

NGG Conference

3-5 November 2021 Amsterdam

Religion and Heritage: Futures for Religious Pasts

Abstracts

November 3d 14:00-15:30: Opening & Keynote 1
Location: Theaterzaal (Universiteitstheater)

Marian Burchardt, (Leipzig University): Religion as Heritage: Sacred Lineages in a Secular Age

Across the world, transnational migration and emergent forms of religious diversity have provided new incentives to frame religion as (national) heritage. Scholarly discourses therefore often focused on how such framings reflected affirmations of cultural hierarchies and the defense of national identity. At the same time, religious minority communities as well are beginning to fashion their histories, material traces and identities in terms of heritage. How are we to understand this turn toward heritage religion and its multiplication? What are the precise conditions and forms in which people create the affective ties that render heritage religion culturally resonant and consequential?

In my talk, I develop the idea of the “religious heritage assemblage” as the totality of the heterogeneous discourses, sites, and practices in which claims to religion as (national) culture are articulated, authorized, and institutionalized. Such claims are chiefly organized around three fields of mobilization. Thus religious heritage is (1) mobilized by ordinary people as an affective politics of belonging, 2) aesthetically and semantically elaborated by cultural institutions such as museums that canonize its status as official national memory, and (3) legally codified and politically institutionalized within power relationships in order to secure cultural hegemonies and as part of a politics of citizenship. In each of these fields, discourses regarding religious heritage are signifying practices in which the meanings of religious heritage for nation-states and their citizens are negotiated, defined, and authorized. Marshalling ethnographic evidence from Canada, Spain and Germany, my main point is to show how heritage religion crystallizes as a new social form through religion is lived and experienced.

November 3d 15:30-17:00: Parallel Panels

Panel A: Heritage out of Control

Location: Theaterzaal (Universiteitstheater)

Chair: Eva Ambos (University of Tübingen)

Discussant: Nathalie Arnold Koenings (Zayed University, Dubai)

Shaped by secular and religious structures of thinking that are rooted in imperial, colonial and national legacies, heritage sites have been important locations for establishing a common understanding of the past and present. Upholding distinctions between the secular and the religious that are key to modern statehood, heritage also draws frameworks for imagining possible futures. Exposing the power dynamics that are embedded in the formation of the secularized space of heritage, this panel aims to shift the focus to spirits and energies that afford us ways to upset the material limits of supposed meaning-making processes. Tracing absences, affective dissonances and the ensuing silent consensuses produced by the very materiality of heritage sites, we aim to destabilize the place-oriented, static and secularized notions that abound in debates on heritage. This focus has the potential to destabilize the imposed genealogies and lineages that bolster not only the notion of heritage and broaden our range of possibilities in imagining future. Our panel proposal draws on the conversations that were held during the Heritage out of Control Workshop hosted by the Empires of Memory Research Group at the Max-Planck-Institute (MPI) for the Study of Religious and Ethnic Diversity in May 2021. We take the opportunity to expand our discussion with a focus on temporality of heritagization through cases from Africa to the Middle East. Examining cases of intimate and embodied heritage, our panel aims at complicating discussions on the tensions between religious and secular heritage that opted for asking new questions about spatiality and temporality of heritagization.

A-1: Ezgi Güner (University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign): Conjuring the Ottoman Heritage in the Black African Muslim Archive

‘Welcome, the offspring of Abdülhamit!’ said the Bukinabe sheikh to the Turks visiting his village, according to an Islamic magazine published in Turkey, and he allegedly refused to lead the prayer in the presence of ‘the Ottomans.’ Narratives about how the Black African Muslim commemorates Ottoman spiritual authority have gained popularity among religious circles in Turkey over the last two decades. There has in fact been a mobilization by state and religious actors to reclaim the material and immaterial forms of Ottoman heritage on the continent. While the Turkish official development agency restores the mosques, tombs, and palaces in order to preserve the Ottoman history in Africa south of the Sahara, humanitarian volunteers and religious entrepreneurs collect, co-invent and circulate nostalgic memories of the Ottoman past. This paper examines how the Black African Muslim archive becomes a repository of imperial spirits through which the Turkish Muslim can reincarnate as the heir of the Ottoman. Based on a multi-sited ethnographic fieldwork in Turkey, Tanzania, Senegal, Gambia and Benin, I analyze the immateriality of the Ottoman heritage in Africa. Drawing on travel stories, popular histories, and ethnographic accounts, I argue that the spirits of Ottoman sultans and caliphs haunting Africa are conjured up by the racialized imaginaries of the Turkish Muslims. Retrieving the lost spiritual energies of their Ottoman ancestors, they are able to project a glorious imperial past onto the future.

**A-2: Duane Jethro (Centre for Curating the Archive, University of Cape Town):
Unearthing Spirits: Heritage, Faith and Forced Removal in Constantia, Cape Town**

Constantia is celebrated in tourist brochures for its natural beauty, viticulture and architectural heritage. It has some of South Africa's oldest and most well-known wine farms, is overwhelming white, elite and expensive. The Cape Dutch architecture of the manor houses is celebrated as a distinctive expression of South African heritage. Yet the slave narratives associated with European colonisation of the Cape underlying this cultural heritage narrative are subordinated, avoided or historicised in ways that cast it as a matter of the distant past. This dominant heritage narrative links in with South African state heritage policy that promotes reconciliation and nation-building. Former and existing black residents have recently started engaging with their past, unearthing subaltern genealogies of heritage. Christ Church Constantia, the oldest Anglican Church in the area, commemorated its 160th year of establishment in 2020, and explicitly framed itself as having slave roots and as a place of worship for black communities. The Constantia Heritage and Education Project (CHEP), was initiated to gather the stories of forced evictees, to share memories and experiences of life in Constantia before and after forced removal. This paper profiles these two heritage and memory initiatives and considers how and in what ways they disrupt and transgress the control of Constantia's dominant heritage narrative. It pays special attention to legacies of slavery, apartheid era forced removal and religion and religious commemoration in the area, asking what the role of religion, religious worship and commemoration is in unearthing disruptive subaltern heritage narratives in Constantia today.

A-3: Serawit Debele Bekole (University of Bayreuth): 'Wurs': Inheritance as the Embodied, the Intimate, and the Everyday (NB: on Zoom)

In this talk, I think about spirits as intimate inheritance which are part of everyday existence. To do so, I think through spirit mediums to articulate heritage as intimate and always in motion. I work with the Amharic word 'wurs' (inheritance) that my interlocutors use to refer to benevolent spirits that they inherit up on the passing of a senior spirit medium. Unlike what we conventionally call inheritance, wurs is embodied, it lives with(in) the person who inherited it. Wurs plays an active role in the person's as well as adherents' life. It also then becomes an intimate companion (not in a sexualised sense) of the host. The question then is, what kind of conceptualisation of heritage/inheritance accounts for wurs as lived, intimate, mobile and embedded in the quotidian? Obviously, the conception of heritage as static, secular(ised) and place-oriented is not helpful. The talk grapples with how heritage can be imagined otherwise, beyond divides of the sacred/secular, institutionalised/everyday. It also brings in indigenous religious practices into conversation as a prison to rethink heritage.

A-4: Çiçek İlgiz (MPI for the Study of Religious and Ethnic Diversity): Spiritual Love: Sensing in the Musouin of Mevlana Celaleddin Rumi (1207-1273)

Since the beginning of 2000s UNESCO developed an interest towards the Sufi branch of mystical Islam and marked 2007 the 'Mevlana Year' to celebrate 800th anniversary of the birth of Mevlana Celaleddin Rumi, the 13th century Sufi philosopher who is known for his teachings on spiritual love. In the following year, the ecstatic Mevlevi ritual called Sema was added to the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage. Following these two happenings, the Mevlana Museum where the tomb of Mevlana is exhibited started attracting more than 2.5 million visitors every year from all over the world. Believers of Abrahamic religions along with hippies, shamans, Osho followers, mediums and fortune tellers among many others meet

in December in Konya, the notorious city of today's Turkey for Islamic conservatism, and call their gathering the 'love pilgrimage.' For the pilgrims, the visits to the musealized tomb of Mevlana, joining to the whirling dervish rituals and collective recitations of his poems are ways to 'align' with Mevlana's energy of spiritual love. Analyzing processes of culturalization of an Islamic saint as spiritualization, the presentation asks what happens to the genealogies of inheritance when people go to museums to align with energies of the exhibited objects? Based on ethnographic research the presentation suggests that centering the attention to sensing allows us thinking outside of the secular-religious and tangible-intangible divide that manufacture heritage. More significantly, it argues that engaging with heritage through sensing enables to generate genealogies that are beyond bounded to shared historicities and geographical references,

Panel B: Handling Religious and Sacred Objects Throughout their Life Cycle: Materiality, Identity, and New Destinations
Location: 2.18 (Meertens Institute)
Chair: Fred van Lieburg

B-1: Sabine Hiebsch (Theological University Kampen): Religious Objects as Identity Markers in Dutch Lutheranism: Georgine Schwartz's Commemorative Medal (1917) as a Case Study

On the occasion of the celebrations for the quadricentennial of the Reformation in 1917, the sculptor Georgine Schwartz designed a commemorative medal, commissioned by the Lutheran congregation in Amsterdam. In this presentation I will analyze Schwartz's design, its materiality and iconography. I will show the (ritual) use of the medal within the 1917 celebrations that were a *lieu de mémoire* for the Lutheran church. Schwartz's commemorative medal is presented as a case study for how religious objects could function as identity markers in Dutch Lutheranism. As such, the 1917 medal stands in a long line of commemorative Lutheran religious objects that were a key part in constructing a Dutch Lutheran identity. An important factor in this context is the minority status of the Lutherans within the Dutch religious landscape. This background influenced the usage and contextualization of religious objects as a component of constructing a religious identity.

B-2: Cunera Buijs (National Museum of World Cultures, the Netherlands): Siberian shaman's coats and drums: the power and transformations of museum objects

Shamanistic practices exert fascination and stimulate extensive scientific and public interest. It is a contested topic for many Indigenous peoples in the world, Siberia included. Shamanism includes a great variety of aspects and healing is one of the major aims. Throughout the ages, numerous spiritual and indigenous healing forms have been marginalized or severely persecuted. In Siberia, shamans' drums and coats were confiscated by Russian officials and burned or transferred to anthropological museums in Russia, Germany, the Netherlands and beyond. The transformation of these ritual paraphernalia, of which shamans would never part voluntarily, into museum artefacts is a complex process. It transforms these historical objects into cultural heritage, separated from their original Indigenous contexts. Within the museum, riddles of their spiritual power come to the fore: do these objects still contain these powers or are they neutralized within the new museum context? How are these spiritual powers addressed by younger generations, and how should museums deal with these issues? Having lost the original spiritual contexts of ritual objects

during the colonization period, Indigenous peoples in Siberia now revive parts of their cultural heritage by reconnecting to the heritage of their ancestors in museum collections. To illustrate this, I will look into the shamanistic coat that the Museum of World Cultures recently commissioned from Siberian artist Anatal Donkan for the exhibition 'Healing Power. Winti, Shamanism, Witchcraft' (Tropenmuseum, 2021), to go on display along with an authentic shamanistic coat from the museum collection.

B-3: Minou Schraven (Amsterdam University College / Vrije Universiteit): Catholic Devotion, the Pope and the Agni dei: Appeal and Anxieties From Past to Present

To the ridicule - and dismay - of Protestants, Catholics of the early modern period strengthened their devotion recurring to a wide range of objects, such as crucifixes, rosaries, medals and religious images, preferably those carrying a blessing or indulgence. Among the most powerful of these objects were the Agni dei: small disks of the purest wax that were consecrated by the pope during the Holy Week of his first (and then each seventh) year in office. By tradition, they were impressed with the Lamb of God, hence their name, plus the name and coat of arms of the pope who had consecrated them. Looking closely at their materiality, fragility and indexical relation to the pope, this paper examines the production, distribution and use of Agni dei, and the way they were perceived, both by Catholics and Protestants. In a world in which papal authority was no longer universally accepted, the objects were powerful and easily recognizable markers of loyalty to the pope's cause. While early modern popes thus dramatically increased the numbers of Agni dei, they were anxious to regulate their correct handling and material integrity. Today, popes do no longer consecrate Agni dei; the practice was silently abandoned in the 1960s in line with the Second Vatican Council. How (again) does this resonate with changing views on the pope's office, and what does it mean for the ways Agni dei are valued and displayed today?

B-4: Kirsten van Kempen: 'You cannot just throw Jesus in the bin.' Catholic Devotional Objects as Sacred Waste

A few decades ago, Catholic devotional objects like crucifixes, statues of saints and rosaries were a fixture in Catholic interiors in the Netherlands. However, as the number of Christians in the Netherlands declines every year, most devotional objects nowadays end up boxed in attics instead of fixed on walls. Even though they take up space, their owners feel apprehensive about throwing them away. The objects are 'sacred waste,' a notion of anthropologist Irene Stengs that describes 'material residues and surpluses that cannot be disposed of as garbage because they are charged with a religious, moral or emotional value.' In this paper, I will explore three case studies about the repurposing or disposal of devotional objects that take into account their religious value. As framework, I will use the guidelines of Museum Catharijneconvent for the repurposing and disposal of objects from church interiors. Consultations with curators and collectors make clear that museums have already collected many private devotional objects and will likely refuse additions, unless their provenance is well-documented. Private collectors ignore provenance and focus on an object's uniqueness. An exception is a collector in Vaals who continually expands his collection and keeps every object, regardless of its physical state. The fact that he is an atheist offers insights in the ways in which devotional objects attract people that no longer identify as Christian. Lastly, with regard to the destruction of devotional objects, there do not seem to exist any rules, aside from some unofficial practices. Summarizing, this paper argues that the future of private devotional objects has not yet received a lot of attention and should be explored further, before owners get over their apprehension and we lose these objects forever.

