The interest of geographers in regions has always been accompanied by an awareness of many aspects of globalisation and modernisation. Moreover, the development of geography as an academic discipline is closely related to the question of how regions have been perceived, as regions were the principal subject of early geographical researchers. After having lost its importance as a central concern of geography in the 1980s, the region re-emerged in the course of the 1990s as a key concept in the social sciences, as well as in spatial planning, administration, and politics. This resurgence should be understood in the context of accelerating processes of cultural and economic globalisation, joined by an economic regionalism focussed on the specialisation of regions within a worldwide network and on their marketing. The concept is now applied to many different spatial scales, including supranational areas which are spread over several different countries. It is also employed as a way understand rapid, spatial transformations, such as shrinkage, industrialisation or urbanisation.1

In the last three decades, region and identity have been joined to create the concept of regional identity. It is an essential element in the renewed interest in regionalism and occupies an important place in various disciplinary discourses, particularly in geography. Perhaps not surprisingly, it often displays an ambiguous character, as it is involved in discourses which are plural and contextual.2

In scholarly discussion, as well as in spatial planning, governance and politics, heritage is inextricably intertwined with regional identity. The frequency with which these concepts are jointly applied suggests that their relationship has been thoroughly studied and extensively analysed both in theory and in case studies. However, despite the apparently self-evident way in which these notions are combined, the understanding of the role of heritage in the construction of regional identities is still in its beginning stages. Clearly, the relationship between heritage and regional identity requires considerable further exploration.

Main question

Long before the concept of regional identity came to be widely used, it was common practice to relate historic places, landscapes and other elements of heritage to regions as well as to the identity of individuals or groups of people. And each of these three concepts contributed to complex discourses that span multiple fields of research. Their positioning, application and interpretation has changed in the course of time and reflect larger changes in the discourse of such disciplines as geography, history, heritage studies, archaeology, anthropology and sociology. Taking most of this background into account, I want to explore the triangular relationship between the concepts of region, identity, and heritage, which I will do in the course of seeking an answer to the main question posed by this book:

What is the role of heritage in the construction of regional identities?

In order to get a clearer view of how heritage works in the construction of regional identities, I have chosen to explore this field by approaching it from three different perspectives, each of which is presented in its own chapter. Initially, however, I survey the various positions in the academic debate on the role of heritage in the construction of regional identities.

The second perspective employed here is the examination of the role of heritage in a dynamic, urban network that has been conceived as a region for a only relatively short time. I focus, in particular, on how heritage is appropriated to shape an identity for a new region and how competition between various heritage themes and forms of authenticity interferes with the overall process of unification within the region. My case study is the Euregio Meuse-Rhine - whose territory extends to three countries (Germany, Belgium and the Netherlands), as they both have a strong presence in historical studies on the Carolingian era. I analyse how heritage from this period has played a role in the formation of the identities of these regions in the recent past and how it continues to do so today.

The third and final perspective for the construction of regional identities.

Figure 1.1, Heritage and regional identity.
study in this instance is the Arnhem Nijmegen region, in the eastern Netherlands, a highly dynamic, quickly urbanising, polycentric region which is actively searching for ways to bind its two main cities together, and is using heritage as one among them.

My third approach is *diaschonic*. It is focused on the Ruhr area, which is a good candidate for this purpose, since it has been conceived as one entity for over a century and has gone through immense structural change. The evolution of the role of heritage is particularly interesting in this case, because it is the chief symbolic vector of the new regional identity that took form after the closure of the coal mines and steel industry, a process which began in the late 1950s. Much has been written about industrial heritage and the identity of the Ruhr region, but few attempts have been made to survey the changes in the memory of the industrial era and its changing role in the construction of a new regional identity over the last five decades. Furthermore, since most of the writing on this topic has been available only to those able to read German, I hope my analysis will, among other things, convey a good understanding of the role of heritage in the Ruhr to a much broader audience than has been reached until now.

**The remainder of the book**

My book consists of four essays, preceded by this introduction and followed by a brief concluding chapter. Each essay is developed independently of the others, but all are centred around the role of heritage in the construction of regional identities. They also have similar, rather tightly structured introductory sections in which I present their relevance to the whole, their research questions, and their connections to current theory.

Chapter 2 is a theoretical exploration and discourse analysis of regional identities and heritage. Before examining the relationships between region, identity and heritage, I first consider each of these three concepts separately. Then, after briefly surveying the history of the use of the concept of the region in geography, I introduce the notion of identity and show how it has been applied to spatial contexts. Next, I discuss the compound concept of *regional identity*. I position heritage as one of many ways of dealing with the past – and here I discuss this concept as part of a broader *memory complex*. The chapter ends with a brief discussion of how the relevant methodologies will be used in the remainder of the book.

In Chapter 3 I analyse the role of early medieval heritage in the construction of regional identities of two regions, Alsace and the Euregio Meuse-Rhine, which are both embedded in the process of Europeanisation. After introducing the central problem and aims of the chapter, I present the broader European context in which I discuss medieval heritage. An historical outline of early medieval Europe and the analysis of its heritage in today’s Alsace and Meuse-Rhine constitute the bulk of the chapter.³

Chapter 4 is centred on heritage and regional identity in the rapidly urbanising region of Arnhem Nijmegen. An introduction and an historical overview are followed by an analysis of how various heritage themes are being employed to brand the region as a whole – as well as individual parts of it - through websites and through institutional and governmental policies. The chapter concludes with a study of four different spatial planning projects in the region, in all of which heritage and spatial notions of identity play an important part.

Chapter 5 focuses on heritage and memory in the Ruhr region of Germany. After a brief introduction sketching out its industrial history, I recount the evolving role of memory and heritage in the structural transformation of the region from a decaying industrial heartland to a modern, service-oriented region. Several different phases of this process are examined in some detail.

The book concludes with Chapter 6, where I offer general conclusions. Taken together, these constitute an answer to the main question that I formulated above. I also argue there that although the concept of regional identity has been extensively explored in recent decades, its relationship to the manifold ways of dealing with the past needs much further analysis and theorisation.
1 Martin Jones and Anssi Paasi, “Guest Editorial: Regional World(s): Advancing the Geography of Regions,” Regional Studies 47, no. 1 (January 2013): 1-5.


3 Some of the main concepts of chapters 3 and 4 have also been discussed in my contributions to Linda Egharts and Kees Boom, eds., Companion to European Heritage Revivals (Dordrecht: Springer, 2014).
REGIONAL IDENTITY AND HERITAGE
§2.1

INTRODUCTION
This book focuses on the role of heritage in the formation and transmission of regional identities. My research aims at understanding a triangle of interactions, namely the interrelationships among the phenomena picked out by the three concepts of region, identity, and heritage. Two of these notions have been paired in the concept of regional identity, and heritage has become closely associated with this pairing in the past decade or so. In this chapter I will first explore these three notions separately, and then go on to discuss their various combinations and relationships, paving the way for the three case studies which make up the remainder of this text.\(^1\)

### Research aims and questions

The aim of this chapter is to explore spatial notions of identity with specific attention to the region and its relationship to heritage. I will also describe how the three key notions can be seen as a coherent grouping based on a reading of the existing literature, and then sketch out the context in which they are most usefully understood, thereby providing a theoretical foundation for the analysis of the case studies that follow. In short, this chapter seeks to answer the following question:

*What theoretical positions and opinions can we distinguish in the academic debate on the role of heritage in the construction of regional identity?*
§2.2

REGION: A HISTORIOGRAPHY
The region has been at the heart of geographical research since the early development of the discipline. The various ways it has been interpreted reflect the changes in the field of geography since its emergence as a separate discipline. Many concepts found in geography have previously been used – and some still are – as synonyms of region: for example, area, landscape, and place. This is not surprising, as the discipline has long concentrated on studying and describing regions of various sizes.

**The intrinsic character of regions**

The early modern geographer, biologist and traveller Alexander von Humboldt (1769-1859) sought to understand and explain how various empirical observations like temperature, altitude and vegetation were interrelated in a given area, as well as on a global scale. In his travel reports he wrote about regions and used the term Landschaft (“Landscape”) to describe the **Totaleindruck einer Gegend** (“overall impression of an area”). Later, landscape began to be employed somewhat differently than region in geographical discourse, as the perception of the environment gained dominance in its interpretation. Von Humboldt’s contemporary Carl Ritter tried to grasp the coherence among the earth’s macro-regions, which, in his view, all had their own functions in the total global system.6

An influential reaction to this environmental determinism came from French géographie humaine, which is primarily associated with the name of Paul Vidal de la Blache and which adopted a more modest approach. Towards the end of the nineteenth century, Vidal de la Blache focussed on analysing and describing the complex relationship between the cultural and natural characteristics of various regions in France. He wanted to reveal the essence of genres de vie (“ways of life”) by providing detailed accounts of the natural characteristics and cultural features of a region. In his view, people choose their way of life from the many possibilities natural surroundings offer, and this, in turn, changes the landscape through the way they build their settlements and roads and field patterns. A region (pays) is formed, according to Vidal de la Blache, by an area that shows sameness or similarity in many aspects, which can be either natural or cultural in origin. In every region, these cultural and natural aspects are interrelated in typical ways. This is how every region comes to possess its own character, its **personnalité géographique**.7

Around the same time as the emergence of the possibilistic tradition Vidalienne, German geographers also turned their attention to the topic of the coherence between the natural and cultural aspects of regions. Alfred Hettner, for one, regarded mapping the mosaic of different regions as the core task of spatial sciences – chorology as he called it. Every region has its own character, or **Individuum**, which is the result of various intertwined social and cultural phenomena. Unlike Vidal de la Blache, he thought that the natural environment is the main determinant of a region’s character.9 His “jigsaw-puzzle view of the world” was later criticised for its assumption that all areas are comparable, essentially stable and without any hierarchy between them.10 But this view still find applications today, for example, in some of the work done by the Assembly of European Regions.11 Hettner’s contemporaries also attempted to tackle the problem of how hierarchy works between different places, for example, Walter Christaller, who tried to explain the coherence and evolution of the hierarchy of towns in his central place theory.12

International contacts influenced the development of geography in England and the United States, as well, where some authors adopted approaches which were just as positivistic as Hettner’s, treating the region almost as an organism. Cyril Fox, a British archaeologist, published The Personality of Britain in 1932.13 From the 1920s onwards, Carl Sauer centred his work around the changes that humans make in the landscape. Following the path blazed by the French and – particularly – the German geographers, he saw the region as “an area made up of a distinct association of forms, both physical and cultural”.14 This approach yielded historical descriptions of regions in which the emphasis was placed on human actions, encompassing cultural, social, economic, political and technological factors.15 Sauer paid special...
attention to changes in the course of history and sought to reveal the personality of a region.\(^{16}\)

The regional geography shaped by Vidal de la Blache, Hettner and Sauer, among others, emphasised the internal coherence, harmony and homogeneity of a region. These geographers focussed on rural areas, which they saw as rather stable; they considered the city and areas with more intense spatial dynamics less suitable for research. A fundamental assumption in the world of these early regional geographers is that the identity of a region is something that exists on its own, apart from the observer or researcher. Thus, it is possible for an observer to describe and map the interplay of cultural and natural characteristics. Humans partially determine the character of a region through their interventions in the landscape, but they act only on options given by nature and within the boundaries that nature sets. In their view, the observing human does not play a role in the creation of the region under study. This approach may be called essentialist, given its basic premise that the essential character of a region can be known by mapping and describing it; in other words, it is a reality that exists in complete independence of the eye of the observer. This approach exerted a strong influence on the discipline of geography well into the 1950s,\(^{17}\) when the emphasis on physical geography gave way to a view assigning a greater role to human action, and geographers began to understand the functioning of relatively isolated regions.

### The layered region

The early regional geographers displayed what might be called a kind of anti-modernist sensibility. Their desire to map regions “as they were” was provoked in no small measure by a fear of losing them to urbanisation and industrialisation before they were thoroughly studied. A reaction to essentialist regional geography came several decades later, as geographers started questioning the traditional approach to regions, which they found to be too static. Marxist geographers, in particular, criticised the undifferentiated and universal descriptions of regional cultures, arguing that no culture is homogenous and uncontested. Others wanted to devote more attention to the role of external economic and social relations.

James S. Duncan, an American geographer, rejected the unquestioned assumption that culture is a homogenous organism which is not reducible to the actions of individuals and is, therefore, “above men”.\(^{18}\) Other modern geographers, like Doreen Massey, emphasised the importance of external influences on regions, rather than internal cohesion. In her earlier work, she does not approach regions as isolated, inward-looking entities, but rather as areas that are parts of nation states, the global economy, and other larger contexts.\(^{19}\) Every region is unique because of its specific combination of many economic and historical layers. The accumulation of these layers shows what position the region has occupied in external networks and relations both in the past and in the present. Massey distinguishes several economic phases according to which a region can be categorised. Over the course of time, a certain path dependency emerges which is different for every region.\(^{20}\)

### The region as a social category

In the course of the 1980s and 1990s, the concept of the region was stripped of its traditional territorial meaning. In the new cultural geography, the region is no longer viewed strictly as a part of the earth’s surface, but, instead, as a social category or entity that is constructed by actors and networks. The conflictual character of the (re)-production of regions is emphasised, and the interests, power relations and aims of actors are accorded a major influence on the ways in which regional identities are constructed, maintained and abolished.

In her later work, Massey takes this process a step further than in her layered-regions approach by emphasising the importance of external relations in regions and their role in larger networks, thereby ipso facto rejecting the essentialist approach to regions. According to Massey, a region can have many identities. Every group constructs the identity of a place in its own way. Massey’s statement about place is also applicable to regions: “Constructed out of a particular constellation of social relations,
meeting and weaving together at a particular locos.”  

Places or regions are thus no longer seen as isolated locations, but rather as meeting-places embedded in all kinds of worldwide networks. Place should, therefore, not be approached as a static entity but as process. The unique character of a place is not dependent on a long history particular to that location, but on social networks which display geographical differences. Every place or region distinguishes itself by a unique interplay of global and local social networks. Thus, the character of places can be understood only in the context of their relationships with other places.

The approaches to the region developed by Massey and others share a common orientation with the work of the influential poststructuralist philosopher Jean Baudrillard. In the 1980s he argued that the development of mass media and communication technologies have led to the hyperreality in which we live. We are no longer capable of knowing reality, because we are surrounded by signs that only refer to other signs. The meaning of these images without an original (simulacra) is determined solely by what they refer to. A place or a building is no longer anything more than: “a physical support of contemporary myths, a physical place for symbolic exchange made possible by ... turning ... itself into a mega logo advertising its own presence and activity.” Consequently, the concept of region no longer refers to any reality or any actual physical places. Messages and meanings – including those pertaining to the characteristics of an area – circulate without any purpose in a system of man-made copies. This raises the question of whether the very concept of a region has lost all significance.

City planners Luuk Boelens and Alda Alagic try to overcome this threatened loss of meaning with what they call a poststructuralist approach to the region, one which shows how it can become an effective level of governance. Basing their view on Actor-Network theory, they argue that regions should be conceived as fundamentally scale-less, instead of being connected to particular territories. Moreover, regions should be seen as confronting problems or challenges that are shared by multiple central actors, independent of territorial and sectoral boundaries, whether these be permanent or only temporary. In this approach, regions have become no more than “vehicles for development” which have lost all their connectedness to a particular part of the earth’s surface, a specific group of people, or a set of definite (physical) characteristics.

**Place and space**

In the essentialist interpretations of the region of geographers like Vidal de la Blache, little attention is paid to processes of change affecting the characteristics of the region. Their system of concepts was not equipped for interpreting the scaling-up of agriculture and changes caused by industrialisation. Attention to these factors, as well as to external relationships, emerged mainly in the course of the 1980s and 1990s, allowing processes of change driven by supra-regional developments to be analysed more accurately. The emphasis shifted from stability to fluidity and change. As one author succinctly put it: “there is nothing fixed about regions; they are contingent, mobile, unstable.”

