In a persuasive and very influential way, Mary Carruthers showed that unlike today, memory in the Middle Ages was not a mere passive force impossible to control and irrelevant to intellectual processes. Rather, memory storage meant correct manipulation of information, that is, true understanding of the matter, and the process of recalling was always a process of active re-creation. Managing well one’s memory meant gaining intellectual creative power, and thus it was a matter of vital importance.

The Ars memorativa was a technique of memory management promising this kind of power. It was an ancient set of rules originally aimed at helping Roman orators remember and successfully deliver a speech, that is, a performance that

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they did not learn by heart but were re-creating on the spot based on the crucial points retrieved in their succession. Sure, there was *memoria verborum* (the word by word memorization), too, but much more emphasis was placed on the more difficult and prestigious *memoria rerum* (the memory of things, that is, concepts). The art was described in most detail in *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, an anonymous treatise from ca. 80 B.C. which was, however, attributed to Cicero throughout the Middle Ages. The method was based on a system of places and images. The places were a kind of set structure within one’s mind, such as a house, a garden, or a road. They were then occupied by images, created through a number of specific rules in order to keep the memory of the particular subjects. Remembering was then re-visiting the places in one’s mind and re-interpreting the images, recovering the information encoded in them. The places were supposed to be clear, well-lit, systematic, and ordered. They were to be, in the first place, striking:

And we shall do so if we establish likenesses as striking as possible; if we set up images that are not many or vague, but doing something; if we assign to them exceptional beauty or singular ugliness; if we dress some of them with crowns or purple cloaks, for example, so that the likeness may be more distinct to us; or if we somehow disfigure them, as by introducing one stained with blood or soiled with mud or smeared with red paint, so that its form is more striking, or by assigning certain comic effects to our images, for that, too, will ensure our remembering them more readily. 4

At the same time, as the author notes, the art has to remain individual:

… one person is more struck by one likeness, and another more by another. Often in fact when we declare that some one form resembles another, we fail to receive universal assent, because things seem different to different persons. The same is true with respect to images: one that is well-defined to us appears relatively inconspicuous to others. Everybody, therefore, should in equipping himself with images suit his own convenience. 5

Thus, he says, what should be taught is primarily the method accompanied by examples. 6

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4) *Imagines igitur nos in eo genere constituere oportebit, quod genus in memoria diutissime potest haerere. Id accidet, si quam maxime notatas similitudines constituemus; si non multas nec vagas, sed aliquid agentes imagines ponemus; si egregiam pulcritudinem aut unicam turpitudinem eis attribuamus; si aliquas exornabimus, ut si coronis aut veste purpurea, quo nobis notatior sit similitudo; aut si qua re deformabimus, ut si cruentam aut caeno oblitam aut rubrica delibatum inducamus, quo magis insignita sit forma, aut ridiculas res aliquas imaginibus attribuamus: nam ea res quoque faciet, ut facilius meminisse valeamus*, Ad Herennium 3, 22, 37, ed. and tr. Harry CAPLAN, London 1968 (= Loeb Classical Library).

5) *Praeterea similitudine alia alius magis commovetur. Nam ut saepe, formam si quam similem cuiquam dicerimus esse, non omnes habemus adsensores, quod alii videtur alius, item fit sic imaginibus, ut, quae nobis diligentier notata sit, ea parum videatur insignis alius. Quare sibi quemque suo commodo convenit imagines comparare*, Ad Herennium 3, 23, 38–39.

6) “…it is the instructor’s duty to teach the proper method of search in each case, and, for the sake of greater clarity, to add in illustration some one or two examples of its kind, but not all” *(praeeptoris est docere, quemadmodum quaei*
With the decline of Roman oratorical culture, the uses of the art of memory were transformed, too. The art re-appeared in several contexts during the Middle Ages and the Early Modern times, and has been explored also in connection to meditation, architecture, or philosophy and theology. It was in ca. 1400’s–1520’s that the art of memory experienced an unprecedented boom. Although the problem, is, of course, a complex one, the sudden interest in it was most probably primarily due to the rise of the universities and preaching—the growing body of students and preachers accompanied by the growing amount of information to be processed made it necessary to develop memory strategies. All the treatises are very similar to each other, each explaining the basic rules of the art before turning to the specific examples of proper places and memorable images. Beside the architectural structures, lists of 100 items are suggested as memory “places,” put into groups of five, arranged alphabetically or sharing some characteristics. Alternatively, the human body may function as a memory place, with sub-places on the head, belly and the limbs. A variety of advice is provided for creating the memory images, but the main rule of selecting the striking and uncommon is always applied.

An important aspect of the treatises is that their authors never explain everything: they were mostly itinerant teachers making their living out of the art, and so they did not write down all they knew and all that was needed to understand the art, thus ensuring that their oral explication would remain necessary to their students. As a result, we are not always able to decode their suggestions today. This fact then seems to support the doubting voices: Was this art really useful to anyone? Does it not only make memorizing more complicated and confused? Was it really spread in practice or it was simply copied as a curiosity? As will become clear from the evidence gathered in this study, not all the medieval sources considered the art useful. Yet, it also becomes manifest that it is in no way a marginal phenomenon but a strategy of conceptualization that influenced late medieval thought on a number of levels.

During the fifteenth and the beginning of the sixteenth century, some countries such as Poland had a clear art of memory culture, with a number of teachers...
instructing their students in mnemonics, and with the art of memory functioning not only as a theory but as a much practiced art. The same cannot be said of the Czech lands. It is possible that there is a lack of evidence for a memory culture in the area due to the specific developments of the fifteenth century, namely the Hussite movement, a turbulent era with years of insecurity and violence. During this time, the previous sites of intellectual and cultural discourse basically disappeared: after 1409 Prague University lost its international fame and became a local school,\(^{10}\) the most distinguished monasteries were physically destroyed, and the majority of the Catholic intellectual elite went into exile. On the other hand, where written culture is concerned, the whole fifteenth century is very rich both in Latin and vernacular texts. Most of them, however, pertain to the religious controversy of the time. Almost every author from that period took a clear stand on one of the arguing sides and defended it, whether through a poem, a satire, a tract, or a letter. Thus, it seems that there was neither much possibility nor much interest in gathering enough scholars and students to create a discourse on a theoretical topic—including the art of memory—that was not directly related to contemporary concerns.

Another possibility which seems to be supported by the manuscript evidence is that memory, perhaps in light of Aristotle’s *De memoria et reminiscencia*, was not seen as an inherent part of the creativity of the intellect but rather as a passive force that could be improved with a healthy life-style, dietetics, and frequent meditation. Indeed, there are many treatises dealing with memory from the medical perspective provenient from the area.

At the same time, however, the lack may be in appearance only: the culture of memory in the Czech lands is still a largely unexplored topic, many of the texts remain unedited and are badly or imprecisely catalogued, and thus much is still waiting to be discovered. Contexts beyond rhetoric should be studied, too, especially the context of preaching and meditation: actually, the most striking surviving mnemonic image from the area is a complex figure aimed both at private meditation and as a structure of a sermon (in Prague, NL, I G 11a, f. 17v–18r) \(^{(1)}\).\(^{11}\) It was copied in 1491 by Crux de Telcz (Oldřich Kříž z Telče), who speaks of its “certain effect” (*cum effectu aliquali*) and includes also a detailed instruction on how the figure should be used to create a mental book.\(^{12}\)

The study presented here, a mere preliminary step in researching the field, offers evidence which is not so scarce after all. And although it provides many more questions than answers, it hopefully also shows that the subject is exciting and worthy of further exploration.

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\(^{11}\) The text and its manuscript transmission is discussed by Farkas Kiss in his study *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. Lucie Doležalová, Leiden 2010, pp. 49–78.

\(^{12}\) Accompanied by this explanatory commentary, the figure survives in five manuscripts, but there is also one manuscript where there is only the figure without any explanation, and 14 more mss. including only the text. They all come from Central Europe but the precise place and time of its original composition could not be specified. For the list of manuscripts and other details, see F. Kiss, *Memory, Meditation*.
I. Artes memoriae proper

Since the art of memory treatises are rather repetitive (innovation within them is usually restricted to the concrete suggestions of mnemonic places and images), they are a good example of fluid texts with problematic authorship. Thus, it is important to be reminded that, just like in most other cases of medieval texts, it is impossible to draw a precise dividing line between what is “our” and what is “foreign,” and that insisting on making such distinction would be misleading. The reason for its inclusion here is merely posing the question whether the specificity of the Czech environment of the time had an influence on writing on memory, too.

1. Transmission of foreign treatises

Besides the Rhetorica ad Herennium, several art of memory treatises of foreign provenance were known and copied, many of them not long after they were composed. To my knowledge, there are two Czech copies of the treatise Memoria

13) The surviving manuscripts include: Prague, National Library (hereafter NL), III E 30 (from the first half of the 13th c., Italy, with marginal notes); VIII C 13 (beg. 15th c., Bohemia); VIII H 3 (2nd half 15th c., Bohemia?); or IV E 10 (Y. I. 1. n. 123) (12th–13th c., together with Candelabrum [= Summa dictaminum]).

15) Fol. 2v–15r (dating on fol. 15r: *Explicit tractatus perutilis de arte memorandi finitus in vigilia beate Marie Magadalene quasi hora decima octava anno Domini millesimo quadringentesimo quadragiesimo quarto* [July 21, 1444]).


21) Fol. 25r–30r, inc. *Hic dicturi sumus de arte mirifica*. Although Seelbach is aware of this redaction, she does not note this manuscript (nor does she note three other manuscripts of the same text with the same incipit: Lambach, Stiftsbibliothek 426a, fol. 1r–8r; Melk 1819 [nunc 1681] and Vatican, BAV, Pal. Lat. 884, fol. 8). The same treatise also precedes the art of memory by Martin of Prague in Vienna, ÖNB, Pal. lat. 5254—on which see below.

22) Fol. 121r–130v (the codex was owned by Rosenberg family in Trebnó but its previous whereabouts are not known); cf. S. Seelbach, *Ars und Scientia*, pp. 92, 326, who notes ten manuscripts of the German text including this one. This text is preceded by a Latin text on the same topic entitled *Regulae artis memoratiae*, for which see below.


24) Prague, NL, I G 11a, fol. 27v–28v and 31r–41r, inc. S. Seelbach, *Ars und Scientia*, pp. 50–54, no. 2.2, inc. *Quem admodum intellectus* (8 mss. noted but not this one); the text is edited on pp. 260–265 based on Munich, BSB, clm. 4749.

25) On fol. 25r–27r, inc. *Vellem generosissimi adolescentes ea vobis imbuenda esse, que michi dicendo incumbent. Sed intelligat quis hanc preceptionis rationem ad exercitationem commodari, expl.: sed memoria naturalis perficitur arte et memoria est frugalior…* for a discussion of this text, see S. Seelbach, *Wissensorganisation*, pp. 21–23. The codex is a miscellany from the second half of the 15th c. previously owned by Jesuits in Brno. Among others, it includes a calendar with computistic and astronomic tables, mnemonic verses on computus, some German texts but also the Czech Alphabet by Jan Hus (see Miroslav BOHÁČEK – František ČADA, *Beschreibung der mittelalterlichen Handschriften der Wissenschaftlichen Staatsbibliothek von Olmütz*, Köln 1994, pp. 10–13).

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our context. Another task still to be carried out is a careful survey of surviving incunables and early prints.  

Even this preliminary survey shows that the art of memory was known in the area. The codices which include treatises on memory come from various contexts (different monastic orders as well as a university environment), which suggests that the art was not restricted to a particular channel of transmission. In addition, as shall be discussed below, the treatises do not appear in isolation: a number of the codices in which a foreign treatise is copied also include an art of memory tract of Czech provenance as well as other texts linked to the culture of memory. Thus, it can be observed that there was an active reception of the art.

II. Artes memoriae of Czech origin

As far as the memory treatises of original Czech provenance are concerned, each of them has some features that may be considered characteristic of the specific context of origin. Thus, the first relevant ars memoriae (to be discussed in detail below) is an anonymous fragmentary treatise repeating the basic rules of the art and surviving, to my knowledge, in a unique manuscript. This otherwise not particularly noteworthy piece of writing proves to be of Czech origin through the unfinished list of the suggested mnemonic places, which clearly connects it to the Hussite environment: the whole is rather apocalyptic in nature and includes the burning of monks, violated graves, snatched vessels and dug up lands, but also Wycliff’s books, or Žižka (i.e. Jan Žižka, one of the most important Hussite leaders).

