CHAPTER ONE

Memory in Ancient Philosophy

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1. The Origin of the Art of Memory

Ancient philosophy has long become our philosophical other in which we can almost always discover, or rediscover, a theme or an insight that we now deem modern and new. Memory's philosophical recollection of itself can therefore become reflective once it looks into the mirror of its ancient understanding and recognizes itself in images and narratives that appear both familiar and strange.

The word *mnēmē* is widely used in Greek literature in the sense of individual "remembrance" or "memory," which we find in Theognis, as well as in the tragic poets Sophocles (*Oedipus Tyrannos* 1246; *Oedipus Coloneus* 509) and Euripides (*Phoeinissae* 1585). Among the early ("Presocratic") thinkers or "physiologists" (those who wrote on nature or *physis*) there are few and occasional references to memory (*mnēmē* or *mnēmosynē*; Epicharmus, fr. B6 DK; Democritus, fr. B 191 DK).

Memory here is often associated with being, life, gift, and immortality, whereas oblivion is associated with non-being and death (Orpheus, fr. B19a DK; Pythagoras, fr. 8 DK; Xenophanes, fr. B1 DK; Heraclitus, fr. A16, B126a DK; Parmenides, fr. A37 DK). Eventually, Anaxagoras mentions memory—together with experience, wisdom, and art—as a capacity that allows for reproduction and use of agricultural skills (fr. B21b DK), thus, in a sense, anticipating the notion of cultural memory.

The invention of the art of memory that enables us to cultivate our natural capacity to remember is ascribed to the famous lyric poet Simonides of Ceos (ca. 556–468 BCE). The often mentioned story runs that, when invited to a banquet, he had to leave the dinner hall for a short while. After having returned, he discovered that the hall had collapsed and buried everyone present, yet the bodies were so disfigured that they could not be identified. Simonides, however, was able to tell who was who because he remembered the places where everyone had been reclining when the party had started. In this way, Simonides invented the art of memory.[1] Although the *ars memoriae* is not mentioned in Simonides's extant fragments, the third-century BCE *Parian Chronicle* explicitly refers to Simonides as the inventor of a system of mnemonics (*to mnēmonikon*; *Mar. Par.* 54). Later, the story is reproduced by the Latin rhetorical writers, particularly in Cicero (106–43 BCE) and then in Quintilian (ca. 35–90s CE), who also refers to a number of Hellenistic writers. But the method of memorization that presupposes putting the remembered in imaginary *loci* is already well known and widely practiced in antiquity, and it is likely that Aristotle (384–322 BCE) in his *De memoria* (452a14) refers to Simonides's method, which consists in putting an image representing the memorized thing into an imaginary place or location in a house, street, shelf, or the like, in a

1 Cicero, *On the Orator: Books 1–2*, with a translation by E. W. Sutton and introduction by H. Rackham, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1942), II.86.351–353; Quintilian, *The Orator's Education: Books 11–12*, with a translation by Donald A. Russell, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001), XI.2.11–15. Thus, "art was born of experience (*nata… ars ab experimento*)," Quintilian (XI.2.18). Cf. Longinus, *Tekhnē rhētorikē*, in *Rhetores graeci*, vol. 1, ed. Leonard Spengel (Leipzig: Teubner, 1853), 316.3–6.

certain order that corresponds to the order of the things, events, or words to be memorized. The duality of the place and the placed (image) corresponds, then, to the "where" and the "what" of the remembered: the "what" can be retrieved for memory only if it has a proper place, for otherwise it is lost from being as remembered or located in our thought.

If art both imitates and complements nature, then the *ars memoriae* amplifies and supplements our natural ability to remember. The trained memory becomes a reliable aid in public recitation and speaking, in poetry and rhetoric. Later it also gives rise to a universal language that becomes a prototype for the modern scientific method, which is based on providing lists or enumerations of the discussed things or of the steps of an argument in an exact order.[2]

2. Speak, Memory

Memory is the mother of the Muses. So the tradition, known already to Hesiod, tells us.[3] An archaic cult of the Muses was established by the Aloadae of Askra in Boeotia, located at the bottom of Mount Helicon, where Hesiod grew up. Etymologically, "Muses" are "those who think."[4] They know everything and remember everything because of their origin from their mother Memory (*Mnēmosynē*) and their father Zeus who, in later Platonic interpretations, becomes the embodiment of reason or *nous*.[5] Because they know everything and preserve all knowledge as memory, the Muses can also teach us, if only we listen carefully to what

2 Paolo Rossi *Logic and the Art of Memory: The Quest for a Universal Language*, trans. Stephen Clucas (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, [1960] 2000), 8–10, passim.

3 Hesiod, *Theogonia, Opera et dies, Scutum*, 3d ed., Friedrich Solmsen, Reinhold Merkelbach, and M. L. West (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 25, 36, 52–62, 915–17, 966, 1022, etc. Cf. Martin L. West, ed., *Homeric Hymns. Homeric Apocrypha. Lives of Homer* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003): *Hymn. Hom.* 4.429–430; and Apollodorus, *The Library*, trans. J. G. Frazer, 2 vols. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1921), I.3.1.

4 The word "Muse" may be Lydian in origin. See Roberto Gusmani, *Lydisches Wörterbuch. Mit grammatischer Skizze und Inschriftensammlung* (Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 1964), 275.

5 Plotinus, *Enn.* III.5.8.5–11; cf. Plato, *Phil.* 30d.

they have told the poets and, later, thinkers—philosophers and mathematicians. If asked properly, the Muses—who live off hearsay and fame, but do not really know anything—can tell us what they know, as Homer says several times in the *Iliad* (*Il.* 2.484–486; cf. 16.112). Hesiod's *Theogony* (1–115), *Works and Days* (1–12), and the *Catalogue of Women* open with a hymn or invocation of the Muses, who "taught" the poet to sing (*Theog.* 22; *Op.* 662).[6] In the archaic time, there are only three, and not nine, Muses: Meleta ("Care"), Aioda ("Song"), and Mnema ("Memory").[7] The personified Memory is thus originally not the mother of the Muses (their father is still Zeus) but is one of them, a Muse closely related to poetry and the poetic transmission of knowledge.

The archaic times did not yet know a personal immortality: death is overcome only in and by the word of fame, *kleos*, which is transmitted in personal and cultural memory. Non-being is associated with death, whereas being is connected with memory. To remember is thus both to know *and* to be. This archaic motive becomes persistent throughout much of its later appropriation and philosophical explanation. Immortality is thus acquired through memory, the right to which one earns by a virtuous or heroic feat. In the concise formulation of one of the seven wise men, Bias of Priene (sixth century BCE), "you will obtain memory through deed" (DK I 65, 11). Since memory rewards good actions and saves the actors from the "futility of oblivion," it is therefore equally important not only to act properly but also to remember well. But because individual memory easily fails, cultural mechanisms of originating and transmitting memory are established from early on, first as epic poetry and later as history (e.g., Herodotus 4.144).

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6 Cf. also the Homeric hymn "To the Muses and Apollo." Martin L. West, ed. *Homeric Hymns. Homeric Apocrypha. Lives of Homer*, with a translation by Martin L. West, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003), 206 and Virgil, *Aeneid* 7.641–646.

7 A fragment attributed to Museus mentions two genera of the Muses: the older, from Chronos and the younger, from Zeus and Mnemosyne (fr. B15 Hermann Diels and Walther Kranz, eds., *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*, 6th ed. (Zürich: Weidmann, 1951–1952); hereafter = DK.

As Hannah Arendt put it, the epic relation between the "doer" and the "teller," the hero and the poet, Achilles and Homer, the one who embodies virtue and the one who speaks about it, is rather paradoxical because each one needs the other.[8] On the one hand, the "doer" performs a remarkable and memorable exploit because he or she hopes to be spoken of and remembered by posterity, thereby becoming immortal and continuing to live on in the glorious realm of cultural memory. The hero acts and is known only because there is the poet to tell the tale. On the other hand, the "teller" or the poet narrates only because there are those who strive to save their names through unforgettable deeds and thus become citizens of the culturally transmitted and sustained world of memory and glory. The poet tells a story only because there are heroes whose stories can and should be told. The "doer" and the "teller" thus bring each other into history and secure for each other a space in historical being. The two live on in memory within a memorable and memorizable text, which establishes both beyond the reach of mortality.

3. Poetic Catalogue

Epic is usually considered the most archaic literary genre. Yet, there is even a more archaic constituent within the epic itself: the so-called catalogue poetry, which contains catalogues, lists, or enumerations. Catalogues are plentiful in Hesiod, Homer, and epic poetry (often in the Homeric hymns, e.g., the *Hymn to Apollo* 421–29). Among famous poetic catalogues are Hesiod's catalogue of nymphs (*Theog.* 240–64); in Homer, we find *Teichoskopia*, or Priam's and Elena's view of the Achaean troops from the walls (*Il.* 3.162–244), the *Epipolesis*, or Agamemnon's survey of the troops (*Il.* 4.250–418), the catalogue of Nymphs, or the list of Nereids who lamented Patroclus (*Il.* 18.39–48),

8 Hannah Arendt, *The Life of the Mind* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanavich, 1981), 132–33. Cf. Walter Benjamin: "Memory is the epic faculty *par excellence*" (Walter Benjamin, "The Storyteller," in *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt and trans. Harry Zohn [New York: Shocken Books, 1969], 97).

and the list of heroines in the *Odyssey* (11.225–329). But perhaps the most celebrated of all are the catalogues of women in Hesiod (the so-called *Ehoiai*) and the catalogue of ships, *nēōn katalogos*, in Homer (*Il.* 2.494–877, probably the oldest part of the *Iliad*). Already in ancient times the catalogue of ships became proverbial for a long-winded story (Aristotle, *Poet.* 1459a36). Describing the Ionian revolt, Herodotus, in imitation of Homer, lists the ships of the Ionians and Aeolians who had to defend Miletus from the Persian fleet; he also mentions their numbers (Herodotus 6.8–9). The Hesiodic catalogue of women (the first two lines of which coincide with the last two lines of the *Theogony* 1021–1022) is the list of mortal women who had lain with gods and thus originated families of nobles and heroes. The text of the catalogue contains genealogies that go back to earlier local genealogies of the eighth century BCE (in Elis, Messene, Argos, Lesbos, et al.). The Homeric catalogue of ships describes the Achaean and the Trojan troops in the Trojan War. It lists twenty-nine Achaean contingents in 226 verses, as well as sixteen Trojan contingents in sixty-two verses. For each of its entries, Homer's list mentions (1) the name of the country or city of origin, which provides the name of a nation, (2) the name of the leader(s), and (3) the number of ships they brought to Troy. Any such entry is often accompanied, and thus expanded, by a short narrative that mentions the myths that are connected with the birth, genealogy, and/or exploits of a hero, or the stories that pertain to his country. Scholars stress, however, that the catalogue genre predates Hesiod and Homer, who both draw on a common ancient tradition that goes back to the late Mycenaean times. But already in Mesopotamia, Iran, Armenia, Asia Minor, Syria, Near East, Egypt, and India, as Jack Goody has convincingly argued, any culture that cares about processing, storing, and transmitting the records it considers important is always based on an organized list or catalogue.[9]

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9 Jack Goody, *The Domestication of the Savage Mind* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 74–111. For Goody, the very passage from oral to written culture comes with the possibility of a reliable word for word transmission in a list, which is why written cultures are always based on list.

The very structure of a catalogue shows that it is a mnemonic device: in both Hesiod and Homer a catalogue is often preceded by an invocation of the Muses or the gods (those who know and remember), followed by a question (who? what? how many?), and then by an answer, in which what is deemed important (names, deeds, and events to be included and immortalized in cultural memory) is given in the form of an ordered (long) catalogue or an organized list.[10]

Poetic catalogue is therefore one of the earliest forms of artificial memory, for it keeps and reproduces that which cannot be confided to fleeting individual memory. Originally *oral*, such memory is entrusted to poetry that organizes and stabilizes poetic catalogue by rhythm and meter, which allow for passing on in singing and recitation the exact knowledge of memorable people and deeds of the past. It is only much later that oral epic catalogue poetry is committed to writing. Memory originally trusts the oral poetic word more than written prosaic one. This archaic epic attitude persists in Plato, who criticizes writing as betraying memory. The poet is thus the one who allots others a place in lasting communal memory, doing so in a catalogue and passing the memory on within a culture, which is then organized around the transmission and interpretation of such memory.

