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After Warburg

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After Warburg

a cura di

Maurizio Ghelardi e Daniela Sacco



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Warburg and Steinmann as Forschertypen

Elizabeth Sears

One of Aby Warburg's interesting propensities was to view scholarship in art and cultural history through the lens of scholars viewed as types. His well-known letter of 9 August 1903 to Adolph Goldschmidt, just then appointed professor *extraordinarius* in art history in Berlin, is a case in point (Gombrich 1970, 141-144; Kreft 2010, 140-148). In a conversation with Goldschmidt at Berlin's Lehrter Bahnhof, Warburg had playfully but seriously begun mapping out lines of study in the art historical field. He followed up with a summary taking the form of a schema in which he placed some twenty art historians within two overarching categories and a dozen subcategories. Group I: these were the hero-worshippers pursuing an "enthusiastic biographical art history" with a dose of historical retrospection thrown in to lend authority to panegyric. Standing in a tradition with sixteenth-century roots and characteristically leading from the artwork or the artist, they included the connoisseurs and the *Attributzler* (Bayersdorfer, Bode, Morelli, Venturi, Berenson, and *das schnuppernde Gelichter* — "the nosing out crew"). Group II: these were the scholars who, above and beyond biographical art history, had undertaken to pursue stylistic art history: "die Wissenschaft von den typischen Formen" — "the science of typical forms"; clearly these formed the methodological elite. Warburg's tactic here was to distinguish individual approaches according to *Bedingtheiten*: the sociological factors that individual scholars posited as the style-determining conditions against which heroic artists had to contend. The conditions ranged from technique to custom and included Warburg's own subcategory: "Bedingtheiten durch die Natur des mimischen Menschen" (translated by Gombrich as: "Restricting conditions due to the nature of man's expressive movement"). Thus Warburg constructed a matrix of contrasting positions in which scholarly

approaches were mutually defined along multiple vectors. This exercise could be taught.

The University of Hamburg was founded in 1919; Warburg *in absentia* was made an honorary professor in art history in 1921 (having earlier, in 1912, been given the title of professor by the Hamburg senate); and when in 1924, after his six-year struggle with mental illness, he returned to Hamburg to resume the directorship of the Kulturwissenschaftliche Bibliothek (KBW), Warburg began to teach. A seminar for the Winter Semester 1926-27 was announced as “Übungen über Forschertypen auf dem Gebiete der Renaissance-Kultur” — a seminar in which students were to consider comparatively the work of “researcher types” in Renaissance cultural study (Roeck 1991). Owing to eye troubles, Warburg paused the seminar, soon after the student Heinz Brauer had, on 3 November 1926, given a *Referat* treating “Jacob Burckhardt: Leben und Werk”. In the following Summer Semester Warburg resumed the class under the same title but with the subtitle “Jacob Burckhardt”. Each student took up a text or a problem associated with the pioneering cultural historian who, in *Kultur der Renaissance* had undertaken “to consider Renaissance man in his most highly developed type (*Typus*)”, as Warburg put it (Warburg [1902] 1932, 93). At the final session of the seminar, Warburg delivered an example of method (Warburg [1927] 2010; Didi-Huberman 2002/2017, ch. 2), letting two thinkers who were important to him illuminate one another, two “sensitive seismographs”, two types of “seer”: Burckhardt vs. Nietzsche.

In the final year of his life, during a lengthy period of residence in Rome, mid-November 1928 to early May 1929, Warburg repeatedly found occasion to demonstrate his methods, delighted to find those with a feeling for his own *Forschertyp* (Warburg [1926-1929] 2001, 24.01.1929). He had traveled to Italy in the company of Gertrud Bing as his scholarly assistant and Franz Alber as his personal aide, a nine-month journey intended to speed the completion of his culminating image-word project, the *Bilderatlas Mnemosyne* (cfr. Engramma 2019, Biester 2020). Even as the party approached Rome, Warburg was exchanging letters with Ernst Steinmann, director of the Bibliotheca Hertziana — an art historian whom he had known for decades, on whom he could rely, a scholar as well connected in Rome as Warburg was in Hamburg (WIA, GC, A. Warburg-E.

