

Clément Poupard

The “*Histoire Totale*” of Francesco Panigarola’s (1548–1594) *Trattato della Memoria Locale* through *Stemma Codicum* and the Materiality of Books

Abstract: Following the lead from Ann Blair’s “*histoire totale*” of Jean Bodin’s *Universae Naturae Theatrum* (1596), this chapter intends to present the total history of Francesco Panigarola’s (1548–1594) *Trattato della Memoria Locale*. This book contains the considerations of the famous predicator about the rhetorical art of memory (the “classical art of memory” of Frances Yates) and was used as a manual by his students and fellow Franciscan brothers in Rome. As this book circulated over decades as a manuscript, particular attention will be given to its *stemma codicum* and to the materiality of its various exemplars to understand its reception. Exemplars hastily copied, realized to fulfill practical uses, differ from lavish manuscripts designed to be offered as gifts. I will end the “*histoire total*” of this manual with its editorial history in the 17th century and with a study of the reception of the printed copies.

1 Introduction: Francesco Panigarola’s *Trattato* as a Test Case for a “*Histoire Totale*” of a Book

Early modern studies on education, including university education, tend to neglect the role of memory in learning. This disregard is intriguing, as the existence of specific memory techniques has been strongly highlighted by historians of ideas. It is possible that, precisely, the emphasis put on the inclusion of the art of memory into the history of eremitism and into the history of philosophy at large, may have repelled investigations of the most prosaic pedagogical uses of early modern mnemonics. Indeed, by utilizing the polysemic syntagm “art of memory,” Frances A. Yates and Paolo Rossi (Rossi 1960; Yates 1966) have conflated rhetorical technique, occult practices, and other pedagogical or scientific methods which are very different from one another. However, as its name indicates, the art of memory was, primarily, an art devised to memorize information. As such, this chapter aims to highlight the very mundane nature of early modern mnemonics and to explore some current questions about this know-how: how widespread was the art of memory? Who used it? For what purposes?

Such an approach is not novel. Historians of the late middle age have already investigated the creation and circulation of mnemonic knowledge (Heimann-Seelbach 2000; Doležalová, Kiss and Wójcik 2016). A specific case has already been attentively scrutinized, i.e., the mnemonic teaching of the *Wanderhumanist* Jacobus Publicius (?–d. after 1493) at the university of Erfurt and the history of his *Ars memorativa* both before and after it was published.¹ Such investigations are recent, and as the non-specialists often stick with Yates's pioneering but dated *Art of Memory*, their effects on the field of history remain limited. Following their lead, this chapter will debunk one historiographical myth, namely Yates's assumption that the Franciscans focused on lullism while the art of memory was a Dominican specialty (Yates 1984, 175, 261). More precisely, this paper seeks to offer insights regarding the utilization of the art of memory inside the Franciscan order, as well as proposing methodological reflections for the study of manuals which went from manuscripts to printed books.

Indeed, Franciscan authors have published various mnemonic manuals during the Middle Ages (see, e.g., Rivers 1999) and continued to do so during the early modern period.² As predicators, they were interested in different ways of enhancing their oratorical abilities. If *memoria* did not become a focus within the rhetoric tradition, in contrast to *inventio* or *elocutio*, it remained nonetheless one of the five conventional parts of rhetoric. In this context, some Franciscans investigated the artificial memory described in the classical treatises of rhetoric (*Rhetorica ad Herennium*, III, 16–22; Cicero, *De Oratore*, II, 354; Quintilian, *Institutio oratoria*, XI, 2). Bright orators, such as Francesco Panigarola (1548–1594), did not hide their utilization of mnemonics and spread these techniques when they taught rhetoric to their fellow brothers. It is, however, difficult to generalize, as few scholars have investigated Franciscan intellectual and educational history beyond 1517 (Roest 2015, 196; on Franciscan education before 1517, see Roest 2000). The memory techniques of Francesco Panigarola, considered one of the most famous predicators of his time, present the advantage of being well-documented.

To understand the utilization of mnemonics in the education of Franciscan friars, I did not perform an intellectual microhistory focused on Francesco Panigarola, but I have rather undertaken an erudite study of the Franciscan's mnemonic manual. Following the path opened by Ann Blair in her study of Jean Bodin's *Universae Naturae Theatrum* (1596), I intended to present a “*histoire totale*” of a single book (Blair 1997, 9). Starting with Panigarola's autobiographical account of

¹ On Publicius in general, see Heimann-Seelbach and Kemper (2018, 333–395). On Publicius' reception and fortune, see Heimann-Seelbach (2000, 116–132). On Publicius' teaching at Erfurt, see Kemper (2018 and 2021). And on the history of Publicius' printed text, see Merino Jerez (2020).

² Gesualdo 1592; Marafiotto 1602; Castrovillare 1721.

the creation of the treatise, such an undertaking requires paying close attention to the various copies realized by Franciscan brothers, as well as the motivations behind its publication as a printed book, and finally to its reception by its international readership. Indeed, the audience of the treatise was not static. From a manuscript realized for personal uses in the 1570s, the *Trattato della memoria locale* became a text circulating inside (and outside) the Franciscan order, before being put into print and appropriated by a large audience.

These different stages of the *Trattato*’s circulation require the uses of different tools by the historian investigating them, but all of them imply the same methodological stance: the use of the utmost erudite methods available to scholars. This position was formalized four decades ago by bibliographers (McKenzie 1986) and then by Armando Petrucci who merged the methodologies of various ancillary sciences with bigger historical questions (e.g., Petrucci 2002). This position was also used as a research program by the French medieval “*nouvelle erudition*” (Potin and Théry 1999). While early modern intellectual history had not been characterized by such methodological claims, knowledge production in the Renaissance has already been studied through the analysis of the very material dimension of the sources. For instance, the study of watermarks has been utilized as a reliable method to understand the circumstances of the creation of miscellanies produced in the context of university teaching (Lepri 2022).

In this historiographic framework, even a topic traditionally inquired into by specialists of philosophy (Rossi 1960; Yates 1966) or literature (Bolzoni 1995; Carruthers 1990, 1998; Carruthers and Ziolkowski 2002) may be very fruitfully investigated according to paleographical, codicological, philological, and bibliographical methodologies. In the case of Panigarola’s *Trattato*, the attention paid to the material aspects of the different manuscripts, and the realization of the *stemma codicum* (see the annex), have been key explanatory factors. Likewise, a bibliographic approach to the printed treatises focused on the difference between every edition and on the *ex-libris* and *marginalia* of extant copies has also brought significant data about the reception of the last stage of the *Trattato*’s life.

