

## The Art of Memory as cultural transfer.

### An Italian treatise of the 15th century and its adoption.

In the following, the early modern concept of ‘memory’ will be delineated in the form of a case study, which covers the area of functional literature. The treatise ‘*Artificialis memorie regule*’ written by Jacopo Ragona bears upon human activities and practices and stays close to everyday life,<sup>1</sup> by referring notably to game culture, government, and commercial culture of the Renaissance.<sup>2</sup> After providing some basic information about mnemonics, the contribution will address the context of origin and raise the question of cultural transfer.

#### *I. Introduction: The Art of Memory*

The Art of Memory is a doctrine (or rather a conglomerate of doctrines) dating back to ancient times, which has received varying levels of attention over the course of time.

In essence, the doctrine should facilitate a better memory performance by supporting the natural memory with special techniques. These primarily take advantage of the human power of imagination and ability to systematize. For this purpose, the artificial memory employs figures, places, symbols or letter systems.

The tools of organising the memory contents remained amazingly stable in ancient and medieval times, although changing interests led to new requirements for mnemonic teaching. Memory played a central role for the medieval semi-oral culture, as it ensured the functioning of cultural tradition, but it was no less crucial for individuals. It could even be ascribed a salvation-historical importance, as remembering was considered as conducive to one’s salvation, and as a consequence, monasticism created a meditation practice that envisioned biblical events and stages of Christ’s life. Thus, the Art of Memory was incorporated into the customs of a religious community.

In later times, the maxims of mental imagination and order could also be utilised to adjust particular, or rather dubious contents to the memory. As a result, people took advantage of the

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<sup>1</sup> For the tract’s low demands in terms of literary quality cf. Sabine Seelbach: Introducing Art of Memory into Vernacular: The Case of Bibliothèque Ste Geneviève Ms. 3368. In: *Daphnis* 41/2 (2012), pp. 357–381, esp. p. 368. – An earlier version of this paper was presented at a seminar organised by the Centre for the Study of Cultural Memory at the Institute of Modern Languages Research (IMLR, University of London, School of Advanced Study). I am grateful to Dr. Katia Pizzi (IMLR), Prof. Dr. Sabine Seelbach (Klagenfurt) and Dr. Susanne Rischpler (Würzburg) for their helpful comments and their advice.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Peter Burke: *Die europäische Renaissance. Zentren und Peripherien*. Munich 2012, p. 216f. Following approaches dealing with the history of mentality, ‘Renaissance’ is interpreted as a cultural ‘movement’ that is linked to everyday customs and attitudes. According to Burke’s approach, the term also implies assimilation and transformation processes, considering the respective cultural, social or political contexts; cf. pp. 13–33.

Art of Memory for the purpose of exercising magical practices, by storing occult knowledge in memory systems and by using, for instance, the zodiac signs, as suggested by Giordano Bruno.<sup>3</sup> In view of the early stages of the Art of Memory, these areas of application had been of minor importance.

Having arisen in Greece, the *Ars memorativa* was handed down mainly by Roman sources. An anecdote, told by Cicero, conveys the invention of the Art of Memory. The poet Simonides of Ceos<sup>4</sup> was invited to a celebration, where he had to recite a praise poem. In the course of the celebration, Simonides left the hall and witnessed how the roof of the hall collapsed, burying all the guests beneath it. Later, the converging relatives failed to identify the disfigured victims, while the recollection of the seating plan enabled Simonides to recognise the bodies. By this observation, Simonides realised that a spatial arrangement and visualisation have great significance for the memory performance, and according to tradition, he invented the *Ars memorativa*.<sup>5</sup> The essence of this methodology consists, above all, of the selection of a particular place – Roman texts propose a spacious house with vestibule, living rooms, bedrooms and room decorations such as statues, or also a colonnade, or several places along a travel route (as suggested by Quintilian<sup>6</sup>). The given sequence of places ensures a succession or spatial order, which allows a more effective saving of the memory contents. The places are intended to be occupied by individual mental images, which represent the memory contents in the shape of figures or signs.<sup>7</sup> The images can be attained again, if the remembering person paces off the place in his imagination and extracts the encoded content. It is recommended that the images should be designed to be as ostensive and affective as possible, in order to make them striking and conducive to memory; Latin texts use the term ‘*imagines agentes*’, as mnemonic authors rated animated scenes or activities as an ideal device.

This method is known as the ancient doctrine of places and images (‘*loci*’ and ‘*imagines*’). It is transmitted in Roman writings, in particular in Cicero’s ‘*De oratore*’ (II, 86, 351–II, 87,

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<sup>3</sup> Cf. Frances A. Yates: *Gedächtnis und Erinnern. Mnemonik von Aristoteles bis Shakespeare*. Berlin <sup>3</sup>1994 (*Acta humaniora*), pp. 185–213, 225–245, 265–293.

<sup>4</sup> Simonides (ca. 556/553–468/465 BC) created, among other works, victory odes (*epinikia*), dithyrambs and monodic lyric.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Yates (fn. 3), p. 11. The anecdote is told by Cicero in ‘*De oratore*’ (II, 86, 351–II, 86, 354).

<sup>6</sup> For the proposal of using travel routes as series of mnemonic places see Quintilian: *Institutio oratoria* XI, 2, 21.

<sup>7</sup> Hajdu describes this system as ancient symbolic-topological technique, whereas treatises of the 15th century use a symbolic-nominal system that employs series of words and numerals. Cf. Helga Hajdu: *Das mnemotechnische Schrifttum des Mittelalters*. Amsterdam 1967 (reprint Leipzig 1936), esp. pp. 100ff. Furthermore, the ‘*memoria rerum*’ and the ‘*memoria verborum*’ are distinguishable in ancient mnemonics; the first employs acts, the second takes for every single word an equivalent in terms of ‘*similitudo*’ (ibid. p. 24; *Rhetorica ad Herennium* III, 20, 33). – Quintilian (*Institutio oratoria* XI, 2, 23–XI, 2, 26) restrains the doctrine of *loci* and *imagines* and provides a practical, easier style of mnemonics (ibid. p. 26f.).

358), in the anonymous ‘Rhetorica ad Herennium’ (III, 16, 28–III, 24, 40) and in Quintilian’s ‘Institutio oratoria’ (XI, 2, 17–XI, 2, 22). All of these authors treat the ‘memoria’ or the memorisation of a text as a component of rhetoric, or more precisely, as the fourth of five working steps involved in preparing a speech.<sup>8</sup> Thus, the Art of Memory was initially part of rhetoric. Mnemonics aimed at mastering speeches and comprised means and methods, especially on behalf of those, who had to access complex memory contents professionally in ad hoc situations.

