

Saxl and Boll*

Dorothea McEwan



Figure 1 Portrait Saxl, © Collection Portrait Photographs, WIA.

This article will deal with the beginning of Saxl's academic career, marked out by his two mentors, Aby Warburg and Franz Boll. Saxl, born into a high bourgeois family in Vienna, his father was an eminent lawyer, has chosen art history as his discipline and entered the University of Vienna. To locate the records dealing with Saxl's life and scholarly work is on the one hand easy, and on the other hand difficult. The easy bit refers to the Warburg Institute Archive with Saxl's business and scholarly papers, but as we do not have personal papers by Saxl, it is very difficult to appraise his personality fully from these alone. Some of his letters can be found in university archives, notably in the Heidelberg University Library. This collection is particularly important for an appraisal of the Saxl – Boll contacts, as the Warburg Institute

Archive houses the Warburg – Boll and the Warburg – Saxl correspondence as well as the Boll – Saxl, but not the Saxl – Boll letters. With the help of the Heidelberg collection, I am now able to shed light on Saxl's early post-doctoral research activity. The contact with Boll should prove of crucial importance as it was setting the points for Saxl's academic career.

Saxl started his degree course in Vienna in 1908, and spent the summer term of 1910 in Berlin. From there he travelled to Hamburg for a few days in March 1910 with the express intention of meeting Warburg as he has heard about Warburg's specialist collection of books and photographs of, amongst others, medieval astrological illustrations. At that time Warburg was engaged in research into the astrological cycle of paintings in Palazzo Schifanoja in Ferrara. To this end he was in correspondence contact with Franz Boll, Professor of classical philology at the University of Heidelberg, member of the Heidelberg Academy of Science and author of *Sphaera*, a study of Arabic and Hellenistic astrology, which was to be of seminal influence on Warburg.¹

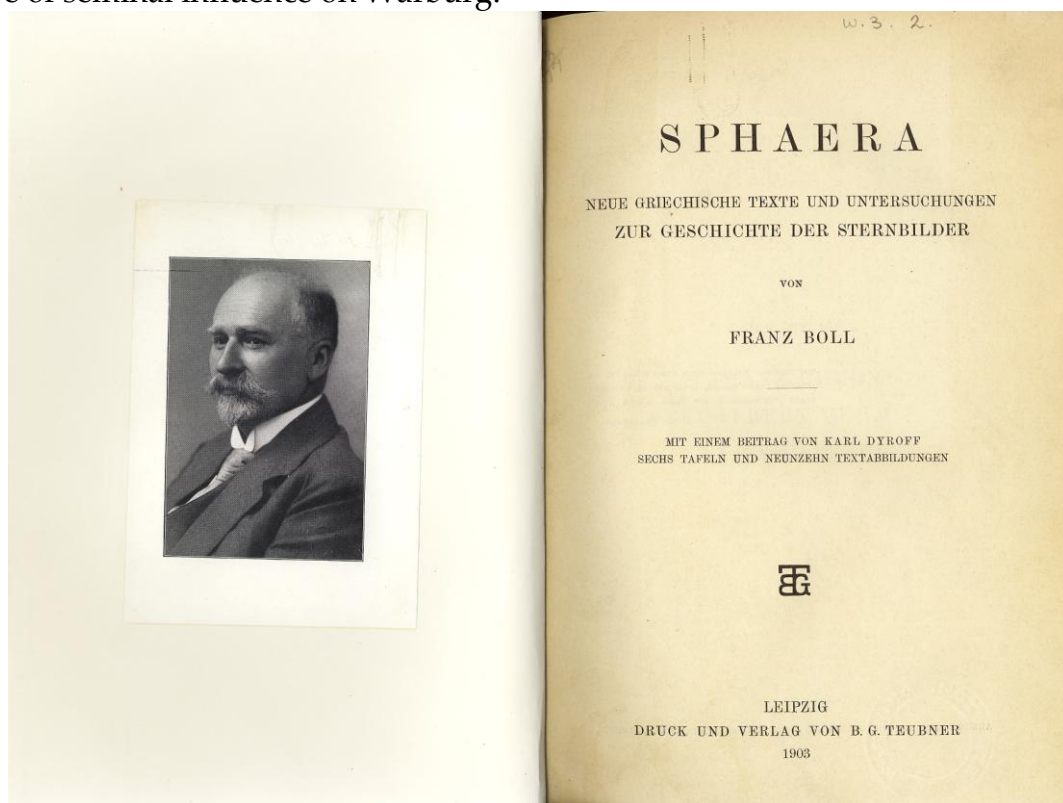


Figure 2 Portrait Boll
© Collection Portrait Photographs, WIA.

* Lecture on the occasion of the Archive Seminar 2008, June 13th, 2008.

¹ Franz BOLL, *Sphaera. Neue griechische Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der Sternbilder*. Leipzig: B. G. Teubner, 1903.