The second known ars memoriae by a Czech author was actually written in Erfurt. The man who claims to be its author in the preface, Mattheus (Matouš) Beran, a monk of the Augustinian monastery in Roudnice, was originally a doctor, but, together with many Catholics went into exile during the Hussite wars, and the treatise, written in 1431 (as he states himself in the colophon), seems to be one of his attempts to make a living abroad. Another aspect of his text revealed by a closer analysis may be also seen as characteristic of the region: the treatise was actually not his—Mattheus Beran appropriated an art of memory written in 1420 (and revised in 1423) by Mattheus of Verona.

The close link to the German environment is manifest in the following two treatises: the fragmentary list probably by Wenzel Faber de Budweis (České Budějovice) and the anonymous regulae surviving in two manuscripts of a probable German origin, both included here primarily because they have not been noticed before. Finally, there is a brief treatment of the art in a famous encyclopedia by Paulerinus (Pavel Žídek), and another one within an ars dictaminis written

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26 There is, for example, one copy of Matheolus Perusinus, De memoria augienda seu ars memorativa, Rome ca. 1490, four copies of Jacobus Publicius, Artes orandi, epistolandi, memorandi, and one glossed exemplar of Jan Szkłarek’s memory treatise (Cracow, 1504). For an edition and analysis of the last mentioned tract, see Rafał Wójcik, Opusulum de arte memorativa Iana Szkłarka. Bernardyński traktat mnemotechniczny z 1504 roku, Poznań 2006 (= Prace biblioteki uniwersyteckiej 28).
in Jihlava around 1408–1415. They both suggest that more is to be found within larger encyclopedic or rhetoric treatises on more general topics.

While these treatises themselves rarely offer new approaches, they do reveal some specific particularities. In addition, they provide information on the cultural context in fifteenth-century Bohemia. Although there does not seem to have been a circle or a school, the art of memory was applied by both Catholics and Hussites as a useful tool—the surviving evidence shows clearly that the art of memory appealed to both the arguing sides.

As the following chapter will show, it is probably more correct to see these artes memoriae proper in the broader context of the culture of memory in the area, which would include medical advice, rhetoric, or practical mnemonics, and comprise both the verbal and pictorial aspects of the art.

a) The Hussite anonymous: memory as a search for similarities and dissimilarities

The first identified ars memoriae extant from Bohemia is a fragment of an anonymous treatise (inc. Nam secundum commentatores in libro de memoria et reminiscencia) included in a codex currently kept in Prague, NL, VIII E 3, on folios 136v–142r, with an addition on folio 175v. The codex is a miscellany copied in Bohemia after 1415, ca. 1420, containing primarily a number of sermons by an important Hussite theologian Jakoubek of Stříbro (Jacobellus de Misa), but also several works by Jan Hus and short anonymous theological notes. The treatise does not seem to fit the codex contents so obviously: there is nothing else concerning rhetoric in it.

27) For a description of the codex, see Josef Truhlář, Catalogus codicum manu scriptorum latinorum, qui in c. r. bibliotheca publica atque Universitatis Pragensis asservantur, vol. I, Prague 1905, no. 1528, pp. 561–562. For further information on it, see, e.g. František Michálek BARTOŠ, Jakoubkovský sborník táboršský (A Taborite collection with Jacobellus’ works), Časopis českého musea 93, 1919, pp. 59–62; Jindřich MAREK, Jakoubek ze Stříbra a počátky utrakvistického kazatelského v českých zemích: studie o Jakoubkově postile z let 1413–1414 (Jacobellus de Misa and the beginnings of utraquist preaching in the Czech lands: a study on Jacobellus’ postilla from 1413–1414), Praha 2011; few notes are to be found also in Idem, Husitské postily připisované Václavovi z Drachova (Hussite postillae ascribed to Vaclav of Drachov), Miscellanea oddělení rukopisů a starých tisků 18, 2003–2004, pp. 4–144.

A possible link is the practical use of the art of memory for preaching purposes, although this concern is not made explicit.

Studying the treatise is quite complicated due to the handwriting. It was probably written down in haste and thus it contains many mistakes and is difficult to read. The text seems to have been copied from a barely legible model: the scribe makes many mistakes and leaves empty spaces, and some of the sentences do not make sense. The extant folios of the treatise do not form a coherent text. On f. 140r, the text ends three-quarters of the way down the page, the rest of it is void, and the text on f. 140v is not an immediate continuation of the treatise. The text lacks an end; it is interrupted after the eleventh series of five mnemonic places on folio 142r. The addition on folio 175v belongs to the same treatise. Thus, at least in the form in which it survives, the text is so condensed and confusing that it seems impenetrable to anyone not familiar with the art in advance.

The entire treatise begins with a brief, one-paragraph, treatment of natural memory and includes a reference to the four humors, to Galenus stressing that humidity is better than dryness, but also to Aristotle’s *De memoria et reminiscencia*. In the following more detailed treatment of artificial memory (inc. *Nunc de artificiosa memoria et pertinentibus*), beginning on the bottom of f. 136v), the anonymous author always presents a term, then quotes its definition from the *Ad Herennium* (referred to as *Tulius*), and finally offers his own definition, which, as he usually stresses, is better. For example, he says:

[artificiosam memoriam] iam Tulius constare dicit ex locis et ymaginibus dicens: “Constat igitur memoria artificiosa ex locis et ymaginibus.” [AdHer XXIX.2] Et quia hec diffinicio est iuvenibus abstracta, ideo planius et completius Ego eam sic diffiniam: “ars memoratiua est notio, qua quis scit in determinato spatio loca cum figuris eorum decenter designare et super ea ymaginationes quarumlibet rerum uel vocum vel memorabilium applicare et per hec eas memoriter retinere.” Ista diffinito videtur omnia principalia arti huic neccessaria in se includere, super qua pendebit declaratio tocius huius materie. 30

Tully has already said that [artificial memory] consists of places and images, saying: “So the artificial memory consists of places and images.” And because this definition is [too] abstract for youths, I would define it more clearly and completely thus: “the art of memory is a conception, by which one is able to design places fittingly in a determined space with their figures, and apply to them images of any object, word, or anything to be remembered, and thus be able to keep them in memory.” This definition seems to include all the es-

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29) It opens with *ista sunt loca centena*, and thus it indeed seems that the remaining part of the list of mnemonic places was originally included.

30) Fol. 137r. The English translations are mine unless noted otherwise.
sentials necessary for this art, on which the exposition of this whole subject depends.

As seen here, the author seems to be concerned with making the art understandable and useful to youths. He also defends the art of memory, however difficult it may seem when approaching it for the first time, and stresses the importance of frequent exercise, without which the art is useless. Then he compares learning the art of memory to learning to read. When children learn to read, he says, it is also very difficult for them to connect letters into syllables, but once this art is practiced and learnt properly, it becomes automatic and easy:

...take a common example of boys who first understand letters with difficulty, compose syllables slowly and heavily, create sentences with difficulty and effort, and read with heaviness and toil. But when they become accustomed to it through exercise, they compose and read all that is written quickly and as if automatically. Do the same in this art and it will work for you in a similar way.

This whole discussion may be seen as the author’s anticipation of criticism about the art of memory being too demanding and requiring too much investment—a point which was manifestly made in late medieval Bohemia (see below), and thus certainly not unexpected from his audience.

As noted above, the most peculiar feature of this treatise is the list of the suggested mnemonic places. First of all, it shows in practice one of the basic rules of a**rs memoriae**, namely that every person should fashion the places according to one’s own needs since what helps the memory of one might be an impediment for another. The suggested mnemonic places are bound to the very specific Czech
context of the time, especially at the end in the ninth to eleventh *quinarius* (2) as seen here:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nonus quinarius</td>
<td>Ninth group of five</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sacerdos barbatus</td>
<td>bearded priest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sacramentum in falanga</td>
<td>sacrament on a wooden pole</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Due biture</td>
<td>two [circular] pieces of cheese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anglicus ruffus teotunicus</td>
<td>English red-haired[?] German</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Libri wikleff</td>
<td>Wycliffe’s books</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decimus</td>
<td>Tenth [group of five]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ignis zizke</td>
<td>fire of Žižka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zizka</td>
<td>Žižka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balista</td>
<td>ballista (i.e. an engine for hurling)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exercitus</td>
<td>army</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

34) John Wycliffe (1324–1384), theologian at Oxford University; many of his ideas were adopted by the Hussites.
35) Note that there are only four places mentioned here.
36) Jan Žižka of Trocnov (d. 1424), the most famous leader of the Hussite troops.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Undecimus</th>
<th>Eleventh [group of five]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grex</td>
<td>herd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monachi comburuntur</td>
<td>monks are burnt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sepultura violantur</td>
<td>sepulchres are violated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vasa dirapiuntur</td>
<td>vessels are snatched</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terre foduntur</td>
<td>lands are dug</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The eleventh quinarius succeeds in bringing quite a vivid picture of violence into one’s mind, and it thus may be argued that the whole is rather anti-Hussite. Even so, the Hussites tended to boast about their success in the war. In addition, the imagery presented here could also be interpreted as apocalyptic – and apocalyptic themes and visions were very frequent in the writings of the Hussites who expected the End Times to appear soon.  

Another important aspect of this treatise is the author’s discussion of the strategies of connecting the images to the places. Each place (as it is seen above) is a person, an object or an activity, and so the task requires combining the place and the mnemonic image, a task which the author says can always be achieved, because it is always possible to find a feature in which two things either agree or differ (as he says: *iuxta illud sophisma commune et unde: omnia, que conveniunt, differunt*). From the theoretical nature of this discussion on similarities and dissimilarities among objects we can infer that the author of the treatise had certainly studied logic.

Finally, the author gives examples of finding the concordance or contrast between things, stressing that it is a fundamental part of the art of memory, even though he does not find it sufficiently underlined in any other treatise on the topic:

Quod si non poteris subito invenire loci et rei locande convenientiam et rei proprietatem seu aliquam pertinentiam, tunc vertere debeles cognicionem ad loci et rei locande contrarietatem et impertinentiam, in que scilicet sibi repugnant, sicut si haberes in loco catum at pronunciaretur unus auis vel coruus aplica minorem auem vel coruos quasi a cato manducarentur. Similiter si in loco habes lupum et pronunciaretur ouis uel porcus cicius ibi inuenies disconuenientiam quam

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37) Fol. 142r.
38) The Revelation of John was the book of the New Testament the Hussites read most frequently. The apocalyptic imagery was especially developed by the Taborites. Cf. e.g. Gian Luca PROTESTÀ, Radical Apocalyptic Movements in the Late Middle Ages, in: The Continuum History of Apocalypticism, eds. B. McGinn – J. J. Collins – S. J. Stein, New York 2003, esp. pp. 311–314.
39) Fol. 140v.
convenientiam, ergo aplica ymaginem loco per disconuenientiam. Et ista comouebit te ad memoriam unius [lacuna] et hec ratio planius apparebit quando ista practice declarabuntur inferius. Et hanc rationem dico fundamentalem huius artis, licet eam non invenerim in Tulio nec in aliis artis huius tractatoribus.  

If you cannot quickly find accordance and a common aspect or some pertinence between the place and the object to be placed [there], you must turn your attention to the contrast and impertinence between the place and the object to be placed [there], as if they were fighting with each other. If you had a cat in the place and it should be pronounced [i.e. stand for] a bird or a raven, put a small bird or a raven as if they were being eaten by the cat. In a similar way, if you have a wolf in the place and it is pronounced a sheep or a pig, you will more quickly invent a discordance than an agreement, and thus should put the image into that place using a discordance. And these things will move you to the memory of one [lacuna], and this reasoning will become clearer when these things are discussed in practice below. And I say that this reasoning is essential to this art, although I have not found it in Tully nor in other authors of treatises on this art.