Steinmann exchange, 22.10-14.11.1928). Soon after the party had settled at the Palace Hotel on the Via Veneto, Warburg decided to stage a *Demonstrationsabend* or “demonstration evening” for a few esteemed colleagues, including Steinmann, so he might offer “sketches of chapters of the iconological Atlas in progress” (“Kapitel-Skizzen zu dem in Arbeit befindlichen ikonologischen Atlas”) (WIA, GC, A. Warburg to E. Steinmann, 1.12.1928). The guests present on that early December evening were Ludwig Curtius of the Deutsches Archaeologisches Institut and wife, Franz Cumont of the Institut historique belge de Rome, and, since Steinmann was unable to come, Warburg’s seminar student Heinz Brauer, that year attached to the Hertziana, was witness to the demonstration (WIA, GC, H. Brauer to M. Warburg, 8.12.1928). The idea arose that Warburg should give a proper lecture before a Roman-German audience. Curtius extended an invitation, but Warburg opted for the Hertziana and turned the planning over to Steinmann. On 19 January 1929, guests heard Warburg speak on “Die römische Antike in der Werkstatt des Domenico Ghirlandaio”, the lecture hall decked out with seven newly constructed cloth-covered wood screens onto which constellations of photographs had been attached (Fleckner 2012). These screens, with Steinmann’s encouragement, were left standing for two weeks after the lecture so that Warburg might offer additional demonstrations of method before select groups, four in all. Steinmann attended the first.



1 | Aby Warburg and his son Max Adolph in Warburg’s study in Hamburg, 1917. © Warburg Institute, London.

2 | Ernst Steinmann in his study in the Palazzo Zuccari, Rome, June 1921. © Archiv der Max-Planck-Gesellschaft, Berlin-Dahlem.

Throughout their scholarly careers, Warburg and Steinmann occupied markedly distant positions on the disciplinary continuum. If in 1903 Warburg put himself in Group II as one treating the “science of typical forms,” he placed Steinmann in Group I, among the “enthusiastic art historians” who pursued a biographically oriented art history, within the subcategory: “sentimental-heroic, religious political reconstructing on a historical foundation”. And if the two felt little intellectual affinity, still, as precise contemporaries, they experienced the tumults and shared the possibilities of their times. Both were scholars of Italian Renaissance art, and both were founding directors of enduring research libraries initially created to foster the study of Italy’s art and culture, libraries that owed their foundation to private Jewish philanthropy. Their paths inevitably crossed from time to time and, along the way and certainly by the end, each found something to admire in the stern commitments of the other. Here follows the exercise of comparing two *Forschertypen*, whose acts, tactics, temperaments, and goals receive sharper definition when set against the alternative provided by the other: Warburg vs. Steinmann.

*

The two were born in 1866, Warburg in June, Steinmann in September; one German Jewish, the other German Christian; Warburg the oldest of seven children, Steinmann the youngest of six. Their lives, privileged, unfolded according to generational patterns, however different their circumstances (Gombrich 1970, Tesche 2002). Warburg was born into a cosmopolitan banking family in Hamburg (his father Moritz directed M. M. Warburg & Co.); Steinmann into a family living in the village of Jördenstorf bei Teterow in Mecklenburg-Schwerin, with intimate connections to the local aristocracy (his father Adolf was a pastor). After schooling, both ultimately opted to pursue art historical study, a discipline rapidly developing in German and Austrian universities in the 1880s and 1890s, and both, like many of their contemporaries, looked south and conceived a deep and abiding passion for Italy and its art. Warburg’s university study took him to Bonn, Munich, and Strasbourg; Steinmann’s to Tübingen, Rostock, and Leipzig. They defended their dissertations, neck and neck, in 1892, and both would undertake their year of military service. Steinmann’s dissertation, submitted under Johannes Overbeck, was an exercise in Christian archaeology: *Die Tituli und die kirchliche Wandmalerei im*

Abendlande vom V. bis zum XI. Jahrhundert ("Tituli and Ecclesiastical Wall Painting in the West from the Fifth to the Eleventh Century"); Warburg's dissertation, submitted under Hubert Janitschek, focused on the impact of the pagan heritage: *Sandro Botticelli's "Geburt der Venus" und "Frühling": Eine Untersuchung über die Vorstellungen von der Antike in der italienischen Frührenaissance* ("Sandro Botticelli's 'Birth of Venus' and 'Primavera': A Study of the Conception of Antiquity in the Italian Early Renaissance"). The art historical lives of both were in part shaped by founders of the discipline. Right around 1889 Anton Springer brought Steinmann from theology to art history, and August Schmarsow introduced Warburg to Florentine art.