From Saxl's very first written communication to Warburg, a postcard from March 24th, 1910, after his visit to Hamburg, we know that the two men talked about Dürer, Mercury and astrology as shown in images of gods. Saxl promised to send bibliographical references and signed off 'Happy Easter'!² There are no diary entries by Warburg with his first appraisal of Saxl, but he must have been impressed because he contacted Bruno Fuchs, the author of a book on the iconography of the seven planets in Italian art³ and floated the idea of a collaboration between Fuchs, Saxl and Warburg; nothing came of it, so that Warburg contacted Boll in pursuit of his goal, 'to cultivate a thriving astrological cabbage patch'.⁴ All along Saxl kept up his correspondence with Warburg, mainly on the peregrinations and metamorphoses of the images of planets, the dating of which was to remain one of the main research activities throughout his life. In the autumn of 1910 Warburg encouraged him to collaborate with him on the history of cosmology,⁵ and offered to put his library at Saxl's disposal. Boll had drawn Warburg's attention to the Codex Reginensis 1290, a Latin manuscript in the Vatican Library with images of classical gods, attributed to Albricus, recte Alexander Neckam, the 12th century mythographer and medieval antiquary, who had collected notes from many sources on 'how the ancients represented their gods'.⁶ Warburg also wanted an Arabic illuminated ms, the Liber Bolhan, Codex Arab. 133, in Oxford photographed, in particular the images of the so-called 'planet children', that is the professions attributed to those born under a particular sign of the zodiac, attributed to Babylonian gods. Warburg hoped to document that the occultist magical illustrations pointed to an as yet undiscovered Arabic ms, which could be the main source for the astrological images in the West.⁷ In short, Warburg realized that he would need a roving research assistant.⁸ But Saxl had not yet completed his studies, he was in the middle of his PhD research on Rembrandt which he wanted to finish and indeed finished by the summer of 1912. However, he intimated that he would welcome a research commission which would provide him with funding, once his studies were completed, and which would open future employment

² WIA, GC, Saxl to Warburg, 24.3.1910.

³ Bruno Fuchs, *Die Ikonographie der sieben Planeten in der Kunst Italiens bis zum Ausgang des Mittelalters*, München, 1909, Dissertation. Warburg Institute London [abbreviated WIA], General Correspondence [abbreviated GC], Warburg to Fuchs, 17.3.1910.

⁴ Universität Heidelberg [abbreviated UH], Heid.Hs. 2109, Warburg to Boll, 11.11.1910. 'ein üppiges astrologisches Kohlfeld'. (All translations are by the author.)

⁵ WIA, GC, Warburg to Saxl, 24.9.1910.

⁶ WIA, GC, Warburg to Saxl, 6.9.1911. '..wie die Alten ihre Götter darstellten', in F. Saxl, *Verzeichnis astrologischer und mythologischer illustrierter Handschriften des lateinischen Mittelalters in römischen Bibliotheken*. Heidelberg; Carl Winters Universitätsbuchhandlung, 1915. Sitzungsberichte der Heidelberger Akademie der Wissenschaften. Phil.-hist. Klasse, Jg. 1915, 6. 7. Abhandlung, VII.

⁷ WIA, GC, Warburg to Saxl, 13.9.1911.

⁸ WIA, GC, Warburg to Carl Heinrich Becker, 13.9.1911.

opportunities, as, being of Jewish extraction, he knew that he would not get a post as art historian at any of the imperial collections in Austria.⁹

In the spring of 1912, shortly before finishing his PhD, Saxl, through Warburg's contact with Boll and through Boll's contact with Carl Heinrich Becker, editor of the journal *Islam*, published an article [Fig. 3] on the history of representations of planets.¹⁰ Warburg encouraged Saxl to send a copy of his article to Boll, Warburg had already alerted Boll that the 'young Austrian' would present his 'first fruit'.¹¹ Saxl did so, but wrapped his thanks for Boll's interest in his research into a comment that he could not share Boll's interpretations of the Harran cult investing the image of the sun with the royal figure, when the chief cult was that of the moon god.¹² Boll's reply is not extant, if, indeed, there was a reply. Warburg, impressed by Saxl's scholarship and wanting to secure Saxl's cooperation, wrote to Boll: would he support an application by Saxl for a scholarship from Heidelberg Academy? In this way, everybody would be helped, Saxl financially and Warburg professionally. He added tactfully, that he would contribute financially, but because of reasons of decorum he would prefer it if Saxl received a commission from Heidelberg Academy and not just from Warburg.¹³

