

# The afterlife of antiquity and modern art: Aby Warburg on Manet

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## Introduction

The decided turn towards critical and academic favour that Aby Warburg's thought and works have undergone in the last three decades within Anglo-American and French scholarship has eclipsed even his revival within his native Germany.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, Warburg is now considered a tutelary figure within fields as disparate as visual and cultural anthropology, library and information science, archive and media studies, in addition to his work's having revitalized the contextual study of art history which – at least in its English-language iteration – had long been dominated by the formalist methodology of that other great student of Jakob Burkhardt, Heinrich Wölfflin. Indeed Warburg's fortunes as a Weimar and pre-Weimar era intellectual have come close to matching those of his younger and also prematurely lost Jewish confrère Walter Benjamin. It was, arguably, critical interest in Benjamin's work that has been partly responsible for the revitalization of Warburg studies, in the guise of a 'search for origins' for a certain German intellectual tradition that the Third Reich and the long silence that followed the destruction of the 1939-45 war all but eclipsed.

Yet Aby Warburg's status as a pioneer of the anthropological study of art and culture, as a visionary archivist and collector, as a mentor and institution builder, as an innovator in the use of photography as an art historical tool and as an interdisciplinarian *avant-la-lettre* has still not been enough to save him from the fate described by Gertrud Bing, the colleague who perhaps knew him best, as the art historian revered by many but read by very few. This has been especially true of Warburg's status in the areas that lie outside his rather narrow published output that mostly focuses on the rapport of the early Renaissance with ancient art and on an image archaeology attuned to the circulation of antique imagery in Western art. While it is true that an increased scholarly interest in his methodology and a more

<sup>1</sup> Warburg's work was introduced to English readers by Gombrich's 1970 intellectual biography and presented more fully in Aby Warburg, *The renewal of pagan antiquity: contributions to the cultural history of the European Renaissance*, ed. Kurt Walter Forster, trans. David Britt (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 1999). The proliferation of French and English-language scholarship on Warburg in the 1990s and 2000s is traced in Dieter Wuttke's bibliography *Aby M. Warburg-Bibliographie 1866 bis 1995*, Baden-Baden: V. Koerner, 1998, and its two updates: Björn Biester and Dieter Wuttke, *Aby M. Warburg-Bibliographie 1996 bis 2005*, Baden-Baden: Koerner, 2007, and Björn Biester, 'Aby Warburg - Bibliographie 2006 bis 2015', accessible at <http://aby-warburg.blogspot.com>.

rigorous, de-romanticized understanding of his biography have gone a long way towards 'opening' Warburg's work up to a variety of fields like American studies and aesthetics,<sup>2</sup> crucial areas of art history have seemed immune to his 'science without a name', and none more so than the history of modern and contemporary art.

It might well be true that, as the French editor of his work Eveline Pinto theorized, Warburg as the proponent of an 'asynchronous' image history is more appealing as a 'retro-modern' or even postmodern figure than as a modern thinker.<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless the notion that he was completely indifferent to the fundamental changes taking place in art during his lifetime is highly implausible. Warburg was after all married to an artist, advised several people on the acquisition of modern art, belonged to several circles of émigré German artists and intellectuals during his time in *fin-de-siècle* Florence, was a major advocate of the Hamburg Kunsthalle's adventurous collecting activities in modern art and wrote many observations on the subject. The latter took forms as varied as a theatrical satire on Hamburg's modern art scene, an exegesis of contemporaneous American chap-books and an elegy on the death of his friend Arnold Böcklin. Already as an undergraduate in Munich during the 1888 International Art Exhibition, Warburg was much taken by the expressive boldness of artists like Fritz von Uhde, a full four years before the official start of the Munich Secession. Additionally, modern artworks and iconography are represented on several panels of his unfinished magnum opus, the *Atlas Mnemosyne*. There is even evidence that Warburg was attuned to categories like folk art, which was only later co-opted into the modern art canon.

So why does a cleavage – real or perceived – still persist between Warburg's 'psychology of human expression' and modern art as practiced in his time and the present? After all, wouldn't a psychology of creative expression benefit from an investigation into the artistic utterances of the moment just as much as those of times past? Part of the reluctance of critics to take Warburg seriously as a scholarly voice on anything postdating the German Reformation surely stems from the fragmentary nature of his own work and the (only) circumstantial engagements he had with modern art as an emerging creative and philosophical category during the late nineteenth century. Whereas his students and colleagues occasionally diverged from their narrow area of interest to comment on such unlikely topics as cinema

<sup>2</sup> We should not forget that Warburg saw himself more and more as an Americanist in later years; see Steinberg, 'Aby Warburg's Kreutzlingen Lecture: A Reading,' in Warburg, *Images from the Region of the Pueblo Indians of North America*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995, 104-9.

<sup>3</sup> Eveline, Pinto, 'Aby Warburg: essais florentins et autres textes', in Aby Warburg, *Essais florentins*, Paris, Klincksieck, 1990, 10. Although Georges Didi Huberman has repeatedly focused on the potential of Warburg's radical 'anachronism', Michael Steinberg has alternatively suggested the importance of 'synchrony' in Warburg's thought; see Steinberg, 'Aby Warburg's Kreutzlingen Lecture: A Reading', 99.

(Erwin Panofsky) and abstract expressionism (Edgar Wind),<sup>4</sup> Warburg's only substantial work that did not directly concern the afterlives of antiquity was as a participant in debates about public art in Hamburg and as a systematic collector and cataloguer of propaganda during the 1914-18 war.<sup>5</sup> His deep sympathy for figures like the Renaissance banker Francesco Sassetti has led several commentators to cast him as an erudite 'too lately born,' if not as a man altogether out of time.

It is crucial, however, for the sake of his current and future reception, that this image of Warburg be challenged. While scholars still await the publication of his notebooks and his (aborted) theoretical treatises,<sup>6</sup> it is instructive to consider his mature work in the years after his return to Hamburg in 1924 which is after all the closest Warburg ever got to articulating his legacy as he saw it. Here too, one finds a lot of abandoned projects: a planned return to America ('which I have loved with unyielding force for thirty-five years'),<sup>7</sup> a planned work on the thought of Giordano Bruno and the Atlas of images itself, named after the Greek goddess of memory, *Mnemosyne*, that was to inaugurate a new model of art history 'without theoretical interpretation', to use the terms of Walter Benjamin.<sup>8</sup> But during Warburg's last visit to his beloved Italy, a journey-*summa* of his life's work, another work came to occupy his attention, launching him into another one of those quests for source images that so intrigued him while at the same time offering the promise of an even broader transhistorical theorization of visual and symbolic expression. In this case, despite Warburg's aversion to French culture and his quite superficial regard for impressionism, the catalyst for one of his very rare 'timely meditations' on art was none other than Édouard Manet.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>4</sup> It should additionally be noted it was the cousins of Warburg's close colleague Ernest Cassirer that were largely responsible for introducing French impressionist art to Berlin through their gallery.

<sup>5</sup> Mark A Russell, *Between Tradition and Modernity: Aby Warburg and the Public Purposes of Art in Hamburg, 1896-1918*, Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2007.

<sup>6</sup> Bearing titles like 'Foundational Fragments for a Monistic Psychology of Art'. See the recently published volume of Warburg's Studienausgabe: Aby Warburg, *Fragmente zur Ausdruckskunde*, ed. Ulrich Pfisterer and Hans Christian Hönes, Berlin: De Gruyter, 2015

<sup>7</sup> Quoted in Steinberg, 'Aby Warburg's Kreuzlingen Lecture: A Reading,' 108.