4. History and Memory

Through poets, rhapsodes, and listeners, epic preserves and transmits the "absolute past" beyond an immediate experience. This "absolute past" cannot be changed but can only be looked at and listened to, and

Cf. Jacques Le Goff, *History and Memory*, trans. Steven Rendall and Elizabeth Claman (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992), 61; M. T. Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record: England 1066–1307* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993), 19–21.

10 W. W. Minton, "Invocation and Catalogue in Hesiod and Homer," *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association* 93 (1962): 188–212; M. E. Edwards, "The Structure of Homeric Catalogues," *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 110 (1980): 81–105. Catalogues of memorable *misdeeds* are also known: thus, Demosthenes in the *Against Meidias* mentions a collection, *syllogē*, of Meidias' wrongdoings (21.23).

can thus become the basis for cultural memory. Such a memory is maintained and exercised by both transmitting and constantly reinterpreting. History, on the contrary, retains the events that occurred either to an eyewitness or to somebody who can relate to a witness through a reliable transmission of the story. Epic poetry is solemn, must be heard and memorized, and sings of the events that could not have happened to the listener. Conversely, history is down to earth, is often entertaining, and speaks about the events that could have happened to the reader. Aristotle famously opposes poetry to history: while poetry shows things as they could be, history depicts things as they were (*Poet.* 1451b4–7). The historian, therefore, speaks about the "was," the particular and individual, while the poet sings of the "might have been," the universal. Yet historical knowledge is important: it provides the minutia for the finely belabored tissue of culture, which needs to be preserved and remembered in as much detail as possible. Hence, unlike epic that is originally oral, history is prosaic and written, for even the poetic catalogue cannot remember all the particulars.

As a systematic "scholarly" enterprise, history originates in ancient Greek authors of the second half of the sixth century and flourishes into the fifth century BCE. At this time, *historia* means "inquiry." Thus, Aristotle refers to his study of psychology as "history" (*De an.* 402a3–4), and Iamblichus reports that Pythagoras called geometry "history" (*De vita Pyth.* 52.11). History transmits specific and concrete knowledge about political and cultural events, as well as about people's origin and descent (as "genealogy"). At the same time, history also provides knowledge about the natural surroundings and environment one inhabits and explores (as "geography"). In either case, knowledge of particulars—concrete places, individual people, unique events—is transmitted through the memory of a reproducible, written historical text.

Hecataeus of Miletus (sixth–fifth century BCE) is an exemplary figure here, not only because he is the first historian, but also because his approach to writing history exerted considerable influence on later historians, such as Hellanicus (ca. 480–395 BCE) and Herodotus

(ca. 484–420 BCE).[11] Hecataeus's *Periēgēsis* is the description of the known and inhabited world, which also comes with a map, *Periodos Gēs* (which perhaps is an improved version of the map of Anaximander). Later, *Periēgēsis* is called "geography," or "description of land," by Strabo, since it recalls and depicts—both tells and shows—the world as known and traveled. The early historical geography has precursors in epic poetry with its description of places and detailed poetic catalogues, but it also comes out of the tradition and practice of composing navigational manuals (*Limenes*). These guidebooks were often produced by sailing around (*Periplous*, e.g., in [pseudo-] Skylax) or along a shore of a country or an island so that the landscape was described the way it appeared from a shipboard (cf. Homer. *Od.* 9.105 sqq.). *Periēgēsis* is similar to poetic catalogues, in that, to a great extent it consists of lists or catalogues of the names of cities and peoples in various countries, often accompanied by a story or a myth of migration, of founding and naming a city or a country, or of war—all these stories need to be saved for history by being remembered and preserved in a text. Later, geographical history becomes an established and well-developed genre, from Herodotus to Eratosthenes (ca. 285–194 BCE) and Strabo (ca. 64/3 BCE–23 CE), and is much used by Diodorus Siculus (first century BCE). Genealogies are one of the major subjects for oral (in catalogue poetry) and written (in the Bible and early histories) memorization and become the basis and the point of reference for cultural and historical traditions. It is not by chance, then, that Hecataeus's other major work, *Genealogiai*, contains genealogical accounts, which are for the most part mythological (e.g., the genealogy of Deucalion, fr. 15). Many later writers include genealogies as an integral part of their histories, for example, Hellanicus (*Phorōnis*) and Herodotus

11 Of Hecataeus's two major works, *Periēgēsis* and *Genealogiai*, around 400 fragments are preserved (Hecataeus, *Hecatei Milesii Fragmenta*, ed. Giuseppe Nenci [Firenze: La nuova Italia, 1954]. Cf. Aelian. *Varia hist*. 13.20. See also Felix Jacoby, ed., *Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker*, vol. 1, *Genealogie und Mythographie* (Leiden: Brill, [1923] 1957), 9–164, 185–237, 262–87; and Dmitri Nikulin, "Memory and History," *Idealistic Studies* 38 (2008): 75–90.

(a mythological genealogy of the Lydian kings as the descendants of Heracles, 1.7).

In a sense, the two works of Hecataeus, *Periēgēsis* and *Genealogiai*, a *geography* and a *genealogy*, become paradigmatic for early history in the latter's use and organization of memory. While genealogy preserves linear narrative memory (the line of descent) as the memory of the "heard," geography contains both linear narrative (sailing around and along) and visual or scenic memory (that of a map) as the memory of the "seen."

One can say thus that epic presents an uncritical, unreflective yet universal knowledge of the memory of the remote past. History, on the contrary, remembers—keeps and transmits—a critical, reflective yet particular knowledge of the immediate past. History, then, needs philosophy in order to establish critical, reflective, *and* universal knowledge, which in Plato paradoxically is the memory of the present.

5. Memory and Recollection in Plato

Plato (429–347 BCE) is the first to use the notion of memory as a philosophical concept. Although use of the word "memory" (*mnēmē*) is attested well before him, the notion of "recollection" (*anamnēsis*), first systematically used in his *Meno*, is Plato's original contribution to philosophy. Plato also appears to be the first to use the term in the Greek language, although the famous orator Lysias also employs the word once in a funeral oration at around the same time.[12] As is often the case with Plato, a discussion of a topic or notion arises within a particular context of a conversation. But because the dialogical situation is each time concrete and the interlocutors unique, establishing a general theory behind a number of oftentimes loosely related arguments is not an easy task. In fact, as has been recently suggested, a reconstruction of

12 Lysias speaks of the "reminiscences of sacrifices" (*Epitaph,* 39.3). However, Lysias's authorship of the speech has been contested. Cf. Liddell-Scott-Jones, *Greek-English Lexicon* and *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae*.

a systematic theory of memory in Plato is neither possible nor even advisable because of the incommensurability and difference of the contexts in which memory is treated and discussed.[13] Nevertheless, I will try to provide a plausible reconstruction of Plato's account of memory and recollection and will outline their functioning within Plato's philosophy.

We might begin by noting that, first, except for the *Hippias maior* and *Hippias minor* (which, as Thesleff suggests, might not be written by Plato),[14] all the relevant Platonic dialogues that discuss memory and recollection belong to the middle and late periods; that is, they were composed by the mature thinker. And second, although Socrates's presence on the stage diminishes in the later dialogues, he is always vividly present at the discussions of memory and recollection. This might suggest that the problematic of memory is important for Plato until the end of his philosophical career and that the very way of thinking about memory is tightly connected with the Socratic method of finding the truth of a thing through questioning.

Together with the theory of forms, recollection is probably the most famous of Plato's doctrines found in his dialogues or "popular" published writings. There is also ample evidence of the theory of recollection in Aristotle and other debaters within Plato's Academy, but which remained unpublished and appear in Plato's dialogues only in part or as hints.[15] The discussion of *anamnēsis* occurs in the *Meno* 80d–86c and *Phaedo* 72e–74a and is centered on the discussion of the problem of whether we can learn something about the things that *are*.[16] Such

13 Giuseppe Cambiano, "Problemi della memoria in Platone," in *Trace nella mente. Teorie della memoria da Platone ai modern*, ed. Maria Michela Sassi, (Pisa: Edizioni della Normale, 2007), 1–23.

14 See Holger Thesleff, "Platonic Chronology," *Phronesis* 34 (1989): 1–26; and Holger Thesleff, "Studies in Platonic Chronology," in *Platonic Patterns: A Collection of Studies*, 143–382 (Las Vegas: Parmenides Publishing, 2009).

15 Cf. Dmitri Nikulin, ed., *The Other Plato: The Tübingnen Interpretation of Plato's Inner-Academic Teachings* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2012).

16 For a discussion of recollection in the *Meno*, see Dominic Scott, *Plato's Meno* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 85–128; David Sedley and Alex Long, Introduction to *Meno and Phaedo*, by Plato, ed. and trans. David Sedley and Alex Long (Cambridge: Cambridge University

things are always the same and for this reason are atemporal; they are only thinkable because physical things remain in a constant flux and are therefore ever changing. The knowledge of these self-identical things ties cognition with being and thus epistemology with ontology. For Plato, being is the being of ideal forms of things; number, human being, justice, and virtue are examples of forms. Each form (*eidos* or *idea*) is one. Yet the form allows for a plurality of things to be related to the form (to "participate" in it) and thereby to both exist and be known to us in what these things are (*Phaedo* 72c; *Parm*. 129a–134a et al.). The proper knowledge (*epistēmē*), then—the knowledge of those properties that cannot be altered—is only of the forms, whereas we can only have a more or less exact (and as such, useful) opinion (*doxa*) of the things that participate in a form yet change over time.

However, any attempt at the cognition of being is marked by a *paradox*. This paradox is formulated by Socrates (*Meno* 80d–e): if we begin with what we do not yet know, how do we know what we are looking for? For if we do not know a thing or a concept, we do not know what we are looking for, but if we already know it, we will not be searching for it. This paradox is resolved by Socrates by suggesting that we can only know that which we somehow *already* know. Therefore, coming to the realization of what we have already known (but hesitated to ask) is recollection.

Learning (*mathēsis*) is thus knowing, and knowing is recollection as coming to understand what one has known before (*proteron*) but somehow has forgotten (*Meno* 81c–e, *Phaedo* 73c). Learning *is* recollection: *mathēsis* is *anamnēsis* (*Meno* 72e). To know is to recollect, restore, and recognize that which is already ours, that is, what is and has been our own (*Phaedo* 75e). Learning is discovering a treasure that we have always owned without knowing it. If this is the case, then when

Press, 2011), xvii; Gregory Vlastos, "*Anamnesis* in the *Meno*," in *Plato's* Meno *in Focus*, ed. Jane M. Day, 88–111 (New York: Routledge, 1994). For Vlastos, Plato's doctrine of recollection "carries not only the implication that non-empirical knowledge can exist but also, unfortunately, that empirical knowledge cannot exist" (ibid., 103).

we try to come to know something, we already know *that* we know, although we do not yet know *what* we know. Therefore, first, it is only possible to learn about those things that cannot be otherwise. And second, learning is analytic: we do not produce or invent new knowledge but only discover that which is already independently true before the act of discovery. Thus, again, learning about empirical things and their properties cannot count as knowledge but only as opinion.

This already-knowledge, then, becomes a presupposition for learning as recollection.[17] But how did it happen that we already know everything that we discover in ourselves in an act of "recollection"? Plato has to assume that each individual soul had already preexisted before it was embodied in its current form and thus had already learned and known everything. The preexistence, and therefore immortality, of the soul is spoken of in a myth in the *Meno* (70c–d) and in the *Phaedo* (81a). However, as Jacob Klein has pointed out, "the nature of the tie between the thesis of the soul's indestructibility and the thesis of recollection is by no means clear."[18] One could say perhaps that Plato's recollection is a way of making implicit (non-empirical) knowledge explicit. Yet this might amount to saying simply that we can learn anything. However, since Plato is an emphatic realist in insisting that true knowledge cannot be a product of our construction but is rather that of the discovery of how things really are, independent of our cognition of them, he needs to presuppose the immortality and preexistence of the soul as a condition of the possibility of knowledge and its completeness. In this way, we can learn anything by discovering *what* we have known and *that* we have already known it before.

But how do we come to know what we know for the "first" time, beyond the temporality of our current cognition and existence? For

17 As Moravcsik argues, knowledge as recollection in Plato is non-empirical or a priori. Yet at the same time, it is not purely deductive or analytic, because otherwise one would not need a reference to memory when discussing knowledge. See Julius Moravcsik, "Learning as Recollection," in *Plato's* Meno *in Focus*, ed. Jane M. Day, 112–28 (New York: Routledge, 1994).

