the Warburg Library

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The Home Page is:
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http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Noology

Wikipedia: Noology External links:
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A printable .pdf-Version is here:
http://www.noologie.de/aby.pdf
Unfortunately, the .pdf format cannot give access to the vital Multi Media files.
And more problematic, one cannot get to the footnotes.
These are accessible only in the .htm format.

The .htm version is here:
http://www.noologie.de/aby.htm
This contains all the www-links that can be accessed.

The Appendices are in the files:
http://www.noologie.de/_extra.htm
http://www.noologie.de/_extra.pdf

The Aby Warburg Library
The Glossary and Some More is in:
http://www.noologie.de/gloss.htm
http://www.noologie.de/gloss.pdf

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Aby Warburg and his Library Structure:

http://www.noologie.de/warburg-class.html
http://www.noologie.de/aby.htm
http://www.noologie.de/aby.pdf

## The Warburg Institute Library

https://wdl.warburg.sas.ac.uk/
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https://wdl.warburg.sas.ac.uk/

## Warburg Digital Library Collections

Welcome to the digital collections of the Warburg Institute, the premier institute in the world for the study of cultural history and the role of images in culture. The Warburg Institute is cross-disciplinary and global. It is concerned with the histories of art and science, and their relationship with superstition, magic, and popular beliefs. Its researches are historical, philological and anthropological. It is dedicated to the study of the survival and transmission of cultural forms – whether in literature, art, music or science – across borders and from the earliest times to the present. We hope to build our digital collections to reflect this remit, beginning with books from Aby Warburg's Kulturwissenschaftliche Bibliothek. The digital library follows its physical counterpart in employing the unique classification scheme devised by Warburg. Details can be found at:

http://warburg.libguides.com/classification

**Ex Libris Aby Warburg: Magic and Science**

https://wdl.warburg.sas.ac.uk/islandora/object/islandora%3A3969

This collection features books covering the subjects of Magic and Science from the personal library of the Hamburg art historian and scholar Aby Warburg (1866-1929). These books formed the basis of the Kulturwissenschaftliche Bibliothek Warburg, which was officially opened in 1926 and emigrated to London in 1933-1934. As suggested by the name of the Library named after him, Warburg had wide-ranging interests in Kulturwissenschaft, a term difficult to translate, but usually rendered as 'cultural studies', understood in its widest, anthropological sense. It is well-illustrated here by his collection on Magic and Science (classmark F). Together with Philosophy (A) and Religion (B, G), it makes up the broader category of 'Orientation', which deals with man's attempts to make sense of his place in the world.

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## The Warburg Institute Library holds a collection

https://warburg.sas.ac.uk/library-collections/library

The Warburg Institute Library holds a collection of international importance in the humanities. Its 360,000 volumes, available on open shelves, make it the largest collection in the world focused on Renaissance studies and the history of the classical tradition. It includes a large number of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century continental books and periodicals (especially German and Italian) unavailable elsewhere in the UK, as well as several thousand pre-1800 items.

The categories of Image, Word, Orientation and Action constitute the main divisions of the Warburg Institute Library and encapsulate its aim: to study the tenacity of symbols and images in European art and architecture (Image, 1st floor); the persistence of motifs and forms in Western languages and literatures (Word, 2nd floor);

the gradual transition, in Western thought, from magical beliefs to religion, science and philosophy (Orientation, 3rd & 4th floor) and the survival and transformation of ancient patterns in social customs and political institutions (Action, 4th floor). A video guide is available.

**Our Research Guides provide a practical in-depth guide to the Library's collections.**

**Contact the Library**

**Email: Warburg.Library@sas.ac.uk**
**Tel:** +44 (0) 20 7862 8935/6
**Twitter: @Warburg_Library**
**Facebook: @WarburgLibrary**

**Subject View**

https://wdl.warburg.sas.ac.uk/browse/subject

**Grid View of the Library**

https://wdl.warburg.sas.ac.uk/islandora/object/islandora%3A3969?page=1&display=grid
https://wdl.warburg.sas.ac.uk/browse/classmark

# The Warburg Institute

https://warburg.library.cornell.edu/about/warburg-institute

The Warburg Institute of the University of London exists principally to further the study of the classical tradition, that is of those elements of European thought, literature, art and institutions which derive from the ancient world. The Institute stems from the personal library of the Hamburg scholar Aby Warburg (1866-1929), whose research centred on the intellectual and social context of Renaissance art. In 1921 this library became a research institute in cultural history, and both its historical scope and its activities as a centre for lectures and publications expanded. In 1933 it moved from Germany to London to escape the Nazi regime, and in 1944 it was incorporated in the University of London. It is now a member-Institute of the University's School of Advanced Study. Its first Director was Fritz Saxl followed by Henri Frankfort, Gertrud Bing, E. H. Gombrich, J. B. Trapp, Nicholas Mann, Charles Hope and Peter Mack. The tradition drawn on by the Institute includes the work of such distinguished scholars as Warburg himself, Fritz Saxl, Ernst Cassirer, Raymond Klibansky, P. O. Kristeller, Otto Kurz, Arnaldo Momigliano, E. H. Gombrich, D. P. Walker, Frances A. Yates, Charles B. Schmitt and Michael Baxandall. It has been a tradition of new departures achieved primarily by working across the boundaries of established disciplines. The Institute continues to promote this approach through all its research activities.

[AG: It would be a little bit more revealing when someone would write an article about how the Warburg Institute and Library was financed after Aby's death.]