Apart from the essentialist and structuralist interpretations of the concept of a region, there is a third approach that should be mentioned here. In the phenomenological studies which began to appear in geography in the 1970s, the notion of place assumes a central role: it is interpreted as a coherent whole which gives meaning to human life and to our tangible surroundings. Authors from various disciplines searched for better ways to understand the relationships between man, his environment, landscape and nature. A number of phenomenologists, Martin Heidegger and Franz Brentano among them, focused on the relationship between humans and their surroundings. Well-known results are the works of Yi-Fu Tuan and Edward Relph concerning the twin concepts of place and space as fundamental aspects of human existence in the world.

Tuan introduced these concepts as dichotomous ways of experiencing an environment. Space indicates a surrounding which is undifferentiated and without meaning, while place offers a way of understanding the world. Tuan wants to emphasise that space is not just a stage on which daily life takes place, and so he makes subjectivity and the experiences of humans the subject...
Commenting on place, social anthropologist Nadia Lovell writes: “Landscapes are turned into places by human action (...), and specific places are notionally extracted out of undifferentiated space by becoming imbued with particular meaning by, and for, human sociality and identity.”

Phenomenologists believe that place is an essential element of human existence, one which plays a creative role. Society is inconceivable without spatiality; for the structure of place makes possible everything social and cultural in society. Place is a precondition for being able to grasp human existence. Edward Casey states that we are essentially place-bound and never without “emplaced perceptions”. He differs from other phenomenologists in thinking that place is as primary as perception itself, rather than just a part or product of space that is constructed and determined by humans. As another author puts it: “There was no place before there was humanity but once we came into existence then place did too.”

Elaborating on this position, Relph states that places can exist on many different scales, from a room to a street, a region or a continent. What is important here is the experience of place, and that is something which is not dependent on a certain physical dimension or scale. Paasi argues that region has a longer historical duration than place and represents a “higher scale history”, in the sense that it cannot be reduced to the history of the individual. Rather, the region is constitutive “for the habituated practices sedimented in the local and regional forms of social life, through which it will be reproduced.” He relates place to region by means of the concept of generation, since generation contextualises individual histories and life cycles, which, again are linked to local and regional history. Generations thus mediate the history of a region.

The phenomenological approach created an awareness of the deleterious effects that globalisation has begun to have on many regions. Many locations appear to have become, as it were, identity-less. Anthropologist Marc Augé and geographer Relph, each in his own field, came to the conclusion that in this time of globalisation the concept of place is no longer applicable to all locations. A sense of disengagement is occurring -placelessness as Relph calls it. He mourns the loss of a sense of place resulting from the homogenisation brought about by increased mobility and improved communication technologies. According to Relph, placelessness is a widespread state of mind, and he claims that “to a very considerable degree we neither experience nor create places with more than a superficial and casual involvement. What is important is to recognize that placelessness is an attitude and an expression of an attitude which is becoming increasingly dominant, and that it is less and less possible to have a deeply felt sense of place or to create places authentically.”

Marc Augé approaches this new way of experiencing locations as a phenomenon calling for anthropological study. We experience these so-called non-lieux (“non-places”) at locations that are not charged with meaningful relationships, history or identity. Augé, who mentions supermarkets, airports, highways, hotels and amusement parks as examples has shown that places - and also regions - have become bereft of identity on account of the increasing importance of relationships with external networks. This is a finding we encountered above in the later work of Massey, although he views it from a very different perspective.

The notion of placelessness fits well with Tuan’s analysis of space and place. He argues that place refers to safety and stability, while space refers to openness, freedom, and threat. Space allows movement, while place means pause. Every pause in movement enables us to transform a location into a place. In other words, a certain amount of rest or continuity is required to be able to give meaning to a place. This is all the truer for the region: it, too, can be conceived as a place, but it proves to be even more permanent, because its institutional character lends it a longue durée. All the same, this does not mean that place can arise only in a fixed location. A boat or a gypsy camp can also be a place, despite the fact that it moves from one location to another across the earth’s surface.

An interesting nuance pertaining to the constructivist emphasis on global networks, as well as on placelessness and space, is offered by philosopher Peter Sloterdijk. He is critical of the current way of looking at globalisation, and points out two extreme consequences of globalisation for the relationship of self to place. The first is the phenomenon of the self without a place,
i.e. the existence of individuals who are no longer attached to a specific part of the earth’s surface. He illustrates this with a reference to Heinrich Heine’s comments about diaspora Judaism in the past two millennia. “The Jews,” Sloterdijk writes, “are not at home in a country, but rather in a book: the Torah, which they carried with them like a ‘portable fatherland’.” A people without land does not make the same mistake as many sedentary groups have made in the course of history, namely thinking of “the land itself as the container of the people, and viewing their native soil as the a priori of their life’s meaning or identity.” The other extreme consequence of globalisation is place without a self, which can be interpreted as Relph’s placelessness or Augé’s *non-lieux*, but also uninhabited areas that have not yet been made into places. These places are not dependent on groups of inhabitants that “would be at home in them.”

Despite the existence of place without a self, Sloterdijk emphasises the necessity of homeliness, or feeling at home. Even people who travel frequently develop their own ways of “mobile cocooning”: rituals and habits which make them feel at home in new locations. Sloterdijk thinks that nomadic cultures, despite their flexibility and mobility, are very domestic, conservative and closed systems. He recognises that distances are neutralised by communication technologies and rapid means of transport, in other words, that space is being compressed. However, he adds that in many aspects of life, the local element is still dominant. Most businesses involving food, for example, are still predominantly regional and national in character. When we think mainly in terms of globalisation, he believes, we pay too little attention to the ever-present localism in the cultural, economic and social aspects of our lives. In our time we appear to move more often and further away than ever before, but even in the new locations, the basic situation repeats itself: “one establishes oneself in a particular place and extends oneself by means of local resonances.”

Further nuance has been given to this process and to the network approach by geographer Denis Cosgrove. He has studied the suburban residential areas in his home city of Los Angeles, which have been cited by many others as merely generic places with no real attachment to the surrounding nature. Describing the development of these suburbs, where twenty-first-century buildings are constructed in *gated communities*, he argues that the demand for safety that they speak to can be traced back to the nostalgic desire to live in a safe home, to anchor one’s life in one fixed place. Whereas other authors have dismissed these suburbs as placeless, *unheimisch* and *pastiche*, Cosgrove claims that these *gated* ways of constructing houses reflect the ideals of homeliness, social order and harmony between the land and human life. Especially in an area where the degree of detachment from the traditional landscape is particularly high, humans try to create a home, using specific ways of building which help them secure their attachment to a specific place.

To sum up, throughout the twentieth century technological, economic, cultural and political changes have influenced the way geographers have approached the notion of the region. Initially they interpreted the region mainly as an entity which displayed an intrinsic coherence between the natural and cultural characteristics of a particular part of the earth’s surface. Then, when the growth of globalisation became ever more evident, they started to emphasise the region’s status as a part of various (global) networks, embracing the processes of globalisation and making them their primary field of study. In the 1990s, some geographers adopted a structuralist approach, which accorded very little importance to the natural and physical environment of the region.

At the same time, phenomenologists searched for ways better suited to interpreting the relationship between humans and their environment. They rejected the essentialist interpretation of the region with its assumption that an area can be known without taking into account the effect of the observer. And they found the structuralist approach of Massey and others to be insufficient. For the remainder of this book, in discussing physical location I will take as my point of departure Casey’s notion of the primacy of human perception in the creation of place. Accordingly, I will interpret regions as entities that are constructed by humans via their physical and social involvement with their environment. I include here regions both with and without institutionalised governance. (Modern nation-states can be seen as the ultimate development of the latter type.) Following Hospers, I believe that the marketing of regions can be successful only when it draws on the
meanings and values that are connected to a region considered as place and when it undertakes marketing campaigns lasting long enough to establish themselves as part of that place. I am not seeking to deny the effects of globalisation and of the technological developments that make us all part of global networks, but rather to show that these effects notwithstanding, the physical, the daily and the local still make up the basic structure of our lives, just as Cosgrove and Sloterdijk have argued. The region is not going to dissolve or become obsolete, although, of course, its salient characteristics will constantly change in response to internal and external actions, both intentional and unintentional.
§2.3

IDENTITY AS A METAPHOR
Possessing a personal identity has two implications. It means, first, that I differ from you and that you, too, possess one – that you are unique, as well. At the same time, identity means that we are alike or the same, as the Latin origin of the word, *idem*, indicates. Not only individual people but also groups can have an identity which distinguishes them from others and, simultaneously, indicates that they are *idem ditto*, exactly the same. Normally speaking, identity is associated with humans; individuals as well as groups. But identity can also be assigned to objects, places or regions. One could say that identity is used metaphorically when it is associated with non-human phenomena. In this section I will show that it is not the only term that is used as a metaphor when indicating the character of an area.

**The construction of identities**

First and foremost, identity is ascribed to individual humans or groups of people. Only secondarily is the concept used to characterise, for example, regions, cities or places. The word identity is derived from the Latin *idem*, which means *the same* or unchanged.49 What underlies the concept of identity is that a person is identical to him- or herself, from the cradle to the grave. Additionally, a person is equal to other people. In other words, he or she shares a number of characteristics with others, like being human, having a gender, and coming from a specific place. Paradoxically, identity also implies that an individual is distinguished from others. People are thus assumed to be the same as others, while at the same time we are all different.50

This paradox is solved by differentiating between identities of individuals and identities of groups. This is how the concept of identity can mean that each individual shares characteristics with others and yet is distinguished from them at the same time. In the social sciences, identity has always been a central issue, but it was treated as something innate, hidden deep inside a person, far away from the outside world. This conception, however, has not gone unchallenged. In the 1980s for example, sociologist Norbert Elias argued that an individual’s true identity is not an intrinsic, innate self, but the result of social processes of self-containment. Elias emphasises that the division between the individual and his or her surroundings is also a product of social processes. These processes suppress other potential interpretations of the role of the individual in a given group. The division between inside and outside worlds is a typically Western concept, but humans are, Elias believes, much more dependent on each other than the Western image of individuals allows.51

Some of the factors that shape identities are gender, race, social status, and religion. Place is also an important factor in forming the identities of both individuals and groups.52 As archaeologist Karin Altenberg states: "In the process of constructing communal or individual identity people try to control and manipulate places. In this process the power of seclusion is obtained and boundaries are formed along with social conventions and cultural norms."53 Territory, therefore, is not simply the setting in which group identities are constructed; it also plays a significant role in shaping them. Places express the identity of a group. The social world is organised in space. Places differ in scale – from a room to a street, a village or town, a state, or a continent – and all of them are filled with and constructed by meanings, memories, and human relationships. The members of a given community share common conceptions about both communal and individual space.54

**Identity as metaphor**

When we borrow the concept of identity, a notion that is primarily used in referring to human individuals and groups, and apply it to a region, we are using the concept metaphorically. In landscape studies, we find numerous such uses to indicate the characteristics of a region. A very early example is German geographer Carl Ritter’s term *Erdindividuum*55 (“terrestrial individual”, my translation), which he employed to designate macro-regions such as Africa, Oceania or Europe.56 It is worth noting that these early regional geographers probably used these terms not as metaphors, but almost literally, equating the character of regions with that of humans.57
In the next section I will discuss the concept of the *Individuum*, which Hettner took from Ritter, as well as the notion of the *personnalité géographique* as used by the French geographer Paul Vidal de la Blache, and, finally, that of *personality*, as found in the work of the American geographer Carl Ortwin Sauer and the English geographer Cyril Fox. Their use of human metaphors for regions is not accidental. These early geographers approached regions as actual entities possessing a strong coherence and inner harmony; accordingly, they could thus be studied and understood as functioning organisms.

It is not only the regional geographers of the early twentieth century who used concepts developed for describing human character and personality to indicate the characteristics of places or areas. For example, in the 1980s the architectural historian Christian Norberg-Schulz re-introduced the *genius loci* as a metaphor in identifying the characteristics of a place. This approach is strongly embedded in postmodern architecture, which made context a guiding principle in the design of new buildings. The notion of the *biography of place* was employed as early as in the 1940s and 1950s by American sociologists and urbanists in discussing the reputation of American cities, and again in the 1970s by the American geographer Marwyn Samuels. In his dissertation, archaeologist Jan Kolen further developed this metaphor, maintaining that the history of a given landscape is strongly linked to the biographies of its individual inhabitants and users. Kolen even suggests that landscapes have a *rhythm of life* which transcends the course of individual human lives.

Regional identity is thus only a recent addition to the tradition of using concepts metaphorically to characterise places and areas. Its first use, I believe, is in a study published in 1969 by David Kopf and Edward Cameron Dimock Jr. on the region of Bengal in western India. Another early example can be found in the unfinished research project *Identité de la France* (1970-1985) by the Annales historian Fernand Braudel. From the 1970s onwards, use of the concept has “mushroomed,” but it has rarely been discussed analytically. We may note here that DNA appears to be the latest branch to sprout from that same tree of concepts which initially applied to humans and were later used in characterising a part of the earth’s surface.
§2.4

MAKING A PAIR: REGIONAL IDENTITY
Although the use of the concept of regional identity has increased dramatically since the 1970s, it has received remarkably little in the way of rigorous analysis – neither in the spatial sciences, nor in heritage studies, nor in the practice of spatial planning. Having treated the concepts of region and identity separately, I will focus here on their combination, namely the concept of regional identity.

In the previous sections it became clear that some geographers fear that many places which now have meaning are bound to disappear in our rapidly changing society, while others, taking a constructivist approach to regions, contend that globalisation and mobility in our increasingly networked society have come to dominate the relationship of humans to their immediate, tangible surroundings. Here, I will argue that our identification with places or regions remains important, despite the rapid transformations occurring in our society and the increased mobility within it. I will finish this section by arguing for an interpretation of regional identity that focuses on the interplay between the processes which create meaning (the making of place) and the physical characteristics of the region. In this regard, phenomenology offers a good starting point in its central concept of the *lifeworld*. This term is a translation from the German *Lebenswelt*, a concept that was introduced by phenomenological philosopher Edmund Husserl to indicate the pre-existing world in which we, as bodily beings, experience, perceive and have our existence. That is a pre-condition of our being, but is at the same time constituted by our consciousness and experience.

The continuing importance of “making place”

Although regional identity has become a fashionable topic in research on spatial planning only relatively recently, we have seen that it is embedded in a longer tradition of applying human characteristics metaphorically to places and regions. The structuralist approaches to regions rejected the idea that the characteristics we ascribe to regions actually exist in the *real world* and emphasised, instead, the social construction of identities. In any case, in this view the plurality of identities and the importance of external relations make it impossible to determine with any real confidence just what, in fact, the characteristics of a region are. Regional identities are cut loose from their physical and spatial context, and the relationship of humans to a certain part of the earth’s surface seems to be determined solely by social processes. It appears to me that because of the strong emphasis it puts on external relationships, the region itself has become more or less *identity-less* in this way of thinking.

A geographer who further explored the notion of the region as a social construct – but in this case in relation to its physical territoriality – is Paasi. In his research he emphasises the interplay of various shapes in the construction of regions. He defines the latter as follows: “Historically contingent structures whose institutionalisation is based on their territorial, symbolic and institutional shaping.” Regions, in this view, are characterised by territorial shapes and symbols which express the region’s identity. A number of institutions are required to produce this territoriality and to express this regional identity; they define the difference between this region and all the others. Finally, Paasi maintains that a region also has an identity which exists through the social interaction of its inhabitants.

Cosgrove and his colleague Stephen Daniels offer a different approach to regions. Rejecting an exclusive concern with either physical characteristics or global networks, they claim that the practices of everyday social life are and will continue to remain important, despite the fact that the world seems to be shrinking as travel times shorten and communication technologies improve. Humans, they assert, will always want to feel at
home in their immediate surroundings and will devise all kinds of ways to achieve this end. Despite the omnipresence of change in society, we still try to make the place we inhabit into our home, to identify with it. The non-lieux and placelessness that were so feared in the 1970s and 1980s have not succeeded in dominating our daily lives.

