

## Associations in Late Medieval Art of Memory (example of the Czech lands)

### Associações na arte da memória tardo-medieval (exemplo das terras checas)

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**Abstract:** Using two late medieval treatises from Bohemia as examples, the study presents various ways of creating images in the context of the art of memory, showing a tension between relying on common, generally shared associations which the mind easily interprets, and using rare, personal connections which are imprinted in one's mind more deeply. The tension remains unresolved: both methods are applied in the art of memory, the actual choice seems to be *ad hoc*. Both types of associations provide a unique and so far neglected insight into the medieval mind.

**Keywords:** art of memory; associations; medieval Bohemia; medieval manuscripts; medieval Latin; rhetoric.

By associations I mean here quick mental connections that are not being questioned or rationally evaluated but form an inherent part of a particular concept in one's mind – they are words or images “glued” to other words or images in one's mind, and so they appear together with them, or soon after them and substantially influence the way we perceive them. Mental associations are thus responsible for jumping to conclusions, intuitive judgements, automatic emotional reactions<sup>2</sup>. Rather than unique and personal, mental connections are, to a substantial degree, widely diffused and culturally and historically bound. For example, in medieval iconography the attributes of saints can be viewed as associations (a wheel immediately brings to mind saint Catherine, etc.). Similarly, based on bestiaries, individual animals are associated with particular habits and characteristics, or many biblical characters are linked to

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<sup>2</sup> Cf., e.g., KAHNEMAN (2011).

specific virtues or vices. Yet, mental associations are also dynamic: always context bound and being constantly transformed and re-defined.

The study of associations is extremely important also for understanding what is often referred to, without further specification, as “the medieval mind”. There are many studies on specific links and concrete medieval associations. Historical linguistic studies on collocation statistics also create sets of connections that can be approached both as reflecting associative links and as taking part in creating them<sup>3</sup>. Medieval rhetoric clearly has a lot to offer just as visual sources<sup>4</sup>. Building a complex mental map of medieval associations is, however, certainly not a feasible research option. Yet, exploring the field further is worthwhile and illuminating. In this study, I would like to argue for the use of yet another source, for better understanding medieval mental associations, the art of memory.

Memory in general is a crucial field for studying associations. In the medieval context, for example the sermon preparation notes show which words were considered by the priest as keywords, triggers able to bring to mind the sermon content<sup>5</sup>. These associations are thus somewhat different: the triggers are chosen rationally, the preacher consciously assesses the strength of the associated word as far as its power to bring about the remaining content in one’s mind is concerned. At the same time, they clearly work with implicit, usual and unreflected associations since these create the efficient mental shortcuts.

Art of memory (*ars memorativa*) specifically is still different<sup>6</sup>: here, images of things to be remembered are also created artificially (so there is rational reflection of the connection) but, at the same time, already from the founding treatise *Ad Herennium*, it is stressed that the mental images need to be striking rather than usual and everyday, as well as personal rather than generally applicable. The well-known passage reads:

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<sup>3</sup> Cf., e.g., QUIRK (1974).

<sup>4</sup> Cf., e.g., COPELAND and SLUITER, eds. (2012), HOURIHANE, ed. (2017).

<sup>5</sup> Such study is, of course, only possible if both the preparation notes and the full sermon are extant.

<sup>6</sup> On art of memory, see especially HEIMANN-SEELBACH (2000).

*Docet igitur nos ipsa natura, quid oporteat fieri. Nam si quas res in vita videmus parvas, usitatas, cottidianas, meminisse non solemus propterea quod nulla nova nec admirabili re commovetur animus: at si quid videmus aut audimus egregie turpe aut honestum, inusitatum, magnum, incredibile, ridiculum, id diu meminisse consuevimus. <Itaque quas res ante ora videmus> aut audimus, obliviscimur plerumque; quae acciderunt in pueritia, meminimus optime saepe; nec hoc alia de causa potest accidere, nisi quod usitatae res facile e memoria elabuntur, insignes et novae diutius <manent in animo. [...]*

