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Katharina Steudtner

“Sites of Memory” – A Topic for Research and Communication?

Communicated by Michael Meyer

This article focuses on theories and discourses in cultural studies that deal with the concept and phenomenon of *memory* and analyzes the relevance of such content for professional discussions in ancient studies and the preservation of monuments. Using examples of my own and “borrowed” examples from others, I seek to show how the concepts from sociologist Maurice Halbwachs and historian Pierre Nora have an especially fruitful effect on our research and can generate new associations. I begin my observations at a natural temporal and spatial starting point: a historicist church interior in Berlin. The focus then moves to the medieval-looking Wartburg Castle, in Eisenach, and the western facade of the Metz Cathedral, concluding with the “ancient” ruins of Didyma and Pompeii.

Sites of memory; collective memory; communicative memory; functional memory; storage memory; preservation of monuments

Der Beitrag thematisiert kulturwissenschaftliche Theorien und Diskurse rund um Begriff und Phänomen der *Erinnerung* und fragt nach deren Relevanz für Fachdiskussionen in den Altertumswissenschaften und der Denkmalpflege. Anhand eigener und „geliehener“ Beispiele möchte ich zeigen, wie sich insbesondere die Denkmodelle des Soziologen Halbwachs und des Historikers Nora fruchtbar auf unser Forschen auswirken und dabei neue Zusammenhänge entstehen können. Die Betrachtung beginnt zeitlich-räumlich naheliegend in einem historistischen Berliner Kirchenraum, entfernt sich hin zur mittelalterlich anmutenden Wartburg bei Eisenach und zur Westfassade der Kathedrale von Metz, um bei den „antiken“ Ruinen Didymas und Pompejis zu enden.

Erinnerungsort; kollektives Gedächtnis; kommunikatives Gedächtnis; Funktionsgedächtnis; Speichergedächtnis; Denkmalpflege

Even though the most intense debates around memory and remembrance may have abated, each and every one of us will consider our origins again and again, and as researchers we will attempt to understand the political, economic, social, and cultural processes of the past. At a time when everyone is talking about the destruction of archaeological sites and objects by the so-called Islamic State, we are all aware that the barbarism against people presents another dimension entirely. And yet, the violence against cultural heritage eventually renders its victims rootless. Evidence of archaeological and architectural culture imparts identity; indeed, it helps to situate people spatially, historically, and culturally.

Many facets come into view as we tap into and examine the debates over remembrance and the confrontation with specific professional issues that surface in research. This is also why the assigned topic, “Sites of Memory,” is hyphenated in its original German formulation (*Erinnerungs-Orte*): to leave space for ideas that go beyond Pierre Nora’s concept of *sites of memory (lieux de mémoire)*. It is scarcely possible to briefly cover the most important discourses in depth or to read the major works of the discussants and reflect upon these. Issues and phenomena will nevertheless be demonstrated, and their relevance for specific professional discussions considered. Based on proprietary and ‘borrowed’

examples, some related to my discipline (the preservation of monuments) and others to classical antiquity, I would like to show how cultural studies approaches can affect discipline-specific research.

1 Memory & remembrance: protagonists, terms, concepts

Archaeologist Nikolaus Himmelmann (1929–2013) has written on the fundamentals of what ancient studies and history have to do with our memory in his 1976 book *Utopische Vergangenheit* ("The Utopian Past"), under the title of *Geschichte gleich Erinnerung* ("History Equals Memory"):

> Philosophers and historians include history [...] under the concept of memory by proceeding from the phenomenon of individual memory to a supposedly collective one. It appears that in the process, as so often happens, a mere metaphor was recoined into a real analogy [...]. Just as individuals refer to their experiences and fates in memory, seeking to understand themselves and their actions from it, so do the fates of their forebears become present in the personified group, nation, and humanity through history, determining their identity.[1]

But Himmelmann criticizes the fact that "the concept of individual memory [...] [is] passed on to the collective in a way that is neither historically nor logically satisfactory. The stylization of the collective to the person, necessary to this process, represents a very uncertain premise already."[2]