The rhetorical field of application disappeared or changed to a large extent during the Middle Ages. Nevertheless, it is evident that the engagement with the Art of Memory still continued. After reducing the doctrine to a few components in the Early Middle Ages, which were repeated in a formulaic manner,<sup>9</sup> new methods emerged in the course of time. For example, figures in the shape of the human body could be used for mnemonic places; they were often intended for the learning of declinations and conjugations.<sup>10</sup> The confidence in the human capacity to create mental associations, as well as the precepts of order and accuracy still remained valid for medieval mnemonics.

Especially the approach to the subject by Thomas Aquinas (‘Summa theologiae’, II–II, q. 49, a. 1) proved to be influential. Thomas linked the memory with the virtue of ‘prudentia’,<sup>11</sup> and subsequent to ancient suggestions, memory could enter the subject area of ethics. Scholastic influences on memory treatises still remained in the 15th century, in which the preference for logic impacted on the choice of memory techniques and examples; the treatises include, for instance, the memorisation of logical conclusions.<sup>12</sup> The interest in Aristotle, which arose in

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<sup>8</sup> From the finding of arguments to delivering a speech: 1. inventio, 2. dispositio, 3. elocutio, 4. memoria, 5. pronuntiatio.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Sabine Heimann-Seelbach: *Ars und scientia. Genese, Überlieferung und Funktionen der mnemotechnischen Traktatliteratur im 15. Jahrhundert. Mit Edition und Untersuchung dreier deutscher Traktate und ihrer lateinischen Vorlagen.* Tübingen 2000 (Frühe Neuzeit 58). – Authors of the High Middle Ages, dealing with the memory, are Hugh of Saint Victor and Boncompagno da Signa; cf. *The Medieval Craft of Memory. An Anthology of Texts and Pictures.* Ed. by Mary Carruthers and Jan M. Ziolkowski. Philadelphia 2004 (Material Texts), pp. 32–70, 103–117.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Hajdu (fn. 7), p. 99.

<sup>11</sup> For Thomas’ esteem of ‘memoria’ cf. ‘Summa theologiae’, II–II, q. 47 a. 3 ad 3, ed. Commissio Leonina (Opera omnia, 8), Rom 1895, p. 351: “[...] prudentia non consistit in sensu exteriori [...] sed in sensu interiori, qui perficitur per memoriam et experimentum ad prompte iudicandum de particularibus expertis.” Thomas follows the Aristotelian ethics and suggestions from ‘De inventione’ Ciceros; cf. Rafał Wójcik: *Masters, Pupils, Friends, and Thieves. A Fashion of Ars memorativa in the Environment of the Early German Humanists.* In: *Daphnis* 41/2 (2012), pp. 399–418, esp. p. 404. – Theologically educated persons could draw on this notion of memory as well as on the Augustinian doctrine of the soul’s powers (cf. ‘De trinitate’ X, 11/12: ‘memoria’, ‘intelligentia’, ‘voluntas’).

<sup>12</sup> Cf. the scientific group of treatises entitled ‘Attendentes nonnulli’ (Seelbach: *Ars und scientia* [fn. 9], pp. 46–70).

the High Middle Ages, also caused his work 'De memoria et reminiscencia' to find entrance in memory treatises and sometimes opened these to epistemological questions.<sup>13</sup>

New medieval fields of application were found, in comparison with ancient mnemonics, in meditation,<sup>14</sup> as already mentioned, in university studies and in the practice of preaching.<sup>15</sup>

A new rise of the Art of Memory appeared in an unpredictable way in the 15th century. The doctrine began to be handed down in separate treatises, and these treatises reflect an interest throughout Europe, although the reasons for this development remain obscure. Recent research has offered several hypotheses, as for instance the education boom in the late Middle Ages along with the foundation of universities and an increasing lay education, the rapid development of preaching and the wide-scale increase in written documents;<sup>16</sup> shortly afterwards, the humanist education and the interest of humanists in rhetoric appeared on the scene.<sup>17</sup>

Italian treatises of the 15th century, representing early and prevailing prototypes, developed several memorisation methods (in addition to the ancient architectural model and the medieval corporal model): They used numeric or alphabetic orders, and word sequences<sup>18</sup> based on picturesque terms. In accordance with the open-minded, urban atmosphere of the Italian Renaissance, they contain examples of everyday application. Now, the treatises do not only address preachers or scholars, but they also regard banking, trading and the world of merchants, who by way of example want to keep an overview of debtors and creditors, goods and prices.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> The treatises 'Attendentes nonnulli' conceive the memory as sensitive power following Aristotle's suggestion, cf. Sabine Seelbach: Konzeptualisierungen von Mnemotechnik im Mittelalter. In: Kunst und Erinnerung. Memoriale Konzepte in der Erzählliteratur des Mittelalters. Ed. by Ulrich Ernst and Klaus Ridder. Cologne/Weimar/Vienna 2003, pp. 3–29, esp. p. 19. For Aristotle's treatment of this topic, see 'De memoria et reminiscencia', a tract belonging to the Aristotelian 'Parva Naturalia'.

<sup>14</sup> The traditional monastic method of reading consists of 'lectio' and 'meditatio', cf. 'Didascalicon' and 'De archa Noe' by Hugh of St. Victor; Mary Carruthers: The Book of Memory. A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture (Cambridge Studies in Medieval Literature 70), Cambridge 2008, pp. 202–217.

<sup>15</sup> The dissemination of fundamental principles or practices was perfectly possible in the ordinary course of medieval teaching, as far as we know. Mnemonic techniques in a highly elaborate form seem to have been taught only in small circles.

<sup>16</sup> Only few mnemonic tracts were written in the previous century; Farkas Gábor Kiss: Performing from Memory and Experiencing the Senses in Late Medieval Meditative Practice. The Treatises 'Memoria fecunda', 'Nota hanc figuram', and 'Alphabetum Trinitatis'. In: Daphnis 41/2 (2012), pp. 419–452, esp. p. 419f.

<sup>17</sup> It is possible that suggestions by scholars from Byzantium caused a humanistic interest, as they conveyed ideas of sophisticated origin, which were otherwise hardly accessible; cf. for early Italian treatises that correspond to this finding, Seelbach: Ars und scientia (f. 9), pp. 451ff.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. 'Ars memorandi' by Matthaeus de Verona (Padua 1420). See Seelbach: Ars und scientia (fn. 9), pp. 25–28, 34–38. For Matthaeus see Sabine Heimann-Seelbach: Ars und scientia. Wissenschaftssystematische Implikationen in *ars-memorativa*-Traktaten des 15. Jahrhunderts. In: Seelenmaschinen. Gattungstraditionen, Funktionen und Leistungsgrenzen der Mnemotechniken vom späten Mittelalter bis zum Beginn der Moderne. Ed. by Jörg Jochen Berns and Wolfgang Neuber. Vienna/Cologne/Weimar 2000 (Frühneuzeit-Studien N.F. 2), pp. 187–197, esp. p. 191.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. Hajdu (fn. 7), p. 103.