*Praeterea similitudine alia alius magis commovetur. Nam ut saepe, formam si quam similem cuiquam dixerimus esse, non omnes habemus adsensores, quod alii videtur aliud, item fit <in> imaginibus, ut, quae nobis diligenter notata sit, ea parum videatur insignis aliis. Quare sibi quemque suo commodo convenit imagines comparare.*

*[Now nature herself teaches us what we should do. When we see in everyday life things that are petty, ordinary, and banal, we generally fail to remember them, because the mind is not being stirred by anything novel or marvellous. But if we see or hear something exceptionally base, dishonourable, extraordinary, great, unbelievable, or laughable, that we are likely to remember a long time. [...]*

*Then again, 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.]<sup>7</sup>*

In addition, there is no single method of creating the memory images, the exact ways in which they are created vary. The autor of *Ad Herennium* notes that the images are to be selected “from all things”:

*Quoniam ergo rerum similes imagines esse oportet, ex omnibus rebus nosmet nobis similitudines eligere debemus.*

*[Since, then, images must resemble objects, we ought ourselves to choose from all things likenesses for our use.]<sup>8</sup>*

Already the example of a complex memory image in *Ad Herennium* includes several images created through very different strategies:

*Hoc modo, ut si accusator dixerit ab reo hominem veneno necatum, et hereditatis causa factum arguerit, et eius rei multos dixerit testes et conscios esse: si hoc primum,*

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<sup>7</sup> *Ad Her.*, III.22 and 23.

<sup>8</sup> *Ad Her.*, III.20.

*ut ad defendendum nobis expeditum <sit,> meminisse volumus, in primo loco rei totius imaginem conformabimus: aegrotum in lecto cubantem faciemus ipsum illum, de quo agetur, si formam eius detinebimus; si eum non, at aliquem aegrotum <non> de minimo loco sumemus, ut cito in mentem venire possit. Et reum ad lectum eius adstituemus, dextera poculum, sinistra tabulas, medico testiculos arietinos tenentem: hoc modo et testium et hereditatis et veneno necati memoriam habere poterimus.*

*[For example, the prosecutor has said that the defendant killed a man by poison, has charged that the motive for the crime was an inheritance, and declared that there are many witnesses and accessories to this act. If in order to facilitate our defence we wish to remember this first point, we shall in our first background form an image of the whole matter. We shall picture the man in question as lying ill in bed, if we know his person. If we do not know him, we shall yet take some one to be our invalid, but a man of the lowest class, so that he may come to mind at once. And we shall place the defendant at the bedside, holding in his right hand a cup, and in his left tablets, and on the fourth finger ram's testicles. In this way we can record the man who was poisoned, the inheritance, and the witnesses. In like fashion we shall set the other counts of the charge in backgrounds successively, following their order, and whenever we wish to remember a point, by properly arranging the patterns of the backgrounds and carefully imprinting the images, we shall easily succeed in calling back to mind what we wish.]<sup>9</sup>*

The whole image forms one unit and is therefore perceivable through a single gaze of the viewer's mind. It consists of parts, each with its own meaning. The image of the defendant should be an image of that very person if we know him – thus, there is the least possible distance between reality and the memory image. The image for the poison is the cup, while the image of the inheritance are the tablets. Both these images are based on visual characteristics of the things to be remembered. The image for the witnesses, on the other hand, i.e. the ram's testicles, is based in verbal rather than visual similarity (*testes* meaning both witnesses and testicles). Several aspects of this whole memory image remain unclear and it is not sure whether they carried meaning at all, e.g. the possible significance of what is held in the left and what in the right hand. This will continue to be a problem during the Middle Ages: images are often proposed without any explanations of the associative links on which they depend.

During the late Middle Ages, there is a true boom of the treatises on the art of memory. They all repeat the basic rules of forming mental places and

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<sup>9</sup> *Ad Her.*, III.20.

images but differ in the specific examples they offer. A detailed comparative analysis of the strategies in the suggested image creating has not been carried out yet but it is apparent that different methods, based on both visuality and textuality just like those in the *Ad Herennium*, were used. Here, I will compare only two of the late medieval treatises from the Czech lands, and only choose several parts from each of them. Yet, I hope that the present study based on analysis of selected associative techniques in image-making in two *artes memoriae* is not merely a small contribution to a study of medieval associations but also shows some more widely applicable aspects of medieval mental processes.

