Paolo Beni's *Trattato della Memoria Locale* and Applied Mnemonics

Trattato della Memoria Locale de Paolo Beni e a mnemónica aplicada

ANDREA TORRE [1] *(Scuola Normale Superiore of Pisa — Italy)*

Abstract: The essay aims at analyzing the manuscript *Trattato della Memoria Locale* by Paolo Beni (1552-1625), which tested the classical mnemotechnic rules in the architectural structure of Santa Giustina's church in Padua. By showing us a logical mental way to represent our memories through the introjections of an artificial external order, the treatise also implicitly suggests a way to analyze a real architectural space and the iconic-plastic elements that it contains, e.g. the precious and impressive wooden choir of the fifteenth century composed of two series of stalls with illustrated backs: the scenes of Jesus' life in the upper side are semantically and mnemonically linked to the underlying emblems of Virtues and Vices.

Keywords: Architecture; Mnemotechnics; Preaching; Emblematics; Rhetoric.

If we consider the art of memory not only as a set of theoretical rules, but also as a collection of practices and experiences related to memories, it assumes a more complex structure, and becomes something similar to the concept of cognitive activity seen as an act of constructing thought that is governed by rules, procedures and rituals (as stated by CARRUTHERS [1998]). Since ancient times but with greater intensity since the Middle Age, organizing and educating memory means objectifying it in mental structures, and living it by traveling through these inner spaces occupied by all our experiences. It is to the topography and above all to the architecture of the actual world that mnemonists refer to delineate a mental space in which it is possible to orient oneself thanks to precise coordinates. The relationship between actual places and interior spatiality is dialectical. On one hand, in fact, the introjection of the topography and architecture of the outside world suggests an increasingly rationalized mental space and a representation of memory as an ordered and measured place. On the other hand, the rules of memory also contribute to an increasingly geometric and abstract perception, as well as conceptualization, of the external sensitive space[2].

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[2] See SACCARO DEL BUFFA (1993-1994). On the relationship between art of memory and architecture see also CARPO (1998), KIRKBRIDE (2008) and KUWAKINO (2011).

On the basis of these general considerations, I would like to focus my attention on a mnemotechnical treatise which, in addition to showing us how to build a logical mental path of representations of our memories through the introjection of an artificial external order, also suggests a way to analize an actual architectural space and the iconic-plastic elements that compose it. We are dealing with the manuscript *Trattato della Memoria Locale nel quale si spiega il modo facile per acquistarla* by the Paduan scholar of rhetoric Paolo Beni (1552-1625)[3]. The treatise, now kept in the Secret Archive of the Vatican City (Archivio Beni, Serie II 129), dates back approximately in the late Sixteenth Century and is presented by the author as "an exercise about the art of memory [...] an important tecnique which is very useful to learn and to use the knowledge, notably the eloquence"[4]. It is immediately evident that the mnemonic techniques are considered as part of the art of rhetoric. And it is not just by chance that Beni starts his work by stating that *memoria verborum* is useless, because the faithful and complete reproduction of a series of memorized words implies a high possibility of error and waste of energy. A powerful *ars memoriae* refers, on the contrary, to the concept (*memoria rerum*) and is useful both for the person discoursing and the person listening.

In order to be memorized, the concepts have to be translated into fixed images (that is to say, places of memory) and into movable images (that is to say, images of memory).[5] Beni's terminological distinction derives from the observation of the persistence or disappearance of the mental representation even after its memorial use. In this way, Beni is considering the local memory in its literal meaning, that is to say as a technique that is able to visualize a regular system of mental spaces, mainly architectonic places. In addition to this define-

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[3] On Paolo Beni see: Mazzacurati (1966); Diffley (1989); Tomassini (1994).

[4] "Mentre dunque bramate di apprender sì maestrevol'arte, la qual è veramente di molt'uso all'acquisto et esercizio delle scienze, e particolarmente dell'eloquenza" (f. 1*r*). All the translations from Beni's text are mine.