As young scholars, both Warburg and Steinmann gravitated to Florence to become part of the fin-de-siècle expatriate community, drawn there by the lure of Quattrocento art. Warburg resided in the city, on and off, 1894-1904, and Steinmann lived there for certain periods during the same years. Both met their future wives, accomplished artists, in Florence: Mary Hertz, a painter and sculptor from a prominent Lutheran family in Hamburg; and Olga von Gerstfeldt, singer, essayist, art historian, and poet of Russian background (Tesche 2002, 39-47, 84-105). It was in Florence, too, that Steinmann first came to know his patroness, Henriette Hertz, whom he would advise as she purchased paintings and amassed a library to support scholarly research. Neither man would pursue a conventional academic path. Warburg lived as a private scholar, active in the field and in the civic life of Hamburg; Steinmann was vaulted into the position of director of the Großherzogliches Museum in Schwerin, near the village of his birth, 1903 to 1911, with Rome as a second home. After Olga's premature death in 1910, Steinmann would become a permanent expatriate, soon as director of the Hertziana, where he was able to pursue his ongoing document-based investigations into the life and work of Michelangelo. Warburg opted to leave Florence, where, as he put it to a friend in 1910, "aesthetic rhetoric has a fogging effect on the documentary value of image production" ("wo die ästhetische Phrase den documentarischen Wert der Bilderschöpfung vernebelt"); in Hamburg, he wrote, he could study the relation between *homo sapiens* and the cosmos, track witnesses to the legacy of antiquity across the domains of knowledge and belief (not only classical), and investigate superstition (*Aberglaube*) in a rigorous and systematic way (WIA, GC, A. Warburg to J. Mesnil,

31.12.1910). Both scholars would devote the years of their prime to building and shaping exemplary libraries that, through their structure, defined research tasks and enabled the methods they pursued.

Warburg's wealthy family stood behind his developing plans to transform his library into a cultural historical institute. By 1905 he was recording book purchases; in 1908 he began keeping a record of visitors to his library; in 1909 he moved with family to Heilwigstraße 114, giving over the entry floor and some additional rooms to books, and working with his first assistant Paul Gustav Hübner on a reordering (Stockhausen 1992; Schaefer 2003). Only after the first world war, in 1921, in response to the founding of the university and with the impetus of Warburg's one-time assistant and now acting director, Fritz Saxl, would the library begin to support public lectures and publication series, the "Vorträge" and the "Studien". Initial funding for the Hertziana, too, was private. Ludwig Mond, chemical industrialist, entrepreneur, and art collector, with his wife Frida Mond, enabled Henriette Hertz, Frida's childhood friend, to purchase the late Renaissance Palazzo Zuccari at the top of the Spanish Steps to house her books and art collections. In 1912 she made a will giving her art to the Italian state and making over the library and palazzo to Germany, to be administered by the Kaiser-Wilhelm-Gesellschaft (which after the second world war became the Max-Planck-Gesellschaft); she would appoint Steinmann to the directorship with right to name his successor (Tesche 2002, 48-56; Ebert-Schifferer 2013). After her death in 1913 institutionalization proceeded apace. Already in 1912, Steinmann had launched a publication series, *Römische Forschungen der Bibliotheca Hertziana*. The first book to appear in the series was a study of ancient statuary known in the Renaissance, a book that originated in a dissertation written under Goldschmidt by Paul Gustav Hübner, who served as both Warburg's and Steinmann's first scholarly assistant (1908, 1911), in both cases helping to organize the library — so tight was the German art historical network. At the Hertziana, as at the KBW, it was only after the disruptions caused by the war, from about 1921, that Steinmann could make lasting gains.

Steinmann's position came with demands that found no parallel in Hamburg: it fell to him to facilitate the short — and longer — term research of the steady stream of German students and scholars who made

their way to the foreign capital to study monuments, visit collections, work in the Vatican and other libraries, and meet with local specialists. At core, however, both institutions were libraries, and simultaneously Warburg and Steinmann were overseeing the acquisition of books — in many cases the same books — and creating photographic collections, while devising systems for organizing knowledge so as to support anticipated research. Warburg's pursuit of the "science of typical forms," and his concordant desire to foster an "art historical science of culture" (*kunstgeschichtliche Kulturwissenschaft*) and to promote a "mixed method" (*gemischte Methode*) (WIA, GC, A. Warburg to F. Saxl, 8.12.1929), caused him to focus on a problem, the survival of antiquity, to give equal weight to image and word, and to accord significant space to works relevant to human orientation (religion, science, philosophy) and social and political life. If the Hertziana holdings would include contextualizing works on Italian culture, emphasis was placed on studies proper to the discipline. After "systematic art history" came books on art and then artists, alphabetized, grouped by nation (Italy, Spain, France, Low Countries, England, Germany, Scandinavian and Slavic countries) (*Jahresbericht* 1913/14 [MPG-Archiv, Abt. I, Rep. 6, Nr. 549a]). If in Hamburg offprints from collected works — periodicals and anthologies — were, when available, bound and filed in their position in the encyclopedic armature, in Rome, from the outset, art history was served by systematic efforts to index the contents of such publications, yielding card files arranged by author and subject, as well as a file of important editions of artists' lives. Thus Warburg's Group II, Group I distinctions played out institutionally.

