

Rafał Wójcik

MASTERS, PUPILS, FRIENDS, AND THIEVES

A Fashion of *Ars memorativa* in the Environment
of the Early German Humanists¹

Abstract

This article considers several issues regarding the art of memory (*ars memorativa*) that can be observed in printed treatises composed by early German humanists. It seems that between about 1474 and 1530 it was fashionable for some German scholars to compose, compile and publish mnemonic treatises of their own. There is evidence that the treatises by, e.g., Matheolus Perusinus, Jacobus Publicius, Conrad Celtis, Petrus de Ravenna, Jodocus Wetzdorf, Conrad Umhauser, Hermann von dem Busche or Johannes Cusanus were widely read and spread at the turn of the 16th century. The characteristic features of the treatises, their structure and the format from this period, such as the quantitative analysis of the treatises printed till the end of the 15th century, are considered in the article. The other part of the text focuses on the environment of the German humanists who used to read and write mnemonic treatises, exchange ideas and, sometimes, even thieve them from one another.

This article is focused on a narrow subject matter pertaining to a larger set of issues related to the art of memory. Although the aspect that I would like to highlight has not been overlooked by researchers in the past decades, as yet it has not been properly addressed in works on *ars memorativa*.

¹ The present article was originally delivered as a paper during the *Ars memorativa in Central Europe* workshop at the Alpen-Adria-Universität in Klagenfurt, Austria. The organization of the workshop, my relevant studies on mnemotechnical treatises from Central Europe as well as writing of this article has been made possible thanks to a scholarship and financial support granted by the Austrian Lise-Meitner-Program awarded by Fonds zur Förderung der Wissenschaftlichen Forschung; the title of the project: *Late Medieval Ars Memorativa Treatises from Central Europe in Social, Cultural, and Historical Contexts* (Nr M 1347). I would like to thank all who participated in the discussion and contributed with their valuable comments, especially Sabine Seelbach, Lucie Doležalová, Susanne Rischpler, Angelika Kemper and Farkas Kiss.

A number of issues closely related to the classical art of memory and the problems thereof have already been thoroughly and extensively investigated by researchers. Almost anybody who has been engaged in studies on medieval techniques aimed at improving the process of memorization is well acquainted with works written by Ludwig Volkmann,² Helga Hajdu,³ Paolo Rossi,⁴ Frances A. Yates,⁵ Grover A. Zinn,⁶ Roger A. Pack,⁷ Mary Carruthers,⁸ Lina Bolzoni,⁹ Wolfgang Neuber, Jörg Jochen Berns,¹⁰ Sabine

² Ludwig Volkmann: *Ars memorativa*. In: *Jahrbuch der Kunsthistorischen Sammlungen in Wien. Sonderheft 30* (1929), pp. 149-150.

³ Helga Hajdu: *Das mnemotechnische Schrifttum des Mittelalter*. Wien 1936.

⁴ Paolo Rossi: *Logic and the Art of Memory. The Quest for a Universal Language*. Translated with an introduction by Stephen Clucas. Chicago 2000.

⁵ Frances A. Yates: *The art of memory*. Chicago 1966.

⁶ Grover A. Zinn, Jr.: *Hugh of Saint Victor and the Art of Memory*. In: *Viator 5* (1974), pp. 211-234.

⁷ Roger A. Pack: *An Ars Memorativa from the Late Middle Ages*. In: *Archives d'Histoire Doctrinale et Littéraire du Moyen Âge 54* (1980), pp. 221-275.

⁸ Mary Carruthers: *Boncompagno at the Cutting Edge of Rhetoric: Rhetorical Memory and the Craft of Memory*. In: *Journal of Medieval Latin 6* (1996), pp. 44-64; eadem: *The Book of Memory. Study of Memory in Medieval Culture*. Cambridge 1990; eadem: *The Craft of Thought. Meditation, Rhetoric and Making of Images 400-1200*. Cambridge 2006; *The Medieval Craft of Memory. An Anthology of Texts and Pictures*. Ed. by Mary Carruthers, Jan M. Ziolkowski. Philadelphia 2000; Mary Carruthers: *Thomas Bradwardine: 'De Memoria Artificiali Adquirenda'*. In: *The Journal of Medieval Latin 2* (1992), pp. 25-43.

⁹ Lina Bolzoni: *The Gallery of Memory. Literary and Iconographic Models in the Age of the Printing Press*. Transl. by Jeremy Parzen. Toronto 2001 (Italian edition: *La stanza della memoria. Modelli letterari e iconografici nell'età della stampa*. Torino 1995); eadem: *The Web of Image. Vernacula Preaching from its Origins to St Bernardino da Siena*. Ashgate 2004 (Italian edition: *La rete delle immagini. Predicazione in volgare dalle origini a Bernardino da Siena*. Torino 2002); eadem: *Das Sammeln und die 'ars memoriae'*. In: *Macrocosmos in Microcosmo. Die Welt in der Stube. Zur Geschichte des Sammelns 1450 bis 1800*. Hrsg. von A. Grote. Opladen 1994, pp. 129-168; eadem: *Fresken, illustrierte Bücher und mnemonische Systeme. Die Gedächtniskunst und die Kunst der Transkodifikation*. In: *Seelenmaschinen. Gattungstraditionen, Funktionen und Leistungsgrenzen der Mnemotechniken vom späten Mittelalter bis zum Beginn der Moderne*. Hrsg. von Jörg Jochen Berns, Wolfgang Neuber. Wien 2000, pp. 463-480.