Panel C: Religious Heritage, for Whom?

Location: 301 (Universiteitstheater)

Chair: Lieke Wijnia (Museum Catharijneconvent)

The production of religious heritage results from involvement of stakeholders, institutions, and communities. While such involved parties often share the goals of heritage conservation and presentation, underlying reasons of why and how can offer points of contestation (cf. The Religious Heritage Complex 2020). Furthermore, in secularized countries like The Netherlands, the process of heritagization provides objects, sites or rituals with the task of serving a pluriform and diverse audience. In order to achieve this task, the practical work of heritage production is characterized by continuous negotiations. While the factor of stakeholders and institutional structures offer much-researched topics, we propose that the factor of audience deserves more attention in the study of heritage negotiations. Heritage institutions are faced with the challenge of translating heritage's material and immaterial dimensions, and academic and expert knowledge, to their audiences' anticipated frames of reference. This panel takes the factor of audience as its departure point and explores how it functions in negotiations to reach relevant, sustainable, and suitable heritage productions. The three contributions proposed below will be followed by a conversation with the attending conference participants. The aim of this panel is twofold. First, we hope to offer conference participants a look behind the scenes in relation to the position of audience in heritage production. Second, we aim to discuss how audience, and its implications for heritage production, can potentially become a more integrated factor in the study of religious heritage. Overall, we hope this exchange results in the identification of potential avenues for future collaboration between the academic study and the practical field of religious heritage.

C-1: Dimphy Schreurs (Museum Catharijneconvent): Identifying Visitor Groups in the Museum

For years, Museum Catharijneconvent, like many other museums, worked with identifying visitor groups by means of characteristics such as age, education level, and postcode. Such markers, however, do not give any indications about the reasons why people visit a museum. In order to achieve a better fit between the museum's presentations and activities and visitor motivations, the research of museum-expert of John Falk provided a source of inspiration. His long-term research on free-choice learning visits, which includes museum attendance, focuses on personal motivations and personality traits. In this contribution, Dimph Schreurs discusses how Falk's research on visitor identities has been translated into the work of the museum.

C-2: Lieke Wijnia (Museum Catharijneconvent / University College Utrecht): Anticipating Visitor Motivations in Mary Magdalene. The Exhibition

Mary Magdalene is a highly debated biblical character, on whom an abundance of literature and artistic representations exist. For the major Mary Magdalene exhibition at Museum Catharijneconvent this fall, the responsible project team had to anticipate how to convey the pluriform nature of this saint to its visitors. The diversity in interpretations of Mary Magdalene became the departure point in the exhibition, relating to object selection, narrative approach, the accompanying audio- and video excerpts, and the exhibition design. Taking

several aspects from this exhibition as a case study, its curator Lieke Wijnia will discuss how choices were made in relation to target visitor groups.

C-3: Inge Basteleur (Groningen Historic Churches Foundation): Designing for Diversity

Groningen Historic Churches Foundation is a secular heritage organization that takes care of almost a hundred churches in the province of Groningen. Education is a crucial part of the work of the foundation, as young people are the ones who will inherit these buildings in the future. This contribution focuses on the School Church (Schoolkerk) project in Garmerwolde, which aims to foster interreligious dialogue in a medieval church building. In the tower next to the church an interactive exhibition was built, covering the topic of Christian and Islamic feasts. The exhibition combines ancient and modern architecture with contemporary design. The project is specifically designed for school children. The Foundation considers a classroom to be a mini-society – a super diverse group that lives together every school day. As religious literacy in the Netherlands is declining, designing an exhibition on religious feasts included quite some challenges. Inge Basteleur will discuss design and presentation choices in relation to the target audience of school children.

Panel D: Minority and majority religious heritage formations

Location: 101a (Universiteitstheater)

Chair: Ernst van den Hemel

D-1: Clara Saraiva (University of Lisbon) ‘Do you know who Yemanjá is’? Minority religions and their heritage in Portugal

After being for many centuries a nation of emigration, Portugal became, in the late 70s and 80s, a destination for immigrants and the country became the locus of a new multicultural, multi-ethnic and multi-religious society. This was triggered by the freedom of expression and religion made possible by the 1974 revolution, and the entrance of Portugal into the European Union in 1986, which made it attractive to migrants. This paper will analyze the relationship between the current Portuguese religious and heritage-making dynamics, and how these are shaped by post-colonial legacies and the myth of a tolerant non-xenophobic country. This includes idealized representations of national identity with reference to the colonial past, narratives of post-colonial melancholy, rhetoric’s of cultural inclusion and practices of social exclusion, and the transmission and reinvention of former colonial imaginings through heritage and popular culture.

The new religions that emerged in the 1980s are protected by the 2001 law concerning religious freedom. Portugal has, amongst others, Jews, Islamic groups, Evangelical churches, Pentecostal and Neo-Pentecostal Churches, African Prophetic churches and animistic practices brought by a variety of African and Brazilian migrants, as well as several variants of Afro-Brazilian religions (Bastos and Bastos 2006; Vilaça 2001; Mafra 2002; Saraiva 2008; Sarró 2009). What is the situation nowadays with these religious minorities and their heritage, in a country where basically only Catholic sites have thus far been classified as heritage? What is the role of the Commission for Religious Equality in a country traditionally Catholic and where, in spite of all the referred changes, hegemony still lies with the Catholics? What is the connection between the definition of Portugal as a secular European country and the inclusion/exclusion of ethnic minorities- and their heritage-- that often are connoted with (other) specific religions? We will specifically look at the case of the Afro-Brazilian religions, struggling to be accepted as official religions by the Commission,

and also trying to make some of their heritage (as public rituals and feasts, such as the Yemanjá celebration, which takes place in public beaches) visible and recognized as such?

D-2: Manpreet K. Janeja (Utrecht University) The Goddess in Amsterdam: Food, Feeding, and Worship as Heritage in an Entangled World

In this paper, which draws on my ongoing research on ‘Food and Body Matters in an Entangled World’, I focus on some of the principal festival rituals of the Bengali Hindu Mother Goddess Durga, as celebrated by groups of Bengali Hindus in a suburb of Amsterdam. Through a sensory ethnographic investigation, I unpack the specificities of food and feeding, bodily comportment and corporeal engagements in the *puja* (ritual worship) of the Goddess that come to be (dis-)assembled and re-assembled as ‘religious heritage’ in less-than-felicitous conditions. In so doing, I examine the possibilities of imagining and negotiating religion-as-heritage as a material presence in ‘plural/ diverse’ urban settings characterised by ‘ambivalent secularity.’

D-3: Jip Lensink (Utrecht University): Contextual Theology as Heritage Formation: The Preservation of Moluccan Culture, Christianity, and Identity

In this paper the case of Moluccan Protestantism is used to argue that contextual theology is not merely a postcolonial theological movement, but also needs to be understood as part of a larger project of heritage formation in the context of post-independence nation-building. Both contextual theology and heritagization can be seen as a postcolonial response to the denigration and negation of native religion and culture in the colonial period. The analysis explores the parallel developments between the processes of contextual theology and heritage formation that take place in the national context of Indonesia, when in the shift from Dutch colonial rule to independence a highly diverse archipelago had to be conceptualized as one coherent and unified nation. It is shown how the interests of the Moluccan Protestant church (GPM) and the Indonesian government coincided in two central political periods. The move from purification to inculturation demonstrates the theological adaptation of the Moluccan church to consecutive national political regimes.

The word ‘heritage’ (*warisan*) is central to the Moluccan contextual discourse, and the development of contextual theology resembles characteristics of heritage formation through a controlled political process of careful selection of cultural forms, aimed at a sense of authentic local identity. The sources of contextualization are the religious as well as cultural heritage, in the form of a legacy of colonial Calvinism, Moluccan culture, and their centuries-long inevitable entanglement. Furthermore, the implementation of Moluccan contextual theology partakes in the socio-political effort of preservation of Moluccan cultural heritage. At the same time, paradoxically, the majority of Moluccan Christians does not self-theologize a profound relation between culture and religion, but merely supports contextualization through the discursive regime of preservation and heritage. Hence, a double development of sacralization of heritage and heritagization of religion appears. On the one hand, a selection of cultural forms – taken to be tokens of authentic Moluccan identity – is the source of contextual theology that sacralizes this cultural heritage as part of Moluccan Christianity. On the other hand, while intending to counter certain aspects of the colonial legacy, contextual theology also draws on the Dutch Reformed tradition as Moluccan religious heritage. Moreover, the theology of inculturation as it is implemented is interpreted by congregants as an effort of heritage preservation.

This paper is based on anthropological research on Moluccan theology. I make the conceptual point that Moluccan contextual theology is both a theological exercise of inculturation and an expression of Indonesia's heritage politics.

November 3d 17:15-18:45: Plenary 1

“In Between“: religious things in colonial collections in Dutch and other museums

Location: Theaterzaal (Universiteitstheater)

Speakers: Raymond Corbey, Birgit Meyer (chair), Peter Pels, Wonu Veys

Ethnological and other museums contain things with spiritual power that were employed to mediate between this world and the sphere of ancestors and spirits in their original contexts in Asia, Africa and Latin-America. They became part of colonial collections through the activities of Western missionaries who preached against indigenous religious practices and demanded that sacred things were destroyed upon conversion, or handed over to mission societies and collectors. In the course of their trajectory into European museums, these things were vested with new meanings and values, from power-object, evidence of idolatry, ethnographic index of animism or fetishism, indigenous art, or cultural heritage. So far, debates about the restitution of colonial objects rarely account for the spiritual power and sacred values that objects once possessed and might acquire anew when returned to source communities, let alone for the sacrality of (nationalist) notions of secular heritage itself. In this plenary, we will address these objects as things “in between” this world and another world, indigenous religion and Christianity, mission societies and anthropology, art and heritage, and museums and communities of origin. Based on detailed research on colonial collections, speakers will take these “in between” artefacts as entry points to critically unpack modalities of colonial encounter and contemporary co-existence in Europe's plural frontier zones from a transregional and historical perspective.

Collecting while converting: Missionaries and ethnographics

Raymond Corbey (Leiden University)

During the heyday of European nation and empire building, Christian missionaries have forwarded substantial amounts of indigenous ritual art from colonies to European museums and markets. At the same time they have been responsible for the destruction of as substantial amounts of objects in the missionary fields. Their efforts have often been seen as destructively hacking into local culture and religion. However, a sizeable casuistry shows that what really happened at the grassroots was much more complex: native agency often loomed large. Our focus will be on cases from the Netherlands East Indies, but similar things happened in other parts of the world. A careful investigation of such goings-on is germane for decisions on repatriation of ritual items, discussions which have intensified in recent years.

A Raja Ampat altar: between ideological zeal and indigenous voices

Fanny Wonu Veys (National Museum of World Cultures)

The National Museum of World Cultures in the Netherlands holds the only remaining complete group of ten altar figures originating from the Raja Ampat Islands, West Papua, Indonesia. In this presentation I will explore considerations for collecting and displaying these religious objects. It will result in a story about protestant zeal, oscillating between

respect for both the indigenous religion and the already established Islam and disgust for some of the local cultural practices. These same considerations of disgust and respect come into play when displaying the altar in different Western museum settings. However, this altar also calls for uncovering ways of dealing with sensitive religious material that holds ancestral remains. How do we incorporate appreciation for the artistry, reverence for what the figures stand for and thoughtfulness in exhibition conception while at the same time honouring the ancestral presence and recognising the descendants of the originating communities? All this in a context of hearing Papuan communities and their feelings of sorrow at cultural suppression by Dutch missionaries and loss of freedom under historical Dutch and current Indonesian colonisation, but equally important of pride in their Papuan identities. I will explore whether museums can be places where all these contrasting and sometimes conflicting elements can be expressed and heard.

Do Catholics See Things Differently? Paradoxical reflections on sacralization during the secularization of a Dutch mission museum, 1954-1960

Peter Pels (Leiden University)

When, in 1954, Father Piet Bukkems CSSp. first furnished two rooms of Villa Meerwijk with artefacts from Spiritan missions, collections of butterflies, and stuffed animals, he most likely did not realize that he had just inaugurated the Afrika Museum in Berg en Dal. Asking, in particular, for objects showing “superstitious customs, sorcery, fetish worship, especially old figurines, amulets and the like”, his “museum of rubbish” was nevertheless going to be “most remarkable”. However, how can “rubbish” do so without exerting, on the audience, some of the power that was first invested in it by its *féticheurs* (as contemporary missionaries often called them)? This presentation reflects on some of these paradoxes of Catholic secularization by discussing, first, the secular magic of the museum as a local tourist destination, and its sacralization of “Africa” in the early years of the Afrika Museum; and secondly, the fascinating mix of cultural relativism, Catholic sentiment towards objects, and the ambiguous religious status of “ethnographic art” that supported the Afrika Museum’s widespread popularity in 1959-1960, when Father Gerard Pubben CSSp. professionalized its curating of objects by employing Father Placide Tempels OFM’s *Philosophie Bantoue* (1945).