Over twenty years later, Himmelmann took up the topic again, this time under the title *Archäologie gleich Erinnerung* ("Archaeology Equals Memory").[3] He went on a quest for meaning, delineating the concept of "remembering" as "by nature [...] an individual matter of an individual person, conditioned by mental processes, linked to involuntary selection" and wrote, as he had in 1976, that he did not want to see this meaning assigned to a transpersonal view of history, based on collective consciousness. Further searching led him to synonyms such as "to indicate the past" or "to assure oneself of the past," as well as to the lexical definitions "to remind of something" and "auto-experienced recall." In Himmelmann's summation, concretized external experience and one's own existential experience of living were not separated carefully enough, and were instead even referred to by the same word. He noted: "If Jan Assmann writes that one must remember his past so as not to repeat it, he probably does not mean to *remember*, but to evoke = to make oneself aware, to appropriate what would be factually accurate."[4]

The terms memory and remembrance are used in different ways in various cultural studies and cultural historical contexts; indeed, Himmelmann's "external memory" (*Fremd-Erinnerung*) is actually also called remembrance (*Gedächtnis*). The difficulty of translating language often comes into play. Indeed, two of the fundamental concepts come from French-speaking authors: the French word *Mémoire* has two senses in German, *Erinnerung* and *Gedächtnis*.

Beginning with these ideas, I would like to introduce some of the concepts and phenomena that have been problematized in the cultural sciences, and by Maurice Halbwachs (1877–1945) in particular. My first example is from the present day, and moves from there into the recent past.

1 Himmelmann 1976, 190.
2 Himmelmann 1976, 190. English translations of German citations throughout this paper are by Casey Butterfield unless otherwise indicated.
3 Himmelmann 2000, 47–48, cited below.
4 Himmelmann 2000, 57, note 3. Reference to J. Assmann and Hölscher 1988.

Since I came to Berlin in 1992, I have been observing life in and around the Gethsemane Church, which became known to me through the events in the fall of 1989.[5] The local church congregation comprises what Halbwachs called a *cadre social*, or "social framework."[6] The church functions as a kind of village within the city, conferring identity and social cohesion. Above all, however, it is the site of consistent rituals for the purpose of providing material and spatial expression of essential intellectual and spiritual content and to present these as supports for memory, both internal and external. Or, as Halbwachs formulated it: "The believer entering a church, cemetery, or other consecration place knows he will recover a mental state he has experienced many times."[7]

For people associated with the church, Gethsemane is a space of personal memories, including *rites de passage*, concerts, and festivals. Halbwachs calls this level *primary experience*: individual, selective memory with all the senses, personal experience as a fundamental portal to history. Many members of the congregation come from the western part of Germany. For them, the events from 1989 that are associated with the church already form part of the *communicative memory*. Communicative memory conveys orally transmitted experiences and traditions for up to three generations after the time of the event. In order to pass it down, according to Aleida Assmann (*1947), is "a milieu of spatial proximity, regular interaction, shared lifestyles, and shared experiences" is required.[8] The events associated with the congregation are called to mind at church events and leadership meetings by those who witnessed them, as well as in the periodical church newsletter of the (churchgoing) public.

For example, older members of the congregation talk about the Peaceful Revolution of 1989. Small plaques in the pews commemorate experiences of the time with quotes: opponents of the regime found community and shelter in Gethsemane as the police and the Stasi surrounded the church. Vigils at the time referenced the Garden of Gethsemane, under the biblical motto "Watch and pray."

Some years before, a Christ figure was erected in front of the church door (Fig. 1). It had originally belonged to the collection of the Church of Reconciliation on Bernauer Strasse, 1.5 kilometers away. The land on which the Church of Reconciliation stood had to be turned over to the state: the church was demolished in 1985 because it obstructed surveillance of the border.[9] Knowledge of the origins and placement of the figure in front of the portal of the Gethsemane Church is available on the congregation website, but we can assume that most active congregation members no longer know about it. To use Assmann's terms, here an event is gradually transitioning from the *functional memory* of the community into *storage memory*. Her model of inhabited or functional memory and external storage memory consists of "two complementary modes of cultural memory,"[10] wherein the storage memory serves as a kind of repository and is located close to the threshold of forgetting. Assmann writes: "It is possible for historical knowledge to reclaim some of these disembodied relics and abandoned materials and perhaps even reconnect them with the functional dimension of cultural memory."[11] Her model has especially great relevance for considering material objects as stores of knowledge.