[5] "Ma posto che pur si voglia usar per concetti la Memoria Locale, e con figure rappresentative disporli in luoghi, fia ben sapere o supporre che quest'artificio è composto d'Immobile e Mobile. Immobile è il luogo over per opra dell'intelletto o imaginativa si locano le figure rappresentanti i concetti. Mobile è la figura rappresentante; perché servito ch'abbia a spiegar il concetto nell'occorrenza presente, non più si adopra ma si lascia sviar di mente e porre in oblio" (1*v*).

tion of local memory, the author considers also the traditional rules about the invention and the composition of the images (both *fixed* and *movable*): namely, medium size and linear uniformity of the *locus memoriae*; correct disposition of the *loci* proceeding from left to right, "because this recollection will take place as an act of reading" (3*v*); clear distinction between the parts that make up the locus, because "the dissimilitude is distinctive and agrees well with the variety of *simulacra* and concepts"; and finally, perfect knowledge of the local structure, of which "every corner must be known, and have it in the imaginative in the manner that one has a hand with his fingers or a picture with his figures"[6].

Beni refers both to the canonical *imagines agentes* which must give body to the concepts, as well as to more specific animated *simulacra* which act as minor places inscribed in the main structure. Both the *loci* and these *simulacra* must then be adequately marked through five or ten characteristic symbols such as a cross or a hand, in order to be able to easily and neatly reconstruct the memorial sequence that is articulated thanks to them. Even if Beni followed the canonical precepts regarding the art of memory without further elaboration, the rules exposed by the author are illustrated with a clarity that is rarely found in the treatises on this discipline. Beni said he tested the efficacy of mnemotechnic in the Paduan church of Santa Giustina, along whose internal walls he was able to recognize 173 possible places of memory to be numerated by the positioning of mnemonic hands and crosses, and to be seen from left to right more or less in the same way as if you were reading: "I take an example of the place of memory. When I enter the church of Santa Giustina passing through the left door, I am used to employ all the cloth of the wall and chapels and going all the way to the right door. In this way I have created an immobile place"[7]. Here the mental diagrams of the mnemonic techniques find an archi-

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[6] "3ª che il luogo si trascorra con la mente dalla sinistra alla destra, e dalla sinistra alla destra pur vengano disposti et ordinati detti simulacri, perché tal rammentazione succederà più commodamente a guisa del leggere, in cui abbiam uso di passare dalla sinistra parte alla destra […] 4ª che detto luogo abbia diverse parti le quali non siano in tutto simili, e ciò perché la similitudine delle parti può confondere la memoria […] 6ª che del detto luogo generale o immobile devrà sapersi ogni cantoncino, et avesi nella immaginativa nella guisa che si ha una mano con le sue dita, o un quadro con le sue figure" (3*v*).

[7] "Ma di gratia prima che passiamo più oltre, rechisi essempio dell'Immobile. Io entrando nella chiesa di Santa Giustina di Padova per la porta sinistra soleva servirsi di tutta

tectural representation characterized by a strong consistency that allows the mnemonist to leave the abstract mental space in favour of the concrete three-dimensionality of an external space. However, this memory space rarely coincides with a church. Among the few examples we can recall, as particularly contextual to our discourse, I would memtion the example of the Strasbourg's cathedral in the *Ars memorativa* by Lorenz Fries, or the *Phoenix* by Pietro of Ravenna, who recalled one of his most impressive mnemonic performance he experienced in the Italian church of San Sisto in Piacenza[8].

The mental diagrams developed in the art of memory find in the spaces of the Santa Giustina church an architectural representation with full material consistency, which allows the mnemonist to abandon the abstractness of mental space for the concreteness of a three-dimensional physical outer space. Furthermore the exemplary choice of the Padoan church is based on its immensity (it is in fact the eleventh largest church in the world) and on the way it is adequately structured in an homogeneous series of small chapels. In this case, the mnemonic imagery does not find direct expression on the page of the treatise as an illustration but can find its realization through the elements of a well defined cultural context, that is to say the interior of a church and, more generally, the artistic-architectonic cultural heritage of the city of Padua:

> […] *if you wish to locate a higher number of concepts, you can go out [...] from the church door where the 173 places started and finished, and proceed on to "the cloth of the wall" which connects the church to the monastery; and you will be able to find more and more places on the cloth of the monastery wall, which have spacefull dozens of loci; and then, if you are still curious, from the corner of the monastery wall, which goes to the stables, you can make good use of the very long wall that leads to the walls of the*

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quella tela di muro e di capelle in giro ritornando fino alla destra porta, e vi stabiliva luogo immobile per cento settanta tre luoghi, o parti del detto luogo immobile" (6*v*).