The first *ars memorativa* chosen here is a reworking of a treatise known as *Memoria fecunda* (written in Bologna in 1425), which also contains elements of the *Attendentes nonnulli* treatise (written ca. 1445–1450). It was copied by a certain Johannes de Fredelant on October 5, 1461, and seems to survive in a sole copy, MS Praha, Národní knihovna, I G 11a, ff. 31r–41v. The whole manuscript contains a full section with several art of memory treatises but the Fredelant treatise is not complete: its beginning (probably one folio) is missing<sup>10</sup>.

Like other art of memory treatises, it contains many concrete propositions of images for frequently used concepts. For example, suggested images for numbers are usually based on similarity of the shape of the digits to certain animals or objects. In the Fredelant treatise, the first nine digits apply exactly this strategy:

*pro unitate ponemus unum digitum*  
*pro dualitate ponemus fistulam vel furcam*  
*pro ternario ponemus caudam porci incurvatam admodum cifre ternarii*  
*pro quatuor ponemus instrumenta quo implentur farcimina vel cordam*  
*pro quinario sustentaculum vetularum*  
*pro senario ciconiam cum rostro suo*  
*pro septenario cignum*  
*pro ocleario cathenam*  
*pro novem baculum pastoralem seu cambucam*  
  
*[for [number] one we place [the image of] one finger*  
*for two we place a pipe or a fork*  
*for three we place the tail of a pig curved in the shape of the digit three*

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<sup>10</sup> I have analyzed the text as well as the memory section of the manuscript recently in detail in DOLEŽALOVÁ (2021).

*for four we place the tool with which the sausages are filled, or a rope*  
*for five the staff of old women*  
*for six a stork with its beak*  
*for seven a swan*  
*for eight a chain*  
*for nine a shepherd's stick or a cudgel<sup>11]</sup>*

Several of these images appear in other treatises, too, and some of them are familiar till today (although, e.g., Czech children associate a swan with number 2 rather than with number 7).

The strategies applied for images for higher numbers (i.e. composed of more digits), are nevertheless not so straightforward:

*pro vicesimo ponimus papilionem vel apem*  
*pro trecesimo vesperilionem*  
*pro quadragesimo currum*  
*pro sexagesimo gallum*  
*pro septuagesimo anciam*  
*pro octuagesimo milium invetatum*  
*pro nonagesimo aquilam*  
*pro centenario griffonem*  
*pro millenario leonem*  
  
*[for twenty we put a butterfly or a bee*  
*for thirty a bat*  
*for forty a carriage*  
*for sixty a cock*  
*for seventy a goose*  
*for eighty old millet*  
*for ninety an eagle*  
*for one hundred a griffin*  
*for one thousand a lion.<sup>12]</sup>*

A carriage standing for 40 could be based on visual similarity but it could also be based on a verbal vicinity of *quadragesima* (40) with *quadriga* (a four-in-hand). Besides, there seems to be going on some hierarchy of animals with the eagle ranking quite high (90), the griffin even higher (100)

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<sup>11</sup> Praha, Národní knihovna, I G 11a, fol. 34r, the English translation here and elsewhere, unless noted otherwise, is mine.

<sup>12</sup> Praha, Národní knihovna, I G 11a, fol. 34v.

and the lion the highest (1,000). In any case, the relationship between the word to be remembered and the suggested image is not so simple any more.

Discussing images for colours and selected characteristics, Fredelant identifies the method used explicitly as the rhetorical method of *anthonomasia*, i.e. replacing a characteristics by an object that bears it<sup>13</sup>. His examples are:

*pro albo ponimus lac, liliū vel cretam, (...)*  
*pro nigro ponimus carbonem incaustum*  
*pro rubeo rosam vel sanguinem*  
*pro citrino crocum*  
*pro illo accidente magnus ponimus gigantem (...)*  
*pro parvo gnomum vel pigmeum<sup>14</sup>*  
*pro illo accidente castus<sup>15</sup> turturem*  
*pro luxuria Helenam vel passerem*  
*pro divite usurarium<sup>16</sup> vel alium divitem*  
*pro paupere mendicantem*  
*pro misericordia ponitur Christus*  
*pro pietate beata Virgo.*