5 Gethsemane Church was one of the important places of the non-violent revolution from 1989. See https://www.chronikderwende.de/lexikon/glossar/glossar_jsp/key=gethsemanekirche.html (last accessed 20.10.2020).

6 "The Social Frameworks of Memory," in Halbwachs 2008, 56.

7 Halbwachs 1991 [1950], 52–53 (cited in Binnewerg 2013, 94). English translation see Halbwachs 1980, 151 (translator not credited).

8 A. Assmann 1999, 36.

9 According to https://ekpn.de/vier-kirchen/gethsemane/ (last accessed 20.10.2020). The link also includes (scant) additional information on the history of the church and its features.

10 A. Assmann 2011, 123.

11 A. Assmann 2011, 124.

Fig. 1 | Gethsemane, Facade with Jesus figure (photo from 2016).

But let us return to the Gethsemane Church. Its even earlier past is now devoid of witnesses: archivists are the only ones who can still reconstruct the comparatively slight damages from the war and the structural changes after 1945.[12] The last of the Russian forced laborers who served at the church cemetery from 1939 to 1945 died a few years ago. Church life in the Third Reich, including the clashes between German

12 These include simplified painting in the interior, makeshift replacement of destroyed panes of unique historicist windows in the chancel, simplified features of the space (e.g., pulpit and altar).

Christians and followers of the Confessing Church; the everyday congregational life in the Weimar Republic, before and during the First World War, and before the construction and consecration of the neo-Gothic brick hall church by August Orth (1828–1901): all of this has become history and at the same time is also part of the *framework* of the *cultural memory* belonging to the congregation, in which remembrances, even beyond the third generation after the event, are preserved for posterity in various media. Halbwachs summarizes these events of the communicative and cultural memory into *collective memory*.

For Halbwachs, history begins where the living memory and its respective frameworks end. A multitude of collective memories contrasts with the *one* history authenticated by professionals. Many authors adopt Halbwachs' distinction between history and memory, but criticize his positivist conception of history. Also important is his fundamental insight that "our conceptions of the past are affected by the mental images we employ to solve present problems, so that collective memory is essentially a reconstruction of the past in the light of the present."[13]

How does this relate to the concept of sites of memory (*lieux de mémoire*) that Pierre Nora (*1931) developed in the 1980s? Like Halbwachs, Nora also stresses that history and memory are not synonyms in any way. According to Nora, however, sites of memory cannot "constitute collective memory in the Halbwachsian sense. On the contrary, 'there are *lieux de mémoire*, sites of memory, because there are no longer *milieux de mémoire*, real environments of memory.'"[14] Nora holds that in (European?) society, "the link to the living past, specific to groups and nations and constitutive of identity," has been demolished.[15] Sites of memory become signs, isolated artificial placeholders for the natural collective memory that no longer exists, for the comprehensive memory space, the memory landscape.

The Gethsemane Church was thought of in the Noranian sense when labeled as a "Site of Memory": In the collection of *Erinnerungsorte der DDR* ("Sites of Memory of the GDR"), churches were subsumed under the heading *Schwerter zu Pflugscharen* ("Swords into Plowshares") as spaces for the gathering of the political opposition, places of prayer and shelter.[16] These undoubtedly included Gethsemane in the 1980s, especially during the vigils in the fall of 1989. *Sites of memory* are understood in general as *loci* within the meaning of ancient mnemonics: they have physical, functional, and symbolic dimensions. Important – and critical in various ways – is that an object of culture can become a site of memory through intentionally symbolic idealization, either when it emerges or retroactively.[17] According to Nora, sites of memory can be geographical locations, buildings, monuments, or works of art, as well as historical figures, days of remembrance, scientific texts, and symbolic actions. *Lieux de mémoire* are also characterized by a historiography oriented toward historical memory, in which a theoretical concept of collective memory is connected to "concrete analyses of the formation and passing down of past visions."[18] In this, the *lieux de mémoire* are not limited to the historical sciences, but rather are open to investigations in a great variety of disciplines.[19]

The preservation of monuments, however, has so far largely resisted this suggestion, which also makes a significant social contribution in "securing the material carriers of memory traces."[20] The term *memory* frequently comes up at professional conferences