# Some history of the Warburg Library

I just know a little humorous tale of how the Warburg Library came into being. Abraham (Aby) Warburg was the eldest son of the Banker Warburg in Hamburg. He was entitled to inherit the bank. But he gave up this inheritance in favor of his younger brother Max. See the quote below. In return his brother had to promise him to buy him all the books that Abraham Warburg wanted to buy. This was one of the baddest deals in the Jewish history of making deals. (Remember the sad story of the Trump deals?). Because the Warburg bank nearly went bankrupt, because Abraham bought so many books, so that it ate severely into the profits of the Warburg bank. It is also to be noted, that Abraham Warburg was "just a little bit" schizophrenic. I believe that one has to be schizophrenic in order to do the work that he had done. This was 1920-1929, and no computer in sight. And without a computer this work was super-human. Since I have a computer and especially Hypertext as my mental-amplification-tools, I don't have as much trouble like the good Abraham had. To quote Nietzsche again who was also an expert on the subject: Someone who belonged to the genus of "Die letzten Menschen" would have never thought of such an endeavor as Abraham embarked upon. To do something like this, one necessarily has to be mad. And Nietzsche bekame just that, after a while. Abraham was mad from the outstart. To put it another way, when you are a very intelligent Jew, you have exactly three options to choose from: 1) You become a successful banker, like the Warburgs or the Rothschilds, 2) You become a Talmud expert and 3) You just become mad. Abraham chose the option #3.

**"Man muss noch Chaos in sich haben, um einen tanzenden Stern gebären zu können."**

Nietzsche: [515]

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aby_Warburg

**Aby Moritz Warburg** (June 13, 1866 – October 26, 1929), was a German art historian and cultural theorist who founded a private Library for Cultural Studies, the Kulturwissenschaftliche Bibliothek Warburg, which was later moved to the Warburg Institute, London. At the heart of his research was the legacy of the Classical World, and the transmission of classical representation, in the most varied areas of western culture through to the Renaissance.

Warburg described himself as: "Amburghese di cuore, ebreo di sangue, d'anima Fiorentino"[1] ("Hamburger at heart, Jew by blood, Florentine in spirit").

Against the resistance Aby Warburg met with from his relatives, he forced through his plans to study art history. **Aby famously made a deal with his brother Max to forfeit his right, as the eldest son, to take over the family firm, in return for an undertaking on Max's part to provide him with all the books he ever needed.**

Aby Warburg was born in Hamburg into the wealthy Warburg family of German Jewish bankers. His ancestors had come to Germany from Italy in the 17th century and settled in the town of Warburg in Westphalia, taking on the town's name as their family name. In the 18th century the Warburgs moved to Altona near Hamburg.

Two brothers Warburg founded the banking firm M. M. Warburg & Co in Hamburg, which today again has an office there. Aby Warburg was the first of seven children born to Moritz Warburg, director of the Hamburg bank, and his wife Charlotte, née Oppenheim. Aby Warburg showed an early interest in literature and history and the second eldest son, Max Warburg went into the Hamburg bank, younger brothers Paul and Felix also entered banking. Max Warburg established the Warburg family bank as a "global player".

During his years in Florence Warburg investigated the living conditions and business transactions of Renaissance artists and their patrons as well as, more specifically, the economic situation in the Florence of the early Renaissance and the problems of the transition from the Middle Ages to the early Renaissance. A further product of his Florentine period was his series of lectures on Leonardo da Vinci, held in 1899 at the Kunsthalle in Hamburg. In his lectures he discussed Leonardo's study of medieval bestiaries as well as his engagement with the classical theory of proportion of Vitruvius. He also occupied himself with Botticelli's engagement with the Ancients evident in the representation of the clothing of figures. Feminine clothing takes on a symbolic meaning in Warburg's famous essay, inspired by discussions with Jolles, on the nymphs and the figure of the Virgin in Domenico Ghirlandaio's fresco in Santa Maria Novella in Florence. The contrast evident in the painting between the constricting dress of the matrons and the lightly dressed, quick-footed figure on the far right serves as an illustration of the virulent discussion around 1900 concerning the liberation of female clothing from the standards of propriety imposed by a reactionary bourgeoisie.

He suffered from manic depression and symptoms of schizophrenia,[3] and was hospitalized in Ludwig Binswanger's neurological clinic in Kreuzlingen, Switzerland in 1921. There he was visited by Emil Kraepelin who did not confirm the diagnosis of schizophrenia and suggested Warburg was in a mixed manic-depressive state, a diagnosis with a more positive prognosis. Indeed, his mental conditions improved also thanks to the support of the philosopher Ernst Cassirer, who visited him in the clinic: "Warburg was highly relieved that Cassirer fully understood his plans to restart his research, that Cassirer highlighted the importance of Warburg's ongoing scientific efforts, and felt he could contribute substantively to the art history discourse" [4] After his release from Binswanger's clinic in 1924, Warburg held occasional lectures and seminars between 1925 and 1929, which took place in a private circle or in his library.[5]

Warburg died in Hamburg of a heart attack on 26 October 1929.

## Last project: Mnemosyne Atlas

In December 1927, Warburg started to compose a work in the form of a picture atlas named *Mnemosyne*. It consisted of 40 wooden panels covered with black cloth, on which were pinned nearly 1,000 pictures from books, magazines, newspaper and other daily life sources.[6] These pictures were arranged according to different themes:

Coordinates of memory
Astrology and mythology
Archaeological models
Migrations of the ancient gods
Vehicles of tradition
Irruption of antiquity
Dionysiac formulae of emotions
Nike and Fortuna
From the Muses to Manet
Dürer: the gods go North

The age of Neptune
"Art officiel" and the baroque
Re-emergence of antiquity
The classical tradition today[7]
There were no captions and only a few texts in the atlas. "Warburg certainly hoped that the beholder would respond with the same intensity to the images of passion or of suffering, of mental confusion or of serenity, as he had done in his work."[6] Mnemosyne Atlas was left unfinished when Warburg died in 1929.

https://live-warburglibrarycornelledu.pantheonsite.io/about
Begun in 1924 and left unfinished at the time of his death in 1929, the *Mnemosyne Atlas* is Aby Warburg's attempt to map the "afterlife of antiquity," or how images of great symbolic, intellectual, and emotional power emerge in Western antiquity and then reappear and are reanimated in the art and cosmology of later times and places, from Alexandrian Greece to Weimar Germany. Focusing especially on the Renaissance, the historical period where he found the struggle between the forces of reason and unreason to be most palpable, Warburg hoped that the *Mnemosyne Atlas* would allow its spectators to experience for themselves the "polarities" that riddle culture and thought.

