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Warburgian Studies in the Ibero-American Context

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Warburgian Studies in the Ibero-American Context

a cura di

Ada Naval, Ianick Takaes, Giulia Zanon



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Warburgian Studies in the Ibero-American Context. Editorial of Engramma 227

Ada Naval, Ianick Takaes and Giulia Zanon

The image chosen to illustrate this issue comes from the so-called *Atlas of Borso d'Este*: the 1466 manuscript that transmits the Latin translation of Ptolemy's *Geographia*, in the version reworked by Nicolaus Germanus on the basis of Jacopo d'Angelo's 1410 translation. The volume—which also includes maps updated to contemporary knowledge—was dedicated to Duke Borso d'Este and stands as one of the highest testimonies of the humanistic culture of the Italian and European Renaissance.

The folio reproduced here offers a comprehensive vision of the world in the second half of the fifteenth century: a sort of snapshot of the known horizons, which only a few years later would be radically redefined in the age of great explorations and geographic discoveries. As is evident, in this depiction of the world, the American continent, soon to be reached by European fleets, does not appear.

We have considered that this image may serve as an eloquent metaphor for the task this issue of Engramma sets for itself. On the one hand, it represents a material object, a book—one of the forms of transmission and dissemination of culture that Aby Warburg deemed essential; a book that is also the restitution of knowledge from Antiquity—the geographical treatise of the second century CE—and at the same time a testimony to its rebirth in the modern age. On the other hand, the absence of the New World challenges us, with the force of a manifest lacuna, to reflect on the limits and openings of every epistemic horizon and, above all, on the gaps still to be filled.

From this suggestive image arises the theme of Engramma 227, which constitutes the third stage of an international survey on the current state of Warburgian studies, in continuity with Engramma 165, *Warburgian Studies* and Engramma 199, *A Companion to Warburgian Studies*. This new volume gathers contributions that reflect on Warburg's intellectual legacy and on its applications in diverse cultural contexts, configuring itself as an open space for critique—capable of challenging both geographical boundaries and traditional disciplinary partitions, in keeping with the very spirit of Warburg's thought and with the tradition of the Journal.



The Atlas of Borso d'Este, an edition of Ptolemy's Geography produced by the humanist Nikolaus Germanicus, 1466, Modena, Biblioteca Estense Universitaria, Lat. 463 (α.X.1.3).

The coordinates of this issue are situated within the Ibero-American context. Latin America, by virtue of the vastness and heterogeneity of its cultures, constitutes a particularly fertile ground for observing how Warburg's method has been received, interpreted, and refashioned; and, by linguistic proximity, the gaze extends also to Spain and Portugal. In this broad field of inquiry, in recent decades research groups, seminars, journals, translations, and new editions have generated a vibrant and plural field of studies, elaborating readings of Warburg's legacy capable of infusing his lesson with renewed vitality. In this sense, the linguistic plurality that runs

through the collected contributions reflects Engramma's commitment to fostering a space of research and dialogue that is genuinely polyphonic.

The aim of this issue is to propose original conceptual frameworks and novel perspectives in order to rethink and expand Warburg's reception within the widest possible cultural horizon. The fundamental question is simple: to investigate how editorial, curatorial, and research projects have developed—or may develop—new lines of inquiry capable of transcending the European context. Warburg's figure—precisely because of his capacity to question limits and encourage transgressions across bodies of knowledge—lends itself today more than ever to functioning as a critical resource for a cultural world in constant redefinition. The invitation is to regard Warburg's work not as a crystallized theoretical body enclosed within a narrowly defined critical tradition and reducible to a restricted canon of German, Italian, English, and French scholars, but as a *machine à penser* in continuous transformation: a dispositif that demands to be set constantly back into motion, much like the image of the Atlas which, in revealing itself to us in its incompleteness, urges us to continue thinking beyond its borders.

The issue is divided into three sections: *Overviews, Essays, Presentations*.