In other words, the role of regional identity as a product of the interplay between the social processes of signification and the physical characteristics of the environment remains vital. Several authors from various disciplines have re-formulated regional identity from this perspective, while at the same time incorporating stability as well as processes of change in their approaches.

In 1980, Norberg-Schulz published his book Genius Loci: Towards a Phenomenology of Architecture, in which he employs the concept of genius loci in offering a phenomenological account of living and building. In his later work Nightlands, he asserts that northern light is the most basic element of Scandinavian identity and describes the decisive influence that the character of light exerts on the relationship between the traditional ways buildings are constructed throughout the region and the surroundings of these buildings.

Analysing the regional identity of Scandinavia through a study of its architectural history, Norberg-Schulz acknowledges that a “loss of place” has occurred and points to certain locations that are no longer places where people meet others and come home to. In many cases, the spirit or genius of a place, which enables people to identify with it and feel at home there, has been lost. Consumption and short-term experiences have become more important than meaning and continuity. Nevertheless, he sees the possibility of combining a regional identity - a sense of rootedness - with contemporary ways of building and of shaping the world in which we live. In Scandinavia, this is possible because the northern identity is already characterised by openness, dynamism and incompleteness, in other word, by qualities that are typical of our time. Architecture can, therefore, be realised there in a contemporary way, one which also does justice to the regional identity of the northern countries.

Regional and political geographer Kees Terlouw recognises the existence of historically evolved regional identities tied to a specific geographical territory. He calls these identities thick because they are based on shared cultural and social characteristics and a common past. He states that: “Despite the decline in the localised nature of social networks, residents are still in many ways interconnected. Living together in space makes them interdependent for their quality of life. Proximity, propinquity, or thrown-togetherness, are at the basis of many temporal identifications.”

Terlouw finds that these thick identities have become more fluid as social networks have become increasingly centred around the individual, whose multiple social ties (kinship, family, friends, colleagues, church etc.) no longer overlap. These localised social networks change over time, since shared interests can create a new form of regional identity that is more fluid and transitory than the traditional, thick ones. This process coincides with the increasing importance of regions in political and economic terms, creating thin regional identities, which he defines as communicated regional identities used in promoting external competition between regions as well as in gaining support from the local population for the effective functioning of regional administrations. Terlouw observes that thick regional identities are generally oriented towards a shared past, tend to value stability and the old ways of doing things and, therefore, are resistant to change. Thin regional identities, on the other hand, are future-oriented and receptive to new developments.

Using Terlouw’s concepts, we can summarise the aspects of regional identities communicated by regional administrations in the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspect</th>
<th>Ranging from thick:</th>
<th>To thin:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spatial form</td>
<td>closed</td>
<td>open</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>territorial</td>
<td>network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisation</td>
<td>institutionalised</td>
<td>project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants</td>
<td>general population</td>
<td>administrators and specific stakeholders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose</td>
<td>broad and many</td>
<td>single</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>cultural</td>
<td>economy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>defensive</td>
<td>offensive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>historically-oriented</td>
<td>future-oriented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>stable</td>
<td>change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>old</td>
<td>new</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scale focus</td>
<td>local and national</td>
<td>global</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tabel 2.1. Characteristics of thick and thin regional identities, ordered by aspects of regions.
These thick and thin identities should not, however, be seen as dichotomous, but rather as two poles of a continuum, since the way in which the aspects of identity are distributed varies considerably from region to region. Regional identities can also become thicker or thinner over time. Thus, Terlouw’s schema allows for a certain amount of overlap between these opposing types. In particular, he argues that thin regional identities are more successful in marketing when they incorporate parts of already existing, thicker identities.

**Regional marketing**

Terlouw’s thin regional identities (that is, “communicated identities by regional administrations”), which tend to be offensive, open and emerge from specific projects, are often exploited as single-purpose marketing tools. In this context, it is important to bear in mind that although we move more often than in previous centuries, we still maintain a definite preference for our current environment, which is sometimes called the *neighbourhood effect*. Research on migration in Western Europe shows that individuals and companies are generally not eager to move; and, if they do move, it is often for a short distance rather than to a different region. In the Netherlands, for example, every year only ten percent of the population move, twenty-five percent of whom stay within ten kilometers of their former location; and only fourteen percent move over a distance of more than one-hundred kilometers. Few people move between twenty and fifty kilometers away, apparently because this is a distance they are prepared to travel daily. Businesses are even more “home-loving”: three-quarters of businesses relocating within the Netherlands remain in the same municipality, and only six percent leave the region. Similar numbers have been found for other Western European countries.

This is precisely why economist Gert-Jan Hospers questions the effectiveness of municipal or regional marketing aimed at outsiders. *Warm* marketing aims at persuading current inhabitants and companies to stay in a given region proves to be more effective than trying to recruit newcomers to a city or region, demonstrating that the expression “there’s no place like home” is still reflected in relocation behavior. Hospers’ research also shows that, in any case, regional marketing is only successful in the long term. In governance, twenty years seems like eternity, but for the marketing of regions it is necessary to promote a region with the same message for that long a time.

The case studies following this chapter will show that not all regional identities that are created mainly to market a region to potential businesses and inhabitants from outside are equally successful. Hospers argues that marketing a region is very different from marketing a sweater or a new brand of coffee. Some regions are more easily promoted than others. regional identity, which he defines as the connection inhabitants feel with the region they live in, can vary in kind and intensity, and that makes all the difference.

**Reciprocity of humans and environment**

This emphasis on the importance of connectedness to a region – even though its advocates do acknowledge the influence of change and global networks – is not as widely accepted as some researchers think it should be. Archaeologist Christopher Gosden considers it a loss that there is no notion of reciprocity between humans and their surroundings in geographical publications. Although the approach is different in the social sciences, one detects a similar lack of attention there to this reciprocal relationship. This situation should act as a spur to devise a different approach to spatial notions of identity, one which would focus on the coherence between socio-cultural meanings and the physical environment. As I have mentioned before, place is a precondition for understanding the world, but it is equally true that humans need social and cultural concepts in order to grasp and interpret the physical world.

The world in which we live is such that human beings are able to observe it and endow it with meaning. This world would not exist, however, without humans who interpret it through cultural concepts. Gosden also recognises this reciprocity between man...
and world and emphasises the process of mutual construction: humans shape the world to the same extent in which the world shapes them.\textsuperscript{92} “Space is shaped and carved out by socially constructed patterns of movement and thus determines our future “room-for-maneouvre.””\textsuperscript{83}

Phenomenology seeks a way to grasp and interpret the coherence between humans and their environment, a notion that is fundamental to the interpretation of ‘regional identities’. Phenomenologists speak in this context of lifeworlds, the term they use to designate the self-evident context and pattern of everyday life. In this lifeworld, individuals can live an everyday life without consciously considering every action. The lifeworld consists to a large extent of actions, objects and places that are not experienced or questioned in a conscious way.\textsuperscript{84} The concept of the lifeworld rightly draws attention to the fact that the lives of people are a central part of the world, but the concept in fact is a pleonasm, since the word \textit{world} already signifies “age or life of man.”\textsuperscript{85}

In the lifeworld, the landscape, or the region, ideas are stored about the past, the present and the future. As Kolen argues, people do not arrange their landscapes or, more generally speaking, their lifeworlds, based solely on notions of the past; they take into account their intentions, ambitions, ideals, and utopias. The history of the lifeworld should, therefore, be seen not only as the continued effect of the past, but also as the realisation of expectations and images of the future.\textsuperscript{86}

It is not only intentions, ideas and ideals that are incorporated in the physical environment; social relationships are rooted in it, too, since the organisation of places reflects social structures. All these elements contribute to the socio-cultural processes of signification that jointly shape the identity of a region. Often, these processes occur unconsciously, as they take place in the self-evident practice of everyday life, which includes many actions and interactions that are executed without conscious thought.\textsuperscript{87}

Many scholars from various disciplines have written about this theme. The historical geographer David C. Harvey, for example, attributes to these actions “an unconscious generation of principles”, which is not very distant from sociologist Pierre Bourdieu’s concept of \textit{habitus}.\textsuperscript{88} The phenomenology-oriented geographer David Seamon writes about \textit{place-ballet}, by which he means the interplay of the unconscious, daily routines of many people within one area. This “dance” of daily, human movements creates a strong sense of place.\textsuperscript{89} The active role of the environment in the construction of regional identities consists of creating the preconditions of the lifeworld, which then determines our motion in space and secures, reproduces and represents socio-cultural relationships and meanings: “The material world is not a passive medium for social action, but a set of material forces which play a role in human action in a variety of ways. First of all, the world is not set apart from us, as a series of objects confronting a knowing subject because it is the world into which we are socialised. Notions of time, space and human relations are inculcated into our bodily being as we grow up.”\textsuperscript{90}

The world in which we live offers the prerequisite for humans to be able to observe it and charge it with meaning. At the same time, this world would not exist without humans who interpret it through cultural concepts. Gosden also recognises this reciprocity between man and world and emphasises the process of mutual construction: humans shape the world to the same extent in which the world shapes them.\textsuperscript{91} As Hilary Putnam formulates it: “The mind and the world jointly make up the mind and the world.”\textsuperscript{92} Jan Kolen adds that humans order and signify their lives based on concepts, ideas and values, but their lifeworld is never entirely unilaterally constructed by culture. Quite the contrary: our cultural concepts are a necessity to disclose and visualise the non-cultural dimensions of our world.\textsuperscript{93}

It is in this interaction between humans and their lifeworld that the construction of regional identities takes place. Anthropologist Tim Ingold formulates the origin of spatial notions of identity as follows: “A place owes its character to the experiences it affords to those who spend time there – to the sights, sounds and indeed smells that constitute its specific ambience. And these, in turn, depend on the kind of activities in which its inhabitants engage. It is from this relational context of people’s engagement with the world ... that each place draws its unique significance.”\textsuperscript{94} Place, at all its different scales – home, the landscape, the region – contributes actively to the construction of identities. In this
section I have written about humans giving meaning and signifi-
cation to place, but from the perspective of the active role of the
lifeworld, I could just as well have written of deriving or drawing
meaning from place.

If we conceive of the region as a lifeworld, following the
phenomenological approach, we can interpret regional identities
as a product of the interplay of human signification, human
actions and the physical characteristics of an area. Such an inter-
pretation brings up the question of the role of the apparent con-
tinuity in the physical characteristics of a region and the dynamics
which seem to characterise contemporary society. How can we
interpret the interplay between socio-cultural dynamics and phys-
ical continuity?

Let us return to Christian Norberg-Schulz, who emphas-
es the importance of a region’s identity, even in times of rapid
transformation and great mobility. As noted above, he sees the
possibility of taking the traditional, stable characteristics of the
Scandinavian region as a point of departure for contemporary
architecture. The essence of the northern identity would thus
be incorporated into new spatial developments. While Nor-
berg-Schulz has applied his ideas to only one specific region, an
interpretation of regional identity in which continuity and change
interact positively is applicable to other regions as well.

Another starting point for formulating an interpretation of
regional identity in which continuity and change are not necessarily
mutually exclusive is offered by the work of Kolen. He describes
how the rhythms of lives of individuals come together with the
rhythms of the earth, nature, and time. Following Ingold’s approach,
he also analyses how the rhythms of individual lives “resonate”
with transformations in the landscape and in the lifeworld of other
people. More specifically, and following Ingold again, in writing
about temporality Kolen observers that the natural rhythms of
the lifeworld, like seasons and the sequence of day and night, are
intertwined with the rhythms of individuals and societies. Humans
participate in landscapes, and because of this, the history of the
landscape cannot be detached from the histories of these individ-
uals. Social dynamics find their reflection in the environment,
which itself displays cyclic patterns of change with which our own

life rhythms resonate.

It takes time to “anchor” meanings in the landscape. Many
shapes, structures and buildings last longer than the lives of
individual people. The landscape shows resistance, is resilient
as it undergoes transformation, and is not infinitely malleable.
Certain older characteristics persist within the newer shapes that
the lifeworld assumes. I want to emphasise here that this is true
mainly for place on a supra-local scale. At the scale of the region,
physical changes occur more slowly than do changes in ideas and
meanings which lead to our making modifications in our own life-
world. On the local scale, say in a home, place can change drasti-
cally in a short period of time, for example, through demolition
or construction. The technological opportunities to intervene in
our physical surroundings may sometimes seem endless, but they
definitely are not.

Thus, the region can be approached as place, although on a larger
scale. Identity related to places is easier to conceive if the social
groups involved are relatively small, for example families, where
all the members know each other and their lifeworlds coincide.
But, then, how are identities constructed in cases where com-
unities are larger than the social networks of their individual
members, or the daily surroundings of these individuals? The
construction of identities in nation states has received con-
siderable scholarly attention, from, among others, the American
anthropologist and political sociologist Benedict Anderson. He
calls nations “imagined communities”, since there is no nation
whose citizens know most of their fellow citizens, yet they all
have a mental image of their community. In such large-scale
cases, many aspects play a formative role, especially cultural,
religious and spatial ones. Following Anderson, cultural geo-
grapher Stephen Daniels observes that: “National identities are
coordinated, often largely defined, by legends and landscapes,
by stories and golden ages, enduring traditions, heroic deeds and
dramatic destinies located in ancient or promised home-lands
with hallowed sites and scenery. The symbolic activation of time
and space…gives shape to the imagined community.”

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More recently, urban and cultural geographer Donald McNeill positioned this process of imagining national identities as four categories: stories, symbols, a geographical space, and ‘the other’. Every nation has stories that contribute to the construction of its identity, such as folk tales or a dominant historical narrative; or the process may be facilitated by the existence of national institutions or media. Symbols may also motivate the process of imagining communities; they may include, for example, foods, famous people, sports teams, flags or anthems. According to McNeill, geographical space (space as a real-world phenomenon) is also vital to the construction of identities, as it contains landscapes (or cityscapes) that have a symbolic function or represent particular values that are associated with the nation. The ‘other’, McNeill’s fourth category, is vital for constructing an identity, since it helps a group to define what it is not. He states that this process of othering is not only powerfully at work at the national level but also plays an important role in contemporary regionalism in Europe as well.

Moreover, the factors involved in the construction of national identities are in many cases also relevant in the construction of regional identities. In discussions of nations and regions, it is the former which is usually associated with the Enlightenment ideal of sovereignty. However, regions and nations can exist in many forms and may have common characteristics. For example, numerous sub-national regions have separatist ambitions that are nationalist in character, as is the case in the Basque Country, in Catalonia, and, to a lesser extent, in Scotland. Other regions currently exist somewhere between sovereignty and being part of a larger state, as is the case with Kosovo, which is recognised as an independent state by the United Nations but is regarded as an autonomous province of Serbia by some states. These latter countries are most often faced with a separatist region themselves, and want to prevent any successful precedents – Spain being one among them. Regions can also be supranational, or spread over parts of multiple countries, as is the case in Scandinavia, or in the Euregio Meuse-Rhine, which crosses the borders of Belgium, Germany and the Netherlands, as well as in the historic region of Karelia, located in the border area of Finland and Russia.

