2008

Joan of Arc and the Crusade: Memorizing Medieval Examples to Improve a Renaissance King

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In 1518, *Le Penser de royal memoire* was published in Paris by Guillaume Michel de Tours. Thanks to the pioneering research conducted by

1This article is part of a larger project that involves the critical edition of Guillaume Michel’s *Le Penser de royal memoire*. This research has been funded by the generous contribution of the Transliteratures Project (Rutgers University) and the University of Richmond. My heartfelt thanks go to Professors François Cornilliat and Francis Goyet for their insightful guidance. I would also like to thank my colleague Anthony Russell for his precious comments and for rendering my English translations more harmonious to native ears.

2Guillaume Michel was born in Chastillon sur Indre in Touraine (France) at the end of the fifteenth century. Despite extensive research very little is known about his life. From one of his translations’ prefaces, we learn that he was a professor: “L’office d’ung bon et prudent professeur de lettres et sciences,” he writes, is “[d’]approprier ses paroles et sermons aux choses qu’il est à traicter et descriptre.” He wrote five original texts (*La Forest de conscience contenant la chasse des princes spirituelle* (1516); *Le Penser de royal memoire* (1518); *Le Siecle doré: contenant le temps de Paix, Amour et Concorde* (1521); *Les Elegies, threnes et complainctes* (1526); *De la Justice* (1556, posthumous); and was a prolific and well known translator. He translated the following works: Virgil, *Les Bucoliques* (1516); Apuleius, *De l’Asne doré* (1518); Virgil, *Les Georgiques* (1519); [Suetonius] *Des Faictz et gestes des douze Caesars* (1520); Polydore Vergil, *Historiographe tres renommé* (1521); Eutropius and Paul the Deacon, *L’ancien tresor historical des imperiales couronnes de Romme pareillement des Italles* (1521); *Le Floralier, recueil et epitome des hystoires, dictz et sentences du Grand Valere, prince de tous hystorigraphes* (1525); Virgil, *Les Œuvres* (1529); Sallust, *Salluste Autheur Romain* (1532); Josephus, *De l’Antiquite judaïque.* (1534); Cicero, *La premiere partie des epistres familiieres* (1537); Justinian, *Les Œuvres de Justin, vray hystoriographe, sur les faictz et gestes de Troge Pompée* (1538); *La Pandore de Janus Olivier, pere spirituel et evesque d’Aga* (1542). He is also considered to have been the editor of the 1526 edition of *Le roman de la Rose*. His translations of Virgil were authoritative until the middle of the sixteenth century. Gérard Defaux affirms that his translation of Virgil “a fait autorité jusqu’au milieu
Anne-Marie Lecoq in her monumental book *François Ier imaginaire*, this allegorical text has recently caught the attention of scholars as part of an important moral and political literary production that was published under the reign of King Francis I (r. 1515–1547). Lecoq’s study and subsequent works, such as the critical edition of Jean Thenaud’s *Triomphe des Vertus* by Titia Schuurs-Janssen, shed new light on the literature of propaganda addressed to Francis I, the king who traditionally embodies, in France, the Renaissance itself. In particular we have become more and more conscious of the fact that a significant portion of these texts, in addition to praising the king and defending his policies, ardently preach the crusade. For a long time, there was a tendency simply to put aside and forget such seemingly fervently compositions, as if they did not belong to the Renaissance period.

With his *Penser de royal memoire*, Guillaume Michel thus becomes an exemplary case of an important literary production that does not correspond to our preconceived ideas of the Renaissance. His work advocates the crusade and begs Francis I to lead it as the chief of all Christian princes. Thus, if on the one hand it is true that the idea of a crusade gives rise to a strong opposition by authors like Erasmus and du siècle” (Marot, *Œuvres poétiques* 1:414).

3 The idea of launching a crusade constitutes an important political and rhetorical theme in the first part of sixteenth-century France and particularly at the very beginning of Francis’s reign. This call for a crusade continues the discourse of the political literature developed in France in the years immediately preceding Francis’s reign. In fact, under the reign of his predecessor Louis XII (r. 1498–1515), writers such as Lemaire, Gringore or Jean Marot play an important role in this phenomenon (see Le Fur, *Louis XII*). Their rhetoric associates solemn praise of the acts and virtues of their king (presented as an image of God), the active defence of his internal and foreign policies, and a call to unite all Christian princes in order to undertake a crusade against the Turks. The “Very Christian” king, then “Eldest Son of the Church” is described as being called to guide this crusade (see Le Fur, *Louis XII*, 221–235); Louis XII and then later Francis I combine this idea with their ambition to acquire the title of Emperor. In other words, the project of a crusade is one of the means by which the king of France seeks to impose his political and symbolic supremacy in Europe.

4 Guillaume Michel is the perfect example of this ambivalence. On the one hand his texts often display a didactic writing style that at times seems indifferent to stylistic elegance; on the other he is the first French translator of Suetonius and Apuleius, and his translation of Virgil’s *Bucolics* and *Georgics* become an authority until the middle of the sixteenth century.

5 See Erasmus, *Enchiridion militis christiani*, 87: “Such sentiments [poverty, faith,
later Rabelais, who were traditionally seen as representative for us of the spirit of the Renaissance, on the other hand it is also a fact that the crusade project is welcomed by others who feared (sincerely or not) the rapid rise of Turkish dominion in the East and in Europe, and who continued to believe (sincerely or not) in the necessity of re-conquering the Holy places. We typically associate the idea of the crusade with the Middle Ages, but it is also alive in the Renaissance, although in the latter period it was never concretely realized. In a recent article, for example, Olga Zorzi Pugliese has shown that Baldassare Castiglione, in one of the first manuscripts of the Cortegiano (1513–1518), defends the project of a crusade under Francis I:

He [Castiglione] lavishes praise on the king, describing him, for instance, as being “endowed with those divine qualities that are so rarely seen on earth among mortals,” and indirectly, through the mediation of the dedicatee Alfonso Ariosto, exhorts the king in highly passionate terms to lead a religious crusade. [...] Francis I is urged to embark on this holy war in order “to remove from the world the Moslem sect that is so engrained and powerful. [...] The French monarch, he writes, must

charity and the contempt for everything involving vice], such examples would not readily be found among courtiers, ecclesiastics, or, I might add, monks” and again “for that reason I am all the more astonished that these ambitious titles of power and dominion have been transferred to supreme pontiffs and bishops and that theologians are not abashed in their ignorance and ostentation to call themselves commonly “masters” although Christ forbade his disciples to allow themselves to be called either “lord” or “master,” for there is one who is both lord and master, who is also the head of us all, Christ Jesus” (101).

