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Mnemosyne reloaded

a cura di Monica Centanni, Daniela Sacco

ENGRAMMA. LA TRADIZIONE CLASSICA NELLA MEMORIA OCCIDENTALE
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Aby M. Warburg by Gertrud Bing

English edition by Elizabeth Thomson

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On October 31, 1958, the bust of Aby Warburg was unveiled and placed in the Hamburger *Kunsthalle*. Gertrud Bing, who was Warburg's closest collaborator, commemorated the occasion by holding a memorial lecture. In her words, official tones blended with memories of funny episodes and new aspects of the scholar's life, providing a complete portrait of the man and of the Master. Bing's text was published in an Italian translation in 1960.

Next October, it will thirty years since the death of Aby Warburg, and twelve months since his bust, exiled to the storerooms of the gallery at the beginning of the Hitler's era, has, thanks to the loving concern of his friends and the enthusiastic help of the municipal authorities, found a worthy and congenial place in the *Kunsthalle* of Hamburg, the city in which he was born. This modest albeit dignified bust which is now one of a group of portraits of famous people from Hamburg, was the butt of one of Warburg's amusing stories that were frequently self-mocking, and made being in his company so enchanting, and I wish to recall it here. The bust was made only after his death because his wife, although an experienced sculptor, had never been able to convince him to pose. At best, Warburg used to say, he might have complied if she had made him model for a life-size equestrian monument.

After so many years, these recollections strike a chord in the memories of those who knew him personally, they make him come alive again; but how can one conjure him up in the minds of all those for whom the name means nothing more than something vaguely heard of? How can one sketch out in just a few strokes a portrait of a man who in every possible way bore to such an extraordinary degree the mark of the uncommon? If one were to ask people who knew him for information, their replies would probably be far from clear. Some, maybe even the majority, would speak about his brilliant mind, and quote some of his jokes improvised with unsurpassed, dazzling and precise linguistic imagination. Some would highlight the rigor with which his life conformed to the rules of conduct that he had chosen for himself, that always drove him towards the absolute. Others still would remember how uncomfortable his attempts could be to make these rules acceptable to an environment that was all but willing to listen to him.

Neither pupils nor friends, for whom his scientific discussions have remained unforgettable, will always be able to say what was important about those talks or what made them so extraordinarily effective. Warburg himself was wont to say of himself that he was “just the man made to create a beautiful memory”. This ironic statement is also a reflection of his tragic awareness that he was not allowed to live in peaceful harmony with himself or with the people close to him. In fact, these words have proved him right: Warburg has become a quasi-mythical figure.

His scientific personality went much the same way. His published writings consist of only two volumes. The findings and arguments that have secured him a special place among the great art historians of his generation emerge from five or six essays and masterpieces of scrupulous historical accuracy, psychological sensitivity and brilliant mastery of the material, but they are not easy reading. Even these essays convey only a fraction of what his work and his personality have meant to scientific research. To have a complete picture, one would have to add to those essays the numerous fragments, references, notes and sketches that lie among the papers he left behind in formulations that were constantly being revised, and again rejected. One would have to be able to recreate the conferences that he held without notes, for which we have only outlines and reports, and reconstruct the many familiar conversations in which he never tired of talking about what roused his scientific interest. Above all, we would have to add the written works published over the last thirty-six years by the Warburg Institute. I think that in almost every one of them, one could identify what in content or method can be traced back to him; in retrospect, it seems to me even now that his scientific persona could be explained by these works more effectively than would have been possible on the basis of his writings alone while he was still alive. For this reason, the only thing I think I can do now is this: use my memory of him to bring back to life a few traits, to me characteristic, of his personality and grasp the opportunity to talk about his work just enough to prevent our commemoration from appearing to be only a matter of local patriotism.