**Constructing regions through research**

Having argued that the spatial aspects of identity are still at the core of human existence and that the region has not lost its significance as a spatial entity, I will now briefly discuss two regions that have been extensively examined and that can be regarded as the main experimental subjects of the investigation of regional identity. My aim here is to show how research itself can have a strong influence on the construction of its own subject. The first example is Mediterranean world, which has been conceived as possessing a shared history and identity at least since the publication in 1949 of Fernand Braudel’s *La Méditerranée et le Monde Méditerranéen à l’Epoque de Philippe II*. His work set an example for many other studies, like *The Corrupting Sea* by Peregrine Horden and Nicholas Purcell, who choose a network perspective on the history of the region by emphasising connectedness, but otherwise remain deeply indebted to Braudel’s legacy. More recent works adopting a similar approach are those by Broodbank, Pieterberg, and Holton. Studying the lands around the Mediterranean Sea as a single region is not just an approach dominant in the historical and archaeological disciplines; it also affects the way in which this region is constructed qua region. Moreover, in the tradition of the Annales school, the *longue durée* is heavily emphasised, resulting in the publication of weighty tomes that treat the development of the Mediterranean region over very long periods of time. The Annales school has thus constructed not only the subject, but also its temporal dimension. The academy, of course, is not the first to refer to Roman times when approaching the Mediterranean area as a single entity. Many others have appropriated this Roman heritage for many different purposes. For example, “Mare Nostrum”, the Roman name for the Mediterranean Sea, was favoured by the Italian Fascists, as well as by other nationalist groups, and the practice still exists.

A similar construction of a research subject has been undertaken for the Nordic world. Norberg-Schulz’s work on Nordic regional identity set an example for many subsequent studies of the region. A recent example is the book – with its accompanying documentary series – by Stine Jensen entitled *Licht*.
op het Noorden (“Light on the North”, my translation), which shares Norberg-Schulz’s emphasis on the quality of the region’s light. Other examples are the *Journal of Nordic Archaeological Science*, created in 2002, and a recent collective effort of many geographers and landscape researchers that resulted in the book *Nordic Landscapes: Region and Belonging on the Northern Edge of Europe*. Its historical focus is on the past two centuries of the Nordic region – Norden as the editors call it – although there are some references to the Nordic countries shared roots in the Viking age. (Obviously, the temporal scale here is very different from that used in the case of the Mediterranean.) In this book the region is presented as a social construct of which the landscape is an integral part, but it should be noted that the identity of Norden is as much constructed by this group of academic researchers as it is studied by them – not least on account of their naming it in the way they do. Paasi, who is generally rather critical of the construction of regional identities through research, is a contributor to this volume. There are other regions, including the Baltic, where it is possible that researchers will construct an identity that requires research. But it is also significant to note that other, similar areas have not or hardly been defined as regions by academic researchers, like the countries around the North Sea. One exception, in this regard, is a study by the cultural historian Alain Corbin on the emergence of the sea as a place of pleasure and relaxation during the Enlightenment.

I have argued that the concept of regional identity should encompass both physical characteristics of a portion of the earth’s surface as well as socio-cultural processes of signification. It should also take into account the fact that some elements are stable or change only slowly, while others change quickly and abruptly. Finally, it should recognise that while humans play an active role in the construction of the spatial aspects of identity, so does the physical environment. It takes time to make a place, even more so on a regional scale than at the local or individual level. According to Paasi, regions have a longer historical duration than places, and, as mentioned earlier, he employs the concept of generation to mediate between place and region. Generation links together individual histories, which themselves are embedded in local and regional histories. It is not unlikely that changes on a regional scale have a dynamic similar to those occurring at the generational level rather than to those found among individuals or in places at the local scale. Here we encounter the temporal dimension of identity, which is the starting point of the next section, where I will discuss how heritage, history, and memories are all part of the same field of practices that give the past a place in the present.
HERITAGE, HISTORY AND MEMORY

§2.5

REGIONAL IDENTITY AND HERITAGE
Heritage is the last concept requiring an introduction in this chapter, since region, identity and regional identity have now been theoretically explored. Heritage is a complex concept that is often opposed to history, on the one hand, and to memory, on the other. I will argue that the differences among these three concepts – heritage, history, and memory – have generally been much exaggerated in the past, to an extent which does not reflect the practices in the field of heritage and which creates more problems than it solves. In practice, these concepts overlap to a large extent and are, in fact, interdependent; making sharp distinctions between them is unnecessary and counterproductive. I have found this to be especially true in my research, which continuously grapples with the overlaps among them. In analysing the role of heritage in the construction of regional identities, a more integrative approach to these concepts is necessary.

**History**

History has generally been considered to be the polar opposite of heritage. One difference between them that is often noted concerns their aims. History essentially seeks to understand the past in its own terms, while heritage engages with the past with any eye to the present and the future. As their points of departure and aims differ, history and heritage make different choices regarding what is remembered and what is forgotten. In writing history, one tries to select the most relevant parts of the past in the light of their contemporary context, while in the field of heritage one selects only those parts of the past that appear to be relevant and useful in the present and future. Researchers in adjacent disciplines, such as sociologists, anthropologists and geographers, have used historical approaches to nourish their insights. As a reaction to this incursion into the territory of the historians, the latter felt the need to demarcate explicitly their own field in contradistinction to others in which the historical dimension plays an important role. Thus, historians Jo Tollebeek and Tom Verschaffel argue that history is only truly history when it is based solely on intrinsic historical interest and serves no goals existing in the present. They assert that there is no hierarchy among subjects in historical research, as all facts from the past are equal and historical reality has no intrinsic relevance. They argue that the focus on the present, or *hodiecentrism*, misses the point of true history, which is driven by historical interest. In this approach, the historian appears to be a somewhat naïve realist, since he believes that is it possible to gather knowledge of and insights into a (formerly) existent but lost reality. Tollebeek and Verschaffel argue, accordingly, that the current use of the past for the presentation of identity is unhistorical. The authors thus provide an essentialist argument for demarcating history as different from sociology or geography and, at the same time, for dissociating it from all uses of the past in the present – including practices that others would designate as heritage.

Cultural geographer David Lowenthal also opposes history to heritage when he writes: “Heritage should not be confused with history. History seeks to convince by truth, and succumbs to falsehood. Heritage exaggerates and omits, candidly invents and frankly forgets, and thrives on ignorance and error.” Although he acknowledges that the boundaries between history and heritage may shift and partially overlap, Lowenthal portrays heritage as a doctrine, a craze and a “self-conscious creed,” that “looms large today and thrives on persisting error.” He is critical about history, but nevertheless emphasises that historians most often strive for openness and tell how things were and became as they are. Yet the distinction between history and heritage is not as clear as Lowenthal and other essentialising historians argue. Their underlying assumption is that history is only oriented towards the past, whereas heritage is concerned only with the present and future. But could the discipline of history do its work without a strong relationship to the past, given that it aims at understanding the past in the present? The answer is “no”, because the choice of research topics, the scope of inquiry, and the methods adopted are necessarily bound to the present. And could heritage do without a strong relationship to the past, as its aims lie in the
present and future? Some authors argue that a fictive connection to the past, or only a fantastic reference to the past, is enough to designate new places or things as elements of heritage, but in my opinion some relationship to the past is necessary in order to be able to speak of heritage.

In both fields, history and heritage, certain parts of the past are forgotten. In the case of history, this is because these parts seem less relevant than others to answering a historical question. In the case of heritage, those parts of the past considered less useful for present and future purposes are deliberately ignored. It is thus difficult to find a clear separation between history and heritage in this respect. Incidentally, it may be worth observing here that many products of historical work are financed by and applied in heritage settings.

Memory

A similar confusion and polarisation in discourse has occurred around the concept of memory. The confusion about what memory is and what it is not reached its zenith with the work of the French historian Pierre Nora, who introduced the concept of lieux de mémoire (“places of memory”), in which he connected memories to places. He argues that these places are a recent development and affect the way the past is seen in relation to the environment. They replace what he calls milieux de mémoire, social environments filled with memories, which have supposedly disappeared because of the emergence of mass culture and democratisation on a global scale. Nora romanticises memory, considering it to be immediate, permanently evolving, and absolute. He opposes it to history, which he describes as “the reconstruction of what is no longer”, and which he asserts is aimed at suppressing and destroying memory. Nora argues that it has thus become impossible to transfer memories intact to future generations unless there are anchors in the environment able to serve as mnemonic devices.

This anti-modernist approach to the way in which the past affects the present informs a large, encyclopaedic study on places of memory in France, produced under Nora’s leadership. The description of all these places, however, is essentially historical in character. Memories of individuals did not play a role in the documentation of the lieux de mémoire. Basically, Nora’s re-interpretation of these places as vectors for passing on knowledge about the past to future generations makes them into a kind of heritage practice. At the same time, he positioned memory as the polar opposite of history. Thus, in my opinion, Nora has contributed to the confusion regarding the meaning of both terms and made their distinction scarcely workable. I want to resolve this confusion by approaching practices that involve the designation and preservation of heritage as a conscious way of remembering; and, inversely: we can approach conscious ways of remembering as heritage practices.

Another problem with the concept of memory is that it refers not only to a mental function of individuals but to content, as well. It is thus a term with broad applications, from neuroscience studies of brain functions to writings on social practices in the context of war commemorations. One needs, therefore, to take both the individual and the social aspects of memory into account. Although it is individuals who remember things, memories are always situated in a socially determined context. Even the most personal feelings and thoughts are rooted in specific conditions and environments. Sociologist Maurice Halbwachs argued that individual memories cannot be detached from what he called collective memory. Even if an individual remembers an event that no-one else witnessed, he or she experiences and interprets this occasion on the basis of all the knowledge and experience he or she has already acquired, and much of these latter two categories are collective and determine the framework in which the memories of each individual are shaped. By virtue of being part of a social group, individuals are capable of acquiring personal memories, and of localising and recalling them. Memories form part of the ensemble of notions shared by others, such as places, dates and linguistic forms. According to sociologist Paul Connerton, the group provides a framework in which individual and social memories constitute places through a kind of “mapping”. In other words, we situate our personal memories within the mental space that is determined by the social group.

Thus memories are strongly rooted in a social context.
Still, remembering is a personal act. That is why some find Halbwach’s social memory to be a somewhat unfortunate term, since it suggests that memories can somehow exist in the social realm – between and outside individuals. Historian Jay Winter offers the alternative term collective remembrance. But not all memories take the form of remembrance, a notion which implies the sort of ceremonial remembering connected to the post-war memorial activities that Winter writes about. His analyses of the visual arts, literature, poetry, and many kinds of social actions have made it clear that collective remembrance is not only an affair of the state, but is largely determined by the way individuals and groups, like families or survivor networks, develop strategies and practices to express their feelings of bereavement and loss.

Memories are shared between individuals in a group, in order to maintain them and pass them on. This process of sharing memories is as important in shaping the identities of individuals as it is in shaping those of groups. Because certain memories belong to specific groups, they strengthen its internal cohesion and are a way to distinguish one group from another. The transfer of memories can take place in many ways, for example through telling stories, rituals, books, images and films, but also by anchoring memories in space.

Halbwachs emphasises the importance of the stabilising influence of our material environment. He points out that groups “engrave” their form upon the soil and retrieve their collective memories in the same framework. He also connects memories to space and group identities: “The group not only transforms the space into which it has been inserted, but also yields and adapts to its physical surroundings. It becomes enclosed within the framework it has built. [...] place and group have each received the imprint of the other.” In daily language concerning memories we assume that they are mental images of the past that can be recalled at will (or sometimes unintentionally) in the present. They demand spatial anchoring in order to be transferred socially. For this anchoring of memories, the most hospitable places are those which have remained relatively unchanged over a long period – including landscapes of memories, lieux de mémoire, memoryscapes and the like. In other words, it appears that there exists a type of space particularly suitable to the preservation of memories.

In light of the above, it may appear surprising that some authors do not view increasing mobility, improving communication technologies and other factors of globalisation as a threat to place or to the importance of real world phenomena for the construction of identities. Several authors even argue that identities come into existence not only thanks to continuity and the settlement of people in one location, as is the assumption of many geographers. They contend that travelling or movement can also lead to the construction of identity. According to Lovell, identity does not have to be bound to a ‘homeland’; it can also emerge in ‘in-between’ places, or even be de-territorialised altogether.

Travelling is not only a displacement, but also plays an important role in forming cultural values. Roots do not always prevail over routes. The production and reproduction of identities often takes place in border areas; in situations in which one is in contact with others and boundaries need to be marked. In some cases, a memory of a place of origin is sufficient to bind a group of people together. The memory of a place can sometimes counterbalance the sense of displacement and uprootedness.

Moreover, memories are not restricted to places where change comes slowly. Regions undergoing rapid transformations are also charged with memories, and memories can be ‘placed’ there, as an extensive case study by anthropologist Susanne Küchler illustrates. According to her research, the ‘lifeworld’ can also be perceived as a process of remembering and forgetting. Memory works in the interplay between humans and their environment. There are no holes in the so-called blanket of memories. Forgetting is often seen as a completely different from remembering, but in fact it is part of the same process; they are two sides of the same coin.

Heritage

Emphasising the differences between history, memory and heritage can be counterproductive in many ways. I argue, instead, for an integrative approach to the various ways of engaging with the past. A good starting point is the work of anthropologist Sharon Macdonald, who uses the concept of the ‘memory complex’ to
show how memory, heritage, and identity are woven together in the form of affects, practices and physical objects. To Macdonald, memory complex is shorthand for something which includes memory, heritage and identity. I think, however, that her conception needs to be enriched by the addition of history, in order for us to more fully understand the complex and diverse ways of “doing and experiencing the past”. Moreover, I claim that history and heritage are interdependent concepts.

History depends on heritage, as the study of the past is always deeply rooted in the present. Tollebeek and Verschaffel, as noted above, argue that history is a separate field which exists only on the basis of genuine historical interest and serves no present purpose. Accordingly, no one historical subject is more important than any other. However, they overlook the fact that, in most cases, historical research has its own fashions; at any given time, some historical themes are more popular than others. The selection of these themes takes place in the present. And while it is made by individual historians, the latter are subject to the influence of politics and to criteria related to funding. The utility of the past for the present, what we could call heritage, is omnipresent, even if not explicitly so, in the work of historians. Moreover, historians see the past through their own eyes, and they themselves are thoroughly enmeshed in the present. Likewise, heritage depends on history, as history generates the knowledge about the past that is appropriated and used for aims that lie in the present and future.

Like several other concepts I have discussed so far, the meaning of ‘heritage’ has been conceived in essentialist and, later, also in structuralist and phenomenological terms. Traditionally, heritage is referred to as the old objects, structures, and places that society regards as valuable for the present and future. These are seen as having intrinsic historic and ‘authentic’ value that merits care and protection. Heritage works with notions of durability, continuity and value. It is assumed that what is heritage is durable of character and carries certain values that make its preservation worthwhile. The selection, inventorying, conservation and restoration of physical objects possessing these intangible aspects are the core tasks of the heritage professional. In the course of the twentieth century, legislation and institutionalisation contributed to the professionalisation of this essential function of heritage. Although this approach to heritage as authentic material with intrinsic historical value is still the basis of the professional heritage field, a number of people have begun to conceive of heritage in a different manner, namely as something man-made, a process, or else as something essentially intangible.

The constructed and political nature of heritage has been highlighted by authors like Eric Hobsbawm, who contends that heritage is grounded in a deliberate and tactical reinterpretation of the past. He showed that many traditions that we take for granted are actually invented traditions, by which he means “a set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past.” The invention of traditions has always existed, but Hobsbawm suggests that in times of rapid social transformation old traditions disappear and new ones are invented. The latter function as a means of establishing social cohesion and become symbols of collective identities.

Following Hobsbawm’s lead, in the 1990s other researchers began to study various aspects of the deliberate appropriation of the past, looking at how it served to reinforce and legitimise power and authority. They stressed that heritage implies ownership, since it can be seen as a “manifestation of possessive individualism.” In Great Britain, especially, writers emphasised the political side of heritage, focussing on concepts like personalised heritage discourses, exclusion, otherness, and gender. These political aspects are closely related to the interpretation of heritage as a process of appropriation and signification. According to Laurajane Smith, heritage is not primarily a matter of objects or places; it is rather the experience of those things, and thus a social and cultural process. Nothing self-evident or inherently valuable dwells in the objects we conceive as heritage. Arguing that heritage is “a process of engagement, an act of communication and an act of making meaning in and for the present”, she comes to the conclusion that all heritage is intangible. It is a performance which consists of acts of remem-
boring and commemorating in the present, and it can also be approached as a discourse on negotiating cultural values and identities. Thus, in Smith’s interpretation of heritage, the relationship to the past has lost much of the significance it has in the more essentialist approaches to heritage. “Doing” heritage in the present has thus gained in significance relative to what are usually considered to be the primary elements of what we call heritage: relationship to the past and the authenticity of objects. The main thing is how heritage is used in the processes of creating and re-creating identities.