<sup>8</sup> This was Benjamin's remark on his own Arcades Project; see Benjamin's November 10, 1938 letter to Theodor Adorno in Walter Benjamin, *Selected Writings: 1938-1940*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003, 100. The fitting epithet in Warburg's case might well be Uwe Fleckner's 'Without Words'; see Fleckner, 'Ohne Worte, Aby Warburg's Bildkomparistik zwischen wissenschaftlichem Atlas und kunstpublizistischem Experiment', in Aby Warburg, *Bilderreihen und Ausstellungen* [Vol II.2 of Warburg's Gessamelte Schriften- Studienausgabe], Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2012, 1-18.

<sup>9</sup> In addition to Appendix I below that illuminates Warburg's process during his research on Manet, see Uwe Fleckner and Isabella Woldt's introduction to 'Manet und die italienische Antike', in Aby Warburg, *Bilderreihen und Ausstellungen*, 367-71, and Maurizio Ghelardi, 'Le dernier voyage d'Aby Warburg: Édouard Manet, Mnemosyne, Giordano Bruno', in Aby



Figure 1 (detail) Plate 20 from Warburg's 1929 Exhibition *The Roman Antiquity in the work of Domenico Ghirlandaio for the Biblioteca Heriziana in Rome*, courtesy of the Warburg Institute, London (WIA III, 115.6). Note: 284 corresponds to Fig. 6 below, 285 to Fig. 4, 287 to Fig. 9, 288 to Fig. 5, 289 and 293 to Fig. 3 and 290 is a detail of Fig. 5.

Warburg, *Miroirs de faille: à Rome avec Giordano Bruno et Édouard Manet, 1928-9*, Paris: Les presses du reel, 2011, 19-22.

In Rome during the final winter and spring of his life, Warburg reflected on his legacy as an art historian and formulated the core ideas for what he viewed as his main contribution to posterity: the method that he used to build his library into an interdisciplinary institution and would also shape his last project – an Atlas that would trace the development of artistic expression as a psychological factor in the historical development of mankind. Within that Atlas, whose plates were strewn about Warburg's suite in the luxurious Palace Hotel in Rome, Manet's *Le Déjeuner sur l'herbe* (1863) appeared as early as January 1929 as one of the illustrations to be used in a talk at the Biblioteca Hertziana on 'Roman Antiquity in the work of Domenico Ghirlandaio' (fig. 1). Warburg had already assembled the core images that would form part of his later argumentation on Manet: the twentieth picture panel of the lecture on Ghirlandaio features reproductions of the *Déjeuner sur l'herbe* (one taken from a book) and a reproduction of Marcantonio Raimondi's 1530 print *The Judgement of Paris* (as well as a detail of that composition). One could, at this point, object that the posture of the breakfasting trio on Manet's ground-breaking painting had long been known to have derived from a lost painting by Raphael via Raimondi's print. If Warburg chose Manet as a test-case for his method, why then dwell on a comparison that had already been made some two decades prior by his good friend and colleague Gustav Pauli?<sup>10</sup>

The aforementioned panel provides an initial insight into Warburg's own breakthrough: attached to Manet's and Raimondi's works is a seventeenth-century, previously unidentified Dutch landscape that Warburg had encountered in Tivoli and which he attributed to Nicolaes Berchem.<sup>11</sup> The composition of this painting includes figures with similar postures to those of Manet and is therefore a further link in the image chain from the Early Renaissance that was Warburg's true specialty, via Northern Mannerism (whose development during the life of Luther he had also studied), to the advent of modern art in nineteenth-century Paris. But Warburg did not stop there: above all these reproductions he placed two photographs of ancient sarcophagi from Roman villas, whose reliefs represent the same motif (the Judgment of Paris) and which can be said to have both originated the particular *Pathosformula* that Manet 'inherited,' and to have inspired a much more important thesis that Warburg had refined throughout his entire career: the human acquisition of distance from the pagan world of superstition.<sup>12</sup> In Manet's

<sup>10</sup> See letters in Appendices II and IV. For more on the history of this research see Hubert Damisch, *The Judgment of Paris*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996, and Wayne Andersen, 'Judgment of Paris', in *Manet: The Picnic and the Prostitute*, Geneva: Editions Fabriart, 113-20.

<sup>11</sup> See note 58 below.

<sup>12</sup> The connection between Raphael's painting and the ancient sarcophagi (particularly the one in the Villa Medici) had been made before by Otto Jahn, Anton Springer and even Joachim von Sandrart as early as 1675, albeit in a circumstantial manner. Warburg introduced a third sarcophagus (from the Villa Ludovisi) to this comparison.

case, this was achieved with the secularization of a motif initially used to represent demigods on people's funerary monuments that came to be employed for no less secular and quasi-sacrilegious a purpose than a collective portrait of two clothed bourgeois men and a naked woman in the Bois de Boulogne. In a preparatory note to Atlas Mnemosyne Warburg summarized this progression as follows: 'The flight of Gods, Manet, Heliotropism,<sup>13</sup> Pagan Gods and Pleinair'.<sup>14</sup>

Warburg – with the help of Bing whose input and primary research on his behalf in Rome should not be underestimated – developed this argument further during February of 1929. Following his usual course of thought from the afterlife of a specific expression originating in antiquity to an attempt to articulate something fundamental about the nature of artistic expression itself, he traced this process of abstraction as

the sequence during the course of which antiquity is progressively naturalized, or secularized, beyond the [particular] cultural frontiers and the figurative particularities of the Renaissance: departing from an integration of figures into the landscape, Antiquity [the Gods], with Giorgione and then Marcantonio Raimondi and lastly Manet, was little by little relegated to the realm of a prosaic 'pastoral gathering';<sup>15</sup>

so that,

the secularization of this ancient heritage would be the inevitable price to pay for the transition from myth to *logos*: 'per monstra ad sphaeram'.<sup>16</sup>

From monstrous fear to the remove afforded by logic: Warburg's favoured motto in his later years,<sup>17</sup> his recurrent focus on the 'banalization' of the Olympian Gods of old has a significance beyond its immediate Nietzschean context.

The insight to be gained by considering Manet's deployment of a godly posture on a trio of French bourgeois, is not limited to the realization of humanity's transition from superstition to cynical reason, from projection (of the self onto the Gods) to abstraction. For Warburg, Manet's innovation is also of fundamental importance for art's mimetic faculty, as he revealed in one of his letters to Pauli (see

<sup>13</sup> See note 52 below.

<sup>14</sup> Pleinair is in French in the original text. Warburg, 'Mnemosyne I [1927-9],' in *Werke in Einem Band*, Berlin: Suhrkamp, 2010, 641. Warburg also makes alliteration between 'Manet,' 'Maenad' and 'manic' in this passage.

<sup>15</sup> Maurizio Ghelardi, 'Le dernier voyage d'Aby Warburg: Édouard Manet, Mnémosyne, Giordano Bruno', in Aby Warburg, *Miroirs de faille*, 20.

<sup>16</sup> Maurizio Ghelardi, 'Le dernier voyage d'Aby Warburg', 21.

<sup>17</sup> Christopher Johnson, *Memory, Metaphor, and Aby Warburg's Atlas of Images*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2012, 30 and 42. This motto can be seen as the dialectical opposite of Goya's 'The sleep of reason produces monsters.'

