

Newsletter of the Societas Magica/ No. 4

The current issue of the Newsletter is devoted mostly to the activities, collections, and publications of the Warburg Institute in London. Readers desiring further information are urged to communicate with the Institute at the following address, or to access its Website.

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**The Warburg Institute:
History and Current Activities**
by Will F. Ryan
Librarian of the Institute

The Warburg Institute is part of the School of Advanced Study in the University of London, but its origins are in pre-World War II Hamburg. Its founder, Aby Warburg (1866-1929),¹ was a wealthy historian of Renaissance art and civilization who developed a distinctive interdisciplinary approach to cultural history which included the history of science and religion, psychology, magic and astrology. He was the guiding spirit of a circle of distinguished scholars for whom his library and photographic collection provided a custom-built research center.

In 1895 Warburg visited America and studied in particular Pueblo culture, which he regarded as still retaining a consciousness in which magic was a natural element. In his historical study of astrology he was influenced by Franz Boll (part of whose book collection is now in the Warburg library). In 1912 he delivered a now famous lecture on the symbolism of astrological imagery of the frescoes in the Palazzo Schifanoja in Ferrara; he wrote a particularly interesting article on Luther's horoscope; and he began the study of the *grimoire* called *Picatrix*, the various versions of which the Warburg Institute is gradually publishing.

It was an interest in astrological symbolism in art which was instrumental in bringing Warburg into contact with another distinguished scholar, Fritz Saxl, who became his librarian and was largely responsible for keeping the library intact during Warburg's lengthy illness and after his death.

In 1933, to escape Nazi persecution, the whole library and photographic collection was moved to London, where eventually it became part of the University of London. The library then had about 60,000 volumes; it now contains over 300,000, and an equal number of photographs. The unique subject organization of the library (almost all on open access shelves) has been retained to the present day, as has the direction of the scholarly interests of the fellows of the Institute.

Most of the literature on magic, astrology, alchemy, and divination in the library is classified as history of science. This perhaps requires no special justification today, but a century ago, when Warburg first started putting his collection together, this reflected a determination to re-focus cultural history by paying much more attention to subjects then normally thought to be on the antiquarian fringe.

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Warburg Institute Library: Classification of the History of Science

Natural Sciences

Magic

Occultism; The Evil Eye; Amulets, Magic Stones; Knots and Mazes; Magic Mirrors, Sorcery (special section on Faust); Secret Societies

Alchemy and Chemistry; History of Zoology, Botany, Mineralogy, Pharmacy

Medicine (including sections on Medicine and Religion; Medicine and Art; Astrological Medicine, Temperaments, Melancholy; Plague)

Mathematics (including Number Symbolism, Periodicity, Harmony, Magic Squares and Letters, Mathematical Games)

Divination

Monsters Phrenology

Comets Dreams

Solar Eclipses, Earthquakes Crystal Gazing, Hydromancy, Geomancy,

Augury Fortune-Telling, Dice and Board Games,

Palmistry Chess, Card Games, Tarot

Prophecy

Eschatology, Antichrist; The Returning Emperor; Prophecy and World War

History of Astrology and Astronomy

(Babylonian, Greek and Roman, Arabic and Jewish, Indian, Medieval, Renaissance, and Modern)

Astrological Practice (Horoscopes, etc.)

Calendars and Almanacs, Prognostications

Astral Mythology, Astrological Iconography

Globes and Instruments

History of Cosmology (special sections on Microcosm, Omphalos and Beginning and End of the World)

History of Geography, Exploration, and Cartography

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The art and culture of the Renaissance are still the prime areas of research and post-graduate teaching, but the elements of magic and astrology in the history of European culture which intrigued Warburg and Saxl have continued to feature as a minor but still substantial part of the work of the Institute and of the scholars who have been associated with the Institute.

To make this point I have only to mention the names of Franz Boll, Robert Eisler, Henri Frankfort (former Director), A.A. Barb, Otto Kurtz (former Librarians), Frances Yates, and D. P. Walker, and, among the current scholars working in this field whose works have been published by the Warburg, David Pingree and John North. Of the present staff of the Institute two regularly publish on, among other things, subjects related to magic and astrology: C.S.F. Burnett on medieval Latin and Arabic magic, divination, and astrology, and W.F. Ryan (the current Librarian) on Russian magic and divination. Many other scholars have worked on subjects related to the history of magic, astrology, and alchemy at the Institute, either as students of the Institute, or as visiting fellows, or simply as regular readers. This is reflected in the lectures, seminars, and publications of the Institute and in articles appearing in the annual *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, and in the catalogue of the library. The library catalogue is accessible on-line at the Institute's Website (for which the URL is given above). It covers over 80% of the library's monographs, all the offprints, and all the periodicals. Most of the library's holdings in magic, divination, astrology, and alchemy are listed in this catalogue.