13 See Erl 2005, 23. Citation in the English translation of Halbwachs by Lewis A. Coser in Halbwachs 2008, 34.
14 Nora 1990 in Erl 2005, 23. Translation of the English citation by C. Butterfield.
15 See Erl 2005, 23.
16 Eckert 2009.
17 As per Erl 2005, 23.
18 As per Erl 2005, 25.
19 As per Erl 2005, 25.
20 Wohlleben 2000, 16.

and debates, but more as a catchword than as a phenomenon. The differentiated range of topics in cultural science presumably makes broad and continuous discourse among professionals more difficult.[21]

Halbwachs was of the view that objects do not remain important in the thinking of groups because of their materiality, but because they are continually being recapitulated and thereby passed down. From this, Anke Binneweg developed the idea of assigning the preservation of monuments (in its "theoretical-practical dual nature"[22]) to both science and the culture of memory. In her point of view, Halbwachs' approach here could mediate between the culture of memory, which is quite detached from the historical material, and the monument that is bound to materiality because it relationally describes the connection between humanity, memory, and (constructed) space. Underlying this thought is Halbwachs' almost poetic statement that "most groups [...] engrave their form in some way upon the soil and retrieve their collective remembrances within the spatial framework thus defined."[23]

Another focus of Binnewerg's is a critique of Nora's *Lieux de Mémoire* from the viewpoint of the preservation of monuments. I summarize it here: First, Binnewerg finds it problematic that Nora understands sites not only in terms of geography or materiality. Second, sites of memory are often legitimized and instrumentalized in retrospect.[24] Third, Nora's conception frequently shortchanges the scientific and cognitive level, which collides with the application and practice of the preservation of monuments – that is, the sighting, documentation, selection, and placement under protection of constructed objects. Instead, fourth, the argumentation is often emotionalized and myths projected onto it in a way that stabilizes the contemporary and is based on politics or economy.[25] Fifth, Binnewerg refers to differences in meaning between the more positively connotated *Erinnerungsorte* ("sites of memory") and the entire material "inventory of buildings and architectural remnants",[26] including the "uncomfortable heritage," such as battlefields, vestiges of border installations, and concentration camps, that is also enshrined within the preservation of monuments.[27]

2 Shifts in the collective memory: castle, cathedral, temple

A review for *Steinbruch – deutsche Erinnerungsorte* speaks of "shifts in the collective memory."[28] I would like to pursue this idea in the examples that follow.

The first case mainly involves the emergence of various overlapping memories and histories, a phenomenon that might be seen as the norm. Wartburg Castle, a medieval ruins in Eisenach that was home to the *Sängerstreit* minstrel contest and St. Elizabeth of Hungary, was part of the space and landscape romanticized by Goethe in 1777 as

21 See also Binnewerg 2013, 91. Exceptions include the volume by Meier and Wohlleben 2000 and Falser 2008.

22 Binnewerg 2013, 95. Excerpted below (english translation of Halbwachs' citation see https://is.muni.cz/el/1423/podzim2015/SOC571/um/59556777/Hawlbachs_Space_and_the_collective_memory.pdf, p. 15 (last accessed 20.10.20)).

23 Halbwachs 1991 [1950], 161, cited in Binnewerg 2013, 96 (english translation of Halbwachs' citation see https://is.muni.cz/el/1423/podzim2015/SOC571/um/59556777/Hawlbachs_Space_and_the_collective_memory.pdf, p. 15 (last accessed 20.10.20)).

24 Binnewerg 2013, 95; this aspect is as per Falser 2008, 312–313.

25 On this subject, I would like to point out that I can recognize a similar trend at world heritage sites, and therefore as an issue within monument preservation. A need for discussion and change that goes beyond debates on remembrance is indicated here.

26 Binnewerg 2013, 95.

27 On this see Bernbeck, Hofmann, and Sommer 2017.

28 Binder 2001.

Fig. 2 | Wartburg, Luther’s study (photo circa 1900).

“magnificent.”[29] Luther sought refuge there in the sixteenth century, and it was the site of the translation of the New Testament (Fig. 2). The location gained increasing national significance with the events around the castle festival of 1817, three hundred years after Luther’s stay there. As a result, the latter half of the nineteenth century brought structural changes to the heretofore Romantic ruin, which were carried out in accordance with plans by Ferdinand von Quast (1807–1877) and Hugo von Ritgens (1811–1889). The Cold War era also left its mark on the castle, including the removal of the building’s historicist interior in the 1950s.[30] The current look of the structure is informed by a presumably medieval castle; the image of Luther’s scriptorium, circa 1517, is particularly embedded. This “construct” of overlapping meanings is now a national monument, as well as a UNESCO world heritage site and – borrowing from Nora – a definitive German *Erinnerungsort*.