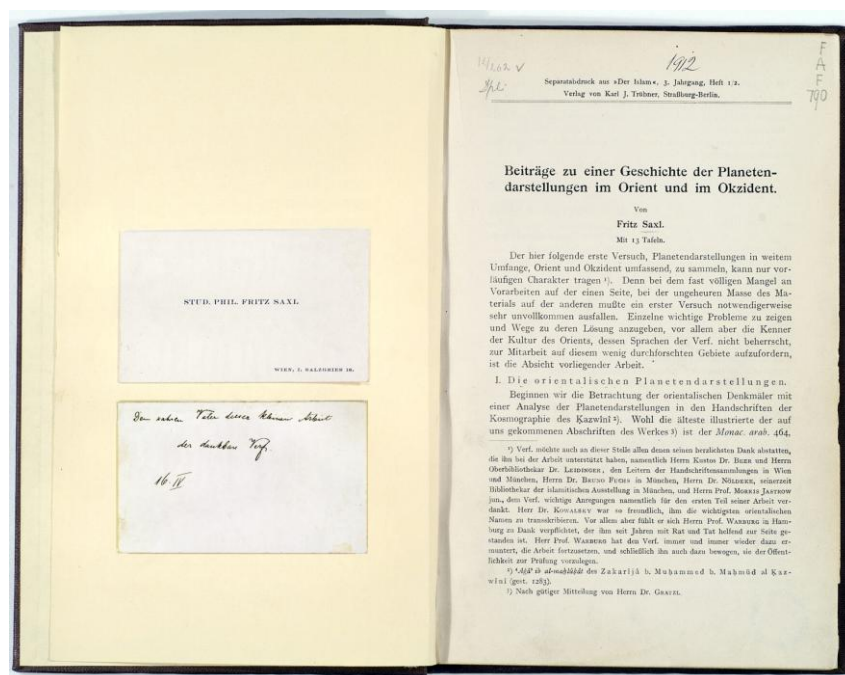


Figure 3, Title page of Saxl's article in *Islam* together with Saxl's visiting card.

© Library WI; Archive, GC, WIA.

⁹ WIA, GC, Saxl to Warburg, 12.2.1912.

¹⁰ 'Beiträge zu einer Geschichte der Planetendarstellung im Orient und Okzident', *Islam*, Heft 3, 151-177, with 35 plates.

¹¹ UH, Heid.Hs.2109, Warburg to Boll, 25.5.1912. 'Erstlingsarbeit'.

¹² UH, Heid.Hs.2109, Saxl to Boll, n.d., after 11.5.1912.

¹³ UH, Heid.Hs.2109, Warburg to Boll, 9.9.1912 and n.d., between 10.9. and 21.9.1912.

Now, Warburg had to ask Saxl whether he would be interested in a scholarship from the Heidelberg Academy,¹⁴ to which Saxl initially replied in the affirmative, but then backtracked, as he doubted his abilities to fulfil the expectations placed in him.¹⁵ Warburg did not give up and was delighted to hear that Saxl would attend the Tenth International Art Historical Congress in Rome in October 1912, in which Warburg played a leading role. Boll was absent, but Saxl was very impressed by it all. Despite its hustle and bustle, Warburg and Saxl found time to discuss their proposed collaboration, paid for by Heidelberg, which prompted Saxl to write an application to the Heidelberg Academy on the day after the Congress had ended. He was very keen to continue with research first published in his article in *Islam* and mapped out what he wanted to do: track down the genesis of types, the medieval images of planets, the planet children, typologies of horoscopes, etc. As an art historian he was interested in 'Traditionsgeschichte': the way in which topics from classical antiquity were illustrated in the Middle Ages by Christian illuminators. Pagan gods, represented through astrological images, had been endowed with Christian ethical qualities;¹⁶ and more, frequently copied in its 'moralisè' form, particularly when introducing a picture book of pagan gods, these images had become, in Saxl's words, the medium of 'Christian moral pedagogics'.¹⁷

Already one month after the congress in Rome, at the end of November 1912, Boll was able to give Saxl the good news. Heidelberg Academy had approved Boll's support of Saxl's application for a research commission for three months in the spring of 1913. He was to work in libraries and archives in Italy in order to locate and photograph astrological mss and to submit a report to the Academy for its December 1913 meeting.¹⁸ Saxl, who at that point was working his way through a mass of catalogues in Monte Cassino, was relieved. He could continue with his work and would get paid for it by a prestigious German academy. He was now on the first rung of his career ladder. He was quick to suggest which libraries and archives to visit, and insisted on being allowed to take photographs not only of textual passages but also of images,¹⁹ for a report without images was unthinkable for an art historian, or like 'fly droppings', as Warburg put it.²⁰

¹⁴ WIA, GC, Warburg to Saxl, 1.9.1912.

¹⁵ WIA, GC, Saxl an Warburg, 4.9.1912.

¹⁶ WIA, GC, Saxl to Warburg, 4.9.1912.

¹⁷ 'das antike Bild wird einem "höheren Zweck" geweiht: es muß zum Träger „christlicher Moralpädagogik“ werden, um dem mittelalterlichen Menschen wertvoll und verständlich zu sein'. F. Saxl, *Verzeichnis*, 1915, viii.

¹⁸ UH, Heid.Hs.2109, Boll to Saxl, 30.11.1912.

¹⁹ UH, Heid.Hs.2109, Saxl to Boll, 6.12.1912.

²⁰ UH, Heid.Hs.2109, Warburg to Boll, 9.2.1913. 'Fliegendreck'.

Boll agreed that Saxl should photograph text and images, he should differentiate between astrological and astronomical images, he should not bother with geometrical drawings or drawings of the zodiac; he should describe the mss, but not in too great detail.²¹ The last request is wholly understandable when one considers Saxl's schedule to travel to archives in Cesena, Cortona, Fabriano, Florence, Forlì, Gubbio, Imola, Milan, Modena, Perugia, Ravenna, Rome, Rovigo, Venice, Vicenza – and all this in three months.²²

Saxl left for Rome in March 1913 and complained in the very first letter that he would not have enough time – he could only work four days per week and then only five hours per day in the Vatican library, despite the fact that Warburg's friend, the Jesuit and later Cardinal Franz Ehrle, prefect of the Vatican library, allowed Saxl to go into the stacks and select the volumes himself. He used the camera on loan from the Heidelberg Academy, but had quite a bit of trouble with it, as it was large, packed in a heavy wooden box and it used photographic paper which needed to be developed quickly after the photographs were taken because otherwise the exposures would fade completely.²³ The photographs he took were good and are still in the Photo Collection of the Warburg Institute.