Letters and diaries offer hints about the two scholars' mutual perceptions. Early on Warburg's irritation with Steinmann's work, temperament, and conspicuous success comes through. He intuited what the documents reveal, that Steinmann was a scholar disposed to revere artistic genius. In a diary entry of 1 May 1894, Steinmann recorded the feelings prompted by an encounter with Michelangelo (Tesche 2002, 31-32).

Heute Morgen verbrachte ich 4 Stunden ganz allein in der Capella Sistina; ich war allein mit Michelangelos Geist. Welch' einen Reichtum von Schönheit, Freude und Trauer haben die großen Gestalten des Meisters in meine Seele gegossen. Mir ist's, als ob er selber redete, ich verstehe ihn so gut, dass ich meine er selbst stände neben mir, den Sinn seiner Schöpfung deutend. Ich

nenne die Capella Sistina meine geistige Heimat [...]. Dort erfrischt sich meine Seele [...]; dort bin ich heute in stiller Andacht niedergekniet so heilig ist die Stätte.

This morning I spent 4 hours wholly alone in the Sistine Chapel; I was alone with Michelangelo's spirit. What a richness of beauty, joy and sorrow the master's great figures poured into my soul. For me it is as though he himself spoke, I understand him so well that I fancy he himself stood beside me, indicating the meaning of his creation. I call the Sistine Chapel my spiritual *Heimat* [...]. There my soul refreshes itself [...]; there today I knelt in quiet piety, so holy is the place.

In 1901, Steinmann published the first of two volumes of a reputation-securing study of the Sistine Ceiling, *Die Sixtinische Decke*, the second to follow in 1905. Monumental in scale, splendid in appearance, their publication was subsidized by the German Reich. Warburg purchased the volumes for his library, but the text raised his hackles, and to colleagues he launched tirades: to Heinrich Brockhaus, director of the Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florence, who defended Steinmann for having brought together a good deal of material (WIA, GC, H. Brockhaus to A. Warburg, 20.1.1902), and also to Wilhelm Bode, soon to become Director General of the Berlin State Museums (Roeck 2001, 79; trans. 2009, 69) (Berlin, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin-Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Zentralarchiv, NL Bode, 5251/1, 11.1-2).

Es ist wohl noch nie mit weniger Glück deutsches Reichsgeld zu wissenschaftlichen Zwecken herausgeworfen worden. Ohne Phantasie und Enthusiasmus in lauwarmen koketten Wimmerton für ältere Jungfrauen der besten Stände hingegossen und dabei von einer geradezu brutalen Oberflächlichkeit im einzelnen.

It is arguable whether money from the German Reich has ever been thrown at a scholarly project to less felicitous effect. It is couched in a half-hearted and coquettishly simpering language lacking in imagination and enthusiasm and suited only to old maids from polite society, while on points of detail it reveals a positively brutal superficiality.

Warburg's stance toward Steinmann's art historical scholarship had taken shape earlier, when Steinmann had ventured directly into his territory. In 1895 Steinmann published an article on Botticelli's paintings in the Sistine Chapel, correcting Schmarsow as he re-identified a biblical scene, and this led him to the Quattrocento. In 1897-1898 he published three slim volumes for the popular Knackfuss series of *Künstler-Monographien*, treating Botticelli, Ghirlandaio, and Pinturicchio. The first, which would go into four editions and be translated into English, concerned the artist at the center of Warburg's dissertation, the second, an artist who would increasingly come to seize his attention. In November 1897, in a letter to a friend, Warburg sniped at Steinmann's Botticelli, finding "behind the mask of selfless intimacy" (*unter der Maske selbstloser Innigkeit*), arrogant ignorance and a lack of understanding of what was truly significant artistically; Steinmann's *Porträtschnüffelei* was pseudo-scholarship, he wrote, and only the proof of connections between the Sistine frescoes and biblical texts was of undeniable value (WIA, GC, A. Warburg to J. Dwelshauvers [J. Mesnil], 2.11.1897). Warburg would buy the three books and in his personal copy of *Botticelli*, with an active pencil, he would express his contempt for vague language and subjective assessments by means of underlines, question marks, and a few marginal notes. His underlines highlight not facts or thoughts but sentimental descriptors, as in the opening account of a supposed self-portrait by Botticelli, where the eyes were said to lend the physiognomy the same "winning magic" (*gewinnender Zauber*) and the same "melancholy charm" (*melancholischer Reiz*) that delights us in the portraits of the young Raphael; phrases like "indescribably beautiful" (*unbeschreiblich schön*) seemed unworthy to a scholar who valued rational analysis. Warburg's approach to Botticelli was problem-oriented; his driving ambition was to determine what antiquity meant to the artist. Steinmann indicated that Botticelli's source for the *Birth of Venus* "seemed" to be Poliziano's *Giostra* (the word *scheint* double-underlined by Warburg), in reference to the poet's description of reliefs owed to Vulcan, including the *Birth of Venus*, in the tournament poem for Giuliano de' Medici (Steinmann 1897a, 77). Warburg had taken the matter further, positing that Poliziano gave the *concetto* to the artist, placing poet and painter within the Medici circle, and drawing extended stylistic analogies between what Poliziano chose to take from Ovid and what Botticelli chose to extract from ancient art: life in motion. In the case of Steinmann's *Ghirlandaio*, the difference in outlook was again marked.