Appendix IV below): ‘The intellectual in me always rejoices [...] to see that the gross opposition between ‘original’ and ‘imitation’ can be overcome through the mediation of a superior point of view according to which imitation is not a juridical problem, but rather part of a psychology of culture.’ Here Warburg addresses (albeit fragmentarily) a fundamental question whose currency in modernism and post-modernism has only increased: should art be subjected to the ‘originality’ test to determine its value – monetary or aesthetic – or should such evaluation be based on its import within and for a psychology of culture? Is Manet ‘imitating’ or even ‘parodying’ Raphael and, through him, the sculptors of the ancient sarcophagi? In Warburg’s estimation what should matter has to do with ‘distance’: not only the temporal distance between the various manifestations of the same motif, or the conceptual distance between men and their gods, but distance as *difference*. In his paper, Warburg draws attention to an important feature of Manet’s work – the naked woman’s direct gaze toward the viewer of the painting – and traces its origin to a ‘falsification’ originating in the Renaissance.<sup>18</sup> The ancient motif is not, as it turns out, the direct ancestor, the Ur-image of Manet’s composition; it is ‘no less constructed than re-constructed.’<sup>19</sup> Manet’s ‘inheritance’ of the partly falsified ancient motif is thus proof that Antiquity was as much a model of the Renaissance as it was the product of its creative imagination. The pagan antiquities that represented the natural elements (water nymphs and so forth) were not simply anticipatory of Manet’s forging of a new pictorial ‘sentiment of nature’ but the latter, indirectly, helped shape modernity’s image of antiquity just like Bonasone, Raimondi and Raphael before him. In short, it was not Manet who needed this return to the sources in order ‘to appear as a faithful guardian of tradition’ (the question Warburg poses himself at the outset), but rather tradition who needed artists like Manet for its afterlife. Creative re-workings or misapprehensions and playful variations on a theme, Warburg seems to be saying, are not the exclusive province of modern art, for ‘every age has the renaissance of antiquity that it deserves.’<sup>20</sup>

In the end, true to his lifelong habits, Warburg never did publish the paper on Manet that he feverishly dictated to Bing over several days that spring, despite the fact that he had already assembled an extensive image repertoire to go with it (fig. 2). Nor did he ever deliver it as a lecture. Nevertheless, Manet and his predecessors were prominently featured in one of the panels of the *Atlas Mnemosyne* (fig. 10), evidence of the centrality of Manet’s painting in his mind during the final months of his life. If, as Michael Fried has famously argued, Manet’s work – at once

<sup>18</sup> The direct gaze toward the spectator is also reproduced in a graphic reconstruction of the sarcophagus done in 1890 (fig. 8).

<sup>19</sup> Andrea Pinotti, ‘Archéologie des images et logique rétrospective, Note sur le ‘Manétisme’ de Warburg’, *Images Ré-vues, hors série*, no. 4, 2013, 12.

<sup>20</sup> Quoted in E.H. Gombrich, *Aby Warburg: An Intellectual Biography*, London: Phaidon, 1986, 238.



‘landscape, portrait, and still life’ – came to ‘comprehend and thereby to supercede’ all previous paintings,<sup>21</sup> Aby Warburg’s contribution reminds us that a culmination can also entail a return to the source. *Plus ça change...*



Figure 2 (detail of) Plate 3 from Warburg’s iconographic apparatus for “Manet and Italian Antiquity,” Courtesy of the Warburg Institute, London (WIA III, 116.1.1). Note: 37 corresponds to Fig. 4, 41 to Fig. 7, 45 to Fig. 5, 46 is Giorgione’s *Il concerto campestre* (now attributed to Titian), 47 to Fig. 9, 48 and 49 to Fig. 3 and 50 is a detail of Fig. 5.

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<sup>21</sup> Michael Fried, *Manet’s Modernism, or, the Face of Painting in the 1860s*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996, 505, note 224.



**Textual note**

This translation follows the original typescript (of forty four sheets) which was simply entitled 'Manet' and is included in Aby Warburg, *Bielderreihen und Ausstellungen* [Vol II.2 of Warburg's *Gesammelte Schriften- Studienausgabe*], Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2012, 372-5; see also 'Editorial note' in *Bielderreihen und Ausstellungen*, 374 and the textual note in Warburg, *Miroirs de faille*, 209. Previous translations of the text that have also been taken into consideration include: Italian (Il 'Déjeuner sur l'herbe' di Manet. La funzione di modello delle divinità pagane elementari in rapporto alla evoluzione del moderno sentimento della natura', trans. M. Ghelardi, in *Conosco un ottimo storico dell'arte : per Enrico Castelnuovo; scritti di allievi e amici pisani*, M. M. Donato, Pisa : Ed. della Normale, 2012, 431-4), French ('*Le Déjeuner sur l'herbe* de Manet, La fonction préfiguratrice des divinités élémentaires païennes pour l'évolution du sentiment moderne de la nature', trans. S. Zilberfarb, in *Miroirs de faille*, 125-38), Spanish ('El *Déjeuner sur l'herbe* de Manet, La función prefigurativa de las divinidades elementales paganas para la evolución del sentimiento moderno de la naturaleza', trans. Natalia Gil and Daniela Losiggio, in *Revista Eadem Utraque Europa*, Vol 8, N°13, Buenos Aires, 2012, 237-54), Polish ('Sniadanie na trawie Maneta. Wzorotworcza funkcja poganskich bostw elementarnych dla nowoczesnego odczucia natury', trans. Krzysztof Pijarski, in *Konteksty* (Contexts), nos 2-3, 2011, 116-9) and Dutch (in Pieter van Huisstede, *De Mnemosyne Beeldatlas van Aby M. Warburg. Een laboratorium voor beeldgeschiedenis, deel I: teksten*, Diss. Leiden, 1992, 249-253).

*Manet's Le Déjeuner sur l'herbe:*

The pre-figurative function of elementary pagan divinities  
for the evolution of the modern sentiment towards nature.<sup>22</sup>

(Warburg Institute Archive [WIA] III, 116.1.1,<sup>23</sup> 1929)



Figure 3 Édouard Manet, *Le Déjeuner sur l'herbe*, 1863, Oil on Canvas. Musée d'Orsay.  
Erich Lessing/ART RESOURCE, N.Y.

No modern painting poses more difficulties for the art critic [Kunstrichter]<sup>24</sup> who wants to demonstrate the crucial, essential role of formal and thematic links with tradition, than Manet's *Le Déjeuner sur l'herbe* (fig 3). Faced with a work which was raised as the standard in the battle for a luminous escape from the chokehold of academic virtuosity, it might seem futile – if not worse – for someone to want to trace an evolutionary line through the centuries from Arcadia to the Batignolles<sup>25</sup> by way of Rousseau. Nevertheless, in his combat for the rights of the human eye,

<sup>22</sup> The subtitle was added by Ernest Gombrich in a later version of the typescript dated 1937 (reproduced in Warburg, *Werke in Einem Band*, 647-59).

<sup>23</sup> The photographic apparatus is in WIA III, 105.2 and 115.6 (see fig. 2).

<sup>24</sup> Literally 'judge' or 'arbitrator' of art: an implicit reference to the *Judgment of Paris* (see below).

<sup>25</sup> The reference is to the Parisian quartier in the 17<sup>th</sup> arrondissement where Manet had his atelier.

Manet invoked the example of Giorgione<sup>26</sup> in order to defend the realism – in itself far from revolutionary – in the appearance of dressed gentlemen in the company of a nude woman. Did Manet, the man who advanced toward the light and whose directness in figuration taught the world that we should not try to find a style conducive to the creation of new expressive values without, at the same time, participating in the universal patrimony of the human spirit; did he need this return to the sources to appear as a faithful guardian of tradition? This is the question that we would like to pose to ourselves today. Because expressive values draw their penetrating strength not from the rejection of older forms, but from the nuances in the transformations to which they are subjected. This duty that transcends the individual can be an insurmountable burden from the average artist; for the genius, however, such a challenge constitutes an act of mysterious magic on the order of Antaeus<sup>27</sup> which grants to new forms their exultant force of persuasion.