## ***II. Jacopo Ragona: ‘Artificialis memorie regule’ (1434)***

One such treatise containing economic examples is ‘Artificialis memorie regule’ (Rules of artificial memory) by Jacopo Ragona Vicentinus. In the following, the text will be examined on the basis of a manuscript preserved in London, Victoria and Albert Museum (KRP.A.22).<sup>20</sup>

The mnemonic doctrine traces back to Mantua and was completed in the first half of the 15th century. Supported by the Marchese, Mantua took an active part in the intellectual life of the Renaissance during this time. A famous Renaissance school had been founded here in 1423, at the ruler’s invitation, which was kept by Vittorino da Feltre (1378–1446).

The tract provides evidence of the Marchese’s efforts to further education, which also covered the temporary fashion of mnemonics. Jacopo Ragona, the author of the treatise, has remained almost unknown as a historical person.<sup>21</sup> He obviously came from Vicenza, where the Ragona are mentioned as one of the city’s prestigious families. His productive period was arguably in the thirties of the 15th century.<sup>22</sup>

The text refers to a court context and considers courtly addressees. This constellation may allow some inferences regarding the tract’s cultural milieu of origin, the aims of application and the attempt of cultural transfer undertaken by Jacopo. The coexistence and the interference between noble culture and other contemporaneous varieties of culture (such as the scholar and the economic culture) apparently lead to intracultural processes, which will be grouped under the term ‘cultural transfer’, too. The term covers the communication between a source and a target culture, and it can relate – within a broader understanding – to

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<sup>20</sup> The dating of the treatise can be taken from the Roman manuscript Vat. lat. 6896 („quarto Kal. Novembris 1434“, f. 55r) and the London manuscript KRP.A.22 („tertio non. Septembris 1434“, f. 1v); Vicenza is named as place of writing. Cf. Seelbach: *Ars und scientia* (fn. 9), p. 25. Several copies of the tract are preserved in London libraries, cf. British Library, Add. Ms. 10438 (2r–18r; including a sketch of a palazzo); Victoria and Albert Museum, KRP.A.22 (=National Art Library, MSL/1957/1349), f. 1r–30v; Wellcome Hist. Med. Libr., Ms. 502, f. 1r–16v. Further manuscripts are kept in Foligno, Genoa, Milan, Palermo, Paris, Parma, Rimini, Rome, Treviso, Venice (ibid. p. 25f.). – A partial edition of the treatise was published by Paolo Rossi (*Clavis universalis. Arti della memoria e logica combinatoria da Lullo a Leibniz*. Bologna 1983 [Saggi 244], pp. 43–45, 291), another edition, on the basis of Roman and Venetian manuscripts, was carried out by Guglielmo Zappacosta (*Studi e ricerche sull’umanesimo italiano. Testi inediti del XV e XVI secolo*. Bergamo 1972 [Saggi e ricerche di lingua e letteratura italiana 5], pp. 35–61), whose edition has no complete critical apparatus by limiting it to the first few folios. Cf. also the text presented by Prospero T. Stella (*Tecniche della memoria nel secolo XV: Le Regulae di Giacomo Ragona di Vicenza*. In: *Orientamenti pedagogici* 43/1 [1996], pp. 71–101), who also draws on the Roman and Venetian transmission without mentioning Zappacosta.

<sup>21</sup> Michael P. Sheridan summarises the few pieces of information: Jacopo Ragona and his rules for Artificial Memory. In: *Manuscripta* 4 (1960), pp. 131–147, esp. p. 131. Stella gives an overview of locally-specific literature and other sources (Stella [fn. 20], pp. 71–73) and suggests an administrative function of Jacopo; according to Stella, Ragona’s death occurred at some point between 1452 and 1467.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. Angiolgabriello Di Santa Maria: *Biblioteca, e Storia di quei scrittori così della città come del territorio di Vicenza che pervennero fin’ ad ora a notizia del P.F. Angiolgabriello Di Santa Maria Carmelitano scalzo Vicentino*. Vol. 2: *Dall’Anno MCCCCX di Cristo al MCCCCLXX*. Vicenza 1772, pp. 41–43. For the Ragona family cf. Stella (fn. 20), p. 73, for Vicenza’s cultural presence p. 98. See also James S. Grubb: *Provincial Families of the Renaissance. Private and Public Life in the Veneto*. Baltimore/London 1996, p. 171.

information, discourses, texts, images and modes of behaviour.<sup>23</sup> As we will see, not all these aspects are relevant to our example.

The treatise is dedicated to the Margrave (Marchese) of Mantua Gianfrancesco I Gonzaga (1395–1444),<sup>24</sup> who had commissioned the treatise, as the dedication suggests.<sup>25</sup> The treatise must have been drafted during Gianfrancesco's reign as Marchese between 1433 and 1444; the dedication refers to the year 1434.

At the outset, the treatise 'Artificialis memorie regule' makes references to mnemonic authorities: Cicero, Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas. They are adduced in order to describe the most basic principles of memory, namely the doctrine of places and images, the necessity of a serial arrangement and the selection of memory-enhancing, appropriate similarities<sup>26</sup> between the things to be memorised and their mnemonic symbols.

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<sup>23</sup> Cf. the three aspects of culture summarised by Lüsebrink (related to aesthetic, material and anthropological components of culture). Cf. Hans-Jürgen Lüsebrink: *Interkulturelle Kommunikation. Interaktion, Fremdwahrnehmung, Kulturtransfer*. Stuttgart/Weimar <sup>3</sup>2012, pp. 10–15, 145–163.

<sup>24</sup> *Governing 1407–1444*; Emperor Sigismund elevated him to the rank of a Margrave in 1433. Cf. Seelbach: *Introducing* (fn. 1), p. 366. Another mnemonic tract had already been written previously for the House of Gonzaga ('*Liber memoriae artificialis*', 1429), whose author was a Minorite from Mantua named Bartholomew. The richly illustrated educational treatise was created for the eldest son of Gianfrancesco, Ludovico III Gonzaga (1412–1478), and probably originated in a school context (Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, ms. lat. 8684); cf. Susanne Rischpler: *Ars memoriae illuminata. Buchschmuck im Dienst der spätmittelalterlichen Gedächtniskunst*. In: *Geschichte der Buchkultur*. Vol. 5: Gotik. Ed. by Christine Beier (the text, which will be published soon, was kindly made available to me by the author). Stella also suggests a major importance of memory training in the school run by Vittorino da Feltre (Stella [fn. 20], p. 99f.).