18 Jacob Klein, *A Commentary on Plato's* Meno (Chicago: University of Chicago Press), 166–67.

Plato, one should assume that the soul has learned all truths at a certain point; even when the demiurge, reason, creates the cosmos, he has to look at the objectively existing world of atemporal paradigms or forms of things, appropriate them, and produce the world in accordance with them (*Tim.* 27d–29d). The human soul, therefore, should once have learned the eternal truths. However, since the initial learning cannot be referred to any particular time, while recollection is a process and happens in time, the first memory cannot be properly described and is thus either not mentioned (in the *Meno* and *Phaedo*) or is put in terms of a myth, a plausible yet nonbinding story that always comes to the rescue where we lack a logically compelling reconstruction. Klein rightly sees a possibility of connecting this indefinite "first learning" with the myth in the *Phaedrus* (246a–247e), although we do not know whether Plato intended it to be the description of the "first memory." Here, Plato famously compares the human soul to a chariot driven by two winged horses of good and bad temper and steered by the charioteer who represents reason. It is only when the charioteer happens to raise his head above heaven that he becomes able to see—and first learn about—the real being (*hē ousia ontōs ousa*), which has no color or shape but of which alone there is knowledge.

6. Recollection, Geometry, and Dialectic

The working and possibility of *anamnēsis* is demonstrated by Socrates in action, in a famous—and quite spectacular—mathematical example when, by asking appropriate questions, he makes a slave boy solve the problem of doubling the area of a square and thus occasions him to "recollect" what he has apparently already known before (*Meno* 82b–85b). To his surprise, the boy who only understands the concept of square but is not trained in geometry discovers that he is capable of solving the problem, to which he initially provides a wrong solution: doubling the side of the square quadruples its area rather than doubles it. In order to double the area, one needs to draw the diagonal in the

square and then construct a new square with the side equal to this diagonal. However, the decisive step of the act—producing the diagonal—is performed by Socrates (*Meno* 85a) and not by the boy himself, whose task is to recognize the solution implied by the drawing and accept it as his own. The construction of the diagonal is also mentioned in the pseudo-Platonic dialogue *Sisyphus* (388e) probably written at the Academy. Besides, a method similar to that of the *Meno* is alluded to in Plato's *Phaedo* (73a–b), where Cebes suggests that drawings (*ta diagrammata*) are the best way to find out that we already have knowledge of many things that we did not yet have a chance to learn but which, if properly asked, we can recognize in these diagrams.

Once we have learned something, it is very difficult to unlearn it, insofar as learning is a conscious and intentional act. Even if we think that we forgot what we had learned, it mostly means that we forgot *how* we did so, and often *that* we did so, yet what we had learned might still affect us in various ways. Recollection may mean an active conscious effort toward remembering what we once learned. Alternatively, recollection can also mean a passive act of the recognition of what we remember when we encounter the remembered, either by chance or through a hint from another person. The *Meno* example seems to suggest passive recollection, since the boy "remembers" the solution of the problem by recognizing it once—and after—he is led to it by his shrewd interlocutor.

A further problem here is whether doubling the square is a *discovery* of the already existing properties, in which case they will be atemporal and pertaining to being—or whether it is a *construction*, when the answer and the corresponding properties are produced and revealed by their very enacting. The opposition between these two approaches is clearly seen in the ancient mathematical distinction between theorems and problems, explained at length by Proclus in his commentary on Euclid (*In Eucl.* 76–79). A theorem demonstrates that which already exists independently of the act of cognition but is understood in and through an act of thinking as "seeing" (*theōria*) a property inherent in

the object, for example, that the sum of angles in a triangle equals two right angles. A problem, on the contrary, requires production or the making (*poiēsis*) of a geometrical object, so that the sought after solution comes as a result of a series of compositions and divisions of an object.[19] As Proclus reports, the debate of whether geometry in its essence is discovery or construction was already central to the Old Academy, where Speusippus, the successor of Plato, defended the position that every mathematical proposition is a theorem, contrary to Menaechmus who held that every proposition is a problem.

Therefore, Plato's choice of a geometrical problem as an example of *anamnēsis* does not seem to be accidental. We know that mathematical studies flourished in the Old Academy and that Plato knew well many illustrious mathematicians of the time including Archytas, Theodorus, Eudoxus, Theaetetus, and Menaechmus. In the Pythagorean school, which was congenial to Plato's attitude toward mathematics as clarifying the meaning of being, Philolaus (ca. 470–390 BCE) argued that the decad, which is the completion of number, can be called memory (*mnēmē*). The reason for this is that the decad and its constituents allow us to achieve a firm understanding of being, which is also why the monad, the indivisible basis of number, can be called memory as well (*mnēmosynē*, fr. A13 DK).

A famous problem that the mathematicians of the time debated is the so-called Delian problem of the duplication of the cube, which, as Theon tells us in reference to Eratosthenes (2.3–12), comes as an oracle to the Delians urging them to build an altar double the size of the existing one, in order to end the plague. According to Plato, the oracle meant to reproach the Greeks for the neglect of mathematics and contempt of geometry. Eutocius in his *Commentary on Archimedes' Sphere and Cylinder* relates that the problem was solved by several geometers,

19 Dmitri Nikulin, *Matter, Imagination and Geometry: Ontology, Natural Philosophy and Mathematics in Plotinus, Proclus and Descartes* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002), 223–26.

including Archytas, Eudoxus, and Menaechmus, and one solution was even ascribed, probably wrongly, to Plato himself.[20] Therefore, Plato's choice of the problem of doubling the square can be seen as a reference to the debate of whether the discovered solution is a theorem or a problem, in which case the *anamnēsis* example in the *Meno* represents an implicit polemics against Menaechmus.

Ancient geometry accepts a hierarchy of problems according to the simplicity of the lines needed for their solution: the problems solved by applying a ruler and compass, that is, with reference to the simplest and thus most "perfect" figures of the circle and straight line, are considered to represent the properties of mathematical being better than those implying more complex curves, such as conic sections (first discovered by Menaechmus) or other curves (Proclus. *In Eucl.* 111–12). Unlike doubling the square, doubling the cube cannot be solved by the application of a ruler and compass, which suggests that a more complex solution to the problem is needed, for instance, by using the parabola, as Menaechmus did. Yet, as Plutarch tells us (*Quaest. conv.* 8.2), Plato strongly objected to "mechanical" solutions in geometry, that is, to the reduction of theorems to problems, because this would mean assimilation of being to becoming, theory to production. Through visible images, geometry demonstrates non-empirical properties that do not change over time and do not arise from within by an act of construction, but rather pertain to being. For Plato, we do not and cannot produce but only "recollect" by drawing geometrical figures and uncovering what is already there.

We thus encounter two opposite attitudes: one is the realist position of Plato and Speusippus, holding that recollection attests to the already-knowledge, or memory, of being. The other is the constructivist

20 Thomas Heath, *A History of Greek Mathematics*, vol. 1, *From Thales to Euclid* (Mineola, NY: Dover, 1981), 244–58. See also Ivor Thomas, ed., *Greek Mathematical Works*, with a translation by Ivor Thomas, 2 vols., Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1939–1941), 256–308.

stance of Menaechmus, maintaining that the recollection of what we apparently already know in fact comes from our ability to produce solutions to complex problems by construction. In either case, however, as the *Meno* example demonstrates, a problem is solved by attending to and answering simple and straightforward questions.

The process of questioning is hence central to recollection. When in the *Phaedo* Simmias says that he has *forgotten* the argument that knowledge is nothing but recollection and asks Cebes to *remind* him of recollection, Cebes replies that anyone can find the right answer to any question provided that the question is *rightly* asked. Dialectic is precisely the art of asking the right questions. Platonic dialectic proceeds by asking simple and unambiguous questions that yield straightforward "yes" or "no" answers and thus progresses, in a number of steps, toward the answer to the original question.[21] Plato's doctrine of recollection attempts to explain how we come to the understanding of what is, which exists in an atemporal *act* yet is revealed through a temporal *process* of learning in a dialogical step-by-step questioning of being and its properties. Therefore, asking the right question means, first, establishing the appropriate question: what something is (e.g., what is justice?) or how something can be done (how can one double the square?). And, second, it means asking a number of questions in an order that will lead to the answer. Dialectic, then, can be taken as a way of achieving a justified and sound conclusion of an argument (*logos*), with a soundtrack of two or more actors added in a dramatic dialogue. *Anamnēsis* can be considered a codification of the dialectical method in Plato. The dialectical and dialogical questioning, in turn, can either be taken as discovering the truth of a thing (as it is for Plato) or as producing it (for Menaechmus). In the former case, everyone learns from oneself by learning that one already knows what one is looking for; in the latter, one is instructed (implicitly or explicitly) by the questioner.

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21 Dmitri Nikulin, *Dialectic and Dialogue* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010), 23–39.

7. Memory and Forgetting

Recollection thus occurs when a true (or correct) opinion (*alēthēs doxa, orthē doxa*) is awoken by the right questions and, submitted to the scrutiny of dialectical debate and justified and proven by reasoning, becomes knowledge (*epistēmē*) (*Meno* 85c–86a; *Phil.* 64a). In the *Timaeus* Plato sharply opposes true opinion to reason (*nous*) on the ground that true opinion comes from persuasion, whereas reason comes from instruction (*Tim.* 51d–e). This makes sense in the context of the discussion of the origin and structure of the cosmos, where Plato contradistinguishes truth and faith (*alētheia* and *pistis*) as corresponding to the two different ontological realms of being and becoming (*ousia* and *genesis*, *Tim.* 29a–c). However, from the epistemological point of view stressed in the *Meno*, the opposition between truth and true opinion is not so sharp because, although they are different, both can lead to the same result of showing the right path from premises to conclusion, similar to outlining the right road from Athens to Larissa or from New York to Boston. True opinions come and go—they become produced and forgotten—but if bound by reasoning about their causes, they can become stable (*monimoi*) and turn into knowledge (*Meno* 97b–98b): this is what recollection is.

But how is thinking related to sense perception (*aisthēsis*) in an act of *anamnēsis*? Recollection begins with a perception of sensible objects or their images and, if properly directed by dialectical reasoning, can trigger recollection or, as Plato puts it, a "shock" (*seismon*, *Phil.* 33d) within the soul. Sense perception, then, is not a proper cause but is rather an occasion for recollection and thinking. The process of learning as recollection allows us to pass from the realm of fluid becoming and opinion to that of firm knowledge and being, which is symbolically represented as memory. In this case, one could say that memory is being, as Plato seems to suggest in the *Phaedrus*. Or, we could say that the memory of being *is* being.

Yet we can hardly find an unambiguous and consistent "theory" of memory in Plato. In the famous discussion of the purpose of writing in

the *Phaedrus* (274c–277a; cf. Hecataeus, fr. 24), Plato closely associates memory with wisdom because memory preserves its objects intact and alive, and such are also the forms, always the same yet always thinkable from a different perspective. Writing and the alphabet, then, are not a "cure" (*pharmakon*) for forgetfulness. Rather they serve as a reminder (*hypomnēsis*) that makes us seemingly wise yet in fact forgetful of being, insofar as writing makes us reliant on external, rigidly fixed signs incapable of defending themselves and always telling the same story. The image of memory as a writing tablet (*deltos*) of the mind unto which the events of the past are written appears already in the *Prometheus Bound* (788–789) attributed to Aeschylus. In a similar vein, Hippocrates suggests that grammar provides the capacity to remember the past (DK I 188, 12). But for Plato, when asked, a written text only repeats what it has already said without being able to answer any questions. The written is thus incapable of recollection and cannot really support memory. At around the same time, Alcidamas makes a similar claim, arguing against the Sophists that writing is an utterly inflexible way of preserving a speech, which needs to be first written and then memorized in order to appear *ex tempore* when delivered.[22]

We know that memory and its organization was an important topic for the Sophists. Thus, Hippias (fifth century BCE) was widely known for the art of memory that reportedly allowed him to remember long lists of up to fifty names and reproduce them in exact order (Hippias, fr. A2 DK = Philostratus. *V. Soph*. I.11). Hippias's wondrous capacity to memorize is mentioned in the Platonic dialogues (*to mnēmonikon tekhnēma*, *Hipp. min*. 368d; *Hipp. mai*. 285e), yet each time with irony, which seems to suggest the uselessness of such skill, seen as it is in a self-canceling act of *forgetting to remember*. As Socrates ironically suggests to Hippias, "I forgot" (*Hipp. min*. 368d) or "I did not think" (*Hipp. min*. 368d) about your memory-art. For Plato, Hippias's mnemonics is

22 Alcidamas, "On Those Who Write Written Speeches, or On Sophists," in *The Works and Fragments*, ed. and trans. J. V. Muir, 2–21 (London: Bristol Classical Press, 2001).

nothing more than a way of knowing-much (*polymathia*, cf. Heraclitus, fr. B40 DK; Democritus, fr. B65 DK). The art of memory is the art of foxes, not of hedgehogs (cf. Archilochus, fr. 201 West). It is the art of remembering and recollecting long but useless lists of words, rather than knowing few but important things that are worth remembering and useful in sciences such as astronomy or geometry, in which Hippias's interlocutors take little interest and which he himself does not seem to manage. The art of memory comes in handy in the recollection of things past, in the "archeology" (*arkhaiologia*) that digs into people's origin, into their ancestral genealogy and colony settlements (*Hipp. mai*. 285d–e).

