

Transcription by Decimus (<http://artofmemory.com/user/20875/>)

§ Prologue

For as much as many be of a slow memory and late minded, this little book was made and composed to give and present it to all people, although that at the beginning it was directed to the Italian nation. Know therefore all noble readers that if any do keep these precepts and commandments of this book, then easily and in short time, he may touch the summit and reach the height of this art. It is of a great effect and profit to them that have their minds not prompt, strong, and ready. It seems more to be invented by divine inspiration than by art or science. I have also found by writing that when the author of this present work experimented his knowledge through all of Italy that many affirmed to have seen this book more divine than human, so that some did bless him by great admiration. The author reported that he had no teacher of this art, but it came to him by invention through the aid and help of God that lightened and inspired his spirit. Read therefore my precepts right here if you take the labor and diligence to understand these purposes perfectly, you shall gather the grain thereof, and carry the great and prosperous work of profit and honor.

§ Contents

The first conclusion shall be such: this art is and consists of places and magnitudes. The places are as cards or scrolls or other things to write in. The images are the similitude of the things that we will retain in the mind. Then I will first place my card where we may collect and order the images in the places. And for the foundation of this first conclusion, I shall put four rules. The first is this: the places are the apertures set in walls, pillars, corners, and other like. The second rule is: the places ought not to be too near together or too far away to go to because the nearness troubles greatly the natural memory and by the opposition of the things if the places were too far distant. We will recite a little lesser the things that shall be given to places: they shall be of a mean distance of about six feet. The third rule is such (but it is vain as I see it): it is the opinion of talkers that the places ought not to be made where people occupy, as in a church and common places. It is suffice to have seen a church having where as people walk, but not *always*, and in that they have been taught the contrary experience. The fourth rule is this: that the places are not too high, so for the men who set the images or the stead of images may touch the places. I take then the church greatest known by me, its parts where I do consider, and go into it walking it three or four times, and then return home to my house, and there I journey in my thought to remember the things that I saw. And in that manner, I give the beginning of this work to the places on the right side of the gate, from which men go in the right path or to the chief altar there. I fix and

ordain the first place and the second on the wall next to the altar about six feet between. And if there be any notable thing set, as a pillar in the window, or other like, there put the place. And if the notable thing is not there, or lack, I find in my imagination or my free will something imaginary -- although some forging these places would leave them and thus if fearing that he should be put in forgetfulness, the thing opposed to that is taken and accepted, so that he is mindful to have constituted and ordained the place. And so to be proceeded from place to place until the maker of the places returns to the same gate. And these things are to be done on the first wall of the church, all things left that are in the middle thereof. And if any desires to have the limits of the places enter by order into a monastery, and fill it full all of places or cut the places on the walls without the church. And he that will remember of many things must cut many places. But because I have willed to surmount all the men of Italy by abundance of things and Holy Scriptures, in canon and civil law, and in other authorities of many things, while that I was but a young adolescent, I have prepared 900 places. And now I have added to them another 990 places where I have put the things which are to say and utter by myself, so they are prompt when I will experiment the virtues and strengths of my memory. And when I do leave my country assigned, I visit the cities of Italy as a pilgrim or a wayfarer. I may freely say that I, here with me all my things, yet cease not to edify. I do you to pay that the places in any church or journey is fine only to repose and mark the things which must be recited every day as be your arguments, reasons, histories, fables, and predictions made in spring. And let this office be deputed to these places only. And I have set and declared at the end for these places a thing that shall be judged necessary and utile. For I will that the young students shall be courteous hereof by my right teaching, designated by the places so constituted and put in order, by often repeating them three or four times in a month because the repetition of places cannot be praised in any manner.

