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# EUROPA BOTTOM-UP

ARBEITSPAPIERE ZUR EUROPÄISCHEN ZIVILGESELLSCHAFT / EUROPEAN CIVIL SOCIETY WORKING PAPERS

UDO STEINBACH (ED.)

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## EUROPE AND THE MEDITERRANEAN

TALKING, LEARNING, WORKING, AND LIVING TOGETHER

7

EUROPA BOTTOM-UP NR.22

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**NR. 22/2019**

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UDO STEINBACH (ED.)

**EUROPE AND THE MEDITERRANEAN**  
**TALKING, LEARNING, WORKING, AND LIVING TOGETHER**  
**7**

HERITAGE AND SOCIETY IN THE EURO-MEDITERRANEAN COMMUNITY

A Conference in Berlin  
19<sup>th</sup> June, 2018

Conference Papers (Part 2)

Supported by



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## Europe and the Mediterranean Sphere – a shared Heritage? Transcultural and intercultural Heritage in the Euro-Mediterranean Sphere.

By Verena Metze-Mangold

**“I speak to you, my heart - So you may answer me.”<sup>1</sup>**

### What this is about

With her simple statement that there is knowledge that does not connect but instead separates, Bénédicte Savoy succinctly describes what is at the core of political strife today.

It is the renewed fears of a "finis germaniae", "finis europae" that paralyse us. We forget what power lies in encountering each other as strangers. Richard Sennett wonderfully described it in "The Fall of Public Man". He reminds us how greatly this trait enriched European culture and fed into the rise and dominance of Europe. And, as if it required further proof, Joshua Cohen writes at the beginning of the European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018 with the motto 'Sharing Heritage': "Toledo in transit. The translation of this into the real world can be witnessed in the example of the Spanish city, which in the Middle Ages ensured that divergent cultures inspired each other. No modern Europe without this heritage."<sup>2</sup>

“It was as unheroic heroes that, in the spring of 1085, the armies of Alfonso VI of Castile rode into the city that we call Toledo, deposed the Umayyad Dynasty, and brought to a close nearly three centuries of Moorish Muslim rule, in a campaign that the Castilian Spanish language, but not the Arabic language, refers to as Reconquista. The new Christian *reconquerors* found that this city called Toledo (which was also a Kingdom, and, in Arabic, a Taifa of al-Andalus) possessed a mixed population, which spoke, read, and wrote a mongrelity of

<sup>1</sup> A quote from a poem by the Egyptian Khakheperreseneb from around 1800 BC, titled "About Things in the Country", translated from Jan Assmann's German translation which was displayed at the award of the German Book Trade Peace Prize in 2018.

<sup>2</sup> Joshua Cohen, Toledo in Transit. FAZ, 10 February 2018, S. 12

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tongues: Arabic, Hebrew, Ladino, Latin, and lingua Tholetana, the local Romance vernacular.

Concomitantly, the city's Muslim religious institutions possessed large libraries with a polyglot of books that had, perhaps, only a single commonality: they were largely incomprehensible to their new owners. In order to take fuller possession of what they'd fought for, then, a movement came about to translate these works and make them legible. This movement, which in the imagination of history has acquired the moniker the Toledo School—as if its impulse immediately sterilized itself with campuses and deans—succeeded in bringing an unprecedented amount of the scientific and mathematical and philosophical thought of the Arab world, and of the scientific and mathematical and philosophical thought that the Arab world had itself translated from the Greek, into “modern” Castilian Spanish and so into “modern” Europe.

Because it is a fact that while the Romans copied Greek statuary and painting—Greek surfaces—it was only the Arabs, and, to a degree, the Persians, who took it upon themselves to preserve the less superficial appurtenances: Greek thought and literary culture.

No modern Europe without this heritage indeed. But is the perception of modern Europeans truly shaped by this memory?

The concept of shared heritage, the motto of the European Year of Cultural Heritage, is certainly interesting for this search for traces of our European perception and imagination. However, this hinges on the premise that the memory of Europe and the Mediterranean sphere has not been completely overlaid by images of migrants, or their corpses, arriving on European beaches. We require *multi-dimensional* imagery and imagination that encourages the richness of cultures and maintains respect for and curiosity about difference. “Diplomacy is about perception,” Kissinger once said. The insight that it is our chosen perspective that determines our perception has been consolidated in the social sciences with the term ‘framing’. The search for traces begins with our own perception.

## Crisis of the global order

The *European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018* sets high demands for itself: we wanted to emphasise the *cultural foundation* of the *European peace project* and thus give new impetus to the peace project of the European unification process.

If we realise in what moment of world history this is taking place, one cannot help but beat the crisis drum.

The most powerful Western democracy is serious about its proclamation to pursue its national interests primarily and unilaterally. The US is reneging on the Iran Treaty. The withdrawal from various trade agreements and the Paris Climate Accord tends in the same direction. From the east, China is introducing 'social scoring' and rolling out the Silk Road.

This development threatens to significantly alter the global order of the last decades. One might ask how realistic this nationally-focused approach truly is given the global interdependence in times of climate change, terror, global refugee and migration movements, financial crises, cultural eradication, cyber-crime, artificial intelligence and synthetic biology. Understanding among nations and coordinated international standard-setting are more necessary today than they ever were. And yet progress is being rolled back everywhere.

It is no coincidence that historians draw parallels between 1918 and 2018. The mid- to long-term political and economic costs of an ultimately imperialist unilateralism, based on the unrestrained exploitation of *asymmetrical* power relations and regional dependencies, are uncertain at best.

This political strategy exposes itself to incalculable risks. But it also has repercussions on the concept of the *West*, on the concept of *Europe*, on the European Union, its Member States and external relations. Germany, the belated nation, arrived in the West late in the game; but when she arrived, the West disappeared, the Indian intellectual Pankaj Mishra stated derisively in Berlin.

What can such an official year – European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018 – contribute to a Europe that is struggling for its very existence as a *community of*



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*values?* Or rather: what can *we* achieve with this European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018?

### **European Architectural Heritage Year 1975**

In its genesis, the European Year of Cultural Heritage pays homage to the ultra-successful European Architectural Heritage Year, which the *Council of Europe* proclaimed in 1975 and which is today regarded as the start of the disputes surrounding architectural heritage in West Germany. What is surprising is that the scientific standards for the *preservation of cultural heritage* that had already been developed around the turn of the twentieth century were now activated *politically* against the eradication frenzy surrounding historical monuments.

A newly formulated *understanding of history* was the result and it altered the public's view of elements of industrial culture and *Alltagsgeschichte* (history of everyday life) and towards the buildings of the 19th and 20th centuries. A *holistic* view of the urban landscape prevailed (Ulrike Wendland). Architectural conservation laws were enacted in the federal states.

Architectural heritage bodies were restructured and strengthened in terms of personnel and funding. Monument preservation had become an interdisciplinary professional field. Historians, building researchers, folklorists, scientists, archaeologists, restorers, planners, architects and craftsmen worked together. Monument preservation departed its *elitist island* and opened up to society, citizens' initiatives, politics and urban planning. An entirely new perspective emerged.

Even if we inquire into the potential political impact of *civil society* forces, the 1975 European Architectural Heritage Year is a remarkable event in terms of today's analysis. A massive developmental wave was *corrected* thanks to the marshalling of innumerable forces. Without this correction, our urban landscapes would look very different today.

### **European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018**

Today we face a completely different picture with the *European Year of Cultural Heritage*. It is about more than a specialist topic such as the preservation

of monuments, even if one must concede that the issue of monument preservation in 1975 in West Germany radiated deep into the political and cultural reality of the cities and the Republic. Today, we speak of culture in a much wider, even existential sense.

We see *cracks* and considerable static risks in the structures of the *European integration project*. Following the shocking financial and economic crisis of late 2007 and the crisis of recent years caused by massive refugee and migration movements, the European area is being subjected to great political and cultural *stress*.

The United Kingdom held a referendum, in which its population determined it no longer wanted part in this European integration project. Globally, the free-democratic social and political model that Europe in particular represents is being challenged by a new authoritarianism that has emerged as the *more effective form* of governance in the 21st century.

Anyone who carefully followed the speeches of the French President and the German Chancellor in Davos in 2018 heard, for the first time, a strong emphasis on *multilateralism*, international cooperation and its significance for the European Union: Europe as a *community of values* that is culturally oriented and seeks to place its values at the center of its relationship to the world.

“When Europe engages with the World, culture has to be at the core of our foreign policy,” the EU Commissioner for Foreign Affairs Federica Mogherini stated on 20 April 2016 at the Cultural Forum Brussels. But what culture are we speaking of?

### **Cultural understanding**

There are two foundational *concepts* of culture employed in the European Commission, which have essentially found their way into the Ministries of Culture of all Member States. *One* emphasises the economic benefits of culture; it sees culture as the driver of development in the sense of economic prosperity. Today especially, this means digitally-driven prosperity.

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The *other* concept harks back to the UNESCO Cultural Report of Mexico 1982. This concept views culture as the foundation of a society and what makes it unique, and therefore assigns it a much higher priority. This concept is wonderful for evoking emotions, but is much harder to grasp or even measure. This means political practice must be incorporated.

Two of the EU's key cultural community programmes in recent years are the *European Capital of Culture* and the *European Heritage Label*.

The *European Capital of Culture* has been a marked success as it offers the chance of a Europe-wide and, to a certain extent, EU-certified cultural marketing. The participant cities rightly recognise the huge potential for tourism, and thus economic development, in this programme.

At the same time, the programme also ensures that, during the multi-year application and preparation process, cities must embark on an integrated development process based on the *cultural paradigm*, which structurally speaking takes them to a completely new plane in this regard.

The programme of the *European Heritage Label*, which was launched in 2014 and identifies elements of common European heritage, suffers not only from its low profile, but also from the fact that the participating Member States primarily provide *national* narratives for their sites. This programme has aptly illustrated how difficult it is for states and their respective cultural institutions and cultural dignitaries to break away from *national narratives* and incorporate them into a broader and more realistic European perspective.

UNESCO's broad concept of culture, dating back to the 1982 World Cultural Conference in Mexico, gives us the opportunity to move away from the *functional* and project-related *interpretations of culture* and to look more closely at what Europe should focus on. Of course, culture and cultural heritage play an absolutely central role in the European peace project. What do we share? At the same time, society and its concepts are continually in conflict.

**If** our membership and cultural identity in our societies at the heart of Europe are increasingly being recharged in a national sense, this is a matter of culture.

**If** we become more susceptible to populist formulas that question the coexistence of diverse groups, this is a matter of culture. As illustrated in the conversation between Kubicki and Gauland<sup>3</sup>.