Starting in the late 1990s, phenomenological thought began to have an impact on the field of heritage, leading it to consider heritage as part of the lifeworld, with its accumulated remnants of the many successive generations who have lived (or dwelled, in Heideggerian terms) within it. The meaning of the ‘past in the past’ as well as the past in the present became a new focal point. In addition, researchers began to examine the significance of the bodily experiences, places and materiality involved in the processes of remembering. Scholars developed a biographical approach to objects, places and landscapes, as they looked at the changes in meaning these undergo, often over long periods of time – the longue durée.

Whether one takes a more traditional, essentialist approach to heritage, or focuses on politics, materiality or the processes of signification, how one treats physical objects and places is always an important matter. Various ways of treating heritage objects can be distinguished, reflecting different perspectives on heritage care and preservation. I begin with restoration and conservation, as representing the most traditional approach to heritage, the one which still underlies our current ways of caring for monuments. The re-use and redevelopment of old buildings and places (the second option) has always been important, but it has gained momentum as an approach to many types of monuments since the 1990s. The future of the unused portions of industrial or religious heritage, for example, is strongly dependent on whether new functions and meanings can be found for them. In those cases where sufficient funds, manpower, or interested parties to promote re-development are lacking, another option (the third) is to leave things as they are for the time being. Often it can be left up to a later generation to decide what needs to be done about an object and whether or not it should be regarded as heritage. Intentionally neglecting objects is a fourth option; in other words, leaving a place for other people or nature to take over permanently. Often, informal uses of these places emerge. Sometimes these are related to the latter’s aesthetic or historic value, but sometimes not. Think of garden plots on industrial wastelands, photo shoots in ruined churches, squatters moving into abandoned office buildings or car-parts dealers holding markets in deserted parking places. A final way of dealing with historic places is simply destroying them, erasing authentic substance and making way for entirely new functions and meanings.

Regional identities, time and heritage

On the Album Life for Rent Dido sings about the lack of a home; she never stayed anywhere long enough to create a feeling of attachment to a place. The fragment of her song, which I quoted at the start of this section, sheds a familiar light on identification with a place as home. Generally speaking, home is a form of place-making that can variously refer to a domestic space, a village, a region or a country.

In this chapter I have argued that these processes of placemaking and identification with one’s current environment have not diminished in importance, despite growing mobility and increasingly sophisticated global communication systems. The common sense idea reflected in Dido’s song is that making a home takes time. I believe that the processes of identification operating on a local level occur faster than the development of a region as place. Regional identities thus need time to “grow”, be it through traditions and ways of life, or strategic regional marketing campaigns, as Hospers’ research showed. Terlouw has pointed out how heavily the success of new regional identities relies on ‘thick’ characteristics of regions: stability, rootedness, culture, and long-established traditions. Although Terlouw does not explicitly write about heritage, I believe that heritage is an important factor the construction of regional identities, whether they are old or new. Heritage can provide evidence of roots,
authenticity, legitimation, and unity. It can give newer regional identities further legitimacy by highlighting relationships to the past. But heritage can also be used instrumentally to obstruct the construction of regional identities, as when it competes with other spatial identities within the same area. No region is completely stable and unchanging, and heritage – which lies at the basis of regional identities and which itself inevitably undergoes change – can play a symbolic role of continuity and recognisability in times of dramatic transformations. The case studies in this book sketch out the varied roles that heritage can play in the construction of regional identities in Europe.

Many of the aspects of placemaking are unconscious, occurring as part of the habitual practices of daily life. Memories, and especially their bodily aspects, are difficult to study, but they clearly constitute a major part of what Terlouw calls the thick aspects of regional identities. While it is not at all my intention to minimise the importance of the practices of everyday life in the formation of regional identities, in this book I have chosen to focus on the strategic and political aspects of heritage.

**Region, heritage and identity**

In this section I have argued that the ‘memory complex’ encompasses all practices that are aimed at giving the past a place in the present and future. Memory and history are part of the same field, inasmuch as they are both practices which are quite obviously associated with heritage. The three essays in the remainder of this book are all situated somewhere in the grey area where heritage, history and memory intersect. In my analyses, I use the findings of historical research, because that research is part of what I call heritage. For example, I consider historical studies on the Ruhr region as products of broader developments in the field of heritage. Accordingly, I don’t hesitate to draw on broad, authoritative historical surveys, along with concise local and regional histories (canons) in creating a backdrop for the analysis of the appropriation of the past in the present.

There is a third way in which I employ both history and heritage. My analyses of heritage always have an historical dimension. In other words, I study changes in heritage practices over a longer period of time than is usually done. In this sense, one could see my research as historical, with heritage practices as its main topic. Working with these multiple relationships among heritage, history and memory in the course of one research project is, of course, not an easy task. Nevertheless, I believe it was essential for me to do so in order to find answers to my research questions. My studies are incomplete and doubtless sometimes suffer from a lack of conceptual and methodological transparency. All the same, applying history, heritage and memory in this multifaceted way enabled me to make observations of the role of heritage in complex processes underlying the construction of regional identities that I could not have arrived at in any other manner.

All in all, one could call my approach to heritage moderately structuralist, since I do not believe that the value of heritage is inherent in the old objects that surround us. Heritage is constructed in the present, as part of the interaction of humans with each other and with their environment. However, I do recognize that authenticity and a strong connection to the past are important, since without them heritage could not exist in any meaningful way. And above all: although heritage is constructed in the present, but has a history of its own.
§2.6 SOURCES, PLACES AND FIELDWORK
The investigation of spatially-based notions of identity requires a combination of approaches in order to arrive at a clear view of the role heritage plays in the construction of these identities. Given that this research extends over several fields, it is not surprising that in each of our case studies methodological issues arose that needed to be addressed. My research explores - and is, at the same time, part of - a complex domain where none of the concepts it grapples with is free of debate and all of which are subject to multiple interpretations. In this section, I will discuss the choices I made when establishing historical frameworks for each case study. I will also make some remarks about the content analysis I carried out in one of the chapters and will briefly discuss the role of photography as part of my research. Finally, I will draw attention to the effects of remembering and forgetting on the sources that were available for this study.

**History and heritage sources**

As already discussed above, there is a clear difference between heritage and history. My dissertation focuses on heritage practices, but uses historical sources, as well. The latter serve multiple purposes. First of all, they function as a backdrop for the analysis of heritage practices, allowing us to see what parts of history are selected for present and future aims, and what parts are left out. All three case studies in this manuscript, therefore, start with a limited overview of the relevant portions of the region’s history.

The historical framework in Chapter 3, that offers an overview of the Early Middle Ages in Europe, refers to disputes among specialists concerning the interpretation of the transition from the late Roman Empire to the reign of Charlemagne and the centuries of Carolingian rule that followed. However, as its goal is simply to give an historical impression of the Early Middle Ages in Europe (without elaborating on the complex processes of change occurring at the time) no attempt is made to explore these differences in interpretation. The historical framework for the history of the Arnhem Nijmegen region in Chapter 4 benefits from the fact that there are several extensive histories of the region available in the form of the canons of Arnhem, Nijmegen and Gelderland, which provide the basis of that chapter. These canons were written in the wake of a nationwide trend to produce such works, which generally consist of fifty small chapters, each on one important historical theme. In itself, this is an activity more closely connected with heritage than with the academic discipline of history, although, to be sure, most of these works are written by experts. In sketching out the historical background of the Ruhr region, I have relied on several authoritative works describing its industrialisation, but I have also tried to maintain an international perspective, since the Ruhr is one of several former mining areas in the Western European “coal belt”.

Historical sources are not only relevant as a backdrop for analysing heritage practices; they also figure in the processes via which heritage is constructed and becomes a component of regional identity. In the case of the Ruhr region, particularly, the historical sources I have used are almost inseparable from the heritage practices which contributed to the explosion of interest in the heritage of the mining era that occurred in the 1980s and 1990s. Historical studies, therefore, have an ambivalent role in this dissertation, since they constitute external reference points for the analyses and, at the same time, form a part of the subject being studied. I acknowledge this difficulty and have tried to keep these two roles of history as clearly separated as possible, first, by basing the historical frameworks as much as possible on the acknowledged authoritative sources and, second, by including historical sources as elements of heritage practices only when their role in these practices is both highly relevant and very clear.

**Photography**

Regions and places are the focus of my research. Being “in the field” – which in many cases was an urban area – and making observations there have contributed greatly to my obtaining a clearer picture of the meaning and use of places than would otherwise have been possible. Visiting, participating in events and taking photographs allowed me to draw my own conclusions regarding the use and meaning of places – and these did not always coincide with what we may call the *authorised discourses* in this
domain. Because a major portion of my sources consists of places and images of places, I decided to develop a large database of photographs of the regions where I carried out my research. And since these images can contribute to a better understanding of my findings, I include a large number of them in this manuscript, no doubt more than appear in the typical dissertation on heritage and identities. They are not intended so much to enliven this book as to visually enhance my line of argumentation.

A brief content analysis – the Arnhem Nijmegen City Region

In order to enrich my exploration of the use of historical themes and heritages, I assembled a considerable amount of statistical data on the website of the Arnhem Nijmegen City Region and submitted it to a content analysis, thereby obtaining a clear overview of the different ways in which historical themes are referenced on the region’s promotional websites. Content analysis was originally developed as a tool for communication research and journalism, but thanks to the cultural turn of the 1980s in the social and spatial sciences, it affected the way the latter treated all their sources of information, and so landscapes and pictures, too, were deconstructed as “texts”. Content analysis became a tool geographers use to study the representations of places in the media and how such representations influence our knowledge and image of these places, and even the way we behave (spatially) when we are in them.147

Content analysis has been particularly valuable to me in researching regional marketing and image-building through media. It can be used, for example, to analyse the ways in which particular themes are presented in particular media, or the amount of attention media pay to a particular subject. In this case study, the method has been employed to determine which – and to what extent – historical themes are mentioned on four different regional promotional websites. By the time this book reaches its readers, the websites on which the analysis is based may well have changed or even ceased to exist. Although the analysis is, so to speak, a snapshot, it is still a valuable illustration of how various historical themes are represented in the Arnhem Nijmegen region.

Remembering and forgetting

This book concentrates primarily on heritage practices as selective, deliberate ways to indicate the existence of the past in the present, that is to say, to draw attention to those aspects of the past that are judged to have retained a certain significance. As much as I would have preferred to do so, it is impossible to pay equal attention to the processes of forgetting, which are no less relevant than those of remembering. In a sense, this is a reflection of the sources I have used. They not only disclose heritage practices; they are themselves the product of these practices. Finding what has been recorded is much easier than finding what has been left out. All together, these sources create a kind of objectified memory, one which possesses many features of a paradigm. The telling and re-telling of certain aspects of the past assumes a dominant position; demolition, counter-reactions and those who did not want to remember – or whom others did not want to be remembered are silenced. The analysis of the processes of remembering and forgetting is inherently problematic; for it is itself a form of remembering, and things that are forgotten are obviously much harder to trace than the things that are actively remembered. This manuscript naturally suffers from the same shortcoming; it passes on what is actively and unconsciously remembered and leaves out much of what is already forgotten or doomed to oblivion.


77 Patras, "Bonded Spaces in the Mobile World.

78 Ibid., 140.

79 patio, "The Temporality of Landscape."

80 Höpner, "Regional memory.


82 Ibid.


85 Keen Tellevis, "Reclaiming Regional Identities: Communicating Thick and Thin Regional Identities," Studies in Ethnicity and Nationalism 9, no. 3 (2009): 452-64.

86 Ibid.


89 Kolen, "Biografie van het landschap."

90 Ingold, "The Temporality of Landscape."

91 Kolen, "Biografie van het landschap." 100

92 Ibid., 87.


95 Donald McNab, New Europe: Designed Spaces (London: Arnold, 2004), 38-40.

96 Ibid., 7.


100 Alain Corbin, The Lure of the Sea: The Discovery of the Sea Side in the Western World 1750-1840 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994).

101 Ibid., 22-49.


108 Ibid., 140-41.


111 Ibid., 140.


113 Ibid., 140-41.


115 Ibid., 140.


118 Ibid., 140.

132 Macdonald, Memorylands, 5-6.

133 Ibid., 2.

134 Tollebeek and Verschaffel, De voogdijen van Nussassy, 47.

135 Macdonald, Memorylands, 17.

136 Ibid., 18.


138 Ibid.

139 Macdonald, Memorylands, 18.

140 Laurajane Smith, Uses of Heritage (Abingdon: Taylor and Francis, 2006), 1.

141 Ibid., 17.

142 Macdonald, Memorylands, 80.

143 See Kulen, “Biografie van het landschap.”

144 Macdonald, Memorylands, 96.

145 Hospes, “Regiemarketing.”


NURTURING A SHARED PAST?

Dynamics of early medieval heritage in present-day Europe
In Chapter 3 I shift the attention from a discourse analysis of regional identity, memory and heritage to concrete cases of the role histories and heritage play in the construction and transmission of regional identities. This chapter does not have a primarily geographically or regional perspective, but focuses instead on the heritage of one specific period, namely the Early Middle Ages, and raises the question of what role the heritage of that period is playing in the construction of regional identities in contemporary Europe. I will describe how one historical epoch can take on a variety of roles in different regions of the Continent.

Relevance

After several decades of increasing unification through treaties – Maastricht (1993) and Valetta (1998) – together with the introduction of the Euro and the expansion of the European Union, Europe’s ambitions for greater unity is now a much debated topic in the political and economic spheres. The recent economic and Euro crises have made the European ideal and its motto “unity in diversity” more controversial than before, and have raised new questions regarding Europe’s identity and its perspective on its heritage. How is European heritage to be defined and where should it be represented? Earlier rulers and governments appropriated the past in ways that helped them legitimise their authority and maintain their hold on power. What actions are the current European authorities taking to appropriate heritage, to strengthen the notion of “Europe,” and to legitimise their ambitions for still greater unification? At the present time, several projects are devoted to investigating how heritage can be used to communicate the European ideal to a broad audience, and they are particularly relevant to this study since they show how early medieval heritage is being appropriated with a view toward constructing a European identity.

After a brief discussion of contemporary Europe, I will present an overview of the Continent in the Early Middle Ages. The notion underlying the whole chapter is that of the dynamics of heritages: how heritages have changed, been forgotten, and renewed by appropriation, selection, demolition, conservation, etc. This chapter will illustrate how these processes have occurred in different contexts and in different moments in time. Several studies have been written about the appropriation of early medieval heritage for the construction of modern European nation states and national identities. England, France and Germany, especially, have strong traditions of legitimising their nations based on their respective medieval pasts. Other countries, such as the Netherlands, have omitted this historic theme from their nation-building processes, because it was associated with opposing ideologies or religions. Yet the use of heritage in regions within Europe is a topic that has received much less academic attention. These case studies on the role of Frankish heritage in the Euregio known as Meuse-Rhine and in Alsace emphasise the dynamics of this heritage in two regions which have a very distinct significance for Europe, both historically and today. Accordingly, in both analyses I seek to take into account the overall European background.

Main question

The main question of this chapter is really twofold:

What role does early medieval heritage play in public policy, publications, uses of historic places and in cultural projects in the Euregio Meuse-Rhine and Alsace; and in what ways does this role shape their respective regional identities in the context of European unification?