Warburg's combinatory experiments in the *Atlas* follow his own metonymic, intuitive logic, even as it is propelled by decades of rigorous scholarship. Warburg believe that these symbolic images, when juxtaposed and then placed in sequence, could foster immediate, synoptic insights into the afterlife of pathos-charged images depicting what he dubbed "bewegtes Leben" (*life in motion* or *animated life*). As such, the *Mnemosyne Atlas* strives to make the ineffable process of historical change and recurrence immanent and comprehensible. More specifically, the *Atlas* would chart both the afterlife of the classical language of gestures in Renaissance art and beyond as well as the migration of Greek cosmological symbolism up through to the moment when Bruno and Kepler tried to reconcile the legacies of classical and astrological thought with the discoveries of early modern astronomy. The *Atlas* functions cartographically, too, as it explores how meanings are constituted by the movement of themes and styles between East and West, North and South. Transforming the cartographic and scientific notions of what an "atlas" should be, Warburg creates a dynamic "thought-space" [*Denkraum*] where cosmographic and art-historical images reveal how subjective and objective forces shape Western culture.

In its "last version," the *Mnemosyne Atlas* consisted of sixty-three panels (*Tafeln*). Using wooden boards, measuring approximately 150 x 200 cm and covered with black cloth, Warburg arranged and rearranged, in a lengthy combinatory process of addition and substraction, black and white photographs of art-historical and cosmographical images. Here and there he also included photographs of maps, manuscript pages, and contemporary images drawn from newspapers and magazines. The individual panels, in turn, were then numbered and ordered to create still larger thematic sequences.

While in his later years Warburg increasingly deployed such panels in his lectures and presentations (most famously in his Hertziana lecture in Rome in 1929), he also hoped to publish the *Mnemosyne Atlas*. Indeed, he planned to supplement a volume of plates with two volumes of text, containing historical and interpretive material. However, as he left the Atlas at the time of his death, the balance of word and image is decidedly tilted toward the latter. It is left to us latecomers, then, to carefully supplement the gaps, to connect the *Wanderstrassen* that Warburg adumbrated. This can be done in myriad ways: by adducing his published and unpublished writings; by further mining and explicating Warburg's own sources; by weighing subsequent scholarship on the artists, the eras, the questions, that fascinated Warburg; by conceiving new ways to map the territories that he first adumbrated; and by deepening and extending his insights and methods, either by applying them to new materials and/or in order to reflect on the nature of historical knowledge and scholarship more generally.

But back to the *Mnemosyne Atlas*. The actual panels of the "last version" are no longer extant; only black and white photographs (18 x 24 cm) of them remain, held in the archives of the Warburg Institute. However, seventy-one years after Warburg's death, Martin Warnke with the assistance of Claudia Brink, produced a magnificent edition of the atlas based on the "last version." [See *Der Bilderatlas: Mnemosyne* in Warburg's *Gesammelte Schriften*, II.1 (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2000 [reprinted in 2003, 2008]). The other volumes in the *Gesammelte Schriften*, from the two volumes of Warburg's published writings [I.1-2], the *Tagebuch der Kulturwissenschaftlich Bibliothek Warburg* [VII] to the just published, *Austellungen* [II.3], offer other avenues for interpreting and supplementing the *Mnemosyne Atlas*.] In addition to providing Warburg's draft Introduction to the *Mnemosyne Atlas* – a key if characteristically knotty fragmentary text – they also reproduce Fritz Saxl's illuminating letter to a prospective publisher regarding the *Atlas*, while Warnke's own Introduction provides important details about the *Mnemosyne Atlas*, its genesis, scope, and potential meanings.

We know, then, that Warburg's plan had been to complete at least 79 and perhaps as many as 200 panels. Typically, though, Warburg's vision was not fully realized. As we have it, the Atlas is frozen in a provisional state: panels appear without titles; individual images – there are 971 in all – were for the most part displayed without titles or other identifying information; and while some photographs are matted, most are not.

Fortunately, though, in a notebook titled *Überschriften: Synopsis of Plates* [WIA, III.104.1], Warburg's colleague Gertrud Bing, following her mentor's lead, offers brief headings for each panel, furnishing thereby a kind of conceptual shorthand signposting main subjects and themes. For instance, the headings summarizing the astrological symbolism of panel 22 read: "Spanish-Arabic practice. (Alfonso). Manipulation. The cosmic system as dice table. Sorcery. Lithomancy." Such abbreviated, aphoristic indications of what and how we are to interpret resemble the headings of an encyclopedic entry – albeit an encyclopedia consisting entirely of pictures. Or, if you will, the photographs of the panels serve as a set of post-modern grisailles, a belated memory palace, which invites us to contemplate Warburg's syncretic vision of the afterlife of pagan symbolism and cosmography in medieval, Renaissance, and post-Renaissance art and thought.

This website presents ten of these photographed panels, selected to exemplify both the cosmographical and art-historical content of the *Mnemosyne Atlas*. Though offering but fragments of a fragment, it is designed to show some of the *Wanderstrassen* that Warburg pursued in the *Atlas*. The Warburg Institute has provided new, better scans of the surviving photographs – better, that is, than the images seen in the *Gesammelte Schriften* volume and other publications (to say nothing of other venues on the Web).

Furthermore, the ability to zoom in and out on the panels and on individual images permits a closer inspection of the material aspects of the *Atlas*. Alternately, if you click on individual images, a window providing identifying information will appear; frequently links to further iterations and permutations on the same image are also provided. Finally, under the tab "Guided Panels," the user will find interpretations of individual panels by myself and other scholars. Such meanderings, of course, are meant to be at best exemplary, but never exhaustive.