**If** the digital transformation of our society encapsulates our standards and changes our understanding of civil rights and civil spaces, of privacy, self-determination and democracy, this is a matter of culture.

**If** we do not address the political power of global platforms, which extends into all spheres of the economy and our personal lives, in a regulatory way, but strengthen them through competition and tax policy, this is a matter of culture.

**If** our social, economic and political relationships are virtually determined through manipulation-intended software techniques, this is a matter of culture, specifically political culture.

*Cultural heritage* is the most important resource that enables us to reflect on who we are and who we want to be, how we live and how we want to live. We and: we with others. Especially today, in times of ever-faster and more profound transformation, the concrete experience of these milestones of our historical transformation and reflection *on our existence* creates a free space of self-determination and cultural identification: it frees our imagination, we recognise contexts, and we can design counter proposals for social action.

### **Constitution of the European Economic Area**

We are not only faced *within* Europe with the challenge of significantly increasing awareness of the cultural substance of our societies and of the common cultural *foundation* of the European Economic Area. There is a further task ahead.

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<sup>3</sup> F.A.Z. conversation Gauland v. Kubicki from 21.01.2018. [www.faz.net](http://www.faz.net) /Politik / Inland

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The *Constitution* of the European Economic Area, especially when we think of it culturally, raises the question of the *relationship* that we develop with neighbouring regions. The most urgent question we must ask ourselves as Europeans is whether we see this neighbourhood policy in the traditional geopolitical perspective of *national* interests or as a *European* task.

The establishment of the ‘Union for the Mediterranean’ was a lesson in this regard.

The French presidential candidate Nicolas Sarkozy had used the project for a *Union pour la Méditerranée* in the election campaign to strengthen France's role in Europe. Originally, only the Mediterranean countries of the EU Member States, led by France, were to be integrated into the Union. François Hollande, to a certain extent, insisted on mobilising the European southern axis, particularly against Germany, whose influence is growing increasingly stronger in the EU.

### **Neighbourhood Policy**

In the meantime, with the “European Neighbourhood Policy”<sup>4</sup> and, since 2010, the “Union for the Mediterranean”, we have genuinely European instruments to bring this partnership to life. Two examples:

With “Euromed Heritage”, the European Union implemented a €60 million programme over ten years, involving 400 partners from the EU and the MENA region, including very interesting projects on the region's audio-visual heritage, water issues and cultural practice in the field of intangible cultural heritage.

In a study for Tunisia in 2012, “EuropeAid” examined the possibilities of providing a new impetus for regional development through cultural heritage and cultural tourism while generating jobs for young unemployed adults and academics.

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<sup>4</sup> Cf. EU communication regarding southern neighbourhood policy of 8 March 2011

The quality of the *European Partnership Policy* depends on its *coherence*, on special national interests and on whether it is in the sense of good neighbourhood policy, in line with the true needs of partner countries. A “framing” of the “shared heritage” concept adopted by the European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018 seems obvious.

### **Concept of shared heritage**

*Shared heritage* – if we have this understanding, it offers the greatest opportunity to create mutual understanding and openness that is too often at risk in political and cultural disputes. It is a concept that underlies the UNESCO *World Heritage Convention* adopted in Paris in 1972, a treaty of international law that has now been ratified by 193 states.

In experiencing this world heritage, borders become inconsequential and new relationships are established. The diversity of world heritage leaves us astonished and simultaneously conveys, in a form of subtext, a concrete view of the will and dignity of humans as creators. The diversity of the heritage reveals the deep inner connection between all cultures. What we learn is that local identity creation can succeed within a universal perspective of mutual recognition. We also concurrently practice one of the arguably most important perspectives of our time – that of the world citizen.

Its origins are bequeathed to us from the past, but its importance and cultural value derives from its impact on the reality of life and as a resource for the shaping of future realities of life. The same is true for any heritage. When we speak of *world heritage*, we also link the revolutionary idea of the interconnectedness of universal heritage with the idea of world peace.

Because the UNESCO World Heritage List adopts the cultural-historical sensitive demand of Karl-Friedrich Schinkel for monument inventories in the perspective of national treasures, but goes far beyond in that it tangibly links *national* heritage as part of a *global* heritage, this commits us to responsible custodianship at the national level while broadening the national viewpoint with a human perspective.

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## The contemporary historical context

For the emergence of this idea, the contemporary historical context was enormously significant. The thesis of the ‘Limits of Growth’ of the first report by the Club of Rome generated a disruptive force at that time. The idea of a possible end to human history on this planet became concrete as a result of the Cold War and a newly emerging awareness of the ongoing destruction of the environment as a consequence of human intervention in nature. The globally shared experience was one of destruction, boundlessness and endangerment.

Moreover, the limits of human history became tangible: on 20 July 1969, an estimated 600 million people watched the Apollo 11 moon landing. For the first time in human history, a human being stood on solid ground outside our geosphere and transmitted images of planet Earth as a fragile pale blue dot: *Spaceship Earth* – a metaphor coined by architect and futurist Richard Buckminster Fuller, who popularised this new perception.

A growing awareness of the looming destruction of the environment led to the organisation of the first United Nations World Environment Summit, held in Stockholm from 5 to 16 June 1972. With this summit, which was to lead to the creation of UNEP, the United Nations Environment Program, environmental protection was placed on the UN agenda.

The fact that the UNESCO World Heritage Convention adopted five months later not only includes cultural assets but also nature sites can be traced to the Stockholm Summit. This resulted in the intriguing constellation that *cultural heritage protection* and *nature conservation* were combined in a single international legal instrument.

It is only a seeming coincidence that the UNESCO World Heritage Convention was adopted in the same year in which the nuclear bunker of the German government in Ahrweiler was fully commissioned. The UNESCO World Heritage List can be seen as the establishment of a registry of outstanding cultural creations; as a reservoir of *meaning*, to save humanity from slipping into the unreflective madness that permeated the air of the government bunker of Ahrweiler.

## The meaning

Against the backdrop of this madness, the world community established a multilateral concept of action – in the context of Luhmann, that structures emerge out of actions; in the sense of the UNESCO Constitution, which states: “That since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defenses of peace must be constructed.”

The World Heritage idea reflects the call to understand all cultures principally as *equals* and preserve their highest goods in *free* responsibility. The programmatic core goes much further: if the outstanding cultural sites<sup>5</sup> and the great natural landscapes of this earth do not belong only to the nation states on whose territory they are located and who undertake commitments for their preservation, then they are the ideal possession of all humanity, and indeed both present and *future* generations, to which humanity has a duty to convey these testimonies of a common history as authentically as possible.

*The idea of world heritage and convention thus separates the concept of culture and nature from that of the nation. This separation is one of the most valuable lessons to be learned from the history of the 20th century.*

The result is an understanding between nations based on mutual recognition of World Heritage Sites as *places of learning, teaching and experiencing*. It is no wonder, then, that they are the first target of violent conflict.

Cultural property protection has become more than simply a matter for the UN Security Council and the International Court of Justice in The Hague, as well as legislative amendments, police training and conferences; it has engendered

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<sup>5</sup> The World Heritage List also includes the shadow sides of the past: the list also contains the concentration camp Auschwitz in Poland, the slave shipping island of Gorée in Senegal and the remains of the cathedral in Hiroshima as a monument to Peace – “*Les lieux de mémoires*” (Pierre Nora): Places of painful memory, testifying how thin the veneer of civilisation is.



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countless impressive *collaborations* between states, UNESCO, foundations and international societies, as could be witnessed in the reconstruction of Timbuktu.

### **An incipient world cultural policy**

Over the past 40 years, the concept of shared heritage has become the heart of *world cultural policy* and, in practical terms, the biggest success story of cultural cooperation among the peoples of the world. From the voluntary *partial* renunciation of sovereignty by the states of the UNESCO Convention of 1972, the first internationally binding instrument of a protection concept for the cultural and natural heritage of the world emerged, assuming responsibility for the artefacts on its own soil: a contract with obligations that today binds almost all states.

The next strong thread was pulled in world heritage domestic politics with the 2005 Convention that sought to protect and promote the *diversity of cultural expressions*. In 2015, its provisions were updated for the digital era. It is a cultural convention that does not refer to heritage, but rather to the creation of a political framework for the diversity of cultural expressions today; not protection alone, but promotion; not based on the past, but on the future, and this opens up an international legal framework for national cultural policies – this is altogether new – for their legitimate action in times of global trade agreements and ever-expanding processes of concentration in the global cultural industries.

In a unique way, this international instrument, which in the best case also feeds into new trade agreements, concerns itself with the question of how we want to live in the future.

### **Europe's role**

Europe played a crucial role in the creation of this most recent international instrument of world cultural and governance policy. The Council of the European Union succeeded in negotiating this treaty as a corporation within the multilateral organisation UNESCO: a novel phenomenon. The Presidency was held by the British, who led the European delegation. The European Union ratified this novel international agreement even before almost any other European Member State – even Germany.

*International cultural law has thus been integrated into the European Union as part of the EU's legal architecture.*

International law today determines EU cultural policy as well as that of its member states. The Convention's understanding of the law increasingly determines relevant rulings of European courts. The values, principles and procedures of this international agreement, but especially the world perspective underpinning them, are now playing a noticeable role in the Mediterranean sphere as well.

### **Mediterranean sphere**

Despite the seeming contradictions of this process, it was only possible to achieve a *new quality* of cultural cooperation with younger partners from civil society with the revolts and the social mobilisation seen in the Arab region from 2011 onwards. These processes opened up thanks to art actions and new forms of public culture. The award-winning UNDP report on the situation of youth in Egypt in 2010 tells the tale, as well as the research report by the Anna Lindh Foundation on "Intercultural Trends and Social Change" published in the same year.

So far, the Federal Government of Germany has responded and provided more than €130 million to the *transformation partnership* with a total of five countries in the MENA<sup>6</sup> region, primarily for cultural and media training projects to create jobs for young adults: partnerships within the framework of the European Neighbourhood Policy based on locally determined requirements.

Within the framework of the German Transformation Partnerships, the CONNEXIONS programme contributes to strengthening civil society in the arts and culture sector and has been further developed into a **knowledge partnership for cultural diversity** by 2018.<sup>7</sup>

In Tunisia and Morocco, the programme met with great interest in the *Ministries of Culture* from the outset. From 2013 to 2016, this led to jointly designed in-

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<sup>6</sup> MiddleEast\_NorthAfrica

<sup>7</sup> Cf.: <http://stories.unesco.de/buildingthefuture#142443>;

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house training courses, continuous collegial counselling, a nationwide workshop for cultural leaders and pilot formats for citizen forums on issues of cultural participation.