The Warburg Institute also contains the archive and book collection of the late Gerald Yorke, an associate of the English magician Aleister Crowley. Most of the collection relates to Crowley and his followers, but it also contains many rare items of interest to historians of modern esotericism, and in particular to the magical society called the Golden Dawn.²

1. See E. H. Gombrich, *Aby Warburg: An Intellectual Biography*, with a memoir on the History of the Library by F. Saxl (London: Warburg Institute, 1970; repr. London: Phaidon, 1986). For the growing number of studies on Warburg see the on-line catalogue via the WWW site.

2. A catalogue of this collection will shortly be published. The collection itself is soon to be microfilmed and copies will be available for purchase.

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Request for offprints

The Warburg Institute invites scholars to send offprints. The library of the Institute treats them as books: they are bound, put on the shelves in the appropriate place together with books on the same subject, and catalogued. The whole of the offprint collection has been entered into the Institute database (after 1991 they went in automatically). The catalogue is accessible on-line through the Institute web-site, and the database will soon become part of CURL, the British academic library database.

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Charles Burnett and David Pingree, eds., *The Liber Aristotilis of Hugo of Santalla* (Warburg Institute Surveys and Texts, 26) (1997), 308 pp., £28.00, ISBN 0-85481-115-X.

The *Liber Aristotilis*, or *The Book of Aristotle Containing the Totality of All Questions, both Genethliological and Revolutionary*, was written by Hugo of Santalla in the mid-twelfth century. Hugo was one of the Western scholars who in the 1140's studied and translated the astronomy and astrology preserved in Arabic sources; Charles Burnett has written about him and his associates in his article, "A group of Arabic-Latin translators working in Northern Spain in the mid-12th century," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 1977, 62-108. According to the extended title of the *Liber Aristotilis*, its contents were taken from 225 volumes of authoritative literature, 125 of which are listed in the bibliography.

The edition by Burnett and Pingree gives the Latin text (pp. 13-121), followed by a detailed commentary (pp. 122-202). Appropriately enough for a work intended as a systematic study of the essentials of the discipline, the editors provide full explanation in the commentary of all the technicalities presented by the text. In addition to appendices, the editors give five distinct indexes, affording easy reference to sources, authors, places, heavenly bodies, and terms.

This edition represents a major advance in the study of the transmission of Arabic learning to the West.

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Charles Burnett, *Magic and Divination in the Middle Ages: Texts and Techniques in the Islamic and Christian Worlds* (Aldershot: Variorum, 1996). ISBN 0860786153. \$99.95.

The work Charles Burnett has been doing over the last two decades challenges any facile distinction between specialized and general study: while he focuses in particular on the transmission of Arabic material to the West, his selection of this fundamentally important theme has enabled him to address, directly or indirectly, virtually every area in the history of magic and the occult sciences in the later Middle Ages. This collection of twenty of his articles includes four that have not been previously published, and one for which a new supplement has been provided. Burnett divides the collection into two groups, with ten on magic, and ten on types of divination practiced in the Middle Ages. While the book itself is not published by the Warburg Institute, it exemplifies the kind of exacting scholarship for which the Institute is known.

The first seven pieces deal not merely with magic but with its transmission: "Talismans: magic

as science: necromancy among the Seven Liberal Arts" (previously unpublished); "Adelard, Ergaphalau and the science of the stars"; "Arabic, Greek, and Latin works on astrological magic attributed to Aristotle"; "The translating activity in medieval Spain"; "The legend of the three Hermes and Abā Ma'shar's *Kit~b al-Ulāf* in the Latin Middle Ages"; "Hermann of Carinthia and the *kit~b al-Isam~šs* </I>: further evidence for the transmission of Hermetic magic"; "The *kit~b al-Isam~šs* and a manuscript of astrological and astronomical works from Barcelona (*Biblioteca de Catalunya*, 634)" (previously unpublished).