Many other medieval castles were awakened from their Sleeping Beauty slumbers in the nineteenth century, and architects purified Romanesque and Gothic churches to expand upon them in imaginative ways later on. Relics of the past became the focus of German architects, especially after the establishment of the German Confederation in 1815 and the gradual formation of the preservation of monuments. Along with the Wartburg structures, these included the Marienburg and Heidelberg castles, the Bamberg Cathedral, and the Metz Cathedral. August Orth (1828–1901), for example, created neogothic brick buildings in nineteenth-century Berlin such as the Gethsemane Church mentioned above. But when we think of design in “neo-” styles and the architectural language of that time, it is only one side of the coin.

29 Goethe 2012 [1777], Chapter 20. English translation from http://www.thueringer-staedte.de/en/towns/eisenach (last accessed 20.10.2020).

30 For further details on the structural history of Wartburg castle see Schwarzkopf 2011, 119–122.

German classicists and architects of this same era were concerned with the ancient roots of the culture, as were many of their European counterparts and later their American colleagues: the bourgeoisie took their grand tours, and numerous ancient sites were excavated and explored. In Greece, Asia Minor, and Egypt, architects made classicized forms their own. As part of the everyday space, in the Halbwachsian and Assmannian sense, both classicist and historicist buildings could therefore have served to keep cultures of memory alive.

Whereas the Wartburg castle was mainly shaped by an increase in its importance and by the superimposition of memories, the examples that follow are synonymous with reductions. Let us then shift our focus to the Temple of Apollo in Didim, Turkey, known as Didyma in ancient times, and the researchers working there, as well as to the architects of the aforementioned Metz Cathedral.

What we regard today as the Hellenistic sanctuary of Apollo is only one part of the material from the excavation. The excavation of the temple of Didyma in 1905, led by archaeologist Theodor Wiegand (1864–1936), was a great logistical achievement. It generated extensive knowledge of the ancient world, but also manifold losses, beginning with the demolition of "Greek houses" in the area around the dig, continuing with more modern material such as the windmill on the pile of rubble (Fig. 3), and extending to medieval and late Roman-Byzantine relics. One nadir was the removal of structural elements and decorations from a Byzantine basilica during the search for the archaic origins of the temple (Fig. 4). Fortunately, the meticulous documentation of the find prepared in 1941 by the architect Hubert Knackfuß (1866–1948) offers an impression of the forgone material.

The approach in Didyma apparently corresponded to the usual practice of monument preservation at the time. We can see this by comparing a statement from Wiegand to a quotation from Paul Tornow (1848–1921), the architect in charge of restoring the Metz Cathedral. In 1913, Wiegand wrote in a manual for excavations "that under certain circumstances a more recent, e.g., Byzantine or Parthian wall must be eliminated in order to allow for penetration into a deeper, more important layer."[31] Tornow, on the first *Tag für Denkmalpflege* ("Day of Monument Preservation") in 1900, said of Germany's stock of buildings with historical value:

> If later additions that have nothing to do with the organism of the structure and lack artistic and art-historical value should obscure or disfigure a monument, such additions are to be eliminated [...] The same is true of those inferior buildings whose excessive proximity to the structure detracts from the outsized effect of the monument.[32]

In the case of the Metz Cathedral, part of the existing *knowledge store* was lost in the devastating fire of 1877. Another part disappeared in the massive reconstruction of the west wall in the 1890s, euphemistically termed a "restoration" and carried out by demolishing the portal erected by Blondel in 1764 and replacing it with historicist building material (Fig. 5)[33]. It is no longer possible to investigate the *storage memory* of the Gothic, baroquely reshaped building through its material transmission; to borrow from Assmann, it can hardly be traced back to *inhabited memory*. In the same way, the Temple of Apollo at Didyma lost multilayered material and the knowledge of the past stored within it. The

31 Wiegand 1939, 102.

32 Tornow 1900, 212.

33 I am grateful to Ralph Paschke, former director of inventory at the Brandenburg State Agency for the Preservation of Monuments and Archaeological National Museum, for his assistance with image research.