The frame of reference for this is the UNESCO Convention on the Promotion and Protection of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (2005), with its emphasis on an open society founded on democratic values. Prior to 2011, only four Arab states had ratified this human-rights-based instrument. Today, the number of Arab states has doubled, including four of the five Maghreb states since 2015, with Algeria, Morocco, Mauritania and Tunisia.

The **constitutional changes** enacted in Morocco (2011) and Tunisia (2014) during this period are interesting. The preamble of the new Moroccan constitution uses cultural diversity as a *key concept* for state unity – a first in the Arab world: Morocco defines itself as Atlantic, Mediterranean and simultaneously desert-influenced, with Judeo-Christian-Muslim traditions and cultural roots. This leit-motif is very close to the European concept of "unity through diversity".

The new Constitution of Tunisia expressly recognises artistic and scientific freedoms. In 2012, Tunisia was the first Arab country to organise the World Press Freedom Day together with UNESCO, addressing the issue of the public and democracy;

Meanwhile, until 2018 "SouthMed CV" focused on the political culture of public space and the common good in the southern Mediterranean.<sup>8</sup> In just three years, 38 local projects and 2,000 participants created a local cultural practice and set up a regional network. The project is currently being evaluated.

## **Relations**

In the seven years since 2011, the German UNESCO Commission alone has been able to *enter into in-depth work processes* through two programmes with

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<sup>8</sup> The project will be co-funded by the European Commission's EuropeAid programme within the context of the MedCulture programme of the European Neighbourhood Policy with the southern Mediterranean sphere (DG NEAR). The Arab partners come from Tunisia, Egypt, Jordan and Lebanon.

*around 500 highly motivated cultural actors from civil society* in the transformation countries of the region and to reach a further 2,000 experts within the framework of SouthMedCV.

*This innovative cultural practice is despite the interested target group still little known, both in the region itself and in Europe/Germany.*

That is why DUK 2017, together with the European Cultural Foundation and one Moroccan and one Lebanese/Syrian partner, has prepared succinct examples as an e-publication, which went online this year and can certainly be seen as a contribution to the European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018. <http://stories.unesco.de/buildingthefuture#142443><sup>9</sup>

If, in the European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018, the German BMZ is involved for the first time in the cultural sector in this region and launches the project "Music for Sustainable Development" in cooperation with Morocco and UNESCO, this is at least as pleasing as the future laboratory of the Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie Bremen "New Social Perspectives through Music" in Tunisia: Job and income opportunities are to be created for young music talents, and opportunities will be opened up to acquire the cultural richness of the musical expressions of the region, through the centuries and into the 21st century. In a way, the melody of its life. (<https://seafile.kammerphilharmonie.com/d/b87048b207/>)

It is clear that this neighbouring region, which is so significant for Europe, has no easy path to follow: the 2017 Arab Democracy Index sees positive developments, particularly in Tunisia and Morocco, while development in Egypt is *regressing* at full speed and Lebanon and Jordan are also both facing serious internal tensions, not least as the primary host countries for refugees from the

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<sup>9</sup> <http://stories.unesco.de/buildingthefuture#142443>; among them the artist residence project "*Heritage for Creativity and Development*" of the University of Al Quaraouiyine, Fez, one of the oldest universities worldwide. This should significantly increase the *visibility of transformative cultural activities*.

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region. The November 2016 Arab Human Development Report titled "Empowering Young People to Shape Their Future". In 2011, it stated: "The Arab world is richer than it is developed."

Cultural cooperation, artistic exchange, initiatives in the cultural-economic sector and the references to heritage, creativity and development cannot solve the essential structural questions and blockades alone. However, they do strengthen people, activities and groups who are actively involved in this, instilling in them the courage and clarity to design feasible visions of the future.

If we learn – from which we are still a long way off – to understand ourselves culturally as Europeans and to distance ourselves from strict national formatting, we can then also appreciate the Mediterranean as a historical, contemporary and future cultural space, which is a central element in the emergence of Europe. If this is what primarily came of The European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018, that would be wonderful!

Incidentally, organ building, which was included in UNESCO's "Intangible Heritage" programme this year, was invented in Egypt!

## **The Golden Rule: A Principle on which Christians, Jews, Muslims and Secularists might agree?**

By Costa Carras

At our 2017 conference at Heraklion entitled “Europe and the Mediterranean” I was asked to speak on the subject of “Religion and Politics”. Not surprisingly I opposed negative political stereotyping of any religion, more specifically in the present context Islam, while pointing out that some Christian Churches in the past and several movements in Islam today have held back the liberalisation and democratisation of their societies. Rather more controversially for my audience, I also suggested that the religious element in our cultural traditions may have something valuable to offer in respect of the problems our world faces today.

I continue to hold both positions but would now add that one of the most healthy paths to liberalisation is when a majority in a country whose chief democratic feature is popular elections, but has not yet achieved a separation of powers, comes to decide that such elections are not sufficient for its people to consider their country a full democracy. This has recently occurred very dramatically in a Muslim majority country, namely Malaysia; might conceivably happen in a week from now in Turkey; while there are also signs of such a tendency among Iraqis. There is therefore some evidence that my first major thesis may turn out to be correct and if this is confirmed by events it will represent very good news indeed and not just for the countries concerned.

This year however it is my second thesis I would like to take further. I shall do so by examining what is called the Golden Rule, which no-one will deny is an important part of the cultural heritage of many parts of the world, certainly including both Europe and the Near East, and all the more interesting because its roots are more surely embedded in Judaeo-Christian than in Hellenic or Roman soil.

I shall begin by asking how widespread recognition of such a general but not exclusive guide to moral and political conduct is, a question to which my knowledge of the field is inadequate to provide a full but to which I can suggest a partial answer. My second question, the crucial one, is whether we need the

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Golden Rule as an active part of our moral and political discourse today. As my answer to this question will be affirmative, my third aim will be to draw out some of the consequences.

First, two distinctions within the Golden Rule. One is evident: the Golden Rule can be expressed in a milder negative form or a more challenging positive form. This distinction is crystal clear: Rabbi Hillel, about 100 years before Christ, stated one should not do to others whatever one would not wish another to do to oneself. Like most formulations of the Golden Rule, this was not intended as a complete moral teaching but as a summary and a valuable guideline: no-one, for instance, would wish to be robbed by another person so no-one should rob another person.

The strong and more challenging form expressed by Jesus and recorded both in Matthew and Luke's Gospel is that we should positively act towards others as we would wish them to act towards us. This challenges us to see other people, not necessarily every other person at every time, as no less a potential centre of equal concern for us than we are to ourselves. Clearly this is a more difficult challenge and furthermore one which cannot be translated into the form of a prescription of specific actions. The intention is clear enough however, namely that other people should in principle be as important to us as self-evidently we are to ourselves. This entails a radical change in our existential stance, from which important and indeterminate consequences will flow. It is a principle which does not attempt to dictate specific decisions when we are faced by specific choices, as we indeed are, every day of our lives, since this would cancel one of every human being's most basic characteristics, namely our extensive, though never total, freedom of choice. It does however forcefully recommend to us how we should exercise that freedom of choice.

The other distinction between various versions of the Golden Rule is, unlike the first, not at all evident from the specific form of words employed by a specific teacher. This concerns the definition of "the other". "Love your neighbour as yourself" may be less revolutionary than the words appear to us today if, for instance, one's neighbour is defined as a fellow townsman or a fellow Jew.

This in turn explains why the Parable of the Good Samaritan recorded in Luke's Gospel is even more revolutionary than Jesus' positive formulation of the Golden Rule. It does not just imply that Jews should treat Samaritans as neighbours, it is that Jesus' listeners, Jews like himself, should learn from the example of a Samaritan who behaved in an exemplary manner towards a complete stranger, treating him as a neighbour, something of which a Jewish priest and Levite alike had proven incapable. The Rule therefore as Jesus enunciated it is not just meant to apply to everybody in the future: it already applied in practice and his listeners were called to pattern their behaviour on that of those who applied it, even were they not from among the Chosen People.

Then of course there is a third issue, this time not of distinction but of context. Those who wish to bring objections to the Golden Rule correctly point out it cannot be the sole guide to conduct. This does not however negate the value of an approach to the exercise of human free will that requires us to consider others as much as ourselves when we make ethical or political choices.

If we look below the surface we can catch a glimpse of the creative influence of the Golden Rule in one of the most important modern theories of justice, that argued by the American philosopher John Rawls. His theory posits that justice should be seen conceptually as a social and political situation which is considered satisfactory to themselves by individuals who at the time of making their choice as to social and political arrangements did not know what social and economic position in society they would be occupying themselves. The consequences of such a hypothetical exercise would in his view be substantive but not absolute equality between citizens, in this way fulfilling the Golden Rule's guiding principle that we should see others to be equivalent subjects of activity and concern as we see ourselves.

Fourth and finally we must very carefully distinguish the Golden Rule from the principle of reciprocity, as expressed in the Latin phrase "do ut des". Reciprocity represents the usual basis of daily life. In most societies, ours no less than others in the past, it is based on the search for mutual – or in another phrase, "enlightened" – self interest. The Golden Rule is very different from any principle of reciprocity: there was clearly nothing the man who had fallen among



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thieves on the road to Jericho could give the Good Samaritan in return for everything the Good Samaritan had done for him.

The example of John Rawls from the modern secular age suggests the range of Golden Rule thinking has historically been very wide, indicating that it may lie deeper in human attitudes to one another than we initially think. Even in periods where slavery was common and social differences huge, for example in a late period papyrus from Egypt which derives from before Alexander's conquest in 323, we can read an example of the milder negative form "That which you hate to be done to you, do not do to another". From the Greek fourth century in the West to Confucius in China, from the Mahabharata in India to Zoroastrian texts, from the Rabbi Hillel to the Caliph Ali, the negative form of the Golden Rule, more frequently, and the positive form, less frequently, appears again and again. Clearly it is the range of the command, which makes the greatest difference – whether it applies to kinsfolk, tribe, city, nation or to all people. The significant point for us to remember is that it is in this last form, as applying to all human beings, that the Golden Rule has reached us. It is in this form that Christians, Muslims, Jews and secularists now know it, even if we rarely practice it. But since when was any general rule of moral guidance not honoured more in the breach than the observance?

I now turn to my second and more crucial question. If the Golden Rule as one of the guiding principles for living is a strong but latent presence in most of the traditions we adhere to, are there any considerations relevant to the challenges of our own time, that encourage us to bring it front stage from the background position it currently holds? My answer will be positive.

For lack of time and space I shall mention just four examples of types of ethico-political discourse, which are very common in our own age and to illustrate why they are not, whereas the Golden Rule is, adequate to open the overgrown foot-path on which we appear to be travelling.