Overviews

The opening section of this issue offers a broad survey of the current state of Warburgian studies in the Ibero-American context. The contribution *Estudar (a partir de) Warburg | Estudiar (desde) Warburg | Studying (from) Warburg. An exploration of Warburgian studies across the Ibero-American world* takes the form of a mapping of the trajectories through which Warburg's writings and their critical reception, together with the ideas and lines of research they inspired, have circulated and taken root. To address such an ambitious research question, an inductive method was chosen: numerous scholars from different geographical areas—from Brazil to Argentina, from Mexico to Bolivia, but also from Spain, Portugal, the United States, and beyond—were invited to respond to a series of simple questions about how their intellectual lives intersected with Warburg's legacy: how they first encountered his work, where they studied it, and in what forms they experienced it. From this experiment emerged a multilingual (each respondent was encouraged to answer in their mother tongue) and layered picture, which sketches the crossroads of trajectories in the history of culture. Those who participated in this collective portrait include: Martinho Alves da Costa Junior, Serzenando Alves Vieira Neto, Linda Báez Rubí, Norval Baitello Junior, José Luis Barrios Lara, Jens Baumgarten, Maria Berbara, Gabriel Cabello, Rafael Cardoso, Emilie Ana Carreón Blain, Roberto Casazza, Patricia Dalcanale Meneses, Bianca de Divitiis, Claire Farago, Cássio Fernandes, Aurora Fernández Polanco, David Freedberg, Nicolás Kwiatkowski, Isabela Gaglianone, Jorge Tomás García, Maurizio Ghelardi, Antonio Leandro Gomes de Souza Barros, Fabián Ludueña Romandini, João Luís Lisboa, Laura Malosetti Costa, Claudia Mattos Avolese, Luiz Marques, Ulrich Pfisterer, Ivan Pintor Iranzo, Vanessa A. Portugal, Vera Pugliese, José Riello, Adrian Rifkin, Agustina Rodríguez Romero, Federico Ruvituso, Sandra Szir, Dario Velandia Onofre, Luana Wedekin.

This is followed by a series of contributions that report on the state of the art and provide important bibliographical updates. In *Estudios warburgianos no Brasil (2023-2025)*, Ianick Takaes updates surveys of Lusophone countries previously published by Cássio Fernandes in *Engramma* 165 and by Takaes himself in *Engramma* 199; in *Estudios warburgianos en América hispánica (2019-2025)*, Bernardo Prieto presents an in-depth bibliographical note on the most recent production of Warburgian studies in Spanish-speaking Latin American countries—Argentina, Colombia, Chile, Mexico, and Costa Rica; Ada Naval, in *Estudios warburgianos en España (2019-2025)* provides an update for Spain, following Victoria Cirlot's survey in *Engramma* 165; finally, Fabio Tononi, in *Warburgian Studies in Portugal (2000-2025)*, reconstructs the reception of Aby Warburg's thought in Portugal from the early 2000s to the present.

To conclude this part of the volume, we present a significant testimony from one of the key figures in the history of Warburg's overseas reception. *Las ciencias de Atenea y las artes de Hermes* is an interview with the art historian José Emilio Burucúa, conducted by Ada Naval and Bernardo Prieto. In this extended conversation, Burucúa retraces his encounter with Warburgian thought, in particular through the experience of the Hermáthena group, and discusses his early translations of Warburg's corpus into Spanish—sharing philological reflections of immense philosophical scope on terms such as *Nachleben*, *Pathosformel*, and *Denkraum*—before moving on to his vast intellectual production, crucial in Latin American cultural history, and his most recent curatorial experiences, such as the exhibition *La teoría artística de Aby Warburg. Ninfas, serpientes, constelaciones*, held in Buenos Aires in 2019.

Essays

The second section of the volume is dedicated to five critical essays by scholars close to the South American context. In *Warburg in America From Pueblo to Passamaquoddy*, David Freedberg, art historian and Director of the Warburg Institute from 2015 to 2017, returns to the theme of the “American” Warburg that has marked his scholarly career. Starting from Warburg's interpretation of Hopi ceremonies—an interpretation from which Freedberg distances himself in an interesting way—the essay underscores the importance of gesture in popular forms and in indigenous signifying language, and proposes a possible agenda for future Warburgian studies, oriented toward reconnecting symbolism, representation, and embodiment with the schematic registers of the *Pathosformel*.

In “*Bilderwanderung*”. *Un ensayo entre “greifen” y “begreifen” en las notas americanas de Aby Warburg* Linda Báez Rubí, working with an unpublished corpus of Warburg's notes, investigates the concepts of *greifen* (to grasp physically) and *begreifen* (to grasp intellectually, to understand) between Mesoamerica and early modern Europe. The case study is the *xicalcolihquí chimalli*, a stepped-fret feather shield used by Mexica peoples in the sixteenth century, sketched by Warburg in his notes. The author reconstructs its itinerary: from its fabrication and ritual context in Tenochtitlan, to its subsequent appropriation by Hernán Cortés

and Viceroy Antonio de Mendoza, to its display in German Kunstkammern, and finally its reuse in a court festival organized by Duke Frederick I of Württemberg in 1599.

This is followed by Serzenando Alves Vieira Neto's essay, *Towards a Philosophical Anthropology. Cushing in Dialogue with Warburg*, in which Neto systematically documents the direct and indirect dialogue between Warburg and the ethnologist Frank Hamilton Cushing, investigating Cushing's relevance within Warburg's thought. The contribution traces points of intersection between Warburg's psychological aesthetics and philosophical anthropology, as well as the methodological and conceptual resonances of Warburg's contacts with the Smithsonian Institution.