There is one thing I would like to emphasize at once: Warburg the scholar was no stranger to worldly matters. His brother Max used to tell a story of their childhood: one day, he and Aby, boys of twelve and thirteen, split their inheritance. Their father's bank would go to Max not Aby, but in return, Max had to promise to buy his elder brother all the books he would need for his studies. When, in due course, Max Warburg would add that that promise was the biggest blank check he had ever signed in his life, their agree-

ment sounded like a emblematic episode in the childhood of a great scholar who in his mind has room for nothing but books. In the case of a private scholar who has consistently declined all the calls that he received from universities, it is not hard to believe this notion. However, if one considers that Warburg really did create a scientific library which at his death consisted of about 65,000 volumes, and now has about 140,000, not even the childhood anecdote can disguise the fact that he had a certain instinct for the practical mechanisms of life. Max Warburg himself was well aware of his brother's talent, and he always pointed out how lively was his interest in the affairs of the bank, and how wisely he judged them; he used to say, "My brother could have become a great banker." A matter of particular interest is that the professor had a nose for crises on the stock exchange, and when he would visit his brothers in their offices, saying: "I hear the rustle of the wings of the vultures of bankruptcy", he was often right. Warburg considered the foundation of his library as nothing less than a vocation and a profession; and for years, he was himself its only librarian. There cannot have been many scholars who like him, were familiar with the international book market, and who like him would rob themselves of sleep and spend the small hours every night browsing through the catalogues of antiquarian booksellers.

He applied the same seriousness to matters of public life, and when these were associated with art or science, he immediately made them his cause. Even in these cases, he was never willing to come to terms with mediocrity, and it really was not his habit to stand on the "territory of the facts", as a certain beautiful expression would have it. Perhaps more surprising is another aspect of his persona, especially in the esoteric light that now surrounds Warburg in the eyes of younger generations: his concern for adult education. In those days, evening classes were not central to public interest like today, but to him they were the indispensable prerequisite for any fruitful scientific life. His lectures at the *Volksheim*, which he had helped to found, in terms of scientific seriousness had nothing to envy a course of university lectures for. During those lectures, on Leonardo or Dürer, or the Early Renaissance in Florence, there were many fine points that surely must have gone beyond the understanding of the students sitting in his class. But this mattered not; his secret lay in making accessible to all – to the young, the old, to people who were learned or perhaps simply amateurs, even children, the things that mattered to him.

Warburg was no pioneer blinded by the idea that Hamburg should have its own university. Some of his observations make one think that he considered it more important to open up to a larger circle of interested amateurs

the libraries that were already there, the *Stadtbibliothek* and the *Commerzbibliothek*, and to “indicate”, as he would say, “to those potential readers, the way of the book.” When, once the University was established, there was the risk that Ernst Cassirer would be removed from his professorship in Hamburg by a call to Frankfurt, Warburg did not hesitate to enter the arena of daily controversy. He published in the *Hamburger Fremdenblatt* his article “Why Hamburg should not lose the philosopher Cassirer”, because he was firmly convinced that the general public had a right to know what was really at stake in these matters of academic appointments. It should also be remembered that he planned an exhibition for the planetarium in Hamburg, the implementation of which he did not see. It consisted of reproductions and models illustrating the history of astronomy and astrology, and was the result of many years of scholarly research. He had aimed to arouse in the public an historical awareness. For him, it was not enough that visitors found before their eyes the ready-made spectacle of the movement of the stars; they had to see the evidence from history that has led to the present picture of our universe.

It was these concerns he would be thinking of when he said that he went back to his fellow citizens, reassuring them that “Culture never hurts.” However, he knew how to change his tune when his sense of artistic and intellectual integrity was offended by those who wanted to know what it was all about. When he sensed this danger, and for these things he had a very refined ear, there was no chance of compromise and there was no regard for the other person or his social position; without mercy for those he believed responsible for the offence, and without considering if it would make him unpopular, he would throw himself into battle with all the weapons of his pen and sharp wit. Some may remember his fight against the Hugo Vogel frescoes in the Great Hall of the Town Hall of Hamburg and the bellicose article he wrote at the time. When, many years later, during the First World War, he learned that Hugo Vogel had been called to the Grand Headquarters to paint Hindenburg’s official portrait, Warburg said, “It is now certain that we will lose the war.” It was anything but a joke. For him, there was no room in these matters for indifference, or unconcern. And so it was that he also protested against the Louis XIV style of furnishings on *Hapag* steamers. The illusion of false splendour would serve merely to allow the passengers to forget that they were exposed to the arbitrary powers of incalculable natural forces. This distrust of Warburg’s had nothing to do with the risks they were running at that time crossing the seas, the risks of which the sinking of the Titanic had been a menacing reminder. For him it was a matter of principle not to tolerate dubious optimism, and

not to abandon oneself to an arrogant sense of security when at all times man should think himself lucky if he merely gets by unscathed. There are also less serious stories of this kind: one day he was called as an expert witness before a commission which was to decide whether to end or continue the collection of casts in the *Kunsthalle*. His response to the usual bureaucratic references to previous work and high costs was that nature bestows chalk in unlimited quantities. The term “precedent” for him was like a red rag: with precedent, one could kill any initiative. I was pleased to hear that the collection of casts still exists.

