This study explores the manuscript transmission of three anonymous 15th century treatises, with the incipit “Memoria fecunda”, “Nota hanc figuram” and “Alphabetum Trinitatis”, and their textual relationship to each other. Arguably, both the Nota hanc figuram and the Alphabetum Trinitatis are derived from an idea expounded in the art of memory called Memoria fecunda. The interrelation of these texts clearly shows the close connections between the art of memory and the meditative literature in the 15th century.

The long evolution of a culture of reading and interpretation based on the use of memory reached a climactic point at the end of the Middle Ages, just before, and almost contemporarily with the introduction of the printing press. Methods for recalling texts by heart without the aid of the written word have been widely known since Antiquity, and from the 12th century onwards several authors emphasized the importance of internalizing religious and lay knowledge by the aid of memory (e.g. Hugh of Saint Victor, or Boncompagno da Signa, just to give an example for both kinds of knowledge). Still, the 15th century experienced a sudden revival and a boom in mnemonic literacy. While there are less than a dozen

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treatises known from before the year 1400 which deal with the techniques and methods of remembering things, their number experiences a sudden growth after 1400: up to now, more than fifty texts specifically dealing with the activation of memory processes have been unearthed from manuscripts by recent research, not to mention the treatises that were printed from 1470 onwards. The reasons behind this sudden, Europe-wide interest in the methods of remembering and performing things by heart could be manifold: Be it because of the sharp rise in both lay and clerical literacy, the sudden growth of the European educational system (with the universities established around Central Europe from after 1350), or the information overload caused by the growing number of accessible books and by the rising activity of information centers (universities, public and private libraries), it is evident that the final result was a previously unseen interest in the active use of memory in everyday life.

Mnemonic activity is intrinsically connected to performativity. If the act of remembering is conscious and target-oriented in the Aristotelian sense of recollection (reminiscentia, αναμνησις), it is always directed towards the perspective of reenacting and performing the memorized material. Avoiding oblivion is not the aim, but only a prerogative of remembering: its purpose is fulfilled only when the memorized content is brought to life, produced and performed. In the following, I will examine how the performative dynamics of a written text could be enacted in various forms in different late medieval interpretative communities. The texts presented here were all created in the course of the first half of the 15th century.

In 1425, the earliest known copy of the *Memoria fecunda* treatise on the art of memory was written down in Bologna, beginning with