Unpacking a missionary colonial collection

Birgit Meyer (Utrecht University)

In the early 20th century the missionary Carl Spiess acquired *legba*-figures and *dzokawo* (so-called “charms” and “amulets”) among the Ewe in Togo and the Gold Coast (now Ghana), where the Norddeutsche Missionsgesellschaft had its mission field, for the Städtisches Museum (now Übersee-Museum) Bremen. Taken as symptoms of “idolatry” and “heathendom” by the missionaries and Ewe converts, these things were done away with so as to mark their former owners’ conversion to Christianity, as was required by the mission. Some were shipped to Bremen, where they have been more or less dormant in the museum’s depot for more than 100 years. In my presentation I will sketch the stakes in unpacking this colonial missionary collection from the moment of its assemblage to its long presence in the museum. Situated in between the categories of religious objects, ethnographica and heritage, the things in the collection may well be approached as nodes that lead into the complex colonial and postcolonial entanglements that must urgently be unpacked.

November 4th 09:15-10:45: Keynote 2

Cyril Isnart (CNRS): What's in religious heritage? Beyond the heritage and religion divide

Location: Theaterzaal (Universiteitstheater)

After the fire that destroyed the roof of Notre-Dame-de-Paris, a French medievalist historian believes that the cathedral can no longer be considered a place of worship, but a cultural good. He proposed to transform the first cathedral of France into a museum. Readers of the Catholic newspapers in which this short and provocative text appeared engaged in a lively debate about what a heritage site or a place of worship should consist of.

Drawing on this incidental but significant controversy, I will attempt to trace the history of the divide between religion and heritage and to identify the social practices and representations that feed the distinction. In many ways, however, religious, tourism, or heritage actors do not necessarily want to reinforce the difference. Instead, they compose the social and material life of religious things as an assemblage of heritage and religious characteristics, what we identified as a Religious Heritage Complex (2020 ed. with N. Cerezales, Bloomsbury). Rather than taking the divide for granted, the fieldwork results show that there is a continuum between religious and heritage uses of sacred materials that deserves to be analysed per se to better understand what's in religious heritage.

November 4th 11:15-12:45: Parallel Panels

Panel E: Appropriating the Religious: The Crossroads between Heritage, Religious Practices and Popular Culture

Location: Theaterzaal (Universiteitstheater)

Chair: Andrew J. M. Irving (Groningen University)

Defining the boundaries between religious heritage and cultural appropriations is a challenging task. When religious narratives are not culturally manipulated themselves, material religious cultures are often used, reused and re-signified. Besides, religious and non-religious actors are constantly contributing to new practices, perspectives and re-interpretations of religious heritage. By reuniting different cases of 'appropriations of the religious,' this panel aims to investigate how popular culture, religious actors, social media and nations mobilize religious heritage in unpredictable ways in order to further their interests. What do they select to function as heritage? Why do they make these choices? In what ways is this religious heritage inserted and reconfigured in contemporary religious practices and media? What are the limits of appropriating religious material culture from minority groups? How is the assessment of the religious past useful for present day concerns? In proposing the theme of appropriations of the religious we aim to advance the debates on religious heritage and its intersections with nation-building, religious identity and popular culture. This panel is organised under the umbrella of the Centre for Religion and Heritage hosted by the Faculty of Theology and Religious Studies at the University of Groningen. The centre promotes scholarly exchange, trains future professionals and advises external stakeholders about the connection of religion and heritage.

E-1: Manoela Carpenedo (University of Groningen): Materializing the Jewishness of Jesus: the Appropriation and Re-interpretation of Jewish Material Culture by Pentecostals in Brazil.

While ritual borrowing and appropriation of Jewish tenets by Christians is not new, an unexpected symbolic approximation between Judaism and Christianity has been developing in Brazilian Pentecostalism. This phenomenon can be seen not only through the extravagant replica of the Temple of Solomon recently built by a network of Neo-Pentecostal megachurches in the outskirts of São Paulo, but also through the ritualistic use of Jewish artefacts such as the *menorah* (multi-branched candelabra), *tefillin* (phylacteries), *kippot* (Jewish cap) and *tallitot* (Jewish prayer shawls) by different Pentecostal denominations. Drawing on two case studies, one based on documental research of a Neo-Pentecostal megachurch and another one based on an ethnography of a Judaizing Evangelical community, this paper investigates the appropriation of Jewish material culture by these communities in Brazil. While the need to emulate the aesthetics of the early Church and ‘materializing the Jewishness of Jesus’ is seen as an imperative in both cases, the findings also point to the distinctive ways these two communities consume and re-interpret Jewish material culture. The emergence of Christian groups utilizing Jewish religious symbols and ritualistic artefacts prompts serious questions about the limits of cultural appropriation. This paper also contributes to larger debates exploring how ‘Judaizing’ tendencies in Christianity are changing the contours of Pentecostalism in the global South.

E-2: Mauricio Oviedo (University of Groningen): The Digitized Sacred Heart: Social Media and the Practice of Religious Heritage in Contemporary Costa Rica (NB: on Zoom)

This paper analyses how the digital-heritagization of religious images have changed religious practices and the material culture embedded in them in Costa Rica. It explores a shift in power and practice: the digitalized religious image and what it is considered important to preserve, distribute, and display through the social media platforms, reconfigures the heritage as an act that belongs to the digital user, not exclusively to the national or religious authorized institutions. To outline and analyse this development, I focus on one devotion, greatly developed in Costa Rica since the beginning of the twentieth century and now part of this digital heritagization: the digital visual culture of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. This devotion fundamentally shaped the identity of the Costa Rican population (the country was officially consecrated to the Sacred Heart in 1953), helping to forge the idea of Catholicism as an integral component of the national identity and heritage. Facebook pages such as ‘Fotografías Antiguas de Carácter Religioso de Costa Rica’ with more than 5000 members, or ‘El Arte y Temas Religiosos de Cartago (Católico)’ with 1700, are solely dedicated to the rescue of Catholic visual production of the Country throughout its history, considering it as national heritage. What is being shared here? Some of the distributed images are part of the material heritage of the diverse communities in the country, some still an active component of their devotion, whereas others are the lost religious materiality, the lost heritage of their towns, preserved now just in a photo that now is conserved and displayed in this sort of popular digital (religious) repository.

I will argue that in this kind of digital spaces, there is a constant interaction between 1) the digital image as part of the individuals’ religious practices, including, for example, commenting with prayers or petitions on a digital photo of the Sacred Heart of Jesus from the Central Market in San José, and 2) the photographed object as a component of the active mission of preserving traditions and what is considered ‘heritage,’ by the users of the

platform. This ongoing process in images of the Sacred Heart in Costa Rica is a perfect case study to explore the emerging dynamics of digital religious heritage, what they can tell us about digital and material religion, identity politics, and the power relationship between hegemonic and non-hegemonic entities regarding tradition, authority, resistance, and heritage.

E-3: Mathilde van Dijk (University of Groningen): Fictional Religions as Heritage? Reflections on the Object of Critical Heritage Studies

Critical heritage studies investigate how a selection of the past becomes heritage and how it is used. It concerns material and immaterial 'lieux de mémoire' that are seen as significant for a community's identity. Buildings, concepts and people are claimed as epitomes of either local, national or international values, many grounded in a religious past. Inevitably, what is acknowledged as heritage or not is a part of a master narrative, which excludes as much as includes - in recent years, increasingly, marginalized groups claimed their own heritages or demanded inclusion of it into the master narrative, on their own terms. The initiatives of indigenous groups to reclaim sacred objects from anthropological or natural history museums are examples.

In this paper, I will address the object of critical heritage studies and investigate a domain that is usually not included: the re-use of the religious past in popular media such as films, videogames and television series, specifically in costume dramas, fantasy and science fiction. What does the inclusion of elements from the past mean? Should these be regarded as heritage or at least as a way of dealing with it? Why? Special attention will be given to how such media deal with non-normative humanity, such as disabled or LGBTQ + individuals and cyborgs.

Panel F: Living Religious Heritage Location: 2.18 (Meertens Institute) Chair: Birgit Meyer

F-1: Wouter Kock (Utrecht University): Monastic Communities as Living Heritage

Catholic monasteries have become much treasured heritage objects. This is a process which has deeply affected the religious communities inhabiting these buildings. Not in the least, because heritagization does not only seem to include monastic objects and practices, but also the actual communities themselves. Therefore, in this presentation I will examine the case of living religious heritage through focusing on the heritagization of 'living' Catholic monasteries. Thereby I will, first, reflect on the perspective of the religious since they are representatives of this group who at times voice their concern regarding this issue. This emic perspective, on the other hand, will be problematized by scrutinizing the interwovenness of the religious with the tangible and intangible manifestations of their tradition. One could say, for instance, that it is not the actual monastic individual that is perceived as heritage, but it are much more the practices (e.g. the Liturgy of Hours) and the objects (e.g. habits) carried (out) by this individual which are considered as being so. Nonetheless, in the heritage engagement with living monasteries, the presence of the religious is unmistakably an idealized feature. In the second part of this presentation, I will therefore reflect on the perspective of heritage agents involved with these sites. In the end, through comparing these different perspectives, I will engage with the question whether we can truly speak of living religious heritage when it comes to the heritagization of 'living' Catholic monasteries.

F-2: Clár Tillekens: Finding the Sublime Online: Livestreaming Irish Masses

Amid an era of increased social media screen time and its correlated adverse effects, people are intentionally seeking better online habits. Immigrants and diasporic people derive particular benefit from the internet, as it facilitates the ability to remain connected to facets of respective homelands. This includes maintaining cultural identity by engaging with ethnoreligious community through a digital lens. Irish Catholicism incorporates a variety of folk traditions—many carried on from pre-Christian Ireland—making the religion distinctly integral to the nation’s heritage. Livestreams of Irish masses especially contribute to heritage preservation, as ethnic and ancestral elements appear strikingly apparent in a virtual, categorized context. These livestreams also make the country’s religious practices more accessible to people abroad of multiple generations. Engaging with religion digitally can enable people to form new understandings and find comfort in its heritage—particularly for younger generations who grew up with the internet and have increased religious skepticism. As cultural traditions within Irish Catholicism are abundant, being able to engage with the religion through a heritage angle is crucial for inclusion, societal enrichment, and collective memory.

F-3: Paul Ariese (Reinwardt Academy/University of Amsterdam): Questioning Before Whom You Stand: Perceptions of the Sacred in Musealized Synagogue Space

Based on literature research, this paper proposes three ‘sensitizing concepts’ as a tool to further investigate representations of Jewish religious life in former synagogues: (1) perceptions of the sacred as a contested spatial practice, (2) musealized synagogues as embodied existential narratives, and (3) representations of Jewish religious life as cross-cultural interactions.

Spread across Europe, we find Jewish museums in former synagogues. How Jewish ceremonial objects are presented in these musealized religious spaces varies widely. Besides the absence of liturgical uses of space and objects, the absence of an active community of users of the objects in religious ceremonies is also a significant factor. What impact do these absences have on the ways of appropriation of space, the original meaning of which is expressed in the phrase “Da Lifnei Mi Attah Omed” (Know Before Whom You Stand, Talmud Berakhot 28b), a call to behave with reverence in nearness to God? How does musealization affect the functioning of ceremonial objects as “sensational forms” (Meyer 2012), and how do halakhic rules affect the display of ceremonial objects with varying degrees of sacredness?

(1) While some Jewish museum spaces produce a story of loss, others reconstruct the musealized synagogue as a place of life. The roles that ceremonial objects fulfil within this whole reflect the unique position of Jewish museums: (2) they embody memories, serve as objects of identification, mark the tense relationship of Jewish and non-Jewish culture, set a standard for Jewish religious life or, on the contrary, illustrate its diversity and its contextual nature. At the tipping point of religious and heritage regimes, an intriguing interaction (3) arises between the musealized synagogue space, the narrative about Jewish religious life and such diverse actors as Jewish communities, heritage professionals, and museum visitors.

Panel G: Regulation and Recognition of Religion and Heritage: Cultural and National Identity Formations

Location: C023 (Oude Manhuispoort)

Chair: Sakina Loukili

G-1: Ellen van de Bovenkamp (Utrecht University): How does Morocco Use its Religious Heritage to Promote a Vision of Peace and Tolerance?

Heritagization started in Morocco in the colonial era. Since independence, Moroccan authorities have enthusiastically used the presence of Christian and Jewish patrimony mainly for the benefit of foreign interests, to serve tourism and soft diplomacy. During the last two decades, with the growing rise of Islamophobia in Europe and Islam-inspired violence in the Sahel, it has started to include Islamic heritage as well.

In my paper, I would like to draw a comparison between Islamic, Jewish and Christian religious patrimony in Morocco. How do Moroccan authorities mobilise this heritage in order to support a discourse of peace and tolerance shared by monotheistic faiths? In which manner do Moroccan state policies regarding these three different types of patrimony differ from each other? Which audiences are aimed at? How do Muslims, Jews and Christians in Morocco position themselves toward these policies? To what extent does the image which authorities try to transmit reflect European clichés and concerns about religious coexistence?

My paper aims to provide an overview of the manner in which Morocco currently uses its religious patrimony to promote a message of peaceful monotheistic coexistence. Although each religious patrimony deserves a more detailed and profound analysis, a comparison informs us of the different significations Moroccan authorities and audiences attach to each of these heritages, and thus contributes to a better understanding of the image and position of each religion within and outside of the Moroccan kingdom.