Manet would speak of Giorgione but he never invoked the help of ancient sculpture and of Raphael against the philistines.

Gustav Pauli<sup>28</sup> was the one who proved that Manet's group, lying down and having their breakfast without the least sign of bother, can be ascribed so precisely to the outlines of Italian classicism that we could specify its antique predecessors and the Italian intermediary with a certainty that is very rare in the science of art [Kunstwissenschaft]: Raphael drew a *Judgment of Paris* modelled on the bas-relief of an ancient sarcophagus that we can see still today immured in the façade of the Villa Medici (the French Academy of Art in Rome).<sup>29</sup> In the lower right corner of the etching made of [Raphael's painting] by Marcantonio Raimondi,<sup>30</sup> we can see three demigods stretched out, lying on the ground; their posture and gestures correspond exactly to those of the trio who breakfast on the lawn in Manet's painting (figs 4 and 5).

An inversion of the energy animating the humanity depicted in [Manet's] painting is psychically accomplished by way of certain seemingly insignificant discrepancies in the representation of gestures and the face. In contrast to the gestures of the natural (if subordinate) demons on the bas-relief that are of a

<sup>26</sup> The reference is most likely to Giorgione's *Il concerto campestre* (c. 1500-1510), Paris, Musée du Louvre. At present the majority of critics attribute it to Titian.

<sup>27</sup> Antaeus was the indefatigably strong son of Poseidon and Gaia in Greek mythology.

<sup>28</sup> Gustav Pauli (1866-1938), German art historian and director (1914-1933) of the Hamburg Kunsthalle; see his 'Raffael und Manet', in *Monatshefte für Kunstwissenschaft*, vol. 1, 1908, 53-55. Relative to Manet, see also letters of February 14 and March 30, 1929 from Warburg to Gustav Pauli (written during Warburg's last Roman sojourn) translated below in Appendices II and IV.

<sup>29</sup> Roman sarcophagus relief c. 180-200 A.D. immured in the Villa Medici during the sixteenth century (see fig. 4).

<sup>30</sup> Marco Antonio [or Marcantonio] Raimondi (c. 1475 to c. 1534), Italian engraver and graphic artist.

ritualistic essence and convey their fear of lightening, we see in the Italian etching the representation of a free, illuminated humanity that is sure of itself.

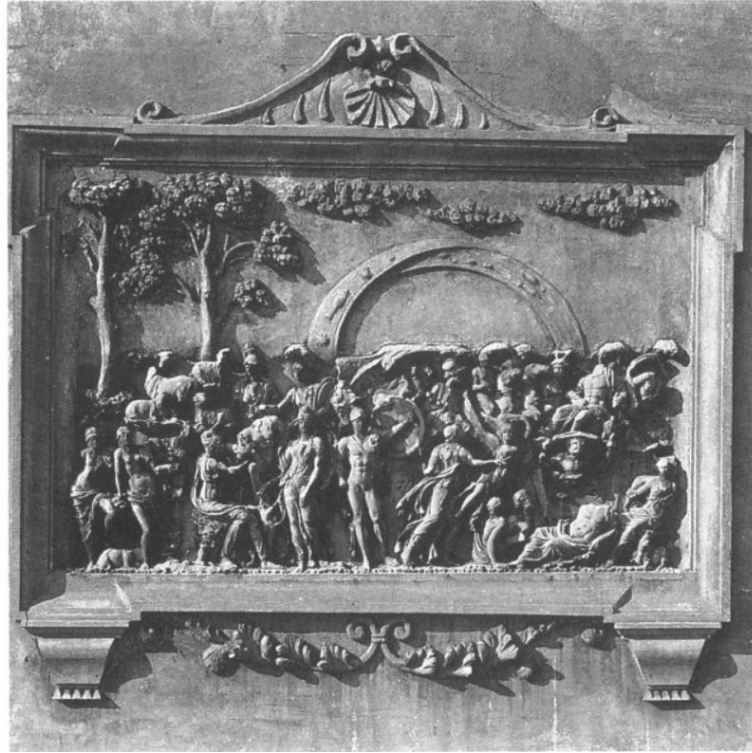


Figure 4 *The Judgment of Paris*, 2<sup>nd</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> cent. A.D., Hellenistic bas-relief on a Roman sarcophagus, Rome, Villa Medici (Académie de France à Rome).



Figure 5 Marcantonio Raimondi, *The Judgment of Paris*, 1513-14, Copper engraving after Raphael. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Rogers Fund, 1919 (19.74.1) Image © The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Of the figures on the etching Pauli says: 'They are nude and beautiful and don't have anything to say.'<sup>31</sup> This is, without a doubt, a delicate and, at the same, very pertinent way to describe the dominant atmosphere of the group. The pagan ancestors, however, did not have it that easy.

*The proof given by Pauli of the memory of a typically antiquarian composition of the Italian High Renaissance surviving in, and even determining the style of Manet's Le Déjeuner sur l'herbe, conceals behind a pleasant effect of surprise the significance that it truly aspired to have for the science of culture – a significance that cannot become apparent except through a detailed elaboration of the background of the story. Pauli furnished the irrefutable proof that the three characters stretched out on the lawn were a faithful reproduction of the three river-gods as Raphael himself sketched them inspired by an ancient sarcophagus and as Marcantonio Raimondi etched them in his famous engraving (The Judgment of Paris).<sup>32</sup>*

In this engraving they only occupy a part of the composition, on the right side. They make up the crowd of demi-gods looking on as the judge decides the winner of the apple in this sinister beauty pageant.

It has long been known that we owe this impressive revival of an episode of pagan mythology to two ancient sarcophagi that survive to our day.<sup>33</sup> On the long façade of the garden of the Villa Medici, we find inserted (up high) as if on a strip of film in motion, the front faces of ancient stone sarcophagi which, like other monumental remains, were dispersed throughout Rome and even inside churches. During the early Renaissance, they were the principal media through which the world of the pagan gods was physically preserved for modern times. It was thus here that the marble sarcophagus that supplied the principal motives to the Italian engraving was located.

The other sarcophagus which featured the 'Judgment of Paris' – equally hidden from scientific scrutiny because of its use as a private decorative piece – is today immured in the façade of the Casino Doria Pamphili (fig. 6).<sup>34</sup> We know that in the time of Raphael, a time truly versed in archaeology, it was part of the collection of Ulysse Aldrovardi<sup>35</sup> (Robert II No 10).<sup>36</sup>

<sup>31</sup> G. Pauli, 'Raffaël und Manet', *Monatshefte für Kunstwissenschaft*, vol. 1, 1908, 55.

<sup>32</sup> This paragraph is crossed out in Warburg's typescript.

<sup>33</sup> See note 12 above.

<sup>34</sup> Roman sarcophagus relief, c. 150-175 A.D.

<sup>35</sup> Ulisse Aldrovardi (1522-1605), Italian naturalist and zoologist; professor at the University of Bologna; see his *Tutte le statue antiche che in Roma in diversi luoghi e case particolari si veggono*, Rome, 1558, 428.

<sup>36</sup> Carl Robert, *Die antiken Sarkophagsreliefs*, vol. 2, Berlin, 1890, 13-20, ill. IV-V (see fig. 6 here); Carl Robert (1850-1922), German archaeologist and paleographer, professor at Berlin and Halle.