The second conclusion shall be that when anyone has the card or scroll I will show them the manner to write in it. As I was some time being a young adolescent in the company of someone noble, it was proposed to me to recite the names of men. And these are the names that follow: I did set in the first place a certain friend of mine having the same name; in the second place likewise; and as for the other names did I collect and set in the place as they had named, and they thus collected were by me recited afterward. And let the collector advice him to set always his friend doing the thing he is accustomed to do and proceed this conclusion clearly so the names are known. And if the friend be known to have such a name as Bordrab Zorobabell, then set the same thing that is spoken of named in his place. I say as much of like things in names of beasts as of the horse, ox, and ass. Do that the horse be set in the first place; in the second, the ox and the ass in the third. And thus must be done in things

that have no life, as the book, the coat, the gown, and of other things in likewise. But be well aware that you should not be deceived so that the book was set in the first place and the coat in the second, so it is simple when you should recite the names. The office of this art is to excite the mind naturally and that cannot be admonished. For the guest of the image is to set and servant the opposite therefore and ought to be set in the place that carries. And if it cannot carry to be carried with another: put such a thing in - the hand of the carrier, because by the movement the memory is moved to the natural. But some young man of his spirit and subtle wit will say that these precepts and commandments are not perfect in all parts: for if the ant is set in the place that carries, howbeit because that it is so little it cannot move for the grain of pepper, or be put it in the hand of the carrier nor also lift it – which I grant if only the ant be there collected if you set a multitude of ants moving and descending on a tree, that which the only ant could not do alone but the multitude will do it. And the friend also will carry in the place the different grains of pepper. Some other quantities will contradict: the full belly does not move me and the multitude of fleas may not be set nor well collected. But I will collect for the flea: the friend taking a flea. And I have afore set in the place of the flea, the right excellent master of all of our time, the good physician Gerard of Uelonne, which I beheld the one taking a flea.

The third conclusion is all of gold if I take men for the letters of the alphabet, and so I have the living images. I set for the letter A for Anthony, B for Benet, and so for the other persons and names of whom the first letter is that which I will collect. And I do set by the letters some fair maidens because they excite greatly my mind and frequentation when I was young. I did collect Juntpere of Pistorten whom I loved greatly. Believe hardly to my saying that if I had set the fair maidens most fairly and decently, I recite this and I have set it in my memory. Retain this secret, which is very beautiful, into the artificial memory, which I have lodged while put in science. And for fear of blame or shame, you would have a remembrance immediately if you collected fair maidens. For the mind by the location of maidens and virgins is a miraculous thing moving to him that has seen the witness testifying the thing. But this beautiful precept cannot fit to those that have women in hate and despise, nor shall not follow the fruit of this act but difficulty and slowness, although all good and chaste men are exempt. For the precepts have borne me so much honesty I ought not to hide, saying I desire and enforce myself and all my powers to leave it to my successors excellently learned in goodness.

The fourth conclusion is that the images of the alphabet or names demonstrative of lies should be well recited and experienced in the mind and often recited. I begin then this wise if it compels me to set in place this copulative: And I set in place Eusebe and Thomas, howbeit that in this order, Eusebe is in place and Thomas standing afore him, but if Thomas holds of Eusebe, and Eusebe holds the

copulative that is man, and of man we see this pronoun of Thomas. And in place, fixed in this art, the rule is such that the first in order is the most grasped of the place and so is the end. Therefore first, we write in this conjunction and likewise in the place. And similar things are to be observed generally in all dictions, and other things to be collected.