Fig. 3 | Didyma, Rubble heap before the start of excavations in 1905.

Fig. 4 | Didyma, Basilica circa 1908.

Fig. 5 | Metz, Southern facade of the cathedral, Changes made in neo-Gothic style, late 19th century.

drive for the material appropriation of antiquity had an additional consequence here: elements of the memories of other cultures were affected by the loss of more recent layers.

3 New reLOCATION: Nora in ancient studies

The concept of *lieux de mémoire*, to which I now return, led to published anthologies in France, pre- and post-reunification Germany, and Europe, as well as two volumes entitled *Erinnerungsorte der Antike* ("Sites of Memory of Antiquity"), in 2006 and 2010. Do these publications seek to contribute to a new reLOCATION of antiquity, similar to what occurred in the classicist and historicist architectural and historical culture? Or have the requirements changed since then?

The loss of the *Milieux de mémoire* established by Nora is certainly the case for "internalized" antiquity, as it was transported to the Central Europe of the nineteenth century, but today it is no longer part of social identity, at least for the educated middle class. The provisional appraisal by the editors, Elke Stein-Hölkeskamp and Joachim Hölkeskamp, in the preface of the second volume is interesting: these ancient historians highly value connecting professionals with the general public. For them, the ancient sites are one of

the "national projects,"[34] as it were – a basis for transnational sites of memory, but in the European rather than global sense. For the editors, an interest in the historical culture(s), forms, and media of memory is no passing fad. In addition to the abstract discourse, they wish to strengthen the specific levels of "constitution and construction of the collective 'identity' of societies or social groups"[35] and, to this end, to focus on questions relating to the concrete features and embodiment of ancient cultures in a "consciously interdisciplinary, methodologically innovative cultural history."[36]

The editors stake a claim that the worlds of ancient Greece and Rome were not nations in the Noranian sense.[37] There may have been common elements within and across the ancient Greek and ancient Roman worlds, but the large geographical area of each was primarily characterized by its respective demographic, political, economic, and cultural heterogeneity. Hölkeskamp/Stein-Hölkeskamp and the numerous authors construct so-called levels of memory as a method of selecting specific sites of memory that are as uncontentious as possible. These levels range from *myths* (like Mycenae or Troy), to *cultural focal points* (Athens with the Acropolis; Rome with its Forum, Coliseum, and Capitol; or Byzantium), *memory media* (e.g., large sculptures such as the Tyrannicides), *designed settings* (vestiges of limes, battlefields, and museum sites like the Munich Glyptothek), and finally to *metaphorical sites of memory*, some of them already operative in antiquity (literary texts – Homer, Herodotus – and cultural practices such as the Olympic Games or oracles), and *modern master narratives*[38] (including those of Winckelmann, Grote, and Burckhardt). Even though some of these levels were already operative in antiquity, the overall selection is more the result of modern thinking. But it is worth looking beyond this and the conceptual critique just expressed, to individual articles.

For example, the classical archaeologist Jens-Arne Dickmann uses the ruins of Pompeii to link some aspects of the discourse of memory with scientific approaches to the ancient site.[39] To begin, Dickmann references Walter Benjamin, who expressed his enthusiasm for the colorfulness and vitality of Naples in the 1920s even as he felt lost in Pompeii, the "largest labyrinth," of which he writes: "I am so ignorant of antiquity that its ruins, which come alive only under archaeological observation, make the requisite imposing impression on me. "[40] What questions does Dickmann now ask of his sometimes long-established material? His first is one of communication: "How, then, […] would a Walter Benjamin be taken by the hand and led through the ruins today, in the fervent hope that he would relinquish his apathy and draw on his experiences in Naples to discover the Pompeiian experience? […] What kind of memory can this place trigger today? Is it memory, and if so, of what?"[41]

Before Dickmann addresses these questions, however, he intends to investigate whether the ancient city inspired or even urged its residents toward their own remembering, and whether there are recognizable parallels between ancient self-remembering and remembrance by later generations, up to and including the modern discussion.[42] This "search for traces of ancient memories" [43] touches on questions about the preservation of ancient