*Christopher D. Johnson*

# Mnemonics, Mnaemae And Mnaemosynae

## Claudia Wedepohl: Aby Warburg's Theory Of Memory

https://www.academia.edu/30644838/MNEMONICS_MNEME_AND_MNEMOSYNE._ABY_WARBURG_S_THEORY_OF_MEMORY?auto=download

AG: This is a slightly edited version. The text is original, and I have done some reformatting and I have includes some sub-chapter headings for hypertext reference. The footnotes are excluded. For this one may consult the original text above. Since the footnote numbering starts with (1) at every new page, this is pretty hard to keep track of. I do all the footnotes for the whole text, even if that gives us around 500 footnotes. But this way it is easier to keep track of all of them. In my dissertation there are only 228 footnotes. In my work diadenk.htm there are just 926 footnotes. I think that I am the Grand Master of footnotes or endnotes. This is only possible when you have a computer to juggle them all around. After a while I thought that endnotes are not so good since they get lost out of context. So I have reduced them to near Zero.

http://www.noologie.de/ag-dis.pdf
http://www.noologie.de/diadenk.htm

## Umberto Eco and the Warburg Library

We have a good occasion for some thoughts on the system of the library that are given in this text, when Claudia Wedepohl references the "enlightenment" that Frances Yates realized when she entered the mental labyrinth of the Warburg library. This is so much more vital and alive than those hazy and dreamy images of the library of "Name of the Rose" by Umberto Eco. As an expert in Renaissance studies, Eco surely must have known the Warburg library. It is quite mysterious in the afterthought that no-one would make a reference of this connection. At least I could not find any in the www. The funny side story is that the english publisher of Eco's novel is Secker & Warburg. This may remain a deep mystery for all times, because Umberto is dead now. But the name "Abo of Fossanova" leads us to the Abbey of this name, and then we come around full circle about the studies that Aby Warburg did in Italy. As I also point out, there is a deep connection between Fossa Nova and Fonte Secca or Fons Secca. And then there is a Fons Nova. I will enlarge on this in the appendix.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Name_of_the_Rose
William is tasked by the monastery's abbot, Abo of Fossanova, to investigate the death, and he has a debate with one of the oldest monks in the abbey, Jorge of Burgos, about the theological meaning of laughter, which Jorge despises.
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fossanova_Abbey
History
This Cistercian abbey is one of the finest examples of the Burgundian Early Gothic style in Italy, dated from around 1135.[1] Consecrated in 1208 by monks of the mother abbey of Hautecombe, retains the bare

architecture, the magnificent rose window and finely carved capitals, reflecting the prominent role within the area. A monk of Fossanova compiled the Annales Ceccanenses down to 1218.

En route to the Second Council of Lyon in 1274, the Dominican scholastic Thomas Aquinas died in the abbey on 7 March. Since 1935 pastoral duties in the local abbey parish were entrusted to the care of Franciscan Friars Community (OFMConv.).

## The Theory Of Memory by Claudia Wedepohl
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### Saxl and Gertrud Bing normalised Warburg's system

Most interesting is the fact that Wind emphasises the library's encyclopaedic structure relating to the central theme, namely, the Afterlife of Antiquity, here and later called Survival of the Classics. Choosing the term «encyclopaedic» highlights the idea of an entity, a microcosm, in which the user is guided by the logic of a system rather than the mechanics of a catalogue. (2) The library is thus perceived as a coherent microcosm. When Saxl together with Gertrud Bing normalised Warburg's system from 1920 onwards, they had to invent a new, flexible classification as they realised that «[n]o existing system of classification would apply». (3)

The classification system they invented for Warburg's microcosm is hierarchical. This hierarchy is both conceptual and historical. It resembles a tree-shaped structure, leading from the general to the specific. (4)

### The spatial arrangement of knowledge thus aids the retrieval of information

As with the technique of memory, the spatial arrangement of knowledge thus aids the retrieval of information. Indeed, Orientierung not only became one of the four major organisational
categories of the collection but also its guiding principle.(5)

In a general statement about his ambition to build a library, made on 6 August 1925 before an audience made up of people involved in both the design and the execution of the new library building, Warburg stressed that he was determined «to facilitate finding the right book for both scholars and non-scholars».

He added that his guiding model for such facilitation – namely,
finding publications on similar topics in different formats and from ...
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different disciplines – had always been the systematic order of bibliographies,
reference books and handbooks. In short, for Warburg, every publication
had its notional place.(1)

Not the title but the content of a book should determine its place.

Affinity was the rule resulting in a scheme known as the «law of the good neighbour».(2)

### The methodological unity of all fields and all currents

The philosopher Ernst Cassirer would later say that
«in its organisation and its intellectual structure the Library embodies the idea of
the methodological unity of all fields and all currents of intellectual history».(3)

In other words, the idea of the library was reflected in its form.

And in this manner the form or structure of the library acquired an
epistemological value.(4)

The same counted for the virtual library Warburg constructed over the
years in his continuously growing collection of index card boxes
(Zettelkästen). According to Saxl «this vast card-index had a special quality»,
different from the collection of books:

[T]he titles noted down were those which had aroused Warburg's scholarly curiosity
while he was engaged on a piece of research. They were all interconnected in a
personal way as the bibliographical sum total of his own activity. These lists were,
therefore, his guide as a librarian; not that he consulted them every time he read
booksellers' and publishers' catalogues; they had become part of his system and
scholarly existence. […] Often one saw Warburg standing tired and distressed bent over his
boxes with a packet of index cards, trying to find for each one the best place within
the system; it looked like a waste of energy. […] It took some time to realise
that his aim was not bibliographical. This was his method of defining the limits and contents
of his scholarly world and the experience gained here became decisive in selecting
books for the Library.(5)