Steinmann could suggest that Ghirlandaio's life did not offer so psychologically interesting a problem as the awakening and strengthening of genius in Botticelli, Raphael, or Michelangelo (Steinmann 1897b, 4-5). For Warburg Ghirlandaio was interesting precisely on psychological grounds. The artist, in his work for Francesco Sassetti, manager of the Medici banking house, revealed the fault lines in early Renaissance style and the processes involved in stylistic shift. For his patron, Ghirlandaio balanced the competing forces of Flemish piety as exemplified in northern devotional images (*Andachtsbilder*) and antiquity's expressive gestural eloquence (Warburg [1907] 1932, 157).

The paths of the two scholars continued to diverge. Embracing an ever wider range of source materials, Warburg became an expert on astrological and mythographical traditions as he gathered material for his investigations into mentalities, as he studied telling transformations of typical forms. Steinmann's life work became that of paying homage to Michelangelo through the intimate, painstaking labor of publishing documents related to the artist's life and achievements, thus well fulfilling Warburg's characterization: "Sentimental-heroisch, religiös politisch rekonstruierend auf geschichtlicher Grundlage".

It was during the war that Steinmann and Warburg first found common cause. They met up by chance in Rome in February 1915, first at a dinner at the Villa Malta, the residence of Fürst and Fürstin von Bülow, and then again at the Palazzo Caffarelli on the Capitoline, seat of the Germany Embassy (E. Steinmann *Tagebücher*, Berlin, MPG-Archiv, Abt. III, Rep. 63, Nr. 45). Von Bülow, former chancellor of Germany, now ambassador to Rome, was known to both and they unequivocally supported his unsuccessful mission to dissuade the Italians from taking sides against Germany in the war. As Warburg's letters and Steinmann's diary reveal, both were wholly preoccupied by the war. In the entry for 15 February 1915, Steinmann made this explicit, adding that because he had discovered in Warburg the same ardent love for the Fatherland, he found him likeable (*sympatisch*) for the first time in his life.

Wishing to serve their homeland, but nearing fifty when war broke out, the two shared the instinct to politicize their scholarly activities, to orient their historical scholarship toward patriotic ends. Warburg in Hamburg

proceeded to amass a “war library” (*Kriegsbibliothek*), purchasing books concerning war on a lavish scale — some 1500 by 1918 — and simultaneously submitting himself to the relentless discipline of creating a “war file” (*Kriegskartothek*). Daily reading through newspapers, eight German and two Italian, experiencing the war vicariously as he studied propaganda in word and image, he amassed a total of some 90,000 cards in 72 boxes. Documenting the war and wartime irrationality, he gathered proofs under rubrics including Superstition, Prophecy, Religion, Pope and War, Catholic Church, Freemasons, Ethics of War (Schwartz 2007). Warburg focused his wartime scholarly research on the German North — he had turned his back on Italy; his study of ephemeral works and irrational phenomena in another period of crisis in German history, the Reformation, yielded the now classic *Heidnisch-antike Weissagung in Wort und Bild zu Luthers Zeiten* (Wedepohl 2007; Newman 2009). Steinmann sat out the war in Munich and Berlin, opting for an overtly polemical project directed against the enemy in France. To reveal the greed and arrogant pride in the French character, he undertook to study Napoleon’s wholesale theft of European art treasures and the ceremonies accompanying the arrival of the loot in Paris (Tesche 2002, 136-138). As the articles came out Steinmann provided offprints for Warburg, which were duly bound and shelved in the library. *Vae Victis* came first, with a handwritten inscription “In dankbarer Erinnerung”, dated 23 July 1916, the article thus given during or just after a visit Steinmann made to the KBW (WIA, Warburg’s visitors’ book, III.24.1, 17). Three later essays arrived with the dedication: “Für die Kriegssammlung” (“For the War Collection”): *Das Fest der Freiheit im Jahre 1798 in Paris* (1916), *Geraubte Schätze in Paris, I. Die Aachener Säulen, II. Der Löwe und die Rosse von San Marco* (1916), and *Die Plünderung Roms durch Bonaparte* (1917). When the war ended Steinmann was writing a synthetic study on French art theft in Germany and Italy: *Kunstraub der Franzosen in Deutschland und Italien*, left incomplete as he made his way back to Hertziana to undertake the delicate task of reopening a German institute in what had been enemy territory. Steinmann was long advised to keep a low profile, and in fact Warburg’s Hertziana lecture in January 1929 marked the relaunching of his public lecture series in a new hall (*Jahresbericht* 1918, 1922/23, 1928-29 [MPG-Archiv, Abt. I, Rep. 6, Nr. 550, 552, 558]).

