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### We have heritage, therefore we are

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**WE HAVE HERITAGE,  
THEREFORE WE ARE:  
INTRODUCTION TO THE TEACHING  
OF HERITAGE IN A DIVERSE EUROPE**

# WE HAVE HERITAGE, THEREFORE WE ARE: INTRODUCTION TO THE TEACHING OF HERITAGE IN A DIVERSE EUROPE

By Mathilde van Dijk, Andrew Irving, and Todd Weir

The title to this chapter is a rephrasing of French philosopher Descartes' famous *dictum* 'I think, therefore I am'. It sums up why heritage is not only important, but indispensable for a community to carve out its place in the contemporary world. A shared past - or rather: the narrative that people share about this past - defines individuals as members of a community: as a Frisian, a Catalan, a Roma. Here we chose examples of ethnicity, but the same would apply to other groups, such as the adherents of certain religions, people identifying as belonging to non-dominant sexualities, and so on. A shared heritage anchors the members of a community into history, as a part of the large narrative of the past and provides directions for their futures, where before their very existence may have been unacknowledged. An example is the creation of heritage trails, for instance Muslim and Jewish trails, which highlight the long presence of these minorities in presumably Christian territory.<sup>1</sup>

The following serves as an introduction to heritage: how its definition developed in the past decades and history. The changing concepts of heritage and religion will be discussed in connection to recent developments in Europe, notably the changing attitude towards religion under secularisation and the increasing diversity of Europe, both ethnically and religiously. Moreover, the changing policies as well as practices around heritage will be highlighted. Here, the impact of international organisations is important, specifically agreements as made by UNESCO and the European Community. In Europe, the so-called Faro Convention (2005) exerted a great influence on visions and practices of heritage. Arguably, the most important development is how access to and living one's heritage came to be acknowledged as a human right. All of this led to a changed perspective on what heritage is, who has heritage and on the role of the heritage expert.

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1 See below for a detailed discussion. TO BE COMPLETED WHEN ALL PARTS OF THE BOOK ARE IN PLACE

2 Laurajane Smith, *Uses of Heritage* (London/New York: Routledge Taylor and Francis 2006), 29-34.

## What is heritage?

Heritage is a narrative, first and foremost: an ideological appropriation of a historical site, event, practice, concept, person, object, which recruits it as a summary of a community's identity as well as an explanation for its current status.<sup>2</sup> Heritage is lived: by retaining rituals such as going through the usual motions of a religious feast, wearing specific clothes at life-events (e.g. black at a funeral) or attending the commemoration of a seminal event in a community's history. Contrary to what is often supposed, it is not fixed. Instead, practices and narratives evolve through creative processes of meaning making by those claiming a site, event, practice, concept, person, or object as their heritage. Such appropriations also have a dark side to them: if one group claims a certain heritage, others are excluded from it.<sup>3</sup> Therefore, heritage is also deeply political: its narrative defines who can be counted as belonging to our community and who cannot.

Heritage is closely connected to the concept of *lieu de mémoire* (site of memory) as defined by French historian Pierre Nora: 'A place, person or concept that summarises the identity of a group.'<sup>4</sup> The very character of heritage as a narrative means that the significance of sites of memory can change. Moreover sites can mean different things to different people and have differently interpreted points of reference. This is why Nora and his collaborators called the third part of their multivolume work on sites of memory in France *Les France*. Using the plural article before the singular word 'France', they suggest the plurality of visions of what makes 'France' France, what 'France' actually means.

The current discussion around the monuments erected for colonial 'heroes' is an example of changing narratives. In the Netherlands, Jan Pieterszoon Coen's (1597-1627) statue is the best-known example. Its location is the city of Hoorn, which used to host the headquarters of the VOC, the Dutch East India Company, and Coen was the governor of its colonies in present day Indonesia. His main claim to fame was his campaign against insurgents in the province of Atjeh, which he conducted in a particularly cruel way, belatedly identified as genocide.<sup>5</sup> Until very recently, Coen and the VOC were seen as hallmarks of the Dutch Golden Age in the seventeenth century, and thus as symbols of how the Dutch like to view themselves: entrepreneurial, adventurous, a benign global force to be reckoned with, bringing civilization. In the last decades, the dark side of this narrative was highlighted: colonialism, oppression, slavery, poverty for large sections of the population in Europe and the colonies. Increasingly, removal of the Hoorn statue is advocated by postcolonialist activists and, at least as loudly, countered by people insisting on the greatness of the Golden Age heritage and the immutability of Dutch identity. We add that, in Coen's case, it is surprising that he kept his status as a hero for so long, as his cruelty has long been known.