<sup>25</sup> Quotations (with occasionally added punctuation) follow Zappacosta's edition (*Studi e ricerche* [fn. 20], p. 35) as generally accessible text version. The treatise of Ragona is being revised in the course of the project 'Documenta mnemonica' of the University of Klagenfurt, which seeks to prepare a new edition by consulting two manuscripts for the first time: KRP.A.22 (f. 1r–30v) of the Victoria and Albert Museum London and Cod. Pal. 746 (f. 47r–73v) of the Biblioteca Palatina Parma. – A library note on the inside of the front cover in KRP.A.22 mentions Antonius Tophius as scribe, who also acted as a copyist in other contemporary manuscripts (cf. Paul Oskar Kristeller: *Iter Italicum*, esp. A Cumulative index to Volumes I–VI, Leiden 1997, p. 535). Even so, recent research tends to attribute the manuscript to the Paduan scribe Bartolomeo Sanvito (born 1433 or 1435, died 1511); his hallmark was the use of polychrome roman capitals. According to Albinia de la Mare, the time of origin of KRP.A.22 was 1459/1460. Maybe Sanvito visited Mantua at the time, when a papal Congress took place (1459/1460); Gennaro Toscano also supports this assumption, cf. Bartolomeo Sanvito e Gaspare da Padova, *familiars et continui commensales* di Francesco Gonzaga. In: Andrea Mantegna e i Gonzaga. *Rinascimento nel Castello di San Giorgio*. Ed. by Filippo Trevisani. Milan 2006, pp. 103–111, esp. p. 103. Sanvito's productive period as a Renaissance scribe was certainly furthered by the Gonzagas' patronage, since he worked for Cardinal Francesco Gonzaga (1444–1483) during the 1470s and until 1483. Cf. Albinia de la Mare/Laura Nuvoloni: *Bartolomeo Sanvito. The Life & Work of a Renaissance Scribe*. Ed. by Anthony Hobson & Christopher de Hamel. Paris 2009 (*The Handwriting of the Italian Humanists II*), p. 19, 31f.; Nicolas Barker: *Bartolomeo Sanvito*. In: *The Book Collector* 59 (2010), pp. 10–31, esp. p. 16–18. For the artistic similarity between Sanvito and Tophius (Antonius Dominici of Toffia), who temporarily collaborated in a project, see Alfred Fairbank: *Antonio Tophio & Bartolomeo San Vito*. In: *Essays in Honour of Victor Scholderer*. Ed. by Dennis E. Rhodes. Mainz 1970, pp. 159–164. – The Art of Memory apparently attracted the Gonzaga family's interest: It is quite conceivable that Gianfrancesco's grandson, the later Bishop of Mantua and Cardinal Francesco Gonzaga, employed the scribe Bartolomeo Sanvito around 1460, in order to obtain an artful copy of Ragona's tract that was once dedicated to his grandfather. Sanvito was obviously in contact with the Gonzaga family and executed commissions from the 1460s onwards. Cf. de la Mare/Nuvoloni: *Bartolomeo Sanvito*, p. 27, 31–33, 48. Cf. Toscano, p. 103 (dating the first commissions to the late 1450s).

<sup>26</sup> „similitudines convenientes“ (Zappacosta: *Studi e ricerche* [fn. 20], p. 36).

Jacopo explains the doctrine of places and images quite extensively. He proposes a picturesque house with different rooms, halls, kitchens and staircases. It is arranged to be rich in detail and comprises 20 rooms altogether. Further, it has to be equipped with memory objects (which are also called ‘places’), so that 5 objects are distributed in every room. They result in a number of 100 memory objects or ‘places’.<sup>27</sup>

Jacopo writes out his list of 100 objects explicitly; the objects positioned at the places should be familiar and common in the domestic environment, ranging from number 1, a rosary, to number 100, a horn. Hence, Jacopo lists objects pertaining to home, kitchen and workshop: a cabbage, cheese, bread and fish, but also a cap, a hammer and a mirror.<sup>28</sup>

In this regard, Ragona is obviously guided by other Italian treatises, which contain similar collections. The tract’s list is well structured: The objects of manuscript KRP.A.22 are arranged in groups of five (illustration 1). The groups are highlighted by graphical means and marked by different colour accents (blue, rose, purple, gold, bronze) as well as distinctive capitals, which shape the design of the treatise and lend it a precious appearance. The use of colours and gold and silver inks, the page layout and illustrations are well known mnemonic strategies manifesting themselves in medieval manuscript design.<sup>29</sup>

In addition to the list, Ragona describes the use of letters of the alphabet (according to pictographic similarities between letterforms and content<sup>30</sup>), as well as the use of assonances and syllables of unknown words, which have each to be linked with known words. Some of the aims of application are the memorisation of the days and months, of comprehensive personal names,<sup>31</sup> titles and city names. Moreover, he mentions how it will be possible to memorise financial transactions, to deliver messages and to give an account of a military

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<sup>27</sup> According to ancient precepts, the qualities of a model place are listed (size, lighting, animation etc., cf. *Rhetorica ad Herennium*); see Zappacosta: *Studi e ricerche* (fn. 20), p. 36f. For suggested intermediate places („Zwischen-Örter“) see Seelbach: *Ars und scientia* (fn. 9), p. 26f.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. Zappacosta: *Studi e ricerche* (fn. 20), p. 37f. For Ragona’s imagination remaining in a numerical system see Seelbach: *Ars und scientia* (fn. 9), p. 34.

<sup>29</sup> The carefully and elaborately styled text in KRP.A.22, standing out from the simple appearance of other mnemonic treatises (cf. Parma, Bibl. Pal., Cod. Pal. 746), may have been intended for a princely presentation copy. For the „[...] headlines, initials and script types marking new paragraphs, chapter scales etc. [...]“, which order and arrange the conveyed knowledge, see Seelbach: *Introducing*, p. 369.

<sup>30</sup> So the letter ‘o’ stands for a paten or plate, the ‘q’ for the Bishop’s staff etc.; Zappacosta, *Studi e ricerche* (fn. 20), p. 43.

<sup>31</sup> According to the system ‘ordo terre’, ‘ordo loci’ and ‘ordo mense’, which are explained by Jacopo; the first method arranges items according to the location of the elements, the second employs e.g. a wall and uses a disposal aligned to it, the third groups the people to be remembered around a table. Zappacosta: *Studi e ricerche* (fn. 20), p. 40f. Following the principle of ‘imagines agentes’, there emerge vivid scenes and bizarre constellations, when combined with the 100 mnemonic items: „[...] si volueris ista nomina locare per dictum ordinem, Antonio Paulo Francesco Nicolo, ponerem unum Antonium in terra resupinum, deinde ponerem super eo Paulum, qui violenter vellet ei testiculos succidere, postea ponerem quendam Franciscum, qui dictum Paulum fuste sive bastono super caput percuteret, et demum ponerem Nicolaum, qui vellet dictos rixantes dividere, et sic clare habes dictorum nominum locationem.” (ibid. p. 41).

parade; the envisaged situations seem to be of special interest for diplomats and members of the administrative apparatus of rulers. Jacopo's examples are chosen from a related social area and they bear historical references, so that the hat of the Venetian doge functions as mnemonic marker, or Cosimo de' Medici is named as a model of an eminent person.<sup>32</sup>

Jacopo Ragona makes a selection of present memory doctrines according to his princely orderer. His main source can apparently be seen in the anonymous treatise 'Memoria fecunda' (Bologna 1425).<sup>33</sup> As Sabine Seelbach diagnosed, Ragona omits all parts aiming at scientific users, such as abstract terms, the Aristotelian theory of categories and the 'septem artes'.