6 Among the titles of the “beaulx livres de la librairie de Saint Victor” (Rabelais, Pantagruel, ch. 7), we find “La Profiterolle des Indulgences.” See also the episode of selling indulgences in chapter 17. In Gargantua, see the construction of Thélème’s abbey, chap. 52–58.

7 See Knecht, Francis I, 69: “Under Mehmet II they [the Ottoman Empire] had captured Constantinople, penetrated far into the Balkans and expelled the Venetians from Euboea. Now, under Selim the Grim, they were again advancing: having conquered Syria in August 1516, they invaded Egypt early in the following year.” See also Ursu, La Politique Orientale de François Ier, 12: “Ceux-ci [les Turcs] poursuivaient avec un plein succès la conquête de l’Asie mineure et de l’Afrique. En octobre 1516 Selim prit Damas. En janvier 1517 il entra au Caire et avec la décapitation du brave défenseur de l’Egypte, Tumambeg (13 avril 1517), la soumission du beau pays du Nil pouvait être considérée comme terminée. En s’emparant de l’Egypte les Turcs prenaient pied en Afrique et barraient ainsi la route des Indes. C’était un danger évident pour les puissances chrétiennes de la Méditerranée.”
live up to the reputation of his predecessors, and, relying on an army—our army, which is stronger than that of the infidels, Castiglione says, using the first person, as he involves himself deeply in this holy mission—must recover Christ’s burial place.\(^8\)

Castiglione’s position is very similar to that of Guillaume Michel. While the two writers are not of the same calibre, it would be inaccurate to think that there is a “brilliant mind” full of new ideas on the one hand, and a “gothic” and backward-looking author on the other hand. The *Penser* is an excellent example of these ambivalences. If the predominant and insistent theme of a crusade against the Turks makes us think of it in “medieval” terms, and if Michel’s strategic use of memory and elegantly nuanced allegorical display of royal virtues also draw on a “medieval” tradition, we should keep in mind that these ideas and traditions are still alive and important in early sixteenth-century France. After all, these “medievalisms” help build and reinforce the political image of the Most Christian King in Renaissance France as well as in Europe at large. This fact identifies the *Penser* as a work that is fully connected to the cultural and political transformations of its time.

**LE PENSER DE ROYAL MEMOIRE**

The *Penser de royal memoire* is a collection of twelve pieces that are quite different in content and in form, but are organized according to a rigorous order. On the whole, it is essentially a work of political rhetoric in support of the crusade published in the context of the *Concordat* recently signed in Bologna between King Francis I and Pope Leo X.\(^9\)

At the time of the composition and publication of the *Penser*, French diplomats and propagandists (and even Francis himself in his correspon-

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\(^8\) Pugliese, “The French Factor,” 32–33.

\(^9\) According to the terms of this agreement, the king acquired the title of “Fils Aîné de l’Eglise” (The Eldest Son of the Church), which is added to that of “Très Chrétien” (Most Christian); whereas the pope was granted that of “Vicaire du Christ” (Vicar of Christ) (see Le Fur, *Louis XII*, 233.). The *Concordat* recognized the pope’s authority over the council, his primacy in the spiritual domain, and the right to charge a tax to finance the crusade; the king, on the other hand, secured the right to name bishops and abbots. The king was seeking the pope’s support in his Italian adventure and in his eventual pretensions to the title of emperor; in exchange, he vowed to support the pope’s new crusade project. For a more detailed analysis of the *Concordat* of Bologna, see Thomas, *Le Concordat de 1516*. 
dence\textsuperscript{10}) described the king of France as entirely devoted to undertaking, as the self-styled leader of all Christian princes, a war against the Turks\textsuperscript{11} in order to stop their advance in Eastern and Central Europe as well as (theoretically) "reclaim" Jerusalem and the Holy Land. The *Penser de royal memoire* presents itself as a series of discourses addressed, for the most part, to Francis I in order to remind him of his duty to embrace such a project. Michel uses many of the themes developed by the king’s propaganda, which Anne-Marie Lecoq has analyzed in *François Ier imaginaire*.\textsuperscript{12} As far as we know, he did not belong to the king’s court, so it is hard for us to determine whether by publishing this work he was chiefly toeing the official line and trying to join the royal circle by demonstrating his rhetorical skills, or whether he was indeed trying to communicate to the king from the outside in order to push him to respect his engagements at a moment when Francis could appear to be taking his time. Whatever the case, Michel seems sincerely convinced of the practical and spiritual necessity of the crusade, which his work presents both as an obligation for the French monarch and as an illustration of the royal virtues.

The *Penser* contains four fictional epistles in verse, that constitute, in many ways, the core of the work. It also features other compositions in prose or verse, sometimes in prose and verse. Three out of the four versified epistles are addressed to the king. The first one, sent by King David, stands out among the others for its exceptional length (1154 lines). Its message is reiterated in a letter sent by the Daughters of Sion (*filles de Jherusalem*), who implore the French king to come free their land, and then in one sent by Joan of Arc (*Jehanne la pucelle*), who reminds him of her own exploits. These three verse epistles are accompanied by allegorical gifts that are described in great detail: David offers his harp and sling,

\textsuperscript{10}"Dès l’eure que, moyennant la grâce de Dieu, fuce parvenu à la couronne de France et auparavant, ma vraye et naturelle inclination estoit, comme encorez est, sans fiction ne dissimulacion, d’employer ma force et jeunesse à faire la guerre pour l’onneur et reverence de Dieu, nostre saulveur contre les ennemys de sa foy." The following letter is addressed to the king of Navarre and was written in 1516 by Francis I during his visit to Bologna. See also Ernest Charrière, *Négociations de la France dans le Levant. Collection de documents inédits sur l’histoire de France* in Ursu, *La politique en France*, 8 n. 2.

\textsuperscript{11}"[The crusade had] to be led by the emperor and the king of France with other powers participating in accordance with their individual resources" (Knecht, *Francis I*, 69).