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3 Frijhoff, Willem. 'Toeëigening; Van bezitsdrang to betekenisgeving', *Trajecta* 6 (1997), 99-118; id. 'Toe-eigening als vorm van culturele dynamiek', *Volkskunde* 104 (2003), 1-17; id., *Dynamisch Erfgoed* (Amsterdam: SUN 2007).

4 Pierre Nora, 'Présentation', in Pierre Nora ed., *Les lieux de mémoire*, three vols. (Paris: Gallimard 1984-1992), vol. 1, viii-xiii.

5 Marjolein van Pagee, *Banda: de genocide van Jan Pieterszoon Coen* (Utrecht: Omniboek 2021).

Heritage can signify different things to different people. In the Hundred Years' War (1337-1453), usually framed as a war between England and France, Jeanne d' Arc's (ca. 1412-1431) leadership led to a turning point. The teenage daughter of a peasant, she led the dauphin's troops to a victory at Orléans and him to Reims to be anointed as a king. After her capture by the Burgundians, she was extradited to the English, who staged an inquisition trial, which led to her being burnt at the stake. She was already seen as a heroine, a witch, a saint and a heretic in her own day. Later, she became the national heroine of France in 1803, a canonized saint in 1920, a working class heroine for 20<sup>th</sup> century socialists and communists, a populist fighter against 'foreigners' for the *Front National*, a pre-feminist and, recently, a transgender, thus proving that non-cis identity is not just some fad, which happens to be en vogue, but a part of the rich diversity of the human race.<sup>6</sup>

Changing narratives around heritage can transform the self-image of communities. The Faro Convention defines Europe as a pluralist society, in which many voices can be heard and the heritage of many communities be expressed, be they ethnic, religious, or otherwise. This is a radical change of the traditional vision of a Carolingian Europe, which defined it as essentially Christian. This was how the creators of the European Community envisaged it, as a culturally and religiously coherent region, which roughly followed the shape of Charlemagne's Early Medieval empire.<sup>7</sup> This was a very important argument to refuse membership to Turkey in the 1990s, despite its constitution as a secular, instead of a Muslim state after the First World War. Interestingly, in 2002, the German historian Heinrich August Winkler opposed Turkey's membership on the grounds of it not being pluralist, in view of its weak democracy as well as the lacking separation between secular and religious authorities, which, according to Winkler, had been in place in Europe from the Middle Ages.<sup>8</sup> In the meantime, after the Fall of the German Wall and the implosion of the Soviet Union, the European community exceeds the boundaries of Charlemagne's Empire by far, by including many former Communist countries, but Turkey's membership is no longer on the agenda.

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6 Gabrielle Bychowski, 'Were there Transgender People in the Middle Ages?', see <https://www.publicmedievalist.com/transgender-middle-ages/>; Alicia Spencer-Hall and Blake Gutt ed., *Trans- and Genderqueer Subjects in Medieval Hagiography* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press 2021); Marina Warner, *Joan of Arc: The Image of Female Heroism* (New York: Knopf 1981).

7 Lennard Pater en Trineke Palm, 'Konrad Adenauers blauwdruk voor een verenigd Europa : De redding van het christelijke Avondland (1949-1963)', *Tijdschrift voor Geschiedenis* 133 (2021), 255-277.

8 Winkler, Heinrich August, 'Wir erweitern uns zu Tode.' *Die Zeit*, 13 November 2002, URL: [https://www.zeit.de/zustimmung?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.zeit.de%2Fpolitik%2Ffeu\\_und\\_tuerkei](https://www.zeit.de/zustimmung?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.zeit.de%2Fpolitik%2Ffeu_und_tuerkei)

## Cultural heritage: a history of lists

Heritage is a narrative, but who determines what is and what is not heritage? It is only very recent and by no means universally accepted that these determinations are no longer determined by the societal or intellectual Western elite.