A model of the combinations is then provided on the addition to the text on f. 175v, which is separate from the rest and offers an example on how to “fill” the first room (the one concerned with divine things, according to the author) of five places with images:

1\textsuperscript{st} place \textit{Ihesus sedens in cathedra} + image \textit{avis vel agnus; panis}: the bird or the lamb should sit in Jesus’ lap, or Jesus should be blessing or breaking bread

2\textsuperscript{nd} place \textit{angelus adorans} + image \textit{thuribulum}: the incense in the hand of the angel who is spreading it in front of the lord

3\textsuperscript{rd} place \textit{Ewangelia aperta in pulpito} + image \textit{asinus; clericus; rusticus vel laicus}: the ass turning pages of the Gospels or destroying the book; the cleric reading the open Gospels; the layman being prohibited from reading by a finger, or turning his eyes away since he does not know letters

4\textsuperscript{th} place \textit{panis sacramentalis} + image \textit{vetula}: the old woman opening her mouth or reaching her hand for the bread and as if adoring it

5\textsuperscript{th} place \textit{mensa beel aurea} + image \textit{panis, vel caseus, vel piscis}: bread or cheese or fish lying on the table

It seems, however, quite clear that this example is not based on a real sermon or a speech to be memorized. It is much more likely to be a mere hypothetical instance, especially since there are several possible images provided as examples on more

\begin{footnote}{41) Fol. 140v.}
occasions, and, in addition, the individual suggested images fit suspiciously well in the places concerned.

I believe that the preceding theoretical discussion, which I (like its author) have not encountered in any other memory treatise, at least partly reflects the specificity of its Czech origin. Living at the time of the theological debates and arguments, the author must have witnessed a search for accordance and contrasts, a repeated appropriation of the same notions and arguments by the opposing sides for their own purposes. Interpreting his ideas outside the context of the art of memory, we can discern his concern for the multifacetedness (and thus perhaps even the unreliability) of language in denoting reality.

b) Matheus Beran: memory as a play with words

The first known Czech author of a memory treatise is Matouš (Matheus) Beran. His whereabouts can be partly reconstructed from the explicits of the manuscripts of his works. He was a monk at the Augustinian monastery in Roudnice, where he wrote a collection of sermons and biblical commentaries entitled Confundarius minor in 1417. In 1421, the year when the Roudnice monastery...
Fugere artem memorativam?

was destroyed by the Hussites, he seems to have stayed in Lipnice. Like many Catholics, Beran left the country during the Hussite wars—he is next found at the University of Erfurt. It was in Erfurt where he wrote his Ars memorativa together with a number of other, mostly medical texts in 1431. In October 1437 he was in Basel and there he wrote two medical treatises, Pulmentarius and Cyrurgia. At that time he was seriously ill and hoped to return back to the Roudnice monastery to repent as soon as his health improved. Finally, one of his letters copied by Crux de Telcz (Oldřich Kříž z Telče) was supposedly written in 1467 in Roudnice. If we can believe that Beran lived this long and has not been confused


47) This information comes from a codex formerly kept in Dyson Perrins library in Oxford as no. 125 (cf. F. SMÁHEL, Mistří, p. 63). It is an illuminated Bible together with several other texts finished in 1421 in Lipnice. Its explicit reads: Explicit scatum famil / quo pinguit filii dei / oculus iustorum / scandalum increduolorum / Mathie de Rudnicze (“here ends the shield of faith by which the sons of God are fighting: an eye for just men and a scandal for unbelievers; of Mathias of Roudnice”), fol. 393r. The manuscript was sold as lot 15 by Sotheby’s on April 17, 2003, in London, to a Swiss dealer Heribert Tenschert who subsequently sold it to a private collector not wishing to reveal his identity. Thus, we can only consult the most recent description. This is a particular pity, since it so clearly reflects the situation of Catholics during the Hussite movement: it includes 15 Psalms to be used by Christians in times of trouble (isti psalmi a christianis dicuntur tempore tribulationis, fol. 4r). brief summaries of the individual biblical books ‘include notes encouraging orthodoxy and emphasizing its triumph over heresy, so the Book of Kings deals with the history of the church over heretics, Jude condemns heretics to eternal damnation, and the Apocalypse offers comfort for the tribulations of the church, past, present and future; passages of the Bible itself, which can be used when arguing against the Hussite practice, are stressed by pointing hands, and at the end there are “alphabetically arranged biblical references on various subjects, including blasphemy, heresy and heretics” (for a detailed description, see: http://www.sothebys.com/app/live/lot/LotDetail.jsp?lot_id=426BZ [last accessed March 3, 2011], cf. also George Warner, Descriptive Catalogue of Illuminated Manuscripts in the Library of C.W. Dyson Perrins, Oxford 1920, pp. 294–295, no. 125.

48) The autograph of the treatise survives as codex I F 35 of the National library in Prague. It was finished on May 12, 1431 in Erfurt. On fol. 485r its explicit reads: per me fratrem M. Beran exulam canonici regularium de Rudnicz manu mea propria… anno domini 1431 sabbato post ascensionem domini in Erfordia in domo pauperum (cf. J. TRUHLÁŘ, Catalogus codicum manu scriptorum I, pp. 110–111, no. 267). For more on the codex, see Kamil BOLDAN, Die Augustiner-Chorherren aus Raudnitz und Sadská im Exil in der Hussitenzeit als Schreiber der Handschriften (with a number of other, mostly medical texts in). In October he was


51) For more on the codex, see Kamil BOLDAN, Catalogus codicum manu scriptorum I, pp. 121–123, no. 285).
with another person, he must have spent a substantial time after his exile at home.

Beran's works are revised selections from other authors and he does not conceal this fact. He describes his medical treatises in these terms, as well as his Confundarius minor (compiled in 1417 while still in Roudnice) which he says he collected from a number of volumes. Another miscellany of texts Beran collected is called Confundarius maior. It would therefore not be surprising to read that the ars memorativa included in it and explicitly called a supplement to it is not his own work but was instead found and appropriated by him. However, Beran states at the beginning:

Ego frater M. Beran conscipiens ex una parte scolares quam plures a scientia, quam omnes homines natura scire desiderant, ammoueri tum propter memoriam delicate labilitatem, tum propter ignoranciam collocandi in memoria, que memorie sunt digna et collocata retinendi, et ex alia parte huiusmodi defectus ne dum a me sed etiam ab aliis voluntibus proficere cupiens separare et aliqualiter pro meo posse deo me adiuwante hoc compendium quod insignatur de arte Idnaromem in quo precipue de tribus tractatur scilicet locis, ymaginibus et rebus memorabilibus. Et quamquam multi multa opuscula circa hanc materiam considerint, tamen hoc videtur lucidius atque expedicus. Si autem aliqui reperiantur hoc minus beneficium, peto veniam a lectore pariter et correctionem. Amen.

I, brother Beran, observing, on the one hand, that many scholars turn away from science, which all people desire to know by nature, sometimes because of the slipperiness of delicate memory, other times because of not knowing how to place the things worthy of remembering in one’s memory, or how to keep the things placed there. On the other hand, desiring to separate [i.e. eliminate] the defect of this type, not from myself but from others wishing to advance, and somehow, according to my capacity, with God helping me [I produced] this compendium which is entitled On the Art of Gnierebmemer, in which mainly three subjects are treated, namely places, images, and memorable things. And although many have produced many opuscules on this subject,

52) In this letter he is called Matthias praepositus Rudnicas (fol. 63r).
53) Istum libellum nostrum ex diversorum doctorum dictis et scriptis collectum de morbis humani corporis et remedii tractantem non apothecaries sed coquina respicientem; ideo ipsum Pulmentarium intitulamus (Metropolitan Chapter Library in Prague N 53, fol. 109r).
54) Prague Lib. of the National Museum XVI E 11, fol. 393v: hoc opus... scriptum... non tantum pro evangeliorum expositione, sed pro predicacionis occasione, ut quiscunque eo usus fuerit, devote deum pro Beran oret, quia cum maximo labore ipsum ex multiss voluminibus non scid velolit sed scit scivit et potuit, collegit et in hanc formam redegit, et ideo hunc libellum confundarium nominavit, amen.
55) Prague, NL, I F 35, fol. 3r: in hoc nostro maiori Confundario.
56) Prague, NL, I F 35, fol. 485r (the end of the art of memory): Hec hec breviter collecta sufficient pro nostro Confundario supplendo...
57) Spelling words backwards is a frequent mnemonic strategy, which I believe might be connected to the idea that ‘to know’ something means to truly grasp it, to know it from the beginning to the end and from the end to the beginning, from left to right, from right to left, etc. But this, as well as the other activities of changing words described below could, besides their link to mnemonics, be also connected to magic, where such transformations occur, and which Beran obviously knew (see B. LANG, Unlocked Books; pp. 205–206).
Although he speaks of a *compendium*, Beran obviously claims a different type of authorship here than in his previous works. Yet, his treatise does not seem particularly original in either its content, which features all the commonplaces, or in the way it is organized. After the above-cited opening on f. 477r which is followed by several brief paragraphs (a definition of the art, a definition of place with its divisions, and the seven conditions of the places), we are surprised to see a second title on f. 478r: *Incipit tractatus artis euitaromem*, after which the treatise continues with specific sub-chapters formed by examples of items to be memorized. The list seems rather incoherent: verses, grammatical cases, biblical books, history, sermons, texts, glosses, authors, distinctions, arguments, quantities of syllables, the game of dice, cards, and chess. And even this structure is disjointed: after the first two paragraphs these examples are interrupted by several more theoretical chapters on how to form the images. They are titled: ‘On images in comparison to place,’ ‘On images in comparison to images,’ ‘On images in comparison to the memorable things,’ etc. These, however scientific they may sound, give an impression of being quite random. For example, the list of the 100 suggested memory places divided in groups of fives (another commonplace in late medieval memory treatises) is placed within the chapter titled ‘On images in comparison to the memorable things.’

Throughout the memory treatise Beran seems much occupied with the danger of confusion. On many occasions he urges his reader to be very careful and conscientious in following the set rules to avoid mistakes and lapses of memory. At the same time, confusions exist in Beran’s own treatise. For example, he suggests that the genitive singular should be memorized by the image of an iron knee (surely simply on the basis of the same beginning: *genitivus* and *genu ferreum*).

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58) Prague, NL, I F 35, fol. 477r.
60) *memoratiue* written backwards.
61) *Fugere artem memorativam?*
62) He says: *et hoc totum exigitur ne memoria confundatur secundum modum mouentem memoriam in confuso* (fol. 477v), *omnia similia memoria non distinguatur et sic confunditur* (fol. 478r), *ut memoria non erret* (fol. 478v), *ne memoria erret* (fol. 479r), *ne pro inordinacione rerum memoria paciatur defectum* (fol. 479v), *ne memoria turbetur* (fol. 479v), *ne memoria uacillet* (fol. 480r), *sic enim memoria confunditur et uacillaret* (fol. 480v), *ex hoc possit memoria confundi* (fol. 483r).
but he promotes the same image for remembering the Book of Genesis (which, again, begins with *gen*). Among the *imagines doctorum*—a commonplace that reappears in many treatises—Beran proposes that Saint Augustine should hold a vault (*curvaturam*), and Saint Gregory wear a golden necklace (*aurea torqua*). However, later on, when he gives advice for how to remember a quotation from Augustine (inc. *Quanto deum quis plus diliget*), he says that one should attach a golden necklace (*torquem auream*) to the neck or the head of the image, in order to signify that the quotation is from Augustine.

As in the above-mentioned examples, the relationship of the suggested images to the items to be remembered is not always evident now. It is characteristic that while Matouš Beran and other authors of *artes memoriae* provide guidelines about the ways to encode, that is, to create memory images, no one is concerned about the ways to decode, that is, to understand them. The words to be remembered usually begin with the same letters, or agree in one or more syllables with the names of the images they are to be remembered by. But the problem is, of course, that one has to be able to

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63) He says: *Sit ergo imago nominativi singularis nabula, genitivi genu ferreum, dativi decanta, accusativi arcus argenteae, vocativi vocate, ablativi abacus* (fol. 478r), and: *Genesis genu ferreum, ymago exodi flagellum percuciens, ymago numeri saccus plenus nummis ad numerandum, ymago levitici duo diaconi cantantes, ymago deuteronomii uter plenus lacte caprino, ymago iesia id est ecclesia parva sculpta in lapide, Esdre sint ostree, proverbiorum pratum viride, Ecclesiastes una hasta plena oculis, Ecclesiasticus una cos ad acuendum novacula* (fol. 482r).