Objectives

This chapter elucidates some of the roles that early medieval heritage plays in contemporary Europe, both on the regional scale and at the Continental level, and shows how this heritage is appropriated and used in the construction of a European identity, as well as of two regional identities within Europe. As will become clear, the appropriation of heritage involves actions both in the past and in the present. It is an ongoing process in which heritages are preserved for the present and future; by its very nature it is in a state of flux, since the values and meanings of the heritage involved are constantly being confronted by new contexts.

Terms, periods and topography

While the periodisation of the Early Middle Ages varies somewhat in the literature, here I adopt the most widely accepted one, encompassing, roughly, the years between the fifth century and the end of the tenth century. Some geographic terms need to be clarified as well. Europe, first of all, is a territorial concept used since antiquity to refer to the western peninsula of Eurasia. Since then, it is has also been defined in cultural, political, ethnic, and symbolic terms. In this chapter “Europe” will refer to a geographic entity, but it will also include the latter’s historical, cultural and political aspects. When the governmental organisations of the European Union
are mentioned, they will be called by their official names. For example, the term "Meuse-Rhine" is the name of the Euregio (Euro-region) that covers a small border area including parts of Belgium, Germany and the Netherlands, and that is how I will use it here. And the same is true, roughly, for the other case study, on Alsace. Although its name is much older than that of Meuse-Rhine and its borders have shifted considerably throughout its turbulent history, I will use that name to designate the region which encompasses the two smallest departments in France: Bas-Rhin and Haut-Rhin.

Theoretical points of departure

Conceptually, the point of departure of this chapter is the notion that the heritage of the Early Middle Ages is as dynamic in present-day Europe as it has been in the past. Our knowledge of this specific period is the result of many centuries of selection, conservation, demolition, representation and reconstruction of heritage by many different groups, often for reasons related to the construction and maintenance of authority and power relations. These processes continue to operate today. The particular forms they take differ from country to country, from region to region and from place to place, depending on the character of the heritage but also on the characteristics and objectives of those trying to appropriate it. Our knowledge of the Early Middle Ages is, therefore, the result of centuries of successive appropriations of this period. Places, sites, objects, historic figures, traditions and written sources have become charged with the meanings and values of many different groups and individuals of later periods.

This chapter draws liberally on the work of geographer David C. Harvey for the insight it provides into the ways in which traditions, heritage, and notions of identity are interrelated in the medieval world. He focuses, in particular, on the past as a source of continuity and authority in hagiographical accounts from medieval Cornwall, but he supports his case study with such a solid theoretical foundation that one can fruitfully apply his ideas to today's use of the heritage of the Early Middle Ages, as well. He writes that the privileging of one heritage or history over another is a reflection of strategies of domination. He disagrees with Eric Hobsbawm insofar as he considers the "invention of tradition" and appropriation of the past not as a modern phenomenon but as a political resource which itself has a long history. Harvey does not judge these appropriations of the past as cynical manipulations and inventions, believing, instead, that these practices should be considered as part and parcel of their overall social context, including the notions of identity and power relations existing in their time. Harvey links the appropriation of the past with notions of identity, authority and continuity: "The past is essential to identity, and its manipulation to create apparently "natural" interpretations of history is central to the formation of power relationships and the maintenance of authority."  

While many authors have written about the appropriation of heritage in the past as well as in the present, Harvey's work is especially relevant here, because he links the construction of identities and the role of the past in that construction to daily practices and habits, that is to the repetition of meaningful actions by large groups of people. According to him "these processes reflected a myriad of actions and decisions that were linked to identities founded upon a sense of the past and in many ways related to actions and views of habit: they acted out "objective constraints encoded in unexamined assumptions" about what was reasonable and unreasonable."  

Harvey then connects contemporary versions of the past, in his case hagiographies, and the generation of a specific heritage to processes in which the Church established its authority. This chapter takes Harvey's ideas even further, by providing new cases studies and going beyond the confines of the medieval period, especially by examining the role that the heritage of that period is now playing Europe. As will become evident, his ideas of continuous re-use and re-interpretation of the past in relation to the generation of identities are readily applicable to modern regions as well. His emphasis on the authority of the Church will prove to be important for analysing the dynamics of early medieval heritage even up to the present time. Harvey draws mainly on written sources, whereas in this chapter places, traditions, and objects such as relics will also be treated as sources for understanding how the past was employed in the construction of regional and European identities. It may be noted in passing that the anthropologists George C. Bond and Angela Gilliam stress the importance of invented traditions for the continuity of objects more than Harvey does.
§3.2

EUROPE, IDENTITY AND HERITAGE

- CHOSEN LEGACIES -

- NURTURING A SHARED PAST -
Many others have written about how heritage functions and is used in contemporary Europe, and much has been said since the late 1980s about heritage and its political dimension by authors in cultural studies, heritage studies and anthropology. This is not the place to summarise all these studies, nor to give a complete overview of all the policies that aim to stimulate a feeling of European identity by drawing the public’s attention to the Continent’s rich cultural diversity. Thus, in this section, after introducing some of the current projects aimed at nurturing European identity, I will limit the discussion to heritage policies concerned with the early medieval period.

**Efforts to strengthen European identity**

The economic and political unification processes of the last six decades took place in the context of great cultural diversity, in which different and sometimes contradictory readings of the past played a major part. The cultural, linguistic, ethnic and religious diversity of the Continent poses challenges for European integration, which, in principle, is concerned mainly with politics, law and economics. Questions about European identity seem even harder to address than other aspects of unification, partially because a very narrow definition of unification has undermined efforts to focus on a notion of identity that is can be accepted throughout the Continent.\(^{10}\)

The European Union was initiated around 1950 with the creation of the European Coal and Steel Community. It was seen as a means of preventing another war in Europe; for it would encompass two key industries necessary to create military buildups. Since then, the European Union has gone through several phases of expansion and institutionalisation. The current European Union (EU) was established with the signing in 1992 of the Treaty of Maastricht, and the Euro was introduced after 2000, though a European constitution was turned down by referendums in a number of countries.

At the current time, the European unification process is suffering from a severe lack of popularity and trust, not only among the member states’ populations, but also at the governmental level. The economic and Euro crises have changed the degree of importance many people now attach to the feeling of sharing something in common that is specifically “European.” The ideal with which the union started, *never to wage war again*, has been pushed to the background and seems almost forgotten after several decades of relative peace in Western Europe, the expansion of the Union, and the introduction of the Euro. In a symbolically important decision, the Nobel Peace Prize for 2012 was awarded to the European Union. Clearly, the committee wanted to highlight the most important result of the Union: “the successful struggle for peace and reconciliation and for democracy and human rights. The stabilising part played by the EU has helped to transform most of Europe from a continent of war to a continent of peace.”\(^{11}\)

Within the European context, all kinds of cultural projects and initiatives have been undertaken to enhance the notion of a shared identity, culture, and past. The basis of all of them is the notion of “unity in diversity.” This is the motto of the European Union and it emphasises that the variety and cultural richness of the continent is its main asset. While I cannot cite here all the European cultural initiatives, I would like to mention several examples. The first is the annual naming, since 1985, of two cities as European Capitals of Culture, chosen to “provide the living proof of the richness and diversity of European cultures” and “foster a feeling of European citizenship”.\(^{12}\) Another example is the European television (and radio) channel Arte (Association Relative à la Télévision Européenne), which has been broadcasting German and French shows on cultural and art-related topics since 1992.

The annual Eurovision song contest should be mentioned, as well. It started in 1956 as the initial program of the European Broadcasting Union, which has grown into a cooperative venture of 23 national broadcasting organisations.\(^{13}\) Without interruption, the Eurovision song contest has been held every year, hosted by the previous year’s winning country.\(^{14}\) European institutions have an agenda based on stimulating cultural diversity and dialogue, promoting culture as a catalyst for creativity and innovation, and enhancing culture as a part of the Union’s international relations.\(^{15}\) Union’s cultural policy mandates a five-year term for cultural programs.
Europe in international heritage policies

In the preservation and honouring of tangible and intangible heritage on an international scale, UNESCO World Heritage, part of United Nations, is of course the major institution. As a consequence, its international list reflects the self-images of its member countries and the aspects of their culture they find most valuable from that particular perspective. Despite the presence of a relatively large number of European sites on the UNESCO World Heritage List, most of them reflect national self-images and historical epochs in history that were important in the formation of the different European nation-states. For example, the list is filled with castles and cathedrals of the Gothic and Romanesque periods. Less well represented are sites from earlier ages, as well as any reminders of the European scale of the ambitions of former rulers such as Napoleon, Charlemagne, or the Roman emperors. The dark side of Europe – crises, conflicts, wars, and the Holocaust, all essential formative factors in Europe’s history – is under-represented on the UNESCO List.

There is, however, at least one example of international heritage that ignores all national borders and is listed and protected in its entirety by UNESCO. It is the Struve Geodetic Arc, a series of points established by a survey undertaken to measure a part of the earth’s meridian and covering a distance of 2,820 km. Crossing ten different countries, from Norway in the north to the Ukraine in the south, the project dates from the nineteenth century and was carried out in conjunction with an agreement on international boundaries within Europe, something which required accurate mapping.

Returning now to recent European efforts, I note that one recent initiative is the creation of a European Heritage label which “highlights heritage sites that symbolise and celebrate the integration, ideals and history of the European Union. From monuments and archaeological landmarks, to places of remembrance and cultural landscapes, each site has played a significant role in helping to shape the common history of Europe and the building of the European Union.”

[Map 3.1. Struve Geodetic Arc]
The criteria used by the European Commission stress the importance of a site’s symbolic value in European terms and its relevance to Europe in the past as well as in the present; it must have a pan-European or cross-border character as well as a connection to European events, movements, or people. The emphasis on tangible heritage and the lack of participation is a classic approach. Significantly, and somewhat in contradiction to its international character, all the sites on the list have to be pre-selected at the national level. As a consequence, national criteria and ambitions primarily determine which sites receive the European label and which sites do not.

A successful European initiative that should be mentioned here is that of the European Heritage Days. Since 1991, 50 countries have been celebrating their heritage on the same day. Again, every country has its own way of organising and programming the event, which makes it as much a national as a European event and conveys as much a national as a European interpretation of the past. The European Heritage Network, an initiative of the Council of Europe, has set itself the goal of linking heritage organisations and facilitating new partnerships and projects. The latest institutionalisation of heritage policy at the continental level was the establishment of the Steering Committee for Culture, Heritage and Landscape by the Council of Europe in 2012.

There are also many other European initiatives and institutes involved in the selection, preservation, interpretation, and presentation of European heritage. One of them is the European Institute of Cultural Routes, which fosters the development of cultural routes on a broad range of themes in order to create common memories and strengthen European solidarity through tourist travel. Nevertheless, a lack of monitoring has left us without a clear picture of the uses and effects of these routes.

Europe and its early medieval heritage

So far, a review of the policies of several international cultural heritage bodies has shown that European heritage has been and still is used to construct a desired image of the past – one that strongly emphasises the rise of the nation-states and the development of a peaceful and diverse union. But it lacks room for what are probably the most formative parts of European history: conflicts, borders, wars and other forms of violence. One could say that interest in the Continent’s past is a thin one; it goes only far enough to include those stories and heritages which conform to an ideal representation of Europe, an important aspect of which is a certain kind of past.

This is clearly the case when it comes to the role of early medieval heritage in particular. Several European projects have incorporated international heritage of this period in their programmes. One of them is “Cradles of European Culture: Francia Media,” which is financed via the European cultural programme for 2010-2015. The project aims at strengthening the idea of Europe by recalling the existence of the Frankish Middle Realm, which once united vast areas stretching from present-day Friesland in the north to Slovenia in the south and included Rome and Aachen as its two major centres of power. Its heritage incorporates certain important strands of an early European identity. The project encompasses research, a new tourist heritage route, a travelling exhibition, and the preparation of a methodological handbook on organising international heritage revivals. The Frankish Middle Realm existed for only several decades, during the declining phase of Carolingian royal power. Nevertheless, its heritage is now employed as a way of telling the story of a once united Europe and treated as containing intimations of current European ambitions. One might say the interest in this period is too “thin”; for it simply selects the parts that are currently relevant and usable. Such an interpretation of the past fits neatly into the above-mentioned processes of appropriation that have been active, in general, in the European identity project. The motto “Unity in Diversity” will be applied in several ways to the heritage of this period, and emphasis will be placed on the parallels it shows with the world we live in today.

As stated earlier, that project is the context in which the present thesis is written and serves as its major funder. The thesis, therefore, does not just illustrate constructions of a European past; it is itself part of these processes of appropriation of the past.
Map 3.2. European project Franca Media: Cradles of European Culture

Heritage sites from the Heritage route

Associated partners

- Service Public de Wallonie, Luxembourg, Belgium
- Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Université Libre de Bruxelles
- Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Université Libre de Bruxelles
- Museum of Croatian Archaeological Monuments, Split
- Khedive Museum, Cairo
- CERN S.A., Geneva - Switzerland
- Universität Wien, OÖ Lk, Graz
- Museum of Robotics, Berlin
- Museum of Modern Art, Zagreb
- Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest
- Museum of Fine Arts, Prague
EUROPE IN THE EARLY MIDDLE AGES

§3.3

- CHOSEN LEGACIES -

- NURTURING A SHARED PAST -
Given the scope of this thesis, it is not necessary to include an extensive overview of what we know about Europe in the Early Middle Ages, especially since the literature on this period, roughly 400 to 1000 A.D., is abundant. Still, the chapter will offer a brief account of how Europe was structured politically, spatially and culturally in the days of Carolingian rule in order to provide an historical-spatial context for the two case studies. This section is based on the idea that all the elements of the heritage that remain to us from the early medieval period are the products of continual processes of re-use, conservation, transformation, selection, demolition and reconstruction – processes which have been occurring ever since that time.

**An age of transition**

We begin with one of the highlights in the slow disintegration of the Roman Empire from the third century AD onwards, namely the Emperor Constantine’s decision to transform Christianity from a despised and suspect religion into the official religion of the Empire. He also left Rome and built Constantinople to be the new capital of the empire, thus initiating its eventual partition into a Greek-speaking eastern part and a Latin-speaking western part. The Eastern Empire, survived for another thousand years, but the Western Empire declined as a result of social and political turmoil. Over the course of four centuries, many political, social, military and economic institutions disintegrated, leaving the empire vulnerable to invasions and attacks of “barbarians” like the Vandals, Huns, Goths, Alans, Suebi and Visigoths.

Eventually, the Empire broke up into several regions, all developing the remnants of the Roman social, economic and political systems in their own particular ways. The disappearance of the formal imperial frontiers in Western Europe meant a replacement of static political and intellectual borders by an expanding cultural frontier, touching parts of Europe that had hardly been influenced by Rome before, such as Ireland, Scandinavia, and Central Europe east of the Rhine. As Collins puts it, these regions were gradually absorbed into a single cultural continuum as the result of the spread of Christianity. Conversion to Christianity often brought economic benefits; in the West these derived from the growth of monasticism starting in the late fourth century, especially with the creation of permanent institutions from the sixth century onwards. The heritage of the Roman period was deliberately re-used and re-interpreted as the new religious and secular rulers incorporated it into their strategies to consolidate and legitimate their positions of power.

**Merovingian rule**

At the end of the fifth century, the Merovingian dynasty gained power in the late Western Roman Empire. Childeric was a warlord from Gaul whose kingdom was one of several barbarian realms that were more or less supported by the Roman Empire, such as those of the Ostrogoths, and Visigoths, and which also encompassed Burgundy and Provence. Childeric was succeeded by his son Clovis, whose dynasty became a dominant power in early medieval Western Europe.