The 1972 UNESCO *Convention Concerning the Protection of World Cultural Heritage and Natural Heritage* might seem like an obvious place to begin charting the development of contemporary heritage practice. Drafted, as its preamble notes, in view of the “magnitude and gravity of the new dangers threatening” cultural and natural heritage – it is referring especially to the threats of the “changing social and economic conditions” of the mid-twentieth century – the Convention defined world cultural heritage in straightforward, concrete, and listable terms: “monuments”, “groups of buildings”, and “sites” having “outstanding universal value from the point of view of history, art or science”.<sup>9</sup>

The presence of *lists* in the Convention which lays out how a monument, group of buildings, or site may come to be *listed* as “world heritage”, is not just a coincidence. It expresses a long tradition of inventorying treasure items, begun already in antiquity. Such lists of valued objects and sites of the venerable past were sometimes drafted by the treasure-holders themselves, as a means of communicating wealth and stability to themselves or others, and, at the same time, of keeping a record of what could be pawned or sold if need arose. In the Renaissance and early modern periods, collectors developed techniques of list-making to organise and to identify gaps in their encyclopaedic knowledge-oriented collections of objects of value.

Lists have also been drafted by people other than those who own the treasure. These inventories, produced with the efficiency of a tax office, served to ascertain the number, nature, condition, value, and whereabouts of the possessions of an individual, group, or institution. They could assist, if need or desire should arise, in identifying and seizing the most valued objects and property of subjects, dependents, or newly conquered groups. In those cases the lists would be made by experts e.g. art historians or cultural anthropologists. In this context, Laurajane Smith defined their work as the construction of an “authorised heritage discourse”, a list of objects with narratives cast in stone.<sup>10</sup>

The State’s instrumentalisation of lists of valued property during the dissolution of monasteries in Protestant lands in Europe in the sixteenth century, and especially in the wake of the French Revolution and secularisation in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, was both a development and a perfection of this list-making technique. By means of heritage/treasure lists, valued property formerly in private or religious possession was transferred to the patrimony of the State, by which the experts came to be employed.

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9 United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, *Convention Concerning the Protection of World Cultural Heritage and Natural Heritage* (1972), article 1. Available online at: <https://whc.unesco.org/en/conventiontext/>

10 Smith, *Uses of Heritage*, 11-43.

It is perhaps no surprise, then, that the lists of UNESCO arise out of nineteenth-century national and colonial practices of listing objects, sites, and monuments to be acquired, preserved, restored, and, in part, strategically displayed. The way in which objects are presented provide a narrative for the collectors. For instance, in a large collection of Ancient Egyptian antiquities like the Louvre's, Egypt is portrayed as an empire, a forerunner of the French colonial empire as it fought the English for domination of Egypt. Moreover it is presented as a forerunner of world civilization rather than as strictly localised Egyptian, let alone Middle-Eastern or African heritage. In this, as in many other cases, world civilization seems to be shorthand for Western civilization. Occasionally, the appreciation of Egypt went hand in hand with blatant racism: inspired by current Egyptology, the Irish-American labour activist John Campbell ascribed Egypt's success as an empire to the whiteness of its people.<sup>11</sup> In the meantime, it has become clear that in certain dynasties the pharaohs must have been dark-skinned as were and are many Egyptians today.<sup>12</sup>

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What was new in the UNESCO Convention's definition of heritage is the idea that such things could not only be outstandingly valuable, but that their value could be "universal". This remains controversial, for it introduces into the definition of heritage the question *for whom* these objects and sites have such value – in this case, it is argued, *for all*. As the briefly-sketches history of list-making teaches us, this question is important because it focuses attention not only on who gets to decide what is valuable as "heritage" and what counts as value in the first place, but also on who is benefitting from such a decision.

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11 John Campbell, *Negro-mania being an examination of the falsely assumed equality of the various races of men* (Philadelphia: Campbell and Power 1851), 12. On Campbell, see Andrew Heath, "The producers on one side, and the capitalists on the other": Labor Reform, Slavery, and the Career of a Transatlantic Radical', *American Nineteenth Century History* 13 (2012), 199-227, 199-227.

12 On the narratives about the connection between Egypt and Africa, see for instance: David B. O'Connor and Andrew Reid ed., *Egypt in Africa* (London: UCL 2003).

13 John Campbell, *Negro-mania being an examination of the falsely assumed equality of the various races of men* (Philadelphia: Campbell and Power 1851), 12. On Campbell, see Andrew Heath, "The producers on one side, and the capitalists on the other": Labor Reform, Slavery, and the Career of a Transatlantic Radical', *American Nineteenth Century History* 13 (2012), 199-227, 199-227.

14 On the narratives about the connection between Egypt and Africa, see for instance: David B. O'Connor and Andrew Reid ed., *Egypt in Africa* (London: UCL 2003).