2 Panigarola’s Manuscript and Its Circulation within the Franciscan Order

The stories of the first encounters between Francesco Panigarola and the art of memory should be considered with critical distance. Indeed, the only available source of information consists in the five manuscript testimonies of the *Vita scritta da lui medesimo*, an autobiography he wrote in 1590, edited by Fabio Giunta in

2008. The *Vita* is not an exceptional book, as various autobiographies of ecclesiastics were published in the 16th century as examples of ideal Christian lives (Panigarola 2008, 9). Thus, the narrative told by Panigarola should be studied with a skeptical mindset. An instance illustrating the doubtful character of his story can be found in the episode of Panigarola's discovery of the principles of the art of memory when he was very young: he mentally situated different passages of a Ciceronian discourse on a painted frieze in his classroom (Panigarola 2008, 57–58, 218). The anecdote in itself is not implausible, as such autodidactic discoveries happened from time to time, the best-known example being patient S studied by the Russian psychologist Alexander Luria (Luria 1968). However, as the *topos* of the young prodigy was common in autobiographies at this time, it is probable that Panigarola exaggerated his precocity.³ The second mention of the art of memory is far less spectacular and thus more credible. Panigarola explained he had heard about mnemonics in the classical rhetoric manual *Rhetorica ad Herennium* while he was a Franciscan novice in Florence, around 1570–1571. He insisted on having learned the art of memory as an autodidact (Panigarola 2008, 69, 218), a claim which is impossible to confirm or disconfirm. It only indicates that such a statement was believable, and thus that mnemonics was not usually taught in Franciscan *studia*. Following his novitiate, Panigarola became a *lector* at the *studia* of Florence (1573–1575), Bologna (1575–1578), and Rome (1578–1582), while earning the reputation of being an outstanding orator (Benzi 2016, 87–88; Panigarola 2008, 90–111). As Filippo Mignini has already established, the *Trattato* was written during Panigarola's years as a teacher. Indeed, the manual makes references to Pope Gregory XIII (1572–1585) and was mentioned in the dedication of Panigarola's *Modo di comporre una predica* (1584) to his Roman students (Mignini 2013, 61). Consequently, the *Trattato* was written between 1572 and 1582.

The technical content of the *Trattato* is easy to apprehend, as it is almost identical from one manuscript to another. It consists in the classical, rhetorical, art of memory and is similar to quantities of other mnemonic manuals written in the 16th century. It starts with a list of rules concerning the creation of “*luoghi*,” mental locations such as a house or a church. The building is itself divided into smaller locations, such as doors or windows. These places are the containers of images symbolizing information. The images should interact with the place in which they are located, for example, to remember a certain Francesco placed in front of a door, the orator could imagine Francesco opening the door with a key (Panigarola

3 This *topos* seems to be highly regarded by other practitioners of the art of memory. Della Porta had probably lied about his age to be able to present his childhood as the one of a gifted child (Piccari 2007, 16–18), and Bruno presented himself as precociously intelligent from the cradle (Ciliberto 2020, 25–26; he also claimed to know the art of memory “*adhuc puer*,” 35).

1599, 80r). Thus, the predicator who had established a fixed mental route around and inside a church could locate images symbolizing parts of a sermon in his various mental locations and, while performing his discourse, would check his mental images to remember the different themes he has to talk about. The fixed order of the mental trip allowed the orator to structure the information he stored in his *luoghi*, and thus to remember the different parts of the discourse in the order he had placed them.

Mastery of different mental places is thus necessary to the practitioner of the art of memory, as well as the ability to create efficient memory images. For this purpose, Panigarola gave various rules concerning the creation of images, taking into account the nature of the information to memorize: the rules are different if the thing to memorize is a concept, a word easily visualized, a word difficult to visualize (such as a conjunction), a number, etc. These sets of rules were typical of a mnemonic manual. Then, after explaining how to erase the mental images (another inescapable chapter in mnemonic treatises), Panigarola provided his readers with a second method.

Instead of dividing a building into small places and locating images in them, the practitioner may imagine inhabitants of ten Italian cities ordered alphabetically (Ancona, Bologna, Como, Drapani, etc.). The mental images should interact directly with the inhabitants in order to be memorized. This technique is less common than the first one, but similar methods existed before Panigarola discovered the art of memory, like the one devised by Della Porta in his *Arte del ricordare* (1561). Another hint indicating that the Franciscan brother found inspiration in *L'Arte del ricordare* is his example to memorize the word “che” (“that,” “than”), which is very similar to Della Porta’s example.⁴

To summarize, Francesco Panigarola’s mnemonics were similar to the methods explained in various memory manuals at this time. Even if these techniques themselves were not outstanding, Panigarola’s education was. His family was noble and had traditionally sent one child to the Franciscan order with every generation. Thus, once he entered the order, Francesco Panigarola received special teaching (Benzi 2006, 67–69), teaching which may have led him to the *Rhetorica ad Herennium* and indirectly to the art of memory. Consequently, it is difficult to establish if learning the art of memory was something common for 16th-century Franciscan novices. While it is not possible to make general assumptions about

4 Della Porta 1561, C3r. Another similarity between both manuals consists in the advice to use Pietro Valeriano’s *Hieroglyphica* to find inspiration for creating mental images (Della Porta 1561, D2r–v; Panigarola 1599, 81r).

the spread of mnemonics inside the order; it is nonetheless feasible to analyze the circulation of one single manual, the *Trattato della memoria locale*.

The first hint of the circulation of the *Trattato* is given by Panigarola in his manual of rhetoric, the *Modo di comporre una predica* (1584). Panigarola dedicated the treatise to the “brothers who study in the house of Araceli at Rome”⁵ that is, to his Roman students. Talking directly to them, he reminded them that “almost all of you have a small manual about local memory [mnemonics], made by me.”⁶ It is not clear whether Panigarola dictated his memory manual to his students or whether he let them copy his manuscript. A dictation may explain some differences between the extant manuscripts, but hastily copying can explain them as well. In any case, this dedication indicates widespread reproduction of the *Trattato* amongst his students. They were all first-class Franciscan students, as the “*casa di Araceli*” was a *studium generale*, one of the five best teaching centers of the Franciscan order inside the Italian peninsula. Though the number of students who received Panigarola’s teaching is unknown, it is probable that they were few: five years after Panigarola left Rome, in 1587, the Observant general chapter limited the places at the “*casa di Araceli*” to 16 (Roest 2015, 154, 172–175). It is not impossible that people outside the Franciscan order received some teachings in this *studium* too, but this was at best very marginal (Roest 2015, 194; Solomon 2021, 25). In general, most of Panigarola’s students were good students, rising stars of the Franciscan order, and future preachers.