Beyond that, he drops elements essential to spiritual addressees such as preaching, the virtues and vices, or the saints.<sup>34</sup> Thus, the philosophical, rhetorical and theoretical aspects of mnemonics are reduced, which are discussed diligently in other contemporary tracts.<sup>35</sup>

Jacopo confines himself to a few types of text intended for memorisation, such as messages and announcements, while he inserts a new passage dealing with the card game. The tract gives a picture of a purposeful adaptation of mnemonics to the needs of a lay culture of high standing. The author even adapts himself linguistically to his recipient(s), by staying close to the *Volgare* – Zappacosta speaks of a "volgare latinizzato".<sup>36</sup> Jacopo Ragona apparently prefers a language mixed of Italian and Latin interspersed with dialectal elements, which informs his list of 100 places. Hence, "Formaio" for cheese, "Spechio" for mirror and "Orilugio" for clock appear in this list, although the treatise is worded in Latin.<sup>37</sup>

The cultural transfer evidenced by Ragona's treatise thus shows social, lexical and practical dimensions, which mediate between the scholarly culture and the cultural milieu of the doctrine's recipient.

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<sup>32</sup> Cf. Zappacosta: *Studi e ricerche* (fn. 20), p. 44. The Florentine Cosimo de' Medici (1389–1464), called 'il Vecchio', was a politician, financier and patron of the arts.

<sup>33</sup> See fn. 66. Cf. Seelbach: *Ars und scientia* (fn. 9), pp. 28–32; Seelbach: *Introducing* (fn. 1), p. 364. Moreover, the writings of Petrus de Urbe Veteri ('*Ars memorie artificialis libellus*', 1418) and Lodovico da Pirano ('*Regule memorie artificialis*', 1422–24) probably served as models, according to the dissemination of the list of 100 places; the treatise of Matthaeus de Verona ('*De arte memorandi*', 1420) contained already a list of terms organised in groups of five. The mentioned tracts are discussed as possible sources of Ragona's '*Artificialis memorie regule*' by Seelbach: *Ars und scientia* (fn. 9), pp. 18–38, esp. p. 27.

<sup>34</sup> Cf. Seelbach: *Introducing* (fn. 1), p. 364, also *Ars und scientia* (fn. 9), p. 33; the anonymous tract '*Memoria fecunda*' (1425) uses allegorical symbols, e.g. images for the seven liberal arts (*ibid.* p. 30), and takes examples from legends.

<sup>35</sup> Especially if they are influenced by scholasticism, which also becomes apparent in Italian treatises of the time. Cf. the mnemonic doctrine outlined by Matthaeus de Verona, who describes syllogisms and deals with theory of signs; the tract also includes accounting and gaming culture. For Matthaeus' '*De arte memorandi*' see Seelbach: *Ars und scientia* (fn. 9), pp. 34–38.

<sup>36</sup> Cf. Zappacosta: *Studi e ricerche* (fn. 20), p. 29: „Si tratta, com'è facile rendersi conto, e come abbiamo già osservato, di un latino ricco di costrutti medievali e di parole ed espressioni tolte di peso dal volgare, tanto che, in moltissimi casi, sembra quasi di leggere niente altro che un volgare latinizzato [...]“ Cf. Sheridan (fn. 21), p.137.

<sup>37</sup> Cf. Italian 'formaggio', Latin 'caseus' (cheese); Italian 'specchio', Latin 'speculum' (mirror); Italian 'orologio', Latin 'horologium' (clock). Cf. Zappacosta: *Studi e ricerche* (fn. 20), p. 37f.



The mentioned card game will serve as a first example in the following.<sup>38</sup> Card games apparently found approval in the environment of noble families of the Italian Renaissance; they were an element of courtly entertainment culture and stimulated the production of artistically designed card sets. The version of the game mentioned by Jacopo, which uses the four colours coins (denari), swords (spade), cups (coppe) and batons (bastoni),<sup>39</sup> is based on an Italian hand that can be compared most closely to the game ‘Trionfi’ or ‘ludus triumphorum’.

The so-called Trionfi cards appeared in Northern Italy in the environment of the Dukes of Milan and Ferrara in the 15th century,<sup>40</sup> continued as ‘Tarocchi’ and are regarded as an early form of Tarot cards designed for fortune telling. The name ‘Trionfi’ is associated with the 22 trumps, which were newly developed in this type of game. In all probability, they have to be interpreted as pictures inspired by the Renaissance triumphal processions.<sup>41</sup> As a rule, the trumps mix a medieval iconography, such as the Day of Judgement or Fortune’s wheel, with a Renaissance imagery containing, for instance, triumphal chariots with allegorical figures. Surviving decks of cards created during the Renaissance are hand-painted and show ornaments embellished with gold leaf, so that they manifest themselves as representative pieces of a princely household.<sup>42</sup> Yet, the card game was pertaining to two cultural areas, as the game flourished in an urban environment: Noble players made use of painted cards, town

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<sup>38</sup> The treatise’s engagement in the card game is legitimised by the fact that playing strengthens the memory; thus, the prompt memorisation of cards is considered as a useful matter for rulers: “Nunc videbis aliam regulam, scilicet recitandi ludum cartarum, que multis in rebus poterit tue dominationi usui et utilitati esse.” Cf. Zappacosta: Studi e ricerche (fn. 20), p. 44.

<sup>39</sup> In the course of the adoption of playing cards from the Orient to Europe – they were first mentioned in Florence in 1377 –, the symbols commonly used in India, Persia, and Egypt caused misunderstandings; the symbols were formerly associated with offices at court (a cup stands for the cupbearer, a sword for the armourer, a coin for the treasurer, a polo mallet for the master of ceremonies). See for playing cards of the 15th century, which served teaching purposes and provided legal and logical knowledge, Detlef Hoffmann: Die mnemonischen Kartenspiele Thomas Murners, in: Seelenmaschinen (fn. 18), pp. 585–604, esp. p. 586. Cf. also the exhibition catalogue: Tarot-Tarock-Tarocchi. Tarocke mit italienischen Farben. Bearbeitet von Detlef Hoffmann und Margot Dietrich. Leinfelden-Echterdingen 1988 (Bestands- und Ausstellungskataloge des Deutschen Spielkarten-Museums 2), p. 9 (addressing an underlying numeric and social resp. courtly order); Catherine Perry Hargrave: A History of Playing Cards and a Bibliography of Cards and Gaming. New York 1966 (reprint Boston/New York 1930), p. 231.