G-2: Margreet van Es (Utrecht University): Halal Steakhouses in Rotterdam

This paper takes a culinary approach to the analysis of the complex relationship between religion and heritage. It discusses the emergence of trendy, alcohol-free halal restaurants in Rotterdam, focusing on Muslim entrepreneurs of Moroccan descent who deliberately disconnect 'halal' from the Moroccan culinary heritage – serving halal spareribs and T-bone steaks rather than tajines – and who sometimes reconnect the two – for example, by advertising their use of organic ingredients from their region of origin. This paper explores how these pioneers stretch and shift the limits of what is considered 'halal,' taking their inspiration from different culinary traditions and social media trends. This way, the paper sheds new light on the question: what makes heritage 'heritage'?

G-3: Neha Khetrpal (Jindal Institute of Behavioural Sciences, O.P. Jindal Global University, Haryana, India): International and National Heritagization of Religion (NB: on Zoom).

Over the past few decades, non-Western countries like India, China, Japan and South Korea have worked towards including intangible heritage in international policies. Key to understanding these linkages lies in asking the following question: Are these international

efforts different from how heritage is deployed and constructed nationally? By developing a new theoretical framework that underscores the heritagization of religion, I pursue a niche agenda for research that explains different functions of the heritagization process. On a national level, heritagization helps in the reconstruction of religious values and practices. On an international level, heritagization leads to nation-building by increasing the cultural distinctiveness of a country. Heritagization of religion within a country precipitates communal tension in countries that have a 'rich heterogeneous past' whereas heritagization could be viewed as soft power within the international sphere. I argue that the inclusion of intangible heritage in international policies is more promising as it both enhances the meaning of a shared heterogeneous past and redefines a nation's international position. In other words, heritagization on an international platform confers more advantages. In line with the proposed theoretical framework, it is plausible to argue that non-Western countries may raise the bar for heritagization giving way to a novel form of heritagization competition as a means of not only advancing diplomatic agendas but also for unifying people within borders. Countries' success could be determined by an elegant balance between 'international' and 'national' heritagization efforts.

November 4th 13:45-15:15 Parallel Panels

Panel H: Displaying Religious Material Cultures

Location: Theaterzaal (Universiteitstheater)

Chair: Pooyan Tamimi Arab

H-1: Valentina Gamberi (Research Centre for Material Culture): Sacred Waste as Heritage: Taiwanese Contributions

This paper considers sacred waste (Stengs 2014) as religious heritage. Manipulating religious artefacts as heritage means introducing a new form of engagement that is different from, if not opposed to, ritual experience. In rituals, artefacts are part of an assemblage (Meyer 2012) that mediates between supernatural forces and human needs, producing tangible effects on daily life and tasks. In this term, artefacts secure the efficacy and success of here-and-now practices. In contrast, in heritage practice, instead of a here-and-now efficacy, there is a complex temporal interaction between past and present usages of and narratives about material artefacts in order to produce future policies that guarantee certain community's values. In other words, rituals repair and rebalance here-and-now problematics, whereas heritage projects future ideals. In such a logic, when ritual ceases to be performative and efficacious, it can turn into heritage. Heritage, then, is a peculiar form of sacred waste. Discarded material religion, from being waste, garbage, acquires *political* meanings useful for community's goals. However, recycling (Walsham 2017) sacred waste does not imply a simple transformation from sacred power/efficacy to heritage/mundane materiality. Rather, transforming sacred waste in heritage is a complex, ambiguous and conflictual metamorphosis. Religious heritage can still retain sacred power or efficacy, is 'hazardous' sacred waste (Wirtz 2009).

The complexity of heritage as sacred waste is particularly evident during my ethnographic fieldwork among four public temples in the district of Xinzhuang (新莊, New Taipei City, Taiwan). These temples have developed official or informal heritage practices. The temple committees have conserved components of altars or architectural elements of their buildings after periodic renovations. These artefacts are stored because they represent

the history of their temples, as well as attest the religious-political prestige of the latter. Displaying religious material artefacts, either in showcases accessed only by temple committees' members or publicly by worshippers and researchers, as well as tourists, though, implies the enforcement of desacralization rituals or alternative forms of worship that can negotiate religious efficacy without attracting malign forces or gods' outrage. In so doing, temple committees create new forms of museology where the borders between sacred and profane are blurred, in comparative ways to what Tythacott and Bellini (2020) have observed in galleries within Tibetan monasteries.

Researching vernacular practices on sacred waste can therefore question museum practices towards religious artefacts in European museums, where the boundaries between sacred and profane are still viewed as neat. Embracing the perspective of sacred waste in reflecting on religious heritage ultimately furthers and sharpens the analysis of the nature of 'sacred' in this post-secular age (Wirtz 2009, 477). Taiwanese temples can significantly contribute to the current debate.

H-2: Mirjam Shatanawi (Reinwardt Academy): Seeking Islamic Protection or Protection from Islam? The Changing Image of Jimats in Museums

Similar to other parts of the Muslim world, objects to communicate with *al-ghaib* (the unseen) were ubiquitous in colonial Indonesia. Amulets and talismans, known as *jimat* (and variations of this term) in Indonesian languages, often took the form of Arabic formulae written on pieces of paper. Being perceived as connected to Islamically-inspired resistance to Dutch hegemony, the colonial authorities treated such *jimats* with suspicion. In 1872, a legal ban on *jimats* was first enacted, eventually culminating in the additional prohibition of divination and dream interpretation. Even so, objects related to magical practices were much sought after in the ethnographic museums in the Netherlands.

This paper will discuss the amulets and talismans from Muslim Indonesia held in the National Museum of World Cultures in the context of colonial and postcolonial politics. Using a biographical approach, I will follow the *jimats* as they moved through different regimes of image-making. In doing so, this paper will discuss museums as sites of heritagisation and deheritagisation. Finally, I will explore questions around Islamic heritage collected in colonial contexts in today's museum practice.

H-3: Maissan Hassan (University of Amsterdam): Displaying al-Jāhiliyya: Pre-Islamic and Islamic Heritage in Roads of Arabia

In 2010, the exhibition *Roads of Arabia: Archaeological Treasures of Saudi Arabia* opened in the Louvre Museum in Paris. Sponsored by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the exhibition travelled to 15 other cities in Europe, Asia and North America. *Roads of Arabia* has been one of the first exhibitions to internationally promote a celebratory narrative on the pre-Islamic history of the country. The Saudi state, which was once reluctant to positively portray the country's pre-Islamic heritage known as *al-Jāhiliyya*, is now embracing this heritage as part of the Saudi national identity. Interestingly, as historical and archaeological narratives replace religious ones in the state-backed notions of a new and more secular national identity, memory becomes a 'battleground' between the regime and its opponents, particularly conservative Islamist groups. In a country whose national identity has been intrinsically, if not exclusively, Islamic for several decades, the recent shift towards increasingly

incorporating pre-Islamic heritage in state discourses poses intriguing questions on the relationship between religion and heritage in the Saudi context as well as on broader regional and global developments.

The proposed paper aims at exploring the reframing of religion in contemporary cultural heritage discourses in Saudi Arabia. Considering the exhibition *Roads of Arabia: Archaeological Treasures of Saudi Arabia* as the main case study, the paper raises a main question on the extent to which the process of the re-interpretation of pre-Islamic heritage of *al-Jāhiliyya* relates to the re-positioning of Islam in state-sponsored historical narratives. By analysing the museological interpretations of pre-Islamic and Islamic artefacts in the exhibition, the paper will explore how Saudi Arabia's Islamic identity is being negotiated. Moreover, the paper will contribute to further understanding current Saudi efforts to re-define (trans-) national identities via re-interpreting cultural heritage.

Panel I: The Heritage Lab: Experimentation and Resistance in Christian Material Heritage.

Location: 2.18 (Meertens Institute)

Chair: Mathilde van Dijk (University of Groningen)

This panel explores how the material heritage of the church building affords on the one hand innovation and experimentation in the development of new heritage practices or adaptive redeployment of old materials, and, on the other hand, can be instrumentalized in political and religious contests both inside and outside the church. Through a series of contrasting yet complementary case studies, from the past and present, from Europe and Asia, the panel, sponsored by Groningen's Centre for Religion and Heritage, probes presuppositions about the heritagization of the church space, and explores the complex dynamics and politics of experimentation and adaptation of church heritage sites. It aims to challenge simple narratives of secular heritagization of the religious sites of dwindling communities.

I-1: Andrew J. M. Irving (Groningen University): Auto-Musealization: Churches and the Invention of the Museum

Twenty-five years ago Carol Duncan published an influential analysis of the agency of public art museums performed through what she termed 'civilizing rituals' enacted in temple-like spaces: *Civilizing Rituals: Inside Public Art Museums* (1995). This paper turns Duncan's argument on its head, exploring how church spaces, both in form and practice, have 'auto musealized.' Through a series of select case studies of architecture, art, and practice from late antiquity, the Middle Ages, into the modern era, the paper will examine not only how material and textual evidence of strategies of display, control and distance have shaped Christian spaces and practices, but how the church has been active in the authentication, collection, preservation, spatial ordering, display and explication, of its own spaces and treasures since late antiquity. Far from the received narrative of the birth of the museum prompted by definitive break prompted by the rising power of princes and their collections, or revolution and secularization, this paper proposes that the cultural techniques of the modern museum were preceded by, born in, and facilitated by the religious spaces and practices of ancient, medieval, and modern Christianity.

I-2: Annelies Abelman (University Groningen): Conservative Rebellion: The Willibrordus Church in Utrecht and the Heritage of the Neo-Gothic in the Netherlands

In the seventies of the previous century the relics of St. Willibrord were stolen during the night from the Willibrordus Church in Utrecht and brought into safety in the Cathedral. This caused a great uproar amongst the community of Father Kotte. This community played a major role in the conservation and restoration of this church with its own funds, and against the will of the municipal government and the archdiocese. In 2017 the Willibrordus Church in Utrecht was nominated a mission church of the Society of Pius X, a conservative priestly fraternity of the Roman Catholic Church. This church plays an important role in my research focusing on the oeuvre of Wilhelm Mengelberg (1837-1919), his two brothers, his two sons and grandson. Concentrating on this particularly rich case study, I will investigate the determinative role of religious belief in the creation and preservation of ecclesiastical heritage. I will explore how this power is deployed, from the construction of the church, through the cherishing of its neo-Gothic furnishings and utensils, established under the influence of modern papal doctrine after 1850, and still functioning today.

The Roman Catholic upper middle class of Utrecht built this remarkable church in a modern neo-Gothic concept with much focus on the performance of music and the use of Latin, as a competitive counterbalance to the city's cathedral. It was built on a piece of land that was not quite suitable for this church, but was entangled with a living Catholic tradition of the Dominicans at the time of the Apostolic Vicariates and the Dutch Mission. This spirit of rebellion was fostered by communities of ever-changing composition, making this church more a 'Gemeinschaftswerk' than a 'Gesamtkunstwerk' with a strong, enduring agency of the 'Gothic' heritage. These communities, however, have left their mark on the building and its layout, by, for example, creating a 'Father Kotte Court,' and through the celebration of mass in the Tridentine tradition, adhering to the use of Latin (no other church in this modern neo-Gothic style has as many Latin inscriptions as the Willibrordus) and by continued opposition to the inclusion of contemporary artworks of the performance of modern music within the church.

It will be proposed that the modernity of nineteenth-century Catholic Christianity's retrieval and appropriation of 'Gothic' elements may have been among the most dynamic social forces in Western European religious spaces, that continue to resonate to this day, not least because the modern is not just rational, secular, or politically engaged. The paper further develops and provides new perspectives on the cultural significance of nineteenth-century Roman Catholic church interiors.

I-3: Thao Nghiem (University Groningen): Cathedrals and Cadres: the Laws and Politics of Repurposing Catholic Infrastructures in Postcolonial Vietnam

In May 2019, the general representative of the Bui Chu diocese (Nam Dinh province, Northern Vietnam) Father Joseph Nguyen Duc Giang announced a plan to demolish the Bui Chu Cathedral and rebuild a new church on its foundation, due to security concerns caused by the dilapidated conditions of the 134-year-old building. The decision sparked a widespread wave of outcry, not only from Vietnamese Catholics domestic and abroad, but also from historians, architects, and heritage professionals. Public petitions were sent to Pope Francis, the Prime Minister of Vietnam, the Minister of Culture, Sports and Tourism, and the Nam Dinh Province Chairman, pleading for an intervention to halt the demolition, given the church's unique East-West architectural fusion, and its unparalleled value as a cultural and historical heritage. However, because the church was not classified as an official heritage site, the government could not intercede, and the dismantling work was resumed in July 2020. The Bui Chu Cathedral, as several other Catholic churches in Vietnam, albeit satisfying all the

legal criteria, did not apply for a heritage status recognition, in order to preserve the Vietnamese Church's autonomy of its properties.

This paper investigates the complex politics of heritagization in Vietnam by reconstructing a historiography of the laws and policies surrounding the uses, management, and repurposing of Catholic facilities since the birth of the secular state in 1945. In doing so, the project exhibits the desacralization of religious buildings as a contested form of nation-building, a controversial space in which the Catholic Church and the Vietnamese postcolonial communist state manoeuvre, interact, and in many cases compromise with each other. As a result, the paper draws imperative implications on the historical formation of a *modus vivendi* of church-state relationships in Vietnam.

