

Aby Warburg Reading Group

The Afterlife of Classical Antiquity in the Italian Renaissance



ISTITUTO ITALIANO DI CULTURA DI LONDRA

in Partnership with

The Centre for the Study of Cultural Memory, Institute of Modern Languages Research, University of London

Venue: *Istituto Italiano di Cultura, 39 Belgrave Square, Belgravia, London SW1X 8NX*

Third/fourth Friday of the month | February–June 2020 | 16:00–17:00

Organised by:

Dr. KATIA PIZZI (Director of the Istituto Italiano di Cultura di Londra)

FABIO TONONI (PhD candidate, The Warburg Institute)

GEMMA CORNETTI (PhD candidate, The Warburg Institute)

This regular seminar and reading group is devoted to the work of Aby Warburg (1866–1929), a prominent German art historian and cultural theorist who founded the Kulturwissenschaftliche Bibliothek Warburg, which later became the Warburg Institute. Deeply interested in Italian art and culture, he defined himself as: “Amburghese di cuore, ebreo di sangue, d’anima Fiorentino” (“Hamburger at heart, Jew by blood, Florentine in spirit”). The main concern of his research was the afterlife of Classical Antiquity in the Italian Renaissance, particularly in Florence, where he spent part of his life. With this purpose, he coined a series of concepts – i.e., *Nachleben* and *Pathosformel* – and theories – i.e., the theory of social memory – opening up an authentic new path of investigation in the study of art history and images. Warburg’s major contribution was in the study of Florentine art and cultural memory. In this sense, Gombrich states: “A historian who inscribed the word ΜΝΗΜΟΣΥΝΗ, ‘Memory’, over the entrance to his creation demands and deserves to remain accessible to the memory of those whom he benefitted”.

Participants will engage with some of Warburg’s key texts, projects and ideas that have shaped his thought and library. This will enable attendees to estimate his impact on the study of images, in particular, and Italian culture, in general, as well as his relevance in today’s art history.

Participants will be provided with extracts in advance electronically.

The reading group is open to all and free of charge. If you would like to attend, please email Fabio Tononi: fabio.tononi@postgrad.sas.ac.uk.

Topics	Readings	Dates
<i>Life, First Teachers and Studies: Between Hamburg and Florence</i>	Gombrich, pp. 19-42.	21 February 2020
<i>On Botticelli's Birth of Venus</i>	Warburg (1999), pp. 89-111.	20 March 2020
<i>Italian Culture and the Theory of Social Memory</i>	Gombrich, pp. 239-259.	24 April 2020
<i>MNEMOSYNE</i>	Warburg (2003). Gombrich, pp. 283-306.	22 May 2020
<i>The Warburg Library</i>	Saxl	19 June 2020

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Gombrich, Ernst, *Aby Warburg: An Intellectual Biography* (London: The Warburg Institute, 1970).

Saxl, Fritz, *The History of Warburg's Library, 1886–1944*, in Gombrich, *Aby Warburg: An Intellectual Biography*, pp. 325-338.

Warburg, Aby, *The Renewal of Pagan Antiquity: Contributions to the Cultural History of the European Renaissance*, trans. by David Britt (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute for the History of Art and the Humanities, 1999).

Warburg, Aby, *Der Bilderatlas Mnemosyne*, ed. by Martin Warnke and Claudia Brink (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2003).