One is the discourse of civic entitlement combined with the legitimacy given to such language by democratic dialogue and decision-making. This language is sturdily and soundly based on our cultural heritage stemming from the Ancient Hellenes as recovered and reinterpreted among various peoples in the Americas

and Europe between the eighteenth and twentieth centuries, since when it has become one of the fundamental ideologies of our contemporary world.

A second is the discourse of human liberties and rights emphatically to be distinguished from the language of democratic decision-taking and civic entitlement because it assumes that a human being has a value outside and independently of any polity. This mode of discourse has become infinitely more powerful since the Second World War and the adoption of Declarations of Human Rights after the horrors of Fascism, Nazism and Stalinist Communism in Europe and colonialist imperialism in large segments of the rest of the world, imprinted themselves on human consciousness.

A third is the discourse of enlightened or mutual self-interest, a form of discourse which has gained greatly in popularity compared to any ideological system since the collapse of the Soviet bloc, to the point indeed of having been adopted also by the Chinese continuators of Communist ideology. This is a form of financial, political and, to a marginal degree, ethical discourse whose central thrust is to replace both ethical and ideological considerations with the search for mutual interest on a basis of reciprocal advantage. In this type of discourse, to give but one example, the phrase “moral hazard” is commonly reduced to a single type of such hazards, namely the danger of irresponsible borrowing leading to default. Anyone who has lived in the real world knows there are many more “moral hazards” than this, amongst them, for instance, sale of goods on false pretences or through systematic bribery: these two are less commonly mentioned not because such “moral hazards” do not exist but because they can be concealed or reinterpreted in terms of mutual interest. A large part of our intra-European crisis is rooted in excessive use of this type of language and vocabulary.

Fourth and last in this list of types of ethico-political discourse, I shall mention that based on environmental considerations, in turn related to the powerful western scientific tradition that has performed such wonders since the seventeenth century, and that today represents one of the most powerful segments of our shared cultural heritage. This discourse in general is antithetical to the third, that based on the search for reciprocal self-interest, because it sets ever more severe

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limits on how much of the consequences of the operation of mutual interest discourse is compatible with maintaining ecological balance. We should be less surprised than we have affected to be therefore at the rejection of environmental discourse by a populist US Administration: it gets in the way of society's real business, as a businessman obsessed with self-interest sees it.

I have mentioned four types of discourse which are prevalent and powerful in our societies. Are we not doing well enough with those we already have? Why might we need a fifth?

The unpleasant truth that our present systems of discourse are grossly inadequate in coming challenges can, I believe, be revealed merely through an examination of the migration crisis since the implosion of Syria between 2011 and 2015, combined with the continued pressure on European borders from the poorer lands to the south, particularly those already suffering fierce pressure from ongoing climate change.

Did the four types of discourse mentioned assist Europe in developing a common response to the crisis? Not a bit of it. Four countries indeed made some attempt and all four were denied the benefit of European solidarity. Sweden tried first and its liberal approach based on a recognition of the human rights of asylum seekers has been effectively rejected by its body politic, insistent on both its identity and its entitlements; Germany tried more methodically than anyone else, with the additional argument that migrants were needed to maintain the country's economic success, and met a mixed response from which however the only ultimate political conclusion to be drawn is that this issue destroys class solidarity to the advantage of racial and nationalist prejudice; Greece and Italy, victims both of geography and disorganisation, could not cope without European solidarity which on this issue proved a figment of the European Union's imagination.

The problem will not go away? Our whole planet is in the grip of long-lasting illness which is the long-term consequence of our very human desire to be free of the shackles placed on us by nature. The disease is technologically curable if we have the will to cure it but so long as a sufficient number of us does not, our overall situation will continue to worsen. As it worsens more and more areas of

our planet will become less livable, which entails greater competition for more limited resources. So when eight – or however many there may be – well administered EU member states tell their fellows that there should be no increase in EU expenditure they are being as existentially irresponsible as some other member states have been financially irresponsible – if in the opposite sense! – in allocating resources to their citizens beyond their country’s productive limits.

In terms of what type of discourse, you may legitimately ask, is this stance “existentially irresponsible”. The answer must be that it is entirely consistent with democratic norms and with this enlightened self-interest in the maximisation of their citizens’ prosperity: and that it is not inconsistent with support of human rights around the world. These countries therefore can and perhaps do feel morally self-satisfied. Even in the realm of environmental discourse they can say that they are, compared with other countries, ahead of the game and, in some instances at least, assisting others to catch up. They are however failing in relationship to the Golden Rule because their own people’s prosperity comes first even when others are being reduced to misery and not only will they make only a token contribution themselves but they will not allow the European Union to make an adequate contribution either.

The truth is that we are missing an entire class of ethical/political discourse through which people of good will can come to appreciate the reality they are missing because the forms of discourse currently acceptable are inadequate for our situation. And thus it is that I can now answer our second question, yes, we desperately need the Golden Rule. If we do not add this as a fifth, equivalently valid and valuable form of discourse as the others, we are, in my view, doomed to failure. To bring Golden Rule discourse to the foreground would represent an enlightenment in the literal sense of allowing light to illuminate an existing reality which is currently part purposefully, part innocently being obscured from our consciousness. There would be changes for each and all of us. The most significant change, when speaking of a collective rather than an individual response however, might and should be the choice of the most crucial points at which to make the European Union’s presence felt, in the far abroad, the near abroad and at home.

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Let me end by listing four challenges, all colossal, all related to the critical question, “On what should the EU concentrate its energies in relation to this form of discourse?”

The first challenge is to achieve an integrity in the European response to our world crisis and this may prove the most serious challenge of all. We need to acknowledge, first, that Europe cannot bear every burden; but, second, that we cannot even carry all the burden we should carry, precisely because we are democratic societies where public opinion counts. It has become clear, for instance, that human rights declarations and public commitments notwithstanding, a majority of European peoples cannot accept large migration flows. Clearly this is partly a matter of the particular mix of migrants at any one time, partly a matter of numbers, partly the strength of national sentiment in nation states. If this is so however, then European countries are clearly obligated to make a far greater effort to keep potential migrants happily in their present homes rather than to recruit unpleasantly despotic regimes to prevent those already determined to leave, from arriving on Europe’s shores. And that entails a drastically revised and dramatically increased EU budget, for the benefit of no EU country but rather of countries in the “far and near abroad”, as seen from an European point of view but with an European as well as an international end in view, namely that we should be acting responsibly within the limits permitted by popular European discourse.

For others to accept our integrity of purpose it is important to distinguish clearly between the frequent technical and hence temporal limitations in bringing the standards of any industry or service up to the level required so as to begin to roll back climate change, something which is acceptable in principle, although subject to discussion and dispute, and, on the other hand, the falsification of evidence which is destructive of integrity. An objective difficulty can be acknowledged since every people and every industry or service faces objective difficulties. On the other hand, nothing could have been worse for the European image as a whole than that it was possible for such a long period for important national industries to produce falsified statistics and that it should not have been the EU which discovered or prevented it.

In the far abroad the EU contribution can admittedly only be palliative and not structural. This does not mean it lacks value. When faced with such fundamental developments as the erosion of the Sahel and more generally of the territory of overpopulated Middle Eastern countries; or the melting of the Tibetan icecap which is already turning mighty rivers into dirty ditches among the billions of people in East, Southeast and South Asia dependent on that icecap for their water, the EU cannot resolve the problems but can contribute a combination of integrity, generosity and technological expertise. It cannot however aspire to a leading role.

By contrast, in the near abroad, in instances for instance like the young Tunisian democracy or the older Lebanese consociational democracy, the situation is very different. Here the EU can make a critical difference from a financial, a security and an institutional point of view, and should already have done so, through the development of a multi-faceted security, political and economic policy, years ago. The IMF may need to behave to Tunisia as to all its other members: the EU could and should play a different role, closer to that played by the US in post-war Europe. Lebanon is far more sensitive – but could not the EU agree, for instance, to undertake the creation of a refuse management and recycling system in a country that clearly and indeed desperately needs it? Might it not include both Lebanon and Tunisia in the EU's wider cultural community? And might it not build on the shared European cultural heritage of the two communities in Cyprus, a member state, to provide that sense of security which is essential to achieve a political settlement?

Finally, the home front, where developments have in the last few years been going from bad to worse. Why? Because many member states have systematically derided the extraordinary achievements of the European Commission, European Parliament and European Central Bank over the years. Let me give just five examples of major achievements: the ERASMUS programme, which has created a new and hopefully multicultural generation, markedly so in the UK; the NATURA programme one of the best, if not the most advanced, nature protection network in the world; the Creative Europe programme and now the European Year of Cultural Heritage which simultaneously celebrate and express

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what most unites us; the environment and a proactive response to climate change that have become a distinguishing characteristic of European political and economic identity; all the features for a banking union already in place and awaiting completion.

In face of such and many other achievements European nation states shamelessly demand that they and not central European organs, should undertake future responsibilities, insisting on confining any European vision within national blinkers. Not least is this so in facing the greatest challenge of all, one on which far too little has thus far been attempted, namely in developing a meaningful European security policy. Here the major issue is not the percentage of GNP each member spends on security, although this is what makes the newspapers: it is whether whatever is done expresses a joint effort and a united vision. In order to behave generously and creatively to others as we would wish others to deal with us, Europe must be a “we”, not a collection of separate units who talk high about solidarity but practice low and traditionally divisive state politics, as is still and, ever more tragically, occurring today.

## **Knowledgeable Coexistence as a Key for Christian-Muslim Relations in the Near East – Experiences from the Project ‘Recalled Future’**

By Thomas Würtz

### **The Conflict**

The project “Recalled Future” (Erinnerte Zukunft)<sup>3</sup> was conceived and initiated in 2015 by the Catholic Academy Berlin, together with the Bonifatiuswerk.<sup>4</sup> Behind this project lay the desire to ensure that the conflicts between various religious communities and confessions in the Near East, now exposed and strengthened by the long lasting war in Syria and the ongoing instability in the neighbor country Iraq since 2003, would not be continued among the refugees who fled to Germany. It is well known that these conflicts are often due to the fact that Christians or the various Christian churches in the Orient and Muslim groups in the civil war are on different sides. The solidarity of many Syrian Christians with the regime of Bashar al-Asad is an example of this. But this influence of political conditions on the life of the religious communities is not limited to the acceptance or rejection of the respective political rulers. Also the individual events of the conflicts have effects on the religious communities. Thus many Christians returned here after the expulsion of the so-called "Islamic State" from the northern Iraqi Nineveh plain.