64) See R. A. Pack, *An Ars memorativa from the Late Middle Ages*.

65) *Sit ymago sancti Augustini habens curvaturam in manu... Sancti Gregorii unus cum aurea torqua in collo* (fol. 482r).

66) *...et ad collum vel ad caput ymaginis ponam torquem auream per quod innuitur quod originale est beati Augustini* (fol. 483v).
name the image by the correct name when revisiting the place in one’s mind. Beran often uses the relevant name of the image, and thus the connection is clear. For example, Saint Thomas Aquinas should have a beam from a ship upon his neck, that is, \textit{themonem navis}: the beam, \textit{themo}, should probably remind one of \textit{Thomas}, and the ship of water, \textit{aqua}, which should bring back \textit{Aquinas}. Likewise, Saint Ambrose should have a rosary from amber (\textit{Ambrosius—ambra}) around his neck. \footnote{Sit \textit{ymago sancti Thome de Aquino habens themonem navis ad collum, sancti Ambrosii unus habens cordam ad collum cum pater noster de ambra (fol. 482r).} \footnote{Sancti Bernhardi unus cum birreto in capite (fol. 482r).} \footnote{The words connected often call to mind Rabelais’ “comme qui pain interpretoit pierre, poisson serpent, oeuf, scorpion” (as who should interpret bread as a stone, a fish as a serpent, and an egg as a scorpion), (\textit{Gargantua et Pantagruel}, introduction to Book 4 – a witty variation on Luke 11:11–12).} But other times the relationship is a bit more complicated, as, for example, with Sant Bernard who should wear a cap—\textit{birretum}, a word which agrees with Bernard in only two letters. \footnote{Ymago Bede unus cum sacco frumenti in scapulo (fol. 482r).} And yet at other times, the reasons for selecting a particular image remain mysterious (at least to me). \footnote{[Sit ymago] sancti Iohannis Cristosomi unus habens capucium ad collum de griseo panno (fol. 482r).} For example, Bede should appear with a bag of grains over his shoulder (\textit{cum sacco frumenti in scapulo}), \footnote{On fol. 132r.} or John Chrysostomus, that is ‘of golden mouth,’ should not be remembered as a man with a golden mouth, but rather (for reasons which remain unclear to me) as a man with a hood from grey cloth (\textit{habens capucium de griseo panno}). \footnote{This is, with one minor change in word order, exactly the same beginning as Beran’s, the only difference is in the exchange of names (Beran for Verona).} From the previous examples, and from the explanation of the method for creating the images, it is clear that the words Beran uses in these examples are not the words one should use to name the images in order to retrieve the link to these saints.

In any case, it seems that the idea behind the whole art of memory is to make the mind work and to sharpen the intellect: the image is never based on the simple and straightforward. These mental exercises, however, lead exactly to what Beran dreads so much: the possibility of committing a mistake, the danger of getting confused. However unlikely it seems in the context of a memory treatise, I can identify a completely overlooked word play of exactly this type in Beran’s art of memory:

\begin{flushright}
\textit{Conspiciens ex una parte scolares quam plures a sciencia, quam omnes homines natura scire desiderant ammoueri… Ego frater Mattheus de Verona ordinis praedicatorum…}
\end{flushright}

Observing, on the one hand, that many scholars turn away from science, which all people desire to know by nature... I, brother Mattheus de Verona of the Dominican order... \footnote{On fol. 132r.}
Mattheus de Verona is a well-documented person, and his treatise on memory, written in 1420 and revised in 1423, survives in 9 manuscripts. Thus, Verona in the St. Paul manuscript is obviously not a misinterpretation of Beran, but rather the other way round: Mattheus Beran, perhaps charmed by the similarity of his name and the name of the author of the treatise he copied, used a play on words—a strategy with which he was familiar thanks to the contents of the treatise—and created an ‘image’ of the very same type as the other memory images appearing in the text, by changing some of the letters of the original. This one, however, remained unnoticed. The purpose of this particular wordplay, however, was probably not to create a memory aid but rather to distort reality.

Beran’s treatise is indeed a copy of Mattheus de Verona’s earlier work in the medieval sense: although Beran followed his model, he changed the order of the paragraphs, omitted parts, summarized longer passages, added some little words, etc. All in all, it is difficult to see Beran’s improvement of his model: Beran’s version is substantially more confused and disorganized. Nevertheless, a detailed comparison of the two versions is useful, especially since Mattheus of Verona often used the names of the mnemonic images, making the links to the words to be memorized explicit. For example, while Beran had an obscure and possibly corrupted [imago] Origenis unus cum portatico ad collum (the image of Origenes should be one with a portable instrument on his neck), Mattheus de Verona suggested: unus cum uno organo paruo (a man with a small organ—or pipe, or any musical instrument), which bears clear similarity (Origenes and organum). Mattheus of Verona also spelled the “cap” associated with Saint Bernard as berretum (which was common in Italy) rather than birretum, which is more closely reminiscent of Bernardus.

Only on a few occasions does Beran seem to add observations or suggestions of his own. The only longer instance appears after the list of the 100 memory places for which Beran suggests a simpler strategy: one could learn only one abecedary sentence of nine words, and then, by putting different colors in the tenth place ten times, one gets a set of 100 places with much less...
effort (4c). However, since not all the manuscripts of Mattheus de Verona's treatise have been consulted so far, future research may reveal that what now seems to be Beran's original contribution was copied from elsewhere.

In any case, the fact remains that this art of memory was written by Mattheus of Verona. It has been misinterpreted as having been authored by Beran only because of the overlooked wordplay in an unexpected place. On the one hand, one is forced to reach an oft-repeated conclusion: the late medieval culture and literature of Central and Eastern Europe largely depended on Italian and Western models. On the other hand, Mattheus Beran could be promoted as a unique creator of mnemonic wordplays, and it could be stressed that he goes even further by inventing a new purpose for them. If, however, we concentrate on the contents rather than struggle over originality, we are here met with another instance of the close (and, starting with Plato's Gorgias, much elaborated) relationship between rhetoric and the distortion of the truth.

3. Others (fragments, parts of larger works, treatises of doubtful Czech provenance)

A number of other texts on the art of memory appear in manuscripts of Czech provenance as parts of larger units, fragments, or notes. Although many more are certainly waiting to be retrieved and the present discussion should be understood as a preliminary one, they do reveal certain patterns.

Arts of memory can indeed be found within larger treatises on rhetoric, grammar, the nature of studying, or in encyclopedias. This is the case of a brief treatise of the art of memory included on f. 129v–130r of an important encyclopedia Liber viginti arcium from 1460's written by Pavel Žídek (c. 1413–1471, also known as Paulus, Paulus de Praga, and Paulerinus), kept in Krakow, Jagellonian Library, 257 (the so-called Codex Tvardovio), which is still not fully edited. Here Paulerinus refers to his lost magnum Vinculatorium, where, as he says, he devoted

78) It reads:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1.</th>
<th>2.</th>
<th>3.</th>
<th>4.</th>
<th>5.</th>
<th>6.</th>
<th>7.</th>
<th>8.</th>
<th>9.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abbas</td>
<td>Bernardus</td>
<td>cupit</td>
<td>dare</td>
<td>ecclesiam</td>
<td>fratibus</td>
<td>gratis</td>
<td>hodie</td>
<td>lerosolimis</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ista ergo sunt 9 loca per numerum alphabeti descripta et secundum suum ordinem figurarum representativa. demum adorna decimum locum 10 album, 20 viridem, 30 rubeum, 40 flaveum, 50 nigrum, 60 glaucum, 70 griseum, 80 ferreum, 90 argenteum, 100 aureum (fol. 481r).

79) Paulerinus was a curious personality. He was of Jewish origin but was kidnapped as a child and brought up as a Calixtine. During his studies in Vienna, however, he converted to Catholicism. He also studied in Padova and Bologna and became a doctor of law and medicine. After his return to Prague he often entered into conflicts with Calixtines, and therefore stayed in Plzeň (Pilsen), Krakow, and Wrocław for some time. His most important work in Czech is the three-volume Jiřího správovna (George's tool for administration), finished in 1471 and dedicated to King George of Poděbrady; its manuscripts are kept in the Prague Chapter Library and in the National Library; it was edited by Zdeněk V. Tobolka, M. Pavla Žídka Správovna, Prague 1908 (= Historický archiv České akademie 31). For a brief overview, see Pavel Spunar, Pavel Žídek, in: Slovník latinských spisovatelů, Prague 2004, pp. 444–445.

more space to the subject of artificial memory. Indeed, within the few paragraphs he only mentions the place system, gives a specific example of filling two “tristegas,” and finally lists nine aids to memory.

It is also the case of a *Tractatus de arte memorandi* which is integrated within a *Candela rhetoricae* written in Jihlava (Iglau) between 1408–1416. Wilhelm Wattenbach ascribed the whole to Urban Matějov of Potěhy by Čáslav, but a clear proof of authorship is missing. The text has received scholarly attention primarily due to including a *laus Iglaviae* (both in prose and in poetry), since *laudes urbium* are

81) Inc. *De arte memorandi regula, de qua tractatum Tullius circa ultimum sue nove Rhetorice, et primo ad memorandas divisiones tantum, per quantum ecclesiis Beda legitur, nulle [!] verba simul pronunciase etc. et sequitur*. Primo quod ydola capiantur in loco quanto rariori et ignociori possunt. Expl.: *Ars namque certum et usus promptum reddit esse omnem, quo modo aquisit in hac arte tocius mundi materia reminiscetur secundum modum et regulas iam datas. Et sic est finis huius artis iam plenissime et expresse declaratus etc.*

82) On fol. 57v–62v. The codex was then kept at the Fulnek castle in Moravia, afterwards in Františkovo museum in Brno, and currently in Moravský zemský archiv in Brno as FM 964 = 994. Cf. Irena ZACHOVÁ – Stanislav PETR, *Soupis sbírky rukopisů bývalého Františkova muzea v Brně* (Catalogue of manuscript collection of the former František’s museum in Brno), Praha 2010, pp. 453–455. The most detailed contextualized description is František HOFFMANN, *Candela rhetoricae. Fikce a skutečnost v předhusitské příručce rétoriky* (Candela rhetoricae. Fiction and reality in a pre-hussite textbook on rhetoric), Studie o rukopisech 21, 1982, pp. 73–110. Hoffmann suggests a narrower dating to 1413–1416, and, unlike Wilhelm Wattenbach, considers the manuscript only a copy, not the autograph. The passage on *ars dictaminis* is found also in a later copy in Vienna, ÖNB, Pal. lat. 3523, fol. 108r–129v, with a number of changes.
unique occurrences in the area at the time. The part on the art of memory offers ten rules for remembeering *idola* and ten rules for remembering *clausulae*, followed by particular examples of mnemonic images, which clearly reveal that the author was Czech.

In Prague, NL, adlig. 44 G 47, the already mentioned redaction of the *Attendentes nonnulli* treatise is followed by a fragment of an art of memory (on fols. 31r–32v), which has thus far passed unnoticed. Seelbach notes a single copy of this version of the art of memory, Bamberg, SB, Class. 52 (f. 129r–137r) provenient from a Franciscan monastery in Bamberg and dated (according to the watermarks) to 1503, where this art of memory is fully extant. Our manuscript, consisting of 32 folios attached to an incunable of *Historia Bohemica* by Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini, was, however, written in 1488–1489. It was owned, and perhaps even copied by Wenceslaus (Wenzel) Faber de Budweis (České Budějovice in Southern Bohemia) and then kept in the Dominican monastery in the same city. Wenzel Faber was an astrologer who was also active at the University of Leipzig. He collected a number of books, both manuscripts and prints, during his lifetime.