The anonymous Sophistic treatise *Dissoi Logoi* or *Double Arguments*, composed probably in the beginning of the fourth century BCE by someone close to Hippias, ends with a section on mnemonics.[23] Here, the author praises memory (*mnama*) as the greatest invention and mentions three parts or steps of the method that may have been used by Hippias and in Sophistic exercises. First, one needs to focus the mind (*nous*) on the memorized, so that the consciousness (*gnōma*) will perceive it clearly; second, to repeat what one has heard; and third, to use associations (e.g., "gold" (*khrysos*) and "horse" (*hippos*) for the name of Chrysippus). The rules of the art of memory are thereby established, although memorization still cannot concern being, but only its imitation.

When speaking about *anima naturaliter philosophica*, Plato mentions a "chorus" of qualities, such as ready wit, sharpness, diligence, sagacity, and so on, that are indispensable for learning well and quickly and for eventually becoming wise (*Rep.* 486d, 490c, 503c, 535c). Although these qualities may vary each time, memory invariably appears among them, which suggests its exceptional role for learning (also stressed in the Pythagorean school, DK I 467, 16–17). And, as we remember, learning is recollection that leads us to the knowledge of

23 DK I 416, 13–22; John Dillon and Tania Gergel, eds. and trans., *The Greek Sophists* (New York: Penguin, 2003), 318–20, 333.

being. The purpose of memory for Plato is therefore not to perform Sophistic stunts meant to show off, impress, and attract potential pupils that would study the Sophistic pseudo-wisdom for a fee. Memory helps us to learn and understand what is (especially early in one's life: Plato mentions a proverb that what is learned in childhood is remembered remarkably well, *Tim*. 26b), and thus gain a foothold in the intelligible, of which alone there can be knowledge.

This suggests that memory is a *capacity* to store and preserve certain impressions. In the *Theaetus*, when discussing right opinion, Socrates famously suggests that we have a gift from the mother of the Muses Mnemosyne, a sort of a wax tablet (*kērinon ekmageion*) where all kinds of marks, imprints, impressions, stamps, or images (*sēmeion*, *typos*, *apotypōma*, *sphragis*, *eidōlon*) are inscribed and preserved, similar to images of signet rings (*Theaet*. 191c–e; cf. 192a–194d). Socrates also compares this capacity to an aviary where birds of different kinds are kept, once caught (*Theaet*. 197c–198a). The "catch," then, is knowledge, as, for example, the knowledge of numbers in arithmetic.

At this point, we might once again return to the question of how sense perception is related to thought, but this time bringing memory into consideration. (That there is an intimate relation between all three was explicitly suggested by two fifth-century-BCE thinkers, Alcmaeon, fr. A11 DK, and Parmenides, fr. A46 DK.) If memory is the capacity to retain what we have once seen or thought, and recollection is the extraction of the preserved, then memory should be the memory of thought. Yet memory can equally be the memory of sense perception, which is explicitly suggested by Socrates: our memory is a kind of wax tablet susceptible to both sense perceptions and thoughts (*tais aisthēsesi kai ennoias*, *Theaet*. 191d). Similarly, when discussing pleasure in the *Philebus*, Socrates distinguishes between bodily pleasure and the soul's pleasure and suggests that the latter arises only out of the memory of pleasure (*Phil*. 33c). There memory is understood as the preservation of a sense perception (*sōtēria tēs aisthēseōs*, *Phil*. 34a–c), which itself arises when soul and body are affected together.

Thus, the "birds" that we catch and keep are both sense perceptions and thoughts. In recollection, we begin with changing sensible things, but end by recalling unchanging thinkable things. In memory, however, the preserved objects are not only intelligible, such as those that have unalterable universal properties like geometrical figures. They are also sensible and can point in the direction of thinkable things, but are themselves particular and changing. The sensible, then, not only can "trigger" a recollection, but also produce an "imprint" that can be stored in memory. Yet how exactly this happens remains unexplained by Plato.

A question we might also ask then is: what role do drawings or diagrams play in recollection? Are geometrical figures quasi-visual images that serve as "places of memory"—or are they illustrations for the exercise of a discursive step-by-step dialectical reasoning? Put otherwise, does memory "paint"—or does it tell a story and "write"? Or, again, is memory "scenic" or "narrative"?

In the *Philebus* Socrates suggests that memory appears to write (*graphein*) certain speeches (*logous*, which may also mean "arguments") in our souls that correspond to the impressions it receives. Yet there is also another "craftsman" in our souls, a painter (*zōgraphos*) who draws (*graphei*) images (*eikonas*) after the inscriptions of the scribe (*grammatistēs*, *Phil.* 39a–b). This seems to suggest that memory turns linear into dimensional, (Hippias's) list into (Socratic) image, narrative into visual, consecutive into simultaneous, hearing into seeing. Put otherwise, recollection that leads to memory as already-knowing eventually folds a process of discursive thinking (*dianoia*) that runs through arguments into an act of nondiscursive thought (*nous*) that looks at forms.[24]

True knowledge is thus compared to seeing: reason (*nous*) *sees* the true being that appears in and as knowledge (*Phaedr.* 247c), and the soul knows everything, because it has already *seen* everything before in

24 The distinction between *dianoia* and *nous* is not apparent in Plato but will be established later in the later tradition of Platonism, particularly, in Plotinus. For Plato, the divine thinking (*dianoia*) is fed by the reason (*nous*) and pure knowledge (*epistēmē*), *Phaedr.* 247c–d.

its previous births (*Meno* 81c). In recollecting or learning, the soul converts the "heard" into the "seen." The work of memory in the *Theaetetus* is to turn an original linear "inscription" on the "wax tablet" into a two-dimensional image of a "bird." A similarity between writing and painting (*zōgraphia*) is also stressed in the *Phaedrus*, where the written speech is taken as an image of the live speech inscribed into the soul (*Phaedr*. 275d–276a). The operation of memory, then, coincides with that of dialectic, which turns a step-by-step argumentative act of reasoning, *logismos*, into the knowledge of a form, *eidos*, which is not discursive but is "seen" in thought (*Rep*. 518d–e, 533e–534b).

Considered this way, the act of memory is distinct from that of *ekphrasis*, which describes a work of art and thereby turns the visual into narrative. Besides, geometry is particularly appropriate for recollection and learning: a geometrical figure can be visualized as an *image* enfolding a number of consecutive steps of reasoning that can be laid out as a structured mathematical proof. A geometer both derives from, and illustrates by, a geometrical figure those properties that are already (analytically) contained in it and, once made explicit, constitute knowledge.

The opposite of memory is forgetting or forgetfulness, *lēthē*, personified in epic texts as a nocturnal and deceitful creature. Thus, in Hesiod's *Theogony*, Night bore a host of loathsome progeny—the personified Death, Sleep, Distress, hard-hearted Strife, and others. Strife, in turn, bore Forgetfulness (*Lēthē*) and others, including Toil, Hunger, and Pains (*Theog*. 211–232, esp. 227). In Homer, Zeus sends an oracle to Agamemnon in a dream urging him not to forget the imparted message; however, the message is actually a fraudulent trick (*Il*. 2.33). The deceit here discloses the opposite, forgetfulness, which is associated with non-being, sleep, death, evil, grief, pain, and suffering, and as such finds its way into tragedy (cf. Sophocles. *Philoctetes* 877–78; Euripides. *Bacchae* 281–83; Aeschylus. *Orestes* 211–13). No wonder that *Lēthē* is the name of the river of forgetfulness from which the deceased drink, thereby forgetting their previous lives (Virgil. *Aeneid* 6.705). Even grammatically,

lēthō is an epic poetic form of *lanthanō*, "to be hidden," "not to notice," or "to make forget" (Latin *lateo*, "to hide," "be hidden, unknown"; hence "latent"). From this, *alētheia* is derived, which is the word for truth as "not-concealment," to which Nikolai Hartmann and Heidegger dedicated quite a bit of their attention. In Plato, forgetting comes as a disappearance, dissipation, or "exodus" of memory (literally, its "departure," *mnēmēs exodos*, *Symp.* 208a; cf. *Phil.* 33e, 34b–c).

In the storehouse of Platonic memory, individual memories are living beings, "birds" in the aviary or live inscriptions of the wax tablet, not inanimate things stashed somewhere on a shelf. Writing, then, causes forgetfulness rather than promoting memory because its inscriptions are only external signs that deaden live memories. What we keep in memory, we have as our own, which we can always use. Not using memory leads to its decline and dissipation. Memories for Plato are kept alive by exercise and care of memory (*meletē*, *Symp.* 208a), whereas carelessness causes oblivion (*Phil.* 63e). In order to be preserved, memory needs to be reproduced. As Diotima says in the *Symposium*, this is how everything mortal supports itself in existence—by reproducing itself afresh, although not as an individual, but as a continuous relay that maintains the form it embodies each time anew and differently (*Symp.* 208a–b). Such is the work of memory: in order to be the same, it needs to appear each time different and new. This, again, suggests that memory participates not only in the intelligible and thinkable, as the doctrine of *anamnēsis* would imply, but also in the bodily and sensible. Memory, therefore, stands for being as it is remembered, that is, restored and saved from the flux of becoming.

This is the only way in which immortality is accessible to us: through coming to being or recollection of that which is, as reconstituted from within ourselves in knowledge, in a constant effort of preserving and reproducing—of remembering—in body, as well as in thought and reason (*phronēsis*, *nous*, *Phil.* 63c). This is why Plato wholly rejects the traditional epic understanding of immortality in catalogue poetry,

which is the immortality of the historical being in the memory of fame (*kleos*) spread by the poets and maintained by the listeners, of the glory that one earns by heroic deeds, as Leonidas won his everlasting repute.[25]

Plato's treatment of memory and recollection remains fragmented, leaving several problems unresolved, such as the problem of the origin of the initial memory or learning; of an account of memory that would consistently explain the interaction and passage from sensible to mental memory; or of the precise nature of the relationship between memory and recollection. Nevertheless, the undeniable value of Plato's approach is the introduction of memory as a philosophical concept, as well as a clear distinction between memory and recollection. But it is Aristotle who will attempt to work out a coherent theory of memory and recollection.

8. Aristotle on Memory and Recollection

Aristotle's short treatise *On Memory and Recollection* (*De memoria et reminiscentia*) is traditionally included in the *Parva Naturalia*, a collection of opuscules on natural philosophy, right between *On Sense and Sensible Objects* and *On Sleep and Waking*. In *De memoria et reminiscentia*, Aristotle develops his understanding of memory and recollection as a critical response to Plato's discussion of these notions.[26] However, while Plato begins with recollection, Aristotle starts with memory.

As an old hermeneutic rule of interpretation of a (philosophical) text suggests, a rule accepted by Collingwood and Gadamer, in order to understand a text one needs to understand or reconstruct the question to which it is or might be the answer. Yet the question is often implicit and not obvious, even to the author. To ask the question is much more difficult than to provide an answer, and to find an answer is more difficult than to elaborate a well-crafted argument. From its

25 Simonides, fr. 5 Diehl. Cf. Plato, *Meno* 80c, quoting Pindar, *Pindari Carmina cum fragmentis*, ed. Bruno Snell and Herwig Maehler (Leipzig: Teubner, 1987).

26 See Helen S. Lang, "On Memory: Aristotle's Corrections of Plato," *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 18 (1980): 379–93.

inception in antiquity, philosophy discovers a peculiar characteristic of the human mind: it is not always wise in that it can rarely see the real problem at hand or ask the proper question; our mind is very inventive in that it can always find an orderly, long-winded way to the answer once a question is asked, doing so with reference to recognized rules and established procedures of reasoning.