[8] Pietro da Ravenna (1491) 25*r*: "Dum essem Placentiae monasterium monachorum nigrorum intravi ut illud viderem in dormitorioque eius comitante monacho quodam bis deambulans monachorum nomina quae in ostiis cellarum erant collocavi: deinde congregatis eis nomine proprio quem libet salutavi; licet quem nominabam digito demonstrare non potuissem; mirabantur monachi quo pacto ego peregrinus nomina eorum memoriter profertem ipsis mirari non desinentibus; dixi tandem hoc potuit mea artificiosa memoria; quorum unus dixit ergo hoc Petrus Ravennas facere potuit et non alius." On Petrus Ravennas see Merino Jerez (2007).

city; in this way you will have, besides the 173 places that I found, a further 80 interesting places[9].

Such an exploitation of the city space leads the mnemonist on one hand to intertwine his own personal memories with the collective memory of a local community reified in places, buildings and monuments; on the other hand, it induces him to project an order of distinct places onto the urban space, to mentally redesign the plan of the city following the utopian modalities of a memorial encyclopedia. In this reflection between subjective interior space and collective physical spaces, a famous passage by the almost contemporary architect Andrea Palladio also seems to echo: "And finally when choosing the site for building a Villa, we have to take into account the same considerations done when choosing the site for the Cities: since the City is nothing more than a certain big house, and on the contrary the house is a small town"[10]. The extension of the mnemonic path to the external spaces of the church and to the wall perimeter of the city at the same time constitutes a natural increase in the mnemonic power, and a way to facilitate the mnemonist in the mental operation of *compositio loci*. This is a rhetoric strategy which is similar to the one used by preachers when they want to assure people about the truth and the feasibility of their sermon by collocating it in the well-known reality of the city and creating the illusion of a direct, intimate, and daily involvement in the path of salvation[11].

A recurrent and interesting expression, *tela di muro* — the cloth of the wall —, defines the spaces on the internal wall of the church that can be used

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[9] "Quando tu baldanzosamente aspirasti a locar maggior moltitudine di concetti, potrai ... uscirtene della porta della Chiesa ove noi abbiamo terminati li 173 luoghi, e di fuori continuar nella tela del muro il qual congiunge la Chiesa col Monasterio; [...] E molti più ne potrai formar seguitamente nella tela del muro del Monasterio, il qual muro è capace di qualche dozzina di luoghi: et indi, se maggior curiosità sia la tua, dal cantone del muro del Monasterio, il qual volta alle stalle, potrai valerti del muro longhissimo, il qual va a ferire alle mura della Citta: et in tal modo potrai stabilirti, oltre ai 173 luoghi da me divisati, 80 altri luoghi assai capaci" (5*v*).

[10] PALLADIO (1570) 46: "E finalmente nell'eleggere il sito per la fabbrica di Villa tutte quelle considerazioni si deono avere che si hanno nell'eleggere il sito per le Città: concio-siaché la Città non sia altro che una certa casa grande, e per lo contrario la casa una città piccola".

[11] See BOLZONI (2004).

as *loci memoriae*. I have not found this expression in other treatises on the art of memory, and this particular meaning is not indeed one of the possible readings among the customary uses of the word *tela* in the Italian language. We can read this new nuance realistically and we could think of a possible *ut pictura memoria* illustrated by the Paduan scholar through the images on canvas actually present in the church and ready to be considered as motionless *simulacra* that characterize the structures of *loci*; or, once they are re-defined by the imagination, ready to be taken in our mind as real *imagines agentes*:

> [...] you can then create another three loci on the first cloth of the continuous wall by putting a St Francis at the end of the first place of that cloth of wall and a Serafino with his crucifix while being addressed by St Francis from a distance at the beginning of the third. Thanks to these two distinguishing and easily memorised marks, you will get three loci, making five with the two previous ones. And you will get five further loci on the opposite facade, which is very similar. This will be possible, for example, if in front of St Francis and Serafino (where the former reminds us of the latter) you put St Peter with the keys in one hand as the first distinguishing mark, and St Paul with a big sword as a second mark; yet again where each of them will reminds us of the other[12].