Due to the library's origin, its several nucleuses corresponded with Warburg's

studies. His personal fields of interest and needs remained structuring elements until
his death; from the early 1920s, however, the hand-over to Fritz Saxl as acting
director (due to Warburg's illness) and the increased public use
(after the foundation of the University of Hamburg in 1919) de-
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manded a more objective structuring system than Saxl had found and described
for the time before the outbreak of the First World War:
Every progress in his [Warburg's, c.w.] system of thought, any new idea about
the inner relation of facts made him regroup the corresponding books.
The library changed with every change in his research method and with
every variation in his interests. Small as the collection was,
it was intensely alive, and Warburg never ceased shaping it so that it might
best express his ideas about the history of man.(1)
The result was initially a compromise. To describe the special character
of Warburg's library, neither being a small specialist nor a universal library,
Saxl created, possibly influenced by Ernst Cassirer's philosophy of
symbolical forms, the category of a problem-oriented-library (Problembibliothek,
Problemsammlung or Problemgebäude). Accordingly, he spoke about the
«interdependence of problems», problems that were ideally self-evident to
anybody who engaged with the shelves of the library.(2)

### Frances Yates was fascinated by the library

Frances Yates was apparently fascinated by the concept of this library;
now and again she mentions it in her autobiographical accounts, as, for example,
in the speech she delivered in 1978 in Pisa on the acceptance of the
«Premio Galilei»:
Aby Warburg who founded this institute and his library in Hamburg, arranged his
books after the manner of a Renaissance library, reflecting through the subjects of the
books, the place of man and his studies in the universe, a kind of continuation in
Warburg's mind and library of the macrocosm-microcosm theme. Working within this
library on some quite particular and detailed subject, all the resources of the library
were brought to bear on it – history of religion, of science, of art, and so on. This was
an absolutely new revelation to me accustomed as I was to working within the English
tradition of Renaissance studies, a tradition mainly literary or factually historical.
In that library I could start from the subjects that interested me and be let thence into
some much vaster and deeper understanding of history, of the history of ideas and
images, which began gradually to dawn on me, though I did not understand it. […]
Warburg had been particularly interested in Giordano Bruno. I was shown the Bruno
section and began to learn how to expand from that into other sections. It is one of
the principles of that library that enquiry into a specific subject leads, through the
arrangement of the books, into other fields. Much of this is now a familiar technique but
in those days it was new, utterly new to me and intensely exciting.(3)
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Aby Warburg who never explained the system he had conceived and devised in
other than general terms would probably have liked Yates's comparison of
its nature with a Renaissance library. Perhaps he was not even
aware of this analogy that derived, on the one hand, from the simple practicality
of inventing a logical organisation for a growing private library
(initially without a proper catalogue and thus without class-marks), ...

### Warburg's fundamentally universal approach to knowledge

and, on the other, from Warburg's fundamentally humanistic and therefore
universal approach to the cosmos of knowledge. He once said that his specific
type and method of research was the realisation of Vico's idea.(1)
But as often was the case, he did not feel any need to go further and explain
his understanding of this «idea». In her introduction to the Warburg Institute

of 1934, written to explain its concept to a British audience, Gertrud
Bing, then Assistant Director, stressed, like Yates, the traditional aspect of
the Institute's methodologically trans-disciplinary approach by mentioning the
revival of «the old idea of the Universitas Litterarum, last realized in the
eighteenth century». Moreover, she described the nature of Warburg's library as a
hybrid of a laboratory and a museum. By choosing the latter term she, too,
underscored the holistic character of its structure as a microcosm.(2)
That Warburg was indeed interested in sixteenth-century notions how
macro- and microcosmic analogy structured knowledge - and thus the human brain rather
than the human body - can be gleaned from documents.

### Giulio Camillo's L'idea del theatro

In a letter of 18 November 1923 to Saxl, written when Warburg was still hospitalized
in Ludwig Binswanger's sanatorium in Kreuzlingen, he refers to
Giulio Camillo's L'idea del theatro (the title wrongly quoted as
«Teatro della idea della pittura» and the author being confused with the Milanese
mathematician Camillo Agrippa) as a work that shows the afterlife of
«a perfect hermetico-astrological system of the universe».(3)
Despite the confusion and the lack of any further reference to Camillo,
we can assume that Warburg knew the meaning of his «theatre», that it was an allegory
of all human knowledge structured in such a way that the recollection of information
could be facilitated through the use of images.(4)
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### The tradition of mnemonic devices

An obvious indication that Warburg saw his own library in the same
tradition of mnemonic devices is the inscription he wanted to be carved
into the wall over the entrance to his purpose-built new library, reduced
to one word: mnemosyne. While the blueprint of the new building was being drafted,
Warburg must have sent a letter to the classical historian Erich
Ziebarth, enquiring if the name Mnemosyne featured in Greek inscriptions.
Although Ziebarth's reply of 13 June 1925 was disappointing, since the addressee
did not know of a single example, Warburg held on to his plan. He
asked his friend, the well-known architect and managing director of the
city of Hamburg's department of construction, Fritz Schumacher, to produce a
sketch for an inscription bearing the word.(1)
The design he received was indeed later carved into the lintel of the foyer
at Heilwigstrasse 116 in Hamburg.(2)
As a reminiscence of this mnemosyne-inscription, Gertrud Bing ordered a similar
inscription for the lobby of the new library building in Woburn Square in London
that opened in 1958.
Warburg's decision to use a term from classical mythology as a motto
and a leitmotif for both enterprises that dominated his last four years - the
library and the Bilderatlas - demonstrates his belief that the origin of the
sciences was to be found in mythology and in its allegorical exegesis. The
term mnemosyne itself, however, heavily charged with meaning, only appears fairly
late in Warburg's work, and its sudden emergence seems to
have a symbolic meaning with respect to his discovery of the epistemological role of
mythology.

### Mnemosyne and Symbol

The first instance where I have come across the term
is on one of the sheets of a thick, sketchy notebook from Kreuzlingen, dated
11 April 1924. The sheet is titled «Mnemosyne and Symbol». Its first line refers
to Cassirer's presence in Kreuzlingen that particular day. This strongly
suggests that the ideas Warburg jotted down on this page originated in the
long-awaited, very first personal exchange with the philosopher who four

and a half years earlier had been appointed to the chair of philosophy at
the newly founded University of Hamburg. Moreover, the notes also prove
that Warburg's theory of memory was not inspired by writings about the
classical art of memory associated with rhetoric, but by theories developed
by contemporary neurophysiologists. We know that he first learned about
these theories more than 30 years earlier when he heard Hermann Ebbing-haus (1850-1909),
an expert in the study of memory, reading psychology at Berlin.