If it is difficult to ascertain how close the extant manuscripts of the *Trattato* are to the original text written by Panigarola; it is plausible that these extant copies are the result of different chains of transmission originating from Panigarola’s teaching in Rome. The original function of the *Trattato*—helping the friars to learn their sermons—is perceptible in the manuscript held in Paris, at the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Espagnol 448, f. 183r–190r (henceforth, P). Indeed, the content of the manuscript was copied with almost no technical or textual error, and its materiality indicates that it was written for prosaic use. The handwriting, if comprehensible, is not neat, and the manuscript seems to have been copied in a hurry. The text contains numerous abbreviations, and the lines are slanted. The rules indicating how to create mental places are numbered in the margin, a feature missing in other manuscripts (f. 183r–184r). Another material characteristic easing reading is the capitalization of words used as examples to be memorized, i.e., “*che*” and “*perche*” are written with capital letters only, to differentiate

5 “Frati che studiano nella casa di Araceli [Aracoeli] di Roma” (Panigarola 1584, A2r). My translation.

6 “Quasi tutti voi havete in un trattatello di memoria locale fatto da me” (Panigarola 1584, A3r). My translation.

them from other words (f. 187v–188v). To sum up, P was written hastily and contains textual devices facilitating reading. It is not a very attractive handwritten manual, but it is easy to use. Thus, the scribe probably copied it for their personal use, having in mind the practical value of the *Trattato*. The probable uses of P were totally congruent with the intention of Francesco Panigarola when he taught mnemonics.

Most of the other extant version of the *Trattato* are not as easy to analyze as P. Some were probably copied for the know-how they contained, but their materiality does not indicate that clearly. This is the case with the manuscript held at the British Library, London, Add. ms. 12038, f. 213–229 (henceforth, L). The contents of L and P are strikingly similar: whether they come from the same ancestor, or one was copied from the other. Even the paragraph structure of the text is the same in both manuscripts. If their text is extremely similar, their material features are not. L's writing is neater and easier to read than P's, and its lines are parallel. It contains only a few abbreviations. The list of rules for creating mnemonic places is not numbered in the margin. The first "*che*" is written in capital letters, but not the following ones, probably because the result was unaesthetic (f. 224–226). In other words, the content of the text consists in a totally usable memory manual, while the materiality of the manuscript does not indicate clearly if it was copied to be used, offered as a gift, or for some other possible use.

Unlike P and L, some exemplars of the *Trattato* were not copied to be utilized. That is the case for the manuscripts, now lost, from which originate the 1599 and 1603 editions of Panigarola's *Modo di comporre una predica*. Indeed, the two different editors conserved the contents of this manual of rhetoric (though typographical changes are numerous from one edition to another) and each added the *Trattato* to the end of the book. These two versions came from the same ancestor (which I will refer to as β) as both contain the same textual lacuna in the passage about the usefulness of utilizing unhabitual mental images (Panigarola 1599, 79r; Panigarola 1603, 50r–v). Beside this lacuna, both versions contain a significant number of errors. It is difficult, if not impossible, to understand the technical content of the *Trattato* relying only on them.

As the 1599 and the 1603 versions remain quite different,⁷ I postulate that they are not two direct copies of β , but rather that they form the end of two chains of transmission which counted at least one manuscript each, ζ and η .⁸ Sometimes,

7 The 1599 edition bears more errors than the 1603 edition, but a passage included in the 1599 edition is missing in the 1603 edition on p. 52v.

8 I have not discovered any manuscripts which could correspond to ζ and η , which was expected as "the manuscripts used in printing were routinely marked up in the process and discarded" (Blair 2010, 66).

these versions are corrupted in the same textual location, but their errors are different. For example, Panigarola explained that the number seven may be symbolized by the image of a pair of compasses, the shape of which is similar to the digit. A few lines later, still in the same paragraph, he gave an example using this image, but this time the 1599 edition equates the pair of compasses to the number one, and the 1603 edition equates them to the digit five (Panigarola 1599, 85r–v; Panigarola 1603, 54r). Thus, both editions are wrong, but in different ways. Similarly, when Panigarola mentioned the fact that niches (“*nicchi*”) on a wall may be used as places, one version gives “*ricchi*” and the other “*micchi*,” which makes the sentence incomprehensible (Panigarola 1599, 77r; Panigarola 1603, 48v).

How can we explain such different errors in the same textual location? One satisfying answer would be that both ζ and η originate from the same manuscript, β, whose scribe had written very quickly and without paying attention to the readability of his handwriting. β may have been coherent from a technical point of view. Indeed, if we compare side by side the texts of the 1599 and 1603 editions and if we always choose the best version each time we find an error, we could restore most of the technical content of the *Trattato*. Where both manuals are incoherent, as in the above example, the problem was probably due to the poor writing of β. Admittedly, β may have been copied without care for quality of the writing, but its overall content may have been almost as good as P or L's. The scribe was probably reproducing the manuscript (or noting it down) without aiming to show his work to someone else. Thus, β was probably created as a practical tool, a manual, and nothing else. In turn, the scribes who copied β rendered so many incoherent points that their results were disastrous. They did not make any effort to decipher the difficult writing of β, and thus were not seeking to understand Panigarola's mnemonics. As we know nothing about the creators of ζ and η, any hypothesis about their aims would be highly speculative. However, I would like to suggest that they wrote ζ and η because they were compelled to do so. Indeed, if the scribes had read the result of their copy and tried to make sense of it, they would have been confronted with several blatant errors (a negation is missing in the 1599 edition, 82v–83r; see the other examples above). They did not try to properly decipher β, and they did not try to correct ζ and η after writing them. In this context, it seems probable that they copied β because they had to do so. Perhaps they were students, or young friars, who received an order to do so from an older Franciscan brother who thought that a mnemonic manual devised by the famous Francesco Panigarola would be helpful to them.