But when as a result of the failed Kurdish independence referendum of 25 September 2017 Shiite militias came to the area to withdraw the territory from Kurdish control, this led to the renewed flight of Christians and also Yezidi inhabitants.<sup>5</sup> In Syria, Kurds are using the new leeway in self-administration to establish an educational programme in the Kurdish language, but this does not

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<sup>3</sup> For more information see: [www.erinnerte-zukunft.de](http://www.erinnerte-zukunft.de)

<sup>4</sup> The Bonifatiuswerk dedicates itself to the concerns of Catholics in the Diaspora.

<sup>5</sup> Weiss, Martin: Rückschlag auf dem Weg zur Selbständigkeit – Kurdistan-Irak vor und nach dem Unabhängigkeitsreferendum. In: Seufert, Günter (Ed.): Die Kurden im Irak und in Syrien nach dem Ende der Territorialherrschaft des „Islamischen Staates“, SWP-Studie 11, Juli 2018, Berlin, p. 9-27, 23.



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offer any prospects for Arabic-speaking Christians and reinforces their tendencies to emigrate.<sup>6</sup>

The idea for the title “Recalled Future” goes back to the fact that, over a long period of time, the religions present in the Near East were indeed able to exist and prosper side by side. This contiguity and trust was damaged, but – hopefully – not completely destroyed by the war in Syria and the political turmoil in Iraq. What happened here was mainly due to political developments, while the basic religious beliefs remained as far as possible. But there is a danger that the opinions of those of different faiths will increasingly deteriorate. So, the time has come to create memories for the future. Although the situation in Syria and Iraq taken together with the arrival of the many refugees initially triggered these considerations, the ancient tradition of good relations between the religions and the simultaneous smoldering of confessional conflicts are not restricted to the *Fertile Crescent* area, e.g. mainly Syria and Iraq. Rather, it is a phenomenon found in numerous countries of the Near and Middle East. Thus it is worth to have a look at the history of coexistence.

## **The Background**

Christians and Muslims have coexisted in the Near East at least since the early Muslim conquests during the 7<sup>th</sup> century AD. Since that time, Christians of many different confessions have lived under the political sovereignty of Muslims, though this did not necessarily constitute for them a form of “foreign domination”.<sup>7</sup> In a way, the Muslim conquest relieved the local elites of the centralization push in the late Roman and Sassanid empires. This also meant that the yields of the respective regions remained local and did not have to be largely transferred to the metropolis of the empire.<sup>8</sup> Similar observations can be made at the level of religions: As early as in the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> centuries AD, early ecumenical councils led the Coptic Christians living in Egypt and the Orthodox

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<sup>6</sup> Lack, Katharina: Die Lage in den kurdischen Gebieten Syriens: Politische Akteure und ihre Entwicklung seit 2011. In: Seufert, Günter (Ed.): Die Kurden im Irak und in Syrien nach dem Ende der Territorialherrschaft des „Islamischen Staates“, SWP-Studie 11, Juli 2018, Berlin, p. 58-75, 67. See especially reference 87.

<sup>7</sup> Berger, Lutz: Die Entstehung des Islam. Die ersten hundert Jahre, München 2017, p. 148ff.

<sup>8</sup> Berger, Entstehung, p. 279.

Christians in Syria to reject the teachings of the Patriarch of Constantinople. According to the well-known Quran expert, Angelika Neuwirth, the Quran, which serves as the basis for all Muslim beliefs, may also be seen as a text of its era – late antiquity – and as a contribution to the debates that decisively influenced the intellectual and religious life in Mediterranean region since the fall of the Western Roman Empire.<sup>9</sup> In this sense, Islam as a “commitment to the One God” was more acceptable to many residents of the Levant than one might suspect. However converting to Islam represented a definitive step for an individual. At the macro level, conversion in the countries of the Middle East was again a very slow and a rather gentle transition.

Nevertheless, the various religious communities remained good neighbors, and many regions (with the exception of North Africa) were influenced by both Muslim and Christian culture for centuries. Since the project "Recalled Future" is aimed at refugees from Syria and Iraq, it is necessary to shorten the historical view here and above all to look at the political structure from which the two countries emerged at the beginning of the 20th century. This political structure was the Ottoman Empire, which appeared on the political map of the Middle East at the beginning of the 14th century and had a decisive influence on the region of the eastern Mediterranean for many centuries. The Ottoman “millet system” was the living proof of the interreligious coexistence: It allowed each individual community (milla) to take care of its own business, demanding from subjects only a certain measure of taxes and tributes along with accepting the Sultan as ruler. This form of coexistence was secured through imperial rulership. Even if during the war for Crete at the end of the 17th century an increased conversion pressure on Greek Christians became apparent,<sup>10</sup> Greece as a whole would remain steadfast in its Orthodox Christian faith during many centuries of Ottoman rule. However, non-Muslim subjects did not have the same rights as Muslims either. In addition to higher taxation, there was also a ban on carrying weapons or riding a horse and certain dress codes.<sup>11</sup> In the

<sup>9</sup> Neuwirth, Angelika: *Der Koran als Text der Spätantike. Ein europäischer Zugang*, Berlin 2010, p. 22f.

<sup>10</sup> Howard, Douglas A.: *A History of the Ottoman Empire*, Cambridge 2017, p. 171.

<sup>11</sup> Gradeva, Rossitsa: *On Zimmis and Church Buildings. Four Cases from Rumeli*. In: Kermeli, E. & Özel, O. (Ed.): *The Ottoman Empire. Myths, Realities and “Black Holes”*. Contributions in Honour of Colin Imber, Istanbul 2006, p. 203-237.

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early phase of the Ottoman Empire, the Ottoman authorities took sons from Christian families to convert them to Islam and serve them in the army, where they were able to rise to high positions, which of course did not change the suffering of the families concerned.<sup>12</sup>

The system was increasingly challenged, as European powers and above all France began to see itself as the protective power of the Christian citizens in the Ottoman Empire and to conclude corresponding contracts with the Ottoman government. Christians in particular profited from the developing long-distance trade with Europe. However, since the Ottoman Empire was also repeatedly at war with the European powers, increasing tensions developed between Christians and Muslims, which led to violent conflicts around the middle of the 19th century. Muslims, however, did not accuse the Christians of being Christians, but of their solidarity with the Europeans.<sup>13</sup>

The power relations shifted fundamentally during the colonial times, when European Christians steadily came to replace the Muslim rulers. Confessional affiliations were rather strengthened, from the outside insofar as France created its own political entities for the Druzes and Alawites after assuming the mandate in Syria in 1922.<sup>14</sup> However, in their attempt to overcome the colonial efforts, Near East societies did not summon up their religion, but rather oriented themselves to secular Western ideologies. The Ba'ath ideology, for example, co-founded by Michel Aflak (1910 – 1989), a Christian, was the attempt to combine Arabic nationalism and socialist-egalitarian concepts in order to create a postcolonial, united Arabia in which religion had no place. The slogan of the party was “Arab unity, liberty, and socialism”.<sup>15</sup> Yet its failure during the 1960s and 1970s, along with the results of continuing political, social, and economic stagnation compared to the successes of Western civilization gave raise to a new search for solutions. Once again, religion and its highly principled interpretations reflected the zeitgeist: The phenomenon of Islamization was born.<sup>16</sup> At the

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<sup>12</sup> Howard, Ottoman Empire, p.98.

<sup>13</sup> Howard, Ottoman Empire, p.256; Cleveland, William L. & Bunton, Martin: A History of the Modern Middle East, Boulder 2013, p. 84.

<sup>14</sup> Cleveland & Bunton, Modern Middle East, p. 203f.

<sup>15</sup> Anderson, Betty S., A History of the Modern Middle East, Stanford 2016, p. 300.

<sup>16</sup> Anderson, A History, p. 404.

same time, the tendency can be observed among Christians in the Orient to emphasize differences more strongly. Yet even then, the need to preserve good neighborly relations persisted in everyday life.

The escalation that occurred after the second Iraq war of 2003, which President George W. Bush ineptly referred to as a “crusade,” and the events following the so-called Arabic Spring of 2011 (especially the uprising and subsequent civil war in Syria) have made peaceful coexistence in the Near East very difficult. There are - as already mentioned at the beginning - many examples of conflicts that currently challenge this coexistence so strongly; just two are mentioned here: The houses of many Christians living in the Ninive Plane in Northern Iraq were looted by Muslims, whereas some Christians in Syria seem to end up profiting from the successes of the regime during the last years of the civil war. Failure to obtain more knowledge about the other’s religious beliefs, such as can be obtained in an interreligious dialog, stands in the way of expressing any opposition to the political instrumentalization of religion(s). Therefore, it is difficult to simply resume the ways of life before the drastic events of the years since 2003, when the political conditions in the Middle East have stabilized again. This is not the place to outline what would be necessary for a political and social new beginning, but some cornerstones for a renewed form of interreligious coexistence can be identified.

## **The Concept**

This is where the concept of the “Recalled Future” project comes into play. On the one hand, Germany and its own path toward overcoming political divides can serve as a neutral example of what is possible. The technical term, which emerge during the 90ies is “Culture of memory” (Erinnerungskultur). The German culture of remembrance is characterised by the fact that not only its own victims are lamented and heroised during the war, but that the victims of its own crimes are at the centre of remembrance.<sup>17</sup> Even if German history during the Nazi era cannot be directly compared with the current political crisis in the Middle East, the impression remains that experiences from the German culture of

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<sup>17</sup> Assmann, Aleida: *Das neue Unbehagen an der Erinnerungskultur. Eine Intervention*, München 2016, p. 11.

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remembrance can point the way to a revival of the coexistence of the various religious communities. But all reports of post-conflict rehabilitation and reconciliation have in common that the recognition of each other's victims is a very important component.<sup>18</sup> As already mentioned, this recognition is also found in the German culture of remembrance and can be well illustrated in a place like Berlin, where our project is carried out. The German culture of remembrance can thus serve as a model to a certain extent, but at the same time it seems neutral for the current conflicts in Syria and Iraq, forming a “third place” (Dritter Ort) as it were. The culture of remembrance in itself must be distinguished from concrete places of remembrance (lieu de mémoire), especially since the latter can often be culturally conceived and have positive connotations throughout.<sup>19</sup> In the case of the Berlin Wall, however, such a place of remembrance is interwoven with the culture of remembrance.<sup>20</sup> That is why we have integrated it into our project.<sup>21</sup>

Another of these cornerstones would be the transformation of the neighbourhood of different religions and confessions to a more knowledgeable coexistence of all denominations fostered by interreligious experiences. The existing interreligious dialog in many western countries and its goal of a better understanding of the beliefs of other confessions is what is now so urgently needed in the Middle East. Demonizing the followers of another religion or rejecting their beliefs completely is always easier to do if you know little or nothing about them: Is the friendly neighbor in fact nothing but a hidden enemy? In what follows I will give you an insight, how we tried to establish this transmission of images by promoting better interreligious competence.