The current configuration of Santa Giustina's transept does not present the holy iconographic elements described by Beni. This fact, however, does not reduce the importance and originality of the mnemotechnic as treated by the Paduan author. By showing us a logical mental way to represent our memories through the introjections of an artificial external order, the treatise implicitly suggests a particular interpretation of a real architectural space (the Paduan church in this case) and of the iconic-plastic elements that it contains. From this point of view, the relationship between the art of memory and the church of Santa Giustina loses its instrumental characterization and gains an exegetical dimension. The church of Santa Giustina is no longer just a useful example to explain how the art of memory works, but it can also becomes an

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[12] "e poi formi tre altri luoghi nella p.ᵃ tela di muro continuata, mettendo al fin del p.º luogo di tal tela di muro un S. Francesco, e nel principio del 3.º un Serafino col Crocefisso, a cui S. Francesco alquanto da lungi si rivolga; che così con tai due segni distintivi e ben rammemorativi, avrai tre luoghi, siché con li due precedenti siano cinque, e cinque altri ne potrai formar nella facciata o tela di muro opposta che è similissima, il che benissimo ti succederà se incontro a S. Francesco et al Serafino ove l'uno è rammemorativo dell'altro, porrai per essempio un gran S. Pietro con le chiavi in mano per lo p.º distintivo, et un gran S. Paolo con un spadone, per lo 2.º, che pur saranno rammemorativi l'un dell'altro" (7*r*).

example of a place whose structure and functions can be interpreted mnemonically. An example of mnemotechnical theory becomes a case of applied mnemonics. We can for example consider the precious and impressive wooden choir of the fifteenth century composed of two series of stalls with panelled and oval backs: in the upper side they show some scenes of Jesus' life and, most important, in the lower side emblematic representations of the sacraments, the Virtues and the Vices[13].

Beni's treatise does not mention the choir, but an early seventeenth-century description of this wooden cycle was offered by the abbot Girolamo of Potenza in his manuscript *Iconology of the choir of S. Giustina* (Padova, Biblioteca Universitaria, Ms. C77). The description "of the choir chairs" is proposed as a "pedagogy or first rudiments for strangers, as they come to see the beauty of this work, and to have some interpretation of the hard meaning of the images placed in the lower chairs".[14] The interpretation of the iconologies is essentially based on scriptural passages but sometimes it also resorts to modern symbolic repertoires (such as Pierio Valeriano and above all Cesare Ripa) or even to literary sources, such as Ludovico Ariosto. This means that Girolamo's *Iconology* is offered both as a description of iconographies actually made in a specific work of art, and as a repertoire of iconographies that can be used for the creation of new artistic images. The seventeenth-century explanation of these carved figures is obviously allegorical and serves the observer to go beyond a superficial knowledge and reach the core of the Christian message:

> [...] *the corporal and spiritual works of mercy, the evangelical precepts and counsels, and other virtues, and vices opposed to those, by our instruction, symbolically described in the lower chairs, with various painted and carved hieroglyphs, which exposure seems necessary to me in that obscurity, since the scholars of sacred writing do not stop only in the rind and intelligence of the simple littera*[15].

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[13] On the Santa Giustina's wooden choir see FIOCCO *et alii* (1970) 224-271.

[14] "Pedagogia o primi rudimenti per forestieri e genti estranee, quali vengono per vedere la loro bellezza e del lavoro abbino parimente qualche chiarezza di quanto si contiene di oscurità nelle sedie da basso, e quanto in brevità in esse si conchiude" (1*r*).

[15] "Le opere della misericordia, corporali et spirituali, li precetti e consegli evangelici et altre virtù e vitii opposti a quelli per instruttione nostra simbolicamente descritta nelle sedie da basso, con diversi geroglifici dipinti et intagliati; quel espositione mi pare ne-

Just as the prophecies and stories of the Old Testament reveal themselves to be understood only in the light of the message of the New Testament, also the hieroglyphs that occupy the lower part of the choir chairs see their meaning fulfilled only in relation to the illustrations of the events of the New Testament present in the upper stalls. The images of the life of Christ, offered to the faithful for a salvific *imitatio*, are therefore confirmed by the prefigurations suggested by the Old Testament and memorized thanks to singular symbolic-hieroglyphic images:

> *In the 14th chair of the first choir we can see the temptation of Christo in the desert. The figure remembers Adam and Eve living in the terrestrial paradise; in the lower chair there is a symbolic representation of the sacrament of marriage, namely a deer, a doe, and a man who drink in a cistern*[16].