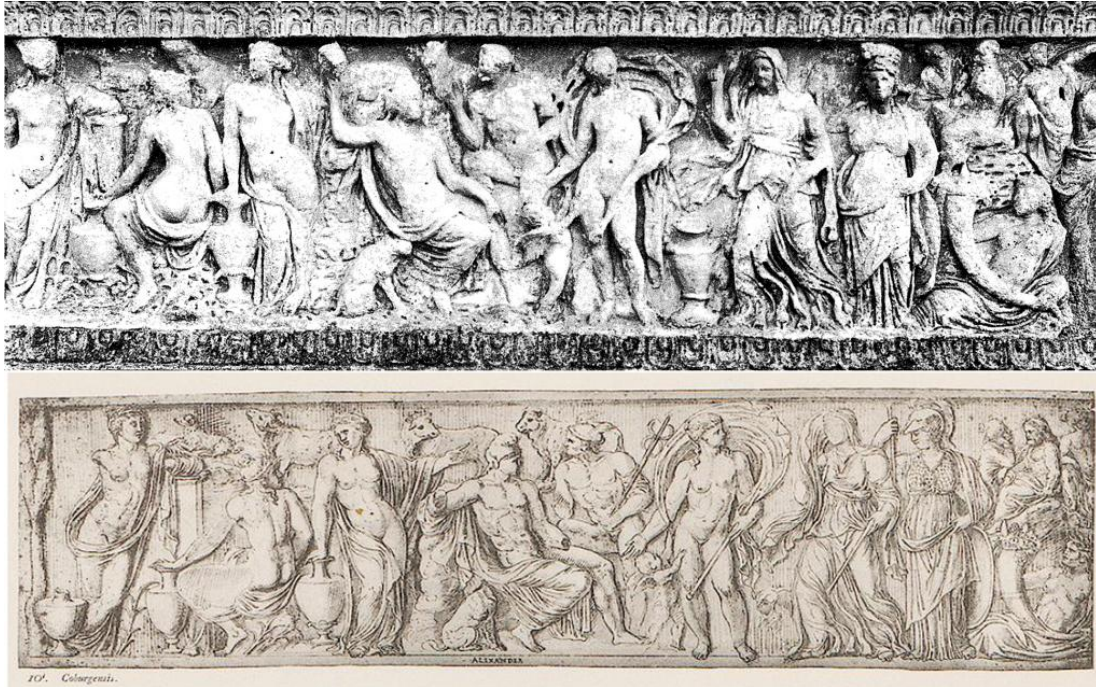


Figure 6 (above) *The Judgment of Paris*, bas-relief of the sarcophagus at the villa Doria Pamphili in Rome and (below) graphic reconstruction in C. Robert, *Die Antiken Sarkophagsrelief*, II (1890), pl IV.

The two sarcophagi diverge in their treatment of the legend in that the bas-relief of the Villa Medici reinstates two scenes that precede the Trojan drama: on the left, the Judgment of Paris, on the right, the return of Venus to Olympus. By contrast, on the relief of the Casino Pamphili, only the judgment of the shepherd on mount Ida is represented and the three Goddesses take up hardly more space than the three water nymphs on the left whose vigorous physical beauty seems to have led the engraver to conclude the narrative –which otherwise adheres precisely to the sarcophagus at the Villa Medici – at this point. There is only one difference that is nonetheless quite significant: the hero with his raised shield in the centre is missing, as is the ascension of Venus returning to Olympus guided by a Nike.

Another engraver, [Giulio] Bonasone,<sup>37</sup> represented the legend in its slightest details and in accordance with the sarcophagus at the Villa Medici (fig. 7). In this composition we also find the second central scene that is missing from Marcantonio: the ascension of Venus. On the other hand, both engravings feature, in a similar manner, the sovereigns of the world of light, placed up high, one furious, the other radiant: Jupiter as god of lightning enthroned over a sky that looks like a stool for his feet, and the Sun that advances in his solar chariot to the rhythm of the day and the night.

<sup>37</sup> Giulio di Antonio Bonasone (c. 1500 to 1574), Italian painter and engraver.



Figure 7 Giulio di Antonio Bonasone, *The Judgment of Paris*, mid 16<sup>th</sup> cent, etching and engraving.  
The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1953 (53.600.4232)  
Image © The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

But we cannot appreciate the crucial difference between the two Italian engravings unless we compare in great detail the poses assumed by the crowd of the demi-gods. In Bonasone, in accordance with the sarcophagi, the terrestrial demi-gods are represented by four characters. Tellus,<sup>38</sup> the ruler of the Earth, appears on her throne, with three genii<sup>39</sup> lying by her side, their bodies attached to the ground; their efforts to straighten their upper torsos betray their sudden commotion on view of the celestial apparition.

The scene is different in the engraving by Marcantonio that departs in this respect from the ancient schema: Tellus has disappeared. The nymph that in the pagan work lifted her ecstatic eyes towards the miracle which she greets by an adoring gesture of the hand, now turns her face toward the outside world observing her.

Even if we judge the artistic skill of Bosanone as significantly inferior [to Raimondi's], we must nonetheless acknowledge that he has preserved, more faithfully than Marcantonio, the religious essence of the sarcophagus as it was understood in pagan funerary art. The image of the ascension was in fact the metaphorical emblem signifying the hope for resurrection that the survivors assigned, so to speak, to the dead in their marble coffins.

<sup>38</sup> The Roman counterpart for Gaia, the Greek goddess of the Earth.

<sup>39</sup> Protective spirits of roman mythology (sing. Genius).



As for the Marcantonio's engraving, it seems to open the way for a fearless abandonment to the primal goodness and beauty of nature.

True: the all-powerful theophany of the forces of light hasn't disappeared from the sky, and if the demi-gods, stretched on the ground as they are, have a perfectly persuasive aesthetic weight, they owe it precisely to the figurative power of the cultic Phobos.<sup>40</sup> Relegated to the mountain and to the bank of the river, they turn, full of hope or fear, to face a luminous height which they are forbidden to approach. Their eyes are deeply absorbed and cannot be detached from the terrible divine apparition as they express their desire to escape the corporeal weight that is the destiny of all non-Olympians.

Let us compare, now, the three figures lying on the ground of the *Déjeuner sur l'herbe* with the sarcophagus and the Italian engraving: the chain that links them is none other than the face of the water-nymph that Marcantonio represents turned toward the spectator. Not only does she no longer have any reason to gesture adoringly in her momentary ecstasy towards the miracle of the ascension, but her attention is now focused on an imagined spectator, found no longer in the sky, but on earth. In the symphony for three voices composed by the group of Manet's painting, the spectator's attention (following the Italian engraving) is clearly solicited: the man seated next to the French nymph directs his intensely energetic eyes beyond the image.

The centre of [Raimondi's] engraving is occupied by the naked woman viewed from behind that we see motioning to cover her head with her garment. This motif does not appear on the sarcophagi; its form might have been inspired by an ancient statue and transposed onto that of Minerva ready to take flight: the shield with Medusa's head reclining on the ground and the helmet with the egret – signs of her intellectual domination – give away her identity; her function conforms stylistically to the era's taste for antiquities but it would nevertheless seem to only consist in the deployment of feminine beauty under a mythological pretext. This Minerva can be valued only as the prototype of that serene Olympian innocence whose corporeality has become the mirror of a superior Humanity no longer mercilessly abandoned to the capricious wrath of the demonic pagan gods.