### **The project implementation (May 2017 – January 2018)**

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<sup>18</sup> With regard to already existing models for coming to terms with violent conflicts and approaches for reconciliation work, we at the Catholic Academy have taken up the examples of Bosnia, Rwanda and Peru.

<sup>19</sup> Schulze, Hagen & Francois, Etienne (Ed.): Deutsche Erinnerungsorte I-III, München 2009.

<sup>20</sup> Wolfrum, Edgar: Die Mauer. In: Schulze, Hagen & Francois, Etienne (Ed.) Deutsche Erinnerungsorte I, München 2009, p. 552-568, p. 566f.

<sup>21</sup> Recently, literature has also increasingly been asking whether elements of European history, such as the Thirty Years' War, have structural analogies to current events in the Middle East. This would argue for a much stronger interweaving of knowledge of European history and the search for solutions to the problems in the Middle East. Münkler, Herfried: Der Dreissigjährige Krieg. Europäische Katastrophe, Deutsches Trauma 1618-1648, Berlin 2017, p. 834f.

### a) The First Meeting

The first meeting of the participants took place in the Catholic Academy in Berlin on May 12-14, 2017, where the first topic of business was to get to know each other. Everyone from the mixed group of 22 Syrians, Iraqis and Yemenis reported his or her own story. After an introduction to the planned phases of the project, the first main theme that cropped up was that of the history of the Berlin Wall. During a visit to the Berlin Wall Memorial in the Bernauer Straße, a witness from that era told us how traumatic the building of the Berlin Wall was for the residents of Berlin. Finally, we also heard that in 1985 the East German government ordered the demolition of the Church of Reconciliation, which became a powerful signal for the division of Berlin and the political implacability of the two political blocs during the Cold War. The project participants came to understand that 30 years ago Germany itself was faced with much more fundamental political problems than is the case today. The visit to the new Reconciliation Chapel, which now stands on the same spot as the old church and serves as a reminder of the reunification process and the need to overcome barriers,<sup>22</sup> provided many parallels to the present situation in the Near East. The next day we heard the story of the East German refugee Maik Hupe, who reported how he made it into the West German consulate in Warsaw just a few months before the fall of the Wall. The fact that, in a not very distant past, the subject of fleeing one's country was a topic of existential concern to Germans provided an important impulse to the refugees.

### b) Religious Diversity

When the group reunited in July 2017, the most important theme addressed was that of religions. In her speech, Gerdi Nützel, a Protestant clergywoman made the connection between the flight of the Huguenots from France in the 18<sup>th</sup> cen-

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<sup>22</sup> Götz, Thomas und Eichhorn, Peter: Berlin. Sakrale Orte/Sacred Places, Berlin 2010, p. 152.

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tury to the present-day situation. She emphasized that Berlin has long been witness to the arrival of new confessional and religious groups.<sup>23</sup> The next day was devoted to directly experiencing the pluralistic religious reality of Berlin.

In the Protestant Berlin Cathedral (Berliner Dom) the group learned much about the official role of the Hohenzollern, being present as figures in the church across from the great Reformers. This century-old close connection between religious affiliation and political power in a European country, even in light of religious tolerance, makes it clear that the modern idea of a religiously neutral central state is not as old as it might seem to be. But this example also gives hope that societies in which there is still a strong tie to a specific religion may still gain the courage to take new steps.

Next, our tour of Berlin took us to the Meeting Center in Neukölln, a Sunni mosque.<sup>24</sup> Then it was off to the Bulgarian-Orthodox church, now situated on the grounds of a former Protestant cemetery, which has its most important liturgical site within the old chapel and is visited by up to 2000 believers on the most important holy days. Finally, we visited the mosque of the Lahore group of the Ahmadiyya Community in Wilmersdorf (a controversial movement even within Islam). This mosque is the oldest extant mosque in Germany and was built between 1924 and 1927 by Muslims for Muslims.<sup>25</sup>

### c) A Look toward the Middle East

The third meeting used the expanding trust within the group to turn away from the situation in Berlin and center more on the interreligious relations in the Near East. It was important to us not to look just at the present situation in that region, but also to study the past. Recall that the project was devoted to remembering the past of coexistence and making those memories valuable and profitable for the future. The first talk on the “History of Interreligious Relations in the Near East,” emphasized the situation in the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> centuries. The speaker noted

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<sup>23</sup> Nützel, Gerdi: *Historische Entwicklung der religiösen Vielfalt in und um Berlin*. In: Kreuzinger-Herr, Annette et. al. (Hg.): *Jeder nach seiner Façon. Vielfalt und Begegnung der Religionen in Berlin*, Berlin 2015, p. 25f.

<sup>24</sup> For more information have a look at: <http://www.nbs-ev.de/>

<sup>25</sup> Backhausen, Manfred (Ed.): *Die Lahore-Ahmadiyya-Bewegung in Europa*, Wembley 2008, p. 51f.

how important it had been to the Abbasid caliphs, who ruled from 760 to 1258 AD, that Christians were welcomed in their territory.

The next day our tour in the Museum for Islamic Art began in the Aleppo Room, a magnificently decorated living room of a prosperous family from Aleppo. At first sight, the Oriental décor suggested that it was home to Muslims, but the depictions of Jesus and Mary on the walls soon revealed that they were in fact Christians. We discussed the art historical connections between ornaments from Islamic art and Christian art found in the museum.

#### d) Lived Interreligiosity

The next day was supposed to be devoted to a discussion of modern theology, in particular the fate of Father Paolo dall'Oglio, who had disappeared. Father dall'Oglio's approach is based on his experiences in Syria while residing at the Mar Musa monastery, where he felt his call: "my love for Muslims and for Islam". In effect, this meant integrating Muslim religious practices in his own Catholic tradition, including a bare wall of the church facing toward Mecca with the inscription "Bismillah," the prostration shown during prayers and the common fasting during Ramadan. An even deeper connection should develop through practical solidarity and shared spirituality.<sup>26</sup> The goal of a "Church of Islam," as dall'Oglio envisioned became the focus of discussion. Some considered this a syncretism, others an act of creating a new religion, still others a completely new form of commonality – even the start of a new revolution in the Near East that is not only desired but also desperately needed. Others, on the other hand, were more careful and pleaded for not overemphasizing the closeness of the two religions in order not to exclude the more conservative parts of their own society and put too much pressure on people's religious tolerance.

The fourth weekend was dedicated to the present-day situation. First, we visited a Syrian-Orthodox Church *St. Jakob* in Berlin-Tiergarten.<sup>27</sup> Over the centuries,

<sup>26</sup> Lika, Eva-Maria: „Kirche des Islam“. Zur Theologie Paolo Dall'Oglios. In: Geist & Leben. Zeitschrift für christliche Spiritualität. Heft 1/Januar – März 2017, p. 33-40.

<sup>27</sup> Nützel, Gerdi: Erfahrungen der Heilsökonomie Gottes - Die syrisch-orthodoxe Kirche St. Jakob. In: Kreuzinger-Herr, Annette et. al. (Hg.): Jeder nach seiner Façon. Vielfalt und Begegnung der Religionen in Berlin, Berlin 2015, p. 46-53.



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Syrian-Orthodox Church was able to preserve its traditions and most of its followers, even though their percentage share of the overall population has gone down continually during Muslim rule. Today, many members of this Syrian Church no longer even live in the region but are now spread all over the world – like those who attend the Berlin congregation. For many of the Muslim participants it was moving to hear Amill Gorgis talk about the history of this church and to listen to some of the traditional hymns – things they were denied in their homeland and able to enjoy only now among their brethren in Germany.

We then visited a Shiite mosque in Berlin-Mitte, which strives to represent all Shiite Muslims living in Berlin (some 8,000) and to provide ways to connect them with the relevant political actors. We spent the evening in a discussion of the role of the Shiite Hezbollah militia in the civil war in Syria. One member of the mosque community considered it a necessary defense against the upcoming and massively expanding so-called “Islamic State” in the years 2014 and 2015, but others in the group were quick to contradict: The rise of the Hezbollah was an expansive pro-Iranian and Shiite political movement intended to strengthen the position of the Shiites in Syria. This in part fierce debate clearly showed that it remains difficult to draw a clean line between political and religious interests. One participant summed it up by wondering how it could be that so many good things, like the social work of the mosque, and so many bad things, like the actions of Hezbollah in Syria with the many innocent civilian victims, could both be done in the name of a single religious confession.

#### e) Anti-Semitism and Anti-Muslim Racism

On the final project weekend, it was important to us to once again take a look at the culture of memory in Germany, which was already mentioned above as one starting point of our concept. Thus, this weekend was concerned with how to react to anti-Semitism as well as to modern anti-Muslim racism. The lectures emphasized both the differences as well as the similarities in these two phenomena.

An especially impressive aspect for the participants was the subsequent visit to Otto Weidt’s workshop for the blind in the area of Hackesche Höfe. During the Nazi era, Otto Weidt (1883 – 1947) himself a blind man employed many blind

persons as well as Jews in his manufacture for brooms and brushes to protect them from being deported. This was possible for him for a long time, since his business was considered important for the war and his products were delivered directly to the Wehrmacht. When this was no longer possible because of new laws enacted by the Nazi regime in Germany in 1943, he hid a number of the families in the small rooms of the manufacture, which we visited. Afterwards, the so-called “stumbling blocks” – bronze plaques embedded in the sidewalk to remember the deported Jews and other persons who had lived in the buildings – that lie between the museum and the Academy – and thus along the path back – took on a new and very immediate meaning.

## **Conclusion**

Thus, the first and the final weekend of the project took place at neutral spots, which allowed us to discuss in detail and work through the wrongs that had been committed in Berlin and how they pertain to one’s own present-day situation. The experiences gained during this project suggest that attending to historical examples is an important aspect of judging one’s own situation and of enabling reconciliation, and that it can contribute to a process of healing. For many participants this desire to reconcile also represented a spiritual need that was satisfied in a common interreligious prayer conducted at the chapel of the Academy.

In March 2018, we were able to make our results available to a wider audience at a public event entitled "Insights into reconciliation work". In April of the same year, we received an invitation from the Swedish Church to hold a workshop in Gothenburg as part of the conference "Healing of Memories". There, too, we were able to report on our experiences and initial results to multipliers and activists in interreligious dialogue. Many asked about the continuity of the project and the further work with the group.<sup>28</sup> As the persons in charge of the Catholic Academy, we saw this as confirmation of our own wish to continue the project, especially since Sweden is interested in carrying out the project in a similar way.