Seelbach¹¹ or Kimberly Rivers.¹² The researchers mentioned above, however, discuss *ars memorativa* in its theoretical approach and relation to antiquity; they investigate the transmission of manuscripts and hand-written sources, indicate the particular influence of *ars memorativa* upon the Renaissance Hermetic tradition or on the Baroque emblematic poetry. Effective mnemotechnical means for remembering specific issues or works, the Bible in particular, have been also investigated.¹³ In addition, the relations between the art

¹⁰ E.g.: *Ars memorativa. Zur kulturgeschichtlichen Bedeutung der Gedächtniskunst 1400-1750*. Hrsg. von Jorg Jöchen Berns und Wolfgang Neuber. Tübingen 1993 (= Frühe Neuzeit 15); *Seelenmaschinen* (fn. 9); or series: *Documenta Mnemonica*, in which for example: *Das enzyklopädische Gedächtnis der Frühen Neuzeit*. Enzyklopädie- und Lexikonartikel zur Mnemonik. Hrsg. von Jorg Jöchen Berns und Wolfgang Neuber. Tübingen 1998.

¹¹ 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).

¹² Kimberly Rivers: *Memory and Medieval Preaching: Mnemonic Advice in the Ars praedicandi of Franciscus Eiximenis (c. 1327-1409)*. In: *Viator* 30 (1999), pp. 253-284; eadem: *Memory, Division, and the Organisation of Knowledge in the Middle Ages*. In: *Pre-modern Encyclopaedic Texts. Proceedings of the Second COMERS Congress, Groningen, 1-4 July 1996*. Ed. Peter Binkley. Leiden 1997, pp. 147-158.

¹³ Susanne Rischpler: *Biblia Sacra figuris expressa: Mnemotechnische Bilderbibeln des 15. Jahrhunderts*. Wiesbaden 2001; Lucie Doležalová: *Biblia quasi in saculo: Summarium Bible and other medieval Bible mnemonics*. In: *Medium Aevum Quotidianum* 56 (2007), pp. 5-35; Greta Dinkova-Bruun: *Biblical Versification and Memory in the Later Middle Ages*. In: *Culture of Memory in East Central Europe in the Late Middle Ages and the Early Modern Period. Conference proceedings Ciążeń, March 12-14, 2008*. Hrsg. von Rafał Wójcik. Poznań 2008, pp. 53-64; see also: Susanne Rischpler: *Spätmittelalterliche Mnemotechnik im Kontext von Konzil und Melker Reform*. In: *Wissenspaläste. Räume des Wissens in der Vormoderne*. Hrsg. von Gesine Mierke und Christoph Fasbender. Würzburg 2013 (= *Euros. Chemnitzer Arbeiten zur Literaturwissenschaft* 2), pp. 10-41; Lucie Doležalová: *Ordnen des Gedächtnisses: Das Verzeichnis als Raum des Wissens der Vormoderne*. In: *ibidem*, pp. 42-57; Cora Dietl: *Die Organisation neuen und alten Wissens in Memorialbildern: Gregor Reischs 'Margarita philosophica'*. In: *ibidem*, pp. 78-100.

of memory and meditative techniques to be observed in late Middle Ages have been indicated.¹⁴

In the present article, however, a particular attention is given to late medieval printed mnemonic treatises that had been compiled, and later read and copied, within the circle of early German humanists, but also to other humanists that exerted some influence upon texts originated within the circle of German culture. Surprising as it is, though, we deal here with humanists who compiled medieval treatises, as the texts written by them reflect and reproduce in their essence the rules and principles that were present in fact in medieval texts. Apparently, it is impossible to indicate an effectively-defined distinct boundary between medieval and humanist mnemonic treatises although, indeed, the latter ones share some common features that make them distinct from their predecessors.

Some of the authors concerned, as well as some of the texts I would like to focus on, are well known, were widely published and have been extensively analysed by researchers. This is particularly true with reference to the texts written by Jacobus Publicius,¹⁵ Conrad Celtis, Petrus de Ravenna, Jodocus Wetzdorf, Conrad Umhauser and Thomas Murner. Other authors, such as Matheolus Perusinus, Henricus Vibicetus, Hermann von dem Busche, Georgius Sibus, Johannes Cusanus, Lorenz Fries, Petrus Coloniae or Jacobus Philippus, have been discussed and acknowledged in bibliographies, biographical dictionaries or have been only mentioned casually in other monographs or studies devoted to *ars memorativa* or the German Humanism. These late printed treatises, i.e. those from the end of the fifteenth and the beginning of the sixteenth century (with the exception of the texts written by Publicius, Celtis, Petrus de Ravenna and Thomas Murner), seem to be of marginal importance to researchers involved in the study on the history of the art of memory and at most occupy their marginal critical interest.

It should also be noted that the present article does not claim to provide the exhaustive coverage and a detailed analysis of the cont-

¹⁴ Farkas Kiss: Memory, Meditation and Preaching: A Fifteenth-Century Memory Machine in Central Europe (The Text *Nota hanc figuram composuerant doctores... / Pro aliquali intelligentia...*). In: *The Making of Memory in the Middle Ages*. Ed. by Lucie Doležalová. Leiden 2010, pp. 49-78.

