

# A brief history of the Society logo

by Hannah Steinberg\*

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Soon after the end of the Second World War the Society embarked upon the now widespread love affair with the logo, an abbreviation of *logotype*, from the Greek *logos* ('word') and *tupeos* ('image'). Since the word *psychology* derives from a combination of *psyche* (from the Greek for 'soul') and *logos*, Psyche, the character from Greek mythology, naturally came to be combined with the Society's name to make a pleasingly simple composition.

I was, at that time, the sole editor of the green-covered *Bulletin* (the forerunner of *The Psychologist*), so it fell to me to produce a jubilee issue to commemorate the 50 years since the foundation of the Society. It was to have white covers with green printing, and would display the new logo for the first time.

To ensure the authenticity of the legend of Psyche, I boldly consulted the most eminent and world-renowned art historian of the age, Sir Ernst Gombrich, whom I knew to be both kind and to have unrivalled knowledge, was at that time Director of the Warburg Institute in London. He referred me to the Institute's librarian, George Trapp, who eventually succeeded him as Director.

Mr Trapp took me into the specialist Warburg Library, and to a folder marked 'Psyche', in which were various prints and drawings. He explained that although there were several versions of the story, the pictures could be roughly dated: the lamp which Psyche held in some of them indicated that they were probably Victorian; earlier pictures usually had no lamp. Images of Psyche showing her with wings were supposed to represent the belief that the word *psyche* had been translated earlier as the soul, or perhaps as a butterfly.

Psyche was beloved by Cupid (Eros, the god of love), who would visit her secretly at night but always vanished before dawn. In an effort to find out who he was she held a lamp over him, but some of the hot oil dripped and woke him, whereupon he fled. Psyche went in search of Cupid, but was captured and enslaved by Venus who treated her most cruelly. Ultimately she was, however, reunited with Cupid and was made immortal.

The design in the Society's logo shows a winged Psyche holding up a lamp in her left hand. She is encircled by a banner of the Society's name. We deliberately chose a Victorian drawing with the lamp, which, in addition to its legendary significance, also symbolised learning. This seemed particularly appropriate for the Society.

The composition and drawing of the medallion was, I think, done in-house, and the whole project was much enjoyed by the participants. It is good that we still retain the classical image today.

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