### Memory as a General Function of Organised Matter

At that time Warburg must have read Über das Gedächtnis als allgemeine Funktion
der organisierten Materie (On Memory as a General Function of

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Organised Matter) a lecture by Ewald Hering (1834-1918),
published in 1870.(1)
Borrowing from the terminology of this German neurophysiologist, Warburg turned the notion
of memory as a «function» of the brain - the brain being defined as «organised matter» -
into a general model for his own theory of memory, both individual and collective.
This is the context in which the new four-floor library building became the materialisation
of the concept Warburg had been contemplating for some time.
In the preparatory notes for his well-known lecture on the Snake Dance,
delivered in April 1923, one year before his meeting with Cassirer, Warburg
dictated that with the instruments of his library he was trying to answer the
«problem» Hering had been formulating so well with his coinage
«memory as organized matter».(2)
This note refers to the title of Hering's lecture, but Warburg neither explains the
implied analogy between the structure of the library and the structure of the brain,
nor does he say what he considers Hering's particular «problem».(3)
Since Hering discusses the inscription of memory on the cerebral or nervous substance
and its function with regard to reproduction, his «problem» must have been, in Warburg's view,
the lawful interdependence between physiology and psychology, or, as Hering says,
matter and consciousness.(4) Since most processes of memory are unconscious,
Hering argues, memory must be «material» in its nature: a kind
of genotype inscribed in the nervous substance and passed on from generation to generation.
It is this particular aspect of the neurophysiology of his day that Warburg adopted.

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### Mnemonics as a technique to recall encyclopaedic knowledge

For the comparison between «memory» (Gedächtnis) and the «instruments (Mittel) of his library»,
it is probably indicative that Warburg modified Hering's only vaguely remembered title.
By replacing «function of» (Funktion der) with «as» (als) he subconsciously changed the sense
to «memory as organised matter». Indeed, this pseudo-title is reminiscent of mnemonics as a
technique to recall encyclopaedic knowledge. Yet only in the very last paragraph of his lecture
does Hering refer to the oral and written literary traditions, the storage of all human knowledge,
or the memory of mankind. Without being processed by individual memory, he argues, this
collective memory would be meaningless:
Oral and written traditions have been called the memory of mankind and this conception is true.
But there is another memory, which is the reproductive faculty of the cerebral substance.
Without it, all written and oral language would be empty and meaningless for later generations;
for, if the loftiest ideas were recorded a thousand times in writing or in oral traditions,
they would be nothing to brains not disposed for them.
They must not only be received, they must be reproduced. If increasing cerebral potency were not
inherited simultaneously with the inward and outward development
of the brain, with the wealth of ideas which are inherited from generation to generation,
if an increased faculty for the reproduction of thought did not devolve upon
coming generations, simultaneously with their oral and written traditions, scripts and
languages would be useless.(1)

In this statement Hering demands the reactivation of collective memory through continuous reproduction. Such reproduction is either triggered by a stimulus in such a way that memory of past experiences (inscribed and unconsciously stored on the nervous substance) is either unconsciously revived or consciously activated. In this process, memory (Gedächtnis) is the

«function» of either the brain or its mirror, the library, as «organised matter» that

activates reproduction.(2)

The fact that, while hospitalised in Kreuz-

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lingen, Warburg pondered precisely the question of how memory functions in the transformational process from impression to expression is documented in another note:

The question is: how are verbal or visual expressions generated, according to which aspect or sensation, consciously or unconsciously, are they stored in the archive of memory and do laws exist according to which they are inscribed an re-activated?(1)

Although Warburg had no technical answer to this question, he translated what he learned from the publications of neurophysiologists into a cultural theory. His main point of reference was the alleged difference between the products of so-called «primitive» compared to those of presumably «civilised» people. Yet this opposition of «primitive» versus «civilised» reflected at the same time different stages of evolution. The evidence Warburg had gathered through his anthropological studies seemed enough to reconstruct, on the one hand, a «psychology of primitive men», namely, of

«someone with no literary education whose reaction is driven by reflex», and, on the other, of «civilised men», namely those who are conscious of the historical dimension of both their own descent and that of their ancestors.(2)

Warburg's simple conclusion was that «[w]ith primitive men the image activated by memory provokes a religious act, with educated men the desire to record».(3)

## Documents Regarding the Psychology of Human Expression

In the same sequence of thoughts he recorded his wish to capture the purpose of his library in the title of a «Collection of Documents Regarding the Psychology of Human Expression».(4)

For Saxl it was important to stress that Warburg always wanted «the student» who used his library to perceive «the essential forces of the human mind and its history»;

further: «Books were for Warburg more than instruments of research. Assembled and grouped, they expressed the thought of

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mankind in its constant and its changing aspects».

1 It is thus quite plausible that Warburg - who made psychology the very first sub-section of the floor that was dedicated to «dromenon» - had Hering's theory of reproduction in mind when he decided to inscribe the entrance to his library with mnemosyne, the ancient term that refers in the first instance to the human faculty to call something to mind, and only in the second instance to its personification, as the name of the female Titan who gave birth to the nine Muses.

Edgar Wind is the only of Warburg's contemporaries who interprets this inscription. He stresses its twofold meaning for everybody who passes the threshold «as a reminder to the scholar that in interpreting the works of the past he is acting as trustee of a repository of human experience», and recalling «that his experience is in itself an object of research, that it requires us to use historical material to investigate the way in which social memory functions».