This memory treatise is dependent on the *Attendentes nonnulli* tract including a condensed explanation of the basic rules of the art, as well as a rather enigmatic list of the suggested mnemonic places. It opens with a mnemonic alphabet following the system introduced by Conrad Celtis, but provides the five keywords for every letter in German. While the author was thus surely a speaker of German, the Bamberg copy of the treatise also includes a reference to the execution of John Hus (1415)—a possible link to the Czech environment. The authorship of Wenzel Faber is clearly far from certain but it remains a possibility.

The previously mentioned Prague, NL, XI C 5 containing the treatise by Johannes Hartlieb also contains a thus far unnoticed art of memory on f. 119r–121r consisting primarily of a list of rules (*regulae*) of the art. A slightly different

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84) An edition of this very relevant text is currently being prepared by the author. A small part of it was published by W. WATTENBACH, Candela rheticiae, pp. 198–199, and it is briefly described by F. HOFFMANN, Candela rheticiae, pp. 96–97.

85) *Inc.: Hic dicturi sumus de arte mirifica*, on fol. 25r–30r.


87) The Leipzig link also appears in the later Bamberg manuscript, which, among other texts, includes *Ars scribendi* [epistolae] ex Jacobi Barini et Nicolai Protti tradicionibus collecta. Jacobus Barinus died in Leipzig in 1497.


89) Fol. 119r–121r; *Inc.: Nota quod nobilissima ars memorativa consistit in duobus videlicet in locis et ymaginibus. Item de quantitate locorum quatuor regule. Item prima regula. Item denotandum quod de quantitate locorum sunt quatuor regule. Sequitur prima regula est ista etc. Prima regula quod loca non debent esse nimirum parua. Racio: quia secundum hoc continget aliquociens que quantitas loci non congeriet quantitati imaginis collocone ut si quis pro loco compararet sibi paraum fenestram et postea opperent ipsum in illa fenestra unum magnnum equum per ymaginem*
version of the same text also appears in Yale University Beinecke library, 306, on fols. 65r–70r, but it is most probably of a German origin.

It is very clear that a closer inspection of the surviving manuscripts will reveal more texts relevant to the culture of the art of memory in the area during the fifteenth century, whether they be full-scale artes memoriae treatises, shorter treatments within rhetorical tracts, or brief notes on the topic.

II. Improving memory by medical means and life-style

The arts of memory proper, however, are far from being the only treatises on memory written in the area at the time. We find advice on improving one's memory in medical tracts as well as in general treatments on the correct ways of studying. The longest relevant treatise comes from 1450, and was probably authored by a well-known scholar Martin of Prague (Martinus Pragensis de Lancia, i.e. Łęczyca in Poland), a dean of the Faculty of Arts and later the rector of Prague University. Martin was a doctor, too, and his text is based on the idea that a healthy mind dwells in a healthy body, thus abounding in advice on how to keep one's body in a good shape using the theory of the four humors. It reveals its Czech origin: Martin regretfully notes the decline of Prague University and admonishes his students that the fewer they are the more they must study in order to be prepared for when the times improve again. This treatise, surviving in six manuscripts, seems to have influenced another neglected tract that gives advice on studying, including advice on memory, which is extant in three manuscripts. Finally, a curious, also not yet edited treatise, De modulo studendi, speaks of the art of memory with strong explicit reservations. All these are discussed below.

The frequent positioning of medical and general “common sense” advice together with artes memoriae in the manuscripts suggests that the two ways of improving one’s memory were not seen in opposition but rather as complementing each other. As is typical in the late Middle Ages, authors and scribes often tried to gather as much material as possible on a particular problem or subject, eventually leaving it up to the readers to select the most useful parts for themselves.

1. Transmission of foreign treatises

It is difficult to look for medieval medical treatises on improving memory and on increasing the efficiency of studying by life-style change because there are no general scholarly surveys of them. Nor do these form an easily definable group of texts, as do the artes memoriae. For example, several Czech copies exist of Pseudo-Boethius’s De disciplina scholarium, which seems to be only loosely linked

90) Inc. Item in consequenti tractatulo ponuntur utiles et bone regulae de locis et imaginibus ad prescriptam artem pertinentibus. This entire manuscript is curious as it contains several texts on the art of memory.

to our topic, and yet it was appropriated in ways that fit it. There are also Czech copies of other brief texts of foreign provenance. For example, a letter by Thomas Aquinas on studying is included in Prague, NL, V F (fol. 155r–v), and Hugh of St. Victor’s *De meditando seu meditandi artificio opusculum aureum* is found in Prague, NL, V D 23 (fol. 195v–197r).

A text to be noted in this context, although of a very different nature, is a commentary to Aristotle’s *De memoria et reminiscentia* by the French scholar Johannes Versor (d. ca. 1485). The commentary appears among his *Parva naturalia*, and, together with other Versor’s Aristotelian commentaries, it became surprisingly popular in the Czech lands in the 1450’s: it survives in eleven manuscripts of Czech origin. Curiously, one of them (Prague, NL, V E 12) was copied in 1455 by Stanislaus de Gnezna (i.e. Gniezno) who also copied a treatise by Martinus Pragensis (discussed below) in the same year. Crux de Telcz also copied one (Prague, NL, I E 38, in 1459), as well as part of the art of memory by Mattheus Beran. The text is a philosophical treatise structured like a scholastic disputatio; it does not directly concern the art of memory at all. Even so, by discussing the subject of memory, it might have inspired further interest in it. In addition, Versor lists four reasons for having a good memory and makes a number of observations that also appear elsewhere in the context of improving one’s memory.

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92) See below II.2.b).
94) They are: Prague, NL, I E 38, fol. 351r–355r (sabbato post Iacobi a. 1459 in collegio regis Wenceslai per Crucem de Telcz); IV G 18, fol. 311v–315r, from 1453; V E 8, within fol. 157r–182v from December 19, 1453; V E 9, within fol. 249v–279r from October 1, 1459 in collegio Regine; V E 12, fol. 90r–93v from March 6, 1455, copied by Stanislaus de Gnezna; X G 16, within fol. 247v–269v from July 15, 1456 and June 23, 1457; Prague, Library of the National Museum, X E 5 [parva naturalia fol. 296r–328r?] from March 20, 1459; L 37, within fol. 231v–252r (per Hilarium de Litomericz et Wenceslaum de Krzizanow on July 24, 1450); M 75 [parva naturalia fol. 351r–378r] from 1452 and 1453; Sankt Florian, Stiftsbibliothek, XI.626, within fol. 205v–222r (from 1451 and 1452, in collegio Reczkonis); Schlägl, Stiftsbibliothek, Cpl. 119, within fol. 259v–281r (from 1452 and 1453, *ex libris Johannis Rabstein*).
95) Possunt considerari quattuor cause bone memorie: Prima est frequens meditatio circa memorabile. Secunda est fortis meditatio circa idem obiectum, nam quandoque ex una forte attentione circa aliquid fit melior memoria quam ex multis considerationibus. Tertia est admiratio de obiecto memorali. Quarta est delectatio vel tristicia illata ex objecto memorabili.
2. Treatises of Czech provenance

a) Martinus Pragensis: “art of memory is useful only for few”

The treatise *De modo artificioso studendi et memorandi et intelligendi* ascribed to Martin of Prague or Martin of Łęczyca was previously noted by scholars both in the context of the art of memory,⁹⁶ and in the context of history of medicine,⁹⁷ where it might fit better. It seems to have been popular as it survives in six manuscripts.

Martin was born in 1405 in Łęczyca (Lancicia) in Poland. He studied at Prague University, probably from 1427, and in 1431 he received his Baccalaureate. He did not become *magister in artibus* until 1443, leading scholars to assume that he must have taught at some school in the meantime.⁹⁸ In 1445 he became the dean of the Faculty of Arts, and in 1455 the rector of Charles University.⁹⁹ Because no trace of him exists after 1463 in Czech lands, all of the Czech secondary sources suppose he died in 1463 or 1464 during the plague in Prague.¹⁰⁰ Polish scholars, however, locate him back in Poland: from 1474 he was connected with Poznań as *medicus capitulæ Posnaniensis*, not actually dying until 1483.¹⁰¹

Martin was primarily a mathematician and a doctor.¹⁰² As early as 1430 he wrote, among other things, *Computus de sphæra materiali* which was accompanied by his *Computus philosophicus* in the manuscript from 1432.¹⁰³ He later wrote

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⁹⁶ See, for example, Helga Hajdu, *Das mnemotechnische Schrifttum des Mittelalters*, Vienna 1936, pp. 112–114; or S. Seelebach, *Ars und Scientia*, pp. 165 and 171.


⁹⁸ He supposedly delivered a lecture on his version of computus at Nazareth College in Prague—see explicit of the text in Prague, NL, X E 19: *Explicit computus philosophicus... declaratus anno eodem [1432] per Martinum de Lancicia in Nazareth.* He is also reported to have taught at Tyn School (see J. Truhlák, *Catálogus codicum manu scriptorum I*, no. 966).

⁹⁹ See *Liber decanorum facultatis philosophicae Pragensis ab anno Christi 1367 usque ad annum 1585*, pars II, Prague 1832 (~ Monumenta historica universitatis Carolo-Ferdinandeae Pragensis I/2), pp. 10, 119, 24, 26.


¹⁰² Mikulka claims Martin was the greatest Polish personality active at Prague University; Jaromír Mikulka, *Polacy w Czechach i ich rola w rozwoju husytyzmu* (The Poles in Bohemia and their role in the development of the Hussite movement), Odrodzenie i Reformacja w Polsce i ich rola w rozwoju husytyzmu, Przegląd Zachodni, 1948, pp. 29–30, or IDem, *Z dziejów polskich wędrówek naukowych za granicę*, Wrocław 1974, pp. 26–28.

¹⁰³ This work is fully extant in Prague, NL, X E 19, and covers the first 74 folios. According to the explicit, it was copied by Stanislaus de Gniezno (*Explicit computaturum [!] Martini de Lancia super textum sphaeræ materialis anno dom. 1430, scriptum eodem anno per manus Stanislaw de Gniezna completumque feria sexta in capitæ quadragesima*). An excerpt from the text can be found in Prague, NL, XI E 3, fol. 139r (inc.: *eclipsari nisi in novilunio, in passione autem domini*, expl.: *ignorancia ergo virtutis planetarum causat magnum errorem in iudiciis circa res naturales*. *Explicit computaturum Martini de Lancia super textum spere materialis. Anno domini Mo CCCCo XXXo scriptum eodem anno per manus Stanislaw de Szezna completumque feria sexta in capitæ quadragesima. Eodem anno Taborite vastaverunt Marchiam, Surbiam, Mysnam, Durniam, Fotlanciam, singulasque regiones Germanorum circumiacentes regno Boemie*).
an astrological commentary on the year 1455, which he dedicated to Ulrich of Rosenberg, an important Catholic nobleman from Southern Bohemia (Magnifico domino Ulrico generosa stirpe de Rosmberg prognosticatio anni currentis 1455). He also wrote a commentary to Aristotle’s Porphyrii Isagoge (Disputata super Porphyrio) and his Categories (Disputata super libro Praedicamentorum). On the one hand, his dedication to Ulrich surely indicates that Martin was a Catholic. Yet, his relationship to the Hussites seems to have been rather friendly, since he remained at the Prague University even after 1458, when it was re-divided into the four articles anew. No clear evidence on this point survives.

The memory treatise, written around 1450, and extant in six manuscripts, is not ascribed to him with absolute certainty. Three of the manuscripts transmit it as anonymous, one mentions only Magister Martinus. Only the manuscript attached to incunable I 77 from the Metropolitan Chapter Library in Prague and the copy in Vienna, ÖNB, Pal. lat. 5254 make the attribution to Martinus de Lancicia explicit (Explicit istud compendium de modo studendi intelligendi et memorandi editum per honorandum ac reverendum magistrum Martinum medicum de Lancicia [Lanotia in the Viennese manuscript]), but these are neither the oldest nor the best of the surviving manuscripts and it is thus also possible that its copyists simply chose to ascribe the treatise by a certain Martinus to a certain famous Martinus. The contents of other works by Martinus de Lancicia should be researched and compared to this treatise more thoroughly to confirm or disprove this hypothesis, a task that exceeds the present study.