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<sup>28</sup> See: Healing of memories. Dokumentation av den Interreligiösa Konferensen, Editor: Henrik Frykberg, p. 18-21.

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In this regard, we plan to expand the concept by using the experiences from this phase and repeat the project in the autumn of 2019. We want to expressly include the participants from this phase and maintain contact with them. Reconciliation work is a long-term process that may take months or even years to realize completely.

It is thus our intention to revive the good old image of neighborliness in the Middle East but to draw it in the colors of a more knowledgeable coexistence.

## Creating a Common Memory Space in Morocco

By Sonja Hegasy

Reconciliation through remembrance is a relatively new concept of coming to terms with a violent past. Since WWII it has expanded world-wide as a norm and a form of *Konfliktaufarbeitung*. Till today 41 truth commissions have been brought to life in order to give victims a voice, and save their testimony from forgetting. Taking the example of Morocco since 2000, this article argues that one of the common heritage features around the Mediterranean pertains this modern memory culture. In Morocco, the EU for the first time co-financed a reconciliation process outside of a European country.

Since the death of Hassan II in 1999, the public shows an immense interest in investigating their own past. Subsequent to the media interest in past crimes, a substantial number of (auto-)biographies about Morocco's Years of Lead (1956 – 1999) and a revitalization of the human rights' NGOs (like a *Forum Verité et Justice*), the state felt compelled to react: In 2004, after being pressured for many years by victims of political oppression and arbitrary injustices, Mohammed VI proclaimed the establishing of the "Equity and Reconciliation Instance – A National Commission on Truth, Equity and Reconciliation" (abbreviation: ERC) to investigate human rights abuses between 1956 – 1999. This is the longest timespan for a truth commission to cover.

The ERC mandate was:

- to resolve serious human rights abuses, including those disappeared by force
- establish the level of damages or compensation claimed by victims and their families,
- and to prepare suggestions for reform to prevent such abuses occurring in the future.

The areas of responsibility of the ERC were enforced disappearances and arbitrary detention, but did not include criminal prosecution against any perpetrators. AT the same time no amnesty law has been promulgated.

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The late human rights activist Driss Benzekri (and himself a former political prisoner) was nominated for president of the ERC. Around 22,000 victims and their families lodged claims with the ERC in 2004. Almost 10,000 of these were eventually approved; 742 cases of disappeared people were solved. The claimants received various forms of compensation, including medical assistance, financial reparation, and occupational rehabilitation. A total of US\$ 85 million was paid out in the framework of the ERC in addition to US\$ 100 million that had been paid out by a former Independent Arbitration Commission: "Many Moroccans had refused the first 1999 commission because it awarded money solely for torture and disappearance at their own government's hands. For the subsequent 2004-5 ERC awards, more were willing to file due to the commission's promise to go beyond mere financial indemnities and encompass collective reparations directed at regions targeted for de-development." (Slyomovics 2016: 14, 15)

The eventual establishment of a truth commission needs to be read as a strategic decision by the Moroccan monarchy in order to build-up legitimacy by investigating the past. At the same time it carried (and its follow-up bodies still carry) the claim on how to live together in the future? In this sense the ERC is a long-needed space where memory is mutualized. Here, according to the German political scientist Helmut König, "the foundations of the political order assume tangible form. Which historical events fill us with horror, and which events do we recognise as having been central ones, and for what reasons is this the case?" (König 2010: 119).

### ***Mixed reception***

Opinion on the results of the ERC is very divided. Because the perpetrators were not brought to justice and there has been no explicit public official apology, some consider the ERC to have been a farce. One would also need to recognize that whatever reparation programs have been carried out, understandably they will not suffice. Though initiatives like the ERC and the recognition by society are important for victims individually - as for society as a whole - victims will not stop looking for explanations and they will not stop wanting answers from perpetrators and the state.

In the view of some parts of the victims, the ERC has reduced the issue of their suffering to one of material compensation and has driven it out of public concern ever since. The ERC has in their eyes rather been a mechanism for the co-optation of a huge number of human rights activists and former political prisoners. For others, despite official statements to the contrary, in setting up the commission the monarchy has acknowledged its actions, and – far more importantly – has rehabilitated the victims before society. For the first time, a state body looked into the torture centres around the country, the attacks by the security forces, the blatant perversion of justice and the disappeared, all of which were repeatedly and explicitly denied under Hassan II. The ERC also opened up the possibility for victims of other injustices to speak out, as we will see below.

The ERC published its findings and recommendations in a 5-volume report in 2006. Along with safeguarding human rights in constitutional law, the final report called for the ratification and enforcement of international conventions, the independence of the judiciary, a reform of penal law, human rights education in schools, and a collective reparations program. Since its beginning in 2004, the ERC has actively involved historians in its work, and historians have accompanied the ERC in various work groups and publications. Ibrahim Boutaleb, renowned scholar and emeritus professor of contemporary history, was one of the sixteen members of the truth commission itself. Younger historians took part in classifying the files and organizing the ERC archive and can bring this knowledge back into their teaching and research.

The recommendations have led to two follow-up processes under the auspices of the Conseil National des Droits de l'Homme (CNDH) called: ERC 1 “Collective reparations”, and ERC 2 “Archives, History and Memory”. ERC 1, the Collective or Communal Compensation Program, constitutes a far-reaching principle of justice and equity, reverting back to international norms of transitional justice. In Morocco, they address those districts and regions that were harmed by grave and systematic violations (the Western Sahara is excluded though). In contrast, the second basket, Archives, History and Memory, was established to encourage and facilitate open scientific research on Morocco’s

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post-colonial history. ERC 2 *inter alia* covered the creation of three local museums (Musée du Rif, Musée des Oasis, Musée de la Sahara), the set-up of an adequate academic infrastructure, the founding of an institute for contemporary history, as well as the introduction of a master degree in contemporary history and a subsequent Ph.D. program.

The truth commission with its various direct and indirect effects was the beginning of a wider awareness of past human rights abuses beyond the direct victims and their families. Their public rehabilitation in the eyes of neighbours, former friends, and society as whole is a very important result of the ERC. An official rehabilitation - and here the state is important - created an essential form of social viability, because it addressed the possibility to live side by side with the perpetrators - a question that poses itself all over the Middle East and North Africa now.

Some families changed their names after having faced this arbitrary and incomprehensible act of loss, in order to safeguard their children. Parents who wait for their children or spouses who continue waiting for their partners even after 20 or 25 years feel guilty abandoning this state of waiting, not to mention claiming inheritance or a pension. The remaining children all too often grow up in the shadow of the absent child; others feel like “replacement childs”. Their suffering became part of a wider social memory, as the doyen of history in Morocco, Mohammed Kenbib, puts it: “Those who tell their ordeal and the sufferings of their close friends no longer remain an isolated voice but become part of a much wider field and in a certain way the expression of rights violations and collective affliction the whole nation is concerned with.” (Kembib 2009: 56)

### ***Conclusion***

Under pressure by the victims' narratives emanating since the early 1990s, the Moroccan state became both: a provider of one platform among others which intensified the societal debate beyond a confined circle of those concerned and those interested, and a controller of the debate that could oversee the process through its manifold initiatives. By giving the CNDH constitutional status with the constitutional reform in 2011, the state supposedly places great importance on the follow-up process after the ERC. This space is needed for the circulation

of competing narratives – a process of transforming memory into history -, otherwise the five-volume recommendations edited by Driss Benzekri only shortly before his death with no inner restriction would have been buried in the drawer. Still, the state certainly does not have a monopoly on the production of historical knowledge nor the reconfiguration of the past into the present.

Achieving a common understanding of one's own history is always the subject of bitter controversy. Morocco is a rare case in the Arab world, where the silence of the victims has been broken and where the historians – first journalists, then academics - are critically reviewing their own silence. The silence of the archives might be shattered in the near future. But the silence of the perpetrators is well kept. Morocco is witnessing the public exchange of personal experiences over human rights violations in numerous communication channels. I argue that although “voicing” partly works towards turning the page, i.e. we forget what we exclaimed, its transformative capacities have been more influential than its suppressive ones. Over the last 25 years, personal memories developed into a “form of activism to denounce past and present state violence” (Menin forthcoming). The circulation of memory puts cracks into the quiescence and pushed a debate on the past. Critical revision of the past is still difficult as sources are hard to access and authors have to anticipate obstruction at any time. But academics and journalists have begun to voice conflicting histories by venturing in hitherto “Forbidden Places”, thus the title of a documentary about the ERC's workings by Leila Kilani.

Old bonds have surely not vanished in Morocco yet but a revision can be seen already turning former heroes into villains and former traitors into heroes. Driss Yazami, the current president of the CNDH – one of the major motors behind this re-writing - talks very prudently about an “inflation of memory” vs. a deficit of history and sees its remedy in academic rigidity: “We discover, and the Moroccan society with us, that maybe we suffer of something that we could call an inflation of memories and a deficit of history and the accomplished action necessitates a follow up with the weapons of academic rigidity. And it is for this reason that the [truth] commission issued multiple recommendations in favor of a modern conduct of archives, a continuous effort of academic formation and



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endorsement of research, as well as subsequently a popularization through the creation of museums.” (Libération 10.12.2013)

Though not always directly related to history, my argument is to say that the public space to discuss abuses by the state power has widened in the context of a review of the reign by the former king. In the praxis of attributing such a central part to the past ruled over by Hassan II, citizens are carrying out an “autopsy” (Jamaa Baida, today director of the new Archives du Maroc) of his reign as a day-to-day praxis. The repetitive downward readings of a heroic post-colonial past, their obvious white spots and the uprisings against state authority today are in my view intrinsically linked.

The pluralisation of national history writing has advanced over the last 15 years. Over time, journalists and historians alike have established themselves as important players, and their alternative readings of the past have started to cast doubt on long-established official narratives. Telling – be it in the fields of art, media or humanities – has become an act of moral significance: thus its strong normative core and its connection to present ideas about society. Academics like Nadia Guessous, Jillali el-Adnani, Hakim Belabbès, Abdellah Tourabi and others have taken up this impetus with the explicit aim of bringing back voices subdued in the past. As Susan Slyomovics makes clear: “What was new in Moroccan history became the individual act of making an official written and registered claim against the state for money and restitution. This in turn produced a file filled with documents based on a written record of the interview and oral testimony with the victim. In sum, the ERC project to provide reparations for illegal imprisonment and forced disappearance remains the motivating force for the creation of the ERC archive. Drawn from oral testimonies in several public sessions throughout the country, during private group presentations and individual interviews at commission headquarters in Rabat, the voices of witnesses and victims constitute that archive. Moroccans, who are the subject of the record as witnesses and victims, were the primary co-creators of the record.” (Slyomovics 2016: 18)

Individual memories have acquired transformative qualities as they uncover hidden histories and subvert official readings of 20th century Moroccan history.