He had to send weekly reports, which were truly colourful affairs. He nearly always had something to complain about, mostly that the catalogues were incomplete; but he was also always enthusiastic about the latest research findings, particularly mss which would help him date Picatrix.²⁴ In particular he moaned about the fact that the time would be too short and that the budget was too tight. What is new with fellowships? After one month he had checked 5000 pages in mss catalogues and 250 ms books, but had found only three really interesting mss, but they allowed Saxl to track down images of planets from classical antiquity to Albricus.²⁵

In copies of mss by the Persian cosmographer and geographer Zakarya ibn Mohammed al-Qazwîni he found images of planet children. A sketch of a circle, cut into four segments and called by Saxl 'Kastlsystem', showed that four children were attributed to every planet [Fig. 4]. The 'Kastl' or quartered circle presented a scientific system, which having originated in the Orient, had been introduced to the West. Astrology, an Oriental science, was now being popularised in medieval Europe by calendars and block books.²⁶

²¹ UH, Heid.Hs.2109, Boll to Saxl, 29.12.1912.

²² UH, Heid.Hs.2109, Saxl to Boll, 27.12.1912, with three pages of a detailed alphabetical list of places, from Cesena to Vicenza, and pressmarks of mss.

²³ UH, Heid.Hs.2109, Boll to Saxl, 25.1.1913.

²⁴ WIA, GC, Saxl to Warburg, 10.4.1913.


²⁵ UH, Heid.Hs.2109, Saxl to Boll, 29.3.1913.

²⁶ UH, Heid.Hs.2109, Saxl an Boll, 24.5.1913. Zakarya ibn Mohammed al-Qazwîni, Persian cosmographer and geographer, born c. 1203, died 1283, author of a description of the world and a history of India. Saxl had researched the two Qazwîni, mss in Vienna, Cod. Vindob. 1437 and 1438 for

fellowship. And he was swift to ask Boll whether Heidelberg Academy could award him a second research commission for the autumn of 1913.²⁹

in Betreff der von meiner Publ. im Islam gekannt zu haben. Im Karvinn³⁰ liest er, der Saturn entspricht dem Lokaminster und tatsächlich finden wir in dieser Hs. Saturn als Zeichen von einem Publ. Ich erinnere mich übrigens auch, in von mir nicht publ. Karvinn³⁰. Saturn mit Goldbeil dargestellt gefunden zu haben. Höchst auffallend ist auch, daß die Venus männlich dargestellt ist, erklärt sich jedoch, indem singulärer-Mercur als Goldbeil. Hier hat man es also einmal durch die Figuren bewiesen, daß die Planetenkinde nicht anders sind, als Menschen, denn die Eigenheiten der betr. babylon Götter (nicht die darauf basierenden Schriften) beigefügt werden, denn dieselbe Darstllg. des Goldbeils findet sich ja sonst unter den Planetenkindebildern. In der Hs. sind auch Schemata für derartige Darstellungen vorgesehen, diese jedoch nicht zur Ausführung gekommen:

des de France.
et es nicht
st. 643, 645
deutsch v. XV
da sie nicht



es war also gedacht, zu jeder Planeten deutlich je vier Kinde zu zeichnen (die Handschriften sind vorhanden). Für mich ist nun wichtig, daß ich gestützt auf einen Brief Warburg gegenüber immer die Hypothese verfaßt habe, daß bei Zunahme der Hs. ein derartiges „Kastel“ system, wie wir es schonweise getauft

Figure 5, 'Kastlsystem' in a letter by Saxl to Warburg, 24.5.1913.

© Collection GC, WIA.

Warburg was extremely happy with Saxl's findings, but did not want Saxl to continue in Rome. Instead, he wanted him to go to Paris for six months to complete Warburg's research on the large illuminated volume of Fulgentius *metaforalis* texts there and offered Saxl a bursary.³⁰ However, Saxl angrily declined this offer by return of post: 'I hope you will understand that for my feeling of scholarly conviction it is something totally different to receive funds from an Academy for my research and to put my work at your disposal or following a moral obligation, in case you have made funds available to me, to do the same'.³¹ Warburg, of course, was upset: 'That's how an enthusiastic scholar, without prejudices, judges me! The little money fills

²⁹ UH, Heid.Hs.2109, Saxl to Boll, 29.3.1913.

³⁰ WIA, GC, Copybook V, 145. Warburg to Saxl, 13.4.1913. The English Franciscan John Ridewall or Johannes Ridovalensis, c. 1330, had written a comment to Fulgentius *Planciades*, end of 5th century under the title *Fulgentius Metaforalis* in which he gave to the gods moralising names, attempts to explain ideas by verse texts and images.