However, this image of a militant Warburg needs to be seen in perspective. There was no truer friend than he. When he felt he could give thanks for recognition, he would do so without reserve, and his righteous displeasure would fall silent.

His sense of responsibility in public affairs is an essential part of the Warburg’s moral fibre and would have manifested itself wherever he lived. However, Hamburg still held a special place in his heart. With all due caution, I can say that it is precisely in his own scientific work that a slice of Hamburg peeps through. I refer to his contributions to the history of art and the civilization of Florence.

Today, the preference for Florentine art of the fifteenth century is a bit out of fashion; in Warburg’s day, it was widespread. With the help of August Schmarsow, Warburg went to Florence for the first time as a student, and Schmarsow was the founder of the German Institute for Art History in that city. Adolf Hildebrand whose aesthetics had a strong influence on Warburg, lived in Florence. Jacob Burckhardt, whose studies still dominate our image of the Renaissance, had drawn substantially from Florentine sources and documents. Warburg’s works are connected to Burckhardt, and no apprentice can have been more clearly aware of his debt of gratitude to the master of his art than was Warburg in his admiration for Burckhardt. Nevertheless, today we can say that the portrayal of the Renaissance outlined by Warburg often surpasses that of Burckhardt.

Warburg lived in Florence for about ten years from the early days of his marriage, and his eldest daughter was born there. He may not have returned to Hamburg had he not felt that he had to distance himself from the wealth of material that poured forth from the archive, and from the collections and treasures of the churches, in order to be able to study it and take it in. Every word he wrote about Florence bears the imprint of a highly personal

relationship with the city that one does not witness often in scientific works. One could almost say that with his work on Florence, Warburg wrote his own version of *Buddenbrooks*. Even in the last years of his life, his language, his gestures, his whole manner made him pass for a Florentine in Florence, and with his slim build, his dark hair and expressive face, as well as his facial features, he stood out from the crowd less in Florence than in Hamburg. I cannot help but tell a story here that would have nothing to do with our subject if it did not show us the Florentine Warburg in action. One summer there were rumours of a typhoid epidemic, and Warburg ran from one office to another to persuade the authorities to take reasonable precautionary measures. But the danger was denied until finally the carcass of a donkey was found in the aqueduct that brought drinking water from Fiesole to Florence. On learning this news, Warburg returned to the offices with a bitter sense of triumph and the intention of raising a lively protest, but was told: "Nonsense! It was just a tiny donkey!" It is one of the few cases of this type that I know of when even Warburg admitted defeat.

However, to understand his affinity with fifteenth century Florence, so important from a scientific point of view, we should remember that Florence was at the time a city-state, more specifically, in contrast with other Renaissance states excluding Venice, a republic; and that the governing body within this community was derived from its mercantile, bourgeois aristocracy. I think it is reasonable to assume that Warburg's Hamburg-based experiences provided him with insights that could certainly give him an instinctive understanding of the Florentines during the Medici age. Warburg's starting point was research on the change of artistic style during the second half of the fifteenth century, and associated with the problem of form familiar to every art historian of his time; his first treatise dealt with the mythological paintings of Botticelli, *The Birth of Venus* and the so-called *Spring* which he would have preferred to call the *Kingdom of Venus*. In this paper, he observes that the stylistic characteristics of Botticelli – streaming hair and fluttering garments – can also be found in the poetry and art theories of the time, and that they provide evidence everywhere of an emerging preference for classical models. However, this observation for him was no more than a starting point.

Between 1450 and 1490 approximately, the years in which he was particularly interested, Florence began an era in which a whole way of life was transformed; Warburg was aware that stylistic changes in monumental art were just one aspect of this transformation because it extended to all the accessories of everyday life. As a result, therefore, he extended his

considerations to essential everyday items, and would base his theories not only on the abundant literary sources, but also on private documents. In this way, he created for the history of art what in classical archaeology is designated by the term *Realienkunde*. Today, we acknowledge that this is a legacy of historical positivism; in Warburg's time, no art historian would have been interested in the business contracts of the Medici, the will of one of their partners in which there was no mention of art, or even letters from their representatives across the Alps who complained about business being bad; such things were left to the historians of political economy. In accordance with contemporary Florentine opinion, domestic furniture belonged to the realms of craftsmen and artisans, and their decoration seemed too distant in style and content from the products of the so-called liberal arts to be taken into consideration, or to pose the question that Warburg asked himself: whether in both cases the choice of figurative content was not determined by the use for which the objects were intended.