\textsuperscript{12}See the chapter consecrated to "Le Chevalier de la Croix, le Nouveau Constantin" in Lecoq, *François Ier Imaginaire*.
the Daughters of Sion send the powerful Horse of Fame (Cheval de Renommée), and Joan of Arc sends her golden spurs. Near the end of the book, the fourth verse epistle, written by “Polynia” (Polynnia, a Muse presented here as the goddess of Memory), addresses the pope to assure him that the now-persuaded king, with his memory full of heroic examples and images of virtues, is soon going to be on his way to fight the enemy.

**Memory and Royal Virtues**

Memory thus plays a crucial role in the rhetorical strategy and disposition of the Penser, as indicated by the title itself, *Le Penser de royal memoire*.

We know that Antiquity and then the Middle Ages paid considerable attention to the knowledge and development of the mnemonic art. Among the five parts of rhetoric (inventio, dispositio, elocutio, memoria, actio), memory had a crucial place, even if theorists did not always mention it; and for some of them, “it was regarded […] as the ‘noblest’ of all these, the basis of the rest” (Carruthers, *The Book of Memory*, 9). Other than its place in rhetorical technique, memory’s importance is also related, in moral terms, to one of the four cardinal virtues, Prudentia or “Prudence,” which is not what we call “prudence” today, but “wisdom” as applied to human and practical matters (that is, the ability to discern good from bad, what should be done from what should be avoided and what is indifferent). Prudentia thus understood is said to be composed of three parts: memory of the past, intelligence of the present, foresight of the future.

For an author such as Guillaume Michel, as for his medieval predecessors, the second book of Cicero’s *De Inventione* is an authoritative source on this subject:

Wisdom is the knowledge of what is good, what is bad and what is neither good nor bad. Its parts are memory, intelligence, and foresight. Memory is the faculty by which the mind recalls what has happened. Intelligence is the faculty by which it ascertains what is. Foresight is the faculty by which it is seen that something is going to occur before it occurs.14

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13 Some of the most important works in this area have been done by Frances Yates in her *Art of Memory* and more recently by Mary Carruthers in *The Book of Memory*.

14 “Prudentia est rerum bonarum et malarum neutrarumque scientia. Partes eius: memoria, intellegentia, providentia. Memoria est, per quam animus repetit illa, quae fuerunt; intellegentia,
These classical notions were further strengthened by the authority of the Church Fathers, such as Jerome and Gregory. In one of his commentaries on the Bible, Jerome states that "Nothing is useful unless you deposit what you should see and hear in the treasury of your memory." In his *Moralia in Job*, Gregory develops this idea of memory as a "storing" of experience; he considers it an instrument of knowledge and at the same time of self-improvement: it is by way of memorization that, he says, "We ought to transform what we read into our very selves, so that when our mind is stirred by what it hears, our life may concur by practicing what has been heard." Artificial memory is a technique that assists in this transformation.

Thus, memory is both an inherent part of prudence and a faculty that can be "artificially" cultivated to help develop prudence, as well as any other virtue. For centuries, theologians and moralists kept recycling this idea according to their philosophical and literary needs. Thomas Aquinas in particular reflects upon the development of prudence, a rational virtue, and memory, which belongs to the "sensitive" part of the soul. This development is precisely the purpose of the art of memory: "artificial" memory mobilizes the sensitive part of the soul in order to facilitate our access to (and our use of) reason, and also in order to suggest to us that which is beyond the grasp of our rational faculties.

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15 "Nihil enim prodest vidisse et audisse, nisi ea quae videris et audieris, in memoriae reposueris thesauro" Commentarium in Ezekiel, XII, 40; PL 25, 373 D – 374 A.; translation from Carruthers, The Book of Memory, 18.

16 "In nobismet ipsis namque debemus transformare quod legimus; ut cum per auditum se animus excitat, ad operandum quod audierit vita concurrat." Gregory the Great, Moralia in Job, I, 33 (PL 75, 542C); translation from Carruthers, The Book of Memory, 164.

17 One of the most important analysis can be found in *Summa Theologiae* by Thomas Aquinas [IIa-IIae q. 49] when he discusses the different parts of Prudence. In this paragraph he combines Cicero's divisions with Macrobius's.

18 "Ad primum ergo dicendum quod quia, sicut dictum est, providentia applicat universalem cognitionem ad particularia, quorum est sensus, inde multa quae pertinent ad partem sensitivam requiruntur ad prudentiam. Inter quae est memoria"; "As stated above (Q. 47, AA. 3, 6), prudence applies universal knowledge to particulars which are objects of sense: hence, many things belonging to the sensitive faculties are requisite for prudence and memory is one of them" (answer to the objection that memory, belonging to the sensible part of the soul, cannot be considered as part of prudence, which is in the rational part; Aquinas, Summa, II–II, Q. 49, a. 1, s. 1).
Michel is an heir to this tradition; he models his *Penser* according to a structure that allows the “artificial” transmission and assimilation of virtues, including not just the “cardinal” ones (prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance), which are meant to be cultivated by all, but also the “theological” ones (faith, hope, and charity), even though the latter are in fact supposed to be inspired by God. Michel’s idea is to facilitate the joint practice of all virtues by a royal character whose memory has been appropriately formed and organized. Thus, the Daughters of Sion send a horse whose various pieces of equipment symbolize (and help to memorize) all seven virtues, cardinal and theological alike.

The Daughters’ epistle further illustrates the Christian understanding of the concept of “prudence” as a virtue: beside its three classical subdivisions (intelligence, providence and memory), prudence is also associated (via references to the Biblical books of *Wisdom, Ecclesiasticus,* and *Ecclesiastes*) with the deeper, more contemplative “wisdom” (*sapientia*) obtained from divine inspiration and transmitted to man from the Word of God. Prudence and its parts are thus placed under the aegis of “wisdom” in the highest sense, which is a divine gift that allows us to elevate ourselves toward God; and what is true for all is even truer for the king. Prudence is something that the king has to cultivate in himself, but it is also (in that it is a form of “wisdom”) a grace that comes directly from the God in whom he believes and whose interests he should “defend” in this world in his capacity as “Chosen by God” (*Oint du Seigneur*); his subjects’ destiny depends on this.

Indeed, the Daughters of Sion promptly suggest that this “gift” implies a duty: for example,

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Il te fault saigement
Tousjours regner des le commencement
Jucq en la fin en escoutant les saiges,
Comme tu faitz, par leurs prudens langaiges."  (fol. 42r)
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19 According to Thomas Aquinas, in his commentaries of Aristotle, prudence, as an intellectual virtue, “is in us, not by nature, but by teaching and experience” (*Aquinas, Summa, II–II, Q. 47, a. 15*). Further on his work, he adds (a. 16, s. 2) that “the experience required by prudence results not from memory alone, but also from the practice of commanding aright.” The role of memory, where teaching is deposed, lies at the foundation, and does not stop with the development of exercise.