¹⁵ Bibliographical data concerning particular treatises — see below.

ents of specific texts and, in particular, their relationships to earlier treatises. Undoubtedly, however, more intensive investigation of the texts in view of their relationships to other treatises, especially to such treatises as *Ars memorie artificialis pater reverende*, *Memoria fecunda*, *Attendentes nonnulli philosophie professores*, or the treatises written by Mattheus de Verona and Goswinus de Ryt, might make these matters clearer and should be undertaken in near future. My intention is to focus on characteristic distinctive features of late medieval treatises and to indicate certain relationships between them. There is much evidence that between 1474 and 1530 it was fashionable for scholars who taught at German universities (and also in Vienna) to compose, compile and publish mnemonic treatises of their own.

In order to cast some light on the genesis and evolution of this particular practice, it seems necessary to describe briefly the reasons behind this enormous popularity of mnemonic treatises in the fifteenth century.¹⁶

It should not be forgotten that the fifteenth century was a particularly golden age in the history of *ars memorativa*, comparable only to Antiquity and the nineteenth century.¹⁷ In the fifteenth century,

¹⁶ The present considerations are based on the author's discussions with Lucie Doležalová and Farkas Kiss and his observations included in the introduction to our jointly authored book soon to be published *The ars memorativa in Late Medieval East Central Europe (Czech Lands, Poland, Hungary)*. I hereby wish to thank the co-authors of the book for their permission to use this information in the present article. Besides offering a discussion on the art of memory in particular Central European countries, the publication will include an anthology of texts, including an anonymous Hussite treatise (originated after 1415), *Ars memorativa* by Matheus Beran (ca. 1437), an excerpt from Paweł Źydek's (a.k.a. Paulerinus) encyclopedia from 1460 devoted to the art of memory, mnemotechnical treatise by Magister Hainricus (1473), *Ars memoristarum* by Paulin of Skalbmierz (before 1498), *Opusculum de arte memorativa* by Jan Szklarek (1504), *Praxis memorativae artis*, *De arte iuvandi memoriam* by Valentinus de Monte Viridi; 1504), *Opusculum artificiosae memoriae* by Michael de Arce Draconis (1505), anonymous Bernardine treatise *Modus reponendi sermonum* (ca. 1507) and *Tractatulus artificiosae memoriae* by Johann Cusanus (Johannes Enclen de Cusa; 1510).

¹⁷ See: Piotr Molenda: Antoni Jaźwiński i jego następcy. Polskie metody mnemotechniczne w XIX w. i początkach XX w. Ph.D. Thesis. Poznań 2009. A book based on the dissertation is being prepared for publication and should be released in 2014.

the sudden rise in the sheer number of treatises originated in Italy is clearly observable. These treatises reverberated and spread across almost the whole of Europe, bolstered by the pivotal role of the Council of Constance (1414-1418) and Council of Basel (1431-1438). A suggestion proposed by Frances A. Yates¹⁸ (also followed by Sabine Seelbach¹⁹) indicates that the two essential reasons behind the flourishing of *ars memorativa* in the late Middle Ages were the influence exerted by Thomas Aquinas, who elevated memory to the position of human virtue and linked it closely (following Aristotelian ethics and Cicero's *De inventione*) to the virtue of prudence, and the inspiration given by treatises of Byzantine provenance after, at the beginning of the fifteenth century, Greek refugees from Byzantium flooded in to Italy (in particular to Venice). Naturally, one can easily accept that the influence of Aquinas and the Greek were significant. However, from the period between the thirteenth century when Thomas Aquinas was active and the fifteenth century, there are only a few vestiges known to us that would suggest certain interest in the art of memory such as *De memoria artificiali adquirenda* written by English mathematician and bishop Thomas Bradwardine²⁰ and *Ars Praedicandi Populo* (*The art of preaching to people*) by the Franciscan Catalan writer Francesc Eximenis written in the latter half of the fourteenth century.²¹ Both texts have been preserved only in three copies each. By contrast to more than 56 treatises described by Sabine Seelbach and preserved in over 250 hand-written copies from the fifteenth century, the former group constitutes only a fraction. What is more, the above mentioned number of hand-written sources should be additionally expanded by the incunabular editions discussed below.

¹⁸ Frances Yates (fn. 5), pp. 73-76 and 82-83; Frances Yates: Ludovico da Pirano's Memory Treatise. In: Cultural Aspects of the Italian Renaissance. Essays in Honour of P. O. Kristeller. Ed. by Cecil H. Clough. Manchester, New York 1976, pp. 111-122.

¹⁹ Heimann-Seelbach (fn. 11), pp. 417-433.

²⁰ Mary Carruthers: Thomas Bradwardine: 'De Memoria Artificiali Adquirenda'. In: The Journal of Medieval Latin 2 (1992), pp. 25-43.

²¹ Kimberly Rivers: Memory and Medieval Preaching (fn. 12); also eadem: Preaching the Memory of Virtue and Vice: Memory, Images and Preaching in the Late Middle Ages. Turnhout 2010.

Beside mnemonic treatises in their strict sense, we should not forget about the transmissions of the ancient anonymous treatise attributed to Cicero at the time, *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, that exerted a significant influence upon the development of medieval art of memory. In the case of this particular book, however, it is not always obvious that the owner of a copy of *Ad Herennium* was exclusively interested in the art of memory. Its possession testifies more to the owner's interest in rhetoric. We also have no knowledge of any mnemonic treatises of Byzantine provenance that could have had any influence on texts representing Western culture, which, of course, does not prove at all that such text did not exist. It might be so then that they are still to be discovered.

It seems quite obvious then that the said upsurge in the interest in mnemonic methods should be also explained by some other complementing factors.