Current maps of what has been acknowledged as world heritage show a preponderance of sites in Europe and, to a lesser extent, North America, as though no heritage of value happens in other parts of the world.

Perhaps we might better say then that ‘heritage’ is not so much a definable list of sites and monuments, but the *act of listing* itself. This is indeed what some contemporary scholars of heritage have argued. Laurajane Smith has gone so far as to state that “There is really no such thing as heritage” at all.<sup>15</sup> Behind her provocation lies a serious point. It is more useful to think of heritage as a kind of social practice that expresses and performs the values and meanings of what we retain of the past in the present than to consider heritage as some kind of inherent, objective quality, or list of things. Moreover, it is also bound up with relations of power. We might say we should focus on the act of *list-making* rather than on the items on the list.

We noted above the ways individuals or groups can use the attribution of on-going value to things from the past as a means of acquiring and boosting their own power. As political power shifted in Europe from kings and princes to nation states and colonial powers in the nineteenth century, this use of things from the past transformed from bolstering the central power of ruling individuals to being used to foster among citizens sentiments of identity and pride in the nation. Heritage was at times explicitly used to instill in ordinary women and men reverence for selected examples of value to the history and identity of the nation (or city, or village), and to discern what and who “matters” –*and what/who does not “matter”* – both at home and abroad.

Alongside this ‘authorised’, ‘expert’, and ‘disciplinary’ use of heritage, the listing of sites, monuments, and objects has also served other ends. Neil Silberman has helpfully summarised these as follows. First, heritage making serves as a means of putting us *in touch with eternity*: the listing of objects, landscapes, and sites from the past of value to us in the present can answer a human quest for “tangible contact” with what Silberman calls a “transcendent metaphysical belief”, by which he means an occasion of communion with enduring “patterns of human destiny” through the sites and objects of our forebears.<sup>16</sup>

Second, the listing of such objects and sites has, from the outset, stimulated the visits of both pilgrims and tourists. It is often the *experience* of visiting these sites and landscapes (rather than expert knowledge about the value of the objects themselves) that is of primary importance. Heritage can provide the visitor and viewer with an important opportunity to escape from every-day present-oriented routines and demands, and to connect with something of more long-lived and broader significance for their identity. Of course, this *heritage experience* itself can be, and often is instrumentalized and monetized, turned into just another marketable entertainment, workplace, or opportunity for consumption.

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15 Smith, *The Uses of Heritage*, 11.

16 Neil A. Silberman, “Heritage Places. Evolving Conceptions and Changing Forms,” in *A Companion to Heritage Studies*, ed. William Logan, Máiréad Nic Craith, Ullrich Kockel (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2015), 29–40 at 32.



Third, while heritage practices have been instrumentalized by dominant powers and ideologies, and despite the authority of the experts, it has become clear that they can also serve as a *means of resistance*. Diverse groups excluded from the power structures that favour the élite – whether they be marginalised because of ethnicity, gender identity, religion, occupation, legal status, place of origin, ability, language, etc. – have successfully marshalled heritage as a means not only of preserving their own past and present identity, but of claiming public space and voice. Heritage practices help these groups to communicate to others what matters to *them*, and to reinterpret or contest the monuments of the majority.

The 2003 UNESCO *Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage* radically expanded the range of list-able heritage items to include oral traditions, social practices, rituals, festivals, arts and the knowledge needed to continue them. More significantly, perhaps, it simultaneously afforded visibility and recognized the integrity of groups who may not have the stability, resources, or political power to produce or retain objects and sites of “outstanding” value. This shift constitutes, in short, a radical democratisation of heritage. It has facilitated and supported bottom-up heritage claims from minority and marginalised groups as they seek to identify and defend sites, objects and practices of importance to them as a means of claiming a right to exist, to resist, and to have and be part of a history, like those identifying as transgenders that we pointed to before.

In another sense, heritage sites and objects that address dark histories (the sites of atrocities, mass graves, incarceration, etc. ) have also served to resist the temptation to forget the traumas of the past, to cover up mistakes and misdeeds, or to hear only the conciliatory stories of the winners. Such resistance to oblivion is, of course, not without its conflicts, and counter-reactions.

