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**Warburg Updated.
Bibliography
and Mnemosyne
Atlas**

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Warburg Updated. Bibliography and Mnemosyne Atlas

edited by

Sara Agnoletto and Margherita Picciché



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Aby Warburg and Mnemosyne Atlas. Readings and Pathways through the Bilderatlas

A presentation of the updating of the section “Aby Warburg and Mnemosyne Atlas” in Engramma

edited by Sara Agnoletto

Pathways through the Bilderatlas

Aby Warburg's notes (1929) provide the latest and most precise indication of the structure of Mnemosyne:

- The Panels are numbered consecutively from 1 to 79, but there are only 63 panels in total due to gaps, groupings and duplications in the numbering.
- The 63 Panels of the Atlas are grouped into 12 thematic sections.

In this new digital edition of Mnemosyne, we present the panels according to Warburg's groupings, with two minor adjustments:

- The first 8 panels, which Warburg grouped together in a single section, are divided into two distinct thematic paths: Path I (Panels 1, 2, 3) and Path II (Panels 4, 5, 6, 7, 8). This decision is based on Warburg's designation of the block of panels 4-8 as “Antike Vorprägungen” (Antique Precoinages).
- Warburg places Panel 77, which contains contemporary images, in the penultimate section devoted to the Nordic Baroque (XI: Panels 70-77), whereas we think it more coherent to place it in the last section (XII: Panels 77-79).

This results in 13 ($\alpha + 12$) Pathways, each assigned a distinctive colour. Below is a summary of the thematic content of each Path*.

Pathway α (Panels A, B, C) | Coordinates of Memory. Man and the Cosmos (the Tornabuonis, Leonardo da Vinci, the Zeppelin)

Mnemosyne is introduced by a group of panels labelled by letters, rather than numbers, which locate the cultural, geographical and historical coordinates of the Atlas as a whole. These panels reflect the oscillation between the magical and the logical-mathematical poles of the Western cultural tradition spanning from the Mediterranean to Northern Europe. In his notes, Warburg titled this group “Zur Erkenntnistheorie und Praxis der Symbolsetzung” (For an Epistemology and a Practice of Symbolisation). Panels A, B and C serve as both a thematic and methodological introduction presenting the central thesis behind the Atlas project. Panel A introduces the question of Orientation on three interconnected levels: cosmic, historical-geographical, and genealogical; Panel B explores the representation of the human body in relation to the cosmos; Panel C outlines the stages of measurement and control of the cosmos, highlighting the tension between its polar energies that are eventually mastered by science and technology.

Pathway I (Panels 1, 2, 3) | Astrology and Mythology. Projections of the Cosmos (Babylon, Athens, Alexandria, Rome)

This group of panels explores the relationship between Man and the Cosmos during Antiquity, bringing together the earliest evidence of the demonic-astrological tradition in its interpretations and representations. These range from divinatory practices to the figures of the Harmony of the Spheres, and from the catasterisation to the representation of the celestial vault. It is a journey that begins from ancient Babylon to Greece, and passes through Alexandria and Hellenistic Rome, foreshadowing the stages of further wanderings.

Pathway II (Panels 4, 5, 6, 7, 8) | Precoinages of Antiquity. Ecstasy and Melancholy; Mother of Life and Death; Pathos of Sacrifice, Pathos of Victory, Pathos of Rise and Fall

These five Panels offer a repertoire of archaeological images known during the Renaissance, albeit with some inconsistencies. This group is presented as a cohesive corpus of ancient models, showcasing various images inspired by ancient models. These images express a wide range of pathos formulas rooted in primordial experiences. They span themes of ecstasy, delirium, bloody sacrificial rites (Dionysus, Orpheus, Mithras) all preserved in the collective memory. It is the “inventory of pre-coined classical forms” (as Warburg wrote in the *Introduction to Mnemosyne*) that reappears as imprints resemanticised in different ways to

address the urgency of the present. Together, these forms clues for reconstructing the “genetic code” of Western cultural tradition.