This antiquary displacement of the gods towards the kingdom of plastic beauty [schein-plastische Schönheit] started with Raphael and his school and had fatal consequences for our insight into the science of culture [kulturwissenschaftliche Einsicht]: we now think of the pagan gods, veritable potentates of destiny for the High Renaissance, as no more than conquered superstitions. But we must realize that it is the astrological demonism of the pagan gods that is their most ancient and authentic function [Urfunktion],<sup>41</sup> as it survived past the period of their aesthetic spiritualization.

<sup>40</sup> In Greek mythology, the god of Horror, son of Venus and Mars.

<sup>41</sup> Pasted on this word in the manuscript: Gestalt/Urphänomen [form/original phenomenon or manifestation].

This is the reason why even on the ceiling of the hall of Galatea of the Villa Farnesina,<sup>42</sup> the figures of the gods – up to now unremarked by anyone – as cosmic powers presiding over human destiny, are assembled in this seemingly idyllic fashion: they are symbols of the constellation of Agostino Chigi<sup>43</sup> in 1465, the year of his birth.

In Italy the desire for compromise within the circle of this same Agostino Chigi, a sincerely superstitious man when it came to the stars' influence, produced a work of art that we could characterize as a conciliation between God the Father and the Capitoline Jupiter: in the dome that caps His tomb,<sup>44</sup> God the Father, through the intercession of seven angels corresponding to the seven planets, enlists the demons of destiny to the service of Christian Providence.

Our thesis, according to which the narcissism of the humans in the image [in Manet] is the constitutive criterion for the evolution of the style of this motif, finds welcome confirmation in a third sarcophagus, that would initially seem to contradict the accent placed on the non-antique quality of the nymph's face turned outwards to face the spectator (Museum of the Baths, No... former Villa Ludovisi, [fig. 8]).<sup>45</sup> But it is precisely at this point that the critical and archaeological knowledge of the monument comes to the aid of historical and psychological analysis: ever since the time of Braun<sup>46</sup> and Jahn,<sup>47</sup> this precise figure was considered to have been a falsification, while today it has even disappeared completely from the composition.

The fact that over many centuries such a falsification did not cause the least reaction from specialists gives credence to a will of society (very little analysed) towards the selection and moderation of emotions. This will must be understood as an artistic factor contributing to the formation of a style: it rhythmically oscillates between an impulse for reconciliation [Annäherungstrieb] and a preference for

<sup>42</sup> The reference is to Baldassare Peruzzi's fresco (c. 1510-11). See Warburg, 'Astrology under Oriental Influence', *The Renewal of Pagan Antiquity*, 701.

<sup>43</sup> Agostino Chigi (1465-1520), Italian banker (incl. to the Pope) from Sienna.

<sup>44</sup> The reference is to Luigi della Pace's mosaic (c. 1516; after Raphael) for the dome of the burial chapel of Augustino Chigi in Rome's Santa Maria del Popolo.

<sup>45</sup> The Museum is now the National Roman Museum – Baths of Diocletian, in Rome.

Warburg does not provide a reference number for the sarcophagus in the typescript. It is clear nonetheless that we are dealing with the sarcophagus (c. 130-40 A.D) from the Villa Ludovisi (fig. 8) which, at the time that this text was written, was located in the Museum of the Baths (of Diocletian) as it was then called.

<sup>46</sup> August Emil Braun (1811-1877), German archeologist, librarian and secretary of the forerunner to the German Archeological Institute in Rome.

<sup>47</sup> Otto Jahn (1813-1869), German archaeologist and philologist; collaborator of Braun.



Figure 8 (above) *The Judgment of Paris*, bas-relief of the sarcophagus at the Villa Ludovisi in Rome and (below) graphic reconstruction in A. von Bartsch, *Le peintre graveur*, vol XIV (1867), 245.

distance [Entfernungswillen]<sup>48</sup> pertaining to the life represented in art. The mission of a historical and artistic science of civilization [kunstgeschichtlichen Kulturwissenschaft] – which has yet to see the light of day – would be to investigate the phases of this will through original iconographic and textual documents.

Between the Judgment of Paris on the ancient sarcophagus and Manet's *Dejeuner sur l'herbe*, an inversion of our conception of the causes of elemental natural phenomena takes place. The inherent laws of natural processes have chased the entire governing council of the gods, with its quarrels and human passions, away from the sky, because such a concept was ungraspable for the individual. Even if,

<sup>48</sup> Distance and proximity are key recurring terms in Warburg's thought; see Sven Lütticken, "'Keep Your Distance'". Aby Warburg on Myth and Modern Art', *Oxford Art Journal*, 28:1, 2005, 47-59.

up to this day, the council of the seven planets, as controllers of destiny, has maintained its virulence in the form of still-unshakable astrological superstition, the great gods of Olympus, for their part, are no longer the object of any official sacrificial cult even since they were sterilized by archaeology.

*Free Statue and Bas-relief*<sup>49</sup>

*The presence of space leads to a desire to represent the proportions of a materially circumscribed corporeality; the eurythmic element of number is sought within the very same bodily limits. Receiving mirror of the present object is outlined. Implies static observation.*<sup>50</sup>

*Transported to the spatial middle ground, the observation of statues does not necessarily lead to perspective, because it attempts, from its fixed point of perception, to gather up the multiplicity of tactile values in so many signs that appear condensed on the surface. The relief is the medium of an expressive will turned toward the future.<sup>51</sup> It demands that we follow it like a procession that unfolds before our eyes. It does not require a fixed place for the spectator. Through comparative observation – developed according to the spirit of Leonardo – of human existence as conditioned by its corporeal structure, the European genius' taste for the microcosm followed the same path as the observation of macrocosmic connections (as we encounter it in Copernicus for instance). Heliotropic shock<sup>52</sup> that follows the laws innate in the succession of appearances. The pagan anthropomorphic gods of antiquity, as cosmic regulators [Ursächler] had to fight in retreat in the South as in the North. But Italy, far from conceptualizing its humanity in terms of grandeur and glory, considered man to be an object of supra-individual, if predictable, powers within the temporal rhythm of earthly events – even if the North, like the South, established an intermediary kingdom between figurative and mathematical thought: the world of the gods of antiquity. If now we compare the engraving by Raphael/Raimondi and Bonasone with Durer's *Melencolia I*,<sup>53</sup> to which we will add a *Juditium annuale* of Doctor Gorgwirus dated to 1516,<sup>54</sup> what would commonly be attributed to a simple studio exercise now appears as a confrontation [Auseinandersetzungsprozess] with the demons of destiny.*

*Human destiny or cosmic process<sup>55</sup> (inversion of the sphere of interests – entry of aesthetic contemplation.)<sup>56</sup>*

<sup>49</sup> Crossed-out intermediary title.

<sup>50</sup> This paragraph as well as the one that follows are crossed-out in Warburg's typescript.

<sup>51</sup> Underlined in the typescript.

<sup>52</sup> For Warburg's use of 'heliotropic' and 'heliotropism' see Christopher D. Johnson, *Memory, Metaphor, and Aby Warburg's Atlas of Images*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2012, 149.

<sup>53</sup> See Aby Warburg, *The Renewal of Pagan antiquity: Contributions to Cultural History of European Renaissance*, Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 1999, 642-3. See also entry for 16.II.929 in Appendix I, and Appendix II below.

<sup>54</sup> Doctor Gorgwirus (i.e. Johannes Borgbirius?) Silesian mathematician and astronomer.

<sup>55</sup> Underlined in the typescript.

<sup>56</sup> This line is also crossed out in the typescript.