The author provides rules and advice for improving one’s memory and studying in an efficient way, but they have little to do with classical art of memory techniques. Martinus reveals himself to be a doctor: he sees memory as a bodily function, and his points are aimed primarily at improving one’s health. He is also a teacher: his text is clearly organized, offers practical and immediately applicable advice, and is strongly appellative. Polish scholarship considers it the first Polish psychological-pedagogical treatise. Even so, as is the case with his contemporaries, Martinus quotes a number of authorities, and many of the

__versus occidentem et septentrionem; the codex is a miscellany including a number of Hussite works—texts by Jan Hus, John Wycliff, Jacobellus de Misa, etc. Parts of it are written in Czech.) Martin’s computus is based on a computus by Johannes de Sacrobosco, with a number of additions by Martin who might have been inspired by his master, Peter called Bradáč from Dvakačovice (see Q. Vetter, Šest století, p. 5).

104) Extant in Prague, NL, I G 6. See also Jiří Bečka, Islám a české země (Islam and the Czech Lands), Olomouc 1998, p. 76, where the author claims Martin is dependent on Farghani in this work of his.

105) These are extant in Prague, NL, V H 14, fol. 90v–218v, inc.: Utrum de predicamentis possit esse sciencia. Quod sic patet... See Ch. H. Lohr, Medieval Latin Aristotle Commentaries, esp. p. 337, nr. 1 and nr. 2; Jerzy Korolec, Repertorium commentariorum mediæ ævi in Aristotelem Latinorum quae in Bibliotheca olim Universitatis Pragensis nunc Státní knihovna ČSR vocata, Wroclaw 1977.

106) The ambiguity of religious contacts in the second half of the 15th c. is a recurring issue in Czech lands.

107) The extant manuscripts are: Vienna, ÖNB, Pal. lat. 4342, fol. 272r–287r; Pal. lat. 5254, fol. 290r–300r; Prague, NL, XIV F 18, fol. 2r–12v; I F 11, fol. 144v–152v; I D 12, fol. 17r–18v; and 202r–204v; Prague, MK, inc. I 77, part 11; for details, see below. Hajdu knew of only the two Viennese mss. (H. Hajdu, Das mnemotechnische Schrifttum, p. 112).

points he makes are also found elsewhere. It is thus a task for future scholarship to evaluate his actual creative contribution.\footnote{Hajdu says that similar ideas appear in a French ars memoriae in Paris, Bibl. Ste. Geneviève, 2521 (XV, fol. 96r–99r) presented as de libro m. Stephani de Nouvent (see H. Hajdu, Das mnemotechnische Schrifttum, p. 114). However, I did not find any close similarity between this text and the treatise of Martinus. In that particular manuscript, the treatise is followed by a Latin art of memory by Girardus de Cruce (from 1462) (see S. Seelbach, Ars und Scientia, pp. 78–81).}

After a prologue that survives only in a fragment in a single manuscript (the authorship of which is, in addition, questionable\footnote{The prologue is found also in Baptistae Guarini libellus ad nobilem adolescentem Maffeum Gambaram de Ordine docendi ac studendi (who lived from 1338–1612).}), the first chapter, De organo anime, explains that just as a worker uses various instruments which he needs to keep in good working order, the soul’s instrument is the body and we must concentrate on keeping the body in good working order if we want to improve our memory. Using the theory of the four humors, Martinus gives a number of dietary and commonsense guidelines (getting enough sleep, enough liquids, etc.). He combines general advice with the specifics of his own regimen for keeping good health (\textit{ego autem...}). The second chapter, de varietate corporum ad quorum diuersitatem sequitur diuersitas animorum, discusses the various types of people and their dispositions for studying. From the third chapter on, the treatise is structured very clearly:

\begin{quote}
III. de impedimentis
\begin{enumerate}
\item cursus et motus frequens corporis de uno loco ad alium
\item indigestio
\item multorum librorum inordinata inspectio
\item longa lectio usque ad fastidium
\item sperrere audire doctos et magistros
\item exercitationis omissio
\item inbui paucis scientiis
\end{enumerate}

IV. de preceptis seruandis in studio et lectione
\begin{enumerate}
\item cum multa percurreris, unum excipe
\item in omni scientia habenda sunt aliqua, que semper sunt prompta
\item principia scientiarum primum sunt discenda
\item tres modos intelligere et usitare argumentationes
\item diffiniciones terminorum cuiuslibet scientie maxime sunt studende
\item propositiones universales scientiarum maxime sunt studende
\item in studio ordinato unicuique arti attribuendum est, quod suum est et un-aqueque scientia expicandae est suis propriis nocionibus
\item ordo servetur (grammatica, rhetorica, quadrivium, philosophia naturalis, metaphysica, theologiana)
\end{enumerate}
\end{quote}
It is apparent that even without explicitly including the technique of the art of memory, many of the concerns, such as the importance of order and exercise, are the same.

In conclusion, we encounter a personal and local touch: Martinus adds a note on the pitiful current state of Prague University, admonishing the students not to give up learning but rather to study even harder in order to be prepared for better times to come. Although only a small note, it clearly shows Martinus’ sincere struggle for ensuring the university would not completely collapse:

*Quantum hec nostra gloriosissima universitas minuatur in quibus deficiat studiis quibus sit calamitatibus subjecta, res ipsa clamat et predicat vos igitur: ‘o adolescentes quorum vires apsissime sunt meis nunc monimentis roborati studiorum precepta suscite ut quod numerus nostre beate minoraut societatis adaugaeant paucorum multa preciosa ingenia.’*
How is that most glorious university of ours diminished, what studies it lacks, to what disasters it is subject! The thing itself cries out and admonishes you thus: ‘O, youths, whose talents are most appropriate, now strengthened by my instructions, follow my orders, so that when the number of our blessed society has diminished, [at least] the many precious talents of the few will be increased.’

While a number of Martinus’ pieces of advice and the citations from the authorities appear in various arts of memory proper, he mentions artificial memory as such only in passing when explaining the importance of *memoria localis* (in V.4), which, he says, is threefold, the art of memory belonging to the first type (*secundum imaginies et similitudines inconsuetas*). Martinus does not recommend it very heartily, however, saying: *Et de tali loco agitur in scientia de memoria artificiali, que sicut multiis est inutilis, sic paucis prodest* (‘And this type of place is the subject of artificial memory, which, just as it is useless for many, is also useful for few,’ (5)).

The six surviving manuscripts of Martinus’ treatise—by far the most we have of one text on memory from our area—suggest that it was this text that his contemporaries found especially useful.

**A reworking of Martinus? (Optimus ille…)**

In addition to the copies of Martinus’ treatise, I was able to identify a text linked to it that is transmitted in three manuscripts, Prague, NL, X H 12, I E 39, and Brno, MZK, Mk 66. The text, inc. *Optimus ille discipulorum instructor*, does not have a title in either of the copies. The Prague manuscript X H 12, which contains the treatise on f. 64v–68r is a miscellany written in 1472 and 1474 in Čáslav. In the Brno manuscript, part of this text directly precedes and is connected to *Parvulus philosophiae naturalis* (f. 100v–136r) by Albert of Orlamünde (frequently ascribed also to Petrus de Dresden) and has been understood as its inherent part.

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111) The other two are *locus* created by reading repeatedly from the same book, and *locus of liber manualis* (cf. fol. 6v of Prague, MK, Inc. I 77).
112) Prague, NL, XIV F 18, fol. 9v. Here we encounter additional evidence that could be used in arguing against the general popularity of the art of memory: Vienna, ÖNB, Pal. lat. 4342, instead of *memoria artificiali* in the above quoted clause, has *memoria Aristotelis*—a mistake most likely due to the scribe’s unfamiliarity with the term *memoria artificialis*.
113) Also known as Petr z Dráždán, Petrus Gerticz de Dresden, or Petrus Hereticus. Petrus was originally in Prague but left for Germany in 1409 because of the Decree of Kutná Hora. In 1412 he was expelled from the school he led in Dresden because of his heretical thinking; he returned to Prague and founded a private school there. According to some sources, Utraquism was originally his idea and not Jacobellus de Missa’s. Petrus was burnt at the stake in 1421. But the text, *Parvulus Philosophiae* (or *Philosophia pauperum*), is now generally ascribed to Albert von Orlamünde and was edited by Bernhard Geyer, *Die Albert dem Grossen zugeschriebene Summa naturalium (Philosophia pauperum)*, Münster 1938. See also Charles H. Lohr, *Medieval Aristotle Commentaries: Authors A–F*, Traditio 23, 1967, pp. 345–348.
114) The text itself inc. *Natura est principium et causa movendi et quiescendi*, and was dated to 1474. It is also transmitted, e.g. in Graz, UB, 966, fol. 125r–136v; or Prague, NL, 1412 (MLVI), fol. 1–88v. It was published in 1513 by Johannes (Jan) Haller in Cracow and in 1516 by Johannes Singrenius in Vienna, but without the initial part on the art of studying. [http://digital.slub–dresden.de/sammlungen/werkansicht/273291661/]. Cf. Martin Grabmann, *Die Philosophia pauperum und ihr Verfasser Albert von Orlamünde*, Münster 1918 (= Beiträge zur Geschichte der Philosophie und Theologie des Mittelalters 20,2), pp. 29–31; František Michálek Bartoš in: *Reformáční sborník* 8, 1946, p. 66.
In Prague, NL, I E 39, this text (f. 164r–168r) opens a rather disorganized section with various advice and excerpts (extending to f. 223r) in a miscellaneous codex from the last quarter of the fifteenth century.\(^\text{115}\)

The anonymous author is not interested in medical issues. The first half of the treatise is, with the exception of one sentence,\(^\text{116}\) very different from Martinus and includes extensive quotations from classical authors. The second part seems to be an appropriation of Martinus’ chapters III, IV, and V. Although the general keywords are the same, the reasoning and quotes used are usually different. In addition, the anonymous author states that he took the advice from Boethius’ *De disciplina scholarium*,\(^\text{117}\) a text which he quotes abundantly even though its aim and scope are in fact quite different. *De disciplina scholarium*, an anonymous work written ca. 1230–1240 in Paris, also known as *Speculum scholarium*, seems to have been quite popular in the area.\(^\text{118}\) One copy directly precedes the memory treatise of Martinus Pragensis in Prague, NL, I D 12.\(^\text{119}\) Thus, it is very likely that the author of *Optimus ille*... used *De disciplina scholarium* together with Martinus’ treatise when compiling his own set of advice. In any case, the art of memory is not mentioned in his text at all.\(^\text{120}\)

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\(^{116}\) This sentence is the clause that opens Martinus’ treatise: *magnam cuiuslibet artis vim comparat artifex cum suorum instrumentorum melioramenta inprimis coaptat*.


\(^{118}\) Surviving copies include: Prague, NL, I G 40 (from 1383); III E 15, fol. 22r–34v (XIII–XIV); III G 22, fol. 75r–97v (end XIV, with a commentary); IV F 14, fol. 32r–40r (XIII); VIII H 22, fol. 94r–122r (anepigr.); X F 17, fol. 1r–33v (1411–1412); X F 25 (from 1407); XI C 1, fol. 193r–200r (copied in 1478 in Soběslav, notes by Crux de Telcz); Prague, Library of the Metropolitan Chapter 1655 (O LXXI), fol. 147r–v (13th); Kynžvart Castle library 20–H–11 (14139) (from 1491). There are also several incunables kept in the Czech libraries.

\(^{119}\) Fol. 196r–201r; here as *De modo progrediendi in discendo et docendo*, copied in 1462 by Wenceslaus de Chrudim.

\(^{120}\) An edition of this text is currently being prepared by the author.
b) *De modulo studendi*: “Avoid the art of memory!”

Finally, a very curious anonymous treatise, *De modulo studendi* (inc. *Ad laudem Ihesu regis sublimissimi*), is kept in Olomouc, RL, M I 357, on f. 38r–85r. The miscellaneous codex from the second half of the fifteenth century was previously owned by the Carthusians in Dolany (Dolein) near Olomouc. The second part of the treatise is introduced as *de memoria artificialiter acquirenda*, but here we do not learn anything about the art of memory. Instead, the author first provides medical advice, offering a recipe for *unguentum memorie*, *pulmentum pro memoria*, etc. He proceeds by counseling the readers on the benefits of frequent meditation and devout attention at mass; but he gives a variety of other words of wisdom: e.g., keeping a mirror in one’s room for clearer sight, having a nicely decorated room so that nothing in it is annoying, or being a *bonus latinista* and writing clearly. The author also includes two stories from Caesarius of Heisterbach, a paragraph on *ars notoria*, *nigromancia*, etc. The entirety is a very detailed and multifaceted treatment on efficient studying.