20 For Thomas Aquinas for example, wisdom “called a gift of the Holy Ghost” resides in the intellect and “presupposes faith” (*Aquinas, Summa, II–II, Q. 45, a. 1 and 2*).
(You should wisely / Reign from the beginning / Till the end, by listening to the wise / As you do, through their prudent speeches.)

The “wise” in question – including the many biblical and historical figures evoked or quoted throughout the text – belong to a sacred past as well as to a current circle of advisors and the “example” of their words and deeds, also inspired by God, constitutes another source of inspiration for the young king, who should not be the “unwise” (insipiens) king described in Ecclesiasticus 10,3 or the childish king (puerilis) mentioned in Ecclesiastes 10,16. In passages like these, prudence and sagesse become virtual synonyms, a single, unified “wisdom” that comes from God and has to be practiced by man. The role of memory is crucial in this relationship between God’s grace and an individual’s works: wisdom or faith come from God, but it is the duty of each of us to develop them just like the other moral virtues, and it is memory which first “sets” and structures them in every person, and even more so in a king. Thus, Joan of Arc explains to the king that remembering signs of God such as holy objects or the actions of God’s witnesses means remembering God himself and fearing Him.

In the Penser de royal memoire, memory’s work is done through the many enumerative allegories that fill the make-believe epistles sent by the king’s illustrious correspondents. In order to ensure the memorizing of virtues, material images are conceived to strike the reader’s senses and imagination, but they should not be too obvious or simple; in fact,

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21 All translations of passages from Le Penser are my own.
22 These references are given by the author himself as a note in margin to the Daughters of Zion discourse.
23 Aside from the main networks of correspondences (harp – royal virtues; horse – cardinal virtues; spurs – pangs of conscience) used to help the king’s memory, Michel fills his text with a series of minor associations. For example: “la columbe [...] signifie le bon conseil du royaume, qui doit avoir les proprietez d’une columbe” (fol. 16r). In the chapter dedicated to the Complaints of the Church, we find the following comparisons / associations: “le sang qui saillit de la verde branche le merite de la passion de Jhesus signifie ; puis par ce qu’il est dict se former en lettres sont entenduz les articles du grand pardon de la cruciade” (fol. 31v). These allegorical figures, carriers of didactic meanings, not only propagate abstract ideas through “l’analogie entre un objet sensible et une réalité supra-sensible” (Cornilliat, “Or ne mens,” 547), but also very precise political projects.
24 In particular the sense of sight. See Estienne, Dictionnaire françois-latin under the voice “memoire”: “Reduire en memoire, Ponere ante oculos, Ruminari, Memoriam facere.” “Se souvenir” does not mean to lose sight, but to have one’s duty under one’s
the objects thus represented should be disposed in a certain order and each one should be composed of different parts that are carefully articulated so as to signify conceptual relations. In the Penser, these images are elucidated by lengthy descriptions of the symbolic gifts that are supposedly sent along with the letters. For example, the strings of David's harp are associated with twenty royal virtues (charity, compassion, generosity, justice, patience and fidelity among others) that are supposed to "sing" together in the king's soul; the shoes of the Horse of Fame represents the four cardinal virtues and the rest of its equipment the three theological ones; Joan of Arc's spurs symbolize synderesis, our conscience's impulsion toward the good and away from evil. This modus operandi is repeated throughout the text and is meant to renew, in the monarch's mind, the desire to imitate the heroic models introduced to him. It can also be duplicated at will: thus, in David's letter, the hero's sling and its five stones (the instrument of his victory over Goliath and the symbolic "weapon" that the king is supposed to use against the Turks) become a mnemonic symbol of "the Christians' cross" (la croix des cretien), the five stones now signifying the five wounds of the Crucified; the cross in turn is called a memoire, a memento of the Passion, an evident "sign" (signe patent) of the Saviour's death and resurrection. So David's sling activates the memory of the cross, which itself commemorates the Passion, which in turn should guide all the thoughts and actions of the "Most Christian" French king. This sequential recollection ultimately gives "victory to the good ones" (aux bons donne victoire) through the sign of the cross, which of course refers directly to the symbolism of the crusade.

Thus the systematic recollection of the past is also a commemoration of its meaning. The acquisition or consolidation of royal virtues through own eyes. This particular practice finds extraordinary examples in the political texts written by the Grands Rhétoriqueurs. A perfect example is Les Lunettes des princes of Jean Meschinot. Readers are struck by the transformation of the four cardinal virtues into a pair of glasses that they can easily picture themselves wearing. For a detailed analysis, see Cornilliat, "L'objet allégorique au XVème siècle," 37-55.

"The fundamental principle is to "divide" the material to be recalled into single units and to key these into some sort of rigid, easily reconstructable order"; Carruthers, The Book of Memory, 7.

Here we notice how "It was memory that made knowledge into useful experience"; Carruthers, The Book of Memory, 1.

A marginal note in the text confirms that "la fonde [...] est l'esperance d'avoir victoire contre les infideles par le moien du memoire de la passion" (fol. 14v).
memory also activates the need for their immediate application to political action, the first and most important such action being the crusade, which is simultaneously presented as an analogue of David’s or Joan’s heroic and holy deeds.

The term “memoire” appears a total of 24 times in the Penser and is visibly distributed throughout the text. Its importance is underlined, of course, in the work’s title, which associates “memory” (memoire) and “thinking” (penser). In their epistle, the Daughters of Sion use similar terms to describe the last of the “three big nails” (trois gros cloux) that hold the horseshoe of Prudence (for, of course, the art of memory also serves to memorize the place and function of memory itself):

Le dernier clou de memoire tenant,
C'est quant l'esprit est du tout retenant
Tout ce qui est ja passé par exemple,
Sy qu'à penser par cela soit plus ample. (fol. 41r)

(When the last nail, that of memory, holds, / That's when the mind completely retains / All that is already past and made into an example, / So as to become, through this, more ample in its thinking.)