The most important reasons of the popularity of the art of memory and its subsequent flowering in the fifteenth century include the significant increase in the number of students at universities, as well as the growing number of universities in the whole of Central Europe, and in Germany in particular. This unique mass education of a particular kind imposed a change in the discourse of teaching, which produced an extraordinary outburst of treatises and textbooks, though far shorter than in the preceding centuries, that Daniel Hobbins calls the late medieval tract.²² The changes that ensued resulted not only in the formula adopted for university treatises, but also for the preaching type of lecture teaching initiated by San Bernardino of Siena. This famous Franciscan expanded the use of rhetoric means, successfully used them to influence and attract the audience, and, in addition, appealed a number of times to mnemonic principles, especially in his vernacular sermons.²³ It is, undoubtedly, this new style of preaching advocated by Bernardino of Siena, as well as the exposure to Italian treatises during councils and journeys to Italy to attend councils of ecclesiastical bodies, that had their

²² Daniel Hobbins: The Schoolman as Public Intellectual: Jean Gerson and the Late Medieval Tract. In: *American Historical Review* 108 (2003), pp. 1308-1337.

²³ Carlo Delcorno: L'ars praedicandi di Bernardino da Siena. In: *Lettere italiane* 32 (1980), pp. 453-454.

effect on the growing interest in the art of memory among the Polish Observants.²⁴ Finally, the invention of moveable type by Johannes Guttenberg must have had its crucial share in the distribution of treatises in mid-fifteenth century.

The above mentioned factors include two that are of particular importance within the context of the issues discussed in this article. Firstly, the appearance of short texts, and then the widespread use of the Guttenberg's invention. Both had a key role in the origination of mnemonic texts compiled by early humanists. Here, I will limit myself to discussing treatises on the art of memory (not including e.g. *Chartiludium logices* by Thomas Murner or *Grammatica figurata* by Matthias Ringmann), though we have to bear in mind that in this initial period of printing (also in block books) one can encounter slightly different works with strong mnemonic value, namely those referring to memorizing the Bible or those that referred to meditation practices.²⁵

Printed art of memory treatises from the latter half of the fifteenth century and the beginning of the sixteenth century were published in either of the two following ways:

- a) as a mere chapter in a larger work, especially one that was devoted to rhetoric. This was the case with Jacobus Publicius and Conrad Celtis, also Petrus de Ravenna, though his art of memory was later published as a section in Gregor Reisch's encyclopedia *Margarita philosophica*. Those chapters were then perceived as entities and were copied as separate treatises. The codex with the shelf number 734/I, currently held at the Library of the National Ossoliński Institute in Wrocław (The Ossolineum), is a case in point. In this book, Valentinus de Monte Viridi copied in 1504 both

²⁴ Rafał Wójcik: 'Opusculum de arte memorativa' Jana Szklarka. Bernardyński traktat mnemotechniczny z 1504 roku. Poznań 2006.

²⁵ See Kiss (fn. 14); idem: The Art of Memory in Hungary at the Turn of the 15th and 16th century. In: The ars memorativa in Late Medieval East Central Europe (Czech Lands, Poland, Hungary). Ed. by Lucie Doležalová, Farkas Kiss, Rafał Wójcik [in preparation]. See also Rischpler (fn. 13).

- Publicius' treatise and rewrote a mnemotechnical treatise by Celtis;²⁶
- b) as a separate work, usually short, that included the most important principles of the art; some printed treatises feature woodcuts, short epigrams written by friends of the author, inscriptions and dedications. This type of treatises can be then divided into the two following categories:
- a treatise that exclusively included a rhetoric part (section) (based on the fourth part of classical rhetoric) in which the traditional rules for places and images are discussed;
 - a treatise that included both the rhetoric part and the medical (pharmaceutical) part that included rules for demeanour, hygiene recommendations, cleanliness, food, beverages or herbs that either enhance or impair memory (e.g. *De memoria augenda* by Matheolus Perusinus, *Opusculum de arte memorativa* by Jan Szklarek or *Artis memorativae naturalis et artificialis ... traditio* by Lorenz Fries).

The treatises that are most important and those that had the highest influence upon the reception of the art of memory, its shape and reminiscence in other texts originated in the latter half of the fifteenth century and the first three decades of the following century, include, in my opinion, the following three works: *De memoria augenda* by Matheolus Perusinus, *Artes orandi, epistolandi, memorandi* by Jacobus Publicius and *Phoenix seu De artificiosa memoria* by Petrus de Ravenna. It is just the three treatises (in the case of Publicius, the chapter from his rhetoric text book) that were most frequently printed at the time and thereby most read. Let us have a look at a list of the treatises that were printed in the latter half of the fifteenth century to see how many editions they had and

²⁶ See Farkas Kiss: Valentinus de Monteviridi (Grünberg) and the Art of Memory of Conrad Celtis. In: *Culture of Memory in East Central Europe in the Late Middle Ages and the Early Modern Period*. Ed. by Rafał Wójcik. Poznań 2008, pp. 105-118.

how many copies have been preserved until our times.²⁷ The following listing does not include block books.²⁸

Anonymous prints

Ars memorativa, [Augsburg: Ludwig Hohenwang, about 1477].

1 edition, 3 copies

Ars memorativa, [Lübeck: Lucas Brandis, about 1478].

1 edition, 7 copies

Ars memorativa, Ingolstadt: [Johann Kachelofen, about 1499].

1 edition, 11 copies

Ars memorativa (in German), [Augsburg: Johann Bämmler, about 1480].

