Neighbours in the Landscape of Memory: Encounters – Juxtapositions – Mutual Influence

Preface

Special issue of Daphnis on the international workshop held in September 26–28, 2019, at Charles University, Prague, organized by Lucie Doležalová (Charles University Prague) and the Medieval and Early Modern Mnemonic Society

At least since the 1980s, memory has become a leitmotif of cultural theory research. Despite the persistent presence of the memory theme, the group of historical sources that deal explicitly with the functioning of human memory, the treatises on Art of Memory, has received little attention to date, for this teaching has long been regarded as a mere technical storage aid. Implicitly, however, this doctrine contains not only the aspect of reproduction, but also the creative possibility of reorganization and the creation of meaning, which gives the *Ars memorativa* historical relevance.

In order to further the study of mnemonic methods, including but not limited to the *Ars memorativa*, the *Medieval and Early Modern Mnemonic Society*¹ was founded at the International Medieval Congress in Leeds in 2018 – the year when the congress theme was Memory, and thus many specialists on the art of memory and mnemonics gathered there.

Members of the society seek to trace out the genesis of the art of memory in its intellectual and cultural origins, as well as the manuscript tradition and the history of the printed editions of the mnemonic treatises themselves. The society's members are equally interested in the implications of mnemonic systems on the surrounding culture and in what they can reveal about the transmission of knowledge, pedagogical systems, and the like.

The first meeting of the society took place in September 2019 in Prague.² Entitled *Neighbours in the Landscape of Memory*, it focused on the subject of “neighbourhood” in a wide sense including encounter and juxtaposition. Applied to the theme of memory, the event discussed primarily mutual influences, translocations and transformations of texts and ideas on the art of

¹ cf. <https://mnemonic.hypotheses.org/>.

² cf. <https://mnemonic.hypotheses.org/our-meetings>.

memory. Special sections were devoted to neighbourhood of languages (primarily Latin and vernacular) and to the relationship between image and text, showing that the memory treatises work very carefully not only with individual minds but also with specific associations born out of particular cultural-historical context. Another important focus of the meeting was late medieval manuscript culture, explored especially with respect to medieval library formation, very active scribes, as well as transformation of a text in medieval manuscripts, exemplified on a sermon.

The meeting was supported by the European Regional Development Fund project KREAS – Creativity and adaptability as conditions for the success of Europe in an interrelated world (reg. no.: CZ.02.1.01/0.0/0.0/16_019/0000734). Six of the papers presented there were converted into studies included in this volume. We would like to thank the editors and reviewers of *Daphnis* for accepting our special issue for the series.

Sabine Seelbach

Alpen Adria University Klagenfurt

Lucie Doležalová

Charles University Prague

September 2021