³¹ WIA, GC, Saxl to Warburg, 16.4.1913. 'Ich hoffe, daß Sie einsehen werden, daß es für mein Gefühl etwas völlig anderes ist, von einer Akademie für meine Studien Geld zu bekommen und Ihnen dabei aus wissenschaftlicher Überzeugung meine Arbeit zur Verfügung zu stellen oder doch, zumindest aus einem gewissen moralischen Zwang, falls Sie mir Geld zur Verfügung stellten, dasselbe zu tun'.

you with scruples of dependence! I rate my offer as colleague higher ... How many people are there who can understand the same problem and serve it? Just pursue the matter, you Austrian petit bourgeois!' ³² Whether Saxl felt stung by the exasperation coming to the fore in Warburg's last three words or whether Saxl was spurred into action by the word 'colleague' is not recorded, but a week later Saxl fell in with the offer, ³³ and Warburg was relieved. 'I do not favour anything which does not favour you as scholar. I am glad about your letter; we can now proceed to deal with the matter in hand simply and clearly. My library has a pre-determined annual budget, which I have to stick to. This year I can spare Mark 1200 for research trips, photographic costs excluded, as a matter of fact, and I can offer you this amount as soon as you wish to accept it'. ³⁴ With Warburg's private research commission in his pocket in May 1913, ³⁵ Saxl asked Boll whether a second travel bursary for Italy from Heidelberg Academy could now be postponed to the spring of 1914, as he wanted to work on the Fulgentius text in the meantime. ³⁶

Saxl came to Hamburg to map out a research strategy, ³⁷ worked in Paris for one month and evaluated his research findings in Rome and Paris together with Warburg. He still had not written his report for the Heidelberg Academy. His goal, a catalogue of astrological medieval illuminations, seemed ever further removed from its realisation. He simply needed more time. ³⁸ Boll asked Warburg whether he should try to find more money to send Saxl to Rome again? He wanted the research project finished, particularly in view of the scholarly collaboration between Heidelberg and Hamburg at a time when the Senate of Hamburg had voted down the long awaited establishment of a university. Boll had hoped that the university project would have brought both scholars together in the same city. Was he hinting that both of them would then no longer need Saxl's services as the flying researcher for them both? ³⁹

At long last, Saxl did send a good summary of his work in Rome, Paris and Hamburg, even if it was not the long awaited report. By researching the

³² WIA, GC, Copybook V, 147, Warburg to Saxl, 20.4.1913. 'Also so sieht ein vorurteilsfreier Enthusiast aus! Das Lausegeld erfüllt Sie mit Abhängigkeitsskrupeln? Ich schätze meine Kollegialität höher und als absolut selbstverständlich ein! Wieviel Leute giebt es denn, die dasselbe Problem erleben und ihm angehören? Sehn Sie doch auf die Sache, Sie oesterreichischer Spießler!'

³³ WIA, GC, Saxl to Warburg, 23.4.1913.

³⁴ WIA, GC, Copybook V, 151. Warburg to Saxl, 27.4.1913. 'Ich begünstige nichts, was nicht Sie als Gelehrten fördert. Ich freue mich über Ihren Brief; wir können jetzt die ganze Affäre einfach und klar behandeln. Meine Bibliothek hat ein bestimmtes jährliches Budget, an das ich mich zu halten habe. Dieses Jahr kann ich für Reisezwecke M. 1200 (respective photograph. Kosten natürlich) erübrigen, die Ihnen zur Verfügung stehen, sobald Sie es wünschen'.

³⁵ UH, Heid.Hs.2109, Saxl to Boll, 3.5.1913.

³⁶ UH, Heid.Hs.2109. Saxl to Boll, 1.6.1913.

³⁷ WIA, GC, Warburg to Saxl, 8.6.1913. and Copybook V, 178, 179.

³⁸ UH, Heid.Hs.2109, Saxl to Boll, 1.11.1913.

³⁹ UH, Heid.Hs.2109, Boll to Warburg, 2.1.1914.

history of mythographers, like Fulgentius, whose text he found in 25 mss, Saxl has been able to establish a copying tradition from the 9th century Irish theologians John Scotus and Duncan to the three English 14th and 15th century poets Geoffrey Chaucer, John Lydgate and John Gower. Saxl finished by stating that he had started to learn Arabic.⁴⁰ Of course, Boll was delighted, and Saxl was exhausted. But whilst Boll could not make any promises yet about a second grant from Heidelberg Academy, Warburg now offered Saxl a post in Hamburg in January 1914: 'I have considered the situation once again and have come to the following conclusion: the library has first of all to keep its ability to adapt financially to new challenges'. He went on to suggest a somewhat meagre salary, which he will be able to pay to Saxl, but sums up on a conciliatory note, 'The compensation for you has to be that my library should try to adapt to your research requests...'.⁴¹ This was an offer, which Saxl could only accept.⁴²

Warburg's offer must be seen against the background of the discussions in Hamburg about the establishment of a university. The Warburg family, like many other leading families, had offered substantial amounts of money, but the Senate of Hamburg only established the university after World War I. Because of the setback –the Kolonialinstitut was founded in Hamburg in 1908, but precluded the foundation of a fully fledged university, it was clear to Warburg that everybody had to collaborate in the creation of proto-academic networks, in Warburg's case making his reference and specialist library accessible to the scholarly public.⁴³ With Saxl as a first-rate scholar, a nucleus had been created which allowed for the vision of an institute for specialists; today we would say a graduate school.

Saxl was in the enviable position of being in demand. Boll had to urge him to send his research report of his first trip to Rome in 1913, as otherwise

⁴⁰ UH, Heid.Hs.2109, Saxl to Boll, 10.1.1914.