1 edition, 5 copies

Ars memorativa (in Italian: Memoria locale e modo de habitare tante cosse quanto l'homo vora), [Pavia: Johannes Andreas de Boscho, Michael and Bernardinus de Garaldis, after 22 Oct. 1494].

1 edition, 3 copies

Conrad Celtis, Epitoma in Ciceronis rhetoricas; De artificiali memoria; Tractatus de condendis epistulis; Alphabetum memorativum; Carmina quaedam, [Ingolstadt: Printer of Celtis, 'Epitoma' (Johann Kachelofen), after 28 Mar. 1492].

1 edition, 24 copies

Jodocus Wetzdorf, Ars memorandi, [Strassburg: Johann (Reinhard) Grüninger, about 1500].

1 edition, 11 copies

Petrus de Ravenna

5 editions, 113 copies:

1. Aurea opuscula (Sermo synodalis. Phoenix, seu de artificiosa memoria. Allegationes nonnullae utriusque iuris), Cologne: Heinrich Quentell, 31 Dec. 1508.
16 copies²⁹

²⁷ Based on *Incunabula Short Title Catalogue* available at British Library website (access 13.07.2013): <http://www.bl.uk/catalogues/istc/>

²⁸ Will be discussed in Farkas Kiss' article in: *The ars memorativa in Late Medieval East Central Europe (Czech Lands, Poland, Hungary)* (fn. 16).

²⁹ Since in some countries books that were published in 1508 are not considered to be incunabula, the number of preserved copies may be substantially higher, though not all copies have their records in catalogues of incunabula.

2. Phoenix seu De artificiosa memoria. Add: Verses by Antoninus Aegidius Canisius, Johannes Antonius Plebanus, Marcus Picardus, Hieronymus Butigella and C. Lycinius, Venice: Bernardinus de Choris, de Cremona, 10 Jan. 1491/92
59 copies
3. Phoenix seu De artificiosa memoria, [Bologna: Bazalerius de Bazaleriis, about 1492].
21 copies
4. Phoenix seu De artificiosa memoria, Erfurt: Wolfgang Schenck, 1500.
15 copies
5. Phoenix seu De artificiosa memoria, [Leipzig: Wolfgang Stöckel, about 1503-06].
6 copies

With the case of Petrus de Ravenna we must not forget about the large number, though hard to be evaluated fairly accurately, of the copies of *Margarita philosophica* by Gregor Reisch. In this famous encyclopedia, Reisch reprinted *Phoenix seu de artificiosa memoria* as a chapter on the art of memory. *Margarita philosophica* had at least ten editions in the first twenty years of the sixteenth century.

Jacobus Publicius

9 editions, 283 copies:

1. Ars memorativa, [Toulouse: Henricus Turner?, about 1475-76].
1 copy
2. Ars memorativa, [Paris: Petrus Caesaris and Johannes Stol?, about 1475-80].
1 copy
3. Ars memorativa, [Cologne: Johann Guldenschaff, about 1481].
11 copies
4. Ars memorativa, [Paris: Antoine Caillaut, about 1484-90].
1 copy
5. Ars memorativa. Add: Regimen sanitatis Salernitanum, Paris: [n.pr.], for Alexander Alyate, [after 1500].
2 copies
6. Artes orandi, epistolandi, memorandi, Venice: Erhard Ratdolt, 30 Nov. 1482.
106 copies
7. Artes orandi, epistolandi, memorandi, Venice: Erhard Ratdolt, 31 Jan. 1485.
116 copies
8. Artes orandi, epistolandi, memorandi, [Augsburg]: Erhard Ratdolt, 20 Jan. 1490.
42 copies

9. *Ars epistolandi orandique modus*, Leipzig: Wolfgang Stöckel, [about 1504].
3 copies³⁰
10. *Institutiones oratoriae et ars epistolandi* (?), [Reutlingen: Michael Greyff, about 1491].
14 copies

Matheolus Perusinus: *De memoria*

17 editions and at least 2 editions from 16th century, 211 copies from the 15th century

1. [Rome: Bartholomaeus Guldinbeck, about 1474-75].
9 copies
2. [Naples: Printer of Silvaticus, about 1474]
7 copies
3. [Padua]: Petrus Maufer de Maliferis, [about 1474].
10 copies
4. [Padua]: Petrus Maufer de Maliferis, [1474]
15 copies
5. [Burgdorf: Printer of Jacobus de Clusa, about 1475].
12 copies
6. [Milan: n.pr., 1475]
2 copies
7. [Louvain: Johann Veldener, not before 1486].
9 copies
8. [Strassburg: Heinrich Knoblochtzter, 1476-84].
27 copies
9. [Milan: Philippus de Lavagnia, about 1475-77].
6 copies
10. [Rome: Stephan Planck, about 1490].
18 copies
11. [Rome: Stephan Planck, between 1490 and 1500].
19 copies
12. [Rome: Stephan Planck, after July 1491].
1 copy
13. [Rome: Eucharius Silber, about 1492].
9 copies
14. [Augsburg: Johann Schaur, about 1494-96].
17 copies
15. [Rome: Bartholomaeus Guldinbeck, about 1482-85].
13 copies

³⁰ It is highly probable that more copies of his edition have been preserved though; due to the approximated date of publication, not all catalogues of *Incunabula Short Title Catalogue* does not show it.