The fifth conclusion is for the syllables of three letters. If the vowel be in the middle as this syllable (bar), I take then the image of the last letter and add something thereto, of which let be the beginning in likewise to the two other letters and do proceed. That if I set in the place of Raymond sitting the place with his staff, the syllable (bar) shall be recited in the place. Then let this rule be kept which is thus repeated: there where the vowel is in the middle of the syllable of the letters, the image of the last letter (R) is taken apposing another mobile, or moving herself to the two letters afore. But if the vowel being at the end as the syllable (bra), then I collect to the image of the first letter of a thing mobile or moving, whereof let the beginning be like to the two following. Then I set and appose Benet among the frogs in the place shall have the syllable (bra). And if I set Thomas I shall have the syllable (tra). The abundance then of these things that begin as the syllable if they be ready had here great utility and profit. But if the vowel be in the beginning, making any syllable as in this word (amo) then always the image of the first letter is to be collected in the place of the thing having his like beginning of the syllable which follows, the word (amo) set there shall be the place. And if, this Eusebe reads this word *e-mo* to us, he must always know if he may possibly collect the diction of three or four syllables, and it is no need. For spite, one is to be made by many things than it may be by few. It suffices to have set the first or second syllable; we may always collect the total diction of two syllables as, Pater. I will set in the place the thing or the man for the image of the syllable (Pa) as Paul. And for the syllable (ter), since that the vowel is in the middle I will take Raymond having a piece of linen cloth in his hand. I conclude then thus nobly that the images of the alphabet adjoined together, and the abundance of things beginning as the syllables will teach us fortune, if the images do lack in us. For if I can have another say I will leave these, whereof I shall speak in the other conclusions.

The sixth conclusion is in these dictions: bread, wine, mood, and other like; and in all the dignities as in the emperor, the king, &c. And so of eternity, I collect by the sound of the voice, which all things do understand, and the Rustikes in their demonstration, and so speak more evident they are concordantly and uniform in speech vulgar and Latin. In such dictions I demand no other images. But put the same that the said diction unforeseen and all the syllables of such dictions may be by good mention collected easily. For in the body of man, I have found images of cases so that the head is the case. The right hand is the genitive. The left hand is the dative. The right foot is the accusative; the left

is foot the vocative. And the belly or stomach is the ablative. And for the singular noble I set a fair maiden naked. And for the plural the same maid, well bronzed and richly on her, that I would remembered of. Or I will collect something or a man if it be something as bread I will collocate a maiden all naked in the place touring the bread with her right foot. And if I will collect any diction I will set a man constituted in office or dignity as a Bishop. I collect a Bishop in the place, sitting the bare earth with his right foot. And if you consider diligently these things, O right sweet reader, then this mention wills them very goodly onto you, and thus I was accustomed how to collect these dictions.

The seventh conclusion is that we may collect dictions by the sound of the voice, features of the body, of the similitudes, and of their images. I use it often for I set my friend for the diction. I knew a doctor that had always in his mouth communication of the law speaking of the time of appellations. This doctor of law said he could say all the law by heart or rote, only I then willing to collect the said law, I set this pain that always hit laughter, and by the extent of the body are set the images when about to be carried is to be made in the diction on I make my friend. And for this word (snatch), I set my friend ravishing somewhat by force, by similitude I set the images when I find the thing at the diction similar letters, howbeit that they are unlike in simplification when I collect well for this word (sing).

The eighth conclusion is for the lords' jurisconsults and lawyers. And I will begin to speak of the volumes of the civil law. And when I will give these things to the places I take the colors of the coverings as for: *f. veteri* a black skin, the code a green skin, a volume a skin of variable color. For the institutions a little book. And the canonical a notary having a great instrument. For the canonical, I set a maiden having a privilege. For the book of feuds, I set some castle. For the decree authorized I set an old man writing in the place, by cause and authority of holy fathers is in it. For the collection of papal decrees a bishop sitting in a chair. For mercies, a maiden named Clemence. For the sixte, an instrument, so called in Italy, whereof consider writing. For the commentators of the law, I set them that have like name. But I take the image of the explanation of the doctrine by myself that I first gave in the collecting of dictions. And I have for the digests, fair Juntpere giving a harp to a Florentine, that he may sign the act of Rome. The allegations of the decree shall be thus collected, for a maiden is set for the allegation. And this maiden makes a cloth or a schedule. And set for the question of fair Juntpere beating her maid. And for the consideration I set a priest consecrating the head. And for the penance, I set Juntpere shriving her to me of her light sins.