In *Participation and Creation of Distance. Aby Warburg and Lucien Lévy-Brühl*, Cássio Fernandes illustrates another crucial encounter between Warburg's method and anthropology, reconstructing the influence of the French anthropologist Lucien Lévy-Brühl—particularly his concept of the *loi de participation*—on Warburg's thought.

Finally, Antônio Leandro Gomes de Souza Barros, in *Astrology Between Science and Superstition in Art History. Aby Warburg and Fernando Pessoa*, investigates the parallel (though never converging) trajectories of Aby Warburg and Fernando Pessoa, with particular attention to their relationship to astrology and its precipitation into art history. Through an analysis of Warburg's method and Pessoa's poetic elaboration, the essay offers an overview of how these two twentieth-century intellectuals explored the complex intersections between science, superstition, and art.

Presentations

The volume concludes with the presentation of two recent editorial initiatives from the Latin American context. The first is *Aby Warburg en/sobre América: Historia, sobrevivencias y repercusiones* (México 2024), edited by Linda Báez Rubí, Emilie Carreón Blaine, and Tania Vanessa Álvarez Portugal, which gathers the papers presented at the international symposium Warburg (en/sobre) América: translaciones y proyecciones, held at the Museo Universitario Arte Contemporáneo in Mexico City in 2017. Structured in three sections—*Historia*, *Sobrevivencias*, *Repercusiones*—the volume offers a selection of essays highlighting the importance of Aby Warburg's American experience in 1896 for his intellectual formation, showing how American anthropology constitutes an indispensable key to his later theoretical elaborations.

In *The Exuberant Excess of His Subjective Propensities. Translating Edgar Wind's Art and Anarchy (1963) into Portuguese*, Ianick Takaes presents *Arte e Anarquia*, published by Edunicamp in March of this year, a Portuguese edition of Edgar Wind's seminal 1963 volume *Art and Anarchy*. Takaes—who curated the edition, translation, and critical apparatus—introduces his work with a highly personal preface that not only contextualizes Wind's work within cultural history but also reflects on his own research path within the Windian and Warburgian tradition in the Latin American and American context.

Abstract

Engramma 227 is the third stage of an international survey of Warburgian studies (after Engramma 165 and 199). The volume explores how Aby Warburg's intellectual legacy has been received, reinterpreted, and revitalized in Ibero-American contexts, extending to Spain and Portugal. Structured in three sections—*Overviews*, *Essays*, *Presentations*—the issue opens with *Estudar (a partir de) Warburg* | *Estudiar (desde) Warburg* | *Studying (from) Warburg*. An exploration of Warburgian studies across the Ibero-American world, a wide-ranging mapping of Warburgian studies across Latin America, featuring responses from scholars of different countries, generations, and languages. It continues with bibliographic updates on Brazil, Hispanic America, Spain, and Portugal, and with key testimonies from great scholars such as José Emilio Burucúa and David Freedberg. The *Essays* section includes critical contributions by Linda Báez Rubí, Serzenando Alves Vieira Neto, Cássio Fernandes, and Antônio Leandro Gomes de Souza Barros, addressing Warburg's intersections with anthropology, philosophy, and astrology. The final section presents two new publications: the 2024 collection of essays *Aby Warburg en/sobre América: Historia, sobrevivencias y repercusiones*, and the new edition of Edgar Wind, *Arte e Anarquia*, published this year.

keywords | Aby Warburg; Iberoamerica; Brazil, Argentina, Mexico, Spain, Portugal, Chile, Porto Rico, Colombia; Hector Ciocchini; Hopi; Frank Hamilton Cushing; Lucien Lévy-Brühl; Fernando Pessoa; Edgar Wind; Art and Anarchy.

The Editorial Board of Engramma expresses its gratitude to the colleagues, friends and scholars, who, in accordance with the double-blind peer-review procedure, have undertaken the reading, revision, and assessment of this issue.

(see online and *Albo dei referee di Engramma*)



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227 • Warburgian Studies in the Ibero-American Context

Editorial

Ada Naval, Ianick Takaes, Giulia Zanon

Overviews

An exploration of Warburgian studies across the Ibero-American world

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Estudios warburguanos en América hispánica (2019-2025)

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“Bilderwanderung”

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Serzenando Alves Vieira Neto

Participation and Creation of Distance

Cássio Fernandes

**Astrology Between Science and Superstition
in Art History**

Antônio Leandro Gomes de Souza Barros

Presentations

**Una presentación de Aby Warburg en/sobre
América: Historia, sobrevivencias y repercusiones
(México 2024)**

Linda Báez Rubí, Emilie Carreón Blain,

Tania Vanessa A. Portugal

The Exuberant Excess of His Subjective Propensities
Ianick Takaes