## **Heritage and Religion: Connecting and Dividing**

A large part of what is now regarded as heritage is connected to religion: a monumental church, a religious feast, and also ideologies and practices rooted in religion. Heritage and religion are linked because of their connection to memory and tradition.<sup>17</sup> The way in which a religion is lived is rooted in the past; in historical religions such as Judaism, Christianity and Islam, tradition is supposed to prescribe how it should be practiced now. Despite their claim of providing universal truth, religious traditions are narratives as much as heritage is, narratives, which can change according to contemporary concerns. Thus, for instance, under the aegis of Christianity, slavery has been defended and opposed; the oppression of women approved and condemned.

Religion can act both as a connecting and a divisive force. Organised religions such as Christianity share a long history of schisms, in which those who ended up outside whatever

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17 Danièle Hervieu-Léger, *La Religion pour mémoire* (Paris: Éditions du Cerf 1993); Cyril Isnart and Nathalie Cerezales ed., *The Religious Heritage Complex : Legacy, Conservation, and Christianity* (London/New York: Bloomsbury Academic 2020).

the dominant fold happened to be were often severely persecuted. In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, in which this handbook is written, those orthodox Protestant believers who oppose inoculation, are increasingly othered as remnants of a primitive past. Such assessments do not take into account both their participation in present day society and the fact that other opponents of inoculation do not necessarily have reasons connected to a Christian identity. Another example is how, frequently, after several terrorist attacks in Europe and the United States, Islam is connected to violence and as a natural Other versus European and Western civilization. This denies the plurality of Muslim ideologies and practices, and denies Muslims a status as Europeans.

Religion inspires strong emotions. Despite the fact that many Europeans now profess not to be involved in any religion or faith, it is striking how much they care about religious artefacts. This is why the French-Portuguese team of researchers Isnart and Cereales posit that religious heritage retains a certain sacredness despite it no longer being used for its original purpose by the majority of users.<sup>18</sup> Referring to mediaeval heritage in particular, although he does not use the word heritage specifically, medievalist and novelist Umberto Eco famously asserted that we still “dwell” in the Middle Ages, as we can still enter the local cathedral: for prayer, if we are believers, or for walking around, if we are tourists.<sup>19</sup> The fire of the Notre Dame in 2019 led to worldwide, emotional response as did other fires of churches on a more local scale. Such churches were the scenes of life events: where one’s ancestors were baptised, married, and buried. Moreover, these buildings are hallmarks of cities and villages: objects seen from afar, meaning ‘home’. Notre Dame receives over twelve million visitors per year; thus becoming a part of the life experiences of tourists and believers from all over the world. Yet, the mere relegation of religion to a status as heritage may be hurtful to believers as it appears to imply that it is a thing of the past, instead of a living tradition.

## Diversity, Religion and Heritage

As is clear from the above, the religious landscape of Europe has become increasingly diverse. This diversity moves in different directions. From the 1960s, a growing percentage of the population considers itself nonreligious, while at the same time, new religious communities comprising immigrants and converts are proliferating. Further complication is added by the fact that secular and religious individuals alike show a keen interest in spirituality and spiritual practices as they do in religious heritage. All three of these dimensions of religious diversification play into debates over heritage and European identity.

Although sociologists no longer assume that religion simply withers away in the face of modernity, empirical surveys have demonstrated the reality of secularisation in the sense of leaving the church in the form of a widespread drop of church affiliation and attendance

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18 Isnart and Cereales, ‘Introduction’ in *The Religious Heritage Complex: Legacy, Conservation, and Christianity* (London/New York/Oxford/New Delhi/Sidney 2020), 1-13.

19 Umberto Eco, *Travels in Hyperreality* (San Diego/New York/London: A Harvest Book 1983), 68.

across Europe that began in the 1960s.<sup>20</sup> Despite regional countercurrents of renewal after the fall of communism, the trend in the twenty-first century is clear. In Great Britain, the Czech Republic, Sweden and the Netherlands, a greater portion of the population identified with non-religion than with the major churches in a 2015 Eurobarometer survey. In Flanders, where over 50% of the population attended mass at least once a month in 1967, the figure had dropped to less than 10% by 2004 and has fallen even further since. In Catalonia, Catholic church participation dropped from 33.8% of the population in 1980 to 18.7% by 2007.<sup>21</sup>

