GALILÆANA

Studies in Renaissance and Early Modern Science

Call for abstracts
The Art of Memory and the Sciences in the Early Modern Age

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The art of memory encompasses techniques for memorization that have been passed down from classical culture, particularly within the context of rhetorical training. For centuries, mnemonics were part of the *trivium* and only became an independent discipline during the Renaissance. This was due in part to the radical changes of the time, ranging from the invention of the printing press to the so-called Scientific Revolution, which led to an unprecedented production and dissemination of knowledge.

In his book *Clavis Universalis* (1960), Paolo Rossi emphasized the importance of mnemonic knowledge in the development of modern science. Using this work as a cornerstone for the history of philosophical and scientific ideas, we aim to expand Rossi's analysis by studying scholars he neglected or to examine more precisely the position of major figures in the early-modern natural philosophy. Furthermore, this Focus aims to broaden Rossi's perspective by questioning the rise of experimental sciences and the mathematization of the world from a social and cognitive point of view. Thus, we welcome proposals examining the uses of mnemonics by individuals engaged in natural-philosophical research, including cases of cross-fertilization between the sciences and the *studia humanitatis*. On a larger scale, studying the social identities of groups of memory art practitioners may help us to better understand at which degree both scientists and humanists continue to share the same «*outillage mental*» (L. Febvre, *Le problème de l'incroyance au XVIe siècle*, 1947).

Topics may include, but are by no means restricted to:

- The evolution of the classical art of memory during the Scientific Revolution, including the creation of new techniques to memorize kinds of information which were neglected up to that point (such as mathematical formulae) and the change in the social composition of the practitioners of the art of memory.

- The influence of mnemonics on the organization and production of knowledge from scientific disciplines, such as astronomy, anatomy, mathematics, mineralogy, or botany. For example, how mnemonic propaedeutics affected the visual tools and experimental *habitus* of early modern natural philosophers, physicians, etc.
- The use of mnemonic tools by authors of the Scientific Revolution and the 'New Philosophy' (but not only them), and the meaning it had in their theoretical speculations. Some examples would be R. Descartes, F. Bacon and G. W. Leibniz, but also in R. Fludd: all of them, at different levels, used specific aspects of the art of memory.
- The use of mnemonic tools by authors who dealt with both *studia humanitatis* and scientific disciplines, and how these tools could establish a link between the humanistic-literary activity and the scientific one. One example would be Galileo, who used mnemonic instances in his reflections on Ariosto and Tasso.

Prospective contributors should submit 300-word abstracts in English by May 15th 2023 to tommaso.ghezzani@sns.it. Abstracts must include the author's/co-authors' name(s), affiliation(s), and email address(es). Finally, a brief CV (two pages at most) should also be submitted. Proposals will be assessed by the journal's editorial committee. Selected contributors will be notified by the end of May.

It is expected that authors will submit the complete article in English by 31 May 2024 via the journal website at gal-studies.museogalileo.it.