⁴¹ WIA, GC, Copybook V, 322, Warburg to Saxl, 10.1.1914. 'Ich habe mir unterdessen die Situation noch einmal überlegt und komme zu folgendem Resultat: die Bibliothek muß in allererster Linie ihre Anpassungsfähigkeit an neu auftauchende Anforderungen pekuniär erhalten. ... Der Ausgleich muß für Sie darin bestehen, daß m. Bibliothek sich Ihren Forschungsbedürfnissen anzupassen versuchen soll'.

⁴² WIA, GC, Saxl an Warburg, 17.1.1914.

⁴³ WIA GC, Warburg to Hans Winkler, 17.1.1914. In this letter Warburg discussed the university question: What did Hamburg need, a university for many students, or a research facility for a few or a third way, a reference library for a limited number of students? In a letter to the botanist Hans Winkler, who had written a memorandum on the university question, Warburg advocated establishing reference libraries in various learned societies and institutes for a limited number of students. Warburg was pleased with Winkler for having quoted the example of American universities and having referred to the same tendency of concentrating research efforts in Paris, the Centre for Humanist Research called Fondation Thiers. Warburg added two more institutes in the field of modern art history, which had been privately founded: the Bibliothèque d'Art et d'Archéologie in Paris, rue Spontini 19, run by Jacques Doucet, and the Biblioteca Hertziana in Rome, founded by the late Miss Henriette Hertz. Warburg, whilst not referring to his own specialist library in so many words, doubtlessly viewed it comparable to the institutions quoted and with whose founders he was in touch.

Heidelberg Academy could not offer him a second scholarship. He also asked him to submit an article to the Academy on the autobiography of Anonymus Ticinensis and to look out for him for information on manuscripts of star signs in which Aries is shown as Agnus Dei.⁴⁴ Both of Saxl's mentors profited from Saxl's expertise and research activity. The reply was to be expected: Saxl did not have enough time, he did not have enough material,⁴⁵ but he did send a report in March 1914 and left for Rome the following day! The Academy had awarded him a second scholarship.⁴⁶

Back in Rome in the spring of 1914 he continued where he had broken off in the summer of 1913. He tried to find more astrological illuminations, but also more textual examples; he tried to date mss, but could not proceed with an article on Anonymus Ticinensis, who, according to Saxl, was instrumental in 'bringing French Gothic style to Italy'.⁴⁷ He wanted to finish his research in a catalogue of illuminated astrological and mythological mss of the Latin middle ages. For that he needed to compare the photographs he had taken the previous year with the originals. His descriptions of manuscripts got longer and longer, but were still not exhaustive enough for him. Again he complained that he lacked vital pieces of information.

Whilst Saxl was in Italy in the spring of 1914, Warburg went to Florence to give a lecture, and Saxl briefly visited him there. Important discussions on the future of the library in Hamburg must have convinced Warburg to trust Saxl's vision for Warburg's library, even if Saxl often spoke and wrote about his inadequacies and lack of skills. The discussions touched on the role of Warburg's library in Hamburg in the absence of a university in Hamburg. Both men agreed on using part of the book purchase budget for scholarships to enable researchers to come to Hamburg and use the library.⁴⁸

At the end of his second scholarship trip, Saxl was able to discuss with Boll the format of the Catalogue, layout, printing, etc. He wanted four registers, names of authors, topics, list of illustrations and incipits. He returned to Hamburg at the end of May 1914.⁴⁹ Warburg was grateful to Boll for his 'good deed', having granted Saxl a 'splendid remuneration' with two scholarships from Heidelberg Academy as Saxl was in dire financial straits;⁵⁰ in the middle of all his research trips in 1913 he had got married and his wife Elise was now expecting their first child.

⁴⁴ UH, Heid.Hs.2109, Boll to Saxl, 27.1.1914.

⁴⁵ UH, Heid.Hs.2109, Saxl to Boll, n.d., before 25.3.1914.

⁴⁶ UH, Heid.Hs.2109, Saxl to Boll, 25.3.1914.

⁴⁷ WIA, GC, Saxl to Boll, 28.4.1914. '...ein Vermittler französischer Gotik nach Italien...'

⁴⁸ cf. D. McEwan, *Ausreiten der Ecken*, Hamburg: Dölling und Galitz Verlag, 1998, 35-36 and F. Saxl in E.H. Gombrich, *Aby Warburg. An Intellectual Biography*, London: The Warburg Institute, 1970, 329-330.

⁴⁹ UH, Heid.Hs.2109, Saxl to Boll, 18.5.1914.

⁵⁰ UH, Heid.Hs.2109, Warburg to Boll, 9.6.1914.