34 Hölkeskamp and Stein-Hölkeskamp 2010, 12.
35 Hölkeskamp and Stein-Hölkeskamp 2010, 12.
36 Hölkeskamp and Stein-Hölkeskamp 2010, 12.
37 Hölkeskamp and Stein-Hölkeskamp 2010, 13.
38 As per Hölkeskamp and Stein-Hölkeskamp 2010, 15, these are "productively read and understood a new and differently today (and not only as a result of the so-called cultural turn)."
39 Dickmann 2006, 482–502.
40 Benjamin 1996, 501, cited in Dickmann 2006, 483. English translation from Scholem and Adorno 1994, 253.
41 Dickmann 2006, 483.
42 As per Dickmann 2006, 483–484.
43 Dickmann 2006, 484.

monuments; it also concerns the continuity of cults, the nature of benefactors, and the forms of commemorating publicly venerated figures such as city founders or actors.

In the passage that follows, Dickmann considers the popular reception of investigations into Pompeii in the nineteenth century and the present, among others, using sources such as the novels *The Last Days of Pompeii* (1834) by E. Bulwer-Lytton and Pompeii (2003) by Robert Harris. He analyzes the respective treatments of the established findings and the public's expectations of the research knowledge. Whereas the Pompeii evoked in the 1830s appears as "a stage set bathed in romantic light,"[44] Harris lets one "discern the details of everyday life from the traces of ancient testimonies," [45] by rendering archaeological findings with the utmost specificity but exercising caution when making analogies to the present.

Analogies are also a subject of the section that follows. Building on Himmelmann, Dickmann titles it "Archaeology in Place of Memory" and asks what role Pompeii could play in the "ongoing discussion about the function of sites as carriers of memory." Here Dickmann comments on Nora's *sites of memory* and their consequences, urging that the concept be applied to antiquity only with the utmost caution: unlike a continually populated place, according to Dickmann, Pompeii does not constitute a (collective) memory, but rather "the painstaking approximation of a complex legacy with diverse characteristics."[46] Its current appropriation "appears as a highly heterogeneous reception executed from various perspectives. The various examinations of archaeological-historical, geological, environmental-archaeological, and preservation-of-monuments-focused problems stand in contrast to the purposes of tourism or education."[47] On the one hand, the ruins are becoming less recognizable after over 250 years of exposure to the elements, and the foreknowledge of archaeologists is increasingly being called into question. On the other, two million people flock to the myth of this "layer of ancient everyday life sealed off by Vesuvius" every year, which Dickmann claims leads to disaster voyeurism that is hardly likely to generate memorable discoveries.

In closing, Dickmann directs his gaze to other realities at the site, such as conservation problems that include old restorations in need of repair and the inaccessibility or removal from storage of preserved murals. He then lists didactic omissions and returns to Benjamin's admitted difficulty with "coaxing insights from the archaeological ruins about the conditions and rules of ancient urban life."[48] He rejects the idea of the analogy to a Naples street scene that Benjamin describes (Fig. 6). Going back to Bulwer-Lytton's presumption that Pompeii's heyday would be a rather "unfamiliar period," Dickmann urges us to set aside putative foreknowledge and instead "interrogate the cultural peculiarities, differences, and strangeness of the living conditions of the time."[49] He advises using these – the many preserved and visible ancient details that still remain – as an impetus to remember, to put them into new contexts and to communicate them with brilliance.

4 Conclusion

The examples discussed here use the cultural studies approaches of Maurice Halbwachs, Pierre Nora, and others for professional reflections, making clear with reference to Nora's *sites of memory* the weaknesses of the concept and the limits of its scientific applicability, in the interests of transdisciplinary thought. Triggered by the debates on memory, new

44 Dickmann 2006, 494.
45 Dickmann 2006, 494.
46 Dickmann 2006, 497.
47 Dickmann 2006, 496.
48 Dickmann 2006, 498.
49 Dickmann 2006, 495.