<sup>40</sup> Hoffmann/Dietrich: Tarot-Tarock-Tarocchi (fn. 39), p. 13. The localisation relies partly on heraldic symbols such as in the card set created for the Este family (ibid. p. 23f.). Three early card sets show the device of the Duke Filippo Maria Visconti (‘a bon droyt’). Cf. Detlef Hoffmann: Gemalte Spielkarten. Eine kleine Geschichte der Spielkarten anhand gemalter Unikate. Frankfurt a. M. 1985 (Insel Taschenbuch 912), p. 49.

<sup>41</sup> Cf. the hypothesis argued by Gertrude Moakley (1966), as summarised by Hoffmann/Dietrich: Tarot-Tarock-Tarocchi (fn. 39), p. 10f. The logic of the early design is unclear, it was possibly experimental (p. 24).

<sup>42</sup> The first card set was created for the Duke of Milan, Filippo Maria Visconti (1392–1447), in the first half of the 15th century; playing cards were also used in Ferrara from 1450 onwards. Especially the ‘Visconti-Sforza cards’ were well received in courtly environments and copied in other places due to their artistic quality. Three of the most prominent hand-painted cards point at Milan (Visconti di Modrone cards, between 1428 and 1447; Brambilla cards, before 1447; Visconti-Sforza cards, after 1450). Cf. Hoffmann/Dietrich: Tarot-Tarock-Tarocchi (fn. 39), p. 21f.; Hoffmann: Gemalte Spielkarten (fn. 40), p. 49.

citizens played with printed cards, which must have been produced in the form of woodcuts early on; the beginnings seem to reach back to the 14th century, as the cards were interdicted for the first time in Florence in 1377.<sup>43</sup>

Ragona does not mention elaborated pictorial designs and refrains from any allegorical or moral interpretation of the cards based on their image inventory, as was usual in other cases.<sup>44</sup> For example, we have notice of card games produced in the environment of Northern Italian nobility depicting the Christian Virtues and referring to symbolic and allegorical images; Virtue and Vice had importance even for the Trionfi game.<sup>45</sup>

Ragona's method of memorisation proposed for a game consists of a visualisation and formation of anthropomorphic figures, which shall be brought into action according to the principles of 'imagines agentes'. First, the user of the Art of Memory has to choose four figures for the four card series (coins, cups, swords, batons). By doing so, he will find, for example, for the coins a rich man, for the cups a drinker, for the swords a fencing master, for the batons a tall person holding a big baton. Jacopo recommends choosing specific people, who are well-known. The created figures should gain an attribute, if they had none before. The rich man receives a bag with money, the fencing master a great sword, the drunken person a gilded cup with wine (in addition, he should be imagined to be swaying). References to actual events and prominent contemporaries are conducive to mnemonic reinforcement as well as the figure's movement and the symbols applied as optical markers. The visual and kinetic features of figures imagined in this way will be deployed more effectively in the course of the game.

Next, Jacopo combines the symbols of the playing cards with his list of 100 places. The player will be able to remember the cards, if he transfers the distinctive figure to the

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<sup>43</sup> Cf. Hoffmann/Dietrich: *Tarot-Tarock-Tarocchi* (fn. 39), p. 18. Printing centres are among others Florence, Ferrara, Venice.

<sup>44</sup> For example, interpretive patterns of this type are documented by Hoffmann: *Die mnemonischen Kartenspiele* (fn. 39), p. 590f. For educational cards cf. Hargrave (fn. 39), p. 236f.

<sup>45</sup> Ragona does not make use of an allegorical-moral program nor the principle of hierarchy by positioning the cards. The Visconti di Modrone cards (also 'Cary-Yale Tarocchi') contained, by contrast, Fortitudo as well as the Christian Virtues Faith, Hope and Love (Hoffmann/Dietrich: *Tarot-Tarock-Tarocchi* [fn. 39], p. 27, 39). Cf. also the images of the 'Mantegna'-Tarocchi from Ferrara (around 1465), which contained in addition to the virtues also estates, professions, arts, sciences and planets; thus, it seemed to be a parlour game for the educated (ibid. p. 41f.). The didactic character approaches the card set close to humanistic scholarship, cf. Hoffmann: *Gemalte Spielkarten* (fn. 40), p. 58. The card set 'Minchiate' (around 1530) showed besides the virtues also the 12 signs of the zodiac and the four elements (Hoffmann/Dietrich: *Tarot-Tarock-Tarocchi* [fn. 39], p. 15). – Occult tarots cards emerged under the influence of Egyptomania in the 18th century, neglecting the play-like character (ibid. p. 45).

corresponding place in the list and if he adds the respective object. Thus, the properties will yield two systems, indicating the order of the cards and their value.<sup>46</sup>

In concrete terms, the player will imagine the prepared figure of the rich man (Cosimo de' Medici), when he gets the card depicting 'eight coins' first, and he will put the figure in the list's first place, where the 'rosary' is located. A 'cap' will be placed into the hands of the figure, which represents the number eight according to the list. Here, it becomes clear that the list of 100 objects is not only a system of places, but also serves for the pictorial transposition of numbers.

The memorisation of this constellation will be facilitated, if Cosimo acts unusually, so that he treats the cap brutally and, for example, tears the cap or urinates on it. Similar tendencies towards normative irritation, which is achieved by violent or unusually ugly or bizarre figures, are frequently found in mnemonic treatises. Such figures were also inserted into manuscript illustrations in the Middle Ages, since they are in fact easier to remember than usual constellations. Medieval memory figures often contained encrypted meaning, and therefore they were arranged in a complex manner by combining objects, pictorial symbols and human as well as animal figures. Figures of this type were created for many purposes, since they could provide extensive knowledge in a compressed way, such as the content of chapters of the Gospel in one picture (illustration 2),<sup>47</sup> the content of a sermon (illustration 3), or overviews of legal knowledge. On the respective 'keyword', more sequences or aspects are at the reader's command, when decrypting the figures; as illustrated by artificial memory, 'remembering' is indeed a reconstructive act.<sup>48</sup>

The medieval method of creating figural mnemonic combinations survived in the Italian Renaissance and apparently had practical utility.<sup>49</sup> Thus, the card game instructions of Jacopo Ragona use contemporary standard methods of image creation, but they reduce the complexity and refrain from the hermeneutical potential (apart from ironic stabs at well-known individuals).<sup>50</sup> The game imposes relatively simple requirements upon the readers,

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<sup>46</sup> A similar, but more easily arranged system for the memorisation of card games can be found in an anonymous mnemonic treatise from the Bibliothèque Ste Geneviève (Ms. 3368, f. 18v–19r). Cf. Seelbach: *Introducing* (fn. 1), p. 365.