Yet, it should be noted that leaving the church, mosque, synagogue or temple does not necessarily mean leaving the faith, or rather, a faith.<sup>22</sup> Neither does it mean ceasing involvement in religious heritage. Sociologists of religion identify a growing group of people creating their own eclectic version of religion, often mixing elements from diverse religious traditions: a Buddha sitting next to an image of the Virgin on a private altar. Many non-Churchgoers describe themselves as 'spiritual, but not religious'.<sup>23</sup> This shows the enduring need for a transcendent sphere, a place beyond the daily experience. This need surfaces in the face of life-events such as birth and death; spirituality may offer a way to deal with these as well as probe their meaning. Sources for spirituality originate in traditional religions as well as reinvented pagan traditions, and may also be rooted in popular culture: cults around popstars or science fiction films.<sup>24</sup> The latter creates its own heritage, often borrowing from religious traditions e.g. the Jedi Knights in the *Star Wars*-movies share characteristics of Samurai and Chinese warrior monks as well as the Christian monk-knights from the Middle Ages.

Regardless of whether Europeans leave behind all connection with religion or recreate it as a new form of spirituality, their leaving of the traditional churches (or mosques or synagogues or temples) has stimulated the material growth of the heritage sector. When Europeans enter churches today, it is increasingly as concert-goers, passersby or tourists, many of whom experience Christianity and church life principally through the past, as something their parents or even grandparents were last actively engaged in. Secularization is changing the function of historic religious buildings, from being sites of liturgical practice to travel destinations, performance spaces or cafes. Declining memberships and

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20 For the several meanings of secularization see for instance Peter van Rooden, *Religieuze Regimes. Over godsdienst en maatschappij in Nederland 1570-1990* (Amsterdam: Bert Bakker 1996), 19.

21 Marc Hooghe, Ellen Quintelier, and Tim Reeskens, 'Kerkpraktijk in Vlaanderen', *Ethische Perspectieven* 16, no. 2 (2006): 113–23. For the University of Lucerne interactive map on religious affiliations in Europe, see: 'Religious Affiliation', Universität Luzern, SMRE data, n.d., [https://www.smre-data.ch/en/data-exploring/religious\\_affiliation#/mode/majority\\_religion/period/2010/dataset/1562/presentation/map](https://www.smre-data.ch/en/data-exploring/religious_affiliation#/mode/majority_religion/period/2010/dataset/1562/presentation/map); European Commission, 'Discrimination in the European Union', Eurobarometer, October 2015, <https://europa.eu/eurobarometer/surveys/detail/2077>. On Catalonia: Marian Burchardt, *Regulating Difference: Religious Diversity and Nationhood in the Secular West* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2020), 5.

22 Grace Davie, *Religion in Britain since 1945: Believing without Belonging* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers 1994).

23 Paul Heelas and Linda Woodhead, *The Spiritual Revolution: Why Religion Is Giving Way to Spirituality* (Malden: Blackwell Heelas, Paul, and LindaWoodhead. 2005).

24 Thomas Luckmann, *Die Unsichtbare Religion* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag 1991), 180.

disaffiliation have led to financial burdens for the owners of churches and synagogues, which, in some regions, has led to a crisis of ownership itself.

Secularization, in the sense of leaving the church, has created the backdrop to debates over heritage and national culture of the past century. In the interwar period, the notions of “Christian civilization” and “Western Civilization,” were heritage concepts embraced by Christian conservatives to oppose secularism and socialism. The function of heritage in such political discourse was to remove religion from the hands of particular faith communities and make it the marker of a national or transnational identity. The relationship of civilization and religious heritage was front and center in the debates in the mid 2000s over whether and how to include references to religion, and specifically Christianity, in the new European constitution. Supporters of its inclusion faced off against advocates of *laïcité* and secularism who wanted “humanism” identified. The final draft of the preamble was a compromise, which stated that the European Union “draws inspiration from the cultural, religious and humanist inheritance of Europe, from which have developed the universal values of the inviolable and inalienable rights of the human person, freedom, democracy, equality and the rule of law.”<sup>25</sup>

Alongside secularisation, globalisation is the second great cause of the transformation of the European religious landscape since the 1960s. What began with inner-European migration from Southern Europe to the booming economies of the North opened up into a global movement of populations. New communities arrived and brought with them their religious traditions from Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Middle East and foreign missionaries planted new churches and attracted European converts. Since the 1990s, migration to Europe was no longer concentrated on a few former colonies, but became global and multidirectional. This has created European societies characterised by what sociologist Steven Vertovec called “superdiversity.”<sup>26</sup>