In 751 AD a change of dynasty occurred, in which one of the powerful aristocratic groups gained control. The Arnulfings, whose power was centred in a region called East Francia, were close to the court, and one of them, Charles (later known as Charles Martel or Hammer), was the first of his dynasty to gradually gain dominance over many parts of the Frankish realm in the early eighth century. From his base in northeast Francia he undertook multiple campaigns to gain control over southern and western Francia; eventually he created local networks of support in which aristocrats were eager to participate, helping him to impose a centralised authority. As a consequence, the centre of power of the Frankish world shifted towards the Meuse-Rhine area, giving it international importance for centuries to come. Charles Martel’s son Pippin III was eventually crowned king with papal consent in 751. Pippin died in 768, and his kingdom was divided between his two sons Charles and Carloman; the latter died soon after, leaving his share of the territory to his brother.
Charlemagne

Charles (later called Charles the Great or “Charlemagne”) was an ambitious ruler who re-conquered many parts of the lands that had once been under Merovingian influence. Although Carolingian annals give the impression that these conquests followed each other almost effortlessly in the course of the eighth century, the process of re-imposing centralised hegemony was much more complex, consisting not only of more or less successful military campaigns, but also of specific territorial policies.

Wealthy abbeys and powerful bishops could pose a real threat to the centralised power of the Carolingian rulers, who therefore, in the first century of their rule, sought out allies within the religious communities. The latter became tied to the ruler through the disposition of church lands, which appears to have been a foundation stone for the Carolingian political system. The ruler was able to require that annual rents were to be paid to the court.

As the Carolingians gained in confidence, their self-image changed; they began to represent themselves as leaders divinely chosen to carry out the task of spreading Christianity. Many regions and peoples were, in fact, conquered by the Carolingians and Christianised in the name of God. The monasteries, moreover, served not only as missionary institutions, but also became responsible for educating the young aristocracy, thus fostering a new generation of elites strongly tied to the Carolingian world and its culture.

A changing political style

The concept of a kingdom or empire in the Early Middle Ages was not the same as it is today, yet modern historians tend to project contemporary ideas and ideals of a nation-state upon earlier territorial power systems. The boundaries of Charlemagne’s empire were not as static, institutionalised and clear as those in today’s Europe. A kingdom was personal property, able to be subdivided among kin as a personal inheritance, in contrast to the ideal, nineteenth-century concept of an indivisible nation-state.

Around 790 the expansion of the Frankish empire slowed down, creating the need for a new form of politics better suited to consolidating the gains already made. War was no longer a binding element among the Frankish aristocracy, and thus Charlemagne pushed his aristocracy towards a more tightly organised hierarchy, one based on the loyalty of free men to the king. They had to swear oaths on holy relics and offer a prayer for the king and kingdom in church services. Counsel and consensus became important values in annual assemblies, where the king, the aristocracy and church leaders met to discuss political matters and where gifts to the king were given with public display. Also, Charlemagne ordered that many capitularies be written. These documents, which recorded the collective decisions taken by the assemblies, were essentially ad hoc responses to existing problems. The capitularies were meant to strengthen the ties between the court and a heterogeneous group of over a hundred counts, facilitating dialogue between king and the most important agents of royal government. They also form the most important historical source of information about Carolingian government, strongly colouring the image of this period in later centuries, including in recent research.

Another change in Charlemagne’s political style was reflected in the construction of royal palaces in places that had not previously been inhabited by Merovingian kings, such as Aachen, Frankfurt and Ingelheim. These palaces were situated in the heartlands of the empire, where Charlemagne expected the political elites from all provinces to visit him at the annual assemblies. The architecture of these palace complexes borrowed both stylistic elements and physical objects from Roman imperial buildings - a self-confident statement of Charlemagne’s political success. The monumental idiom however was new, as was the idea of siting these palaces in different locations than those of the former Merovingian palaces. They were to function as key elements in a new system, in which a permanent capital was replaced by multiple meeting places between the elites and their ruler.

Many of Charlemagne’s measures where directed towards re-educating the regional elites in their responsibilities towards the king as a representative of God on earth bringing “peace, unity, and concord among the Christian people.” In this way,
the landowning aristocracy was offered new, moral ways of legitimising their hierarchical position, status and power. The roles of regional elites had changed substantially in the course of the eighth century; regionally oriented rulers became members of an elite which could acquire power and wealth in many different parts of the empire, as they fulfilled their new roles within the framework of the Carolingian system. At the same time, the Carolingian court encouraged the formation and consolidation of separate regions with their own identity, such as Alamania, Bavaria or Aquitania. The later subkingdoms within the empire emerged within the boundaries originally created by the formation of these regions. This process accommodated regional differences within the empire in such a way as to strengthen Frankish rule over areas that had long been accustomed to self-government.

**Frankish rule after Charlemagne**

Around 780 Charlemagne dispatched two of his sons as viceroy to Aquitaine and Italy respectively, and in 806 he passed the Frankish heartlands on to his eldest son, all the while demanding full obedience from his sons while he himself ruled from Aachen, thereby anticipating the ultimately precarious subsequent division of his empire among his offspring. When Charlemagne died in 814, the Frankish heartlands passed to his only surviving son, Louis of Aquitaine, who had his own son Lothair crowned co-emperor.

Meanwhile his sons Louis, Pippin and Lothair, were able to build up strong networks of regional support in Bavaria, Aquitaine and Italy, respectively, and around 830 they started to revolt against their father, forming an alliance and stripping their father of all imperial titles and having him deposition in 833 (at the field of lies in Alsace). Louis was eventually re-crowned, and when he died in 840, he left his son Lothair as his sole imperial heir. Meanwhile his sons Louis, Pippin and Lothair, were able to build up strong networks of regional support in Bavaria, Aquitaine and Italy, respectively, and around 830 they started to revolt against their father, forming an alliance and stripping their father of all imperial titles and having him deposition in 833 (at the field of lies in Alsace). Louis was eventually re-crowned, and when he died in 840, he left his son Lothair as his sole imperial heir. However, for his brothers and the Carolingian elite, conflict had become a matter of habit, and a war ensued in which Lothair was defeated by his brothers and forced to settle for a division of the empire in three parts in 843 by the Treaty of Verdun. West Francia, Middle Francia, and East Francia fell to Charles, Lothair, and Louis, respectively.

Multiple Carolingian kingship had always been acknowledged, but the conflicts among Louis the Pious and his sons proved that an overriding imperial power over the other kings was no longer accepted, and equality in power among them was formally established. Lothair kept the imperial title and passed it to his son Louis II, King of Italy, in 855. The imperial title thereby became attached to the ruler of Italy; but while it still bore a slight measure of superiority and a link with the legendary Charlemagne, it no longer signified political dominance over the other kingdoms.

The borders between the three kingdoms cut across existing boundaries of royal, aristocratic and ecclesiastic administration and landowning. The kingdoms possessed no specific cultural unity or identity, and their boundaries did not prove to be long-lasting. Charles the Bald, in the west, increased the frequency of his travels, institutionalising a strong bond with abbots and bishops, who often hosted him and his court. His manner of ruling was highly sophisticated, and he developed liturgical rituals for creating kingships and for exalting royal power. The reign of his brother Louis the German, in East Francia, was less concerned with royal ideology, but it was closely associated with the development of writing and literature in the vernacular, i.e. Old High German, a process initiated at the monastery of Fulda. The kingdom had an “open frontier” to the Slavic east, which was the scene of frequent plundering, warfare and exchange. Lothair ruled the middle realm, which still formed the heart of the empire, but much less has been written about this kingdom than its neighbours, since it is not considered to be an ancestor of any modern European nation-state. Lothair divided his kingdom into several subkingdoms, reflecting the difficult political geography of his realm, which consisted of several quite distinct regions. After his death in 855, both his brothers attempted to gain control over the Frankish heartlands, which had been granted as a kingdom to Lothair’s son Lothair II.

Starting in the second half of the ninth century the coherence and stability of the Frankish world slowly began to diminish. Rivalry between aristocrats often led to turbulence and violence. Nevertheless, the kingship formed in Carolingian days remained
a model in medieval European politics. With the death of Louis the Child in 911, the Carolingian dynasty died out in East Francia, and he was succeeded by regional counts. One of them, Henry of Saxony, was elected king of the eastern Frankish realm in 919. His son and successor Otto I gained more control over the dukes and bishops and expanded his territories. He reigned for almost four decades and was crowned emperor in 962. His son and successor Otto II avoided conflicts with the eastern emperor in Constantinople by marrying the Byzantine princess Theophanu. Their son Otto III died young and childless in 1002. His cousin Henry II succeeded him, but likewise died without heirs, in 1024, and this signalled the end of the Ottonian dynasty and of the first phase of the history of the Holy Roman Empire.

Christianisation

The processes leading to the spread of Christianity throughout Europe are immensely complex. It is likely that the church in Ireland, which was converted to Christianity in the fifth century, played an important role in expanding monasticism and in the evangelisation of Europe, as did the missions sent from Rome. The differences between Roman and Anglo-Saxon monasticism and religious practice led to conflicts within the Church. The Irish established monastic communities on the Continent which attracted members from local communities and received protection and support of the Frankish aristocracy.

In the middle of the seventh century and in the following centuries, the monastic communities became increasingly involved in Frankish political turmoil, which included new conquests, competing elites, conflicts over loyalty (the pope versus the king), and power struggles between rival Frankish aristocrats. In the course of the eighth century several churchmen, working together with the Carolingian rulers, spearheaded a correction of many regional religious differences, both major and minor, establishing universal norms for reshaping the church communities and their teaching. Their aim was to define a universally observed Latin Christendom in Western Europe. This movement had both political and religious dimensions, as that unification was necessary for the consolidation of Frankish political hegemony. This concept of correction was not invented, however, by the Carolingians; it was already evident under Visigoth rule in Spain, as well as in Anglo-Saxon England and Merovingian Gaul. All the same, the Carolingians transformed it into an all-embracing campaign to ensure material power through ecclesiastical standardisation and organisation.

They introduced a Latin freed from the numerous existing regional variations in writing and pronunciation, as well as a new, “Caroline” miniscule for handwriting which was intended to make texts easier to read and faster to copy. In addition, networks of prayers for church members were instituted throughout the empire and held periodically to promote a sense of collective religious leadership. A formal hierarchy of archbishops and bishops subordinate to the arch-chaplain at the royal court was established, making it clear that the Carolingian church stood under royal leadership.

Monastic life changed in the ninth century, as the small monasteries dependent on aristocratic families were absorbed by the larger monasteries, where emphasis was placed on liturgy and masses, and where monks were expected to be trained priests. The cult of the saints was also reformed in the age of Charlemagne. The possession of relics by churches was institutionalised, and Church leaders were no longer seen as holy men during their lifetime, as Boniface, for example, had been. Rather, genuine relics from older, Roman saints were acquired and worshipped. Hagiographies, writings about the lives of saints, should be seen as appropriations of the past, as they were produced for very specific purposes: they connected a saint to a specific place and provided them with roots or origins and thus served to strengthen the authority of the Church. Rites for baptism and burial were standardised, and thus the local church and its cemetery increasingly became the focal point of village life, both practically as well as spatially. Cemeteries not only placed the Christian ancestors at the heart of the community; they also functioned as places for meeting, trading, and all forms of collective action.
The Carolingian Renaissance

The “correction” lead to an explosion in book production, mainly in order to supply priests, but also some laymen with authoritative religious texts. It also helped spark a revival of learning, music, art and architecture in the ninth century. This sudden expansion of cultural and learning associated with royal court is often called the “Carolingian Renaissance”, making reference to the later Italian Renaissance with its increased interest in Classical thought and art. In fact, however, the Carolingians also drew on a number of other sources in developing their cultural, political and organisational innovations; Biblical, early Christian, Roman and Merovingian heritages all played an important role in the shaping of the Carolingian empire and its cultural revival. While a sense of renewing the knowledge, cultural elements and values of Classical Antiquity was important in the Carolingian cultural revival, many aspects of it have been debated by contemporary scholars; for its debt to Rome is multi-faceted, and somewhat similar revivals were undertaken by the Merovingian and Byzantine rulers. The underlying purpose of the corrections and of the stimulation of cultural innovation was the creation of a harmonious Christian realm, in which peace, stability and royal control went hand in hand. Also, the Carolingians wanted to been seen as the legitimate heirs of the Roman Empire. A universally followed religion was another of the major elements employed to unify the vast empire of Charlemagne and to justify his rule. The “correction” was not only an organisational effort. It also had important intellectual and artistic components, and starting around 774 Charlemagne’s court began to promote learning and scholarship. Poets, grammarians, astronomers, and scholars from outside Francia came to the court, willingly or as hostages. Books and manuscripts were collected, copied and richly illustrated, and a court library was assembled containing copies of both Classical (i.e. pagan) and Christian writings, such as the works of Cicero, Horace, Martial and Statius. The emphasis appears to have been on the teaching of grammar and the other liberal arts, but exactly who was taught and to what extent this scola palatii was institutionalised remains unclear. Some of the learned courtiers served as architects of the reform movement, for example Alcuin. Other centres of learning sprang up in the ninth century, notably the monasteries of St. Gall and Reichenau, with their extensive libraries of (mostly) religious works. These developments constituted a renewal of the religious culture and traditions of the late Roman period, which had continued to survive in Spain, Gaul and England from the fifth to the seventh centuries. In the ninth and tenth centuries learning declined, largely because central authority weakened, resulting in a decline of resources for the pursuit of learning and in the fragmentation of networks for the exchange knowledge, personnel and manuscripts. As part of their effort to legitimise their rule as self-proclaimed successors of the Romans, Carolingians reintroduced the Roman style of chant and liturgy, and they developed a detailed notation system for music in order to establish a uniform way of singing throughout their vast lands. The “renovation” was also evident in architecture. The royal chapel in Aachen is an important example of how Roman architecture was re-cycled, both stylistically and materially. The Church of St. Vitale in Ravenna was probably the model for the chapel at Aachen, and Roman pillars, along with a statue of Theodoric, were transported from Italy across the Alps to be included in the new chapel complex. Architectural innovations were functional as well as laden with symbolism; for they were meant as a display of legitimate domination. They included the introduction of the westwork, the building of an eastern as well as a western apse for the celebration of Easter, and the adaptation of the basilica type of church and monastery. Religious illustrations were used to convey elements of Christian belief and to transmit stories to the illiterate. All the different artistic media were called upon to depict stories from the Old and New Testaments and the lives of the saints – wall carvings, frescoes, mosaics, the illumination of Psalters, and carved altars. This was an important matter, since this was the age of the “iconoclastic controversy”, a fierce, century-long conflict over the use of images in the Church.
The peasantry

The period following the fragmentation of the Roman Empire was one of transition in which can be found many elements of continuity in terms of population, agriculture, ritual, and social interaction.\(^{55}\) The late Western Roman Empire was characterised by estates and large landholdings and the medieval world was one of villages. But the peasants remained the primary agricultural labour force throughout the whole of the Early Middle Ages, even though many elements in their surroundings, such as tax systems, landlords, and access to artisanal goods changed in the course of time. Mostly these processes were slow; change was neither immediate nor dramatic.\(^{56}\) Much less is known about peasant life, culture and economy than, for example, monasticism or the aristocracy, as most of our sources consist of writings left by the land-owning elites concerning the organisation of their estates, and is coloured, naturally, by their goals, needs and perspectives. It is very hard to draw any firm conclusions about the size and scale of settlement or the continuity of population from the late Roman to the early medieval period, though it is clear that regional differences were very considerable. The scholarly consensus is that there was a fall in population of roughly 50 percent in most parts of Europe. It is also estimated that about 50 percent of early medieval settlements had been continuously inhabited since the late Roman period.\(^{57}\) Roman villas and defensible areas on the former Limes frontier were re-used for both economic and political reasons. Regional and local elites used elements of rural Roman sites and landscapes in their strategies to firm up the bases of their own power.