Though these different versions of the *Trattato* (L, P, β, ζ, and η) were produced for different aims, they all testify about the circulation of this manual inside the Franciscan order. Figure 1 illustrates the spatial spread of the *Trattato*. Originating from a Roman archetype Ω, the branch of the *stemma codicum* correspond-

ing to manuscript β shows a spreading in the Venetian state. Indeed, the 1599 edition was published in Padua by Francesco Bolzetta, while the 1603 edition was published in Venice by Giacomo Vincenti. As both ζ and η were located in the Republic of Venice, it is probable that their common ancestor, β , had been brought to the Venetian state by a Franciscan monk, where the manuscript was copied. Similarly, the paper used to create manuscripts L and P have roughly the same origin. Indeed, both watermarks represent a standing angel inside a circle. Both watermarks are distinct, as the angel from P is topped by a star, and the representation of their wings is slightly different. Though the angel was often used as a pattern for watermarks (Briquet 1907, 44–45), according to Briquet’s catalogue and the Bernstein Portal’s database, this representation of a standing angel inscribed in a circle and topped (or not) by a star seems to be mainly used near the end of the 17th century in North-East Italy. Thus, the *stemma codicum* of the *Trattato* includes two branches (β and θ) the manuscripts of which were produced in the same area, far away from Panigarola’s Roman classroom.

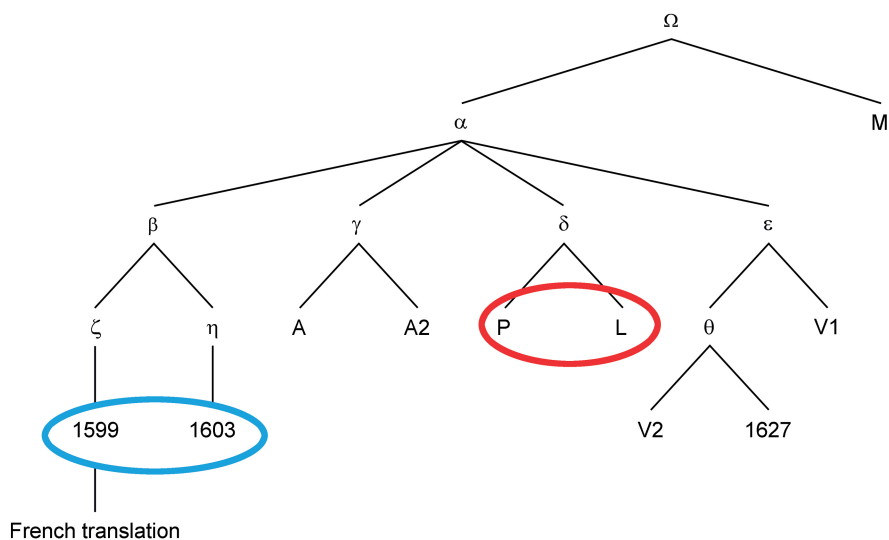


Figure 1: *Stemma codicum* of Panigarola’s *Trattato*. The colours highlight the geographical correlation between extant copies.

So far, the manuscripts we have referred to were probably produced in a teaching context, both by zealous and careless friars. Their dissemination in the Franciscan network is not surprising as the original utilization of the *Trattato* was to improve the friars’ rhetorical skills. It is thus a book they would carry with them and communicate to other brothers who might need it. This rhetorical context was not,

however, the only motive which led Franciscan friars to copy Panigarola's mnemonic manual.

As has been abundantly investigated (e.g., Bouza 2002, 49; Love 1998, 58–59), many manuscripts produced in early modern Europe were gifted to friends or patrons. The manuscript Urb.lat.1352 currently held at the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana (henceforth, V1) was certainly one of these manuscripts made to be given to a prestigious patron. Indeed, unlike L, P, M, and V2, V1 is not part of a *miscellanea*. This manuscript contains only Panigarola's *Trattato*. The lines of text are parallel to each other, and the writing is beautiful. The margins are more than generous (the text only occupies 19 × 13 centimeters and the whole pages are 29,5 × 22 centimeters). The technical content is overall consistent, though the scribe copied an inaccuracy: the pair of compasses, which should symbolize the digit seven, is also presented as a way to remember the digit five. Another hand, with less meticulous writing, struck out this number and added the digit seven above the line as a correction (V1, 10r). A similar correction can be seen on the title page, as the manuscript was originally titled "*Trattato della memoria locale*" before a second hand added "*di Franc[esco] Panigarola*." Hence, it is probable that this manuscript was created to be a gift, given to a powerful patron who read the text, added Panigarola's name and corrected the error. Another hypothesis would be that this manuscript was not meant to be a gift but directly ordered by a wealthy client. Whichever hypothesis proves to be true, the technical content interested the patron, as he corrected the error. However, the manuscript did not seem to have often been consulted; it does not contain any aids (such as numbers written in the margin, as in P) and its dimensions are definitely too large to make it a pocket book. Thus, it is unlikely that this manuscript was regularly used by friars to sharpen their rhetorical skills. Its normal location was on a shelf, not in the hands of people using it.

It is possible that the patron of V1 was truly interested in mnemonics, but it is also probable that he was curious about Panigarola's art of memory because of the orator's fame. It is difficult to choose between these hypotheses, and this uncertainty also extends to three other manuscripts: Urb.lat.1743.pt.3 from the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana (henceforth, V2), 137-IX from the Biblioteca Mozzi-Borgetti di Macerata (henceforth, M) and S.Q.+II. 57 held by the Biblioteca Ambrosiana (henceforth, A1). The scribes who copied them had neat writing and the lines are parallel to each other. Nevertheless, their handwriting is nowhere near the beautiful script of V1, their margins are far smaller, and none is a self-standing volume. Maybe these three manuscripts were carefully copied by friars who wanted to learn mnemonics from books written with a neat hand, or maybe they were carefully copied because they could be gifted to patrons whose interest is piqued by Panigarola's name. As we lack the context of the production and utilization of these manu-

scripts, it is difficult to speculate about the aims behind their creation. It is easier to analyze the motivations of the publishers of the *Trattato*, who used it as a selling point.

3 Printed Versions of the *Trattato* and the Decay of Its Mnemonic Function

The publication of the *Trattato* is inseparable from the editorial history of the *Modo di comporre una predica* (1583). Panigarola explained in the preface that he wrote this manual of rhetoric for his students at the *studium* of Aracoeli. This treatise was republished five times (Benzi 2006, 265) before Francesco Bolzetta decided to include the *Trattato* in his 1599 edition. As the manual focuses on *inventio* and *dispositio*, the addition of a treatise on *memoria* is not redundant with the content of the manual. Nothing indicates that Panigarola tried to publish his *Trattato* and, when it happened in 1599, he had already passed away. He could not verify the quality of the manual published under his name and, as we saw a few pages earlier, the result was catastrophic. The inclusion of the *Trattato* in the *Modo di comporre una predica* did not aim to supply the reader with a prime memory manual, but only to increase the perceived value of the book for potential clients. Indeed, both in the 1599 and 1603 editions, the presence of the *Trattato* was advertised on the title page.