The innocent joy of the comparative observation of human existence – in the sense of Leonardo – as conditioned by its corporeal structure was a force that, illuminated by the light of the microcosm, forged its way towards the understanding of dynamic underlying laws. Its sustaining ground is the impulse toward beauty that belongs to the artistic culture of the Renaissance, which looks for harmony within a given reality and behind which the will to illuminate chaos is motivated by a heliotropic energy that is equal to that estimated by mathematicians. Starting from manifestations of the macrocosmic dependence of man, mathematic cosmology also aimed at the discovery of underlying dynamic laws.

\*

The illogical confusion of Italian artistic creation has produced and preserved a work that, for an art critic of an evolutionist inclination, serves the purpose of an incisive bone.<sup>57</sup> In the ethnological museum of the Villa d'Este in Tivoli we can see a painting dating from approximately 1630 that depicts the Judgment of Paris and features symbiosis of ancient characters [Staffage] and Dutch landscape (fig. 9).<sup>58</sup> The engraving by Marcantonio circumscribes the world of its characters in the smallest details, whereas the landscape is of a resolutely Dutch character, in the manner of landscapes by Jan Both.<sup>59</sup> The three river-gods are no longer banished by the Terribile<sup>60</sup> that dominates the ether; the nymph can calmly turn toward the exterior of the painting because the two male gods are no longer held captive by anything more than an ordinary spectacle: a small group of travellers is trying to cross a current which is neither deep nor dangerous, as the cows dipped in the water assure us. There is therefore no reason why we should want to see in it a menacing aspect caused by powerful demons of nature, as a causal figuration of antiquity would have it. As for the Dutch cow, of a rustic allure, which appears high up in the mountain on the left, nothing would allow us to contextualize her within the history of spirit (in the sense that she might represent a god of the mountain), for the very reason that a powerful bovine is also present on the sarcophagus of the Villa Medici as an imposing specimen within the herd of Paris. Whatever the case, the nostalgia for nature, that eternal appendage of man

<sup>57</sup> A reference to Goethe, see George A Wells, 'Goethe and the Intermaxillary Bone', *The British Journal for the History of Science*, 3:4, December 1967, 348-61. The incisive bone (or *premaxilla*) was considered by Goethe as an evolutionary relic found in the human embryo that could help prove the common phylogeny of humans and other animals.

<sup>58</sup> This is the painting that Warburg and Gertrud Bing attributed to the Dutch painter Nicolaes Berchem (1620-1683) and which was modeled on Raimondi's print. It has alternatively been attributed to Jan Miel (1599-1656).

<sup>59</sup> Jan Botz i.e. Both (c. 1618-1652), Dutch painter who mainly worked in Rome.

<sup>60</sup> In Italian in the typescript.

who is captive to a restrictive social life, demands the satisfaction of its archetypal right [Urrechts]: Manet had read his Rousseau (fig. 10).



Figure 9 Anonymous (poss. Dutch), *The Judgment of Paris*, 17<sup>th</sup> cent., Villa d'Este Tivoli.



Figure 10 Plate 55 of Warburg's *Atlas Mnemosyne*, [The Judgment of Paris], (photographed in Hamburg, 1929), courtesy of the Warburg Institute, London. (6<sup>A</sup> corresponds to the Raimondi engraving, 6<sup>B</sup> to the relief of the sarcophagus in the Villa Ludovisi, 6<sup>C</sup> to the Dutch landscape painting, 8 is Giorgione's *Il concerto campestre* (now attributed to Titian), 11 to a detail of the Raimondi engraving, 7 to the Bonasone engraving, 10<sup>A</sup> and 10<sup>B</sup> to Manet's painting).

**Appendix I:**

*Entries on Manet in the KBW Journal maintained by Warburg and Bing during the 1929 trip to Italy*<sup>61</sup>

2 December 928

[...] In the dining room of the Villa d'Este, a Dutch painting (c. 1560) that transposes the Judgment of Paris by Giulio Romano (Manet) onto a Italian-Dutch landscape.<sup>62</sup>

2 February 929

[...] Manet marches in front of me guiding me under his banner. The first thing that I have done after the great crisis of Berlin was – what else more logical – to go see Manet with Gertrud Bing. Manet, Manebit!<sup>63</sup> It is truly strange that the original cell of the motif, protected by a magic cocoon from blind stupidity, continued to generate forms in the guise of the three river-gods. (In Raimondi is the figure seen from the back really a young woman?)

10.II.929

Mnemosyne is rendered this afternoon on two stretched frames of hessian canvas. At present, we can encompass in our gaze and critique, without hesitation, all of architecture from Babylon to Manet. [...] Manet: 1929 Lecture (around 270 image reproductions).

16.II.929

[...] Manet approaches the *Melencolia I* by Durer. [...] The journey that leads from the sarcophagus featuring the Judgment of Paris to Manet via Durer's *Melencolia I* and 'Berchem' could have as its common denominator: the cosmos and the figurative-anthropomorphic causality.

25.II.929

[...] Lastly, despite violent fatigue (accompanied by a terrible Pharyngitis), aided by colleague Bing (that was not much better physically), I talked about Manet with my documentation in hand. The inversion of the earthly fear of idols in the approbatory receptive mirror of nature.

The sarcophagus – the drawing –

<sup>61</sup> WIA II.15.3.1 transcribed in Aby Warburg, *Tagebuch der Kulturewissenschaftlichen Bibliothek Warburg mit Einträgen von Gertrud Bing und Fritz Saxl*, ed. K. Michels and C. Schoell-Glass, Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2001, 369-443.

<sup>62</sup> See note 58 above. This painting is after the engraving by Raimondi and not after Giulio Romano as Warburg indicates here.

<sup>63</sup> See also the preparatory notes to Atlas Mnemosyne in Warburg, *Werke in Einem Band*, 641.



the engraving – the mixed-subject painting<sup>64</sup>  
in Tivoli – Manet.

Colleague Bing says that the bucolic interpretation that Pauli attributes to the two demi-gods attached to the Earth reflects his optimistic judgment, in the way of an American teenager. Very accurate. I have written to Pauli [see Appendix II below].

#### 20.III.929

Continued work on the Introduction [to the Atlas Mnemosyne] despite being tired. This afternoon, explained Manet to Mrs Kenley and Mrs Wyman in broken English.<sup>65</sup> Energetic inversion in a state of external repose: the river-gods held down to the ground by their veneration cannot get back up; the *déjeuners* [breakfasting party] of Manet don't want to: 'lazy people'<sup>66</sup> catharsis of listlessness.

#### 24.III.929

[...] Manet and the Roman antiquity must take priority [over Mnemosyne]; I count on finishing soon.

[...] The idea came to me to make of Manet a text commemorating the anniversary of the Roman Institute.<sup>67</sup>

#### 28.III.929

[...] The intense work on Manet finally allows me to identify 'in one strike' both the Olympian and the 'demonic' antiquity in their differentiated functions.

*Déjeuner dur l'herbe* – the catharsis of listlessness by way of a reformed Eridanus<sup>68</sup> in the decan of Saturn.

#### 3 February [April] 929

[...] Manet is blocking only in appearance.

Formation of the expressive value – polarity of the energetic problem – the Maenad of the head-huntress and the meditative river-god. In truth: the schizophrenia in the mirror of stylistic movement. Manic-depressive Polarity.<sup>69</sup>

<sup>64</sup> 'sujet mixte' in French in the text

<sup>65</sup> In a letter of March 23 1929 to Saxl, Warburg identifies Mrs Kenley and her daughter Mrs Weyman as visiting Rome from Chicago.

<sup>66</sup> In English in the text.

<sup>67</sup> This refers to the German Archaeological Institute in Rome that was founded in January 1829 and was celebrating. Nothing came of Warburg's plan.

<sup>68</sup> The ancient Greek river-god.