I-4: Maaike de Jong (University of Groningen): Research on the Adaptive Re-Use of the former Roman Catholic Church in Veenhuizen: A Case Study

This paper presents a case study on the topic of adaptive re-use of the former Roman-Catholic church in Veenhuizen, the Netherlands. Veenhuizen is a former prison village or 'unfree colony.' Veenhuizen has been part of the colonies of benevolence and has recently (2021) been placed on the UNESCO cultural heritage list. Students of several institutions of higher education in the North of the Netherlands have looked into ways in which this religious building can be adapted for new uses. The research looked at opportunities for reusing the former Roman-Catholic church for three different target groups: residents of Veenhuizen, visitors and international tourists who are involved in a complex relationship. The research was of qualitative nature mainly consisting of literature, personal observations, and interviews with different stakeholders.

The paper will present recommendations regarding potential re-uses of the church. These recommendations include: 1) creating conference and exhibition spaces; 2) exploring local partnerships; developing several cultural activities, and 3) promoting Veenhuizen as an international wedding destination.

Local stakeholders enjoyed working with young talents. They think that young people can take a fresh look at the future and see that as added value. Stakeholders have the opportunity to see new opportunities and new markets. Stakeholders on the other hand, with their experience in the industry, cultural heritage or tourism can support young talent. By this way of cooperation, it is possible to effectively create innovation in adapting religious buildings for new uses. It is a process of mutual learning. In this way, the cooperation between education and the professional field is consolidated and interconnected.

Panel J: NGG werkgroep Onderwijs, religie en levensbeschouwing Religieus erfgoed in het onderwijs: lessen over levensbeschouwelijke diversiteit in heden en verleden

Location: C023 (Oude Manhuispoort)

Chair: Markus Davidsen

Veel leerlingen zijn niet meer religieus, en denken daarom dat onderwijs over levensbeschouwing en religie voor hen persoonlijk irrelevant is. Dat stelt docenten (en religiewetenschappers) voor een uitdaging: hoe kunnen we leerlingen leren herkennen waar religie een stempel op de maatschappij heeft gedrukt of blijft drukken, en hoe kunnen we ze daardoor bewegen om in te zien dat kennis over religie van belang is voor iedereen, ongeacht diens persoonlijke voorkeuren? In dit panel bespreken ervaren docenten uit verschillende

onderwijscontexten deze problematiek. Centraal staat het gebruik van religieus erfgoed en gebeurtenissen uit het verleden in lessen over levensbeschouwing en religie anno nu, inclusief de uitdagingen rond diversiteit en discriminatie die in de huidige maatschappij zo'n belangrijke rol spelen. We nodigen iedereen met belangstelling voor het levensbeschouwelijk onderwijs uit - wetenschappers, opleiders, methodemakers en in het bijzonder docenten uit het voortgezet onderwijs (van o.a. de vakken GL, maatschappijleer, geschiedenis, CKV en burgerschapsvorming). Na de presentaties is er gelegenheid om met elkaar ideeën en gedachten uit te wisselen,

J-1: Inge Basteleur (Stichting Oude Groninger Kerken): De Schoolkerk

De Stichting Oude Groninger Kerken is eigenaar van bijna honderd monumentale kerken in de provincie Groningen. Deze seculiere stichting heeft als doelstelling het in stand houden van monumentale kerken en het bevorderen van belangstelling ervoor. In de middeleeuwse kerk van Garmerwolde, ten oosten van de stad Groningen, heeft de Stichting een nieuw concept gelanceerd: de Schoolkerk. Hiermee heeft de kerk een aangewezen educatief profiel gekregen en vormt deze het brandpunt van de educatieve werkzaamheden van de stichting.

In de losstaande toren naast de kerk is de tentoonstelling 'Feest! In Oost en West' gerealiseerd; een tentoonstelling over feesten uit het christendom en de islam. Middeleeuwse bouwkunst en hedendaagse architectuur en design zijn er samengevoegd, zodat iets heel nieuws is ontstaan. Een Escher-achtige trap voert de bezoekers naar een uitkijkpunt boven in de toren, onderweg passeren zij acht interactieve verbeeldingen van religieuze feesten. Het doel van de tentoonstelling en het bijbehorende schoolprogramma is om kinderen kennis te geven over wereldtradities en met meer begrip van zichzelf en de ander op te laten groeien. Het thema 'feest' biedt een laagdrempelig en herkenbaar aanknopingspunt om in gesprek te gaan over moeilijke onderwerpen zoals identiteit en religie. Met de tentoonstelling, die aansluit bij het landelijke museale project 'Weet wat je viert,' geïnitieerd door Museum Catharijneconvent, kiest de Stichting Oude Groninger Kerken ervoor om uitdrukkelijk aandacht te besteden aan het immateriële erfgoed dat onlosmakelijk is verbonden met haar collectie.

J-2: Winnie Verbeek (Stichting Goudse Sint Jan / Driestar hogeschool / Universiteit van Amsterdam): De kracht van religieus erfgoed

In christelijk religieus erfgoed bevindt zich een gelaagdheid die ruimte biedt om een heel divers publiek aan te spreken. Het plaatselijke kerkgebouw vormt daarbij voor een leerkracht een uitgelezen plek om een ontmoeting met religie en met religieus erfgoed tot stand te brengen, terwijl een grondig voorbereid gesprek de sleutel kan vormen om diepgaande verbindingen tot stand te brengen.

J-3: Karen Polak (Anne Frank Stichting): Stories that Move, tools tegen discriminatie

Stories that Move is een digitale toolbox waarin de verhalen van jonge mensen centraal staan. Deze 'blended learning' methode bevat vijf modulen die leerlingen uitdagen om over diversiteit en discriminatie te praten en na te denken over hun eigen standpunten en keuzes. Aan de hand van 'visual thinking' technieken krijgen leerlingen inzicht in hun eigen leerproces. Tijdens de presentatie wordt aan de hand van een hedendaags verhaal en een verhaal uit het verleden duidelijk gemaakt hoe deze methode leerlingen betreft bij gevoelige en complexe thema's zoals identiteit, diversiteit, vooroordelen en discriminatie. In Stories that

Move vertellen jongeren over hun ervaringen met antisemitisme, racisme of met discriminatie als Roma, moslims of LHTB + jongeren. Bovenal delen ze wie zij zijn en hoe zij vinden dat we allemaal bij kunnen dragen aan een samenleving waar iedereen zichzelf mag zijn. *Wie* kans ziet van tevoren een (kosteloze) docentenaccount aan te maken of alvast een paar video's van de jongeren te bekijken kan alle informatie en lesmateriaal vinden op www.storiesthatmove.org.

J-4: Joël Valk (Corderius College / Universiteit Utrecht) en Manon Meijer (Universiteit Utrecht)

Door de kerkverlating verdwijnt religie niet uit het Nederlandse landschap, maar zorgt ze als erflater van 'heilig afval' voor nieuwe uitdagingen voor gelovigen en niet gelovigen. Dat rooms katholieke kerken eerst 'ontheilgd' en 'ontkerkelijk' moeten worden voordat ze een nieuwe bestemming kunnen krijgen en dat 'heilige' voorwerpen niet verhandeld mogen worden kan zowel bij achtergebleven gelovigen als nieuwe eigenaren en gebruikers leiden tot heftige emoties en onbegrip. De spanning die religieus erfgoed zo in de maatschappelijke discussie over religie op kan roepen, vraagt om goed onderwijs. De lesmodule 'heilig afval' van de educatieve website Omstreden Zaken biedt nieuwe perspectieven, verdiepende teksten voor docenten en onderzoeksopdrachten voor leerlingen om te komen tot meer begrip en kennis van religie in een veranderende wereld.

Panel K: Reinterpreting Christian Heritage

Location: C217 (Oude Manhuispoort)

Chair: Jan Willem van Henten

K-1: Sarah Randraad (University of Amsterdam) Reinterpretations of Christian Heritage in 19th-century Medieval Collections

Reinterpretations of Christian heritage in 19th -century medieval collections

In October 1856, the French Catholic newspaper *L'Univers* carried the headline "Paganism and Catholicism at the Hôtel de Cluny". In the article, the author recorded Christian art works in the Musée des Thermes et l'Hôtel de Cluny in Paris, while lamenting "each and every insult to religion" caused by their mixed arrangement with secular art. To what extent would the curator of the Musée de Cluny have been concerned with a different narrative, as he was administering the fast-growing medieval collection of the museum?

This paper raises questions related to reinterpretation processes of Christian heritage objects in public medieval collections of the 19th century, where concurrent political developments and the nature of the museum informed methods of display. How did the architecture of the building and arrangement of objects play a part? Which religious, historical or artistic narratives predominated? While sticking to familiar case studies with an explicit focus on medieval art, this paper traces the biographies of three objects that each correspond incrementally to Catholic liturgy. Source materials include both written and visual documentation (catalogues, photographs, plans), aligned with the historiographical discourse (secular and ecclesiastical history writing).

K-2: Hermine Pool (Museum Ons lieve heer op zolder): The Heritagization of the Tabernacle of Rev. Leendert Schouten (1828 1905): from Center of Religious Gathering to (Contested?) Heritage

The Biblical Museum of Rev. Leendert Schouten (1828-1905), located in the vicar's rectory on the Nieuwegracht in Utrecht, was a place of Protestant gathering and religious experience. Once a fortnight, Schouten received between 80 and 100 visitors around his famous model of the tabernacle: the sanctuary described in the Book of Exodus. The community participated in a Protestant service of prayer, songs and sermons. In his own words, Schouten's gospel preaching was inspired by God. The precision with which the text of the Bible is visualized in the model and the authenticity of the materials used, increased the emotional and spiritual experience of both the preacher and the participants in the services. During these meetings, the tabernacle was also subservient to Schouten's vision of the prophetic and historical truth of the Bible.

The biography of the tabernacle shows how in the twentieth century Protestant views on the historical and prophetic truth of the Bible change. Within the context of the Biblical Museum, they lead to a different use and experience of the tabernacle. This leads to questions about the religious identity of the museum and to frictions between stakeholders. This paper investigates which forces and developments (in church, society and museums) have evolved the tabernacle as a center of faith experience, within the context of a Protestant community and museum with a Protestant identity, into a cultural-historical object within a 'neutral' museum setting. What stories about Dutch Protestantism could and should be told by the tabernacle at this moment? And which contestations are involved?

K-3: Rasmus Rask Poulsen (University of Copenhagen): Heritage as a 21st century industry – the Moravian Star as a Religious Object, Heritage object and Commercial Product

Based on ethnographic fieldwork in two Moravian Church settlements in Denmark and Germany, this paper explores the discourse and use of the Moravian Star (*Herrnhuter Stern*) as both a religious object of the Moravian Church and, more recently, a heritage object and commercial product. The star is an illuminated Advent, Christmas, or Epiphany decoration that was first produced in hand out of paper sheets in the 1830s, however 20th and 21st century mass-production and commercial promotion has popularized the star beyond the church and it now comes in various colours and sizes. The recent commercial popularity of the Moravian Star coincides with heritagization of the Moravian Church communities and settlements in Christiansfeld, Denmark (World Heritage Site in 2015) and in Herrnhut, Germany (pursuing World Heritage). The stars are a ubiquitous presence throughout both settlements, especially around Christmas, where they are displayed throughout the townscapes, in church, in private homes and local shops.

The concurrent commercialization and heritagization of the stars come to illustrate the ambivalent potentials of transforming a religious object into a heritage object. Considering the geographical periphery, declining membership and economic scarcity of both churches, congregants ask themselves if the star can retain its central religious meaning in Moravian life while it is mass-produced, or if its growing popularity might be a harbinger of a more prosperous future by way of the past.

In this paper, the case of the Moravian stars come to represent the struggle among Moravians of Herrnhut and Christiansfeld to define and authorize their collective religious identity, practices and values. This happens in the context of increasing heritage formation and with the church being faced with considerable economic incentives. As such, the paper discusses the ambivalent potentials of transforming a religious object into a commercial product and a heritage object.

K-4: Madeleine Brozek: The ‘Matthäus Mania’ in the Local Dutch Context: Religion Goes Easy?

Audiencing or performing Johann Sebastian Bach’s Passion of St Matthew is nowadays considered a ‘Dutch’ Easter tradition in the Netherlands. The weeks before Easter in almost all cities and towns, performances of the passion are organised in multiple and often sold-out venues. This particular tradition is an interesting case to study in the context of processes of religious heritization and the formation of ‘modern’ traditions in contemporary Dutch society. In order to formulate a meta-cultural explanation of the Dutch ‘traditionalization’ of the Passion of St Matthew, this paper adopts an anthropological theory by approaching local performances of the piece as ‘emotion networks’ and furthermore conceptualises the passion itself as a ‘miniature memory-complex’ (Macdonald). This perspective can reflect upon national, religious or cultural totalities while taking into account micro-orientational tendencies of ‘habitus’ theory. This paper thus asks the question: Who is involved and what are the emotional and social capacities of (performances of) the Passion of St Matthew? Methodologically the research on which this paper is based applied an actor-oriented approach of semi-structured interviews and open conversations with stakeholders of different local performances, respectively the performances organised in the towns of Oirschot, Schiedam and Hilversum. These stakeholders mainly consisted of board members, choirs, professional musicians and local churches. The results of this theoretical and methodological approach appeared to reveal that nowadays the Passion of St Matthew functions as a multitemporal and ‘appropriated’ embodied practice in which stakeholders felt deeply connected with Dutch cultural and/or religious history, as well as with collective human senses of nostalgia, suffering and empathy. Overall it can be argued that in the current Netherlands the passion functions as a kind of ‘religion goes easy’ due to its enjoyable and inclusive communal sacralization of religious music heritage and its felt correlation with ‘Dutch’ identity by Protestants, Catholics and Atheists alike.