16. De memoria. Ed: Andreas Boner , [Leipzig: Martin Landsberg, not before 1495?].
13 copies
17. De memoria. Add: Plinius: Historiae naturalis liber XXVIII, cap. IV ad finem; Gordanus (i.e. Bernardus de Gordonio?): Documenta pro memoria; Martialis: Vita beata ex libro X Epigrammatum; Aurelius Augustinus, S: De nociva venere ex libro XIV cap. XVI De civitate Dei. [Strassburg]: Martin Schott, 12 Oct. 1498.
24 copies
18. Also: Leipzig 1508 (ed. Andreas Boner) and Cracow 1530 (for Jan Wiewiórka)³¹

As for the latter half of the century, additional two signs of the popularity of *ars memorativa* should be included. Firstly, it is the demand that for some time pulled the supply (38 editions of different (various) mnemonic treatises in thousands of copies each³² within the timespan of nearly 40 years). Additionally, this enormous numbers of thousands of printed copies should be appended with hand-written transmissions. For example, Sabine Seelbach has found 27 hand-written copies of the treatise by Publicius, 9 copies of *De memoria augenda* by Perusinus and 8 copies written by Petrus de Ravenna. Secondly, within the circles of German humanists a particular fashion for writing short treatises set in at the time (more or less covering the years between 1480 and 1520).

The title of the present article mentions masters, pupils and friends. And indeed, the bulk of the treatises published in Germany and Austria at the turn of the 15th and the 16th centuries was written by German humanists who knew one another well, were in touch with one another, exchanged letters, listened to their lectures at universities, copied from each other the rules governing the art of memory, borrowed and transformed their ideas, woodcuts and, in some instances, exchanged written epigrams to be included in the publications of printed treatises.

³¹ The Cracow edition has been preserved in two copies (National Library, Warsaw — defected copy, last page missing, and the Library of the Seminary in Łowicz — I have not been able to get to the copy).

³² Even with the assumption that the print run was about 500 copies, and it can be expected that in some of instances (Jacobus Publicius, Matheolus Perusinus and Petrus de Ravenna) these figures could be substantially higher, we eventually get 19,000 copies.

In my article I do not mention *Chartiludium logices* by Thomas Murner because it is not a typical mnemonic treatise, though it borrows many rules from the classical art of memory.³³ It is worthwhile to remind within this context that Murner's first teacher in Freiburg was Jakob Locher (Philomusus), whereas Locher was in turn a pupil of Conrad Celtis. Gregor Reisch, the publisher of the mentioned *Margarita philosophica* in which *Phoenix seu de artificiosa memoria* by Petrus of Ravenna was published, remained within the same circle.

It seems that the main inspiration behind the vogue of writing mnemotechnical treatise were two German humanists — Conrad Celtis, with his *Epitoma in utramque Ciceronis rhetoricam* published in Ingolstadt in 1492, and Hermann von dem Busche, who was a master and friend of many young humanists and, at the same time, a recognized author of a short mnemonic treatise himself. Celtis' treatise has been extensively researched.³⁴ Here, it worth remembering that Celtis was the one who described typical mnemonic principles to which, however, he added one of his own — a mnemonic alphabet of his own invention. What is important, this alphabet differed considerably from the alphabet published in Publicius prints. What is even more important within this context is that Celtis was a teacher of a few other authors.

³³ Recent works include: Detlef Hoffmann: Die mnemonischen Kartenspiele Thomas Murners. In: Seelenmaschinen (fn. 9), pp. 585-604; Manuel Stoffers, Pieter Thijs: De 'Logica memorativa' van Thomas Murner: het eerste educatieve kaartspel en zijn publicatiegeschiedenis. In: Jaarboek voor Nederlandse boekgeschiedenis 5 (1998), pp. 7-26; Manuel Stoffers: A question of mentality: the changed appreciation of Thomas Murner's Logical card game (c. 1500). In: Memory & oblivion: proceedings of the XXIXth International Congress of the History of Art held in Amsterdam, 1-7 September 1996. Ed. by Wessel Reinik. Kluwer 1999, pp. 275-293; Rafał Wójcik: Straßburg — Freiburg — Paris — Krakau. Zu den möglichen Inspirationsquellen Thomas Murners, des Autors des *Chartiludium logicae sive logica memorativa* (1507/1509). In: *Daphnis* 40 (2011), pp. 63-88.

³⁴ Cf. the cited article: Kiss (fn. 26), pp. 105-118.

One of his pupils was Georg Sibutus (Daripinus).³⁵ Sibutus was the author of several panegyrics, discriminating eulogies in the form of poems in honour of cities (*laudes urbium*)³⁶ and a number of songs. He also taught rhetoric in Vienna in the late 1490s. In fact, Sibutus also wrote a mnemonic treatise of his own — *Ars memorativa Gerogij [!] Sibuti Daripini*, published in Cologne in the printing office of Quentell on March 27, 1505 r. Sabine Seelbach links his treatise with other humanist *artes* from the same period, in particular with those written by Petrus de Ravenna, Celtis and Hermann von dem Busche. Sibutus himself makes references to only classical authors, such as Quintilian and Cicero. Also his examples of *loci communes* make references to Ovid and Vergil in particular. All this allows us of course to place the treatise written by Sibutus within the humanist currents of mnemonic treatises although his *ars memorativa* still lingers on in the Middle Ages when it comes to its structure and the way mnemonic rules and principles are explained and described.