This was also the case for the 1627 edition of the *Modo di comporre una predica*, published in Rome by Giacomo Mascardi. The technical content of the *Trattato* is without contest far better than the other two editions. For example, in this edition the pair of compasses only symbolize the digit seven (Panigarola 1627, 91–92) and a missing negation from the 1599 edition is correctly written here (Panigarola 1599, 82v–83r; Panigarola 1627, 89). A pedagogical effort is also visible in the typographical code. The rules for creating memory places or images are numbered, written out in full in italics, and the enumeration of rules is structured into separate paragraphs. Though the technical content of the 1627 *Trattato* is far better than the previous editions, this version was not produced by an effort of scholarship. Giacomo Mascardi did not correct the errors from the 1599 and 1627 editions. Indeed, the text contains a lacuna which is not included in the previous publications. The beginning of one sentence explaining that the memory practitioner should create unusual mental images is missing (Panigarola 1627, 85). In the 1599 and 1603 editions, the very same sentence is incomplete, but this time, it is the end of the sentence which is missing (Panigarola 1599, 79v; Panigarola 1603, 50r–v). Thus, Giacomo Mascardi had used another manuscript (that I will call 0)

of the *Trattato* and had not compared his content with the versions already on the market.

θ is related to V2, as the lacuna I have mentioned above is found in both versions. However, θ cannot be V2, nor could it be copied from V2, as several inconsistent passages from V2 are accurate in θ, without possibly being corrected by a scribe using his own rational faculties and the text of V2. It is difficult to assess whether the differences between the 1627 version and other exemplars (such as V1) were already present in θ, or if they were the result of intervention on the part of Giacomo Mascardi. I would like to suggest that the typographical improvements (the numbering of the rules, the division of the rules into paragraphs) were probably made by the publisher. Likewise, the hypothesis of intervention on the part of the publisher would help explain other differences between this edition and all the other versions, printed or handwritten. In one passage dealing with the visualization of persons of both sexes, the text normally refers to “*figure nude*.” In the 1627 edition, they are called “*figure libere*” (Panigarola 1627, 95). Similarly, in an example implying the visualization of a crucifix in an unusual position, the 1627 edition presents an interpolation stating that this position should not be indecent (Panigarola 1627, 85). Thus, it seems logical to assume that Giacomo Mascardi did not thoughtlessly publish a manuscript but censored the passages which may have prevented him from obtaining an *imprimatur* and presented the text in an efficient typographical form. On the other hand, he did not check the already available printed versions of the text to rectify the errors of his own manuscript, and his version is not without some (minor) errors. Thus, once again, the technical content of the *Trattato* was not the main interest of the editor, who mainly wanted to improve the perceived value of the *Modo di comporre una predica* he published.

This pecuniary interest is even more discernible in the translated versions of the *Trattato*. The second edition of the French translation of the *Modo di fare una predica*, the *Art de prescher et bien faire un sermon*, realized in 1601 for Regnault Chaudiere, includes a translation of the *Trattato*. As this translation was done using the 1599 Italian version, the errors are numerous. One example of total nonsense consists in the example of the memorization of the word “*che*” (“that,” “than”). Panigarola explains that the reader can represent it via the mental image of a woman grasping geese (*ocche* in Italian) the heads of which are missing, which indicates that the beginning of the word should not be taken into account, and thus that *ocche* symbolizes *che*. The errors originating in ζ resulted in a hardly understandable 1599 printed version, and the puzzling result was literally translated into French (see Table 1).

Table 1: Nonsensical passage in Panigarola’s *Trattato*.

<i>Pongasi dunque duoi occhi con la testa tagliata in mano, od una donna sopra l'uscia, & subito l'esser senza testa mostrerà la parola doversi proferire senza la prima syllaba, & in veci di occhi, si potrà proferire (che)</i> ⁹	<i>Deux yeux, avec la teste tranchée en main, ou une femme sur l'huis, & incontinent l'estre sans teste monstrera que la parole se doit proferer sans la premiere syllabe, & au lieu d'yeux se pourra proferer (que)</i> ¹⁰
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The result is totally incomprehensible. The fact that the memory manual was very poorly translated did not prevent the *Art de prescher* from being republished in 1604, 1608, 1615, and 1624. The translation was never improved. Though Regnault Chaudiere did not care about the incoherency of the technical content, he was convinced of the importance of the art of memory from a commercial point of view. Indeed, in addition to the *Trattato*, he also added a recipe for an oil that improves memory to the 1604 edition, as well as another memory manual, namely a translation of Girolamo Marafioti’s *Nova inventione et arte della memoria* (first published in 1602). The translation follows the original text closely and was reprinted *verbatim* in subsequent editions, but the reproduction of one of the diagrams was inaccurate (Panigarola 1604, 94r).

This diagram consists of a hand divided in several places (*luoghi*) individuated by different symbols, which are to be used as supports for mental images. Here, the digit 0 of the twentieth place (the extremity of the index) has disappeared, the number 15 is indicated twice, and the number 10 is changed to 80. These flaws are another hint suggesting that Regnault Chaudiere did not check the technical content of the mnemonic manuals he published. He only relied on Panigarola’s fame and on Marafioti’s intriguing diagrams to sell the book.

The creation of the various manuscripts and the publication of the different editions, far from presenting a simple story of the *Trattato*, show how various the reasons behind its spreading were. Was its reception as plural as its production and circulation? The question is, obviously, highly rhetorical. Since Roger Chartier underlined the diversity of thoughts which can be produced by the same text (Chartier 1987), investigations about the reception of books have ceaselessly confirmed the relevance of his analysis. If the *Trattato* is no exception to the rule, most hints about its reception ultimately lead to a similar conclusion: his impact was quite limited.

Indeed, it seems that the only author who borrowed technical know-how from Panigarola was the bishop of Tortona, Paolo Arese, in his *Arte di predicar bene*

⁹ Panigarola 1599, 85r.

¹⁰ Panigarola 1601, 72v.