<sup>69</sup> This remark directly precedes Warburg's famous observation about himself that is written on the following page of the journal: 'Sometimes it seems to me as if, in my role as psycho-historian, I tried to diagnose the schizophrenia of Western civilization from its images in an autobiographical reflex; the ecstatic nymph (manic) on the one side, the mourning river-god (depressive) on the other, like the two poles between which the sensible person,

4 April 929

[...] Pushed on despite my fatigue like a steamroller. Manet resists.

[...] Despite my fatigue, the essence of energetic inversion in Manet: the meaning of the figures lying on the ground is energetically inverted from a symbol of passive fatalism to a cynical being – this is gained by optimism, by an internal redress.

---

faithfully giving form to his impressions, searches for his own style in the creative act. The old game of contrasts: *vita activa* and *vita contemplativa*.'

**Appendix II:**

Warburg's letter to Gustav Pauli, 14 February 1929 [Palace Hotel, Rome].<sup>70</sup>

My dear Pauli,

[...] The debate whose history I would much like to know is the one pertaining to Manet on account of his 'Déjeneur sur l'herbe.' I have not until now found a single exhaustive work on Manet, not even the least bit of bibliographic reference that would promise even a psychological insight on this question. Regarding your own proof,<sup>71</sup> it has for me a much larger significance than would appear to be the case. In the course of my research on the force of survival of the pre-figurations of antiquity in the expressive language of gesture, I had initially, for many years, searched for the surviving expressive value of mimetic intensification and brought this to light. But the other expressive aspect of gestural language, its opposite – to wit: the attitude of the man consumed in his own self – springs up by the side of the first one and demands to be explored on its own accord. Thus, for instance, it seems to me that the standing of Dürer's *Melencolia I* assumed – modified in form (but for this very reason more autonomous) – the posture of a river-god. (That Dürer in fact knew of a river-god in the guise of the figure on an antique pendulum is proven by an engraving of his in the *Life of Mary* series.) This attitude of the river-god which in pagan mythology signified the natural force at play in still or running water, finds a direct counterpart in the *Judgment of Paris* as depicted (after an ancient model) in Raimondi's engraving. The three natural divinities, as you have so well argued, don't have anything 'to say to each other.' Maybe because they were born precisely as a pictorial response to the question of origin that was to be sufficient in itself. They stand for themselves, like reeds in calm waters, and the question of origin and destination is resolved through them in the process of figuration that [...].<sup>72</sup> Thrown all together in the river bank, without anything indicating that they are to be brought together, the three bodies casually assume their place in their luxuriant surroundings.

To trace the pre-figurations of gestural language, to grasp its essence in contiguities and continuities: such is the true and deeper goal of our Atlas which is at present composed by 1500 reproductions, more or less in order.

You can see now what is the meaning of the Dutch painting I discovered at Tivoli.<sup>73</sup> Could I ever have found a more convincing piece of evidence to complete

<sup>70</sup> WIA GC/24050.

<sup>71</sup> See note 28 above.

<sup>72</sup> Passage missing in the typescript.

<sup>73</sup> See note 58 above.

the panels of my historical construction?<sup>74</sup> The attempt to represent the legend of Eve in the ancient epic mode as part of a doubting juridical process is connected to a more evident, animalistic and natural existence. In the waters of the river-gods, the cows, unburdened by their demonic existence (even if a little menacing still), contribute to the metamorphosis that will later culminate in the French painting [Manet]. Paris, in contrast to Paris,<sup>75</sup> awards its prize not to the singular nude but to the group that consists of a clothed humanity and a free body within a flowering nature.

From the secularization of pagan demonism (beyond *Melencolia I* caught as it is between nature and fact) to the affirmation of nature in a French forest.

In his defence against the laughing crowds, Manet invoked the example of Giorgione<sup>76</sup> which had himself painted naked and clothed figures side by side. This reference only applies to the theme of the painting: not only does Manet affirm that the Venetians were the first to present man's rapport to the landscape in this harmonic light, but he also conceals the fact that the composition of his 'concert of stretched-out bodies' carries the trace of the characteristic classical style of ancient sarcophagi, 'seen through the temperament of a Roman.'<sup>77</sup>

You understand now what your discovery means, not only for Manet but for all of my conclusions. The intellectual in me always rejoices (thinking that I have found happy confirmation of our conception of life) to see that the gross opposition between 'original' and 'imitation' can be overcome through the mediation of a superior point of view according to which imitation is not a juridical problem, but rather part of a psychology of culture. The question to ask is this: what is the meaning of this intensification at work in the administration of the heritage that takes places as part of the self-education of the European man? [...]

Your old friend,  
Warburg.

<sup>74</sup> The reference is to the Mnemosyne panel 55 (fig. 10) to which Warburg's Manet text was to serve as a 'companion' of sorts.

<sup>75</sup> Warburg here alludes first to the city of Paris (and thus Manet's painting) and then to Paris whose judgement is the original motif that Manet reproduced in his painting.

<sup>76</sup> See note 26 above.

<sup>77</sup> In French in the text.

**Appendix III:**

*Warburg's letter to KBW, 8 March 1929 [Palace Hotel, Rome]<sup>78</sup>*

Dear all,

[...] My research has also led to the reliefs on sarcophagi that depict an ascent (a motif whose significance has never really been acknowledged): the return of Venus to Olympus in the scene of the Judgment of Paris. What constitutes the third term of comparison between the Judgment of Paris and the legend of Phaeton, as represented on these sarcophagi, are the chained genii<sup>79</sup> that, like figures hit by fear and mourning, or filled with veneration mixed with awe, symbolize the terrestrial domain next to the water-nymphs and the spirits of the mountains. Michelangelo and Manet (via Raphael) have transformed the hereditary patrimony of these chained demons that are united with nature by legend or passive dogma, by converting them into human expressive values – values that represent the face of that coin in free circulation in the guise of art criticism (emancipated from dogma). I pledge to transform this thick eel soup<sup>80</sup> into a more fluid potion by the end of April, at the latest. [...]

<sup>78</sup> Kulturwissenschaftliche Bibliothek Warburg [KBW]. WIA GC/31368.

<sup>79</sup> See note 39.

<sup>80</sup> Warburg's term for his own writing style.

**Appendix IV:**

*Warburg's letter to Gustav Pauli, 30 March 1929 [Palace Hotel, Rome]<sup>81</sup>*

[...] The photograph of the painting of Tivoli<sup>82</sup> is already in your possession, is it not? Marcantonio's engraving served as a model for the mythological figures [staffage]. As for the pagan sovereigns that rule over the world of light, they have been erased to give way to a naturalistic landscape: that is to say, a rivulet where two cows drink water, no longer offering any cause for religious fear [phobos]. If we compare it to its model, an ancient sarcophagus, we notice that in Marcantonio's engraving the celestial sphere that links Olympus with the Earth [Tellus] has already disappeared. The crowned Venus that ascended to heaven has been replaced by a nude Minerva, viewed from behind, that we could mistake for Venus coming out of her bath, if her helmet and shield were not at her feet to remind us of her intellectual symbolism. In short: the principle of art for art's sake<sup>83</sup> already in progress. I would like to follow this evolution that leads from the sarcophagus to the Tivoli painting and Manet's painting, via the engraving; having done that I would be your faithful acolyte, murmuring in a heavy tone and rendering my regards everywhere, behind around and in front of me. This is then our springtime Pascal mystery [...]

With my sincerest greetings to you, your wife and children.



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<sup>81</sup> WIA GC/24054.

<sup>82</sup> See note 58 above.

<sup>83</sup> 'Art pour l'art': in French in the text.