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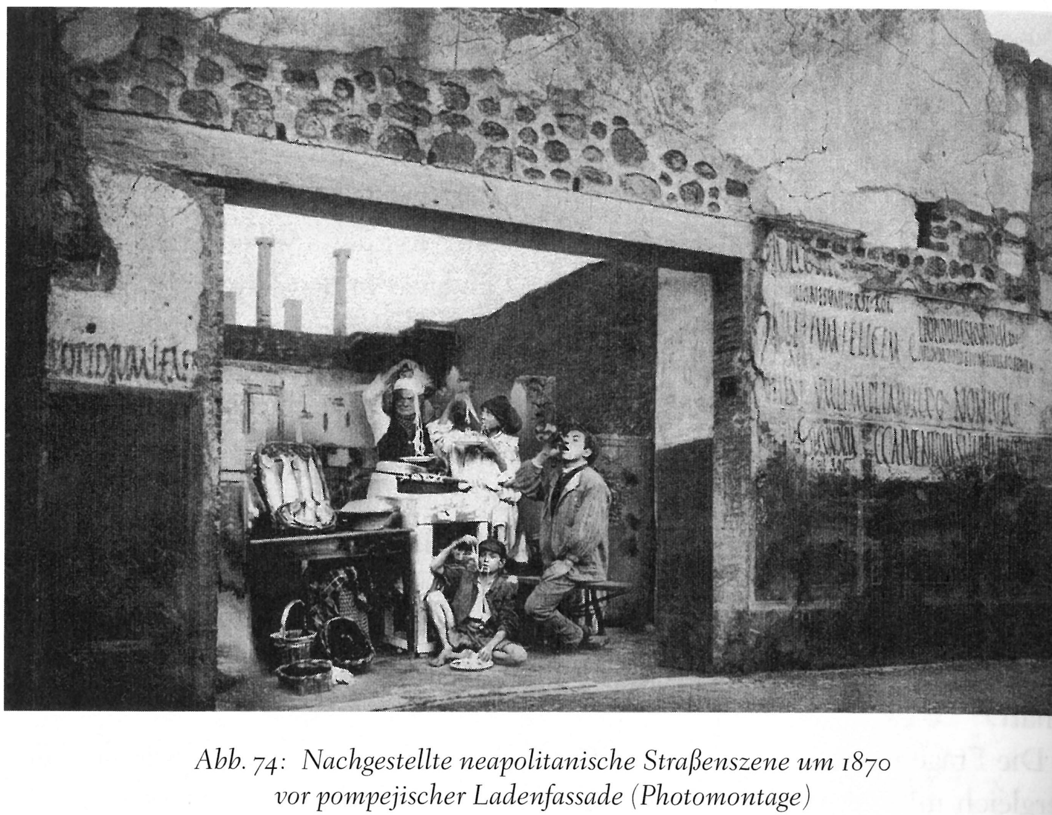

Abb. 74: Nachgestellte neapolitanische Straßenszene um 1870 vor pompejischer Ladenfassade (Photomontage)

Fig. 6 | Neapolitan street scene, photo montage.

questions about the history of research have become apparent, for example in the context of the preservation of monuments and within ancient studies, as well as about current investigative practices: What remains of a multilayered structure after its 'jacket' has been removed – meaning, after the reduction of an "important layer" for Wiegand's purposes – and why and how was this undertaken? Will the structure be more vulnerable in the future to destruction by weathering, wear and tear from tourism, or violence? To what extent does a documentation in the building include stored knowledge, and can an ancient building be materially reconstructed on the basis of its documentation? Who makes this decision? How can Halbwachs' and Nora's concepts enrich the communication of knowledge, or the topics of *public engagement*?

A general question mark remains as far as the depth of penetration and how much the subject discussed here has been illuminated in terms of its content. It is in any case not possible to be a professional researcher and at the same time specialize in comprehensive cultural studies discourses and methods. Openness to 'external impulses' for topics that challenge one's own research and professional identity, however, can lead to interdisciplinary, enriching thinking (supervised in the best case by philosophers and cultural scientists). In the best case, it can create the will to communicate knowledge – and the multilayered example of Pompeii is an example of this – in an appropriate way in the public memory space.

Illustration credits

1 Photo: K. Steudtner, 2016. 2 Library of Congress LOT 13411, no. 1151; source: https://lccn.loc.gov/2002720777 [last accessed 20.10.2020]. 3 Wiegand 1911, Tafel VI. 4 Wiegand and Knackfuss 1941, F 134. 5 Photo: G. Brückel. http://www.kathedralen.net/metz/metz00.html [last accessed 20.10.2020]. 6 Photo montage from Dickmann 2006, fig. 74. Reprinted with author's permission.

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