Wind adds that for Warburg «[e]ach discovery regarding the object of his research was at the same time a self-discovery. Correspondingly, each shattering experience which he overcame through self-reflection became a means of enriching his historical insight».(2)

In this way Wind clearly stresses a didactical, even psychagogic reading of the inscription, presumably by invocation of the mother of the Muses also in the tradition of calling the act of studium, metaphorically, a service to the Muses.(3)

In one of his own last statements about the nature of his library, presented in a speech given in July 1929 at a doctoral ceremony, Warburg refers to his motto mnemosyne by calling the institution a «filter system for retrospective sober-mindedness», whose mission was to prevent the «chaos of unreason».(4)

The inscription thus seems to prove that Warburg adopted not only Hering's terminology
but also his theory about the mechanism of reactivation of memory. With it he was clearly addressing the
individual just as Hering speaks about the individual's conscious and unconscious memory.
Furthermore, Warburg turned Hering's theory into a metaphor for conscious and unconscious collective
reproduction, for example, for the formation of style (Stilbildung).(5)
Hence, whilst for Hering «matter» (Materie) is
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always the individual's cerebral or nervous substance as bearer of memory,
for Warburg it becomes the artefact or any other product of culture as the
brain's output. Thus, when he calls, for example, «the memory of antiquity»
a «function of organised matter», (1)
matter is taken in a literal sense.
The technical term «function» was instrumental for Warburg's definition
of the role of the symbol as a phenomenon of expression halfway between
an image (meaning an effigy) and an abstract sign. He was apparently con-
vinced that the symbol or symbolic form helped reactivate the collective
memory. (2)
In order to trace this evolution, we need to look back at the first
lines on the note sheet with the title «Mnemosyne» that he recorded on 11
April 1924 after a conversation with Cassirer. These lines read:

### Symbol as function of the social memory between kinesis and theoria

«Symbol as function of the social memory between kinesis and theoria». (3)
Not only is this his very first known mention of a so-called «social»,
that is, collective or cultural memory (a concept which dominated Warburg's later work), (4)
but Warburg also tries to capture the idea that every symbol preserves a memory
of the experience that gave rise to it. His implied notion that a symbol
qua symbol is neutral in meaning is similarly important. Accordingly,
the «function» of the symbol is the potential of its latent, energy-laden state,
that is to say: only when the symbol's appropriate meaning is activated and
the potential energy is released through an act of memory, as when a human
being in a critical moment recalls his or her experiences in a former
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state of evolution, is that person able to bestow a positive or negative value
of expression on the symbol. (1)
In other words, exposure to any symbolic artefact constitutes an unmediated encounter
with original phobic and irrational memories embodied in what Warburg calls
«expressive values» (Ausdruckswerte). (2)
In order to illustrate the critical moment, Warburg used the
metaphor of a pendulum, swinging in the whole spectrum of mental states
from a condition of empathetic passion, in which a subject can identify with
an object («kinesis»), to a condition in which the subject distances itself from
the object and see it in abstract terms (theoria). The subject's self-consciousness,
as well as the historical circumstances in which the moment of reflection happens,
determine a fixed point in this imaginary spectrum. (3)
These ideas stand in a long tradition in which mnemosyne is regarded
as a predisposition towards cognition, whether it is cognition of divine
knowledge (the highest form of self-awareness) or experience (the cultural memory of
humanity). What is clear, however, is Warburg's interest in
the materialised memory of a primal experience, handed down to posterity
by artefacts - the equivalent to the material memory of the cerebral substance.
How could these artefacts, he asks, operate as a «function» of «social memory» ?
In order to answer this question, Warburg turned to the theories
of the relatively unknown zoologist Richard Semon (1859-1918) about which
he probably learned through a newspaper article of 1908. (4)

Semon, one of the followers of Ewald Hering, is an important figure for the
beginnings of the study of human memory and its hereditary mechanisms.
He developed a theory of mnemic biology, coining the still common Hellenism engram.
Engram is derived from the Greek verb engraphein and means literally some-

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thing that is inscribed. This inscription, Semon argued, preserved the effects
of certain «stimuli applied to the irritable organic substance». (1)
Semon's idea of an imprint of everybody's perceptions and thoughts on the nervous
substance brings to mind the «impressions from seal rings» in a «block of wax»,
to which both Plato (Theaetetus, 191A-E) and Aristotle refer. Aristotle associated
memory (mneme) in this regard with imagination (phantasia). He writes
about that kind of memory which becomes the human faculty to produce
an image of what is to be memorised: a mental picture, derived from sense
perception, which can later be recollected (De memoria et reminiscentia, 449b-
450b). He assumed that a stimulus triggered the production of such an image
(for which he uses the metaphor of an imprint by a seal ring), facilitated
by the imagination. Probably alluding to these concepts in an implicit way,
Semon held that a stimulus could provoke an alteration in the nerve tissue
and thus activate a process in the organism which he called «energetic». He
was convinced that such alteration would ultimately lead to morphological
mutations which he called «engraphic modifications». (2)
To define the presumed physiological alterations, that is, a
«capacity» of «after-effects of stimulation» as part of a complex unconscious
memory, Semon used another Greek term: mneme. (3)

**Mneme, the sum of all engrams**

Mneme, the sum of all engrams, was for him an
organic plasticity that allowed the preservation of the effects of experience,
linking the past and the present in a seamless living bond. Of particular interest
for Warburg, however, was Semon's theory of the mechanisms that would
«awaken the mnemic trace or engram out of its latent state into one of manifested activity».
Semon called this process «ecphory». (4)
Warburg borrowed all three terms Semon had used or coined, that
is, mneme, engram and ecphory, for his own theoretical vocabulary. (5)
This shows that he adopted also Semon's theories and terminology to express
aspects of cultural heritage: artefacts became visual forms of the engrams
or - according to Warburg's own neologism - dynamograms (Dynamogramme).
An energy-laden dynamogram corresponded to the latent neutral symbol,
functioning as a material trace of social memory. The visible
traces of past human experience in their entirety, the genotype which
Warburg called mneme, consisted of a pool of prototypes - pathos formulae
(Pathosformeln) and symbols alike, laden with psychic energy - that had
come down to us via imagery from a somewhat vaguely defined «antiquity».
Whereas for Warburg the ability to live, relive and express fundamental emotional
experiences was indeed innate, the selection of proto-

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types, the mnemosyne - as Warburg saw it - was controlled by will. This,
again, illustrates the speculative process behind his idea of inscribing the
entrance to his library with mnemosye. What is more: the inscription also
invokes the goddess that might help the activation of memory and its reproduction.
Many nineteenth- and early twentieth-century philologists and historiographers
interested in mythology as a type of structural anthropology had
stressed that the notion of a specific faculty in the human mind was the
principal meaning of Mnemosyne. (1) Warburg was certainly familiar with this
common notion, which was well suited to his own idiosyncratic vocabulary.