Hermann von dem Busche, mentioned earlier in the text, appears within the context of three mnemonic treatises printed at the turn of the fifteenth and the sixteenth century. Firstly, he was a friend of Andreas Boner of Landau, a brother to Jan Boner, one of the most important Cracow merchants who made frequent loans to the Polish king himself and supported (also financially) the community of the Cracow-based humanists.³⁷ Andreas Boner, primarily known as the author of numerous epigrams scattered in books printed at the turn of the fifteenth and the sixteenth century, was also the publisher of one edition of *De memoria augenda* by Matheolus Perusinus.

³⁵ On Sibutus, his works plus a brief analysis of the treatise, see Sabine Seelbach: Sibutus, Georg (Daripinus), in: *Deutscher Humanismus 1480-1520. Verfasserlexikon*. Hrsg. von Franz Josef Worstbrock. Bd. 2. Berlin, New York 2012, Sp. 884-896.

³⁶ In the eulogy to the city of Wittenberg, Sibutus mentions that Conrad Celtis was his teacher.

³⁷ On the family of the Boners, in particular on Jan (Johann), and their role in the sixteenth-century Cracow in: Jan Ptaśnik: Bonerowie. In: *Rocznik Krakowski* 7 (1904), pp. 1-134 (on Andreas Boner short mentions on pages 8 and 53 and Gustaw Bauch's statement in *Dodatek źródłowy* on pages 132-133). An entry with his name is missing in, for example: *Deutscher Humanismus 1480-1520. Verfasserlexikon*. Bd. 1. Hrsg. von Franz Josef Worstbrock. Berlin 2005.

Perusinus' treatise was more often than not printed with no name of the publisher and without a dedication. Hitherto, only two editions with a dedication, one made by Andreas Boner and the other published in Cracow in Florian Ungler's printing shop in 1530, have been discovered.

Hermann von dem Busche exchanged letters with Boner. One of them was published in Leipzig in 1505 in a collection of letters from friends to Buschius. This collection also includes a letter written by Michael Drachenfels (Michael de Arce Draconis) who, in turn, could have been the author of the excerpt of some mnemonical principles that has been preserved in one copy only in Wolffenbüttel (sign. A:104.11 Quod). In addition, the epigram written by Hermann von dem Busche also appeared in a number of editions of mnemonic treatises (more on that below). He also published a treatise of his own, *Aureum reminiscendi opusculum*, that represents typical features of a mnemonic text of the time.

In the introduction to his critical and annotated edition of *Tractatulus artificiose memorie* by Johannes Cusanus, due to be published soon, Farkas Kiss writes that the three known editions of the text (Frankfurt a.d. Oder, 1510; Vienna, 1514 and Leipzig, 1519) attribute the authorship to Cusanus.³⁸ However, the investigations on the life of this itinerant humanist carried out by Kiss, as well as the history of the epigram of Hermann von dem Busche that appears in all of these editions, cast some doubts on the Cusanus authorship, though undoubtedly it was him who prepared the three editions of the treatise for printing. *Tractatulus artificiose memorie* is an interesting example of a borrowing, or, indeed, a theft of ideas conceived by his predecessors, in some instances transformed, in some others, using today's standards, simply plagiarized. The relationships and dependencies between the treatise written by Cusanus

³⁸ The edition will also be published in: *The ars memorativa in Late Medieval East Central Europe (Czech Lands, Poland, Hungary)*. See footnote 16. All editions of his print are very rare, whereas its author is not mentioned in biographical dictionaries. Kiss observes that only the Vienna edition (Hieronim Wietor print shop, Johannes Singrenius edition) is recorded in VD 16 (ZV 4213). A unique copy of the Johannes Hanaw edition from Frankfurt a.d. Oder is kept in the University Library in Uppsala (shelf number.: Ink. 31.230[1]), while the inscribed word *Dudy* (the second half of the 16th or the 17th c.) may indicate its Polish or Bohemian provenance.

and those of Celtis and Publicius are interesting. Cusanus represented the “tribe” of itinerant humanists. Towards the end of his career, in 1529, he also reached Cracow, where he was recorded as a *lector artificiose memorie*.³⁹ During his more than a decade-long itinerancy, Cusanus lectured at 19 universities in seven countries. Initial observations made by Kiss indicate that he lectured, for example, in Cologne (1501), Zwolle (1502), Erfurt (1505), Frankfurt an der Oder (1510), Vienna (1514), Leipzig (1519), Lübeck (1523-27), Copenhagen (1524) and Cracow (1529).⁴⁰ *Tractatulus artificiose memorie* includes epigrams written by Hermann von dem Busche, Hermann Trebelius and Eberhard Verberius. Most probably, Cusanus used the treatise as a text book during his lectures. It should not be forgotten that apart from *ars memorativa* he taught (and published) rules for the so-called *arbores consanguinitatis at affinitatis*, i.e. trees that illustrate the structure of family kinship system. Cusanus, on the one hand, uses the distinction into places of different size (*loci maximi, maiores, minores*) that are used in earlier 15th-century treatises⁴¹ and takes advantage of the mnemonic alphabet and numbers that are copied word for word from the woodcuts in the Publicius treatise, on the other. What is interesting, Cusanus copied the alphabet that was advocated by Celtis in his *Epitoma in utramque Ciceronis rhetoricam* despite the fact that the latter author rejected and criticized the method proposed by Publicius. However, what is the most interesting with this particular treatise is the fact that Cusanus most probably usurped its authorship, for the treatise should be rather attributed to Henricus Vibicetus or Hermann von dem Busche. A print recorded as *Aureum reminiscendi memorandique prebreue opusculum* (Cologne 1501 and Zwolle 1502) that has not been preserved has exactly the same incipit as the *Tractatulus*. Because of the epigram by Hermann von dem Busche, it was often attributed to him. However, the determinations made by Kiss point at Vibicetus as the author of the treatise, von dem Busche only being the author of the epigram, while Cusanus, after the death of

³⁹ Wójcik (fn. 24), p. 80.