The subject carved in the lower chairs is almost always related to the one portrayed in the upper stalls and often establishes a syntagmatic, narrative relationship with those represented in the chairs of the same level. The syntagmatic connection between the various iconographies is also consolidated by the double poetic synopsis placed in the appendix to the *Iconology* of Girolamo of Potenza. The subjects of the various carvings were in fact exhibited both in Latin and in Italian verses. All the poetic texts are dedicated to the explanation of the subject of a chair, promptly referred to by the number in the margin. Here we can see the verses related to the previous example:

> 14. *Arte Sathan Christum cum triplici tentat eadem*
> *primaque sub pomo fallitur angue parens.* (50v)
> […]
> 14. *Tenta Christo il Demonio nel deserto,*
> *De Superbia, Gola e Vanagloria,*
> *L'istesso tenta Adamo poco esperto.* (53v)

We could perhaps consider these two poetic synopses as memorial tools that function in association with the carved symbolic images. In the case

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cessaria in quella oscurità poiché li studiosi della sacra scrittura non si fermano solamente nella scorza et intelligenza della semplice littera"» (3*r*).

[16] "Nella 14ª sedia del p[rimo] choro è la tentaz[ione] di Christo nel deserto. La fig[ura] è d'Adamo et Eva abitanti nel parad[iso] terrestre; nella sedia da basso v'è il simbolo del sacram[ento] del matrim[onio], il cervo e cerva e un huomo quali tutti bevono in una cisterna" (14*v*).

of Santa Giustina the picturae would be two, one of a symbolic-hieroglyphic character and one more referential; the verses look directly at the latter, revealing (as a caption) the scriptural passages of reference, both the New Testament directly viewed, and the Old Testament which prefigures it at an anagogical level. Two biblical memories are therefore condensed into a single image, associated in turn with another image also of allegorical nature. We could therefore conclude that the symbolic carving is to the referential carving just as the Old Testament story is to the New Testament one, and also (passing to another level of fruition) as the Latin verses are to the Italian ones (or vice versa, depending on the level of culture of the reader). These symbolic images are presented in strictly regular series already linked to a possible double edifying content to be memorized. Later in the XVII Century the Jesuit Daniello Bartoli found stringent similarities between the allegory and the art of wood inlay, because both these way of symbolic expression are developed by 'fitting' very different elements to obtain a new artistic object:

> I have often seen evidence of the ancient art of inlay [...] The admirable and delightful thing about these artistic products is to see that something is used to represent something different from it. [...] This art is therefore similar to that expressive language that uses fables, stories and myths to express moral concepts that have nothing to do with them[17].

The carved images are characterized by high mnemonic appeal, offering themselves as real prefabricated *imagines memoriae* that the believer can read and use as a local system, each stall to be contemplated in its turn.

Here we observe something similar to what can be found in the wooden choir of Santa Maria Maggiore in Bergamo, where Lorenzo Lotto between 1524 and 1532 devised a system of significant relationships between the inlays showing stories from the Old Testament and those, emblematically designed, which must have served as wooden covers for the former. If, due to the enlargement of the choir, the covers had not been used as isolated

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[17] BARTOLI (1677) 101: "Io in più luoghi ho veduti lavori e pruove maravigliose dell'antica, e oggidì poco men che dismessa arte dell'intarsiare […] L'ammirabile dunque, e perciò il dilettevole in un tal genere di lavori, non è egli nel vedere applicata una cosa ad esprimerne un'altra? […] Hor così avviene dell'adoperar ch'io diceva un che che sia, preso dalle istorie, dalle favole, dalla natura, dall'arte, a rappresentare un tutt'altro di ragion morale ch'egli non è".

inlays to cover all the stalls, the carved device (*imprese*) would in fact have had to perform the dual memorial function of preserving and reminding in a synthetic and intuitive way important concepts contained in the illustrated scriptures[18]. The morphological affinity of cognitive mechanisms that induce the observer to memorize and remember, to preserve and recreate knowledge is evident[19].