<sup>47</sup> Cf. Hoffmann: *Die mnemonischen Kartenspiele* (fn. 39), p. 600.

<sup>48</sup> Recollecting implies efforts of cognitive construction; cf. Astrid Erll: *Kollektives Gedächtnis und Erinnerungskulturen. Eine Einführung*. Stuttgart/Weimar 2011, p. 7f.

<sup>49</sup> The crude types of figures must have been rather tasteless in the eyes of persons trained in ancient imagery; cf. Hoffmann: *Die mnemonischen Kartenspiele* (fn. 39), p. 591f.

<sup>50</sup> As may be imagined, the temporarily stored information constantly increases during the game and requires some extra thinking; indeed, the criteria of compactness and efficiency seem not to be decisive for mnemonic practices, which is why the Art of Memory attracted criticism ever since it was first invented.

while the situation becomes more complicated in other fields, where a variety of criteria has to be memorised.

A second example taken from Ragona's *Ars memorativa*, which will be examined a bit more closely, is the memorisation of commercial transactions. The author apparently considers them, somewhat surprisingly, as a useful application of mnemonics for the Mantuan ruler. The example presented by Jacopo contains complex information, which shall be committed to memory, such as dates, trade goods, types of coins and values of goods:

„Ista erit una pratica gratia exempli: 1434 di luni 12 di marzo Francesco di Lorenzo da Folegni de dare per sachi 15 de lana a rason de ducati 5 el centenaro pexa livre 2543 monta ducati 136, l. 3, s. O, pizoli 8.“<sup>51</sup>

‘This will be a practical example: 1434, on Monday, 12 March, Francesco di Lorenzo from Folegni must give for fifteen sackfuls of wool, suitable for satin,<sup>52</sup> five Ducats, for the centner<sup>53</sup> of carded wool 2543 Lire, in total<sup>54</sup> one hundred thirty-six Ducats, three Lire, zero Soldi, eight Pizoli.’

For this task, Jacopo combines different memorisation methods, which he had previously explained regarding names, terms and numbers.<sup>55</sup> Particularly important is the medieval technique of visualising the human body, which functions as a pattern for mnemonic places. This method enables the memorising person in our case to sort numbers and types of coins, which have to be located in iconic form over or at the extremities of the imagined figure and result in a differentiated system (a hammer over the figure's left shoulder indicates a twelve; Ducats have to be arranged over the hand, Lire under the hand). Again, a correlation of numbers and objects comes into use: the year 1434 consists of a pelt (number 14) and a pair of pliers (number 34).<sup>56</sup>

The treatise rarely provides the learning person with the opportunity to proceed independently and to design individual mnemonic devices or series of places.<sup>57</sup> Jacopo is more prescriptive in comparison to other mnemonic doctrines, and tends to a systematic indexing of memory

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<sup>51</sup> Zappacosta: *Studi e ricerche* (fn. 20), p. 50; ‘pratica’ may also be read as ‘partita’.

<sup>52</sup> rason: cf. Italian ‘raso’ (satin).

<sup>53</sup> centenaro: cf. Latin ‘centenarium’ (centner).

<sup>54</sup> monta: apparently a technical term with the meaning ‘amount’.

<sup>55</sup> Cf. Seelbach: *Ars und scientia* (fn. 9), p. 27.

<sup>56</sup> The method sometimes results in strange images, as the example of debtor Franciscus reveals, whose debt is visualised in this way; cf. Zappacosta: *Studi e ricerche* (fn. 20), p. 51f.

<sup>57</sup> The creative potential is confined to the adoption of acquainted persons or symbols. The Northern Italian cities offer the possibility to use their products or signs of their trades for symbols (taffeta for Bologna, ducats for Venice); paronomasia is also advantageous, so a ‘coat’ (‘manteletus’) stands for Mantua. Zappacosta: *Studi e ricerche* (fn. 20), p. 48.

contents. Thus, a model emerges, which is pragmatically oriented and ultimately shows a numerical and spatial layout.<sup>58</sup>

A third example will illuminate Ragona's approach, having a practical relation to the area of government: A military review is described with copious details. According to Ragona, the information should be stored by being condensed into an image, and by supplementing more properties and figures. By doing so, the user of mnemonics will get a condensed mnemonic image.<sup>59</sup> For example, a coat ('manteletus') and a person named 'Piero' indicate an origin from Mantua and the father's name, martial attributes such as a horn and a silver helmet are signs for a soldier, draperies hanging on the body of the horse recall its special colour combination.<sup>60</sup>

Ragona's doctrine uses medieval accomplishments in many ways and draws directly on these, but observing its tendency towards secular rationality and a certain closeness to reality, we may inquire into the cultural origin.

### ***III. Environment of origin and cultural transfer***

In Ragona's version, the mnemonic doctrine illuminates interferences between the cultural dimensions of noble culture, economic culture and scholarly culture, as they were developed in Northern Italian cities in the 15th century.<sup>61</sup> In addition, a socially indifferent everyday culture finds entrance into the doctrine and affects the objects of the list of 100 places, which usually contains trivial objects.

Considering the intended adoption and application of the Art of Memory, the social position of Margrave Gianfrancesco, however, seems to have been taken into account. A pre-modern perspective highlights aspects of hierarchy, which remain essential reference points for the selected examples, insofar as distinctive features are preferred, such as badges of rank (e.g. of doges, cardinals, scholars<sup>62</sup> including civil professions<sup>63</sup>). For names or professions, Ragona favours differentiated mnemonic markers related to the content in a metonymic way (mainly

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<sup>58</sup> Cf. Seelbach: *Ars und scientia* (fn. 9), p. 34.

<sup>59</sup> As evidenced by the following example: 'Francesco de Piero from Mantua, a man bearing arms, on a bay horse with a black mane and black legs and with a white fetlock on the left hind foot.' Cf. Zappacosta: *Studi e ricerche* (fn. 20), p. 52.

<sup>60</sup> The person's age, too, can be recognised by means of the attributes of the figure; a young person receives a huge weapon for example.

<sup>61</sup> As the Italian nobility preferred to live in cities, there were many points of contact. Cf. Burke (fn. 2), p. 222f.

<sup>62</sup> An example is the distinction between doctors of civil and canon law; Zappacosta: *Studi e ricerche*, p. 48.

<sup>63</sup> Italian universities were characterised by the marginalisation of theological studies since medieval times. The university subjects had a rather secular character (focused on medicine and law). Thus, the situation differs considerably from the Northern universities, which cultivated centres of theology e.g. in Paris.

by means of ‘pars pro toto’, so that for example a hood seamed with fur stands for a Doctor of Civil Law).<sup>64</sup>

Equally, the government and the fields of diplomacy and military receive attention.<sup>65</sup> It is remarkable that Ragona’s artificial memory has devices for geographical orientation, covering e.g. cities and fortifications, in addition to its attention to social functions.