Unlike Plato who defers the formulation of a problem until sometime later in a dialogue, Aristotle usually opens his discussions by outlining the program of study right away. In the case of *De memoria*, the inquiry is guided by the questions *what* is memory? *why* is there a memory? and *where* is memory located in the soul? (*De mem.* 449b3–6). Aristotle begins by observing that memory can be only *of the past* since it is impossible to remember the future, which is the subject of conjecture and expectation, since it is impossible to remember the present, which is the subject of sense perception (*De mem.* 449b9–15, 451a30–31). That memory refers to the past implies, first, reference to time, because one needs to be aware of the before and after in order to understand the past as past. And second, memory should presuppose the soul's capacity to somehow preserve traces of past events and retrieve them.

This means that memory needs to be understood within the general structure of the mind or soul, which I can only touch on here. As Aristotle argues in Book Γ of *On the Soul*, mind should be understood as having *faculties* or *capacities* that allow it to perform various tasks and operations. Each faculty, such as thinking (*nous* or *dianoia*), judgment (*hypolēpsis*), sense perception (*aisthēsis*), and imagination (*phantasia*), is defined by its proper object and its role in cognition. Memory for Aristotle owes its features to various faculties, but has a particular affinity with imagination, which justifies a brief digression into the role imagination plays in cognition.[27] Imagination (1) differs from both sense perception and thinking in being a capacity of producing *images*

27 See Michael Wedin, *Mind and Imagination in Aristotle* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988); Malcolm Schofield, "Aristotle on the Imagination," in *Essays on Aristotle's De Anima*, ed. Martha C. Nussbaum and Amélie Oksenberg Rorty, 249–77 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996); and Dorothea

(*phantasmata*, *De an.* 427b14–428a5). But such is also memory whose remembrance is always accompanied by an *image* (*De mem.* 450a12–13). There has been considerable debate about whether these images are pictorial or whether they should be taken as causal antecedents of the experience of memory.[28] Indeed, on the one hand, images as pictorial fit within Simonides's places-system of memory, in which the remembered is put in an imaginary place in the form of an imaginary picture. Besides, as Plato similarly suggests in the *Phaedrus* and *Philebus*, Aristotle speaks about images as a sort of picture (*zōgraphēma*) or as traces of signet rings (*De mem.* 450a29–32). Yet on the other hand, he also mentions motions (*kinēseis*), which are similar to a succession or order of steps in a mathematical proof (*De mem.* 452a1–3) or a process of recollecting a name, melody, or saying (*De mem.* 453a28–29), which often come almost effortlessly and are not evidently accompanied by a pictorial image. Because (2) images produced by imagination cannot be considered otherwise than having a size, although not a determinate size, we have to understand the objects of thought, imagination, and memory as continuous magnitudes.[29] This makes imagination congenial to sense perception, because all objects of sense perception, as Aristotle argues rightly at the end of *On Sense and Sensible Objects*, are continuous magnitudes (*De sensu* 449a20–31). However (3), as Aristotle famously claims, thinking is impossible without images and, therefore, without imagination (*De an.* 431a14–17, 432a8–14; *De mem.* 449b31). In this way, imagination also has a certain affinity with thinking. In other words, imagination, in a sense, is a cognitive faculty *intermediate*

Frede, "The Cognitive Role of *Phantasia* in Aristotle," in *Essays on Aristotle's De Anima*, ed. Martha C. Nussbaum and Amélie Oksenberg Rorty, 279–95 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996).

28 Richard Sorabji, *Aristotle on Memory*, 2d ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), ix–xvi, 2–8; Julia Annas, "Aristotle on Memory and the Self," in *Essays on Aristotle's De Anima*, ed. Martha C. Nussbaum and Amélie Oksenberg Rorty, 297–311 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 305. See also the discussion in David Bloch, *Aristotle on Memory and Recollection: Text, Translation, Interpretation, and Reception in Western Scholasticism* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 64–70.

29 Cf. David Bloch, *Aristotle on Memory and Recollection: Text, Translation, Interpretation, and Reception in Western Scholasticism* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 65–67, who argues that images have both a physical and a nonphysical component.

between thinking and sense perception. Finally (4), imagination differs from judgment, because, unlike (true) judgment, imagination is within our power: it is an affection that we can manipulate at will, as do those who memorize something (*De an.* 427b17–20; cf. *De mem.* 452a10). The important point here is that memory requires imagination, and imagination is a faculty that produces images.

Memory for Aristotle is neither an actual sense perception nor judgment (and thus does not provide knowledge). It is rather an imprinted trace, an affection (*pathos*) of either one, once time has elapsed (*De mem.* 449b24–25). Affection for Aristotle is a change or motion, that is, affection is not a substance (not a thing) or action but always belongs to something else as a property (*Met.* 1022b15–21). Memory, then, is a *state* (*hexis*) or "*having*" of *images* that correspond to previous knowledge, judgment, or sense perception. *Hexis* or "having" is an important notion in Aristotle, ontologically located somewhat "between" activity or actuality (*energeia* or *entelekheia*) and potentiality or capacity (*dynamis*; cf. *Met.* 1022b4–8). One should note, however, that in the *Topics* Aristotle makes the opposite claim, namely, that memory is *not* a state or *hexis* but rather an activity or *energeia* (*Top.* 125b15–19). The reason for this might be that Aristotle here opposes sense perception, which he takes to be a state, to memory, which then should be understood as an activity of remembering. As Aristotle explains in the *Magna Moralia*, one needs to distinguish *having* (*hexis*) something from *using* (*khrēsis*) it because using is the purpose of some activity, and having something is always for the sake of using it in action (*MM* 1184b15–17; cf. Plato. *Theaet.* 197b). One can have a *hexis* either naturally (as a faculty) or by training. Thus, for example, through education one can acquire the ability to speak the Ket language, which one does for the sake of using or speaking it on an appropriate occasion. But when one does not use Ket, one still has the ability to do so, keeping it as a *hexis*, the state of having the language.

As was said, memory always evokes an image and, in this way, is similar to imagination. A difficulty that arises here is how we remember

that which is not if we only have an affection of a thing in its absence (*De mem.* 450a25–27). Aristotle's suggestion is that a (memory) image can be considered either by itself, in which case it is the object of contemplation (*theōrēma*) or thought (*noēma*)—or as the image of another, in which case it is a copy (likeness, *eikōn*) or reminder (*mnēmoneyma*) of something else. Each time, then, it is important to understand whether we are looking at the image as such or at the image representing a thing or an event (*De mem.* 450b20–451a2). Yet Aristotle does not tell us whether such a distinction belongs to memory or to thinking, or whether there should always be a thing that corresponds to an image in memory. Therefore, the problem of the representation and represented, of the imagination (or imaged) and image, inevitably emerges if memory deals with images. The problem would not arise if memory is understood as a learned skill (e.g., riding a bicycle or sewing), a state, or *hexis* kept and exercised in an action when the occasion arises. But then Aristotle would still need to insist that even in this case there should be an image accompanying the skill.

Another problem Aristotle seems to recognize is that of inadequate or false memory. Memory is associated with imagination, which can be false (and is false most of the time), whereas sense perception cannot be since it always tells what it tells (*De an.* 428a11–12). The solution Aristotle hints at is that we should rely on training memory, which, as Plato similarly suggests in the *Symposium*, needs exercises (*meletai*) or repetitions that would preserve and keep an image as the image of the thing or event (*De mem.* 451a12–14).

When it comes to individual peculiarities and differences in memory and recollection, they depend, on the one hand, on the slowness or quickness of a mind (slow people have a better memory, while those who are quick are better at recollection) and, on the other hand, on bodily constitution (*De mem.* 449b6–8, 453a31–b7).

In passing, Aristotle makes the interesting observation that one cannot actually remember without knowing that one remembers (*De mem.* 452b26–27). In other words, when I remember, I cannot fail to

notice *that* I remember. Remembering, therefore, is reflexive in its very act, in which respect it is similar to thinking. If one could further interpret this claim as suggesting that I equally cannot fail to notice that it is I who remembers, then memory becomes constitutive of self-identity, rather than just being *my* memory. It is perhaps here, then, that one needs to look for the origin of the modern Cartesian *cogito* (which is equally introduced in passing by Descartes: *Med.* II, AT VII 25; *Princ.* I, AT VIII 7), rather than in Augustine's act of doubt (which can lead to remembrance, *De Trinitate* X.X.14).

Yet memory is not thinking. When in the *De anima* Aristotle introduces his famous distinction between productive reason (*nous poiētikos*) that forms, and acts upon, passive reason (*nous pathētikos*), he claims that we have no memory, no recollection of thinking per se, of the active reason (*De an.* 430a20–25). Therefore, an eternal being does not have memory, since it has no affections (*apathes*) or sense of time. Only humans and some animals have memory (*De mem.* 450a15–22), to the extent that we have an understanding of time, as well as imagination and sense perception, and thus can have affections that we can retain in the form of images.

But an image is an affection (*pathos*) that belongs to what Aristotle calls common sense (*koinē aisthēsis*), one function of which is to apprehend objects that are perceived by more than one sense, such as magnitude and motion (*De an.* 425a27–29; *De mem.* 450a10–12).[30] Having a "pathological" affection, memory belongs neither to thinking (only accidentally) nor to body, nor to a particular sense, but to the faculty of the soul that Aristotle calls primary sense perception (*to prōton aisthētikon*). This is the faculty that allows one to know particular sense perceptions as images and to which imagination also belongs (*De mem.* 450a22–23; *De insomniis* 459a14–18; *Met.* 980a28–981a1). Thus, while

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30 Magnitude and motion share the property of continuity with time, a precondition for having memory. Aristotle, *Phys.* 219a12–13. On the other functions of the common sense, see Richard Sorabji, *Aristotle on Memory*, 2d ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 75.

Plato hesitates in establishing a precise relation between intellectual and sensual memory, Aristotle decisively opts in favor of associating memory with the sensible (*Anal. post.* 100a3–5; *Phys.* 247a7–12), although with a generalized faculty of sense perception, not a particular sense perception. Aristotle's answer to Plato, then, is that memory is similar to sense perception and yet, unlike sense perception, memory can act at will and produce images. Memory for Aristotle is thus a state, a capacity of having—keeping and retrieving—images as copies of those things that can be known or perceived without an actual exercise of either knowledge or sense perception (*De mem.* 449b19). For instance, remembering the Pythagorean theorem (which constitutes knowledge) or the ancient theater of Taormina (which constitutes sense perception) means having an image of them without performing the exact steps and details of obtaining or reproducing this particular knowledge or sense perception. Moving through such steps would instead be recollection.

9. Memory against Recollection

Accepting Plato's distinction between memory and recollection, Aristotle not only appropriates Plato's vocabulary, but also provides a critical response to his teacher. In the *Analytics*, Aristotle explicitly criticizes *Meno*'s thesis that learning is recollection as the recollection of being on the grounds that a singular thing—this triangle—cannot be known before the act of learning and experience (*Anal. priora* 67a21–25; *Anal. post.* 71a29–30). Contrary to Plato, learning is *not* recollection; one can learn twice (*De mem.* 451b6–10), in case one has forgotten what one had learned. Nor is recollection a recovery or acquisition of memory, for one can recollect something without memory preceding the act of recollection (*De mem.* 451a20–21). Moreover, one can have memory of something without having recollected it. Rather, as Aristotle argues, recollection is the recovery of those acts of knowledge and sense perception that have originally led to a state of memory (*De mem.* 451b1).

Recollection, then, is an inquiry or search (*zētēsis*) for an image that would allow for such a recovery (*De mem.* 453a15). Yet to be successful, such a search should be *organized*. Organization or ordering is thus an important principle of recollection. This means that recollection should presuppose an orderly method, usually called association of ideas, which are images that follow an order (*taxis*) of moves (*kinēseis*) in a particular succession (*De mem.* 451b10, 452a3). To organize a series of linked or associated images, one needs to choose a starting point or *beginning* (*arkhē*), a successor (*ephexēs*), and a way of forming associations by similarity, opposition, or neighboring (*De mem.* 451b18–452a2). In order to make recollection more efficient, one can look for and begin with a *middle* (*meson*), from which it is already easier to reach both the beginning and the end of the associative chain, insofar as they are closer to the middle than to each other (*De mem.* 452a17).

Aristotle's example of the use of the method of association is the recollection of a season—autumn—through a series of moves by establishing a connection between images. Taking the image of milk as the starting point, one associates it then by similarity with white, moving from white to air, from air to moisture, and from moisture to autumn, which is the season one is seeking for (*De mem.* 452a14–16). In this example, if one misses one single step in the order of associations, the end might not be reached and thus the whole recollection would fail. But one might also begin with the middle, air, from which one could easier reach both milk and autumn and thus restore the precise track of recollection in its every move.