Yet he had, presumably, developed his ideas on these topics with Cassirer, who held «that it was always assumed that the essence of each mythical figure could be directly learned from its name». (2) Two months before travelling to Kreuzlingen to meet Warburg, the philosopher had addressed the «doctrine of the intimate relation between names and essences, and of their latent identity» as a «methodological principle» in his lecture on Language and Myth (Sprache und Mythos) at the Bibliothek Warburg. (3) Further proof that the conversation with Cassirer was at the origin of Warburg's decision to appropriate the term mnemosyne to denote a specific faculty of the mind can be found in the marginal notes to a passage in his personal copy of Cassirer's Sprache und Mythos, published in 1925. (4)

### Cassirer's Sprache und Mythos

Cassirer's passage refers to Hermann Usener's theory of the momentary god (Augenblicksgott) with which Warburg had been familiar since attending Usener's lectures at the University of Bonn in 1886-1887. Cassirer argued that «[t]he image of the momentary god, instead of merely preserving the memory of what he originally meant and was - a deliverance from fear, the fulfil- ment of a wish and a hope - persists and remains long after that memory has faded and finally disappeared altogether». (5) Cassirer thus presents his own explanation of Usener's notion of the Augenblicksgott as a so-called Urphänomen, describing the god's emergence in a moment of despair as an act of objectifying a subjective affect, of discharging emotional tension and of transforming it into the figure of a daimon or demon. The processes which
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one presumes followed were a dissociation of this particular impression from the universality of daily experiences and its concretion in the form of a god by giving it a name. (1)
The genesis of myths was at Usener's time considered key to understanding the original linguistic meaning of divine names, and even if the Augenblicksgott owed his or her existence to an instantaneous and palpable situation, the meaning of the god's name became objectified in order to form a structured cult. What Cassirer is describing obviously corresponds to Warburg's concept of the creation of symbols somewhere between the concrete and the abstract. (2)

### Collective memory a precondition the ... study of culture

By 1925 mnemosyne had clearly become a catch-phrase in Warburg's vocabulary. Collective memory seemed a precondition for the production, perception and study of culture. Once he had discovered it, Warburg almost immediately transformed the term, which carried with it an allusion to the mythological and etymological roots of memory, into an umbrella description of his new enterprises, not only the move and institutionalisation of his private library, but also the concept of his similarly didactic Bilderatlas, which would serve as an «inventory of pre-coined classical forms that impacted upon the stylistic development of the representation of life in motion in the age of the Renaissance». (3)
The term mnemosyne was, in sum, heavily charged with meaning. It was a substitute for the complex idea of survival in any creative human act, both individual and collective, an act so difficult to characterise that Warburg struggled to describe it in anything other than metaphorical terms. The terms mneme and mnemosyne seemed extraordinarily suitable, thanks to their origin in the concept of mythology, as a pretext of psychology, yet at the same time they also forged an impor- tant link between his thinking and the most recent methods of neurophysiological science.

### Classical mnemonics, in particular Giordano Bruno

When reading Yates's Art of Memory, one wonders why Aby Warburg, whose attention was more and more drawn to the mechanics of memory,

omitted the reception of the theory of memory and the interest in its origin in classical mnemonics among humanists, in particular Giordano Bruno. Apart from the supposedly unconscious adoption of its rules for the structure of his own library, this chapter in the Afterlife of Antiquity was and remained seemingly a blind spot in Warburg's field of interest despite his apparent knowledge of Giulio Camillo's work. In her paper, Yates won-
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ders why Bruno's exploration of astrological images as devices of memory, in particular the 36 decans of the  sphaera barbarica as listed in the Picatrix (which Warburg had rediscovered), remained unnoticed by Boll, Gundel, Warburg and Saxl. It is certainly true that they remained unnoticed and not consciously omitted. Yet at least for Warburg Bruno was first and foremost the above-mentioned reformer, most of all through his Spaccio de la bestia trionfante; a reformer of superstitious beliefs that were based on the literal rather than allegorical reading of the star signs and constellations. In this way Warburg was inspired by the views expressed by Cassirer in his Individuum und Kosmos in der Philosophie der Renaissance (The Individual and the Cosmos in Renaissance Philosophy) of 1925. For both scholars Bruno's moral consciousness was supposedly the predisposition for the ability to «comprehend [nature's] infinity and its incommensurability». (1)

## The Display Tree for an Associative Hierarchy

AG: This is what I have come up with when I modeled my Associative Hypertext Data Structure after the Warburg library. As I said in the main text. the display of the lines is what counts when you want to have the overview. So there is a Tree width, which should not exceed the number of lines that you can display. Doing a lot of scrolling up and down is not a good way to keep an overview. I give an example for the base of such an Associative Tree. This is the root level of the video archive of the Noologie project. Here you can see the main categories by which I subdivide the many different subjects of the first or the root level of the tree. You may notice that this tree is not balanced at all, because the design depends on the depth of the subtrees that you have under each root level heading. There is no patent recipe how to subdivide a Knowledge Data Base. I am sure that Aby Warburg had a better subdivision. But here the requirements are different since I also include a lot of Entertainment Videos, and then a lot of Music Videos. And then some Natural Science and Technology Videos, which was not the purpose of the Warburg Library. So the scope in the present Database is so much wider.

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\music-ethno
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These are the next levels of the tree. Here you can see the volume of the material that is stored under each tree root level.

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I break this display off since it only serves to illustrate the principle.