

PREFACE

This volume presents the papers of a one-day conference, *The Art of Memory: Between Archive and Invention from the Middle Ages to the Late Renaissance: Literature, Visual Arts, and Music*, held at Villa I Tatti on May 11, 2006. The event was conceived and organized by Anna Maria Busse Berger and Massimiliano Rossi.

It was an opportune time and place for an encounter on memory. During the academic year 2005-2006 Anna Maria Busse Berger and Karol Berger were resident at I Tatti as Robert Lehman Foundation Visiting Professors. Shortly before, Busse Berger's book *Medieval Music and the Art of Memory* (University of California Press, 2005) had appeared, in which she introduced music, for the first time, into the ongoing discussion on the art of memory. (The book went on to win both the Deems Taylor Award from the American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers and the Wallace Berry Award from the Society of Music Theory for 2006.) Massimiliano Rossi had been the Hanna Kiel Fellow at I Tatti in 1992-1993, and during the intervening years he had been closely associated with the intellectual life of the Harvard Center, including the organization of the symposium *Le Arme e gli Amori: Ariosto, Tasso and Guarini in Late Renaissance Florence* (in collaboration with Elena Fumagalli and Riccardo Spinelli), the acts of which were published by Olschki in 2004.

In the early twentieth century the theme of memory was placed at the center of art historical enquiry by Aby Warburg. On the door of the Warburg Institute he inscribed the word *Mnemosyne*. Appropriately enough, it was in the Institute's library that Frances Yates wrote *The Art of Memory* (1966), the book that brought memory to the forefront of Renaissance intellectual history in the English-speaking world. A generation later, the American scholar Mary Carruthers introduced the *ars memorativa* into the discourse of medieval intellectual history with two innovative studies: *The Book of Memory: A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture* (1990), and *The Craft of Thought: Meditation, Rhetoric and the Making of Images, 400-1200* (1998).

The modern discussion of memory, however, had begun even earlier in the Italian-speaking world, with the publication in 1960 of a ground-

breaking book by the philosopher and historian of science Paolo Rossi, *Clavis universalis: arti mnemoniche e logica combinatoria da Lullo a Leibniz*. In the 1970s, under the guidance of Paola Barocchi, the Scuola Normale Superiore in Pisa began sponsoring a project with the evocative name *Memofonte*, aimed at employing the computer – then a new technology whose potential was just beginning to be imagined – for the digitization (“*memorizzazione*”) of the contemporary written sources of Renaissance art history.

The Scuola Normale Superiore is currently the seat of the Centro per l’Elaborazione Informatica di Testi e Immagini nella Tradizione Letteraria, directed by Lina Bolzoni, who explored themes of memory and literature, first in a conference of 1989 (*La cultura della memoria*, edited with Pietro Corsi in 1992), in another of 2001 (*Parole e immagini*), then in an edition of Giulio Camillo’s *L’idea del teatro* (1991), and finally in her 1995 book *La stanza della memoria: modelli letterari e iconografici nell’età della stampa* (translated in 2001 as *The Gallery of Memory: Literary and Iconographic Models in the Age of the Printing Press*). For the present conference Bolzoni contributed a detailed historiography of the study of memory since the pioneering generation of Rossi and Yates. According to her nuanced characterization, the study of memory has developed into the ideal meeting ground for humanists and scientists, anthropologists and historians – a field in which texts, images, ritual and artifact all have something to contribute.

In addition to the two organizers of the present conference, the community of Fellows resident at I Tatti in 2005-2006 offered rich resources for an encounter on the role of memory in music, literature and the arts. Philippe Canguilhem of the Université de Toulouse-Le-Mirail, after completing a doctorate on the lute in the musical thought of Vincenzo Galileo, was pursuing research on the musical patronage of the court of Cosimo I. A collector of period wind instruments and a professional musician as well as musicologist, it seemed natural that he would investigate the hand as the musician’s mnemonic aid and symbol. His research on the lived performance of Medici music enabled him to intuit that the music sung by the angels in the Gozzoli frescoes in Palazzo Medici was not chant but polyphony performed from memory, an example of the wider phenomenon of improvised counterpoint. Alison Cornish had come to I Tatti shortly after completing a book on Dante’s cosmology and astronomy, *Reading Dante’s Stars*, published by Yale University Press in 2000. Her work on the practice of translating the classics – *volgarizzamento* – highlighted the tensions between the fashion for translation in the late Trecento and early Quattro-

cento and the almost-Oedipal desire of vernacular authors to displace the Latin text that they were rewriting in the vernacular.

Stephen Orgel of Stanford University was residing in Florence for 2005-2006 and consulting the Biblioteca Berenson to further his multifaceted research into Shakespeare, Ben Jonson, Inigo Jones, John Milton, and Edith Wharton. His paper for the conference at I Tatti drew on his broad experience as an editor of Renaissance literature. Well aware of the difficulty of establishing the “definitive” text of a Renaissance play, Orgel analyzed the tension between memorization and improvisation in Shakespeare, skillfully highlighting the moments when an actor’s forgetting might itself become drama. Stefano Lorenzetti, musicologist and organist, had studied the place of music in noble education and the role of music in confirming noble status in his book of 2003, *Musica e identità nobiliare nell’Italia del rinascimento: educazione, mentalità, immaginario*. In his paper he surveyed the practice on the part of many sixteenth-century music theorists of “deconstructing” the elements of music into the form of diagrams. As his erudite study revealed, these many-branched schemata reveal a close relationship with the innovative didactic and philosophical methods of Petrus Ramus (1515-1572), who seized upon the possibilities of the printing press as a tool for recasting knowledge in visual form.

Mario Carpo, director of the Study Centre at the Centre Canadien d’Architecture in Montréal from 2002 to 2005 and currently professor at the École d’Architecture de Paris-La Villette, had worked on perspective, representation, and the role of the orders in the architectural treatises of the Renaissance, especially the *De re aedificatoria* of Leon Battista Alberti. He was thus the ideal person to approach the famous memory theater of Giulio Camillo as architecture. In his paper at I Tatti he spoke about the transition from an oral architectural culture, in which rules were handed down on site, to the culture of the treatise, which offered the architect written rules to memorize and proportioned drawings as a constant guide and reference. Rounding out the day’s investigations, Luke Syson, the Craig Hugh Smyth Fellow in residence at I Tatti – on leave from the National Gallery in London where he is Curator of Italian Painting – evoked the role of remembered classical sources in the work of Rubens. (Syson’s paper grew out of a separate research project and thus does not appear in the present volume.)

In the three intervening years since the conference Anna Maria Busse Berger and Massimiliano Rossi encouraged the participants to extend and cultivate their lectures into full and mature texts. Before her retirement in

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June 2008, Fiorella Superbi carried out the initial copyediting with her characteristic precision *in utriusque lingua*. Louis A. Waldman, Assistant Director for Programs at Villa I Tatti, offered the project his expert editorial eye and devoted endless care to polishing the papers for publication. To them, as well as to the organizers, go my special thanks.

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