I will take just one example of Warburg's arguments. The Medici correspondence with their representatives in Bruges shows that they organised tapestries by the meter to be sent to them from Flanders. These precious fabrics were used for domestic decorations, as wall coverings, curtains or bed hangings, and preferably portrayed scenes from ancient history with large figures. It would not surprise us to see Burgundian costumes depicted on them, if the tapestries had been used at the court of Charles the Bold. But Warburg was struck by the fact that the Medici urged their agents, also Italian, to take a great deal of care that the tapestries made for them depicted figures "in the style of here": they had so strong a partiality for the style of Flanders as to accept with pleasure the heroic figures of Greeks and Romans in the attire of the paladins of Burgundy. Thus it was that the factor that until then had been, rather loosely, designated as a Flemish influence on the art of Florence, lost all vagueness, and was now seen as the product of conscious choice the origins of which could be traced; the routes by which these influences came to Florence were found to be those of normal traffic and trading.

The way Warburg used comparable analyses of details to convey his notion of the mentality of the Florentine Bourgeoisie in the Quattrocento is unique. What we have learned from him is that human voices can be made to speak even from documents of minor importance. After Warburg realized that there was a weighty baggage of pre-existing trends in taste and requirements governing matters related to everyday life before the ideal style could triumph, it seemed to him that the development of the antiquicising

style at the height of the Renaissance was more marked than before. The development of this style in Florence is the principal evidence of how the traditions of antiquity were embraced during the Renaissance, and of how copying examples of classical art had a role in it.

One would think that it would have been enough for Italians to look at themselves, and their own country to recognize the real evidence of their Greek and Roman past. However, it took a long time to reach this point. Initially in Italy, like medieval Europe, antiquity was received in a modified form, which had its origins in late antiquity. In recent decades, research has focused more and more on this medieval route of transmission, and today we know more and more and can follow the phenomenon better and in more areas than was possible in Warburg's time.

It is no accident that this direction of research goes back to an art historian. Indeed, the figures of ancient mythology had survived in memory for a long time before the evidence of ancient literature and philosophy were rediscovered and became intelligible. Up to a certain point, they had always been intelligible; this was because they were handed down via one image to the next, and were preserved in stone, clay, metals and gems. Only a small number of figurative forms were received by later generations, but few as they were, they were always copied again. "Man", Warburg used to say, "develops at little cost".

Of course, individual imitations of the art of antiquity were already known during the fifteenth century. There is a book of sketches attributed to Ghirlandaio with drawings of ancient sculptures, which painters and sculptors of his time could have drawn on as a source of images. The round decorative reliefs in the courtyard of Palazzo Medici are imitations of antique gems whose originals were in the possession of Lorenzo. However, a discovery such as this went no further; no one had raised the issue of the intentions that determined the selection within the plastic treasures from antiquity. It was assumed that the artists of the fifteenth century were animated by the same admiration for classical antiquity that had been the rule obvious to any educated person from the eighteenth century onwards. Warburg too had initially started out using similar individual copies. His discovery that Botticelli had drawn on neo-Attic plastic models for his figures in motion or hovering in the air, almost flying, was of this kind. In a design that dates back to the school of Botticelli, a group of three figures had been copied from an ancient sarcophagus, which at that time was built into the steps of the *Aracoeli* in Rome. The novel twist that Warburg has given the history

of tradition is not in asking what had been copied, or from what model was the copy derived: it consists, instead, of examining the why of a certain copy. He was thus able to see that when the artists or their customers and learned advisers chose their models, they were not primarily concerned with the content of ancient works, but in their language of gestures. The model for the rapid motion and the nervous gestures of Botticelli's figures is the posture of the maenad from classical antiquity. The group of Apollo and Daphne in which the god tries to grasp his beloved became the prototype of the pursuit of love. When the relief on a tomb in Santa Trinità in Florence was to portray a dirge for the deceased person within it in Santa Trinità in Florence, an ancient sarcophagus portraying the body of Meleager surrounded by figures with the classical gestures of mourning was chosen as a model.