In the postwar years, after Warburg had reemerged from his dark time in mental clinics, the two scholars reestablished contact, asking for favors in telling ways. In 1925, Warburg thought of Steinmann when he needed to find a research assistant in Rome, someone who might hunt down the horoscope of Agostino Chigi in local archives (WIA, GC, A. Warburg - E. Steinmann exchange, 22-29.10.1925). In 1926 Steinmann thought of Warburg when, for the financial benefit of the Hertziana, he wished to sell (but retain for Germany) a Michelangelo dossier from the Paar Collection that Frida Mond had presented in memory of Henriette Hertz (WIA, GC, E. Steinmann-A. Warburg exchange, 18-26.01.1926). This was the state of things when Warburg, with Bing and Alber, arrived in Rome late in 1928.

The first Roman re-encounter took place on 13 November 1928. That was just three days after the Hamburg party had arrived in Rome, a meeting in which “much was discussed” — as chronicled in the *Tagebuch*. Three days after that Warburg attended one of Steinmann’s “men’s evenings” (*Herrenabende*) — not only for men — where he was introduced to the German colony, finding among them many good types. He ruefully noted, drawing on a wartime phrase, that of the sixty or so present, he and Steinmann were, in terms of years, “in the front-line trench” (*im vordersten Schützengraben*); he saw in Steinmann’s study not only an arresting portrait of his deceased wife, but also a picture of Mussolini. Steinmann was the soul of hospitality and went out of his way to help the visitors integrate themselves into the community. On the 19th of the month he included Warburg and Bing on a visit to the Camera della Fede in the company of Biagio Biagetti, general director of the papal collections. On the 23rd he invited both to breakfast with Biagetti and Warburg’s old acquaintances Eugénie Strong and Arduino Colasanti. Steinmann was enmeshed in the social; Warburg might irreverently refer to him as “owner of a tea house” (*Teestubenbesitzer*) (WIA, GC, A. Warburg to KBW, 20.1.1929), but, with others, he availed himself gratefully of Steinmann’s deft and well-meant aid.

Warburg’s Hertziana lecture in January, enabled by Steinmann, was an event out of the ordinary, for some in the audience electrifying and unforgettable. Steinmann had taken control of the guest list: filling the hall were scholars and students from the German Archaeological Institute and the German Historical Institute as well as heads of foreign institutes,

ecclesiastics, and Italian researchers who understood German. Warburg spoke for two hours, sometimes from the podium, sometimes walking from screen to screen. Sensing a certain restlessness in the audience in the second hour, Steinmann approached Bing to suggest that she ask Warburg to wrap things up; she refused; the next day Warburg, hearing this, was livid: it would have broken his chain of thought. But all was well, for the additional sessions that Steinmann allowed were successful, especially the fourth, for which Warburg prepared additional screens. Soon, needing a paragraph summary of Warburg's lecture for his annual report to the KWG, Steinmann asked Bing if she might provide what he needed; Warburg became involved; the paragraph would be drafted but never completed. Steinmann submitted a paragraph genially registering an institutional success, prudently not attempting to characterize Warburg's method, but revealing his compassion (*Jahresbericht* 1928-29 [MPG-Archiv, Abt. I, Rep. 6, Nr. 558]).

Zunaechst erklarte sich der Gruender der Bibliothek Warburg, Prof. Aby Warburg, bereit, eine Reihe von Fuehrungen und Vortraegen ueber den "Einfluss der Antike in der Renaissance" zu uebernehmen, ein Thema, das ihn seit Jahren beschaeftigt hatte und fuer das er ueber ein ganz einzigartiges Abbildungsmaterial verfuegte. Hunderte von Blaettern wurden auf besonderen Gestellen angebracht und fuellten den ganzen Saal, um die Vortraege von Prof. Warburg zu erlaeuern. In kleinerem und in groesserem Kreis hat Prof. Warburg bei einem aeusserst schwankenden Gesundheitszustande in nicht genug zu ruehmender Aufopferung vor einem mehr oder weniger internationalen Zuhoererkreise seine Vortraege gehalten und die Resultate seiner tiefschuerfenden Forschungen haben den Zuhoerern unvergaengliche Werte vermittelt.