The author of this text devotes one paragraph to the art of memory but, rather than praising it, he dissuades the students from using it, arguing that it is too demanding and difficult (6):

> *De arte memoratiua*  
> *Sana persuasione admoneo te fugere artem memoratiuam in omnibus ea fruendo. Nam licet non sit supersticiosa, tamen continue utendo ipsum, ut conveniter fiunt vesani, quia maximo labore caput est in ea oneratum. Nam fiunt iibi maxime varieque discursiones, quare caput confestim confunditur ad vertiginem*

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121) Folia 83 and 84 are exchanged.  
123) An edition of this text, currently being prepared by Jan Odstrčilík as a part of his M.A. thesis at the Institute of Greek and Latin Studies of the Faculty of Arts, Charles University in Prague, will allow a more detailed analysis, which was not considered necessary here, since the actual relevance of the text to the art of memory is limited.
Fugere artem memorativam?

e tc. Sed bene in aliquibus ea fungi potes, ut in sermonibus, habendo aliquos articulos, illos per cameras ponas, aut per membra digitorum, in quolibet unum articulum ponendo, prius tamen declaracionem addiscendo et ceteris ut patet in tractatibus eiusdem. Ut autem intelligas quid magnus labor est in ea, nam requiritur habere camera, secundo angulos, tercio ymagines varias, quarto ad quamlibet ymagnem applicare ymaginatiue significaciones terminorum et ceteris. Post, si necessarium fuerit, exigitur diversa tegumenta diversorum colorum super applicationes priores ponere. Ecce an per talem laborem caput faciliter non commouetur et ceteris. Laudabile verumtamen est ea uti in certis paucis materiis ut quando accidit necessario alicuot memorie commendare.\textsuperscript{124}

On the art of memory
I admonish you with a sound conviction: avoid using the art of memory for everything. Even though it is not superstitious, to use it continuously, as fools do, will burden the head because of the extensive effort; there are great and various discussions as to why the head is suddenly confused by dizziness, etc. But you can use it well in some things, such as sermons, when you have several subjects and place them into rooms; or use the members of your fingers, putting a subject in each one, but first learning the speech, etc., as is clear from the treatises on it. But in order to understand what great effort lies in it: first you have to have a room; second, corners; third, various images; fourth, to apply to every image the meanings of the terms in an imaginative way, etc. Afterward, if it is necessary, various coverings of diverse colours must be put over the earlier placements. How wouldn't one's head be shaken easily from such effort? Etc. Nevertheless, it is praiseworthy to use it [i.e. the art of memory] in a few specific issues, such as when it becomes necessary to store something in memory.

This is thus not a complete rejection of the art but rather a reserved reaction (much as the usual reaction to the technique is today). As a whole, this treatise supports the idea that the medical and meditational-practical approach to improving memory might have been seen as an alternative to the art of memory proper.

3. Others (fragments, brief treatments, recipes)

We encounter a number of other texts providing advice on improving one's memory in several other contexts. For example, Prague, NL, V E 28 contains practical mnemonic aids for remembering canon law, as well as a brief discussion of its contents also aimed at facilitating one's memory of it. Then, on f. 9v, we find a note listing eleven pieces of advice for the efficient study of canon law, some of which (e.g. the third: “Do not study until you have pain or until depression but

\textsuperscript{124) Fol. 79r.}
have a joyful mind”) are generally applicable and recall those already discussed here.  

Quite frequently we find medical advice for improving one’s memory, either within the larger medical treatises, or independently. For example, the Carthusians of Olomouc owned two manuscripts with recipes for memory aids: in Olomouc, RL, M I 359, a miscellaneous codex from the second half of the fifteenth century, we find on f. 83v–84r a text entitled: canon super varia pro memoria deperdita seu corrupta naturaliter seu artificialiter revocanda et recuperanda data per magistrum Cristannum [de Prachatic?] licenciatum de artibus et baccalarium in medicinis. The brief text itself contains a recipe for an ointment and a powder improving memory, followed by other dietetic and life-style guidelines. In addition, Olomouc, RL, M I 406, from the late fifteenth to early sixteenth century, includes two detailed recipes on fol. 134v–135r.

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As noted several times above, the present is only a preliminary survey. A detailed scrutiny of the manuscripts, of their dating and their interconnections, as well as of the editions of the texts, needs to be carried out before any conclusions can be made. The sources from the Czech lands identified thus far do not lead us to suppose that the art of memory was a wide-spread and much used rhetorical technique in the region. The currently available evidence is indeed rather isolated and does not allow for generalizations: the anonymous treatise from Prague, NL, VIII E 3 is a mere fragment that is difficult to contextualize, Mattheus Beran largely copied his treatise, the treatise by Martin of Prague is not really an art of memory tract, and the remaining texts are mostly brief treatments of the topic.

Nevertheless, it is clear that the production in the region was not simply derived from and dependent on accepted models. Perhaps precisely because the art of memory did not become too diffused, it did not become a set type of rhetorical tract. The authors approach it with a clear and critical mind, bringing

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125) The whole note reads: Nota diligenter istos casus modus studendi quia in iuri canonico requiruntur: Primus modus est deum pre oculis habere, quia dicitur: ‘primum querite regnum dei’ [Lc 12,31]. Et alibi: ‘iniciam sapiencie timor dominii’ [Ecclesiasticus 1,16]. Secundus modus est facultatem quam queris in corde geras quia pluribus intentus minor est ad sigla spiritus. Tercius est: non studes ad dolem et usque ad accidiam ut sit tibi animus letus. Quartus est: causam capitulii ad totam et ad quelibet eius partem referas videas si pertineat ad ?. Quintus est attende quare sit statutum. Sextus est contraria solvere. Septimus est causam solucionis diligenter attende unde procedunt ?. Septimus est similia elicere et investigare. Nonus est non generale sed speciale ad memoriam reducas et ipse commenda quia memoria non prodit nisi quam sepius non respexit. Decimus est non textum sed commentum disce. Undecimus est ubi et quare sub tali titulo sunt collocate tales decretis.


129) Incipit tractatus subtilis de reformacione obtuse memorie ciusdam magistri parisienis.

up questions and problems which do not appear in the comparable treatises from Western Europe or Italy. The Hussite author, exploring the possibilities of replacing notions to be remembered by images, gives the *ad absurdum* conclusion that anything can be substituted by anything else. Mattheus Beran suggests an easier way of creating 100 mnemonic places—remembering only nine words and a different color at every tenth place. Martin of Prague does not seem to be interested in the art of memory as such, but, disappointed by the contemporary state of Prague University while strongly hoping for a brighter future, he sees training one’s memory as an important way of ensuring continuity of education.

Advice for improving one’s memory in line with Martinus’ views seem to have been more widely diffused in the area than the proper art of memory. With the rising number of university students and the amount of available knowledge and information, more authors were concerned with the problem of studying as efficiently as possible. Some of them decided to link this issue to the art of memory, others chose not to do so, and the author of *De modulo studendi* even explicitly suggests to avoid the art. However, these are not complete refusals—Martinus says the art is useful for some people, and the author of *De modulo studendi* admits that it is relevant for some purposes.

### III. Physical Contexts of *artes memoriae*

As far as the concrete context of the area is concerned, we seem to lack direct evidence on the practical use of the art of memory. The present chapter surveys the manuscript contexts of the art of memory treatises, since an inspection of the texts we find in the vicinity of these tracts may suggest the ways they were perceived and the contexts they were assigned. ¹³¹

It has already been observed that quite frequently there is more than one art of memory treatise copied in a codex. For example, this is the case of Prague, NL, I G 11a, ¹³² or Olomouc, RL, I 271 discussed below. ¹³³ We also find a combination of the art of memory with medical and other advice for improving memory. Although the art was originally part of rhetoric, the manuscripts containing the art of memory do not contain rhetorical treatises as often as might be expected. ¹³⁴ In the Czech context it seems that the link to rhetoric was weakened, if not lost. In any case, rhetoric as such was not blooming in the area in the fifteenth century, especially as the Hussites spoke openly against stylistic embellishments. At the same time, however, the topic of rhetoric in Bohemia during the

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¹³¹ See also S. SEELBACH, *Wissensorganisation*.
¹³² It includes both a fragment of the treatise by Mattheus Beran and the tract *Nota hanc figuram*.
¹³³ The same is Beinecke 306 and St. Paul im Lavanttal, SB, 137/4 (which are, however, probably not of Czech provenience).
¹³⁴ An *ars dictandi* appears in Olomouc, RL, M I 357 (on fol. 94v–128r; inc.: *Circa materiam dictandi*, with German and Latin examples) preceded by *De modulo studendi*, and rhetorical notes appear together with Martinus’ treatise in Prague, NL, I D 12 and in Vienna, ÖNB, Pal. lat. 5254.
fifteenth century for the most part still remains unexplored,\textsuperscript{135} and thus there might be more to discover.

The connection between the art of memory and practical mnemonics (including preaching aids) is much stronger. We find memory treatises most frequently in miscellanies with all kinds of useful and practically applicable texts. Often they seem to have been designed for preachers: they include sermons, exempla,\textit{ artes praedicandi}, expositions of Decalogue,\textit{ Credo} and\textit{ Pater noster},\textsuperscript{136}\textit{ summae confessorum},\textsuperscript{137} advice on confession, texts of virtues and vices, moral treatises, etc. The subject of composition and use of miscellanies in the later Middle Ages, when they emerge as individualized selections compiled for practical purposes, deserves a more detailed discussion elsewhere.\textsuperscript{138} Here it is sufficient to say that the art of memory was felt to fit into this context of practical knowledge that was to be at hand.

The link between the theory and practice of mnemonics is a subject that also needs further elaboration on the theoretical level. Questions such as: To what degree do practical mnemonic devices follow the rules set up in the\textit{ artes memoriae},\textsuperscript{139} or: To what degree were the\textit{ artes memoriae} using or reacting to the existing practice of memory? have not been addressed and discussed in detail yet. But the fact that the theory and practice of memory were not two strictly divided fields is clear from the surviving codices, where the two types are found side by side.