When the meaning of these ancient expressive gestures was revealed to Warburg, he was able to identify numerous examples of the same type. Artists of the fifteenth century made use of classical gestures when it meant they could portray intense emotion: struggle, triumph, rape, despair and mourning.

Warburg was a pupil of Hermann Usener, so research on myths had been familiar to him since his youth. However, he did not ask himself about the meaning of the myths that in ancient times had inspired those images. For him, these were evidence of moods and feelings become images. For him, Medea is not an example of an archetype, as claimed by C.G. Jung; her image does not transcend the figure that myth confers upon her: she is a jealous wife and infanticide. So, in terms of figurative expression, it is irrelevant whether Proserpina represents death and the revival of plant life or not; in the image that has been handed down to us, Proserpina has become the prototype of violent rape. All these figures are, as Warburg says, formulas of *pathos* minted in antiquity. Later generations, choosing these expressions as models, sought in them the permanent traces of the deepest of human emotions, and appropriated traditional classical tools for expressing them. In fact, the figurative forms that had already been minted preserve the memory of the tragic myths of the Greeks, and lead to religion.

This sense of the origin of the moulded form, the sense that this communicates intuitive understanding of a certain psychological and religious content, permeates all Warburg's research work. This relationship confers upon his language a peculiar sense of urgency, although it does not ever deviate from the investigative concerns of the moment. There are myths of which he never spoke because they struck him too hard.

One of these is the story of Oedipus: I do not think that this reluctance can be fully explained through psychoanalysis. However, Warburg dared to go into a field in which classical figures are not represented as formulas of *pathos*, but clearly as demons. I refer to his studies on astrology.

In Warburg's works, it is not difficult to trace the notional bridge that leads from the formulas of *pathos* to astrology. Even astrology is part of the figurative tradition that can be traced from Late Antiquity to the Renaissance. The names and figures of the planets and of the Zodiac are still witnesses to the mythopoeic imagination that inspired the Greeks. However, here the images underwent a transformation more alarming than in the formulas of artistic expression; they went through the cosmological speculations of the Alexandrians, authors of late antiquity, and in medieval astrology these figures appear as astral demons influencing the fate of all men according to the randomness of their position in the sky and the arbitrariness of their anthropomorphic nature: astrology became an attempt to establish and prevent their objectives by observing and calculating their movements in the heavens.

These ideas have had, as one knows, an important role in history. As an art historian, Warburg had reason to deal with them, and his study of astrology and belief in the prophecy of monsters in the circle of Luther and Melanchthon, is a complicated, but serious example of his method of understanding a historical situation based on figurative and documentary sources. In this study, he emancipated the remains of pagan fatalistic religion from the odiousness of mere superstition, and clarified that their origins lay in religious ideas.

Ultimately, for Warburg, it was not about observations of historical connections of this kind. For him, astrology had a meaning that affects us all: it reflects the awareness of how inadequate human existence can be. Helpless before fate, man takes refuge in magic; he begins to manipulate images to his detriment. It is true that in the idea that evil Saturn can upset the good influence of planet Jupiter still bears the memory of the struggle between Chronus and Zeus. However, here, as in art, images of the myth no longer have the function of example: they have become idols that keep man bound in fear and terror.

However, there are also more comforting factors in astrology. Apart from the fear of demons, it holds the remains of a rational explanation of the universe, which is also a legacy of the Greeks. The astrologers' attempt to follow the movements of these celestial bodies in the form of demons was,

even in the sixteenth century, the starting point for the scientific observations of Tycho Brahe and Kepler. However, once the orbits of the planets had been calculated on the basis of the resurrected scientific logic of the Greeks, awareness of the relationship between the universe and humanity could only undergo a fundamental change. The tangible closeness of the stars that threatened to directly attack mankind was replaced, to put it in the words of Warburg, by “an ideal space for reflection.” This does not mean that humanity had been emancipated, finally, from the fear of demons and belief in the power of the stars. We ourselves know that these fears and beliefs always reappear whenever the human heart is overcome by a sense of foreboding. We have not yet forgotten the flood of predictions and the reports of the birth of monstrous creatures that circulated when Hitler seized power. Newspapers everywhere provide horoscopes, and small weeklies on astrology are read with great interest. Warburg himself recounted how, after a lecture in which he intended to ridicule the dangers of astrology as it is practiced today, people came to him and said, “If a learned man like you is so interested in it, something must be true”.