First the founder of the Warburg Library, Prof. Aby Warburg, said he would be willing to undertake a series of tours and lectures on the "Influence of Antiquity in the Renaissance", a theme that has occupied him for years and for which he has a singular body of illustrative material at his disposal. To elucidate Prof. Warburg's lectures, hundreds of reproductions were mounted on special stands and filled the entire room. In smaller and larger circles Prof. Warburg, despite an extremely uncertain state of health, with self-sacrifice that cannot be sufficiently praised, gave his talks before a more or

less international audience, and the results of his profound research were of enduring value to those present.

In never submitted drafts, Warburg tried to get at the heart of his lecture (WIA III.115.3.3).

Prof. Wbg. eröffnete den neuen Vortragssaal der Hertziana mit einem Vortrag über: Die röm. Antike in der Werkstatt Dom. Ghirlandajos. Zu den folgenden Tagen schlossen sich daran vier einzelne Führungen vor kleineren Kreisen fachwissenschaftlich interessierter Hörer. Vortrag und Führungen gaben an Hand eines Bildmaterials von etwa 300 Abbildungen Ausschnitte aus einem Bereich von Untersuchungen, die demnächst in größeren Zusammenhang veröffentlicht werden sollen. Der Gegenstand dieser Forschungen ist die Rolle des klassischen Antike beim Eintritt des Idealstils in die Malerei der Florentiner Frührenaissance und ihr Einfluss auf die Stilwandlungen der europäischen Kunst des 15., 16. und der ersten Hälfte des 17. Jahrhunderts. Hier handelt es sich nicht darum, Nachweise stofflicher Übernahme zu erbringen. Diese bilden vielmehr ihrerseits erst das Substrat einer Frage nach den Gesetzen, gemäß deren sich diese Übernahme vollzieht.

Prof. Warburg opened the new lecture hall in the Hertziana with a lecture on "Roman Antiquity in the Workshop of Dom. Ghirlandaio". In the days following, four related tours were given before smaller circles of interested scholars. Drawing on a pictorial corpus of some 300 reproductions, the lecture and tours offered extracts from investigations that are to be published shortly in a larger connection. The subject of this research is the role of classical antiquity in the emergence of the ideal style in Florentine painting of the early Renaissance and its influence on stylistic transformations in European art of the 15th, 16th and first half of the 17th century. It was not a question of advancing proofs of material appropriation. Rather these proofs furnished the substratum of an inquiry into the laws according to which the appropriation occurred.

Yet in the course of a communication with the General Director of the KWG, Friedrich Glum, in April 1929, Warburg did his best by Steinmann. Acknowledging Steinmann's unfailing help during the past "Roman working winter," he wrote: "Sicher ist er ehrlich bemüht, einen wissenschaftlichen Dauererst in sein Unternehmen hineinzubringen"

(“Certainly he is honorably engaged in introducing an enduring scholarly seriousness into his enterprise”) (WIA, GC, A. Warburg to F. Glum, 02.04.1929).

*

The two scholars’ final efforts led them to circle back to their roots. If Warburg’s final years were devoted to the *Bilderatlas*, an incomplete attempt to draw together the strands of past and present research and to provide a philosophical basis for the work, Steinmann brought to completion a series of works, each a tribute to Michelangelo in the form of a tool for future study. Working with the young Rudolf Wittkower, later on the staff of the Warburg Institute in London, Steinmann prepared the monumental *Michelangelo Bibliographie 1510-1926*, a handbook with over 2000 entries in alphabetical order (1927). And then came *Michelangelo im Spiegel seiner Zeit*, presenting the reactions of contemporary witnesses; and at the very end *Michelangelo e Luigi del Riccio, con documenti inediti* (1931). In these last years Steinmann also used his influence to gain papal permission for Domenico Anderson (who had taken photographs for his *Die Sixtinische Decke* in 1901) to photograph Michelangelo’s Last Judgment and the paintings in the Cappella Paolina (Tesche 2002, 31). Warburg’s last tour of Italy, 1928-1929, took him to sites revealing of man’s striving to orient himself in the cosmos — whether the anatomical theatre in Bologna, or the Tempio Malatestiano, or the mithraeum in Capua. A few years later, early in 1932, Steinmann’s last tour took him to Bernard Berenson’s Villa I Tatti, from which he motored down to Florence and, revisiting San Lorenzo, Santo Spirito, and the Piazza della Signoria, bid adieu to Michelangelo (E. Steinmann, *Tagebücher* [MGP-Archiv, Abt. III. Rep. 63. Nr. 56]).