Panel L: Roundtable: The Legacy and Imagined Future of Monasteries in North-East Brabant.

Location: E102 (Bushuis)

Convened by Eric Venbrux (Radboud University) & Thomas Quartier (Radboud University / KU Leuven)

In this roundtable we want to reflect on the intertwinement of religion and heritage, particularly concerning monasteries in North-East Brabant. Following a first NWA (National Science Agenda)-matchmaking event with stakeholders at Museum Krona in Uden on 4 October 2021, we further want to explore the possibility of a research project and solicit the involvement of interested religious studies scholars in view of a 2022 proposal. We will present an introduction and an update.

The belt of monasteries in North-East Brabant formed a counterweight to the Bible Belt. They embody a living past and a religious heritage that is fairly unique. Many of the monasteries are situated in former enclaves (such as the Land van Ravenstein and the independent seignories of Boxmeer and Gemert) in the Republic where Catholics could freely practice their religion. After the restoration of the episcopal hierarchy in 1853, the monasteries once again flourished over a period of a century, that is, as long as the comprehensive expression of Roman Catholicism (‘het rijke Roomsche leven’) lasted. The monasteries absorbed part of the population surplus of the Catholic families with many children. At the same time, with their efforts in the field of education and care, they contributed to the emancipation of the Catholic population.

There are still active monasteries in the area, but also quite a few monasteries that have been maintained as religious heritage and given another purpose, ranging from study centre to museum to accommodation for migrant workers. Some of the re-used monasteries are experimenting with more sustainable forms of livelihood, such as a craft centre and the cultivation of organic fruit and vegetables in former monastery gardens.

Rem Koolhaas is right that the most radical changes are taking place in the countryside. The rural region of North-East Brabant is a case in point. The intensive livestock farming in this leading region of agrifood production, to which Catholic clerics gave the impetus, will soon undergo another radical transformation. North-East Brabant has been a border region in a number of respects: religiously, politically, geographically and so forth. Looking at the legacy and imagined future of the monasteries in the region, we would like to consider how liminality impacts on resilience.

This panel is set up as a roundtable, with plenty of room for discussion about the project and future opportunities for research.

November 4th 15:45-17:15: Plenary 2

The future of religious heritage in the Netherlands

Participants: Jan Willem van Henten (chair), Hermine Pool, Emile Schrijver, Lieke Wijnia and Todd Weir.

Location: Theaterzaal (Universiteitstheater)

Religious buildings are being disposed of or demolished or given a new function, private collections of religious objects are transferred to museums, and countless religious objects are currently stored in depots. At the same time, religious objects are exhibited in museums apart from their original context and they are often appreciated by visitors more on the basis of their possible artistic value than on the basis of their religious and cultural-historical significance. You can even ask whether the original function and meaning of these objects are completely lost for many of the visitors without extensive educational explanations.

These developments raise all kinds of questions for both the involved religious organizations that want to dispose of heritage but perhaps also want to preserve and keep it available in a new context and environment, and the institutions, especially museums, to which religious heritage is transferred. Important questions are:

- What do we want to keep and what not, and for what reasons?
- If religious objects lose their religious value, do they still have a cultural-historical value, and if so, which one?
- What happens to religious objects when they are put in a museum?
- Do you have to explain the religious role and meaning of these objects and how do you do that successfully?
- What happens when religious organizations and museums work together and when there is a double role for a building or object, what tensions does this cause?
- What role should the government play in all of this?

Lieke Wijnia (Museum Catharijneconvent / University College Utrecht)

Beyond a sense of loss: What is gained by musealization of religious heritage?

What happens to religious objects when they are put in a museum? From this question my contribution to this plenary session departs. Usually the answer to this question is formulated

in terms of loss. Objects no longer used in the liturgical or ritual settings may find a new home in the museum. So, it is assumed, these objects lose their original function and are transferred into a new context, one that turns them into heritage. Yet, as heritage, the objects also have many potential functions to fulfill. In this contribution, I'll explore several valuable roles religious heritage can play in secularizing contexts like The Netherlands. Dimensions of education, artistry, and sacralization are crucial in maintaining a place for religion in rapidly changing societal contexts, in which religion might have an increasingly less self-evident position. This exploration offers an attempt to move beyond the primacy of the sense of loss that tends to accompany the musealization of religious heritage.

Todd H. Weir (Centre for Religion and Heritage Groningen University)

What happens when religious organizations and museums work together and when there is a double role for a building or object, what tensions does this cause? Since the other three panelists are all museum directors or curators, I would like to speak instead about religious organizations and secular heritage institutions, such as church foundations. I will go into a few examples of cooperation and potential conflict. What I am most interested in is the uncharted territory of heritage work in rural communities in the North. It seems that there is a lot of improvisation going on, which is connected directly to the experimentation taking place in the PKN (Protestant Church in the Netherlands). Religious life and heritage are in an interconnected process of experimentation with meaning that is quite open ended. I don't think that the activists in this field have a clear idea of where this is leading.

Hermine Pool (Museum Our Lord in the Attic Amsterdam)

If religious objects lose their religious value, do they still have a cultural-historical value? I will respond to this question on the basis of the history of heritagization of Our Lord in the Attic. I will examine how a 17th-century clandestine or hidden church in Amsterdam was transformed into a Roman-Catholic museum at the end of the 19th century and into a cultural-historical monument in the 21st century. Understanding this process is important because it can answer the question: what is religious about 'religious' heritage? And how is this building and are those objects loaded with a new historical meaning by the catholic founders of the museum in the 19th century and with a cultural-historical meaning by a secularized and cultural and religious diverse staff today?

Emile Schrijver (Jewish Cultural Quarter Amsterdam / University of Amsterdam)

Amsterdam's Jewish Cultural Quarter is an umbrella organization for a total of 5 museums on four historical sites in the city center. All buildings are connected directly to the history of the Jews in the city. Apart from two Holocaust-related sites, Hollandsche Schouwburg, the deportation center and the National Holocaust Museum, now in the process of being built, five historical synagogues are part of the Quarter. The Jewish Historical Museum itself is housed in four now connected former Ashkenazic synagogue buildings that no longer serve a religious purpose. The historical function of one of the synagogues is suggested in one permanent exhibition only, the one on Jewish religion, which works with the remnants of the former synagogue interior. None of the other three buildings are still easily recognisable as former synagogues. Opposite the street the monumental Portuguese Synagogue is run a visitor site by the Quarter, but also serves as the primary synagogue of the religious community. Cooperation between the Quarter, the community and the Foundation that is the owner of the ritual objects and the library of the community may serve as an illuminating example, presenting lots of opportunities, as well as some challenges.

November 5th 09:30-10:45: Keynote 3

Mirjam Hoijtink (University of Amsterdam): Material Religion and the Production of Cultural Memory in Museums

Location: Theaterzaal (Universiteitstheater)

Dutch colonization of the Indonesian archipelago in the 19th century ran parallel with the institutionalization of sciences, publicly reflected in the establishment of museums. These collections of artefacts and naturalia were divided between natural historical, antiquarian/ archaeological, ethnographical/ anthropological and cultural historical types of museums. The overarching idea to define this categorization can be traced in the constitution of modern historiography, in the first half of the 19th century dominantly led by a neo-humanist vision of universal history.

Due to the fact that the colonization of the different islands generally started with military conflict, many of the hereabove mentioned public museum collections primarily hosted booty taken from indigenous opponents, consequently multiplied with objects collected in expeditions for reasons of knowledge formation and complemented with private, more or less systematically created collections from civil servants and entrepreneurs.

This lecture, firmly based in the ‘heritagization of religion’, questions paradigms of Christianity in the violent military encounters of colonialism with Hindu-Buddhist, Hindu and Islamic culture in relation to the production of cultural memory in the public sphere of national museums in the Netherlands. Through a deep biographical understanding of a selection of objects, today understood as material religion, it will trace the different visible and invisible layers of meaning making since their creation. In doing so, today’s quest to decolonize museums will be discussed in the framework of interdisciplinary scholarship of cultural history, offering tools to open the scholarly mind for global religious connections, and to distance from a past ruled by universal history, that primarily was created to set worlds apart.

November 5th 11:15-12:45: Parallel Panels

Panel M: Violent pasts, Religion and Heritage

Location: Theaterzaal (Universiteitstheater)

Chair: Markus Balkenhol

M-1: Markha Valenta (University College Utrecht): Dutch Colonial Religious Violence as (Repulsive) Heritage

This paper will address colonial Dutch religious violence as a form of heritage that repulses. In contrast to heritage that is desired, acclaimed and maintained, repulsive heritage is hidden and unclaimed. Yet it persists despite neglect – through flashes of rhetoric and affect, cultures of (il)logic, and fragmentary references circulating in ghostly fashion through debates, policies, social relations

and the built environment. In this fashion, it forms an essential counterpoint to formally 'good' heritage in a manner that captures the painful complexity of our patrimony from the past. One example of such 'bad' heritage is the bloody and cruel Dutch war against the Aceh Sultanate (1873-1914), one of the most destructive conflicts in the history of the Dutch imperial 'state of violence' in the East Indies. Its massacres were the outcome of the so-called 'Aceh Method' developed by the Muslim scholar Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje in collaboration with General Van Heutsz. In their time, the men and their method were widely celebrated by the Dutch for their success in securing imperial control. Too often the religious element and legacy of this conflict is misunderstood, however. The Islamic identity and motivation of the Acehnese is regularly referenced, but rarely studied in any depth. Even less consideration is given to religion's relevance in understanding the Dutch assault. And yet, central to Van Heutsz and Snouck Hurgronje's method was a very particular religious vision, built around the distinction Snouck Hurgronje made between the cultural and the political elements of Islam. Those affiliated, in Snouck Hurgronje's view, with political (rather than cultural) Islam were ruthlessly butchered.

Yet in the Dutch cultural memory and archive – its narratives, photographs, and objects – it is not the Dutch who brought violence to Aceh. Rather the archive constitutes the violence as inherent to the place itself, and most especially to its Islamic fervor – as *Aceh's heritage and not that of the Dutch*. This act of disowning Dutch (religious) violence by projecting it onto (formerly) colonized Muslims – including those in the Netherlands today – continues into the present in the media, politics and public debates. So persistent and tangible is its afterlife that it qualifies as an authentic form of repulsive heritage.

M-2: Sana Chavoshian (Leibniz Zentrum Moderner Orient, Berlin): A Dusty Heritage: The Remnants of the Iran Iraq War between Museum and Former Battlefield

The fallen soldiers of the Iran-Iraq war (1980-88) as martyrs underline various modes of heritagization, commemoration and veneration that are particularly initiated and sponsored by the government in Iran. In the past two decades, the military and state organizations have constructed the largest war-museum of the region in Tehran while turning the cleaned and emptied battlefields in the South-west borderlands to the site of pilgrimage for the non-participants in war, particularly women and young students. In contrast with the museum that seeks to follow 'global standards' in depicting legacy of war, the tours to the border are built upon Shi'i-specific heritagization in relation to the messianic notion of 'absence' as well as 'closeness' to the historical Battle of Karbala (680 AC) where the Prophet's grandson and his battalion all martyred in an uneven battle. 'Karbala of the poor,' the propagated motif of the tour, manifests the geographical and metaphorical association between the Shi'i saintly shrines on the other side of the border in Iraq and the sites of former military operations as sacred landscapes. Yet, the two parallel processes, on the one hand making sacred relics over the battlefield and on the other, marking potential objects for the museum have triggered controversies over the logic of their distinction and what keeps them apart. In the same year as tanks are sent from the former battlefields for a permanent exhibition in the garden of Tehran museum of war, small framed photos of martyrs are planted in the sands of the battlefields. A micro and atmospheric quasi-object, the dust, seems to play a crucial role in these decisions.

This paper aims to analyze ethnographically two processes of heritagization of war remnants, in the museum and over the battlefields, through investigating the affordance of quasi-object, namely the dust that covers and envelops them. Endless sandy lands characterize the borderlands where the historical battle of Karbala and the contemporary war have occurred. The question is then, where does the dust make holiness tangible, a matter of preservation and veneration? Rendering war heritage to the dust and rust that covers the

debris, it unsettles the sharp line between the heritage and the debris, the glass saloons of museum and the sacred sandscape of war.

M-3: Roos Dorsman (Université Libre, Bruxelles): The New Orleans Voodooscape: Ethnography of Contemporary Voodoo Traditions of New Orleans, Louisiana

In New Orleans, Louisiana, voodoo is omnipresent. There is voodoo in a more religious sense, that is generally more secretive, and there is a highly visible side to voodoo, that is shown in the many references to voodoo in a commercial or political sense throughout the city. Encountering all these aspects of voodoo, I wondered what the criteria were that defined what voodoo was, and what not. I found out that these boundaries are debated by practitioners and the authenticity of certain events or practices is often internally contested. To me, as a researcher, all these debates are highly interesting and need to be included. This is why I came up with the broader concept of voodooscape. This includes these debates and the large domain where negotiations on voodoo take place. Throughout my thesis I describe these negotiations, with a focus on the ways in which the ‘voodooscape’ embodies memories of the history of slavery and the ways of coping with these memories. I have chosen not to use a narrow definition of what is voodoo, but to include all these dimensions and facets that are related to voodoo as a broad phenomenon, like a -scape. The voodooscape both mobilizes these memories and how to cope with these memories at the same time. In a similar way, the voodooscape mobilizes the memories of more recent events, of which hurricane Katrina and the current violence that caused the rise of the Black Lives Matter Movement are the most important ones in New Orleans. In this paper, I propose to present why the concept of voodooscape can be seen as a useful tool for the analysis of voodoo.