The “examples” kept in “memory” make the mind more apt to “think”

The title of the entire work condenses this idea by giving to the verb “to think” (penser) a nominal form, referring at the same time to the faculty of thought, the act of thinking, and the result of this act. This encapsulates the

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28 The full title of Guillaume Michel’s text is: “Le Penser de royal memoire. Auquel penser sont contenusz les epistres envoyez par le royal prophete David au magnanime prince, celeste champion, et trescrescent roy de France Francoys premier de ce nom avezc aucuns mandemens, et aultres choses convenables a l'exortation du soulievement et entretienement de la sainte foy catholicque.” (sign. Air)

29 “L'importance de l'image dans le travail mnémonique se mesure également à l'aune de la conception théologique de la connaissance et du processus d'élévation mystique. […] La transformation spirituelle du sujet se réalise par le biais d'une reconnaissance, du souvenir de traces divines imprimées dans la mémoire et obscures par la condition ontologique de l'humain, déconnecté de la pleine possession de soi par le péché”; Minet-Mahy, Esthétique et pouvoir de l'œuvre allégorique, 62.

30 The Dictionnaire Historique de la Langue Française affirms that the nominalizing (v. 1155) of the infinitive is replaced by the noun pensée, as the noun of action “pensement” (“action de penser” and “résultat de cette action”). In Le Français de la Renaissance, Mireille Huchon affirms that “H. Estienne attribue à un emprunt au grec l'utilisation de l'infinitif substantivé, bien représenté dans la langue médiévale où il marque l'action en train de se faire” (75). The use of the noun “penser” can assume a
relationship between *intellegentia* and *memoria* as assumed within the virtue of prudence: our remembering nourishes our “thinking” and the first duty of our “thinking” is to remember. The title itself, with its implied chiastic structure, functions as a memory aid: a thought garnished with memory, or a memory which is a source of thought. The book in itself becomes a *penser*, “a way to engage thinking,” a place where we find food to nourish our memory and, therefore, organize our thoughts.

In this case, however, the word “memory” is qualified by the adjective “royal.” The king’s memory, as the foundation of his thoughts and behaviour, is what is at stake here. Michel insists on the link between the king’s present actions and the future glory held in reserve for him in posterity, which is of course another form of *memoire*. In other words, the “memory” that will remain of Francis in the centuries to come depends on the way he chooses to use his own memory now.

The concept of memory, as we just described it, usually corresponds to the feminine form of the word. However, Michel uses the masculine in the title as well as in several occurrences inside the text. 31 The use of the masculine was rare at the time, but it seems characteristic of our author’s style: in Huguet’s *Dictionnaire de la langue française du seizième siècle*, four out of seven references to such a form are taken from another of Michel’s works, his translation of Suetonius. 32 The masculine form is

precise value: when Maurice Scève, for example, talks about the “penser” that afflicts the lover-poet, the meaning is that of “penser souvent” of his *Dame*, to never forget her. As far as the verb is concerned, Robert Estienne (*Dictionnaire français-latin, s.v.*) distinguishes “le penser ponctuel”: “Il faut bien penser qu’il faut faire, *Magni consili est quid faciendum sit*” and “le penser fréquent,” “le penser souvent”: “Pense et repense, *Etiam atque etiam cogita, Identidem cogitato*.” This last meaning dominates in Michel’s text as well.

31 It is necessary here to point out that the adjective “royal” belongs to those which, in the sixteenth century, present a single form in the masculine and in the feminine. In his *Grammaire de la langue française du seizième siècle*, Gougenheim gives “royal promesse” as an example taken from Clément Marot. In our case, it might also be an elided form of “royalle” (after all, the word appears in the title at the end of the first line): the *Penser* is particularly rich in elided words, as in “el” instead of “elle”. We notice that the privilège (copyright) confirms the form “royal”: “Il est permis à Jehan de la Garde libraire juré de l’Université de Paris faire imprimer ce présent livre nommé *Le penser de royal memoire*” (sign. Air). Above all, however, Michel makes a constant distinction in the *Penser* between the masculine form *royal* (“Du tronc royal” [fol. 8r], “l’honneur royal” [fol. 9r]) and the feminine *royalle* (“ta royalle souche” [fol. 2v], “la dignité royalle” [fol. 3v]). There are no exceptions to this rule.

32 Here are the others: “Ne ramenez à mon memoire / Les faitz passez, il ne m’en
used to describe: the faculty of memory, the "remembering" of accomplished actions, and the idea of "memory" as it is kept by posterity. It is possible that the alternate use of the masculine and the feminine in the Penser is dictated by chance or by simple metrical reasons. However, the choice of the masculine form for the title, confirmed by many key occurrences within the text, suggests a deliberate preference on Michel's part.

We may also think, by association, of the conventional meaning of "memoire" in the masculine, that is, a "text containing a statement, a narrative, or instructions," or in the juridical meaning of a text containing the facts of a cause to be judged. It is clear that the word is not employed in this sense here (it is the king's memory that is referred to in the title, not the memorandum addressed by the author to the king), but Michel's preference for the masculine may suggest it nevertheless: in fact, the Penser functions as an instruction booklet offered to the king so that he can feed his memory and govern his people, or even the entire Christian Europe, according to prudence and to the duties of his faith. The actual value of the masculine is, however, best demonstrated in David's descriptions of the sling and the cross: both are said to represent "le memoire" (masculine noun) of the Passion of Christ; they are the objects we should all recall (and which, at the same time, help the very act of recalling) because they commemorate the heart of the Christian faith.

33 See Französisches Etymologisches Wörterbuch, s.v.; or the Dictionnaire Historique de la Langue Française: "d'abord attesté (v. 1190) pour relation par écrit," “mémoire” au masculin “s'est spécialisé en droit (1358: description d'une cause à juger).” Estienne (Dictionnaire français-latin, s.v.) gives the following definitions: 1. "Le memoire et instruction contenant le fait d'une partie, en matiere de proces, Libellus. 2. Memoires et instructions, en matieres de proces et autres choses, Commentarius. [...] 3. Ung petit memoire que font tous les jours ceulx qui ont plusieurs affaires, Libel/us memorialis."

34 On this image of memory as a "boite" (box), "écritoir" (case), or "livre" (book), see the analysis of Jacqueline Cerquiglini-Toulet, La Couleur de la mélancolie, 126–130.