For example, in both of the codices containing Matouš Beran’s\textit{ Ars memorativa}, we also find the \textit{Summarium Biblie}, a biblical mnemonic aid very popular in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries consisting of 212 verses, in which each biblical chapter is summarised in only one or two words.\textsuperscript{140} Thus, the text is incomprehensible without accompanying notes. These two manuscripts each feature a different version of the \textit{Summarium}, as far as both their layout and their contents are concerned.\textsuperscript{141} There are at least twenty-seven more surviving medieval copies

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{135} There is no specific study on the topic except the works of Josef Tůň\textsc{ka}, \textit{Pražská rétorika} (Prague Rhetoric), Prague 1987; \textsc{idem}, \textit{Prague Rhetoric and the Epistolare dictamen (1278) of Henricus de Isernia}, Rhetorica 3/3, 1985, pp. 183–200; \textsc{idem}, \textit{O rétorice a stylu naší středověké literatury} (On rhetoric and the style of our medieval literature), Slovo a slovesnost 25, 1964, pp. 260–270; \textsc{idem}, \textit{Rétorický styl a pražská univerzitní literatura ve středověku} (Rhetorical style and Prague University literature in the Middle Ages), Prague 1975; \textsc{idem}, \textit{K rétorice a k universitní literatuře} (On rhetoric and university literature), Prague 1972. Not much information is found in Jiří Kraus, \textit{European Contexts of Czech and Slavic Rhetoric in the Renaissance}, in: Renaissance Rhetoric. Papers Presented at an International Colloquium held in June 27–29, 1990, Universitität Essen, ed. Heinrich F. Plett, Berlin 1993, pp. 106–117.
  \item \textsuperscript{136} The explanation of these basic texts was an everyday task of the preachers. Cf., e.g., Jaroslav V. Polc – Zdeňka Hlědi\textsc{ková}, \textit{Pražské synody a koncily předhustské doby} (Prague synods and councils in the pre-Husite period), Prague 2002, pp. 110, 166, 265, 266.
  \item \textsuperscript{137} Cf. Jiří Kejř, \textit{Summae confessorum a jiná díla pro foro interno v rukopisech českých a moravských knihoven} (\textit{Summae confessorum} and other works pro foro interno in manuscripts of Bohemian and Moravian libraries), Prague 2003.
  \item \textsuperscript{138} Together with Kimberly Rivers we are preparing a collective monograph on the topic, \textit{Medieval Manuscript Miscellanies: Composition, Authorship, Use} (to appear in Leiden: Brill, 2012).
  \item \textsuperscript{139} I have treated this text in an article, Lucie Doležalová, \textit{Biblia quasi in saculo: Summarium Biblie and other medieval Bible mnemonics}, Medium Aevum Quotidianum 56, 2007, pp. 1–35.
  \item \textsuperscript{140} In Prague, NL, I F 35, the text is copied on fol. 448r–458v in two columns with one keyword per line always followed by an explanatory gloss in a smaller script. In Prague, NL, I G 11a, fol. 7v–15v, the layout of the \textit{Summarium Biblie} respects the verses, the keywords are divided by vertical red lines and the glosses in smaller script superscript. Some of the keywords differ, and so do the glosses. This, in itself is a common feature of the transmission of this text.
\end{itemize}
of this text from Bohemia and Moravia, and there are indications that several more manuscripts now kept elsewhere are of the same origin. The codices are all from the fifteenth century and come from various environments, both Catholic and Calixtine. The degree to which this example of practical mnemonics follows the theoretical rules of the art of memory is difficult to discern, primarily because the text of the *Summarium Bibliae* itself is far from being settled, and no critical edition has yet been published. In any case, due to its substantially condensed form and very clear organisation, it is evident that it follows the basic rules of the art. The individual key words of the *Summarium* are selected in a number of different ways. Sometimes it is a word oft repeated in the chapter concerned, other times it is the first word from a famous quotation from the chapter (even a conjunction or an interjection), and yet other times a word which does not even appear in the chapter but has the capability to remind someone of its contents (or seemed so to its author). They are often striking and surprising. Some of the keywords might be interpreted as having been created in line with the mixing of letters technique so frequently used by Mattheus Beran, but these could also be mere copying mistakes.

The copy of the *Summarium Bibliae* in Mattheus Beran’s *Confundarius maior*, that is, the codex Prague, NL, I F 35, is further accompanied by shorter biblical mnemonic verses and devices copied in the top and bottom margins. Actually, this whole codex is a very interesting miscellany and could be easily considered as a collection of “practical mnemonics”: most of the texts included are brief and dense with important information to be kept in mind. This, however, clearly forms a much looser relationship to the art of memory.

The connection of the theory and practice of mnemonics also appears in codices with foreign *artes memoriae* copied in the Czech lands. Olomouc, RL, M I 156 is a miscellany written by various hands. The same scribe who copied the memory trea-

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141) They are all from the 15th c.: Brno, MZK, Mk 61, Mk 108; Olomouc, RL, M I 161, M II 31, M II 34, M II 60; Prague, Strahov Library, DB III 13; Prague, Library of the Academy of Sciences, I TB 3; Prague, Library of the National Museum—Nostic Library, F 1; Prague, Library of the National Museum, XVIII B 18; Prague, NL, I A 35, I A 39, I A 41, I D 18, I E 15, I F 43 (a fragment), I G 36, III A 16, VI B 11, VIII D 27, X B 16, X G 10, XI A 14, XI C 3, XI E 6, XIV G 17; Znojmo (Znaim), City Archives II 304.

142) Vienna, ÖNB, Pal. lat. 4535 and Alba Iulia, Bibl. Batthyaneum R II 66 are definitely of Czech origin. In addition, Ansbach, SB, 18 might originate from Bohemia (although it is also linked to Leipzig), and Nürnberg, Stadtbibliothek, Hert. MS 1, originally from 13th c. France, includes later Czech glosses. The whole issue of the reception of this curious text requires a more thorough analysis, which is currently being carried out by the author.

143) The ordered keyword structure forming a verse (and thus further facilitating memorization) is a usual mnemonic strategy, also found in the *cisioiani* and many other verses, e.g., there are verses that summarise canon law in the same. Prokop, the scribe of the New Town of Prague, also used this technique in his verses for remembering the components of various types of letters. In addition, Martinus Pragensis uses it in his computus for the signs of horoscope: *Est lib, ari; scor, taur; sa, ge; cap, can; a, le; pis, vir*.


145) This miscellaneous codex is also described by Benedek Láng who says: “... it was not so frequent in the Middle Ages that a manuscript contained such a coherently chosen selection of texts, forming a well-structured unity,” see B. Láng, *Unlocked Books*, p. 206.

tise Secundum Parisienses also copied two artes praedicandi in it.\textsuperscript{147} Olomouc, RL, M I 24\textsuperscript{148} contains both a fragment of an art of memory treatise dependent on Konrad Celtis and mnemonic verses on computus accompanied by a commentary.\textsuperscript{149}

The best example, however, is Olomouc, RL, M I 271,\textsuperscript{150} a manuscript from the Carthusian monastery Na Dolanech (Dollein) near Olomouc,\textsuperscript{151} which has a copy of a well known mnemonic treatise, \textit{Memoria fecunda}, preceded by an unfinished alphabetical version of the mnemonic places (7).\textsuperscript{152} Primarily, it includes \textit{Summula de Summa Raymundi},\textsuperscript{153} and, in addition to several other texts,\textsuperscript{154} features a portion concerned with rhetoric together with a striking number of mnemonic verses.\textsuperscript{155} Many of them deal with grammar (such as how to remember the gender of Latin nouns), others use backwards spelling, etc. There is even a mnemonic verse about how to choose a good cheese (8).\textsuperscript{156} The words used in the poem can easily be interpreted in line with the guidelines of the theoreticians of memory on how to create mnemonic images. The miscellaneous codex consists of thirteen originally independent parts and was copied by ten different scribes. Thus, it cannot be argued that a combination of the theory and practice of memory lay behind its origin, but it was certainly manifested in its reception.

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\textsuperscript{148} For a description of the codex, see M. Boháček – E Čáda, \textit{Beschreibung der mittelalterlichen Handschriften}, pp. 10–13.

\textsuperscript{149} Inc. \textit{Nonaginta unum tollas milleque trecenta / quidquid superfuerit pro solis ciclo teneto}; cf. Thorndike–Kibre 923, Walther, \textit{Carmina}, 12.225 (they do not note this ms.). The text in this ms. is dated to 1491.

\textsuperscript{150} For a description of the codex, see M. Boháček – E Čáda, \textit{Beschreibung der mittelalterlichen Handschriften}, pp. 192–197. The manuscript is digitalized on www.manuscriptorium.com (last accessed May 5, 2011).

\textsuperscript{151} For more on this monastery (but primarily from an archeological viewpoint), see Jakub Vrana, \textit{Kartuziánský klášter v Dolanech u Olomouce} (Carthusian monastery in Dolany by Olomouc), Olomouc 2007.

\textsuperscript{152} This text, entitled \textit{Tabula nominum ordine alphabeti}, covers a single folio, fol. 2r, and is incomplete, ending with the 55th place. Every group of five places includes two alternatives—the upper line usually consists of proper names, the lower line of objects. The places begin with a new letter of the alphabet and the second (or third) letters are vowels (a, e, i, o, u). Inc.: Alonis, Alexinus, Albinus, Anthonius, Augustinus / alabrum, alvearium, aqviuga, ascopa, augustea / baptista, benedictus, biligrinus, botus, bubalais[?]/ Baptisterium, belzebub, bipennis, botrus, bubo… lampertus, leo, –, –, ludovicus / lagena, lectus, liber, loric\textit{a}, lucerna. Although it is not explicitly linked to the art of memory, these are clearly the suggested mnemonic places.

\textsuperscript{153} On fol. 93v–235v, ascribed here to Adam Theutunicus[!]. This text, sometimes also called \textit{Compendium iuris}, was clearly compiled for mnemonic purposes.

\textsuperscript{154} A note by Johannes Guallensis, \textit{De generibus vini}, \textit{Breviloquium de quatuor virtutibus seu de virtutibus antiquorum}, is present, along with hymns and orations, a German fragment of the statutes of Jihlava (Iglau), \textit{Ius regale montanorum} (a silver mining reform issued by Wenceslas II in 1300), and a German translation of \textit{Capitula Narbonensia} from 1415.

\textsuperscript{155} This part of the codex opens with a text that links it to rhetoric: fol. 239r–250v also feature excerpts from \textit{Viaticus} by Magister Dybinus made by a certain Petrus Pyrnis de Mysna (\textit{hec predicta de simplici informacionis modo solummodo sunt conscripta per Petrum Pyrnis de Mysna, presbyterum et baccalareum in artibus et de eodem Viatico huc inserta}), immediately followed by \textit{Versus de arte dictandi} (inc. \textit{Nota quinque sunt partes epistule. Qui dictare putat, in prima arte salutat…}). Folio 251r–v contains 21 brief proverbs, mnemonic verses and poems. In the next passage, fol. 252r–254v feature several model letters, followed again by mnemonic verses (on fol. 257r–258v).

\textsuperscript{156} It reads: \textit{Nota versus ad cognoscendum bonum caseum}: Non cingnus, Argus, non Magdalena, Matusel / Non Abacuc, Lazarus, caseus iste bonus. It is accompanied by interlinear explanatory glosses: cingnus i. e. albus, Argus i. e. oculus altus, Magdalena i. e. flens, Matusel i. e. antiquus, Abacuc i. e. lentis, Lazarus i. e. fetidus (fol. 257v).
Fugere artem memorativam?

(7) Ms. Olomouc, Research Library, M I 271, from the Carthusian monastery Na Dolanech (Dolein) near Olomouc, f. 2r; an alphabetical (unfinished) list of the mnemonic places grouped in fives preceding the Memoria fecunda treatise.

(8) Ms. Olomouc, Research Library, M I 271 (ca. 1444), f. 257v; various mnemonic verses, the first one is Versus ad cognoscendum bonum caseum.
In what ways is the memory culture of the fifteenth century Czech lands specific and different from that of the rest of Europe? As noted above, the destabilizing effect of the Hussite movement on the whole society did not favor the continuous and coherent development (or the passing fashion?) of the art of memory. In addition, Hussites spoke openly against rhetoric. At the same time, though, they introduced a rhetoric of their own, and included a much larger public in the religious discourse than ever before. Although there seems to be no design behind it, the anonymous Hussite treatise proves they found the art of memory useful. Similarly, while Hussites explicitly spoke against icons and images, they developed their own intricate and sophisticated visual propaganda, that can easily be linked to the art of memory as far as its strategies of impacting its spectators are concerned.

For the Hussites, however, the subject of memory in general was most frequently brought up in a very different context: the context of the memory of Christ. This memory was seen as crucial for everyone, since it directed one's life to the path of virtue rather than vice. Furthermore, this memory was recalled and exercised in a physical way: through frequent communion. Stressing the importance of communion as a way of reminding oneself of Christ's passion and thus of correct behavior was a significant aspect of the Hussite movement (shared with devotio moderna). Although the explicit link has, to my knowledge, never been made, this type of reminiscence—physically activated just as Marcel Proust's memories brought back by the madeleines—can perhaps be seen in connection with the art of memory as well. But that is already a different story.

157) There is another possible link to the art of memory in a treatise against icons (De imaginibus) by Nicholaus de Dresda. Nicholaus criticizes creating physical images but stresses that one should depict them in one’s heart (Nicholaus de Dresda, De imaginibus, ed. Jana Něchutová, in: Sborník prací filosofické fakulty brněnské university, řada E archeologicko-klasická 15, 1970, pp. 211–240); cf. also František Michálek Bartoš, Husitská a cizína (Hussitism and foreign lands), Prague 1931, p. 152, no. 21.


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