By frequently repeating such a path, one establishes a *habit* (*ethos*) of recollection; and habit is similar to nature in that nature does what it does repeatedly and always in the same way (*De mem.* 452a26–30). Moreover, when recollecting, one acts by oneself, relying on one's own agency, and is in this respect similar to nature (*De mem.* 452a5–6). And in order to get recollection right, it is important to choose the starting point as the beginning of motion (*arkhē kinēseōs*, *De mem.* 451b30–31) that will get the recollection moving toward its end. But

the beginning of motion or change for Aristotle *is* nature, which he describes in exactly the same terms, as *arkhē kinēseōs* (*Phys.* 200b12; *De caelo* 301b18)! Therefore, although recollection is a kind of art and presupposes artificial methods, the one who recollects becomes nature-like and assumes the role of nature in restoring knowledge or sense perception. One can therefore say that, whereas in Plato recollection breaches the separation between being and becoming, in Aristotle it artfully overcomes the gap between art and nature.

Because recollection is well-ordered and self-directed reasoning (*syllogismos*, *De mem.* 453a10), it bears a striking similarity to logical syllogism. For Aristotle, syllogism is *the* method of obtaining knowledge and arriving at the truth of things. Syllogism is a speech, reasoning, or argument (*logos*) in which, if something is presupposed, something different must follow (*Anal. priora* 24b18–20; *Top.* 100a25–27). There are different kinds of syllogism, but Aristotle is mostly interested in the proving syllogism, that is, the syllogism whose premises are true, which distinguishes it from, for example, dialectical syllogism whose premises are merely plausible (*Top.* 100a27–101a4). Syllogism is a structurally organized reasoning or argument that has two premises (a major and a minor) and a conclusion that necessarily follows from them; the major premise provides the predicate for the conclusion and the minor provides the subject. Both premises, however, contain a middle term that holds a syllogism together, but is excluded from the conclusion. Similarly, recollection is a search and reasoning that chooses a beginning, moves to a successor (a "middle term" that gets excluded), and follows an order in reaching the recollected or conclusion.

In addition to the "syllogistic" understanding of recollection, Aristotle offers a mathematical one. For although he is critical of the Platonic explanation of the role of mathematics in recollection, Aristotle nevertheless finds the practice of mathematics exemplary of recollection in that both consider well-ordered objects and provide knowledge that is established in a number of ordered steps (*De mem.* 452a3). This is why mathematical proof and logical argument (to which one might add

combination of moves in a game like chess or Go) are more easily recalled and serve as the model for recollection. Recollection is hence a "natural," "syllogistic," and "mathematical" activity.

Memory for Aristotle is thus a state (*hexis*), a having of an image, a kind of conclusion to a theorem or argument. Memory is nonpropositional and is similar to scenic memory. Recollection, on the contrary, is a process, an active mediation, a kind of discursive motion through a series of steps in an argument, proof, or syllogism. Recollection is propositional and is similar to narrative memory.[31] Memory and recollection are therefore both opposed to and complement each other in keeping and retrieving sense perception and knowledge.

10. The Stoics: Memory as Treasury

After Aristotle, the problem of memory and recollection continues to occupy philosophers' attention. Thus, Epicurus (341–270 BCE), who held that pleasure is the highest good and that the highest pleasure is the lack of pain, argued that pleasure and memory are intimately connected. According to Epicurus's account preserved in Cicero, we are excited by the expectation of good things and are pleased when we recollect them, so that while the unwise are bothered by the memory (*memoria*) of bad things, the wise enjoy past goods as renewed in recollection (*recordatione*). Memory thus secures our well-being, insofar

31 One could say that Aristotelian memory in its function resembles the Cartesian *intuitio*, whereas recollection is similar to *deductio*. Descartes, *Reg.* IV, AT X 368–70. Julia Annas has argued that Aristotle distinguishes two kinds of memory: (1) personal and nonpropositional ("Paris"), which is memory proper and (2) nonpersonal and propositional ("Caesar invaded Britain"), which is recollection (Julia Annas, "Aristotle on Memory and the Self," in *Essays on Aristotle's De Anima*, ed. Martha C. Nussbaum and Amélie Oksenberg Rorty, 297–311 [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996]). However, as Sassi rightly pointed out against this position, for Aristotle an image of memory, when considered by itself, is the object of contemplation or thought (*De mem.*, 450b25, 451a1), and thus can be taken as impersonal (Maria Michela Sassi, "Aristotele fenomenologo della memoria," in *Trace nella mente. Teorie della memoria da Platone ai moderni*, ed. Maria Michela Sassi, 25–46 [Pisa: Edizioni della Normale, 2007]). In other words, a memory is always mine but, if it is not a memory of sense perception, it can be the memory of a universalizable (e.g., mathematical) thought that can be shared with others.

as we commit painful things to oblivion but joyfully remember good things.[32]

Memory appears to play an important role in the Stoics, although among the texts and fragments of ancient Stoics, *Stoicorum veterum fragmenta* (SVF), only a handful—ten—fragments explicitly refer to memory. This means that any account of memory in the early Stoa will always be a reconstruction based on the collation and interpretation of texts that come from different and often later sources (many come from Sextus Empiricus's writings of ca. 180–200 CE). Moreover, ancient thinkers sometimes disagree with each other about the basic premises behind the Stoic interpretations of memory.

One such fragment suggests that Zeno of Citium (ca. 335–263 BCE) considered memory "a treasury of impressions" (*thēsaurismos phantasiōn*).[33] The "storehouse" of impressions, is, as we remember, Plato's image of memory as opposed to recollection, although in the Stoic account an opposition of memory to recollection is not at all evident. The understanding of memory as a treasury of impressions finds its way both into the fragments of Zeno and Chrysippus (ca. 280–207 BCE), as well as into the later Roman Stoic tradition, in Cicero and Quintilian.[34]

A reconstruction of memory in the Stoics is provided by Ierodiakonou who argues that memory originates in sense perceptions, which are accompanied by impressions (*phantasiai*) that are stored and preserved when sense perceptions are gone.[35] According to this reading, such impressions are not mental pictures or images but each one is

32 Cicero, *De finibus* 1.57.

33 Sextus Empiricus, *Adv. Math*. 7.373 = SVF I fr. 64.

34 For Chrysippus, memory is "a treasury of impressions" (*mnēmē thēsaurismos ousa phantasmōn*, SVF II fr. 56); for Cicero, "a treasury of everything" (*thesauro rerum omnium*, *De oratore* I.5.18); and for Quintilian, "the treasury of eloquence" (*thesaurus eloquentiae*, *De institutione oratoria* XI.2.1 [Quintilian. *The Orator's Education: Books 11–12*, trans. Donald A. Russell (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001)]).

35 Katerina Ierodiakonou, "The Stoics and the Skeptics on Memory," in *Trace nella mente. Teorie della memoria da Platone ai moderni*, ed. Maria Michela Sassi, 47–65 (Pisa: Edizioni della Normale, 2007).

an affection (*pathos*) of the soul (which, as we have seen, is Aristotle's position). Moreover, impressions and memories are corporeal or bodily (which, however, is contested by Plutarch, who is one of the sources of our knowledge of ancient Stoicism), because for the Stoics only bodies can affect something or can be affected.[36] Both for Zeno and Cleanthes (ca. 331–232 BCE), an impression is an imprint (*typōsis*) similar to an imprint of a signet ring on wax.[37] Such a position, however, is considered absurd by Chrysippus, for in this case two bodies would coexist or be stored in the same place. Chrysippus's solution to this problem, then, is to suppose that memory's imprint or impression is a modification or alteration (*alloiōsis*, *heteroiōsis*) of the soul. Consequently, memory becomes capable of storing not physical impressions but alterations or modifications that can coexist in the soul, in a way similar to air's capability of keeping different sounds as alterations of sound at the same time. Understood in this way, memory becomes equally important for the formation of knowledge through experience, which comes after a repetition of similar memories. According to one testimony, memory allows for the production of knowledge based on what the Stoics call naturally occurring "preconceptions" (*prolēpseis*; e.g., of white) and "conceptions" that come from instruction and conscious effort (*ennoiai*, used in science and art).[38]

The function of memory in the later Stoics is equally in need of a considerable reconstruction. According to Reydams-Schils, memory in Seneca and Marcus Aurelius is closely connected with time and is indispensable for establishing practical knowledge. In particular, memory appears to encompass the lived experience that refers to different social relations, from which we can learn in our striving toward

36 Sextus Empiricus, *Adv. Math.* 8.263 = SVF II fr. 363.

37 Diogenes Laertius, *Lives* 7. 45; Sextus Empiricus, *Adv. Math.* 7.228–231.

38 Aetius, *Placita* 4.11.1–3 = SVF II fr. 83. See also Matt Jackson-McCabe, "The Stoic Theory of Implanted Preconceptions," *Phronesis* 49 (2004): 323–47; and Henry Dyson, *Prolepsis and Ennoia in the Early Stoa* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2009). Both *prolēpsis* and *ennoia* are said to play a central role in Epicurus's understanding of memory, Diogenes Laertius, *Lives* 10.33.

moral betterment.[39] Thus, memory is certainly important for the Stoics, yet its precise role needs to be restored through a careful exegetical analysis and intertextual juxtaposition of various texts.

ii. Rhetoric and Memory

Roman philosophy understands itself as coming out of the appropriation of Greek thought. Traces of the influence of the four major schools (Academic, Peripatetic, Stoic, and Epicurean, which themselves also incorporated Skepticism and Cynicism) can be seen in one way or another in practically every Roman thinker. Yet, Roman philosophers take much more interest in practical matters than in abstract metaphysical considerations, which is why rhetoric becomes a major concern for every writer. Cicero alone dedicated several major treatises to rhetoric, including *On the Orator* (*De oratore*), *Brutus*, and *Orator*. Since the purpose of rhetoric is persuasion and the winning over of listeners, speaking in public requires the smooth and convincing delivery of a text written in advance. This, in turn, requires memorization of the speech, because, contrary to our modern understanding, in antiquity delivering a speech while looking into a book or written text is a sign of negligence.[40] Memory is thus one of the key components in Roman rhetoric, being "the guardian of all the parts of rhetoric."[41] Plato already stresses the importance of

39 Gretchen Reydams-Schils, *The Roman Stoics: Self, Responsibility, and Affection* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 29–34. Cf. Seneca, *De brevitate vitae* 10.2–4, 14.1–2 (Seneca, *Moral Essays II: De Consolatione ad Marciam. De Vita Beata. De Otio. De Tranquillitate Animi. De Brevitate Vitae. De Consolatione ad Polybium. De Consolatione ad Helviam*, trans. John W. Basore [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1932]); Marcus Aurelius 2.12, 8.48, 9.30 Aurelius, Marcus. *Marcus Aurelius*, trans. C. R. Haines [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1916]).

40 Quintilian, *De institutione oratoria* XI.2.45 (Quintilian. *The Orator's Education: Books 11–12*, trans. Donald A. Russell [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001]).

41 [Cicero], *Rhetorica ad Herennium* III.16.28 (Cicero, *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, trans. Harry Caplan, Loeb Classical Library [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1954]). Cicero speaks of memory as "the one principal foundation not only of philosophy but of all the conduct of life and all the sciences." Cicero, *Academica* II.7.22 (also quoted by Michel de Montaigne, *The Complete Essays*, trans. M. A. Screech (New York: Penguin Press, 1987), II.17. . Cf.: "All learning depends on memory, and teaching is in vain if everything we hear slips away." Quintilian, *De institutione oratoria* XI.2.1 (Quintilian. *The Orator's Education: Books 11–12*, trans. Donald A. Russell [Cambridge, MA: Harvard

memory, portraying *Mnēmosynē* as the goddess who helps in retelling a speech one heard just once (*Critias* 108d). However, memory does not play any role in the Aristotelian rhetoric, since Aristotle is more interested in logical subdivisions, formal arrangements, and means of persuasion in speech. In Roman rhetoric, the most famous discussions of memory appear in Cicero's *De oratore*, in the anonymous *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, which from the early Middle Ages was ascribed to Cicero, and in Quintilian's *De institutione oratoria*.[42]

Contrary to Plato and Aristotle, neither Cicero nor Quintilian distinguishes between memory and recollection.[43] At the same time, both stress a distinction between *natural* and *artificial* memory, hinted at in Plato's discussion of writing in the *Phaedrus* as the distinction between memory and reminder. Art not only imitates but also strengthens and supplements nature. Hence, as the *Rhetorica ad Herennium* suggests, natural memory (*naturalis*) is "embedded in our souls and born simultaneously with thinking (*cum cogitatione*)," whereas artificial memory (*artificiosa*) complements and enhances the natural one.[44] Natural memory is gifted memory and can be involuntary in that it may retain things without our intention. As Cicero says, "I remember things I do not want to remember and I cannot forget things I want to forget."[45] Yet, natural memory can also be improved and developed: in order to serve us well, memory should be properly trained.[46]

University Press, 2001]). Traditionally, rhetoric distinguished five parts or major constituents, one of which is memory: *inventio*, *dispositio*, *elocutio*, *memoria*, and *actio*.