35 According to the Dictionnaire Historique de la Langue Française (s.v.), "remémorer a d'abord signifié faire la commémoration de avant de se séparer de commémorer et de prendre une autre valeur: faire ressurgir dans sa mémoire (fin XVe s.)." This distinction was recent when Michel writes. Here are two examples taken from David's epistle: "La harpe doncq de majesté royalle / Tu garderas comme bien principalle, / Rememorant les
chault" (Gringore, Prince des Sotz, 1:250); "Lequel... apres son voyage faict à Medine et à la Mecque, donna pour un memoire perpetuel ces trois masses d'or" (Thevet, Cosmographie, 1:6); "Un peintre... / Ne peut rendre semblable et pourtraire un visage / Sans qu'il ne le contemple ou qu'il ne soit guidé / Par un œil souvenant et un memoire idé" (Boyssieres, Premières Œuvres, 21r).
words, “le memoire” for Michel is first and foremost an actual image serving as keepsake or memento; the use of the masculine primarily refers to this crucial meaning.

J O I N O F A R C A N D T H E G O L D E N S P U R S

The idea of memory is present everywhere in the Pens er, but it is in Joan of Arc’s third fictional epistle that all of memoire’s nuances are deployed for the readers. It is also in her intervention that we learn of the king’s (fictional) decision to undertake the crusade. In her missive of 330 lines (the shortest one in the Pens er), the French heroine invites Francis I to put on her golden spurs (in the text, “golden spurs” means remords de conscience, feelings of remorse) in order to bring home victory and bring back to Christianity all the places that belong to it. In this context, Joan’s intervention, as Anne-Marie Lecoq reminds us, “is not surprising: right after Charles VII’s coronation in Reims [1429] a prophecy had appeared announcing that she [Joan] would die in the Holy Land after conquering, with the king of France by her side, Christ’s grave.” Christine de Pizan, in her Dité de Jehanne d’Arc evokes this prophecy that circulated throughout the fifteenth century.

vertuz accordées / Qui en ton corps royal sont bien cordées” (fol. 13r) ; or again: “Ainsi tu doibs en grant soing requerir / Le bon conseil, et fermement querir / Entre les lieux de securité vraye, / Non pas aux champs où chascun se desvoye: / Rememorant par penseée bien lente / Que Jhesuschrist est la pierre constante / Sus lequel est tout fondement assis” (fol. 18r; the image recalls a dove doing its niche in a well chosen stone). The new Gaffiot indicates that the word commemoratio owes its fortune to Christianism.

The trial in which Joan was rehabilitated took place between 1450 and 1456. The previous trial was declared false and thus annulled: “Lesdits procès et les sentences contenant dol, calomnie, contradiction et erreur manifeste de droit et de fait, ainsi que la susdite abjuration, l’exécution et toutes les suites, furent et sont nuls, invalides, sans effet et sans valeur”; Bouzy, Jeanne d’Arc, 137.

Lecoq, François Ier imaginaire, 281.

“En Christianté et l’Eglise/ Sera par elle mis concorde,/ Les mescreans dont on devise,/ Et les herites de vie orde/ Destruira, car ainsi l’acorde/ Prophecie, qui l’a predit,/ Ne point n’aura misericorde/ De lieu, qui la foy Dieu laidit./ Des Sarradins fera essart,/ En conquenerant la Saintte Terre./ Là menra Charles, que Dieu gard !/ Ains qu’il muire, fera tel erre”; Christine de Pizan, Dité de Jehanne d’Arc, XLII–XLIII.

“Dite “de la Sibylye” ou du “nouveau Charlemagne,” concernant un roi, “Charles, fils de Charles,” qui devait unifier la chrétienté, se faire couronner empereur, lancer une ultime croisade pour reconquérir les Lieux saints, enfin déposer sa couronne et mourir au Mont-des-Oliviers pour laisser sa place à l’Antéchrist” (Bouzy,
The choice of a national heroine that addresses Francis I and convinces him to fight the Turks has a double motivation: not only does the prophecy that I have just mentioned correspond to Michel’s design, but it also creates a parallel between the heroine and the king. In the same way that Joan was directly inspired by God and had fought bravely against the English, so Francis I, because of his virtues and his title of “Très chrétien,” should become chief in the fight against Turks. Joan’s letter is important because it finally announces the king’s intention:

J’ay entendu, et tu feras bien certes,
Que tu t’en vas es regions desertes
Pour assaillir ceulx qui le nom de Dieu
Vont blasphemant et meurtrir en tout lieu
De tous costez, jucq’en Constantinoble. (fol. 52v)

(I have heard, and you will certainly do, / That you will go in desert regions / To attack those who Blaspheme God’s name / And sow death everywhere / In every place all the way to Constantinople.)

It is already established that Francis I will dedicate himself to the final victory. This victory has a double meaning: victory against the Turks (enemies of the Christian faith), but also victory against every instinct, sin and immorality (enemies of celestial salvation).

Veulx tu sçavoir la vertu effective
De ce remors ? C’est la force motive
Qui l’ame point à tout bien et stimule
Le mal fuir, qui au cueur se cumule.” (fol. 53v)

(Would you like to know the effective virtue / of this remorse? It is the motive force / that points the soul towards the good and stimulates / the evil that accumulates in one’s heart to flee.)

Jeanne d’Arc, 63).

40Bouzy quotes a document from the Procès de Condamnation de Jeanne d’Arc: “Item elle dit qu’un ange, de par Dieu et non de par un autre, donna le signe à son roi et de cela elle remercia Dieu nombre fois. […] Et alors elle partit et alla à une chapelle assez près et elle entendit alors qu’après son départ plus de trois cents personnes virent le signe susdit. Elle dit, en outre, que pour l’amour d’elle et pour que les hommes cessent de l’interroger, Dieu avait voulu permettre que ceux de son parti qui virent ledit signe, le voient” (Jeanne d’Arc, 61).
In another passage Joan of Arc tells the king that her spurs symbolize "synderesis." In other words, our conscience’s impulsion toward the good and away from evil:

"Les esperons de juste consequence
Sont appellez remors de conscience,
Pour stimuler et poindre franc arbitre
Sy par son veil contre Dieu recalcitre [...] 
Veulx tu scavoir la vertu effective
De ce remors ? C’est la force motive
Qui l’ame point à tout bien et stimule.
Le mal fuir, qui au cueur se cumule."

(The spurs in a rightful fashion / Are called the remorse of conscience
/ In order to stimulate and to spur free will / If by its choice it goes against God [...] / Do you want to know the effective power / Of this remorse? It is the driving force / That spurs the soul to do good and moves it to flee / The evil, that in one’s heart accumulates.)