Pathway III (Panels 20, 21, 22, 23, 23a, 24, 25, 26, 27) Migrations of the ancient Gods. Peregrinations and masquerades of the ancient gods between East and West (Baghdad, Toledo, Padua, Rimini, Ferrara | 13th-15th centuries)

This section traces key stages in the transmission of Antiquity between the Middle Ages and the Renaissance in astrological images, particularly from the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries. The deities of the *Sphaera graeca* disguise themselves and survive in the manuscripts of the Arabic magical-astrological tradition, only to reappear – more or less recognisable, other times camouflaged – in Italian astrological cycles. Among the many precious illuminations, calendars and astrological compendia, three monumental decorative cycles from Padua, Rimini and Ferrara stand out as significant attempts to recover the ancient forms of the gods.

Pathway IV (Panels 28/29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35) | Vehicles of Tradition. Tournaments, Festivals, Tapestries and Mythological tales. Exchanges between North and South (Early Renaissance, Florence, Flanders | 15th-16th centuries)

The pagan imaginary of Antiquity could also survive through another kind of disguise: the “costume *alla franzese*” (thus Warburg), or the “Northern realism” characteristic of the epic and the chivalric novel. The vehicles of this transmission include mythological tales, vulgarised and moralised Classical texts, as well as small artistic artefacts, and everyday objects such as *cassoni* and tapestries, along with testimonies of festivals and popular folklore. Two paradigmatic examples illustrate the interweaving of ancient themes and the representation of contemporary life: the artistic – but also economic, social and cultural – exchange between the Medici family from Florence and Flanders, and the calm monumentality of Antiquity in the style of Piero della Francesca.

Pathway V (Panels 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 41a) | Breakthrough of Antiquity. Feasts, court life, popular games, mythical allegories and Dionysian pathos (15th-16th century)

The irruption of Antiquity into the early Italian Renaissance art manifested through archaeological drawings, the practice of simulated relief (*grisaille*), and the hybrid form of the Medicinan style, which seamlessly blended courtly and Antique element. Pagan demons no longer nee-

ded to disguise to survive: archaeological discoveries, antiquarian collections, and literary sources shaped – and were in turn shaped by – the image of a new culture that emerged in fifteenth-century Italy. Life in motion, animated by the spirit of Antiquity, found fresh expression in the concepts drawn from the Greek and Roman repertoire. Artists sought innovative ways to convey the superlatives of pathos, even going so far as to invent ancient model in anticipation of their eventual discovery (as seen in the Laocoön).

Pathway VI (Panels 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48) | Reincarnations of Antiquity. Mourning figures; Merchants and Fortune; Angels and Victory; Nymphs and Headhunters (Florence, 15th century)

This section focuses on the apogee of the Renaissance through the lens of the reemergence of Antiquity. The works of artists such as Donatello, Giovanni Bellini, Filippino Lippi, Baldassarre Peruzzi and Guido Reni capture the expressive intensity of the Dionysian pathos – literally reinvented in the early Renaissance – in its various energetic gradations. Nymphs, Angels, Headhunters: the *Pathosformeln* are embodied in the *mundus imaginalis*, a realm inhabited by the pagan figures that the Renaissance man constructs for himself (e.g. Salome and Judith; Tobias and the archangel Raphael; Fortuna and the *Nympha gradiva*). Antiquity also infiltrates the depiction of religious and devotional subjects: exemplary figures of this pathetic expressiveness include the “furious mothers” in scenes of the Massacre of the Innocents and the sorrowful figures of the Lamentations (Maenad under the Cross; pagan mourners recontextualised in a Christian setting).

Pathway VII (Panels 49, 50/51, 52) | Mantegna and Antiquity. Control, distance and inversion of pathos

This section is about the act of resistance against the unconditional surrender to the rhetorical grandeur of the ancient model. Mantegna evokes pathos by creating a deliberate distance, rendering the bodies with the physicality of bronze and marble. His distinctive use of perspective and light further enhances this effect, making each element appear as it were petrified. Even the *grisaille*, elevated from its role as a mere background motif, takes centre stage. Mantegna’s stylistic reversal finds its counterpoint in the energetic inversion of the violent and cruel pathos of the Roman Triumph, which is reinterpreted with a positive ethical declination (as seen as in the invention of the theme of Trajan’s Justice).