Migration has altered the political discourse around religious heritage. Until the 1990s, opponents of immigration generally made hay of the supposed cultural differences between “native” and “foreign” populations. Since the 1990s, however, religion has increasingly become a chief marker of difference. The case made against Turkish or North African migrants—most vociferously by the populist far right—has revolved around their Muslim identity. Yet, if one examines recent anti-Islamic rhetoric more closely, it becomes apparent that it revolves less around the opposition of Christian and Muslim faiths than the opposition between Christian *heritage* and Muslim *religion*. For example, during the 2019 elections to the European parliament, Marine Le Pen referenced the Duomo in Milan, Leonardo Da Vinci

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25 Carlo Invernizzi Accetti, ‘Towards a Model of Christian Democracy? Politics and Religion in the Treaty of Lisbon’, *Revue Française de Science Politique* (English Edition) 65, no. 4 (2015): 23–42: p. 37 quote; Gérard Bossuat, ‘Histoire d’une Controverse: La Référence Aux Héritages Spirituels Dans La Constitution Européenne’, *Matériaux Pour l’histoire de Notre Temps* 78, no. 1 (2005): 68–82.

26 Steven Vertovec, ‘Super-Diversity and Its Implications’, *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 30, no. 6 (2007): 1024–25; José Casanova, ‘Immigration and the New Religious Pluralism: A European Union/United States Comparison’, in *Democracy and the New Religious Pluralism*, ed. Thomas Banchoff (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007).

and Jeanne d'Arc and stated "we will never accept to be dispossessed of this material and immaterial patrimony." Hungarian Prime Minister Victor Orbán called fellow populist Matteo Salvini his ally in the fight for the "preservation of European Christian heritage and against migration."<sup>27</sup> The heritage discourse has also allowed the populist right to construct anti-Islamic alliances. The early intellectual leader of Dutch anti-Islamism, Pim Fortuyn (1948-2002), extended this idea of a shared national-religious culture further, when he spoke of "Jewish, Christian and humanistic tradition."<sup>28</sup> This allowed Fortuyn and since him many other Dutch conservatives to claim toleration—for example, towards homosexuality—and liberal attitudes as achievements of Christian heritage. Heritage allows the return of religion in secular form and brings the values of secular society into the logic of a religious opposition.

Using heritage to forge a political alliance between secular and religious forces is most pronounced in populist rhetoric, however, it has been widely employed by mainstream politicians to oppose a supposed "Islamization" of European culture. Against such exclusionary uses of heritage to isolate minority religious groups from dominant forms of Christian and secular heritage, there is a growing consensus among museum curators, heritage organisations, activists, including those belonging to minorities that heritage, religious and other, must be made more diverse and more inclusive. They are recalling obscured histories and giving them the breath of public life through acknowledgement as heritage, and they are doing so from various directions, from above as well as from below. As noted, in the UK and elsewhere, innovative grassroots heritage efforts have created Jewish and Muslim heritage trails.<sup>29</sup> In this way, minority communities carve out their place in present day Europe.

## ***Heritage as a human right: the Faro Convention and the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society***

Increasing awareness of growing diversity and its impact on the multiple roles of heritage in different communities within European society has recentred what we think heritage is, and what we have to do with it. In contrast to the premise of 'danger' and 'threat' of economic and social change to outstandingly valuable sites and objects which drove the 1972 UNESCO definition, in a meeting in Faro in 2005 the Council of Europe proposed a new framework for thinking about and working in heritage that placed people and their values at the centre. Here, cultural heritage is defined broadly as:

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27 "Le jour de gloire" des patries "est arrivé", lance à Milan Marine Le Pen', France 24, 18 May 2019, <https://www.france24.com/fr/20190518-le-jour-gloire-patries-est-arrive-lance-a-milan-marine-le-pen>; 'Hungary's Orbán Commiserates with "fellow Combatant" Salvini', France 24, 29 August 2019, <https://www.france24.com/en/20190829-hungary-s-orban-commiserates-with-fellow-combatant-salvini>.

28 Pim Fortuyn, *Tegen de Islamisering van onze cultuur: Nederlandse identiteit als fundament* (Utrecht: Bruna Uitgevers, 1996), 57.