After introducing the King’s intention and the symbolic value of her gift, the French heroine begins a detailed description of the spurs she is offering to the King. Its length and its insistence make this passage particularly enlightening:

La roue qui tourne sans decadence
Peult figurer humaine remembrance
Qui va et vient sans partir de sa bourne
Dedens l’esprit d’entendement, et tourne
Tout à l’entour comme bon auditeur
Du temps passé, du present et futur.
Ceste vertu six aguillons contient,
Bien stimulez ainsi qu’il appartient,
Et pour scavoir leurs noms proprietaires,
Je dictz ainsi que ce sont cinq memoires
Pour avancer la pouvre creature
D’aller avant par leur calcitrature.
Le premier est l’amour qu’on ha en Dieu,
Et le second le craindre chacun lieu.
Le tiers sy est le memoire des joyes
De paradis et supernelles voyes,
Le quart poignant est une souvenance
Qu’eviter fault d’enfer la doleance,
Le quint tournant le memoire de mort,
Et le dernier et sixte le remort
Du jugement qui sera furibunde
Sus les pecheurs divers et tremebonde.
Voilà les poins que nous devrons adjoindre
Dedens noz cueurs pour en bien nous contraindre.

... [ ... ]

Bon fait souvent penser en ses six choses:
Le bon esprit les baise comme roses.
Pour y penser l'homme se reconnoist
Sans orgueillir ; point ne se desconnoist
Par vanité qui cecy bien remembre.
Ce sont tappis pour bien aorner la chambre
Du cueur induict, et ame bien devotte
Selon [le] dict de maint qui le denotte.
Qui en cecy bien souvent penseroit,
Plus vertueux en tous ses faictz seroit.
Aymer convient Dieu et aussi le craindre,
Qui veult des cieulx la gloire bien enceindre. (fols. 53v–54r; my emphasis) 41

(The wheel that turns without falling / Can represent human remembrance / That comes and goes without leaving its bounds / Within the spirit of understanding, and it turns / In all directions as a good listener / Of the past, the present and future time. // This virtue contains six goads, / Well-sharpened as is appropriate, / And in order to know their respective names / I can say that they are the five memories / That make the poor creature / Advance through their goading. // The first one is the love we have for God, / And the second is the constant fear of him, / The third one is the memory of joys / Of heaven and eternal ways, / The poignant fourth is a reminder / That one should avoid hell's suffering, // The fifth moves the memory of death, / And the last and

41 These lines introduce twice the syntagma “souvent penser” and “souvent penseroit.” The adverb “souvent” is refered here to the wheel that turns, i.e. that goes, comes and comes back again often (souvent), without interruption. After careful verification, we can state that this expression belongs only to Joan of Arc’s epistle. Here “penser” (to think) means “penser souvent” (to think often) and this use recalls the meaning of “avoir mémoire de” (to have memory of). The adverb “souvent” (often) goes back to the Latin’s “frequentative.” See also in Estienne’s Dictionnaire (s.v.), “Penser diligemment et considerer, Pensiculare, Meditari, Pensare, Commeditari, Excogitare, Etiam atque etiam cogitare.” The frequentatives (excogitare, cogitare, meditare) are related to the idea of memoria. On the question of the “cogitatio,” see also Carruthers, The Book of Memory, and Goyet, “Le recueil de sonnets comme ensemble de ‘scènes’ ou ‘tableaux.’” It is not a question of thinking (penser) only once, but thinking about something without ever stopping. The king is invited to remember “se souvenir” virtues always, and by so doing to think (penser) constantly about the political cause of the moment, that is, the crusade.
sixth one is remorse / Of judgment that will be furious / Toward the various and trembling sinners. / These are the points that we have to affix / In our hearts that can well constrain us. // [...] // It is good to often think about these six things: / The virtuous spirit kisses them as roses. / To think about them man must recognize himself in them / Without pride; he who well remembers this / Does not deceive himself out of vanity. / They are like carpets to well adorn the room // Of a committed heart, and of a well devoted soul.

(As indicated by [the] saying of many. / He who often thinks about all this. / Will be more virtuous in all his actions. / It is better both to love and fear God / If one wants to be encircled by heaven’s glory.)

Joan of Arc explains that the spurs’ wheel signifies what she calls remembrance. The term is a quasi-synonym of “memoire,” but she exalts it as genuine virtue that seems to conflate prudence and memory, or to magnify memory by endowing it with the characteristics of prudence itself. In any case, the image of the little rowel (molette) that keeps turning in all directions of time is particularly meaningful. The young king is once again reminded of the importance of prudence. However, the memory of the past, the intelligence of the present, and the foresight of the future are now shown even more efficiently under a new light. Instead of nails that fix, as was the case with the horseshoes of the Cheval de Renommée, we have a little wheel that turns while remaining in place. This wheel has six goads. Their tips become the main “points” of a demonstration. Each of them at once represents and activates “le memoire” of something; in this passage the term “memoire” always appears in its masculine form. The six points of the spur refer to a spectrum of ideas and feelings that go from God’s love to the fear of the Last Judgment, passing through intermediate notions and the emotions that are associated with them. It is the panorama of human life that rotates here in the little wheel – all the while presenting different choices. We may think about the Wheel of Fortune, but this one actually evokes one’s free will and choices. It entices the roi-chevalier, the knight-king, whose own spurs are very much a symbol of the ideal he wants to incarnate, to “think” in a

42According to the Dictionnaire Historique de la Langue Française “le verbe d’ancien français remembrer a eu pour dérivé remembrance, qui signifie en ancien français “conscience”(1080), puis “souvenir” (1119).

43On the image (both form and meaning) of the Wheel of Fortune, see the analysis by Cerquiglini in “Un engin si soutil,” 51–89.
concrete, immediately familiar, and pleasant way about the moral (and political) choices he is facing. This is the kind of “thinking” (or so the assumption goes) that will make him act correctly.