Further, the treatise amazes modern readers with its intensive preoccupation with financial operations and trading practice, which, at first glance, does not suit a work commissioned by a nobleman. When comparing with other contemporary treatises, these examples for application seem far from uncommon. In fact, contemporaneous Italian treatises covering trading operations are numerous; banking and trading are even mentioned in a tract written by a Dominican frater, Matthaenus de Verona.<sup>66</sup>

According to ‘Artificialis memorie regule’, five focal points crystallize that are apparently relevant to the Marchese’s government: military, diplomacy, spatial planning, trade and the game culture. Thus, with its functional orientation, the treatise answers the requirements of early modern politics. It especially illuminates the problems of Gianfrancesco’s period of government; he had to cope with economic difficulties concerning trade and production, he contended with merchants, who sought to preserve their privileges. Gianfrancesco was also involved in military conflicts; Ragona mentions a campaign in Valtellina in the year 1432 as an example for delivering messages.<sup>67</sup> Apart from special discourses aiming at politics in the broadest sense, the environment of origin of the mnemonic treatise seems to be rather uninterested in terms of intellectual profoundness.

In an era-specific way, the processes of transfer proceed from a medieval or scholarly source culture, from which the tract apparently emerges and on which its doctrine is based, into a noble target culture. The meeting point of the two cultural areas apparently is the urban culture of the Italian Renaissance, which can join the worldly, erudite and noble cultural

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<sup>64</sup> Cf. Seelbach: *Ars und scientia* (fn. 9), p. 27.

<sup>65</sup> Gianfrancesco was influenced by the chivalric tradition of his family, and he acted as a condottiere; cf. Molly Bourne: *The Art of Diplomacy: Mantua and the Gonzaga, 1328–1630*. In: *The Court Cities of Northern Italy*. Milan, Parma, Piacenza, Mantua, Ferrara, Bologna, Urbino, Pesaro, and Rimini. Ed. by Charles M. Rosenberg. Cambridge/New York 2010 (*Artistic centers of the Italian Renaissance*), pp. 138–195, esp. p. 148–152.

<sup>66</sup> The applied system of coinage and weights employs the model of the human body; Clm 14260, f. 83rb–83va. Thus, the place for the Ducats shall be the right hand of the imagined figure, for the Lira the left hand, for the Solidi the mouth and for the Denars the head. Cf. also the examples of placement handed down by the treatise ‘*Memoria fecunda*’ (Vienna, Austrian National Library, Cod. 4444, f. 313r–327v, esp. f. 322r). – More tracts with an economic passage are ‘*Ars memorie artificialis libellus*’ of Petrus de Urbe Veteri (1418) and ‘*Memoria artificialis*’ of Antonius de Malaspinis (before 1440).

<sup>67</sup> Cf. Zappacosta: *Studi e ricerche* (fn. 20), p. 53. Cf. Isabella Lazzarini: Art. ‘Gianfrancesco I Gonzaga, marchese di Mantova’. In: *Dizionario Biografico Degli Italiani* 54 (2000), pp. 376–383.

achievements. In this regard, everyday life and luxury come close together in the tract's examples;<sup>68</sup> the underlying intracultural transfer processes were multipolar.

The treatise as a medium and ipso facto the result of these cultural transfer processes reveals an adaptation, which clearly takes into account the interests and the social horizon of the envisaged recipient. The surviving text itself highlights this, as it complies with the tastes of an elite audience by its elaborate design. In accordance with contemporary requirements, Ragona undertakes a contextualisation of mnemonics, by emphasising those areas of discourse, which are relevant to the target culture. As a result of the author's abridgements there is no sharp profile in respect of eruditeness and history of ideas, but the mnemonics of 'Artificialis memorie regule' give evidence of a secularly shaped, urban culture and its cultural orientation patterns as they emerged in Mantua during the Renaissance.

Angelika Kemper

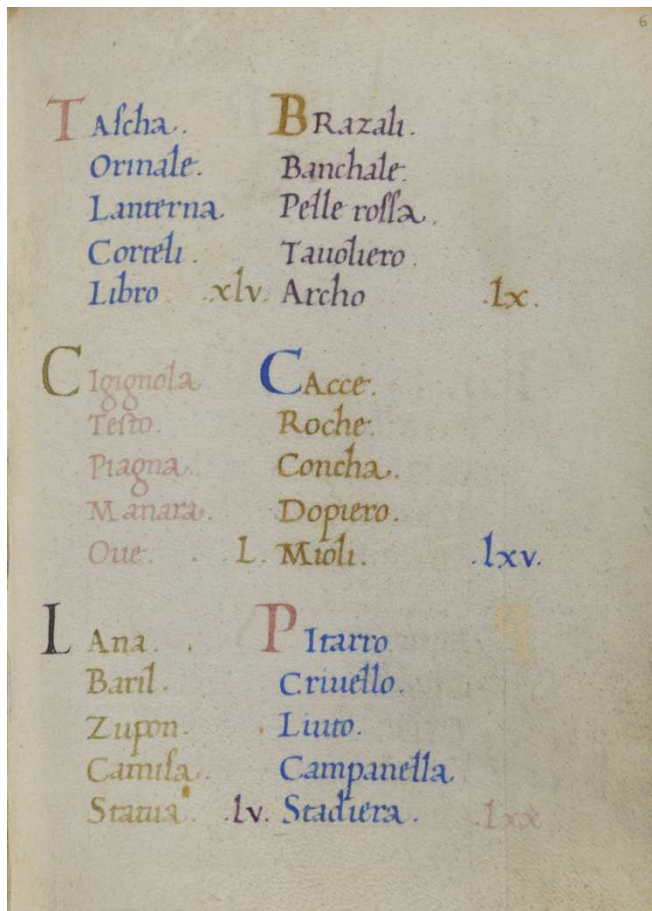
(University of Klagenfurt)

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<sup>68</sup> As indicated even by the objects drawn from material culture, e.g. 'hammer' and 'crown'.

Illustration 1

Jacopo Ragona: Artificialis memorie regule (1434)



(London, Victoria and Albert Museum, KRP.A.22, f. 6r)



Illustration 2

Rationarium Evangelistarum omnia in se evangelia [...] complectens, Pforzheim 1507.



(Munich, Bavarian State Library, Res/4 P.lat. 841#Beibd.10)

### Illustration 3

#### Mnemonic treatise 'Iste ymagines sunt posite'

(including a collection of memory figures, probably created for the memorisation of sermons)



(Vienna, Austrian National Library, Cod. 5393, f. 329r)