Magic and logic, the double face of antiquity that became the fatal destiny of European civilization, are also the two poles between which the pendulum of the individual conscience swings. The fact that man always falls back on magic does not exempt him from the duty to try always to emancipate himself from its guardianship by appealing to his own mind. In the words of Warburg: “We must free Athens again and again from the shackles of Alexandria.”

Warburg believed in the power of reason; he was an enlightenment thinker precisely because he understood the legacy of the demons of antiquity so well. Lessing's *Laocoön* was the strongest influence that he had experienced in his youth, and he felt obliged to teach the German Enlightenment of the eighteenth century. For the same reasons, he felt equally close to another figure from German history who was central to his analysis of demonic faith during the Reformation: Martin Luther. Needing to argue that even Luther had a confused faith in comets, monsters and meteors sent from the heavens as warning signs, was, for Warburg, part of the ambivalence that he acknowledged existed in every historical phenomenon. However, despite this, he recognised in the German Reformation one of the great European movements that have cleared the way for independent thought, and that led to the recognition of the right of all individuals to make their own decisions in matters of religion and morality. The Reformation was, for him, a progressive force.

Here I am at the last point I would like to make clear about Warburg's thought. He came from a family that held on to the tradition of Orthodox Judaism. Warburg performed his first act of Enlightenment on himself when he went to the University in Bonn; he told his parents that from that moment he would no longer observe Jewish laws on food. He could certainly have done so without informing his parents, but it would not have been for him true emancipation; as a result, he cleared the long path he would follow. The general conditions of the years of great speculation following the unification of Germany were favourable to the assimilation of the Jews; in Hamburg, his brother Max and Ballin, director of *Hapag* and a friend of Max, were certainly in acknowledged positions of influence. Rather poignantly, Warburg himself had joyfully and conscientiously completed his military obligations. He never forgot that the German Empire had treated Jews well, and as a result, he was reluctant to listen to its critics. In 1929, he went to see the former Reich Chancellor Bülow in Rome, although he did so with perhaps some malice, because he liked Bülow's Italian wife. Although he identified himself with Germany so fully and unreservedly, as we the next generation would no longer be able to do, even before Hitler, he never felt free of the anti-Semitic threat. A small remark says much more about this than lots of words. When, in Florence, a friend of his wife married one of Warburg's young colleagues, and he therefore had good reason to take part in the celebration, he instead noted in his diary: "Mary and I did not accompany them to the church. It is better that people should be surprised that we are not there, rather than be surprised that we are". Perhaps the clarity derived from that split is the reason why Warburg was one of the few in Germany who found the actions of Bethmann-Hollweg and the "scraps of paper" concerning the violation of Belgium's neutrality, incredible. In the first half of August 1914, when the whole of Germany was elated at the success of the advance into France, we read in his diary the prophetic words, "We win by dying".

The pride in the peculiarities of Jewish orthodoxy that had always existed and had then developed under the pressure of anti-Semitism even among liberal Jews, was foreign to Warburg, who always firmly rejected it whenever he came across it. He had a ready answer to the question of the distinction between the Jews and the nations that host them: "We have suffered the history of the world for two thousand years longer than them." Nothing more would be said, but for those who understand Warburg's style it is not difficult to see in the formulation of his reply the linguistic connection between "suffering", "subjection" and "endurance": *Amor fati*.

There is no doubt that his persona had something of an Old Testament prophet. All those who have ever personally witnessed the fullness of his rage and eloquence, must have sensed this. However, speaking of him, one also recalls Friedrich Schlegel's dictum: the historian is a backward looking prophet. Warburg felt his task was a scientific mission; he spoke of "the problem that directed him" and which he followed without protest despite physical ailments, despite the misunderstandings which he often came across, and despite the self-doubts he was all too often seized by. He declared one day that in his research work, there was to be "not even the suspicion of a heretic playing with science".

Let me close with a short autobiographical phrase written one day by Warburg in Italian: "Ebreo di sangue, Amburghese di cuore, d'anima Fiorentino" ("I am Jewish by blood, at heart a citizen of Hamburg, but my soul is Florentine). Perhaps not even he understood precisely how such a rare combination of those three attributes had influenced him.