Thus, the wheel of “remembrance” is the type of object that activates and at the same time constrains consciousness: it is like an “event calendar” that commemorates and recalls a fact or a truth. As we see from these examples, Michel seems particularly sensitive to the special meaning (keepsake, memento) he associates with the masculine form, but the latter can also contaminate other uses. Thus, although the work’s title refers to a meaning of *memoire* (going from the mental faculty to the idea of renown) for which the feminine is the expected form, Michel underlines the gender that for him evokes those objects that make one “virtuous” by repeatedly focusing one’s “thinking” on them, as often (*souvent*) as possible.44

**Conclusion**

As we can see from these examples, Michel’s moral pedagogy is aimed at a militant goal. Instructions on how to read the *Penser* are in fact given from the very beginning: in his preface, the author states that nothing is more “useful to man during the journey and peregrination of this transitory and terrestrial life that to keep, observe and defend the rules and institutions of the saint catholic faith.” There is “need to exhort or persuade all Christian princes,” and above all “the very Christian kings of France,” in order to defend and increase this faith” and, by so doing, to fight “through the power of arms, and with the help of the three theological virtues, that is, faith, hope and charity.”45 Prudence is not

44I should add that in Michel’s writing some uses of the term “memoire” do remain attached to the feminine, for example in the phrase “en la memoire de” (perhaps because it evokes the Latin “*in memoriam*”), and more generally to signify commemoration: for example, “the three lilies are granted to the kings of France in memory of (*en la memoire de*) the Trinity [and set] in a single blazon, that may represent the one and only God,”[“Les trois fleurs de lyz sont en la memoire de la trinite aux roys de France concedees dedans ung seul escusson, qui ung seul Dieu peult reperesenter ” (fol. 10v)] says a marginal gloss to David’s epistle.

45“Il [n’est] rien plus utille à l’homme pendant le voyage et peregrination de ceste vie transitoire et caducque que de garder, observer et deffendre les regles et institutions de la sainte joy catholique. [...] Me semble estre besoing enhorter ou persuader les princes chrestiens: et entre aultres les treschrestiens roys de France (qui se sont successivement monstrez les vrays pilliers et propugnacles de nostre joy) à icelle
evoked here, but it appears implicitly in the idea of choosing what is “the most useful” for man during his life on Earth: eventually to take arms against the Turks and to be at the service of the “Catholic faith.” The cardinal virtue is submitted to the needs of the theological virtue from which it proceeds and should help defend the institutions that represent it. The king is submitted to God’s will and thus is obligated in this life to fight for his faith.

However, the essential point is the following: since Christian princes are “fighting and debating” among themselves “because of the [...] deception of the enemy,” thus causing “numerous conflicts,” but also because “realms and provinces [...] of the old patrimony of Jesus Christ” are now “subjected to the devils,” it is “apt” “to recommit to our memory, through the imitation of the old Fathers and kings such as David and others, the articles, rules and precepts for the conservation of our faith” (Remettre à memoire, par imitation des anciens peres et Roys comme de David et aultres, les articles, mandemens et arrestz donnez pour la conservation de notre foy; sign. Aiiir-v). The author chooses the verb remettre and not mettre, recommit and not commit to memory: apart from the king of France, who is young and whom the author can still appear to be “forming” without incriminating him, we are told about a world that has forgotten its mission.

We encounter the same idea in another part of the Penser, Les Lamentations de l’Eglise. First, using the Church’s own words in a versified complaint, then in a prose commentary, Michel launches a ferocious attack against the corruption that has infested the Church’s ministry.46 This corruption is marked by a fault of memory, or a refusal to “remember”: in the words of the Church,

Quant à l’estat des ecclesiastiques
Qui les plus pres et sainctz comme reliques
Deussent de moy estre par souvenance,

defendre et augmenter, et au contraire par puissance d’armes, avec l’escu des trois vertus theologalles qui sont foy, esperance et charité, destruire et annichiller les superstitions diaboliques suggerées par l’ennemy de genre humain en la personne de Machomet. “(sign. Aiiir ; my emphases)

46The prose explanation that follows the Church’s Lamentations affirms that the Church “se peult fort complaindre des ecclesiastiques pour la dissolution qui aujour-duy sus eulx domine”(fol. 33r) ; and then follows a long list of abuses. At the same time, however, Michel also praises of its leader, the pastor “Melibeus,” the good “Leon,” the doctor (medecin), a clear reference to Leo X’s family name, Medici.
Plus n'ay en eulx ung seul brain de fiance.
Trop sont legiers et plains d'ilusion,
Sans foy, sans loy, et sans devotion.” (Lamentations, fol. 31r)

(As for the estate of the clerks, / Who should be closest to me / And as holy as relics by virtue of remembrance, / I do not have a scrap of trust left in them. / They are too frivolous and full of error, / Without faith, nor law, nor devotion.)

And the remedy, in the words of the commentator, consists in exercising this problematic memory:

Rememorez comme l'escripture saincte vous compare par similitude de parler aux columbes qui sont sus les ruisseaulx faisant le guet. [...] Vous voiez la foy de l'Eglise par les mescreans assaillie ; toutesfoys vous n'en faictes conte. [...] Pensez, pensez en cecy! (Lamentations, fol. 34r)

(Think, think about this!)

In a way this passage summarizes the art of memory. Priests are compared to Biblical doves, perhaps those mentioned in the Song of Songs (5,12) in the passage about the eyes of the Beloved; what they first need to “recall” (remémorer) is not their duty to keep the people of God, but the image employed to demonstrate this idea. It is through the memorable image that they will have access to the moral and spiritual notion that will improve their behaviour.

Although Michel emphasizes the Turkish menace, he insists more on the Christians’ responsibility: misfortune is not just the result of external events, but the direct consequence of a lack of memory. And the pope (Leo X) represents the pastor who will help restore this memory. It is at first the memory of “articles” and “commands,” less of faith itself than of what it prescribes, and of what one should do in order to “conserve” and “defend” it. In the end, the restored memory implies action: through images, it “fixates” the virtues that force those who have them to act accordingly. The author seems to suggest that a king worthy of this title, who keeps his virtues well organized in his memory and activates them in his “penser” will always undertake, by definition, the necessary actions in order to defend not only his kingdom, but the Christian faith in general. The reconquest of the Holy Land thus becomes the logical, inescapable consequence of “the government of a wise,
virtuous and faithful king,” who (as the saying goes) “remembers his own baptism.”

From a rhetorical perspective, we can say that memory is viewed as the most effective of all the tools of persuasion: in order to persuade the king to do something, it is sufficient to show him that he remembers and what he remembers. From a historical perspective, however, the effort to remind the king of that which he remembers (or should remember) was completely ineffectual – as we know, the much aspired crusade never materialized.

CITEd WORKS


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