Panel N: Spiritual practices and bureaucratic regulation

Location: 2.18 (Meertens Institute)

Chair: Irene Stengs

N-1: Eva Ambos (University of Tübingen): The Magic of Heritage in Sri Lanka

In this paper I argue that though heritage is often produced within secular-bureaucratic regimes, it nevertheless reveals a magical dimension. Drawing on ethnographic fieldwork, the paper will analyze heritage politics in Sri Lanka as operating along the lines of magic. I posit that by producing icons of nationhood, it conjures a useable past for identity formations in the present. In this way, heritage politics naturalizes a particular idea of the nation as Sinhalese Buddhist, thereby marginalizing and overwriting the heritage of minorities. The paper will focus on the heritagization of a Sri Lankan ritual healing tradition that is dedicated to regional deities and forms the cultural property of performer lineages who have long faced caste-based discrimination. In order to scrutinize the magic in this process of heritagization, I will examine institutionalized state driven ‘heritage making’ and the pervasive staging of the ritual tradition that marks it as Sinhalese Buddhist and converts it into national heritage. The paper will thereby shed light on the frictions between the religious and heritage and, through a discussion of traditional performer families’ positioning vis-à-vis the heritagization of their cultural tradition, show how they disenchant the magic of heritage.

N-2: Oscar Salemink (University of Copenhagen): Exhibiting Religious Pasts and Framing Religious Futures in Vietnam

To the extent that secularism is a historically recent frame around the world, cultural history museums inevitably exhibit religious – or at least enchanted – pasts. In Vietnam, cultural history museums that exhibit (pre)colonial objects tend to firmly relegate the cosmological, religious and/or ritual context of these exhibits to a closed-off, pre-modern past with little continuing relevance in the present and future. Prime examples are the Museum of Cham Sculpture in Da Nang, which exhibits the exquisite Hindu-Buddhist sculpture of the Cham principalities on the coast of what is now central Vietnam before their conquest by ethnic Viet armies; and the Huế Museum of Royal Fine Arts, which displays a wide variety of ritual and other objects of the precolonial royalty. The iconography of Buddhist sculpture has little relevance for contemporary (Mahayana) Buddhism among the Viet, while contemporary Cham Bani – a local variety of Hinduism – have been effectively alienated from the historical vestiges of their civilization. The palace objects are portrayed as specimens of a distinctly unmodern past that the current Communist regime successfully overcame. In both cases, heritagization seemed to be a one-way street.

But paradoxically some other cultural museums in Vietnam mounted exhibitions that were clearly intended to rescue and reevaluate religious traditions that had been looked down on in the past. In 2010 the Vietnamese Women's Museum in Hanoi mounted a new exhibition on spirit possession practices in connection with Mother Goddess worship, which until recently had been suppressed as superstition and swindle but since 2016 was recognized as UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage. And around the same time the Vietnam Museum of Ethnology mounted a temporary exhibition on Catholic life in contemporary Vietnam – a deeply contentious issue as Catholicism has a conflictual history with the Communist regime and is widely seen as foreign-imported/imposed. Both these exhibitions had the explicit aim of defusing some of the tensions surrounding these religious practices and congregations by offering more exposure as Vietnamese national religions, and hence of ensuring a future place in Vietnamese social life. In these cases, heritagization afforded a form of validation as a precursor for an acceptance or embrace of these religious practices in the present and future – albeit a validation through the immanent frame of the exhibitionary complex. This is mirrored by a partial re-enchantment of political authority through ritualized spectacle, most tellingly through the Hung King festival worshipping a mythical founding dynasty of 'Vietnam' and celebrating the continuity with the present regime.

N-3: Lufeng Xu (National Institute of Oriental Languages and Civilisations, Paris): Beyond Secular and Sacred: the Competitive Heritagization of Shaolin Kung Fu in Contemporary China

Traditional Shaolin martial art (kung fu) is spontaneously associated with the world-famous Shaolin Buddhist temple and its Buddhist doctrine. However, when the ancestral Shaolin temple in Songshan, Henan, was rebuilt (after the destruction of Cultural Revolution) in the early 1980s, and three temples claiming to be 'Southern Shaolin' were built in Putian, Quanzhou and Fuqing, Fujian Province, respectively, during the 1990s and 2000s, none of the monks in these temples knew how to practice kung fu. The first task was therefore for them to reconstitute a tradition in this field, which was not without questioning the authenticity of the practices, especially in the case of southern Shaolin kung fu marked by competition between three different sites.

From the 2000s onwards, these four Shaolin temples sought to be reclassified as intangible cultural heritage in order to justify their legitimacy, but also to strengthen their influence internationally. In 2002, the ancestral Shaolin temple of Songshan submitted its first application to the UNESCO 'Intangible Cultural Heritage,' but this attempt failed because of the increasing commercialization around the temple. On the other hand, Shaolin kung fu became one of the first items of the Chinese national ICH in 2006. As for the Shaolin temples in Fujian, whose historical foundations are questionable but which have fed legends and literary works for centuries, the monks there respectively selected a locally representative martial art (*Sanshiliubao quan* for Putian, *Wuzu quan* for Quanzhou, and *Zonghe quan* for Fuqing), after which they collaborated with local practitioners to integrate the transmission of each martial art into their monastic history. These three genres of Southern Shaolin kung fu, despite their recent reinvention and ambiguity, were eventually inscribed as intangible heritage but at different scales.

This paper aims to trace the process of heritagization of Shaolin kung fu by comparing four sites in the way they combined heritagization strategy with spiritual practice through the uses of the body. It proposes to analyze the modalities that the different religious and non-religious actors have adopted, and to better understand the tensions they have faced at the religious, cultural, political and economic levels, but also the conciliations they have been able to achieve.

N-4: Martín Andrade Pérez (Erigaie Foundation): The New Life of the Fiestas de San Pacho, in Colombia, after its Inscription on the UNESCO List of Intangible Heritage

The Festival of Saint Francis of Assis, or the Fiestas de San Pacho, is a 370-year-old celebration that takes place in Quibdó, a city in the Colombian Chocó region. The festival mixes the festivities associated with a catholic saint and afro-descendant traditions, resulting in a popular celebration that takes over the city for two weeks. It includes processions, parades, dances, and music, but above all, it entails a particular way of living the religious experience and reveals a complex system of social organization.

The inscription of the festival on the Representative List of Intangible Heritage of Humanity in 2012 coincided with the beginning of the peace process between the Colombian government and the largest guerrilla group, the FARC-EP. I argue that this coincidence has had profound consequences for the festival itself because it joined two kinds of policies: the multicultural policies put in place by the 1991 constitution and the emergent post-conflict policies. This paper seeks to analyze how the demands of 'heritagization,' combined with the government's effort to reimagine a post-conflict country, have transformed the social, religious, and spatial practices related to the Festival of Saint Francis of Assisi. Although for this paper, I focus the discussion on the impact on religious practices, the social and spatial components are strongly tied to the way of living the religious experience.

For the Fiestas de San Pacho, the inscription on the UNESCO list generated power disputes and new conflicts within the community. On the one hand, some people claimed that the 'heritagization' has caused the religious aspect to be neglected to benefit tourism and national expectations, underestimating the spiritual character of the festivity. On the other hand, with hopes of a successful peace-process, a desire to change the festival emerged within certain groups. This includes proposals to increase the secularisation, folklorization, musealization, touristification, and mediatisation of the practice. However, others claimed the impossibility of these changes due to the inscription on the List. 'We have to maintain what we have inscribed' is a usual statement during the conversations about the celebration.

The discussion about religion and intangible heritage is framed within the issues scholars have raised around the creation and implementation of the Representative List (RL).

First, the creation of an analogous list to the World Heritage List has increased the distance between material and intangible heritage (Bortolotto 2011). Second, attempting to represent a culture whose complexity cannot be adequately reflected in the RL is problematic (Kurin 2004). It reinforces the already existing 'global hierarchy of values' described by Michael Herzfeld (2004). Third, the inscription on the RL sends the implicit message of fixing traditions that are fluid and constantly change (Smith, 2006). Fourth, the RL focuses attention and directs financial resources towards selected practices at the expense of others (Hafstein, 2008). Despite these and other alarms, countries have developed a 'patrimonial obsession' (Jeudy 2001), and the inscription on the RL has become a race similar to the 'rush to inscribe' described by Lynn Meskell (2013) for the World Heritage List, in a global arena where decisions are often driven by political and economic interests.

Panel O: Heritagisation of religious buildings.

Location: 301 (Universiteitstheater)

Chair: Jelle Wiering

O-1: Deborah de Koning (Tilburg University / Christelijke Hogeschool Ede): Shifting Dynamics of Nationalisms, Orthodoxy, Tourism, Pilgrimage, and Lived Religion around UNESCO's Tentative Living Religious Heritage Site the Sri Ranganathaswamy Temple City (India)

This paper evolves from my selection of the living religious heritage site the Sri Ranganathaswamy Temple City in India as a case-study to investigate shifting dynamics of and competition between nationalisms (mainly North Indian Hindutva versus South Indian Dravidian nationalism) in the process of heritagisation of this largest living temple complex in the world. The present-day temple city is located on an islet in South India where Shaivism is predominant. The temple city is however dedicated to Ranganatha (Vishnu, Vaishnavism is primarily associated with North India). The present-day temple city of 156 acres consists of seven enclosures and residents live in the outer enclosures. The multiple temples within the inner enclosures are actively in use. The Ranganathaswamy Temple City was added to UNESCO's tentative list of World Heritage sites in 2014 – the same year Narendra Modi became president of India – and its connection with North India seems to have taken new forms. Whereas the UNESCO World Heritage Site Angkor Wat (Cambodia) – which is also a massive site – is subject to multiple studies about (emerging) nationalisms and heritagisation (Winter 2007, 2008), not much attention has been paid to shifting dynamics of nationalisms in the process of heritagisation of the Sri Ranganathaswamy Temple City. It is my tentative suggestion that – especially as a living religious heritage site – the Ranganathaswamy Temple City discloses unique insights on shifting dynamics of agency, orthodoxy, tourism and pilgrimage, and competition between nationalisms brought about by its recent heritagisation.

O-2: Robert Plum (University of Bonn): Reuse of Church buildings (NB: on Zoom)

The two topics of religion and heritage together can bring into the focus the issue of the future of religious pasts, but this can be done even more so by adding to this the issue of the reuse of church buildings. Many of these buildings find themselves in the process, not so much of being preserved or not, but of being reconsidered, reused, and adapted to the desires and needs of the society at large. Therewith, the reuse-issue should be seen as inviting us to reflect on the changing face of religion and the sacred and on its meaning for society.

In my paper I will consider the issue of the reuse of church buildings as a challenge both to heritage stakeholders as well as to religious communities and societies; more specifically I will bring into the discussion those critical philosophical (critical theory of religion) and theological representations of religion (new political theologies) that have paired thinking about religion with thinking about its societal meaning and impact. Therewith, the issue of the reuse of church buildings has become an invitation to look upon secularization, not so much as the return (or not) of religious pasts, but as the need to reflect on the ‘unclaimed heritage’ of those religious pasts and to migrate religious contents in the profane (Peter E. Gordon).

O-3: Elza Kuyk (Utrecht University / Vrije Universiteit): Multiple use of Church Buildings: how Religion and Art Matter and Interact

The Oude Kerk in Amsterdam is known for its ‘context responsive curating’ since it developed as a museum with some evoking exhibitions in 2017-2020. Unlike many other monumental city churches, the building is not available for rent by many groups, but it is an institute with a specific policy for its use, mainly related to art. Most of the exhibitions and performances are claimed to be site specific. Artists have often a long preparatory period in which they relate to the Oude Kerk as a building which inspires them for their site-specific work. The exhibitions of Sarah van Sonsbeeck, Iswanto Hartono, Christian Boltanski, Georgio Andreotta Calò and Adrián Villar Rojas are among the examples. The corona-pandemic evoked specific responses on top of what already went on.

The ‘Oudekerkgemeente’, an ecumenical protestant Christian community, has weekly services and evensongs which closely interact with the church building, in a way that can also be claimed as site specific. Therefore, both religion and art are site-specific expressions in the church building, using the architecture, church furniture and temporary objects in a way that appeals to the participants. Participants are not just individual visitors or individual church members, but they are addressed as communities. Especially when it comes to rituals, the communal aspect turns out to be important.

The interesting development is that the dynamics in the Oude Kerk contribute to a growing awareness that the church building interacts with the different users, in different ways and by different actors. It is the respective ‘matter’ that seems to cause some of the conflicts between different users of the church building. It seems to be that indeed matter points to dynamics that constitute communities which claim to relate to the Oude Kerk.

Panel P: The Digital and the Sacred - New Approaches to Virtually Showcasing Heritage.