⁴⁰ His detailed biography and observations concerning the life of Cusanus are in the cited book *The ars memorativa in Late Medieval East Central Europe (Czech Lands, Poland, Hungary)* [in preparation].

⁴¹ Heimann-Seelbach (fn. 11), p. 125.

Vibicetus (about whom any information is scarce), simply usurped his rights to this presumably widely-read work. It is highly probable that Cusanus was a student of Vibicetus in Cologne. According to the bibliographical record in VD 16, the Cologne edition had the name of Vibicetus, while the print published in Zwolle was published anonymously.

Another work I would also like to mention is *Artis memorativae naturalis et artificialis facilis et verax traditio*, published in Strasbourg in 1523.⁴² Its author, Lorenz Fries, born around 1490, was mainly known as a secretary and archivist in the bishopric of Würzburg and the author of two historical works (*Die Würzburger Bischofs-Chronik*⁴³ and *Die Geschichte des Bauernkriegs in Ostfranken*⁴⁴). He was also a medic and astrologer. The above mnemonic treatise Fries published in the same year, same printing office and also in the German vernacular.⁴⁵

Fries' treatise is interesting not only on account of the references to a fairly detailed example of the arrangement of mnemonic places in the Strasbourg cathedral (a rare example of a reference to a building that existed in real life), but also because of the reference to the treatise by Matheolus Perusinus. Things as they are, the Fries treatise is, similarly to *De memoria augenda* and *Opusculum de arte memorativa* by the Polish Observant, Jan Szklarek, was divided into two separate parts — the rhetoric part, referring to the classical rules of creating places and images, and the pharmaceutical part in which

⁴² The print is discussed by Jean Michel Massing: Laurent Fries et son 'Ars Memorativa'. La cathédrale de Strasbourg comme espace mnémonique. In: Bulletin de la Cathédrale de Strasbourg 16 (1984), pp. 69-78 (reprinted in: Studies in Imagery. Vol. 1: Texts and Images. London 2004, pp. 251-274). Also mentioned by Wolfgang Neuber: Die vergessene Stadt. Zum Verschwinden des Urbanen in der ars memorativa der Frühen Neuzeit. In: Seelenmaschinen (fn. 9), p. 96.

⁴³ Ulrich Wagner und Walter Ziegler: Lorenz Fries. Chronik der Bischöfe von Würzburg 742-1495. 6 Bde. Würzburg 1992-2004 (= Fontes Herbipolenses. Editionen und Studien aus dem Stadtarchiv Würzburg I-VI).

⁴⁴ August Schäffler, Theodor Henner: Die Geschichte des Bauern-Krieges in Ostfranken von Magister Lorenz Fries. 2 Bde. Würzburg 1883.

⁴⁵ Lorenz Fries: Ein kurzer bericht, wie man die gedechtniß wunderbarlichen stercken mag, also das ein yed in kurtzer weil geschiffreich werden mag. Straßburg: Johannes Grüninger 1523 (VD 16 F 2862).

Fries gives instructions for hygienic life and offers clues as to what food and beverages are to be taken in order to enhance memory and which should be rather avoided. A reversal of the sequence of these parts used by Fries is interesting. The Perusinus and Szklarek treatises have their most important “rhetoric” section at the beginning, while the medical section only appended the main body of the treatises. In Fries treatise it is just the opposite, the section regarded by the author as more important and placed at the beginning of the treatise is the part covering formulas and hygienic guidance, while the section on places and images is moved to the final pages. Fries was active within the circle of Thomas Murner and Johannes Grunniger, a printer and publisher who published a number of treatises (including a number of editions of *Margarita philosophica* with *Phoenix* by Petrus de Ravenna).

Summing up, it should be stated that the printed treatises of the time were characterized by a similar structure and format. At the beginning, oftentimes on the title page, or on the following page, an epigram or epigrams written by friends were placed. Then came the dedication followed by a presentation of the rules for the art of memory according to typical and standard order, i.e. a reply to the question what memory is, and then the division into natural and artificial memory with their short descriptions, then a short presentation of the idea and the rules of the creation of places and images and, finally, in some instances, the presentation of the mnemonic alphabet. Sometimes medical and pharmaceutical instruction and recipes were added.

One might conclude that in the latter half of the fifteenth century and at the beginning of the following century there were three main reasons for the origination of mnemonic treatises written by humanists. The first reason was the example given by itinerant humanists who, apparently, were a kind of authority figures for young students — Jacobus Publicius and Petrus de Ravenna in particular. It seemed sort of natural that their pupils wanted to follow their steps when it comes to writing treatises. This, in turn, created a kind of a fashion for writing treatises that, at least in part, were not novel but exclusively copied earlier rules and recommendations. And finally, there is the most obvious sign of the popularity — the demand. Mnemonic treatises, or at least some of their authors, must have been very widely read, which would explain why so many editions of some of

the treatises were printed. The publications, at least in some of their number, were printed without even the knowledge of their authors, or published after their death (*casus* Matheolus Perusinus whose treatise was published in Cracow as early as 1530). This may also explain why Johannes Cusanus could have appropriated Vibicetus' treatise as his own.