*[For the white we place milk, lilly or chalk*  
*For the black a coal that is not burning*  
*For red a rose or blood*  
*For orange saffron*  
*For the characteristic big we place a giant*  
*For small a dwarf or midget*  
*For the characteristic chaste a turtle-dove*  
*For extravagance Helen or a sparrow*  
*For rich an usurer or another rich person*  
*For poor a mendicant*  
*For mercy Christ is placed*  
*For piety the blessed Virgin.]<sup>17</sup>*

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<sup>13</sup> *Si volumus adiectivum seu adiectivorum nomen memoriam invenire ex quo adiectiva propriam memoriam non habent nec ymaginem nec cognitionem, sed cognitio dependet a substantia, propterea summe substantias adiectivum accidentale representancia, sicut faciunt rethores, hoc modo ponendo subiectum accidentis. Leccio tale accidens per anthonomasiam reperitur (Praha, Národní knihovna, I G 11a, fol. 34r).*

<sup>14</sup> pigmeum] pigneum *ms.*

<sup>15</sup> castus] costus *ms.*

<sup>16</sup> usurarium] usuarium *ms.*

<sup>17</sup> Praha, Národní knihovna, I G 11a, fol. 34r.

Helen for extravagance might seem surprising, referring probably to the Trojan Helen, which would, however, normally be rather connected to beauty and which, coming from an ancient myth, is not entirely a commonplace in late Middle Ages. The remaining images are not particularly striking or personal, they are mostly commonplace. Many of them would be the same today (white — milk, black — coal, big — giant, small — dwarf), some reveal their late medieval origin (e.g., the image of a mendicant for the poor). The turtle-dove standing for chaste or virtuous is a typical example of a commonplace medieval association. Michael de Arce Draconis (active in Erfurt in 1505) has a similar image: *Castitas: virgo cum libro et turture* — “Chastity: a virgin with a book and a turtle-dove”<sup>18</sup>. Turtle-doves were associated with monogamy (it is repeated in bestiaries that after the turtle-dove’s spouse dies, it always sits only on dry branches and never finds another partner)<sup>19</sup>.

The strategy applied is indeed the *antonomasia* — instead of a characteristic, a person or object bearing that characteristics is placed. The least creative is the image of someone rich for the rich. A seeming exception is placing a sparrow for extravagance but sparrow was associated with *luxuria* already in the antiquity, being the sacred bird of Aphrodite, and the association was vivid during the Middle Ages, too<sup>20</sup>.

Would it be possible to create a sort of association map if all these images were put together? Could it result in a geographical and temporal overview of association transformation? The same words are indeed often remembered through different images in the individual *artes memoriae*, e.g., the suggested images for extravagance (*luxuria*) are: “Helen” or a “sparrow” (*passer*) by Fredelant, a “pig” (*porcus*) by Mattheus Beran of Roudice nad Labem (d. 1461)<sup>21</sup>, or a “bad smelling he-goat or a swine in filth” (*hircus fetens, vel sus in stercore*) by Michael de Arce Draconis<sup>22</sup>. At the same time, some images re-appear but are aimed at evoking different meanings: e.g. the lion stands for the number

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<sup>18</sup> DOLEŽALOVÁ, KISS, WÓJCIK (2016) 285–295, at p. 291.

<sup>19</sup> See e.g. HODNE (2009).

<sup>20</sup> DINKOVA-BRUUN (2018) 243.

<sup>21</sup> DOLEŽALOVÁ, KISS, WÓJCIK (2016) 200; for more on him, cf. DOLEŽALOVÁ (2018) 179–196.

<sup>22</sup> DOLEŽALOVÁ, KISS, WÓJCIK (2016) 291.



1,000 by Fredeland but for strength or courage (*fortitudo*) by Mattheus Beran<sup>23</sup> and for speed (*velocitas*) by Michael de Arce Draconis<sup>24</sup>.