The next four provide interesting case studies in the study of magical and divinatory manuscripts, including some that are conventional and others that depart from convention: "Scandinavian runes in a Latin magical treatise"; "The Conte de Sarzana magical manuscript" (previously unpublished); "The earliest chiromancy in the West" (with a new supplement); "The Eadwine Psalter and the western tradition of the onomancy in Pseudo-Aristotle's Secret of Secrets."

*Five articles deal with the divinatory technique known as scapulimancy: "Scapulimancy (divination by the shoulder blades of sheep)" (previously unpublished); "Arabic divinatory texts and Celtic folklore: a comment on the theory and practice of scapulimancy in Western Europe"; "Divination from sheep's shoulder blades: a reflection on Andalusian society"; "An Islamic divinatory technique in medieval Spain: an edition of the earliest Latin Scapulimancy (Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Canon. Misc. 396, fols 108r-1125) with translation"; "The scapulimancy of Giorgio Anselmi's *Divinum opus de magia disciplina*."*

The remaining four revolve around themes in the occult divinatory sciences: "What is the Experimentarius of Bernardus Silvestris? a preliminary survey of the material"; "A note on two astrological fortune-telling tables"; "The astrologer's assay of the alchemist: early references to alchemy in Arabic and Latin Texts"; "An apocryphal letter from the Arabic philosopher al-Kindī to Theodore, Frederick II's astrologer, concerning God and Magog, the enclosed nations, and the scourge of the Mongols."

While Burnett is particularly adept at leading his reader at ground level through the thickets of manuscript culture, he is also insightful in his reflection on the importance of his material. As he comments in his preface, "there are few genres of literature in which one obtains such intimate glimpses into the everyday life and concerns of human beings as in magic and divination."

This collection will long remain an important resource, and even at the publisher's price will be worth the investment of academic libraries.

Articles on magic and related subjects in recent issues of The Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes

Some idea of current interests and activities at the Warburg Institute may be gained by a chronological survey of recent articles in the journal. Of the eighteen articles on magic and the occult published since 1980, somewhat over half deal with astrology, the astral magic of Picatrix and its Arabic source, and related matters; the next largest cluster is that of articles on Marsilio Ficino and his circle. (The same interests are reflected also in the journal's shorter notes, which are not surveyed here.) Perhaps the clearest trend is toward articles on the transmission of the occult arts, including that of Arabic materials into the West, a special concern of Charles Burnett.

David Pingree, "Some of the sources of the Gh~yat al-hak\$im," 43 (1980), 1-15.

Anne Sheppard, "The influence of Hermias on Marsilio Ficino's doctrine of inspiration," 43 (1980), 97-109.

David Pingree, "Between the Ghaya and Picatrix. I: the Spanish version," 44 (1981), 27-56.

B.C. Novak, "Giovanni Pico della Mirandola and Jochanan Alemanno," 45 (1982), 125-47.

Anthony Grafton, "Protestant versus prophet: Isaac Casaubon on Hermes Trismegistus," 46 (1983), 78-93.

Mary Quinlan McGrath, "The astrological vault of the Villa Farnesina: Agostino Chigi's rising sign," 47 (1984), 91-105.

Kristen Lippincott, "The astrological vault of the Camera di Griselda from Roccabianca," 48 (1985), 42-70.

Kristen Lippincott and David Pingree, "Ibn al-H~ytim on the talismans of the lunar mansions," 50 (1987), 57-81.

Charles Burnett, "The earliest chiromancy in the West," 50 (1987), 189-95.

David Pingree, "Indian planetary images and the tradition of astral magic," 52 (1989), 1-13.

N.M. Swerdlow, "Astronomical chronology and prophecy: Jean-Dominique Cassini's discovery of Josephus's Great Lunisolar Period of the Patriarchs," 53 (1990), 1-13.

James Hankins, "Cosimo de' Medici and the 'Platonic Academy,'" 53 (1990), 144-62.

Kristen Lippincott, "Two astrological ceilings reconsidered: the Sala di Galatea in the Villa Farnesina and the Sala del Mappamondo at Caprarola," 53 (1990), 185-207.

Hermann Walter, "An illustrated incunable of Pliny's Natural History in the Biblioteca Palatina, Parma," 53 (1990), 208-16.

Jeffrey Spier, "Medieval Byzantine amulets and their tradition," 56 (1993), 25-62.