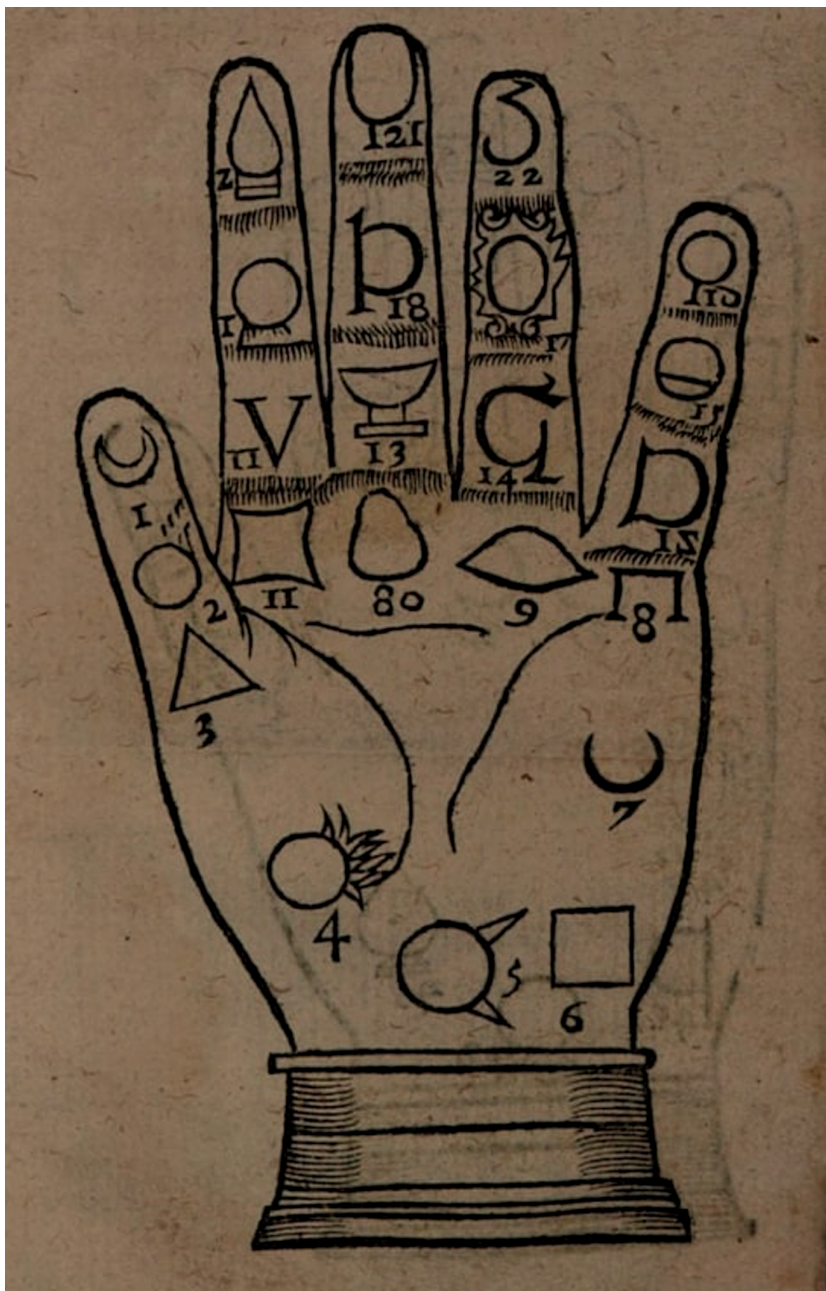


Figure 2: Bibliothèque Municipale de Lyon, 813182.

(Arese 1611, 683–684).¹¹ Though he expressed more interest in Panigarola’s *Trattato* than any other writer, his excerpt of Panigarola’s method is but one amongst other summaries of different memory manuals, e.g., Arese copied Marafioti’s mnemonic hands as well. Arese did not give his own opinion about Panigarola’s system and his references are very limited in length (two pages out of the 88 he dedicated to the art of memory). Still, he is the only one to summarize Panigarola’s method. At best, other authors of memory manuals made reference to the Franciscan as part of a list of past authors. For example, Juan Velázquez de Azevedo indicated his name in a list of 23 other memory experts (Azevedo 1626, 54v).

The materiality of the extant copies of Panigarola’s manual points toward the same conclusion. Indeed, out of 26 copies investigated, only two bear reading marks in the *Trattato*.¹² Even the readers of these two copies did not pay much attention to Panigarola’s method but were more concerned with correcting Marafioti’s faulty diagrams. These results are consistent with the utilizations of the manuscripts deduced above: with the exception of P (and maybe β), no manuscript seems to have been created to be a tool used regularly.

But who were these unenthusiastic readers? Once again, the historical evidence suffers from a bias; that is, the owners I have been able to identify are, in an overwhelming majority, congregations, religious orders, or their members. This result is logical, as the *Modo di comporre una predica* was a manual for preachers. But the invisibility of other readers probably comes from the fact that their copies, not being held in a library, were likely destroyed while the well-preserved exemplars belonging to religious institutions still exist today.

If the reception of Panigarola’s rhetoric by laymen is difficult, and maybe impossible, to estimate, this is not the case with the religious owners. As stated above, it appears that the possession of the *Modo di comporre una predica* or the *Art de prescher* allowed their owners to potentially read the *Trattato*, though it does not seem to have attracted much attention, judging from the reading marks. This potential impact concerned various religious institutions. Indeed, the Franciscans were by no means the only owners of Panigarola’s manuals. Different branches

11 It is not totally clear if P. Arese consulted a handwritten or a printed version, as he referred to Panigarola’s “*discorso scritto à mano*,” though the *Arte di predicar bene* was published 15 years after the first printed version of the *Trattato*.

12 Oxford, Taylor Institution Library, ZAH.IIA.91; Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, D 46832. During this survey, reading marks made with pencil have not been considered, as they are difficult to date. Thus, the British Library, 1493. f. 21, which presents a pencil reading mark in the mnemonic section of the *Modo di fare una predica* from 1599, has not been taken into account.

of the Franciscan order are represented in the *ex-libris* of the manuals.¹³ Jesuit colleges also owned this book,¹⁴ as well as the Dominicans,¹⁵ and the order of Saint Augustinian.¹⁶ One copy is currently held at the Vallicelliana library; it is thus probable that this book was read by an Oratorian at some point.¹⁷ The manuals were also held in monasteries, as the copy once owned by Ascanio Varese shows, the abbot of S. Giovanni di Verdara in Padua.¹⁸ Other extant copies were used in (or, at least, stored in the libraries of) seminaries.¹⁹ The congregation of the *doctrine chrétienne* owned at least one copy in the library of the Parisian seat of the congregation, where the novices were instructed, and one in the seminary of Lyon, where the fathers of the *doctrine chrétienne* taught future clerics.²⁰ Books which do not bear *ex-libris* may have been used by the clergy anyway. For example, a 1604 edition was bound with a discourse written by Monseigneur Claude de Gravier, a discourse to be declaimed by the priests from the diocese of Geneva.²¹ It is thus probable that the former owner of this book was a cleric.