The first of Saxl's three catalogues was published [Fig. 6] by the Heidelberg Academy in 1915,⁵¹ after Warburg had to mobilise a number of helpers for proofreading – Saxl was a so-called 'Feldgrauer', serving as an officer (Leutnant der Reserve) in the Austro-Hungarian army on the Italian front and could no longer look after the printing. Saxl, knowing full well that the Catalogue contained lacunae, wanted to have it published nevertheless, as he wrote in his Foreword, in the hope of helping others produce better results.⁵²

After the war, when Warburg was in the sanatorium in Kreuzlingen and Saxl was acting head of the library in Hamburg, Saxl remained in contact with Boll. After Boll's early death in 1924 – he was 57 years of age – Saxl, truly sorry for having lost his erstwhile supporter, saw it the obligation of the Warburg library to deal with the Boll library.⁵³ Warburg and Saxl were involved in the delicate negotiation of the partial dispersion of the Boll estate of books. Warburg wanted to avoid the books being sold off piecemeal; he achieved that the bulk of books was deposited in Heidelberg university; duplicates went to the Warburg library in Hamburg. A bookplate, commissioned by Warburg and Saxl from a friend of Saxl's, Rudolf von Larisch in Vienna, used a woodcut by Johannes Angelus with the device 'per monstra ad sphaeram' [Fig. 7] in memory of Boll, the friend of Warburg and the mentor of Saxl, and the researcher of the *Sphaera Barbarica*, 'that strange world of stars, meshing together Greek wisdom and Oriental phantasy'.⁵⁴ The Latin phrase was rendered into impeccably concise German by Warburg with his phrase 'vom Greiftier zum Begriffsmenschen', but is nigh on impossible to produce in English as succinctly, possibly something like 'from grasping by physical force to grasping by the intellect, or from physical mastery to mental mastery, or from prehension to comprehension'.⁵⁵

A felicitous intellectual cooperation, Warburg, Saxl, Boll had come to an end. Its goal is very much alive in the Warburg Institute. And for Saxl it was that first step on his career ladder which had come at the right time and which he had used to his advantage.

⁵¹ Saxl, *Verzeichnis*, 1915; see footnote 6.

⁵² F. Saxl, *Verzeichnis*, 1915, iii: '... in der Hoffnung, dadurch anderen zu besseren Leistungen zu verhelfen'.

⁵³ GC, Saxl to Warburg, 9.7.1924.

⁵⁴ GC, Saxl to Rudolf Larisch, 19.9.1924, 'jener merkwürdigen Sternenvelt, deren Elemente aus griechischer Weisheit und orientalischer Phantastik sich zusammensetzen'.

⁵⁵ Preface to the lecture by Karl Reinhardt in Hamburg on 24.10.1924. Printed dedication copies, III.92.3. with dedication to his son Max Adolf and to Fritz Saxl. The text of the lecture was not published, but the two page introduction by Warburg was also inserted as a loose leaf into the volume *Bibliothek Warburg Vorträge 1922-23*, II, Leipzig-Berlin: B.G.Teubner, 1924.