Mary Quinlan-McGrath, "The Villa Farnesina, time-telling conventions and Renaissance astrological practice," 58 (1995), 52-71.

Godefroid de Callataÿ, "The Knot of the Heavens," 59 (1996), 1-13.

Alejandro García Avilés, "Two astromagical manuscripts of Alfonso X," 59 (1996), 14-23.

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To be placed on the mailing list or submit notices for The Warburg Institute Newsletter write the editor at:

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Regarding the American Friends of the The Warburg Institute, contact John B. Adams, Secretary, 224 E. 68th St., NYC 10021; or Jonathan H. Kagan, President, at:

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Books published

by the Warburg Institute

The same focus on astrology and astral magic, and on the transmission of occult learning

across cultures, can be seen also in the various publication series of the Institute.

(See the Warburg Website for currently available volumes.)

Special Publications

Gombrich, E.H., Aby Warburg: An Intellectual Biography, with a Memoir on the History of the Library by Fritz Saxl (1970). 2nd ed. Phaidon Press and University of Chicago Press, 1986; trans. into German 1981, Italian 1984, and Japanese 1986).

Saxl, Fritz, Lectures, 2 vols. (1957). English selection by Penguin Books, as A Heritage of Images (1970). Selections in Italian 1965, Japanese 1980, Spanish 1989.

Saxl, Fritz, and Hans Meier, ed. Harry Bober, Catalogue of Astrological and Mythological Illuminated Manuscripts of the Latin Middle Ages, vol. 3: Manuscripts in English Libraries (1953), in 2 vols.

McGurk, Patrick, Catalogue of Astrological and Mythological Illuminated Manuscripts of the Latin Middle Ages, vol. 4: Astrological Manuscripts in Italian Libraries (other than Rome) (1966).

Warburg, Aby, Gesammelte Schriften (1932). Vols. 1 and 2: Die Erneuerung der heidnischen Antike: Kulturwissenschaftliche Beiträge zur Geschichte der europäischen Renaissance. Selections in Italian 1966, French 1990.

Studien der Bibliothek Warburg

Ritter, H., M. Plessner, and E. Jaffé, Picatrix (Arabischer Text) (1933).

Pruckner, Hubert, Studien zu den astrologischen Schriften des Heinrich von Langenstein (1933).

Gundel, W., Dekane und Dekansternbilder: Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Sternbilder der Kulturvölker (1936).

Studies of the Warburg Institute

Seznec, Jean, La Survivance des dieux antiques: Essai sur le rôle de la tradition

mythologique dans l'humanisme et dans l'art de la Renaissance (1940); English translation, The Survival of the Pagan Gods (1953).

Walker, D.P., Spiritual and Demonic Magic from Ficino to Campanella (1958); paperback ed., University of Notre Dame Press 1975); French trans., Albin Michel, 1988.

"Picatrix": Dax Ziel des Weisen von Pseudo MaTMr§t§, trans. into German from the Arabic by Hellmut Ritter and Martin Plessner 91962).

Pingree, David, The Thousands of Abu Ma'shar (1968).

Pingree, David, Picatrix: The Latin Version of the Gh~yat al-H~k§m (1986).

Warburg Institute Surveys and Texts

Ryan, W.P., and C.B. Schmitt, eds., Pseudo-Aristotle, The Secret of Secrets: Sources and Influences (1983).

Kraye, Jill, W.P. Ryan, and C.B. Schmitt, eds., Pseudo-Aristotle in the Middle Ages: The Theology and Other Texts (1986).

Schmitt, C.B., and D., Knox, Pseudo-Aristoteles Latinus: A Guide to the Latin Works Falsely Attributed to Aristotle Before 1500 (1985).

North, J.D., Horoscopes and History (1986).

Pereira, Michela, The Alchemical Corpus Attributed to Raymond Lull (1989).

OTHER NOTES

W.L. Braekman, Middeleeuwse Witte en Zwarte Magie in het Nederlands Taalgebied: Gecommentarieerd compendium van incantamenta tot einde 16de eeuw (Ghent: Koninklijke Academie voor Nederlandse Taal- en Letterkunde, 1997). xxxvi+ 525 pp. ISBN 90-72474-21-X.