Some of the authors, including Fredelant, note explicitly that the same image may often be interpreted in different ways and thus the mind may be confused. To avoid confusion, Fredelant stresses the force with which one needs to imprint the image in one's memory (*ut fortiter inprimat anime pro quo sumpserit talem ymaginem*) and promises exercise will help to get rid of the danger of confusion (*post modum tamen cum fuerit exercitatus assidue peritus liberabitur ab illo periculo*)<sup>25</sup>.

While Fredelant's treatise fits well among other treatises from the same time, providing examples that are mostly based on commonplace associations, the other treatise chosen for the comparison is radically different in this respect, with image suggestions that are primarily striking and unusual. It is a text entitled *De arte memorandi regulae*, which seems to survive in a single manuscript, Brno, Moravský zemský archiv, G.11, MS 964, written in 1418, on ff. 57v–62v. The whole small codex is called *Candela rhetoricae* and contains several rhetorical treatises as well as a rhetorically embellished praise of the city of Jihlava (*laus Iglaviae*). The art of memory has not been edited yet, except for its unique part discussed here, too<sup>26</sup>.

There is a list of 56 suggested images. Some are based on typical or easily understandable associations, e.g.:

*Clamans ut preco.*

*Shouting as herald.*

*Tacens ut pisces in aqua seu cetum.*

*Silent as fish in water or a whale.*

*Sapiens ut consilium prebens alicui.*

*Wise as one offering answer to somebody.*

*Amarum ut vas felle et mirra mixtum.*

*Bitter as a vessel with gall and myrrh.*

*Dulce ut alvearius melle repletus.*

*Sweet as a beehive filled with honey.*

*Clarum ut vas vitreum in quo est musca.*

*Clear as a glass vessel in which there is a fly.*

Several are biblical, e.g.:

*Vivum ut Enoch et Elias qui nondum sunt mortui.*

*Alive as Enoch or Helias who have never died.*

*Sterile ut Elizabeth vel ficus maledicta.*

*Sterile (or barren) as Elizabeth or the cursed fig-tree.*

<sup>23</sup> DOLEŽALOVÁ, KISS, WÓJCIK (2016) 200.

<sup>24</sup> DOLEŽALOVÁ, KISS, WÓJCIK (2016) 292.

<sup>25</sup> The passage in Fredelant (fols. 33v–34r) is quoted in DOLEŽALOVÁ (2021) 152.

<sup>26</sup> WATTENBACH (1863), edition on 20–21. Cf. also ZIBRT (1895) and ZIBRT (1910) 46. Most recently HOFFMANN (1982).

*Malum ut Ewa pomum carpens, nam inde prodiit omne malum.*

*Bad as Eve picking the apple because thence came all evil.*

*Crescens ut tunica Cristi cum Cristo.*

*Growing as Christ's garment with Christ.*

Yet, there are corruptions, too:

*Pro colorato autem in genere ego habeo pellem Salemonis, in qua omnes colores continebantur.*

*[But for the colorful one I have the skin of Solomon which contains all colours.]*

The skin of biblical king Solomon is not having all colours at all. This is actually a corruption: surely salamander (*salamandra*, meaning chameleon), not the king Solomon is meant.

Several of the connections are easy to understand but curious:

*Laborans ut homo nascens ad laborem.*

*Working as man born to work.*

*Carens colore ut Michael pugnans cum dracone.*

*Lacking color as Michael fighting the dragon.*

*Leguminosum ut seminator vel ortulanus seminans.*

*Vegetably as sower or gardener sowing.*

*Tenebrosum ut animal ligatum in sacco.*

*Dark as an animal bound in a bag.*

*Materiale ut deus artificium qui regit per materias eosdem hos acus, hos malei, hos secures, hos ligni, hos ferri et sic de aliis.*

*Material as God who reigns the artisans through materials: needle, hammer, ax, wood, iron etc.*

There is a strong predilection for violence even when not necessary. For example, both “sad” and “happy” are linked to violence:

*Triste ut sedens in cipo qui cras debet decolari.*

*[Sad as one sitting in prison, who is to be beheaded tomorrow.]*

*Letus ut unus de ore traconis existens liberatus.*

*[Happy as someone freed from the mouth of a dragon.]*

The “laughing” is also linked to violence but in a way that is not easy to visualize:

*Ridens ut unus qui propter nimium risum mortuus est.*

*[Laughing as someone who died due to too much laughter.]*

If there was an image of a dead person, the way he dies would not be apparent. Thus, we need to assume it is an image showing the process of dying.