The ninth conclusion shall be that I will show how places ought to be given to the rubrics of each law, and set two images for the same as I am accustomed, for if I will remember myself of the rubric of

transaction on I set Thomas having frogs on the gesture of the body. I saw two men that would not of longtime cease their contention and debate and giving each to other, took of peace. That is the fair image of the rubric of the transactions. But the principles of the laws where as chapters be set in place by alphabet or found of voice similitude or gestures of the body, whereof is spoken afore and plainly enough.

The tenth conclusion is in collecting arguments, which I am accustomed to set two images. The first is the gesture of the body, as if one lay thus. The testament a power to none but if it is made with seven witnesses. Therefore, I saw the testator to have made this testament before two witnesses, and a ring that seals the said testament. The second image is it that collocates two other dictions more principle of the argument. Take here of an example, you jurisconsult, of these philosophies, wrote my meaning. When in the act the will is demanded of any, he ought to proceed. Here be several words, but it suffices to collect and set the will from proceeding. And then we may say by and in memory of the collection of two or three dictions. The other thing we shall recite elegantly, and believe this and the master have experimented it right well.

The eleventh conclusion, and thus I have the images unto the number of a 100; I have also nine images of the number beginning from one to the number ten, which I have divided on the fingers of the men. I have given to the first finger of the right hand for the first number, or one; the second for two. And so I proceed to the fourth finger of the left hand. And because that these things may the better be retained in mind: I say the first finger of the right hand to be of the Gelfes, the second of the Gelbelaits, the third of the Jews, the fourth a ring, the fifth of the ears. And of the left hand I call the first finger of the Gelfes, and for Gelfes to be esteemed rich and of great estimation, the second of the Gelbelaits. And the third of the Jews for if you point to a Jew with that finger he will look away fiercely. And who that will know the cause, shall find it evident. Therefore, I call the fourth and fifth even so for the number of a 1000. I have set here, if any number be to me apposed early to have the image of the same. The conclusion is such if any should propose if that in one self's place he ought to set many things. I answer thus if I would put the things in places are proposed to me by another because that I ought forthwith to rehearse the said things proposed, I will collect only in the place the images of one thing. But if I dispose to set in places the things that I read in my books, so that I may recite by heart in remembering them, I doubt not to set very often in one place the images of many things.

The twelfth conclusion is proper. That is I will make and show in what manner ought to be made the images of numbers for all numbers that we can think of. I have only found twenty images. And

therefore, I will describe them briefly: for the number of 10 I take a great cross of gold or silver; for the number of 20 I take similitude of the letter: of iron or of wood be rent to anything that is round, for I shall write the number of 20 in the card or scroll in this manner, or for 30, the similitude of this figure is conjunct in this manner to the thing. Therefore I shall find some examples which I will set whereby the read may understand in the more easily, although it is of a rude wit or conclusive, if I will say two or three: I must leave a person in the place holding in his right hand a cross and a Jew that with all his strengths seeks to take it from him by violence of that made from the right hand. If I will say two or four, I will seen the Gebelin in the place shall hold a curtain in his right hand showing it to a fair maiden which shall receive it in her right hand, for the fourth finger I will set a maiden married. And so I collect and set for the fourth and fifth number, if I will remember of penance in the fourth distinction, I will collect an old priest and not young to whom Juntpere shall shrive her faults. And she shall sacred the priest holding her right hand over his head, and so of the other. And because that this be not precedence let us here make an end of the art of memory, and precepts, of whom all things is comprised, at least so explicitly to leave anything, that I promised to write in this place to: judge a vile thing true in place to set in the fifth place a hand of gold. In the tenth, a cross gifted, in the fifteenth a hand of silver; and in the 20th place the image of the same number. And this is my doctrine teaches for to do in all other things.

Thus the end of the art of memory, otherwise called the Phoenix. Translated out of French into English by Robert Copland. And imprinted at London in Fleetstreet at the sign of the George by William Middleton.