

The art of memory as a propaedeutic to learning languages (17th-18th centuries)

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This paper will highlight the existence of a specific teaching method for foreign language learning in early modern Western Europe, namely the art of memory (also called the method of *loci*, the memory palace, etc.) Although it is well known that the Jesuit missionary Matteo Ricci used it to learn Chinese, no scholar has investigated how this mnemonic was used to learn languages in Europe. Yet, the study of a specific teaching material - the memory art manuals - allows us to understand how some professors of *ars memoriae* taught languages using this mnemonic.

More specifically, we want to use German and Italian manuals from the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries to show that Latin (a language presumably known to some extent by the readers of the manuals / the students in the classroom) was memorized in a different way from languages from foreign lands such as Chinese or Arabic. Special attention will be paid to Johannes Döbel's teaching of Russian in the last decade of the 17 century century, as this example is representative of the way in which the art of memory was used to teach a foreign language.