In June 1929 Steinmann had written a cordial note to Warburg, hoping that he had recovered from his long trip, and adding, as a generational compatriot: “Versuchen wir das Beste, uns für unsere Institute, die nun einmal mit unserer Person und unserem Geist so eng zusammenhängen, noch einige Jahre zu erhalten!” (“Let us both try to do the best for our institutes, so closely connected to our person and our spirit, for yet a few years more!”) (WIA, GC, E. Steinmann to A. Warburg, 14.6.1929). Warburg died shortly thereafter, and Steinmann followed up with a letter to Bing,

writing that the hours spent in their company remained “unforgotten” (*unvergessen*) and that he only wished the demands of Roman life had left him more opportunities to come into personal contact with Warburg (WIA, GC, E. Steinmann to G. Bing, 27.6.1930). In July 1933, upon receiving a personal copy of the first volumes of Warburg’s *Gesammelte Schriften*, edited by Bing, Steinmann thanked her: “Ich bin besonders froh, die wertvollen Arbeiten meines alten Freundes Warburg zu besitzen” (“I am especially happy to possess the valuable works of my old friend Warburg (WIA, GC, E. Steinmann to G. Bing, 06.7.1933).

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The fates of the two institutions diverged. In 1933, Hitler in power and the Jewish members of the KBW scholarly staff no longer able to teach at the university, the library, as a private institution, with the help of influential English colleagues, was transferred from Hamburg to London to become the Warburg Institute – and there it would represent Germanic scholarship in Britain (Sears 2013). The Hertziana, belonging to the state, administered through the KWG, surrendered its full control (Glum 1964, 463-467; Schieder 2013). The compromise was that the Palazzo Zuccari would house not only an “art” division (Institut für Kunstwissenschaft) but a “culture” division as well (Institut für Kulturwissenschaft), the focus of which would be the “living spiritual currents” in contemporary Germany and Italy — the word *Kultur*, of course, carrying connotations foreign to the program of the KBW. Steinmann was allowed to choose his successor: Leo Bruhns, professor ordinarius at Leipzig, whose many publications included an eight-volume survey, *Die Meisterwerke: Eine Kunstgeschichte für das deutsche Volk* (1927-1931). The head of the culture division, appointed from outside, was Werner Hoppenstedt, an early follower of Hitler. In April 1933 the Hertziana, still under the ailing Steinmann’s watch, would host a “patriotic” gathering of the Deutsche Vereinigung Rom in honor of the new Reichskanzler Hitler: where Warburg had spoken, now Hermann Göring would speak. Steinmann noted in his official report that the event gave expatriate Germans in Rome an idea of what today was stirring hearts in Germany (*Jahresbericht* 1933/34 [MPG-Archiv, Abt. I, Rep. 6, Nr. 561]). His objections to the choice of Hoppenstedt as director had not to do with political stance but with competence, namely Hoppenstedt’s conspicuous lack of scholarly distinction and relevant experience. In

Steinmann's view, the proposed administrative structure was untenable and Hoppenstedt, however amiable, was not fit for the task Steinmann himself had endeavored to fulfill, that of representing the Fatherland in Italy (Documents of 28.05.1934, 04.06.1934 [MPG-Archiv, Abt. I, Rep. 6, Nr. 564]).

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Acronyms

MPG-Archiv

Archiv der Max-Planck-Gesellschaft, Berlin-Dahlem

WIA, GC

Warburg Institute Archive, London, General Correspondence

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English abstract

Drawing on Warburg's notion of *Forschertypen* and his practice of comparing scholarly temperaments and tactics as a means of illumination, the exercise is here undertaken of setting two historians of Italian art and culture, precise contemporaries, against one another: Aby Warburg (1866-1929) and Ernst Steinmann (1866-1934). Both were founding directors of enduring research libraries – the Kulturwissenschaftliche Bibliothek Warburg in Hamburg and the Bibliotheca Hertziana in Rome – whose creation in the early twentieth century was owed to Jewish philanthropy. If distant on the methodological *spectrum* of their day, inevitably they crossed paths, and documents give hints as to their mutual perceptions. Through their individual responses to common generational experience, insight is gained into the complicated mesh of academic and political culture in the fraught decades they traversed.

keywords | Aby Warburg; Ernst Steinmann; *Forschertypen*; Bibliotheca Hertziana, Botticelli, Ghirlandaio.

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