Consider, for example, the table showing the image of an ermine placed between two branches crossed and tied by a ribbon. The animal stretches out sinuously, placing its front legs on a palm leaf and the rear legs on a branch of chaste tree, the latter branch to which the lace of the ermine collar is also attached. The achievement is completed by the motto POCIVS MORI ('I'd rather die'), engraved on a tablet hanging from the knot of the same ribbon that binds the two branches. As Cortesi Bosco opportunely stated, Lotto introduces a topical devise of the courtly environment "in a figurative context that intends to expand its meaning by moving it from the moral to the mystical spiritual level, referring to a specific condition of religious life, rather than secular"[20]. This semantic shift is not induced only by specific iconographic variants found in the table, but rather by the communicative system within which it is placed; that is, from the position it should have occupied in the structure of the choir and from the biblical subject of the inlay that it should have protected and preserved (physically, and in the memory of the spectator).

The inlay is in fact dedicated to illustrate the Old Testament story of Susanna (*Daniel* 13), young and beautiful Joachim's wife, who was threatened by two old judges while taking a bath in a private garden. The threat of the old Jews — falsely accusing the woman of treason with a young man — does not have the desired effect of undermining the solid fidelity of Susanna, who

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[18] Cf. ALBANI LIBERALI (1981), CORTESI BOSCO (1987), FRANCO (2011), and FERRETTI (2013).

[19] See GALLIS (1980) 375: "All of Lotto's designs for *coperti* conceal yet reveal 'sacred wisdom'. [...] They are sentential and didactic, and their lessons have universal application, being the lessons of history, philosophy, and theology. In particular, the lessons are those of biblical history and of moral and theological commentary on it. The *coperti* are therefore *functionally* hieroglyphic".

[20] See CORTESI BOSCO (1987), 333 (translation mine).

prefers to suffer an unjust death sentence for adultery *rather than* ("pocius"tarnish her own chastity giving in to their cravings. Lotto had already dealt with the story in 1517 in a painting now preserved in the Uffizi Gallery, which presents an iconographic layout similar to that of the inlay (although, specifically, focused more on the moment of the woman's denunciation than on that of the erotic assault), and that accompanies the figure of Susanna with a scroll bearing a variant of the canonical motto: "*Satius duco mori quam peccare. Heu me*" ('I prefer to die than to sin')[21]. Lotto's elaboration is therefore explained in relation to the illustration of Susanna's story which underlies (materially and conceptually) the *impresa* of the covered, and which already develops on a narrative and not a symbolic level the theme of the virtuous choice. It is Susanna's movement — horizontally developed from right to left — that fully represents the moral meaning proverbially associated with the ermine, indicating the right direction to take in front of the crossroads that oppose the temptations of the voluptas (and of the lie) to the difficult and fatal path of virtus; the way of evil (FOEDARI) and that of good (MORI). The organization of movement within the space of the painting confirms the axiology and didactic message: Susanna's movement proceeds in fact from left to right, towards the polarity that has always been associated with divine good and always opposed to the (sinister) place of error and sin. The impresistic inlay confirms the moral significance of biblical history, translating it on a symbolic level. The ermine shows its heraldic value as a plastic representation of the virtus of chastity heroically challenged by his faithful wife. The palm bears with it the memory of the concept of spiritual victory through martyrodom, the victory of modesty over the *voluptas* and of justice over deception (at the end of the story Susanna will in fact be exonerated by a witness). Finally, the chaste tree declines the edifying story in religious *exemplum*, and does so on the basis of the anaphrodisiac qualities that already in the Middle Ages made it the elected food of those who had made a vow of chastity.

Placed in the first stall of the left wing of the religious choir, the pair of images should therefore have fully fulfilled the function of reminder of one of the fundamental requirements requested of the man of faith. The

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[21] For an iconological analysis of Lotto's *Susanna e i vegliardi* see: GENTILI (1981), and BROCK (1990), 35-64.

correspondence between the biblical inlay and the blanket is not a coincidence limited to the case just illustrated, but is the result of a *modus operandi* consciously adopted by Lotto, and repeatedly stated in his letters relating to the Santa Maria Maggiore's job. In an epistle dated September 16, 1527, for example, Lotto complains about the delay with which the inventions of the companies and the indications about the general structure of the choir reach him, and underlines the danger of inconsistency between the symbolic expression of the cover and the subject scriptural of the inlay[22].