Pathway VIII (Panels 53, 54, 55, 56) | Ascent and Descent of the Gods. From the Muses to Manet (Rome-Paris | 16th-19th century)

The “tragedy of heliotropism” as Warburg termed it, referring to the cyclical movement of rise and fall within the Classical tradition, is traced through a step-by-step historical process. In the art of the great masters of the Roman Renaissance (Michelangelo, Raphael, Baldassarre Peruzzi), the gods regain their Olympian looking, as exemplified by the iconographic program of the Chigi Chapel. However, the gods were already on the verge of descending to earth, incarnating themselves in various expressions of the sentiment of Nature: pastoral concerts, gods on leisurely promenades and, finally, Manet’s modern Nymph.

Pathway IX (Panels 57, 58, 59) | Dürer and Antiquity. Migrations towards the North

This introduction to the art of Albrecht Dürer explores the ideal Antique style – a style filtered through the Italian lens, and mediated by Mantegna – in which the superlatives of the gestural language of Antiquity are reinterpreted with a distinctly Nordic composure. As Antiquity traveled from Italy to Germany, its influence – particularly in the imagery of the planetary deities, most notably Saturn and Melancholy – spread throughout Reformation Europe.

Pathway X (Panels 60, 61/62/63/64) | The Age of Neptune. Myth and Celebration of Power between Italian Courts and European Monarchies (16th-17th Century)

In the age of geographical discoveries, the Renaissance man, master of the Sea, emerges as the architect of his own destiny and fortune. In court ceremonies, as well as in the celebrations and self-celebrations of Power, the Virgilian verse “Quos ego tandem” echoes as a motto, embodying the spirit of ambition that drive to surpass the Pillars of Hercules. The ancient warning is inverted in meaning, transforming into PLUS ULTRA. The vehicle of Triumph is no longer the quadriga of Helios/Sun, but the chariot of Neptune.

Pathway XI (Panels 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76) | Art officiel and Baroque pathos. Dramatization of myth: from the rape scene to the anatomical theatre (Rembrandt, Rubens)

This group of panels, titled “Holland” in Warburg’s notes, depicts the reemergence of Antiquity in Northern Europe in the Baroque Era. It exists between the exaggerated rhetoric of official art, echoing the grandeur of Roman tradition, and the anti-rhetorical style of Rembrandt.

Ancients myths and archaic ritual gestures are reinterpreted in the Baroque era through a dramatic gestural language. The magniloquent style of the Art officiel, contrasts sharply with Rembrandt's approach, which not only accounts for the dynamics of real life but also incorporates philological and historical research. These two poles represent opposing forces in the struggle for the style of this century. The excesses typical of Dutch Baroque theatre are inverted in Rembrandt's portrayal of inner suspension between impulse and action.

Pathway XII (Panels 77, 78, 79) | Updating Memory. Sublimation of the Pathos of Antiquity. Sport, Church, State and Power

This group gathers together Examples of the persistence and regenerative power of ancient precoinage formulas as “engrams of Memory”. These include contemporary such as stamps and newspaper cuttings featuring figures of the Mother and the Nymph, either disempowered or repurposed to serve political propaganda (like Neptune's triumphal chariot) or advertising (such as Nike). Another theme explored is the transition from ancestral instinctual ferocity to ritual transfiguration: human sacrifice sublimated in the sacrament of the Eucharist or, in another context, in the “motor catharsis” of the female Golf player, the modern incarnation of the Headhunter. The collection of images – ranging from photographs, propaganda materials, to advertising prints, interspersed with works of art – seem to indicate the polarisation between the logical-rational emancipation of civilisation and the enduring power of a magical-demonic core. Yet, Mnemosyne ends with the firing of a tracer which sounds like a warning: the journey is not one-way, nor has it been once and for all.

Elements for the study of the Panels: the method

The section of Engramma devoted to the Mnemosyne Atlas presents the 63 panels of the final version of Aby Warburg's work (left unfinished due to Warburg's sudden death in October 1929), reproduced from the available editions preserved at the Warburg Institute in London. In the general plan of this annotated edition of the Atlas, each panel is accompanied by Title and Introduction, Primary Sources. Footnotes and Annotations, Critical Readings, Panel, Captions and Details.

Title and Introduction

Each panel is introduced by an editorial title accompanied by a brief synopsis, curated by the Seminario Mnemosyne. In a concise form, but without compromising the complexity of each panel, these texts provide the thematic coordinates of the content presented within the montage.