Location: C117 (Oude Manhuispoort)

Chair: Isabella Archer. (NB: entire panel on Zoom)

In this panel, we are interested in exploring how a viewer's relationship, understanding, appreciation and access to a sacred object or site is affected by the digitization or the online exhibition of the item. The digitization of a site or object, and the transformations that follow this digitization, create a new geography and new relationships to heritage and art, as well as new and expanded definitions of these concepts that question their sacredness. In each paper, the word ‘heritage’ is considered, not only as an object, a monument, or a site, but as a process. With this in mind, we explore how gestures, attitudes, and emotions to heritage act as connected parts of its definition. Digitization is also one of those actions which transform heritage, creating new cycles of sacralization, desacralization, or re-sacralization of heritage,

depending on the intentions of interlocutors and the purpose of the sacralizing or desacralizing actions.

Accessibility is another key concern of our three case studies. Our fieldwork considers both questions about extended accessibility through digital tools, about the accessibility of heritage for visitors, and about the accessibility to heritage data, to establish the possibilities, limits, and complexity of digital tools to preserve the past for the future.

Drawing on our respective expertise in anthropology, art history, archaeology, geography and museum studies, our aim is to provide an interdisciplinary and multifaceted panel by citing case studies of sacred objects and sites from Europe, the Pacific, and the Middle East.

After each panel member explores these ideas from three different perspectives, we propose reconvening to discuss our fieldwork as a group. During this discussion, we will seek to further re-think and complexify the narratives surrounding digitization and the status and definition of the sacred in order to propose a new definition of the sacred which includes and takes into account the digitization of sites and objects.

P-1: Marie-Alix Molinié-Andlauer (Sorbonne Université-UR Médiations): The Digital, the Sacred, and the Mobile Museum

This presentation aims to introduce a new research object in the development stage, Micro-Folles, to propose a more general discussion about the link between the emergence of digital technology in the world of art and heritage and the dimension of the sacred. A French definition of the sacred as being that ‘to which one owes absolute respect, which is imposed by its high value’ (Larousse), thus opposing a profane dimension, which is in line with the Anglo-Saxon definition ‘very important and treated with great respect’ (Oxford). The emergence of digital technology, which we understand here as a tool for the democratization of Art and Culture, but also as a tool to conserve and preserve heritage, calls into question the relationships and appropriations that individuals may have with dematerialized art objects. The purpose of this paper is to try to answer the following question: how does the digital transform the relationship to works of art and transcend the sacred dimension, both in its definition and in its acceptance?

We assume that the intersection of the digital and the sacred includes political issues related to the different forms of representation proposed, thus creating tensions that are reflected in the territories.

To do this, the case of the Micro-Folles, digital museums developed by La Villette and implemented in France and abroad, allows us to offer some reflections based on three major concepts: accessibility, the relationship to the sacred, and the territory. The objective of this presentation is therefore to question the interconnections between these major concepts based on a work in progress and is based on an analysis of a varied documentary corpus (analysis of the press, analysis of ministerial reports, institutional documents, symposiums). We will thus develop 1) the relationship between Accessibility/Sacred in terms of the tensions linked to representation, 2) the relationship between Sacred/Territory to introduce the principle of influence and identity and finally 3) the relationship between Territory/Accessibility to materialize the issues around development and attraction.

P-2: Marion Bertin (Centre de Recherches en Histoire Internationale et Atlantique): The Digital, the Sacred, and Oceanic Objects

Objects acquired in colonial contexts and preserved in public collections are more and more concerned by requests for return or repatriation to their initial territories. These requests may be expressed both by states or by Indigenous communities, and may concern material

artefacts and human remains, as well as requests for documentation related to the objects. Developing greater transparency around the collections preserved by museums has become a wedge issue over the past few years. To address this issue, museums have created significant databases with the aim of presenting the entirety of their collections online, and to help communities know what are the objects to which they are culturally affiliated, in order to aid and encourage returns. Tangible repatriations of objects are not the only kind of act to be considered in this area - some database projects are thought of as a kind of virtual repatriation to their former communities, who are associated with their creation and their management. The digitalization of objects may also be executed by museums to generate and maintain ownership of the documentation of objects if and when they are returned to their states or communities of origin.

This paper focuses on several examples of digitized Oceanic objects, and closely examines the treatment of their sacrality in these projects. Specifically, it questions the status of the sacred digital items, be they artefacts or human remains: how are they regarded by museums that care for them, and by the communities to which they are culturally affiliated? Can digitalization provoke and transfer sacralization? The limit between tangible and intangible is a key issue of this proposal, in addition to the question of accessibility versus restriction of access to digitized sacred objects.

P-3: Isabella Archer (Museum Studies, Ecole du Louvre): The Digital, the Sacred, and Immersive Exhibitions

Threats such as armed conflict, trafficking of cultural property, and environmental degradation have prompted concerned international cohorts to create immersive exhibitions of endangered Middle Eastern cultural heritage sites in recent years. Digital replications of endangered sites and immersive exhibitions are seen as one possible solution for preserving the cultural and historical memory of these sites by increasing their virtual accessibility and promoting global awareness of the threats facing the sites.

This paper explores how three-dimensional visualizations may be used to de-sacralize - or re-sacralize - cultural heritage sites by engaging with visitors in an emotional and experience driven style of curation. Specifically, it analyzes how immersive exhibitions of heritage sites transform a visitor's relationship to the object of exhibition, and how the status and sacredness of a site is constructed, transferred, and re-established by its digital exhibition in a cultural Institution,

Drawing on recent examples of immersive exhibitions of endangered Middle Eastern cultural heritage in Paris (*Eternal Sites: From Bamiyan to Palmyra*, 2016-2017 Grand Palais, and *Age-Old Cities: A Virtual Journey from Palmyra to Mosul*, Institut du monde arabe, 2018-19), this paper will explore how immersive exhibitions affect visitors' sense of scale, perception, and place by moving a heritage site into a museum, and a visitor into a virtual geography of a physical place. It explores how this new exhibition medium is used to create new forms of visual culture and visitor experiences, increasing their accessibility to audiences via a digital format and entertainment-like form of exposition. It also seeks to contextualize this new exhibition medium in a historical context by comparing it to examples of colonial and post-colonial cultural heritage documentation projects.

Bridging anthropology, art history, museum studies, and area studies, the paper explores the physical and immaterial movement of the concept of sacredness and cultural heritage sites, and the status and accessibility of these spaces when they become digitized, in an interdisciplinary context.

November 5th 13:45-15:15: Plenary 3

Beyond Deconstruction: History in the Study of Religion

Speakers: Mattias Brand (chair, University of Zürich), Sarah Cramsey (Leiden University), Gerard Wiegers (UvA)

Location: Theaterzaal (Universiteitstheater)

This plenary aims to re-think the role of historians and historical analysis in the academic study of religion\'. We take up the challenge to establish “a genuine dialogue” between historians and the (social scientific) theory they draw upon, particularly considering William H. Sewell Jr.’s complaint that there is no dialogue “because the historians rarely speak back. They use social theory to orient their thinking, or borrow its vocabulary in their interrogation of historical sources or in formulating their arguments. What remains exceptional is for historians to intervene actively in social-theoretical debates” (Sewell 2005, 5).

We would like to explore how historians of religion “speak back” through methodological practices such as comparing, theorizing, or generalizing (Hall 2007), especially when this goes beyond deconstruction, and aims for a wider conversation about contingent but patterned historiography in the Study of Religion\’s.

History used to be as central component of the study of religion\’. During the nineteenth and early twentieth century, historical analysis dominated the field: those with an expertise in the ancient Near East, Egypt, the Greek and Roman world shed light on religious phenomena as a background to the biblical world, and phenomenologists and comparativists drew extensively upon historical analysis (Stausberg 2007; 2008). From the 1960s, the prominence of history faded in what could be called an “anthropological turn,” highlighting the work of Claude Lévi-Strauss, Clifford Geertz, Mary Douglas, and Victor Turner. Most recently, postmodern and postcolonial criticism embraced a particular type of historical analysis to deconstruct the lingering presuppositions, global inequalities, and normativities of the field. Is there still a role for historians outside of these established paths?

To explore the options, two sets of different historicizing practices can be discerned: particularizing practices deliver a wealth of new insights, diversifying our reconstructions of historical societies and religion(s), while generalizing practices aim for a comparative approach with explicit theoretical ambitions (Hall 1999). The latter are less frequently employed by historians, because they entail complicated generalizations from a small number of cases (Stausberg and Engler 2016, 66. cf. Rüpke 2011). Despite this caveat, generalizing practices and approaches are of foremost importance to a systematic historical analysis of religion with comparative ambition, moving beyond deconstruction towards theoretically informed, self-conscious, re-construction. We, therefore, invite three-four historians to sketch a vision of how historical work could contribute to an increasingly multispectral study of religion\’s (see the contributions in *Religion*, 50, no. 1 (2020) and the exchange about the situation in The Netherlands in *NTT Journal for Theology and the Study of Religion*, 74, no. 3 (2020)).

This plenary will take place during the NGG conference “Religion and Heritage: Futures for Religious Pasts” (Amsterdam, 3-5 November 2021). It is organized by Mattias Brand (University of Zürich) in honor of the Gerardus van der Leeuw Dissertation Award which Mattias Brand received for *The Manichaeans of Kellis: Religion, Community, and Everyday Life*.

November 5th 15:45-17:15: Plenary 4

Secular Sacred: Religious Heritage and the Perils of Nation and Religion

Location: Theaterzaal (Universiteitstheater)

Speakers: Markus Balkenhol, Ernst van den Hemel, Duane Jethro, Aike Rots, Irene Stengs (chair)

This plenary discusses the renewed interest in a religious past as national heritage by introducing the notion ‘secular sacred.’ As a sensitizing concept, this notion aims to gear the attention to the secular and sacred dimensions inherent in religion-turned-heritage. The ambiguous entanglement entails both opportunities and perils for communities, institutions and people involved in the potentially highly explosive matters related to religion, heritage and identity.

Why does religion-as-heritage prominently inform debates about national identity in a wide variety of contexts worldwide? In thoroughly secularized European countries such as the Netherlands, France, or Germany there is now a great and increasing concern about the defense of rituals derived from Christianity such as Christmas or Easter against a postulated ‘loss’ of culture, identity, and national cohesion. In a communist nation like Vietnam, long repressed religious practices such as spirit mediumship are now transformed into national cultural heritage. The secularized, in Catholicism rooted, Brazilian Carnival, is now generally embraced as the hallmark of Brazilian national identity. Moreover, religious heritage increasingly becomes a lens through which to debate European colonial pasts, as controversies around the German Humboldt Forum or the Dutch Saint Nicholas celebration show.

What do these developments entail for those who are professionally, religiously or personally, invested in matters relating to religion, heritage and identity? Orthodox, Pentecostal, and migrant Christian communities, for instance, are all differently situated in these developments, on the one hand potentially benefiting from the renewed attention for their faiths, on the other struggling with secularist rejections of some of their religious convictions. The emphasis on national and cultural identity runs the risk of selectively highlighting certain elements of religious heritage, while marginalizing others. Also important in this new embrace of religion as heritage are the role of (national) heritage institutions and the selection politics at stake. What religious pasts are sacralized as heritage of the nation, and what religious pasts not?

Markus Balkenhol (Meertens Instituut)

Colonial heritage has become contested across the world. Controversies about statues, museum collections or street names all revolve around colonialism’s material culture – the things it has left us with. These colonial objects are both revered and destroyed in what Bruno Latour has termed iconoclasm – the clashing interpretations of how to deal with the power of images. Discussing some examples of colonial iconoclasm, in this contribution to the round table Balkenhol will show how the secular and the sacred become entangled in colonial heritage politics.

Ernst van den Hemel (Meertens Instituut)

In contemporary conservative radical right movements, it has become a staple to refer to (Judeo-)Christian traditions as the cultural essence of the West. Protecting cultural identity becomes a rallying cry for a variety of actors, some of whom share radically different ideas of

what Christian tradition and identity means. In this roundtable, he will present some examples of how the turn to the right entails an influential yet nebulous re-articulation of notions of religious heritage.

Duane Jethro (University of Cape Town)

What happens when Christian symbols and inscriptions are included in secular contemporary museum design? The Christian cross on the Berlin Stadtschloss (City Palace), a monumental reconstruction project, housing the Humboldt Forum heritage complex is an illustrative controversy. The cross, Jethro argues, sets up an illuminating set of conceptual and historical intersections between religion and heritage. Here he discusses the relationship between its symbolism and the ethnographic objects held and displayed by the Humboldt Forum, specifically the crossings between histories of collecting, their museological 'secular-sacred' framing and the struggle for their repatriation.

Aike Rots (University of Oslo)

In East Asia, the category "heritage" has become an important tool for nation-building and state formation. Many worship sites and ritual practices have been reconfigured as heritage, either at the provincial, national, or international (UNESCO) level, allowing for state actors to (re)claim these sites and practices as secular-sacred public property, away from the realm of private "religion". In his current research, Aike Rots examines processes by which ritual practices and worship sites in coastal regions in Vietnam and Japan are transformed from supposedly local, peripheral "folk belief" into national maritime heritage. In this roundtable, he will present some examples of this trend, and explain how they relate to wider socio-political developments.

Irene Stengs (Meertens Instituut/Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam)

Often perceived as the immaterial heritage of specific groups, communities or nations, rituals lay at the heart of cultural, national or religious identities, and of much of the ensuing cultural identity politics. Whether of a religious or secular nature, rituals-as-heritage are attributed a sacred, untouchable value. Consequentially, in the ritual process, the practices, objects and places involved may also become charged with a set-apart or heritage value. In this roundtable Stengs will present two examples (Thailand, Netherlands) on the role of rituals in the making of (religious) heritage.