13 The Recollects of Bordeaux owned the copy of the 1601 edition that is in the Bibliothèque Municipale, T 5748/1 of the city today, while the Capuchin from Paris owned a 1624 edition (today in Bibliothèque Nationale de France, D 46832). An *ex-libris* of the 1603 edition at the Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Firenze, 15.8.132, indicates ownership by the Badia di San Pietro Alli Marmi.

14 Bordeaux, Bibliothèque Municipale, T 5749/1; Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, D-15249 (mf).

15 A copy of the 1604 edition was held by the convent at the street Saint Honoré, Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, D-46831 (mf). Another copy of the same edition was held by the congregation of Saint Maur from the abbey of Aniane, today at Oxford, Taylor Institution, ZAH.II.A.91. A third copy of the 1624 edition was held by the Parisian convent of the Celestins, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, 8-T-6066.1

16 One copy was held at the Augustinian Abbaye Saint-Martin-ès-Aires (copy currently located at Troyes, Médiathèque Jacques Chirac, E16–3929 (TH. 4102)), while another bears an *ex-libris* indicating an Augustinian college (copy currently at Los Angeles, the Getty Library, BF383. P36).

17 This 1603 edition is bound with a compilation of sermons. Rome, Bibliothèque Vallicelliana, S.BOR.BV.123(2).

18 Biblioteca universitaria di Padova, B.1.b.269.

19 Valognes, Médiathèque Julien de Laillier, C 2712; Rennes, Bibliothèque des Champs Libres, 81603.

20 Respectively, Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, D 46831 BIS, and Lyon, Bibliothèque Municipale de Lyon, 813182. On this congregation, less famous than the Jesuits or the Franciscans, see Viguerie (1976).

21 Today at Besançon, Bibliothèque d'étude et de conservation, 237490.

4 Conclusion: The Art of Memory within the Franciscan Order

Panigarola’s *Trattato* is a good case study for two reasons. First, thanks to the information gathered from the Franciscan’s autobiography, the textual and material aspects of the different manuscripts, and the reception of the printed editions, it is possible to have a glimpse of the mnemonic context of the Franciscan order. Mnemonics was not systematically taught and, from the inferences made from Panigarola’s *Vita*, it is probable that its teaching was marginal. However, thanks to Panigarola’s fame, it is probable that the Franciscan friars of the end of the 16th century and the beginning of the 17th century knew of it, and probably understood how it works. The lack of sources indicating that they used mnemonics on a daily basis leads to the hypothesis that, even if they knew that such techniques exist, the friars were not eager to use them. After all, even Panigarola stopped using the classical techniques of mental locations and images when he became an experienced predicator (Panigarola 2008, 218–219) and the catalogue of his library does not include any manual of mnemonics.²² Furthermore, even if these techniques were useful, their utility was limited to the memorization of discourses and the elements of *disputationes* (Panigarola 2008, 2000). Most of the needs of a student or orator could not be filled by memory alone but by the production and utilization of written materials. As Panigarola himself stressed, the pen was the mother of studies.²³ This fact should not be forgotten and may explain the tepid reception of Panigarola’s mnemonics, the printings of which seemed to be a matter of marketing and not of satisfying a pedagogical need.

Second, the study of Panigarola’s *Trattato* has put into evidence how useful the “*histoire totale*” of one book may be. The abovementioned discoveries could not have been made without the use of the most erudite history of the *Trattato* as a book, and not only as a text. The analysis of the materiality of the different manuscripts did not replace the *stemma codicum* but merged with the careful study of the textual transmission of the text. Wielding both tools allows one to reach conclusions otherwise inaccessible. Similarly, the study of the *Trattato*’s editorial history and reception leans on bibliographic approaches allowing one to grasp the actual utilization of the texts. Thus, at each stage of the book’s life,

22 Turin, Archivio di Stato, Regolari di qua dei monti, Mazzo 4, n°15, “Dichiarazione del Duca Carlo Emanuel di Savoia [...] Inventario de libri rimessi in deposito a P.P. Capucini del Monte di Torino dal Duca Carlo Emanuel Pmo di Savoia quali erano del fu Vescovo Panigarola in n.° di 665.” On his up-to-date library, see Stroppa (1998).

23 Panigarola 2008, 191: “madre dello studio era la penna.”

one or several erudite methods can be used to obtain data to answer questions from the fields of the history of ideas, intellectual history, and history of Renaissance thought at large.

Annex: The *stemma codicum* of Panigarola's *Trattato*

The *stemma codicum* of the *Trattato* is a rough representation of the recent discoveries about the different versions of this text. It is by no mean a definitive *stemma* and should be further completed if new manuscripts are found. As the nature of our knowledge about the *Trattato*'s handwritten history is fragmentary, I have been compelled to make several choices to create the stemma as you see it. This section aims to explain these choices and to point out the possible alternatives.

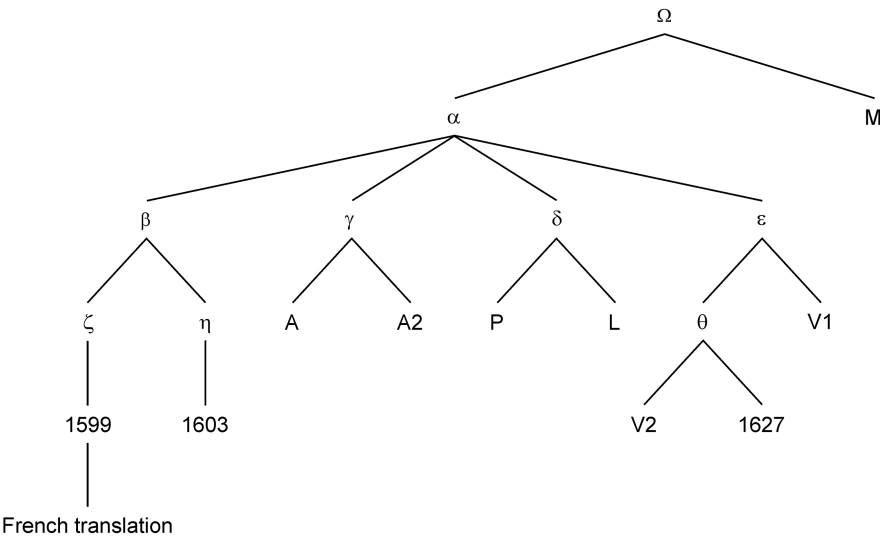


Figure 3: *Stemma codicum* of Panigarola's *Trattato*.