29 See the module on Muslim heritage in Europe.

a group of resources inherited from the past which people identify, independently of ownership, as a reflection and expression of their constantly evolving values, beliefs, knowledge, and traditions. It includes all aspects of the environment resulting from the interaction between people and places through time.<sup>30</sup>

Fundamental to this approach to heritage is the Convention of Faro's grounding in Article 27 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which states, without qualification, that "Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community".<sup>31</sup> 'Participation' is understood broadly by the Faro Convention, not only in terms of who participates (everyone!), but what participation means. Participation is not a matter of simply engaging with pre-existing authorised heritage sites, monuments and practices: rather, participation includes the active "identification, study, interpretation, protection, conservation and presentation of the cultural heritage" and "public reflection and debate on the opportunities and challenges which the cultural heritage represents."<sup>32</sup>

The implications of the Faro Convention for shared ownership of and responsibility for heritage, for dialogue, and democracy are still being worked through: the Rebelah Project is one example. Any idea that the Faro Convention is a panacea is quickly dispelled by tough questions on the ground. How exactly can a difficult, contested, or obscure heritage provide a "shared source of remembrance" as the Convention envisages?<sup>33</sup> Who is in control of the "inclusive" process: is it not the élite, once again? What scale of inclusion are we talking about; are the boundaries local, regional, national, or European?<sup>34</sup> This and other intractable problems will confront anyone attempting to use shared responsibility for and participation in religious heritage for social inclusion.

That need not be cause for despair. Contrary to the logic of lists, the framework of participation anticipates what the ethnographer Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing calls the "awkward, unequal, unstable and creative qualities of interconnection across difference."<sup>35</sup> Individual and collective rights to benefit, identify, benefit from, and contribute to heritage (from my grandma's soup recipe, to the Sistine Chapel), and the responsibility to respect the heritage

30 Council of Europe, *Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society* (2005), article 2a. Available online at: <https://rm.coe.int/1680083746>.

31 United Nations, *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (1948), article 27.1. Available online at: <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights>.

32 Council of Europe, *Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society* (2005), article 12a.

33 Council of Europe, *Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society* (2005), article 3a.

34 See Chiara Rabbiosi, "The Frictional Geography of Cultural Heritage: Grounding the Faro Convention into Urban Experience in Forlì, Italy," *Social and Cultural Geography* (2019) <https://doi.org/10.1080/14649365.2019.1698760>

35 Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing, *Friction: An Ethnography of Global Connections* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 3.

of others will not be frictionless. But it is precisely these small and large-scale tensions that can remind us “that heterogeneous and unequal encounters can lead to new arrangements of culture and power.”<sup>36</sup> This, we might say, is the new heritage practice.

### ***In Conclusion: Creative Heritage – Meaning Making***

Heritage is about meaning, about the narratives that are tied to objects, places and practices and which form the grounding for personal and community identities. Having heritage, living it, shows the presence of a community, as a part of a pluralist Europe, which defines itself as diverse. Heritage is about meaning, about the narratives that are tied to objects, people, places and practices and which form the grounding for personal and community identities. As such, heritage is continually being made and remade.

To work in heritage is to be involved in a process of meaning-making. Democratising the process of meaning making is the ideal behind the Faro Convention, which calls for all residents of Europe to be enabled to find and celebrate their historical roots in the societies in which they currently live as well as in their places of origin. Community organisations can help marginalised groups find their voices and activate their imaginations, and allow them to enter into dialogue with organisations and people that represent the dominant heritage as it was authorised by experts and cast in a network of power relations, in short what used to be seen as *the* heritage of *the* community, whether defined through ethnicity, nationality, religion or something else.

This creative dialogue is a path to democratising heritage practices and hopefully recasting European heritage, so that it is more inclusive. Heritage also offers opportunities for dialogue between different minority communities and between minority and “majority” communities. Thus, heritage is no longer thought of as something produced by experts and given to the public through authorised sites of heritage transmission. Rather it is the product of meaning-making between teachers and students, scholars and community activists. Its place is not just cathedrals and museums; it can be practised in various locations, wherever individuals and communities want to combine and compare historical perspectives in a process of reflection and create a pluralist vision of it, which matches a diverse Europe.

A new type of heritage professional is needed. Whereas in the past, heritage was in the hands of experts, the new heritage professional is much more of a mediator, who specialises in helping communities engage in the co-creation of heritage. The new heritage professional, whether a teacher, an artist, a community leader or a museum curator, always being a member of a community creating heritage plays a mediating role in a multi sided process involving many voices. Moreover, whereas in the past, heritage professionals may have adhered to a strict separation between religious commitments and cultural heritage, the newer heritage professionals have an open attitude towards any dimension of heritage, including religious aspects.

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36 Ibid.