Some of the images are very concrete and not understandable beyond a particular community. These show that the memory images are indeed culture-specific associations. For example:

*Idolum iracundum ut sanctus Procopius quam plures percuciens propter fraccionem sui festi.*

[Angry image as saint Procopius beating as many people as possible for not keeping his feast day.]

The image brings to mind the popular Czech saint, Procopius (first half of the 11<sup>th</sup> century). Procopius is indeed noted for his aggressive behaviour: when the pope Innocent III. refused to canonize him, he appeared in his dream threatening to beat him. He also beat the devil, pagan gods, and a German abbot<sup>27</sup>. His story was, however, not well known outside Central Europe, and thus the association between him and violence is geographically restricted.

Similarly restricted association is the following:

*Distortum ut Rebecca calceos dyabolo porrigens.*

[Ugly as Rebecca offering shoes to the devil.]

Biblical Rebecca, which perhaps comes to mind first, is not described as ugly and does not have anything to do with the devil. In fact, “baba Rebecka” (the old hag Rebecca), is meant: an evil witch who made a pact with the devil, which she won and so the devil had to give her new shoes. By that time, however, the devil was so scared of her that he gave her the shoes from afar on a stick. This is a recurring theme for visual representations in Central Europe but the name of the old hag is mentioned only rarely<sup>28</sup>. In this memory image, Rebecca is offering shoes to the devil, which is probably a corruption indicating that the copyist was not familiar with the story behind the association.

Two folk tale creatures are evoked through the associations<sup>29</sup>:

*Aqueum ut “wodnii muss” qui semper fimbriam aqueam habet.*

[Watery as water goblin (vodník, Wassermann) whose coat tip is always watery.]

The Czech water goblin, here “wodni muss”, i.e. water man, in German known as Wasserman, is known until this day as “vodník” and the watery coat tip is still his primary sign in Czech folktales. Thus, there is a temporal

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<sup>27</sup> In Czech known as Prokop, the saint is the founder of the Sázava monastery. Cf. e.g. SOMMER (2005), KUBÍN (2016).

<sup>28</sup> Cf. DIENSTBIER (2020).

<sup>29</sup> They were both noted in this source by Zíbrt (1895).

continuity but the image would probably not be widely shared across medieval Europe.

*Metallinum ut Chimera vel Perchta, que habet aureum caput, stagneos oculos, ereos aures, ferreum nasum, argenteam barbam et plumbeum collum.*

[Metallic as Chimera or Perchta, who has golden head, eyes of stagnum (i.e. alloy of silver and lead), copper ears, iron nose, silver beard and lead neck.]

There is no continuity in the creature *Chimera* – contemporary Czechs would associate the word with the monster from Greek mythology combining the features of lion, goat and dragon. The word *Perchta*, on the other hand, is associated in Czech with the noble woman Perchta of Rožmberk (1429–1476), who was unhappily married and a victim of domestic violence, and whose ghost in the form of a lady in white is believed to haunt several Czech castles. In medieval folklore, however, Perchta was a different creature, the so-called Belly-Slitter, going around at Christmas time<sup>30</sup>.

Finally, one image evokes an entertaining tale about Naithart:

*Coopertum ut merda Naythardi sub pileo.*

[Covered as the shit of Naithart under the hat.]

In the story, a man in love comes across a beautiful violet and covers it with his hat so that he can find it again and show it to his beloved. While he looks for the lady, Naithart comes, shits nearby and covers his shit with the man's hat. Thus, the lady is rather shocked when her beloved excitedly removes the hat. Also this was a frequent theme of visual representations and the story was well known in late medieval Bohemia<sup>31</sup>.

These particular associations are very specific and were certainly not generally shared but could have been efficient within the Czech community. Taken together with the other associations presented here, great variety is manifest: some images are based on an image, others on a word, yet others have a full story behind. Some are very simple, others difficult or even incomprehensible. Some are general, others specific. Some are complex, other seem quick and *ad hoc*.

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<sup>30</sup> ROZUM (1907).