Conspectus siglorum of Extant Versions

- A1: Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, S.Q.+II. 57, f. 172–184.
- A2: Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, X 307 inf., f. 138–139.
- L: London, British Library, Add. ms. 12038, f. 209–233.

- P: Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Espagnol 448, f. 183r–190r. It is available online (<https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b100330086.r=Espagnol%20448?rk=21459;2>, last accessed August 21, 2024).
- M: Macerata, Biblioteca Mozzi-Borgetti, Manoscritto 137-IX, f. 95r–99v/Photos from this manuscript have been published in Michael Lackner, *Das vergessene Gedächtnis. Die jesuitische mnemotechnische Abhandlung* Xigua Jifa. *Übersetzung und Kommentar*. Stuttgart, Franz Steiner, 1986
- V1: Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica, Urb.lat.1352. This beautiful manuscript is available online (<https://opac.vatlib.it/mss/detail/293924>, last accessed August 6, 2024).
- V2: Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica, Urb.lat.1743.pt.3, f. 428r–436r. It is available online (<https://opac.vatlib.it/mss/detail/251006>, last accessed August 6, 2024).
- 1599: Panigarola, Francesco (1599): *Modo di comporre una predica*. Padua: Francesco Bolzetta. It is available online (https://books.google.fr/books?id=BYZiAAAAcAAJ&dq=modo+di+comporre+una+predica&hl=it&source=gbp_navlinks_s, last accessed August 6, 2024).
- 1603: Panigarola, Francesco (1603): *Modo di comporre una predica*. Venice: Giacomo Vincenti. It is available online (https://books.google.fr/books?id=NjoJ4oCtr-IC&dq=modo+di+comporre+una+predica&hl=it&source=gbp_navlinks_s, last accessed August 6, 2024)
- 1627: Panigarola, Francesco (1627): *Prattica di comporre le prediche usata dal famosiss. Predicatore Fr. Francesco Panigarola*. Rome: Giacomo Mascardi. The only known exemplary is located at the National Library at Rome, 34. 3.A.14.7. It is available online (https://books.google.fr/books?vid=IBNR:CR000371865&redir_esc=y, last accessed August 6, 2024).

This *stemma* does not seem to include any contamination from one version to another. However, when Panigarola taught mnemonics to his students in Rome, they may have verified the content of their copies against the manuscripts of other students. Henceforth, I will follow Richard Tarrant’s general observation and suppose that contamination “was a common phenomenon; one might even suspect that it was the norm” (Tarrant 2016, 15). We do not see any contamination in this *stemma* because most of these first-generation manuscripts (which probably numbered a few dozen) have disappeared or are currently lost.

Actually, the main problem does not consist in the existence or nonexistence of contamination, but about the identity of the archetype. It is not possible to rule out that Panigarola may have used several manuscripts. Indeed, the only reference stating that the manuscript circulated in Panigarola’s classroom concerns the *casa dei Aracoeli* and comes from the preface of the *Modo di comporre una predica*. However, it is not impossible that Panigarola taught mnemonics at the *studia* of

Florence and Bologna as well. According to this hypothesis, he would have used his manuscript as a teaching resource for almost ten years. In such a case, it is possible that the manuscript wore out and Panigarola had to make a second one. This hypothesis is just conjecture, but it underlines the difficulty in talking about “one” archetype.

Even if Panigarola always used the same manuscript, it is not clear if he dictated to the students or gave it to them to be copied. If the students took notes from an oral lesson, it may explain why M had so many small differences relative to α . But, in that case, perhaps would it be better to consider all of these notes taken from the lesson as different archetypes? As a matter of fact, I finally decided to present the *stemma* in the most classical fashion, but the abovementioned difficulties in approaching the archetype should highlight how little we know about the early textual transmission of the *Trattato*.

α and M bear many small textual differences. While M is overall an easily usable version of the *Trattato*, as good as P and L, it also contains a few lacunas which are not found in α . They do not prevent the reader from learning the technical content.

As β is only known through the 1599 and 1603 editions, it is difficult to characterize it, except that it was poorly written. The collation of the best passages of both printed versions would present an understandable technical know-how. A lacuna remains in the passage advising the reader to use unusual images but, overall, the technical content is similar to the original.

A2 consists only in the copy of a few passages describing writing materials (the “*libretto tedesco*”). This page was probably written by a scholar from the 18th century interested in the history of the material, probably Pietro Mazzucchelli, as A2 is part of a miscellanea of various papers he once owned. The few passages written down are similar to those from A1. It may be a copy of A1, but this hypothesis is only backed by the fact that both manuscripts are held at the Ambrosiana. The scribe of A2 indicates that he copied these passages on a “Ms Trivulziano dall sec XVI–XVII” named *Discorsi varii* with the call number M. 153. Such a call number does not currently exist, neither at the Ambrosiana nor at the Trivulziana library; it is thus difficult to elaborate the genealogy of A2. It seems that A1 never bore such a call number. We can only hypothesize that both A1 and A2 originated from a common ancestor. In any case, A1 and A2 are closer to the other manuscripts coming from α than to M.

It is difficult to decide if δ was directly copied from Ω or from α , but it should be underlined that P and L are closer to α than to M.

V2 bears the same lacunas as the 1627 edition, but its scribe did not self-censor. They are both from a common ancestor, which itself has an ancestor in V1. V1 does not have the same lacunas as V2 and 1627, but bears a common textual error, that

is, doubling the word “*che*” in a sentence from the paragraph explaining the eighth rule for creating mental images. If this error can be corrected by mere analytical reflection, it is highly improbable that three scribes would make it independently. Thus, this error comes from ϵ and, given our current knowledge, characterizes all the extant versions held at Rome or published there.

For purposes of readability, I have not represented the French republishing.

Admittedly, the abovementioned difficulties reveal how the construction of the *stemma* was possible thanks to inferences more than thanks to irrefutable demonstration. It is, alas, the common burden of the researcher seeking to reconstruct a *stemma codicum*. As stated by Richard Tarrant, “textual critics cannot prove that their choices are correct; the most they can hope to do is lead their readers to believe that those choices are the best available ones” (Tarrant 2016, 41).

I would suggest to readers who would like to see the *Trattato* for themselves without entering the labyrinth of different versions to consult the edition from Filippo Mignini, who relied on three different versions, namely M and the 1599 and 1603 printed versions (Mignini 2013). Otherwise, the 1627 version, easy to access as it has been digitized, would also be adequate for understanding the technical content of Panigarola’s teaching. The 1627 version is a good substitute to more coherent versions like L, which is not digitized, or P, which is poorly written (and poorly digitized).

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1603

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