42 See Frances A. Yates, *The Art of Memory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966), 1–26; Paulo Rossi, *Logic and the Art of Memory: The Quest for a Universal Language*, trans. Stephen Clucas (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, [1960] 2000), 8–10; and George Kennedy, *The Art of Rhetoric in the Roman World, 300 B.C–A.D. 300* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972), 207 sqq.

43 For Quintilian, recollection (*recordatio*) is the most enduring part of memory. Quintilian, *De institutione oratoria* XI.2.43 (Quintilian. *The Orator's Education: Books 11–12*, trans. Donald A. Russell [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001]).

44 [Cicero], *Rhetorica ad Herennium* III.16.28; cf. III.21.34, 36 (Cicero, *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, trans. Harry Caplan, Loeb Classical Library [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1954]).

45 *Memini etiam quae nolo, oblivisci non possum quae volo*. Cicero, *De fin*. II.23.105.

46 Cicero, *De oratore* II.87.356–57, 360 (Cicero, *On the Orator: Books 1–2*, with a translation by E. W. Sutton and introduction by H. Rackham, Loeb Classical Library [Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1942]); Quintilian, *De institutione oratoria* XI.2.1 (Quintilian. *The Orator's Education:*

The art of memory, therefore, requires, first, a method (*praeceptio*), which, as was mentioned, both Cicero and Quintilian ascribe to Simonides's method of the "places of memory" (the method was also successfully practiced by the Academic philosophers of the second century BCE, including Charmadas of Athens and Metrodorus of Scepsis).[47] And second, the *ars memoriae* presupposes training and discipline (*disciplina*), which require exercise, which, in turn, needs concentration, effort, industry, devotion, toil, and diligence.[48] Exercise keeps memory alive, just as does Plato's *meletē*, "care of memory," and contributes to the cultivation of the self and the development of one's abilities. The main rule for the improvement of memory is "practice and effort (*exercitatio et labor*)," repetition over and over (and over) again.[49] And repetition produces habit (*consuetudo*),[50] which allows us to use memory effectively and to speak as if *ex tempore*, thereby artfully

Books 11–12, trans. Donald A. Russell [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001]). Cf.: "the natural memory must be strengthened by discipline so as to become exceptional." [Cicero], *Rhetorica ad Herennium* III.16.29 (Cicero, *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, trans. Harry Caplan, Loeb Classical Library [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1954]).

47 Cicero says that each one "wrote down things he wanted to remember in certain 'localities' (*locis*) in his possession by means of images (*imaginibus*), just as if he were inscribing letters on wax." Cicero, *De oratore* II.87.360 (Cicero, *On the Orator: Books 1–2*, with a translation by E. W. Sutton and introduction by H. Rackham, Loeb Classical Library [Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1942]); cf. Cicero, *Tusc. disp*. 1.59 (Cicero. *Tusculan Disputations*, trans. J. E. King [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1927]).

According to Quintilian (XI.2.22, 26 [Quintilian. *The Orator's Education: Books 11–12*, trans. Donald A. Russell [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001]), Metrodorus used a memory system consisting of 360 sites in 12 signs of the Zodiac. Cf. Frances A. Yates, *The Art of Memory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966), 39–42; and L. A. Post, "Ancient Memory Systems," *The Classical Weekly* 25 (1932): 105–9. Heraclitus reportedly took the constellations of Ursa major and Ursa minor as the signs of the immortal memory (fr. B126a DK). Joseph Farrell, however, argues that memory needs to be understood not in terms of storage and retrieving but rather as an enactment and performance (Joseph Farrell, "The Phenomenology of Memory in Roman Culture," *The Classical Journal* 92 (1997): 373–83.

48 [Cicero], *Rhetorica ad Herennium* III.24.40 (Cicero, *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, trans. Harry Caplan, Loeb Classical Library [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1954]).

49 Quintilian, *De institutione oratoria* XI.2.40–41 (Quintilian. *The Orator's Education: Books 11–12*, trans. Donald A. Russell [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001]).

50 Cicero, *De oratore* II.87.358 (Cicero, *On the Orator: Books 1–2*, with a translation by E. W. Sutton and introduction by H. Rackham, Loeb Classical Library [Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1942]).

hiding the artificial character of the memorization of that which itself is an artifice (of a written speech).

Artificial memory, *memoria artificiosa*, as the *Rhetorica ad Herennium* suggests, is constituted by places and images, *ex locis et imaginibus* (III.16.29). The mnemonic method, therefore, presupposes the duality of places and the placed, of place or location (*locus*)—and image or likeness (*effigies*, *imago*, *simulacrum, similitudo*). The method finds its philosophical explanation in Aristotle: both places and images are imagined and thus pertain to the realm of imagination and the imaginary. Artificial memory deals with images that imagination should creatively produce and attach to things as marks or signs (*notae*, *signa*).[51] To that end, Cicero advises to choose and imagine places that are "clear and defined and at moderate intervals apart"—and images that are "effective and sharply outlined and distinctive."[52] Otherwise, images can be lost and erased, in a manner similar to letters effaced from wax tablets. The artificial memory is thus likened to the familiar Platonic wax tablets for writing or stamping images of a signet ring. For both Cicero and Quintilian, the places of memory are similar to wax tablets or papyri, and images are similar to letters.[53]

Memoria artificiosa is thus a kind of imaginary writing that produces traces or vestiges of things placed and preserved in imaginary sites. Quintilian is bemused by Plato's criticism and rejection of writing in

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51 Quintilian, *De institutione oratoria* XI.2.21, 29–30 (Quintilian. *The Orator's Education: Books 11–12*, trans. Donald A. Russell [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001]); [Cicero], *Rhetorica ad Herennium* III.23.38–39 (Cicero, *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, trans. Harry Caplan, Loeb Classical Library [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1954]).

52 Cicero, *De oratore* II.87.358 (Cicero, *On the Orator: Books 1–2*, with a translation by E. W. Sutton and introduction by H. Rackham, Loeb Classical Library [Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1942]); cf. [Cicero], *Rhetorica ad Herennium* III.19.31–32 (Cicero, *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, trans. Harry Caplan, Loeb Classical Library [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1954]).

53 Cicero, *De oratore* II.86.354, II.88.360 (Cicero, *On the Orator: Books 1–2*, with a translation by E. W. Sutton and introduction by H. Rackham, Loeb Classical Library [Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1942]); [Cicero], *Rhetorica ad Herennium* III.17.30 (Cicero, *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, trans. Harry Caplan, Loeb Classical Library [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1954]); Quintilian, *De institutione oratoria* XI.2.4, 32 (Quintilian. *The Orator's Education: Books 11–12*, trans. Donald A. Russell [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001]).

the *Phaedrus* as providing only a reminder that is in fact a hindrance to memory.[54] To be sure, for Cicero and Quintilian, the artificial memory can assist us in memorizing and retrieving certain things and events that we have witnessed. However, the intended purpose of the rhetorical memory is the learning and recollection of written texts, which are already artificial and are meant for remembering, that is, for keeping things from oblivion. Hence, artificial memory is a sort of writing turned internal and imaginary.

But it is not yet enough to designate images to places—the whole arrangement of places and images needs to be properly systematically organized and put in a certain *order* (*ordo*).[55] It is order, then, that makes remembrance and recollection possible and effective. Order can be suggested explicitly or implicitly by the distribution of places according to their setting in an imagined house, public building, colonnade, road, town perambulation, or picture.[56] The order of places, then, will define the order of recollection. Following Aristotle, one can begin with choosing the middle in the order of recollection and pick, for example, every fifth place as marked, so that one can easily move to the next two places to the right and to the left.[57] The distribution can either follow a spatial or temporal sequence, when the order of places derived is not imaginary *loci* but is established by a rhythm, which is why it is easier to learn and remember verse than prose.[58] Or order can be also instilled by the logic or rules regulating certain activity, for instance, that of a game. Thus, a good chess player can recall and restore

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54 Quintilian, *De institutione oratoria* XI.2.9–10 (Quintilian. *The Orator's Education: Books 11–12*, trans. Donald A. Russell [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001]).

55 Cicero, *De oratore* II.86.353 (Cicero, *On the Orator: Books 1–2*, with a translation by E. W. Sutton and introduction by H. Rackham, Loeb Classical Library [Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1942]); [Cicero], *Rhetorica ad Herennium* III.17.30–31 (Cicero, *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, trans. Harry Caplan, Loeb Classical Library [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1954]).

56 Quintilian, *De institutione oratoria* XI.2.21 (Quintilian. *The Orator's Education: Books 11–12*, trans. Donald A. Russell [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001]).

57 [Cicero], *Rhetorica ad Herennium* III.18.31 (Cicero, *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, trans. Harry Caplan, Loeb Classical Library [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1954]).

58 Quintilian, *De institutione oratoria* XI.2.39 (Quintilian. *The Orator's Education: Books 11–12*, trans. Donald A. Russell [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001]).

a combination in a game by recollecting the moves of chess pieces (images) on the board (in the system of memory places). Quintilian illustrates this by telling the story of Scaevola who was famous for his skill in playing a board game called "twelve rows" and who was able to restore a whole game from memory, stating exactly where he had made the wrong move.[59]

Cicero makes a further distinction between the memory of words (*verborum*) and the memory of things (*rerum*), arguing that the memory of things is more important for an orator because it allows grasping ideas through images that function as memory "sites" or "places" that are ordered in a certain way as a technique for remembering.[60] In a sense, the memory of things is the visual memory (of a face, situation, event), whereas the memory of words is the memory of hearing (of a verse, phrase, speech). Once again, we encounter the opposition between scenic and narrative memory, between the memory of seeing and painting and the memory of hearing and speaking. No wonder that *ekphrasis*, a vivid literary description of people, places, and events, which is a conversion of the visual into the spoken and back, in and by the effort of imagination, can be used as a mnemonic technique.[61] As Cicero explains, we remember best what is given by the senses; of all the senses, vision is the sharpest; therefore, what we heard or thought is best kept as (or as if) seen.[62] Or, in Quintilian's aphoristic formulation,

59 Quintilian, *De institutione oratoria* XI.2.38 (Quintilian. *The Orator's Education: Books 11–12*, trans. Donald A. Russell [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001]); cf. Cicero, *De oratore* I.50.217 (Cicero, *On the Orator: Books 1–2*, with a translation by E. W. Sutton and introduction by H. Rackham, Loeb Classical Library [Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1942]).

60 Cicero, *De oratore* II.88.359 (Cicero, *On the Orator: Books 1–2*, with a translation by E. W. Sutton and introduction by H. Rackham, Loeb Classical Library [Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1942]); cf. [Cicero], *Rhetorica ad Herennium* III.20.33 (Cicero, *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, trans. Harry Caplan, Loeb Classical Library [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1954]).

61 Cf. Zeno, SVF I fr. 58 and Shadi Bartsch, "'Wait a Moment, Phantasia': Ekphrastic Interference in Seneca and Epictetus," *Classical Philology* 102 (2007): 83–95.

62 Cicero, *De oratore* II.87.357–358 (Cicero, *On the Orator: Books 1–2*, with a translation by E. W. Sutton and introduction by H. Rackham, Loeb Classical Library [Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1942]).

"the eyes are quicker than the ears."[63] Put otherwise, artificial memory allows for recollection as representation, as the storing and unpacking of discursive thought and speech, of a process—through and by the nondiscursive, through a series of imaginable acts, of discrete moves or images put in a certain order. This means that Aristotle is right in his account of recollection as a well-ordered reasoning of a logical or mathematical kind, as a "syllogism" that by its very structure condenses and determines the sequence of the memorized and recalled.