<sup>31</sup> DIENSTBIER (2017) with further bibliography.

How would the author decide which method of creating the images to suggest? The choice of the methods surely depended on the community of readers for whom the treatise was written. The *peregrinatio academica* — travels and moves of teachers and students, frequent during the late Middle Ages, surely favoured approachability, i.e. more general and easier images. Yet, there were other aspects the author considered, too: he might have had only short-term rather than long-term plans, he might have been reacting to a particular situation or addressing a particular community. Also, in the context of rhetorics and literary education, the aim of the author may not necessarily have been practical usefulness but rather a display of knowledge, wit and creativity. The manuscript of *Candela rhetoricae* includes rhetoric advice as well as a unique exemplar of a *laus urbis* from the Czech lands — the author was indeed eager to show his elegant Latin and extraordinary ideas, which might have been the reason he chose the singular image suggestions, too.

Yet, it is not to be simply concluded that various strategies were used in image creating in the context of the art of memory. There is a clear difference and a discernible tension between the methods: some of the connections are personal, idiosyncratic associations, while others are general, typical, based on stereotypes and usual associations. This split reflects the tension between the phases included in the practice of the art of memory. The first phase is active: the encoding of the images requires special efforts and it works with the unusual, the noticeable, the striking. It is a self-imposition, a self-inflicted trauma (as it was also often pictured)<sup>32</sup>. The second phase, however, is passive: the decoding of the image during the phase of reminiscence should be almost automatic, the mind should not hesitate but immediately grasp the encoded meaning. The images should thus be created as unique and idiosyncratic but the connection between the image and its meaning should be strong and so obvious as to avoid confusion in interpretation. It is quite clear then that this art required substantial training. Yet, the *Ad Herennium* is wrong, the images are never selected from *all* the things there are in the world but only from a historically and culturally conditioned set. We shall hardly succeed in

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<sup>32</sup> See TORRE (forthcoming).

uncovering the “medieval mind” but the suggested images of the medieval art of memory do provide an exciting glimpse at it.

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**Resumo:** Tomando como exemplo dois tratados tardo-medievais da Boémia, o estudo apresenta várias formas de criar imagens no contexto da arte da memória, mostrando uma tensão entre confiar em associações comuns, geralmente compartilhadas, que a mente interpreta facilmente, e usar conexões pessoais raras que são impressas na mente mais profundamente. A tensão permanece sem solução: ambos os métodos são aplicados na arte da memória, a escolha real parece ser *ad hoc*. Ambos os tipos de associações fornecem uma visão única e até agora negligenciada da mente medieval.

**Palavras-chave:** arte da memória; associações; Boémia medieval; manuscritos medievais; latim medieval; retórica.

**Resumen:** Tomando como ejemplo dos tratados bajo-medievales bohemios, el estudio presenta varias formas de crear imágenes en el contexto del arte de la memoria, mostrando una tensión entre basarse en asociaciones comunes, generalmente compartidas, que la mente interpreta fácilmente, y utilizar conexiones personales poco frecuentes que se imprimen en la mente más profundamente. La tensión sigue sin resolverse: ambos métodos se aplican en el arte de la memoria, la elección real parece ser *ad hoc*. Ambos tipos de asociaciones proporcionan una visión única y hasta ahora preterida de la mente medieval.

**Palabras clave:** arte de la memoria; asociaciones; Bohemia medieval; manuscritos medievales; latín medieval; retórica.

**Résumé :** Prenant pour exemple deux traités de la Bohême de la fin du Moyen Âge, cette étude présente différentes manières de créer des images dans le contexte de l'art de la mémoire. Celles-ci révèlent une tension entre les associations communes, généralement partagées, que l'esprit interprète facilement, et les connexions personnelles plus exceptionnelles qui s'impriment plus profondément dans l'esprit. La tension n'est pas résolue : les deux méthodes sont appliquées dans l'art de la mémoire, le choix réel semble *ad hoc*. Ces deux types d'associations offrent une perspective unique et jusqu'ici négligée sur l'esprit médiéval.

**Mots-clés :** art de la mémoire ; associations ; Bohême médiévale ; manuscrits médiévaux ; latin médiéval ; rhétorique.