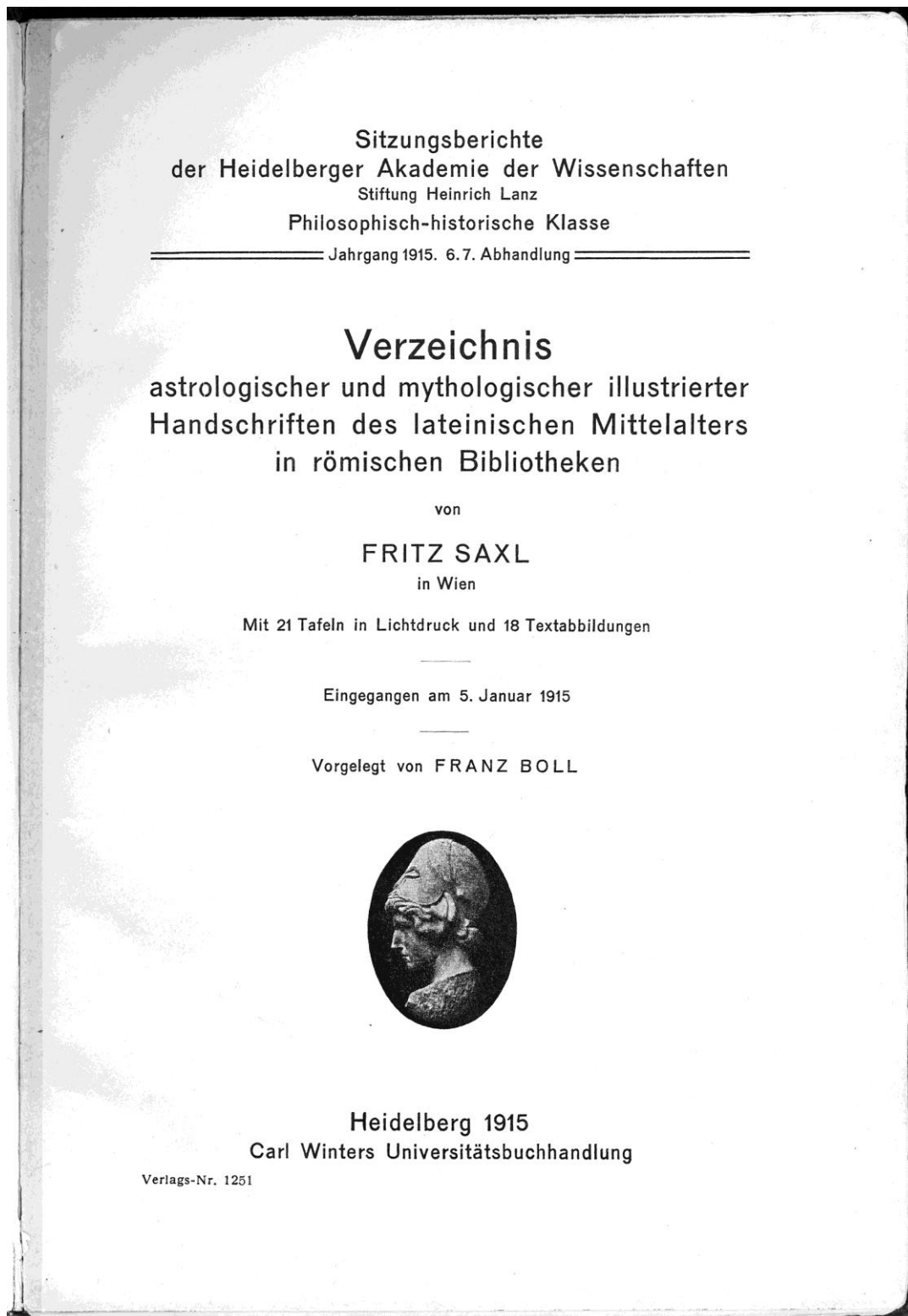


Figure 6 F. Saxl, *Verzeichnis*, 1915, title page.
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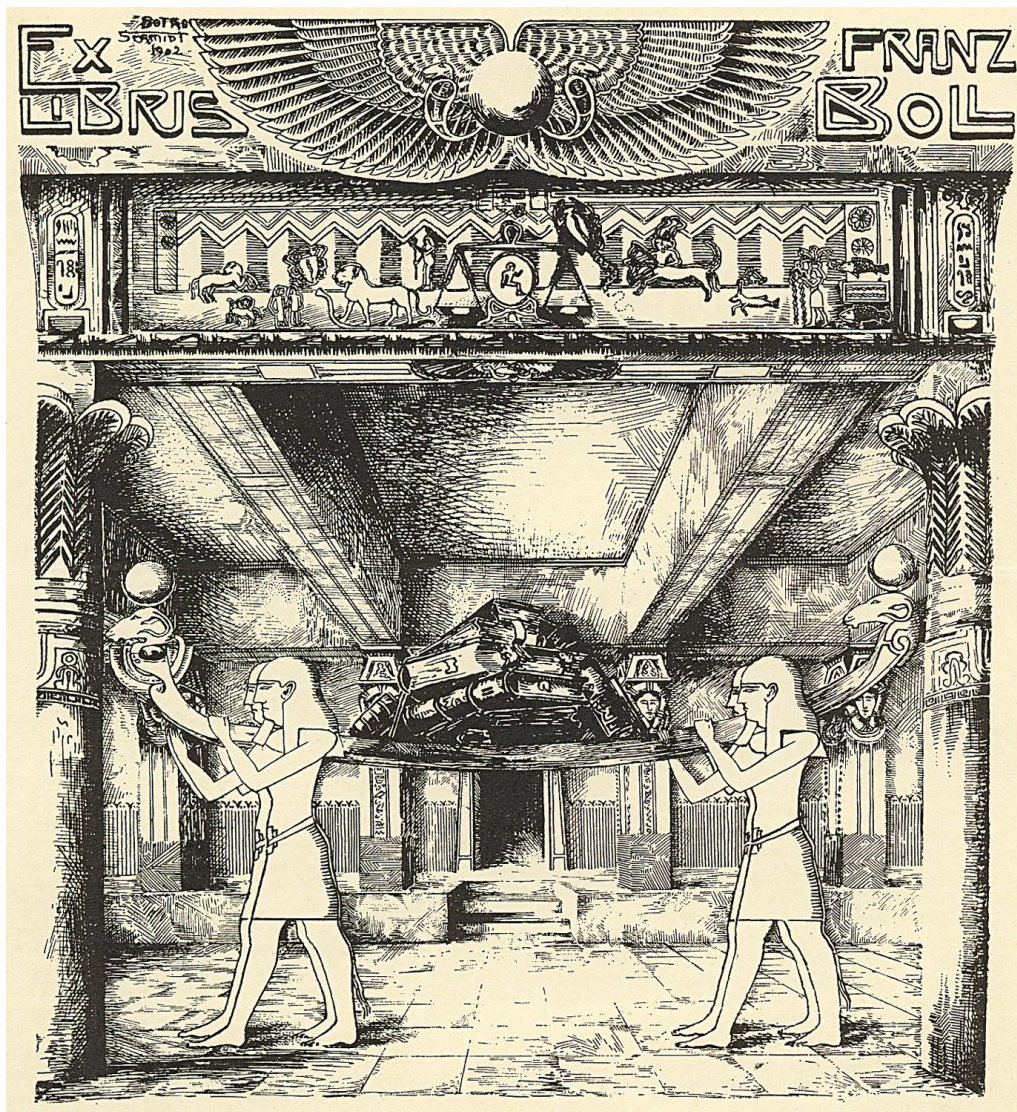


Figure 7 Bookplate for Franz Boll, with postcard from Saxl to Grete [Ramsauer?], 2.9.1924.
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Dorothea McEwan was Head of the Archive of The Warburg Institute from 1993 to 2006 and is an historian and Honorary Fellow of the University of London.

Dorothea.McEwan@sas.ac.uk