12. Plotinus: Memory as Power

Egyptian by his country of birth, Roman by place of teaching, and Greek by the language of his writing, Plotinus stands at the origin of the last great philosophical synthesis in late antiquity, the later tradition of Platonism. The latter both incorporates the previous philosophical traditions and produces a radically new thought that later had a great influence on medieval and Renaissance thinking. Memory is mentioned many times in Plotinus's writings and plays an important role in his psychology, within the discussion of the structure of the soul and her place in the order of being. Two texts are especially important here: a long digression on memory in the treatises *On Difficulties about the Soul* (*Ennead* IV.3 (27).25–IV.4 (28).12), which was originally one single treatise divided into three by Porphyry, and the later *On Sense Perception and Memory* (*Ennead* IV.6 (41)). Plotinus is well aware of Plato's discussion of memory in the dialogues, of Aristotle's *De anima* and *De memoria*, as well as of the views of the Stoics on the subject, although he portrays himself as only a commentator of classical philosophical texts. Philosophical commentary becomes a favorite genre of the age: voluminous commentaries on Plato and Aristotle are produced by Porphyry, Proclus, Damascius, Simplicius, and others for school use

63 Quintilian, *De institutione oratoria* XI.2.34 (Quintilian. *The Orator's Education: Books 11–12*, trans. Donald A. Russell [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001]).

but are also studied as philosophical texts in their own right. Still, despite his humble posture, when commenting on the views of his predecessors, Plotinus nevertheless comes up with his own original interpretation of debated topics.

The originality of Plotinus's philosophical approach, which became so influential in late ancient philosophy and was further developed in the works of Iamblichus, Proclus, and other late-Platonic thinkers, consists in establishing and investigating the levels of the existent in its various ontological relations and causal interactions. One can say that the core of Plotinus's philosophy comes out of the tradition of Middle Platonism in distinguishing various levels in thinking and reality,[64] as well as from a close reading and careful interpretation of Plato's *Parmenides*, which provides an account of the logical possibilities of various connections between the categories of the one (*hen*) and the many (*polla*). The origin of everything that *is* is the *one*, which itself, strictly speaking, does not exist, insofar as it is situated "beyond being." This one generates being as the being of the intellect (*nous*) (*one-many*). The intellect, which is the identity of thinking that thinks itself in an act and is identical with the objects of thought or intelligible forms (*noēta*), produces the soul that already is *one and many* and thinks its objects (*logoi*) discursively and logically, which is already a reasoned process and not an act. After the soul come bodies, which are *many-one*, and below them is matter, which is pure *many* and as such cannot be properly known. The constituents of the existent are intimately and mutually connected, so that the motion of life and thought consists in the descent from and ascent to various kinds of reality, down to bodies and up to the pure being as the intellect, and even to the one itself, which already cannot be even thought.

For the discussion of memory, it is important to note that the soul appears in different ways in Plotinus's system of the existent: a philosophical hypostasis, which is the soul that abides in the intelligible

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64 John Dillon, *The Middle Platonists* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996).

realm and is characterized primarily by thinking; the world-soul or the soul of the all (also described in Plato's *Timaeus* 34b–36d), which animates the whole cosmos, and of which the "higher" soul is engaged in thinking and the "lower" vegetative soul is immanent to the world; and an individual human soul that is embodied or "descends" into the world during our lifetime and returns to the intelligible after the death.[65] Human soul is our "self" and is primarily characterized by discursive thinking (*dianoia*) and the imagination (*phantasia*). Although, situated in the middle of the order of being, the soul is also capable of joining the intellect in thought, on the one hand, and of having sensations, on the other.

As far as memory is concerned, we need to start by observing that even if it can be of the best, memory itself is *not* the best (*Enn*. IV.4 [28].4.1–10). Why? Because memory has no part in the constitution of our well-being or happiness, since well-being is a state (*diathesis*) and does not consist in the memory or anticipation of well-being (*Enn*. I.5 [36].1.3–5). It is therefore better to be detached from the memory of human concerns (*Enn*. IV.3.32.9–10; cf. Plato. *Phaedr*. 249c–d). In a sense, memory is a sign of the finitude that we can and need to overcome by ascending to being, to the thinking of the intelligible forms. Yet, being for Plotinus is timeless or eternal, which means that it exists all together and outside any succession (which is why it is difficult for discursive thinking to grasp being). Eternity is the eternity of the intellect and being (since intellect *is* being), and time is the time of the soul (*Enn*. III.7 [45].1–6). But because memory refers to the past and also presupposes distinctions and a succession of events, it needs time. Therefore, first, there is *no* memory in the intellect but only knowledge in the act of pure thinking that thinks itself in the forms of intelligible objects (*Enn*. IV.4.1.1–11; IV.4.2.1–8; IV.4.15.2). The intellect has no memory, since it has nothing to remember, for it already *has*

65 See Eyjólfur Kjalar Emilsson, *Plotinus on Sense-Perception: A Philosophical Study* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 23–25.

and knows everything. And second, memory is only the memory in and of the soul.

For this reason, the soul as a hypostasis does not have memory, because it exercises its thinking together with the intellect. Memory can be attributed to the soul of the all if its activity of producing and maintaining the world is understood in a manner similar to that of humans' activity. Yet one need not do so, since such an activity is not conscious or reflective. And celestial bodies that are considered alive and ensouled do not have memory; they keep moving always in the same way or keep their same location (*Enn.* IV.4.6.8–23; IV.4.15.7; IV.4.30–1–2).[66] It is primarily our individual human soul that has memory.

In order to appreciate Plotinus's interpretation of memory, it is best to begin with an account of what memory is not. Most important, memory is *not* a collection of impressions (*typoi*) or retentions (*katokhai*) kept as imprinted in or unto the soul (*Enn.* III.6 (26).3.28–30; IV.6.1.1–5; IV.6.3.56–57).[67] Against the Stoics who take the soul to be a body, Plotinus argues that memory cannot consist of physical imprints of sense perceptions, for if they are sealed onto the soul as something liquid, they would soon disappear, and if as something solid, then each new imprint would erase the previous one, so that memory will be impossible (*Enn.* IV.7 (2).6.37–49). Because of this, memory belongs to the soul only and not to the composite of soul and body (*Enn.* IV.3.26). As such, memory is not a store of impressions or a collection of stamps in an album. For if the impressions remained permanently preserved in the soul, we could not possibly have forgotten them (*Enn.* IV.6.3.27–29).

66 Luc Brisson, "La place de la mémoire dans la psychologie plotinienne," in *Études Platoniciennes: III. L'âme amphibie. Études sur l'âme selon Plotin*, 13–27 (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2006).

67 See Daniela P. Taormina, "Della potenzialità all'attualità. Un'introduzione al problema della memoria in Plotino," in *Plato, Aristotle, or Both? Dialogues Between Platonism and Aristotelianism in Antiquity*, ed. Thomas Bénatouïl, Emanuele Maffi, and Franco Trabattoni, 139–59 (Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 2011). Taormina argues that in *Enn.* IV.3.29.24 Plotinus uses the term "retention" (*katokhē*) in a different sense, as standing for Aristotle's "state" or *hexis* in the *De memoria*, which is further supported by Porphyry's assertion that for Aristotle memory (*mnēmē*) is the retention of an image (*katokhē phantasmatos*; fr. 255F Smith, ap. Stobaeus III 25.1).

Therefore, against Plato's account in the *Theaetetus*, memory is not a wax tablet with inscriptions on it (*Enn*. IV.6.3.75–79). What is it, then?

Memory for Plotinus is a *power* or *capacity* (*dynamis*) that the soul uses in order to reproduce or possess what it does not currently have (*Enn.* III.6.2.42–46; IV.6.3.70–71). Since memory is a power, it is not an affection (*pathos*), for being affected is opposite to being capable of doing something (*Enn.* IV.6.2.1–3). Qua power, memory is a "preparation for being ready" (*Enn.* IV.6.3.58) to recall, actualize, and bring to life what the soul has experienced, thought, or perceived.[68]

Decisive for Plotinus's understanding of memory is his appropriation of Aristotle's *De memoria*: the perceived (*aisthēma*) is remembered as an image of imagination or of the power of producing mental images (*to phantastikon*, *Enn*. IV.3.29.22–32). Similarly, for Longinus memory is the preservation of images of imagination, *sōtēria phantasiōn*, *Ars rhet*. 314.21.[69] In his discussion of memory in the *Ennead* IV. 6 Plotinus appears to directly respond to Longinus's treatise *On Memory*. It is thus the power of imagination or *phantasia* that is the seat of the faculty of memory in the soul. The images of imagination (*phantasmata*) that are kept in memory, then, are not imprints (*typoi*) or things stored in memory, but are dynamic images reproduced by the imagination when needed.

As I said, the soul occupies the *middle* position in the order of the existent, insofar as she is capable of thinking the identical, the being of intelligible objects—and perceiving the nonidentical, the becoming of sensible things (*Enn*. IV.6.3.5–8). But imagination is also *intermediate* between thinking and sense perception and as such is a sort of *mirror* that reflects both the being of the thought and the becoming of the perceived (*Enn*. IV.3.30.7–16; IV.4.13.13).[70] More precisely, an object of

68 Dmitri Nikulin, "Memory and Recollection in Plotinus," *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie* 96 (2014): 183–201.

69 In his discussion of memory in the *Ennead* IV. 6 Plotinus appears to directly respond to Longinus's treatise *On Memory*.

70 Dmitri Nikulin, *Matter, Imagination and Geometry: Ontology, Natural Philosophy and Mathematics in Plotinus, Proclus and Descartes* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002), 175–79.

thinking (*noēma* or *noēton*), on the one hand, is thought by the intellect (*nous*) and is further represented in discursive thinking (*dianoia*) in an argument or verbal expression as *logos*; it then can also be reflected in the imagination (*phantasia*) as *phantasma*. On the other hand, an object (*aisthēma* or *aisthēton*) of sense perception (*aisthēsis*) is equally reflected in the imagination. The *nous* and the *dianoia* both know the intelligible: while the former thinks it in an act, the latter conceives it in a logical or verbal sequence; and the *aisthēsis* is the knowledge of affections distinct from affections themselves (*Enn.* IV.6.2.16–17). Hence, the imagination is itself a double power or, rather, a double-sided *mirror* that can reflect, reproduce, and represent both being and becoming, which then can become the objects of memory. Memory, therefore, is also *double* and can be the memory of the thinkable, as well as the memory of the sensible.

But there is no memory in the purely thinkable, for there is no need for it. This means that the memory of what the soul thought in and with the nondiscursive intellect can be restored or remembered by the soul only *after* it was thought. This is the peculiarity of Plotinus's appropriation of Plato's theory of recollection: *anamnēsis* is not a discovery of forms that are already there for the soul to be recovered—recollection is rather a process of the actualization of such objects by the power of memory. Consequently, memory recalls what it has thought or "seen" in the intellect when it was yet "undescended" into the world and the body (*Enn.* IV.3.25.32; IV.4.3.1–8).[71] Recollection is thus a "different kind of memory" (*Enn.* IV.3.25.32–33).

In a way, even the memory of the thinkable is double: On the one hand, it is the memory of the forms, a recollection of the thinkable as a

71 Cristina D'Ancona, "Plotino: Memoria di eventi e anamnesis di intelligibili," in *Trace nella mente. Teorie della memoria da Platone ai modern,* ed. Maria Michela Sassi, 67–98 (Pisa: Edizioni della Normale, 2007); and R. A. H. King, *Aristotle and Plotinus on Memory* (New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2009). See also Henry J. Blumenthal, *Plotinus' Psychology: His Doctrines of the Embodied Soul* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhof, 1971) and John McCumber, "Anamnesis as Memory of Intelligibles in Plotinus," *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie* 60 (1978): 160–67.

kind of mental picture in the imagination (*horama*, *theama* or *eikon*). On the other hand, it is the memory of the intelligible presented discursively as an argument or a "speech" (*logos*; *Enn.* IV.3.30.1–7). Therefore, memory is not only capable of imaginative quasi-visual representations of the "seen," but also of discursive logical or verbal memories of the "heard." In this way, memory is not only scenic but also narrative. However, when the soul finally returns to the intelligible, unites with, and becomes again, the higher soul, it becomes forgetful (*Enn.* IV.3.32.17). Paradoxically, the ultimate moment of recollection is oblivion, because in the intelligible the soul does not need either recollection or memory. In this sense, being amounts to the total forgetfulness of being. For when we ultimately recollect the intelligible, we lose memory, and thus forget being. Thus completing the long and intricate story of the progression of memory in antiquity, Plotinus leaves it for further rethinking and reappropriation in the Middle Ages and modernity.