It is this relatively *longue durée* over the past 25 years which needs to be taken into account when studying Morocco's societal dialogue over conflict and competing readings of the past. Beyond efforts to control a critical discourse and its protagonists, this work shows how an official acknowledgement of past human rights abuses leads to a widening of the debate, and thereby to an incalculable liberalization of the public sphere: A more general debate about legitimate and illegitimate violence emerges, and affects the relationships of power within Moroccan society. Hitherto unknown cases of state offences and misconduct have been subjected to public scrutiny challenging Morocco's politically relevant elite, including the king himself. As a synthesis, this revision can be traced in an emerging "New Historiography" exemplified in selected changing grand narratives on Morocco's nationalist movement, post-colonial uprisings and opposition, racism and violence.

Mediated through the ERC, personal memories initiated such changes and laid the ground for a more open and free investigation of the past. The opening of the Archives du Maroc and the Institut du Temps, the three regional museums under way or the envisaged Maison de l'Histoire du Maroc are thus not only complicated infrastructural matters but the basis for free academic and public discourse. Many citizens in the Middle East express deep discomfort about a post-colonial past that is regarded as their prime reference, but which they feel is completely unrevealed to them. Thus, I think, we can say: the way people live with history is currently changing drastically.

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## ONE Heritage – Heritage and Society in the Euro-Mediterranean Community

By Rupert Graf Strachwitz

*Why should the Maecenata Foundation, a pro-active German civil society think tank, organize a side-event to the European Cultural Heritage Summit?*

The reason is that since 2012, one of the foundation's programmes has been 'Europe Bottom-Up', and that 'Europe and the Mediterranean' is the most important project within this programme. The foundation has organized international conferences in Italy (in 2013 and 2015) and in Greece (in 2017) that focussed on 'Talking, Learning, Working, and Living Together' and brought together delegates of all ages from academia, cultural institutions, and civil society and from countries all around the Mediterranean. The title chosen for the 2017 conference was 'Remember for the Future – The Mediterranean As a Memory Space'. The cultural heritage Europe shares with all who live around the Mediterranean played a prominent role in the discussions, not least because Europa Nostra Vice President Costa Carras and others devoted their presentations to some particularly relevant and frequently overlooked aspects of this vital precondition of rebuilding trust and thus reconstructing the common space, as soon as politics permit civil society to do so<sup>29</sup>.

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<sup>29</sup> The proceeds of the 'Europe and the Mediterranean' conferences held in 2013, 2015, and 2017 are published in the Maecenata Foundation's Europe Bottom Up online publication series as follows: Udo Steinbach, Rupert Graf Strachwitz, Piero Antonio Rumignani (Eds.) Europe and the Mediterranean. Talking, Learning, Working, and Living Together 1. EBU No. 11: 2015, Udo Steinbach, Rupert Graf Strachwitz, Piero Antonio Rumignani (Eds.) Europe and the Mediterranean. Talking, Learning, Working, and Living Together 2. EBU No. 12: 2015, Costa Carras, Sarrah Kasseem, Udo Steinbach Europe and the Mediterranean. Talking, Learning, Working, and Living Together 3. EBU No. 17: 2017, P. Adam-Veleni, M. Çizakça, V. Costantini, U. Koldaş, F. Richard, B. Thum Europe and the Mediterranean. Talking, Learning, Working, and Living Together 4. EBU No. 18: 2017, Y. Bettahar, S. Hamouda, E. Ikonomou, N. Lafi, D. Stefanakis Europe and the Mediterranean. Talking, Learning, Working, and Living Together 5. EBU No. 19: 2017  
see: <http://web.maecenata.eu/publikationen-europa/europa-bottom-up>

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Hence, it appeared relevant to introduce the findings into the debates of the European Cultural Heritage Summit.

*What is it that drives us to do so?*

„In countries that lack a fully representative democratic government, civil society is often the only vehicle through which to vocalise – on behalf of the men, women, and children of all the religious or ethnic groupings – the most effective and constructive way to develop and implement a lasting peace in their society.“<sup>30</sup> It may well be that this task for civil society applies as much to countries that do enjoy some form of representative government. Most certainly it applies a wide range of tasks and challenges facing the citizens today, not least the guardianship for our cultural heritage, which is after all one of the prime catalysts of identity and loyalty. Moreover, this cultural heritage is ONE, and is common to the people of Europe and the MENA region.

West Germany’s first post-War Head of State, Theodor Heuss is quoted as saying: “There are three hills, from which the Western world originated: Golgotha, the Athenian Acropolis, and the Capitol in Rome. From all of them, the Western world was moulded, one has to see them in unity.”<sup>31</sup> One is reminded of this when hearing what some people utter as they talk about the MENA region, the south side of Mediterranean, often in fact including part of the north side as well – anything south of the Alps. What some politicians are telling us creates an artificial divide between the North and the South. Our common cultural heritage presents an appropriate and compelling argument against these kind of opinions. It is for this reason we felt that in the context of a European Cultural Heritage Summit, we should remind ourselves that to understand Europe’s cultural heritage is not possible without looking across the Mediterranean.

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<sup>30</sup> Mark Muller Stuart, *Storm in the Desert. Britain’s Intervention in Libya and the Arab Spring*. Edinburgh: Birlinn, 2017, p. 167

<sup>31</sup> „*Es gibt drei Hügel, von denen das Abendland seinen Ausgang genommen hat: Golgotha, die Akropolis in Athen, das Capitol in Rom. Aus allen ist das Abendland geistig gewirkt, und man darf alle drei, man muss sie als Einheit sehen.*“ Theodor Heuss, speaking at the opening of a school in 1950, quoted from: Theodor Heuss, *Reden an die Jugend*, Tübingen 1956, p. 32 (translation by the author).

After all: Roman Law was codified by Justinian, who was born in Macedonia, and ruled in Constantinople as Emperor for 38 years in the 6<sup>th</sup> century). Justinian's Code remains the basis of European, including Scottish, and Muslim law. The commonalities of foundation law that regulates one of the earliest and most persistent cultural achievements of mankind, are just one example.

Greek philosophy, the basis of our thought, and indeed our religion, was translated into Arabic, and then retranslated into Latin. Without these translations, much of Plato and particularly Aristotle would be lost, since the barbarians from the north destroyed most libraries.

Christian religion was developed at the very South Eastern corner of the Mediterranean. From all we know or may assume Jesus was not a mere wandering Holy Man in an rural far-away part of the Roman Empire. He grew up on the outskirts of a new capital, Sepphoris, and must have spent many years studying and imbuing Jewish, Greek, Egyptian and most probably Zoroastrian and Buddhist philosophy. Interestingly, a brief survey of approx. 50 cathedrals and major churches in Germany has shown that their patron saints nearly always came from today's Israel, Palestine, Lebanon, Syria, and Turkey – most prominently Mary, Peter, and Nicholas (who lived in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century in Myra/Turkey). There is not a single German among them, which just shows that in looking at traditions the right way, we only have to go back a little further to discover this one common heritage. To think Europe without the entire Mediterranean is, so we may conclude, impossible.

As long as the Roman Empire lasted, this was obvious. It was *mare nostrum* – a political unity, that existed from the 1<sup>st</sup> century B.C. to the 4<sup>th</sup> century AD. Before that and after that, the region was – and still is – politically fragmented and has undergone continual changes. But trade, ideas, styles, way of life, and art travelled freely across the sea, as did ideas, people, and goods. Phoenicians, Egyptians, Greeks, Celts, Romans, Jews, Visigoths and Ostrogoths, Arabs, Normans, French, Venetians, Genoese, Turks, and finally the British, not to mention many others fought to be masters of the sea – and failed. There were times when Northern Europe was the Master of the Mediterranean – be it the Byzantine Empire, the Holy Roman Empire, the Realms of Jerusalem. There were others

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when the Arabs, and later the Turks commanded the sea. All this, regretfully, was not always peaceful – conquerors of all types, pirates, and what today would be termed terrorists presented a real danger. But traffic and intercultural exchange never stopped.

Finally, in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century, when Turkey had become the “sick old man of Europe”, European powers tried to carve up the Mediterranean. Germany, although busy constructing the Baghdad Railway, could never quite make up her mind whether she should be part of this or not, and ended up forming an alliance with Turkey against France, Britain, and Russia in the 1<sup>st</sup> World War.

European imperialism culminated in Sir Mark Sykes and François-Georges Picot drawing a line through territory that was not part of either of their countries to determine their respective interest zones. What drove them, and how they thought, becomes clear from a quotation attributed to Mark Sykes: „I feel such an intense prejudice against Armenians that I am certain that anything I might say would only be biased and therefore not worth reading; and I think anyone who has had dealings of any kind with this abominable race would probably be in the same position. The Armenian inspires one with feelings of contempt and hatred which the most unprejudiced would find it hard to crush. His cowardice, his senseless untruthfulness, the depth of his intrigue, even in the most trivial matters, his habit of hoarding, his lack of one manly virtue, his helplessness in danger, his natural and instinctive treachery, together form so vile a character that pity is stifled and judgment unbalanced. I cannot believe, as some urge, that his despicable personality has been produced merely by Turkish tyranny.“

***So, given this track record, what is our task?***

A telling phrase is attributed to Sir Thomas More, Benjamin Franklin, and Gustav Mahler: “Tradition is keeping the fire burning, not praising the ashes!” Whoever said it first, does not matter very much. It tells us that we need to rethink our concept of heritage in a forward-looking, post-colonial spirit. Europe and the Mediterranean belong together. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century global village, when attempting to find common ground with all men and women who inhabit this planet, what could be more appropriate than to find a common cultural ground with those among our neighbours whom we share so much with anyway. Our

previous conferences have learnt us the lesson that talking becomes easy when being respectful rather than overbearing or arrogant, and concentrating on commonalities rather than divides. There is some evidence that civil society is better at this than governments. Most certainly, our previous experiences have demonstrated very clearly that there is ample common ground for citizens from different walks of life to explore. This is the experience we felt we should bring to the table at the 2018 European Cultural Heritage Summit.

We are grateful to Europa Nostra and the German National Committee for Cultural Heritage for allowing us to do this side event. We are indebted to the Representation of the Free State of Bavaria in Berlin for offering us their beautiful venue, and extremely pleased that such a distinguished group of experts assembled to discuss the issues.



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