The mnemonic functioning of the Santa Maria Maggiore's and Santa Giustina's choirs, and their relationships to the iconographic whole, can affect not only the profane instrumental uses of that local structure, as Beni shows us, but also and principally the applications which are closer to that structure, namely the liturgical and catechistical. The monk who found himself in the need of thinking about something particularly complicated, (for example the content of a difficult lesson or the text of a long and articulated sermon), had to do nothing but divide everything into distinct concepts and link the individual concepts to the images that can be found in the choir stalls placed in a precise sequence. In this way, the sequence of these images reproduces the right sequence of the whole concept to remember. In fact the memorial dynamics and aims, that characterize the religious offices, cannot do anything but benefit from the awareness of a natural osmosis between actual place and *locus memoriae*, between the inside and outside: that is to say, they take advantage of the possibility to interiorise, as memory spaces, the real places where the offices take place. Inversaly, there is the possibility of perceiving, through a strong effort of concentration, which is also an act of meditation, the actual space of the church as a materialization of a memorial *thesaurus*[23]. All the

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[22] LOTTO (1962) 53: "[...] me importa a sapere et dove particularmente se ne li cantoni immediate siano dui o uno et al pilastro più dentro la quantità perché mi fano bisogno per el rispeto tanto de comodar de le istorie quanto de la luce. Etiam mi bisogna sapere se 'l numero de la banda de la sacrestia se 'l sia compito, per el lume o quanti ne mancha et da l'altra parte sotto l'organo quanti de piccoli bisogna a compir, perché voglio darli principio a tuti per cavarmene i piedi con la gratia de Dio. Et de le imprese me siano mandate perché siano de più che de mancho 'per ellegere quelle che siano più al proposito in un sugeto'".

[23] See OHLY (1979).

actions, all the movements carried out in these spaces, are therefore the metaphoric equivalent of continuous acts of memorization and remembering aimed to benefit the believer in intellectual and spiritual ways.

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Resumo: Este ensaio tem como objetivo analisar o manuscrito *Trattato della Memoria Locale* de Paolo Beni (1552-1625), que testou as regras mnemónicas clássicas na estrutura arquitetónica da igreja de Santa Justina em Pádua. Ao mostrar-nos uma forma lógica mental de representar as nossas memórias através das introjeções de uma ordem externa artificial, o tratado também sugere implicitamente uma forma de analisar um espaço arquitetónico real e os elementos icônico-plásticos que ele contém, como, por exemplo, o precioso e imponente coro de madeira do século XV composto por duas séries de cadeiras com fundos ilustrados: as cenas da vida de Jesus na parte superior estão semanticamente e mnemonicamente ligadas aos emblemas subjacentes de Virtudes e Vícios.

Palavras-chave: Arquitetura; mnemócica; pregação; emblemática; retórica.

Resumen: Este ensayo pretende analizar el manuscrito *Trattato della Memoria Locale* de Paolo Beni (1552-1625), que puso a prueba las reglas mnemotécnicas clásicas sobre la estructura arquitectónica de la iglesia de Santa Justina en Padua. Al mostrarnos una forma mental lógica de representar nuestros recuerdos a través de las introyecciones de un orden externo artificial, el tratado también sugiere implícitamente una forma de analizar un espacio arquitectónico real y los elementos icónico-plásticos que contiene, como, por ejemplo, el precioso e imponente coro de madera del siglo XV compuesto por dos sillerías con respaldos ilustrados: las escenas de la vida de Jesús en la parte superior están semántica y mnemotécnicamente vinculadas a los emblemas subyacentes de Virtudes y Vicios.

Palabras clave: Arquitectura; mnemotécnica; predicación; emblemática; retórica.

Résumé : Cet article vise à analyser le manuscrit *Trattato della Memoria Locale* de Paolo Beni (1552-1625) qui a testé les règles mnémotechniques classiques en œuvre dans la structure architecturale de la Basilique Sainte Justine à Padoue. En nous montrant une voie mentale logique pour représenter nos souvenirs à travers l'introduction d'un ordre extérieur artificiel, le traité suggère aussi implicitement une manière d'analyser un espace architectural réel et les éléments iconique-plastiques qu'il contient. C'est par exemple le cas du précieux et impressionnant chœur en bois du XVe siècle, composé de deux séries de stalles aux dos illustrés : les scènes de la vie de Jésus dans la partie supérieure sont liées sémantiquement et mnémotechniquement aux emblèmes sous-jacents des Vices et Vertus.

Mots-clés : Architecture ; mnémotechnique ; prédication ; emblématique ; rhétorique.