Willy Braekman's years of work on the study of medieval magic have now led to a major new publication: a book whose title translates as Medieval White and Black Magic in the Netherlandish Linguistic Region: A Commentated Compendium of Incantamenta to the End of

the Sixteenth Century. The work is systematic and comprehensive, with sections on medical and veterinary enchantments, formulas for various purposes (understanding the language of animals, driving away vermin, becoming invisible, etc.), means for recovering lost goods, magical virtues of plants, erotic magic, means for dealing with magical theft of milk and related matters, and conjuring of spirits. The texts come chiefly from manuscript sources, although Braekman has also mastered and made appropriate use of the full range of relevant published material.

The title should not be taken to imply that Braekman has given us a sourcebook with annotations. Rather, he has incorporated the sources within a running analytic commentary; the book is more a study with ample citation of texts than a source book with commentary appended.

Among the salient merits of the book is that it deals with the texts from a specific region, for which it is possible to give such a thorough survey. Rather than having value only for the study of this region, however, the study has relevance by virtue of its comprehensiveness to work on magic throughout Western Europe. Anyone working on any of the themes covered in the book--which is to say, anyone working on the history of magic--will wish now to consult Braekman to situate other materials with reference to the contours of the field which he has established.

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*Sarah L. Higley's paper, "The Legend of the Learned Man's Android" (a version of which she gave at the 1995 session of Societas Magica at Kalamazoo), is now out in an anthology: "The Legend of the Learned Man's Android," in *Retelling Tales: Essays in Honor of Russell Peck*, ed. Thomas Hahn and Alan Lupack (Cambridge: Brewer, 1997), pp. 127-160. This is an exploration of the mythology surrounding the scientist cum necromancer who makes a "moving statue" or "computer construct"--from Simon Magus to Stephen Hawking. Another version (focussing on later scientists and science fiction) is forthcoming in *Camera Obscura*, in a future issue devoted to "Angels, Aliens, and Dinosaurs." She has an encapsulated version of her talk on medieval "learned men" in that essay as well.*

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A call for papers has been issued for the Fourth International Congress on Fifteenth-Century Studies, to be held in Antwerp, 2-7 July 2000, and one of the nineteen themes listed is "Witchcraft, Magic, and Alchemy".

One-page abstracts in duplicate must reach both of the following by 30 Sept. 1999: Prof. Edelgard E. DeBrock, Marygrove College, Modern Languages, Detroit, MI 48221, fax 248-489-0875, 110337.3107 @compuserve.com, and Prof. Peter De Wilde, Departement Romaanse

Taal- en Letterkunde, Universiteit Antwerp, Universiteitsplein 1, B-2610 Antwerpen (Wilrijk), Belgium, fax 323-820-28-23, dewilde@uia.ua.ac.be

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The Journal of Occult History

For at least the past twenty years there has been a growing interest in all aspects of the history of the occult sciences, especially astrology, alchemy, magic, and witchcraft. At present, however, there is no journal which acts as a forum for them. The Journal of Occult History is intended to fill this gap and provide a forum for scholars from a wide variety of disciplines to forward their subjects and expand the range of perceptions in this particular field.

Intentions

- 1) The journal is devoted to scholarly articles on all aspects of the principal occult sciences in history: magic, witchcraft, astrology, alchemy, divination, prophecy, Kabbalah, and Rosicrucianism.*
- 2) There is no limit on chronological period. Papers on such subjects, dealing with the ancient world right through to the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries will be welcome.*
- 3) The Journal will appear initially twice in each calendar year, beginning in Spring 1999.*
- 4) The principal language of the Journal is English.*
- 5) All contributors will be asked to supply a brief summary of their article.*
- 6) There will be a review section. All reviews will be in English.*
- 7) There will also be a section devoted to the transcription of hitherto unpublished documents and/or the translation of whole documents or extracts of documents or published works which have not appeared before in English.*
- 8) The possibility of an annual list of published articles in these fields is being considered.*
- 9) The possibility of an annual supplement, separately published, devoted to translation or edition of texts, is being considered.*

Readership

A journal of this kind will be very attractive for people over a wide range of scholarship, for example, history, law, art, religion, feminist studies, anthropology, mathematics, chemistry, sociology, and philosophy.

Editorial Board

General editor: Dr. P.G. Maxwell-Stuart, Department of History, University of St. Andrews, Scotland.

One copy of a submitted article, and a copy on disk, should be sent to: Dr. P.G. Maxwell-Stuart, Deans Court, North Street, St. Andrews, Fife KY16 9QT, Scotland. Fax: 01334,462602, e mail: pgm1@st-andrews.ac.uk