Primary Sources. Footnotes and Annotations

For each Panel, a series of notes by Aby Warburg and his collaborators – presented in the original German and in Italian and English translations – are offered as the only autograph material relating to the individual panels of the Atlas:

- Notes by Aby Warburg (1929). This refers to a series of notes, preserved in the archives of the Warburg Institute under the title *Flüchtige Notizien* [WIA III.102.6, edition edited by Giulia Zanon] which, although dated 19 November 1929 (the date of Warburg's death), were actually written on 19 October 1929, as can be seen by comparing the various stages of development in the Atlas. In fact, throughout October 1929, Warburg marked the month 'XI' instead of 'X' in his diary. In these notes, each table is given a short title.
- Notes by Aby Warburg and coll. (1929). Transcription, critical edition and translation curated by the Seminario Mnemosyne from the originals preserved in the Warburg Institute Archive, London [manuscript edition WIA 108.1.1.1; typescript editions WIA III 108.1.1.2; WIA III 108.1.1.3]. The annotations, called *Überschriften*, are fully elaborated editorial titles for each panel of the Atlas. They were first published in the critical edition of the Mnemosyne Atlas curated by Martin Warnke et al. (Berlin 2000).
- Notes by Gertrud Bing (ca. 1940). These are handwritten notes made by Gertrud Bing after the Kulturwissenschaftliche Bibliothek Warburg moved from Hambourg to London, probably around 1940. The notes, which are held in the Warburg Institute Archive [WIA III 108.1.2], provide a synopsis of each panel of Mnemosyne and include suggestions for the completion, editing and publication of the Bilderatlas. Gertrud Bing's notes were first published in a critical edition in Engramma 211, edited by Giulia Zanon.

Critical Readings

Interpretive essays, graphic analyses and thematic developments focusing on individual panels of the Atlas or on themes that span several panels. These in-depth studies bring together research and analysis of Warburg's work published in Engramma (in the 'Further Readings' section) and elsewhere (in the 'Other Readings' section).

Panel

High-resolution photographic reproduction of each Panel (courtesy of Warburg Institute Archive, London).

Captions

Captions for the images in each Panel, presented in a new critical edition. The numbering of the images in each panel of the Atlas follows the edition of the Mnemosyne Atlas curated by Werner Rappl et al. (Hamburg, 1994), with some modifications. A complete Index of all the captions for Panels 1–79, accessible via the sidebar in the Mnemosyne Atlas section, provide an overview of all 1,135 artworks in the Atlas, searchable by author and subject.

Details

Reproduction of the individual artworks on the 63 Panels, in the highest possible resolution. It was decided to reproduce the images in colour and in the highest quality available today to ensure better legibility, in keeping with the approach Warburg intended for his Atlas. As has been documented, Warburg sought the best reproductions available at the time in order to enable all readers and scholars to analyse and read all the images in detail.

On the occasion of the exhibition at the Fondazione Levi in Venice in 2004, Seminario Mnemosyne proposed a critical analysis of the structure of the Mnemosyne Atlas, divided into 14 thematic sections ($\alpha + 12 + \omega$): see Engramma no. 35, in particular “Una partitura dell’opera-Atlante” in *Studiare Mnemosyne progettando una mostra sull’Atlante*. This division into sections differs only slightly from the structure sketched by Warburg in his 1929 notes, which has recently been rediscovered: the Pathways of the earlier version remain accessible in Engramma’s Archive for the historical record of the work of Seminario Mnemosyne.

Abstract

In this issue of Engramma, entirely dedicated to the new edition of the bibliography on Aby Warburg, the Warburg circle and the Atlas Mnemosyne, we present the updated section “Aby Warburg and Mnemosyne” of “La Rivista di Engramma”, which contains the first and only critical edition of the Atlas of Images, fully accessible online. This work, an in fieri project in itself, is the result of more than twenty years of dedication by the Seminario Mnemosyne to the study of Warburg and the refinement of a methodology suited to the complexity of his *magnum opus*, Mnemosyne.

keywords | Mnemosyne Atlas; Bilderatlas; Aby Warburg; Panels; Pathways.



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Editorial

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Aby Warburg, Mnemosyne Atlas

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