Microregional differences throughout Europe were great, but in general the position of the tenant farmers lacked any legal basis in the fifth and sixth centuries, leaving them wholly dependent on local power relations.\(^{58}\) Although there were regional differences, between the fifth and ninth centuries aristocratic dominance grew in accord with the logic of a feudal economy.\(^{59}\) The payment of taxes dominated the economy, giving landlords the opportunity to accumulate wealth and devote great sums of money to warfare and the building of churches, castles, universities and the like. In the eighth and ninth centuries these elites developed large residences in the countryside, at a considerable distance from village life.\(^{60}\) These estates were increasingly organised after the model of the manor. A part of the land, owned by aristocrats or granted by the king, was set aside for peasant families to grow the crops for the landlord. Sometimes the peasants were free, but in other cases they were tied to the land and their lord. These manors did not consist of one unified parcel of land but rather of lands scattered across rather large territories. The distribution of these manors across Europe was very uneven, and even within the Carolingian Empire they often coexisted with other forms of landowning.\(^{61}\)

Urban life

Despite the difficulties of defining the characteristics of an urban settlement, I can briefly describe how cities were transformed in the wake of the disintegration of the Roman Empire. In general, urban life decayed as many former Roman cities were abandoned, destroyed or reduced to a more village-like status.\(^{62}\) The continuity of life in former Roman settlements was twofold. While the cities no longer had much economic importance, the city walls or fortifications still provided shelter and defence against raids and violent attacks. And, the reuse of former political centres no doubt served important symbolic and political functions, as well. Christian bishops had taken over civil jurisdiction in many regional centres and their surroundings, turning them into cathedral towns.\(^{63}\) Often the new cathedral was built on the site of a former basilica, frequently adopting its architectural typology.\(^{64}\) Roman burial grounds were also reused in the Early Middle Ages if Christian saints were buried in them. These graves became places of veneration; later they became the sites of new churches, providing the early medieval settlements with two centres: a political and economic centre and an ecclesiastical one. The city of Maastricht is a good example of this twofold reuse of a former Roman settlement; for it grew and flourished throughout the Middle Ages thanks to these two main functions. Some other cities, however, did not survive after their early medieval peak. This was the case of Dorestat. It has been suggested that Dorestat, unlike Maastricht,
did not possess any inalienable possessions (relics) which would make it a pilgrimage site and, therefore, that it had no secure basis of existence after the trade with the Vikings ceased.65

Industry, networks and trade

In the seventh century interregional trade was at its nadir in most parts in Europe.66 By the eighth century the situation had improved, and, in any case, the Carolingian economy was not as inward-looking and self-sufficient as was long believed. Flourishing exchange networks existed between gateway towns, also called “emporia”, on the edges of the empire all around the North Sea coast of England (Hamwic), Scandinavia and what is now the Netherlands (Dorestat) and France (Quentovic). Luxury goods like jewelry and adornments were traded: amber and furs form Scandinavia, metalwork, wine and quern stones from the Rhine area, wool cloaks form England and textiles from Frisia. Tolls were levied by royal officials. Ultimately, Quentovic, Hamwic and Dorestat were abandoned, giving way by the year 900 to the growth of new regional economic centres such as Rouen and Mains, which were more easily defendable.67

Parallel to the North Sea trade network, new economic ties were established between Northwestern Europe and the Mediterranean as the old long-distance Italian trading connections became revitalised towards the end of the eighth century.68 Goods produced in Western European manors and monastic workshops were exported to Italian markets, which itself furnished the silks, spices and slaves wanted by the Islamic elites.69

Frontiers and raids

The expansion of the Carolingian Empire in the course of the eighth century stimulated unity and support for the king among the regional aristocracies, and in the ninth century the latter were called upon to stabilise and maintain its new frontiers. Interaction between neighbours inside and outside the empire was close in cultural, economic and political terms, since the counts in the border areas were ordered to maintain friendly contacts with the non-Christian population beyond the frontiers. In the north, Scandinavian peoples, later called “Vikings”, used plundering and raiding as a means of creating internal loyalty and expanding their own group, with the aim of adding to their northern territories. In the early ninth century trading contacts led to small-scale piracy, mostly affecting monasteries in the coastal regions of Francia and Britain. Large-scale raids began only when the Frankish empire was on the brink of civil war. Rival Danish factions looked for allies among the competing Frankish aristocracies and royal families and profited at the expense of their Frankish patron’s opponents. Their new wealth was spent on Frankish and Anglo-Saxon markets. Their raids may have accelerated change in many respects, but they were surely not the most important cause of changes in Carolingian society.70 What is known about the Vikings and their raids is based on Carolingian written sources and modern archaeological excavations. In these writings most of the friendly contact between Carolingians and Vikings is left unmentioned, whereas plundering was incorporated into Christian rhetoric, in which the raiders were explicitly interpreted as God’s way of punishing wayward Christians. These writings were meant to inspire the ruler to redouble his efforts to create a truly Christian society.71 The stories of Viking raids were well suited to this purpose, and they continue to colour our perception of these northern groups even today.

While the sources relating to Viking raids are not abundant, we know even less about the contacts and conflicts with the eastern neighbours of the Frankish realm. The frontier territory was long and open, and it was the home of various Slavic peoples, including the Abrodites, Bohemians, and Sorbs. Occasionally small raids occurred, but there probably was also friendly contact, and Frankish cultural influence was doubtless fostered by Christianisation beyond the frontier. Further south, along and beyond the Danube River, the kingdom of the Moravians developed into an important centre of trade and contact, but it was also a growing military power and a threat to the Carolingians. It was around 860 that land contacts between the Carolingian world and Constantinople were resumed. The southern edge of the Carolingian world was connected to the Muslim caliphate via several sea routes, with raiding and plundering existing alongside normal overseas trade, just as it did in the North Sea area.72
§3.4

EUREGIO MEUSE-RHINE: A FRAGMENTED FORMER CENTRE OF POWER
The area that was once the heartland of the Carolingian empire is now crossed by the borders between three modern European states; the birthplace and royal seat of Charlemagne are now located in a region called Euregio Meuse-Rhine. This section will focus on whether the heritage of the early medieval period, a time when this region was the powerhouse of a large part of Europe, still plays a role in today’s Euregio. More specifically, I will examine the nature of that role during the last fifty years. As this question is obviously too broad to be fully answered here, the discussion will concentrate on the way in which the early medieval heritage is represented in three publications dating from the late 1950s to the present. First, however, I will give a short introduction the institutional and cultural aspects of the region.

The institutional region

The Euregio Meuse-Rhine came into existence as a formal collaboration of five subregions in the Netherlands, Germany and Belgium: the southern part of the Dutch province of Limburg, the Belgian provinces of Limburg and Liege, the region around Aachen, Germany, and the area that is home to the German-speaking community of Belgium. This cooperative venture started as a working group in 1976, inspired by the European ideals of cross-border cooperation and mutual understanding. The group reorganised as a foundation in 1991, making it one of the earliest examples of institutionalised cross-border cooperation in modern Europe. The Euregio administration seeks to coordinate policies in many fields, including economic development, employment and education, mobility and infrastructure, research institutes, health and healthcare, climate and energy, security, culture, and tourism.

The Early Middle Ages in the Euregio

In the late Roman era, the region now called “Meuse-Rhine” had a rich agricultural landscape with fertile soil, and by the third century AD it was dotted with villas. It was able to sustain a relatively large population, including in the regional centres. The Roman road (via Appia) between Cologne and Bavai intersected this agricultural landscape, passing Tongeren and crossing the Meuse by a bridge in what today is Maastricht.

Although there is very little evidence for the scale of the continuity of land use, it is clear that in the early Carolingian period the Meuse-Rhine region was dotted with royal and monastic estates that essentially adopted the pattern of land distribution characteristic of the Roman villa, and the area between Aachen, Maastricht and Liege was almost entirely under royal control. West of the Meuse the estates were mostly in the hands of the regional aristocracy. In the Carolingian period, the towns in the Meuse valley formed a network with strong economic, political and religious ties, a fact which makes the history of any individual settlement incomprehensible without its regional context.

In the late Roman period, Tongeren (Tungorum) was the centre of the civitas and one of the largest urban centres in northwestern Europe. It was a walled city and an episcopal see from the fourth century onwards. Servatius was its first bishop. In Merovingian times, Tongeren flourished as a centre that was served only by land routes, but it declined in the fifth and sixth centuries, not regaining its importance until later in the Middle Ages.

Around 333 AD a small fortified settlement that is now known as Maastricht was built on the ruins of the former vicus on the western bank of the Meuse, and the bridge over the river was restored. A church was erected and Merovingian kings had a palatium there. A cemetery was laid out along the road to Tongeren (near the later Vrijthof), where Servatius was probably buried in 384 or, in any case, after 359. Later a church might have been erected over his grave, providing Maastricht with a second religious centre. Around the beginning of the sixth century, the episcopal see was moved from the declining Tongeren to Maastricht, which grew into a densely populated mercantile city in the ninth century. It is not at all certain how, when and why the bishops moved their residence from one town to the other. One suggestion is that the changing power relations and competition between royal and aristocratic families, of which the bishops were members, influenced the location and character of episcopal
power. This would also account for the siting of the burial places and the fostering of saintly cults over the bishops’ graves in the early medieval period. It has been suggested that the St. Servatius complex of Maastricht was chosen by the regional aristocracy as a place for “keeping” inalienable objects, relics of a saint, thus endowing these objects with power and so-called “cosmological authentication”. The cult-place that evolved around the saint and his remains was an important factor in the development and continuity of Maastricht as a central location.

The city of Liege grew out of a rural manor of Roman origin, where Bishop Lambert (later St. Lambert) was murdered in the early eighth century. He was buried in Maastricht, but his successor Hubert (later sainted) transported his remains to a new church and centre of pilgrimage in Liege. In a later period this would become the new episcopal residence. The Liege area is also thought to be the possible birthplace of Charlemagne, since it was the regional power base of the Pippinid family.

Aachen has a different origin than the other cities in the Meuse-Rhine region. It was not situated along an old trade route, but grew on account of the baths that Roman legions built there over the local natural warm-water springs. In the seventh or eighth century it was occupied again and used first as an occasional winter residence by Pippin and Charlemagne and later as the permanent Carolingian residence and effective capital of the empire. A new public square and church were built, inspired by the Roman city of Ravenna and making use of its treasures and symbols of political power. Aachen was to remain a seat of royal power in the ninth century, even after the empire was split up into three realms in 843, and then into two kingdoms by the Treaty of Meerssen (which is located in today’s Meuse-Rhine region).

Tongeren, Maastricht and Liege were all three devastated by the Viking raid of 881, an event which probably led to the fortification of the abbey of Servatius in Maastricht, but which had no effect on the urban landscape of the region in Carolingian times. Aachen was also damaged by the invading Vikings and lost its significance as a centre of power around the same time.
**Appropriation of early medieval heritage**

When surveying the representations of local and regional histories in the cities of Euregio today, one observes that many cities, both large and small, have created their self-images based on their histories; and this applies to marketing as well to cultural institutions, spatial planning and the local products offered for sale. Some use a single historic theme. Tongeren for example, chooses to be explicitly Roman, calling itself the oldest city in Belgium. It has a prize-winning Gallo-Roman Museum and has erected in its main square statues of the Emperor Julian and of one of the regional opponents of the Romans, the Eburon King Ambiorix. It also has a brand new shopping centre called Julianus located in the heart of the city, an “Ambiorix route”, hotels called Ambiotel, Eburon and Caelus VII, Amburon beer, Ambiorix chocolates, Caëder cookies and Caesar’ke brandy. In Tongeren the High Middle Ages definitely take a second place to the early medieval period.80

The same is true of Aachen, where Charlemagne is ever-present: in architecture (the cathedral and the former palace), as well as in a statue in front of the city hall, in the Centre Charlemagne (currently under development), the Route Charlemagne, the annual awarding of the Charlemagne Prize, and three major exhibitions about him where held 2014. Nevertheless, very few entrepreneurs have adopted Charlemagne for the names of hotels, restaurants, products or services as compared to their counterparts in Tongeren. The European context is much more emphasised in Aachen than in other cities in the region. For example, the Charlemagne Prize is explicitly European, and Aachen had planned a centre for European culture to be built in the symbolically important area between the city hall and the cathedral.81 Aachen’s citizens showed little support for the centre, as they used their veto in a referendum on the centre and its outspoken architecture.82

Several other cities have chosen to promote several historical themes simultaneously, for example, Maastricht. There, the Roman fortifications, the religious importance of the city from Servatius’s death onwards, the garrisons that were based in the city between 1600 and 1830, and its early industrial development...
are all given their fair share of prominence in a kind of layered presentation of the city’s past.

A similar approach has been taken by Liege, whose historic centre consists of a vast square which was once the site of buildings of great importance: the Gothic St. Lambert’s Cathedral, an earlier Ottonian church, the shrine that St. Hubert commissioned for St. Lambert in the seventh century, and a Roman villa before that. This is where St. Lambert was murdered; it became the centre of a pilgrimage which enabled Liege to develop into a major city. Today, Liege seems to identify very much with the old prince-bishopric, which remained a stable secular and religious power form the tenth (?) century until the French Revolution. Marking a dramatic break with the ancien régime, the cathedral of St. Lambert was demolished in 1789. This, the city’s most central location, is now excavated and the public can visit a site under St. Lambert Square (as it has been able to since the early 20th century). In many ways, the stories, places and relics of Saints Lambert and Hubert still play a central role in the identity of Liege, while Charlemagne is much less visible there. He is commemorated by a large statue, which has been restored by the city, but unlike St. Lambert and St. Hubert he is not connected to the story of the city’s roots.

A visitor to the cities of the Euregio might get the impression that there is no coherence among the historical themes they are promoting, and, generally speaking, it seems as if the past is not a significant element in the area’s public image. The name and geography of the Meuse-Rhine region are not well known to tourists, and it remains an abstract geographical notion even to most of its inhabitants. Nevertheless, within the Euregio’s borders several projects have stimulated coherence and cooperation at the regional level in the fields of archaeology, history, heritage, and in local and region marketing, helping to counterbalance the fragmented interpretation and representation of the various aspects of its history. At least one regional network of archaeologists exists: MHAL. In this section three of these regional cultural or historical initiatives will be discussed, each from a different moment in the last decades. I begin with an illustrated historical study of the three cities of Aachen, Liege and Maastricht written by Dr. Jean Lejeune in 1958, several decades before the
The second, a book dating from 1992, is an attempt to define the region in terms of historical coherence and archaeological cooperation. The third, from 2012, is the joint submission by Maastricht and the Euregio in the competition for the title of European Capital of Culture in 2018. In all three publications the early Middle Ages are represented in a particular way. As will become clear, the role of Charlemagne and his contemporaries in these works is often closely correlated with the Euregio’s position in present-day Europe.

The Early Middle Ages in Lejeune’s *Pays sans frontière*

In 1958 Dr. Jean Lejeune, a professor at the University of Liege, published a study of the historical development of Aachen, Liege and Maastricht. This book was published in French (*Pays sans frontière*), German (*Land ohne Grenze*), and Dutch (*Land zonder grens*) and consists of a sixty-page historical overview of the similarities among the three cities, followed by a section with more than 160 pictures.97 The publication of this book was not an isolated event. The decade after the Second World War saw major increases in European economic and political cooperation. In 1951 the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) was established, in which the heavy industry that had previously been a source of international conflict turned into a starting point for European integration. Six years later, the Treaty of Rome was signed creating the European Economic Community (or Open Market), along with the European Atomic Energy Community; it consisted of six countries: Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands. The enthusiasm for international cooperation and the decreasing importance of frontiers in that period98 are clearly evident in the book, most significantly in the title, which can be translated as “country without borders”. The introduction, signed by the mayors of the three cities involved, argues that the towers of Aachen, Liege and Maastricht have always been visible from the neighbouring countries and that these cities owe their development to the existence of a European community. Even their destiny has always been European, according to Lejeune, who welcomes the postwar period as offering new life to the Continent, which has become young again.99 Lejeune asserts the existence of a unity among the localities on the three different borders and presents it as something logical, historical and self-evident. Yet, this is not the case. Deriving a sense of regional unity from their history is a twentieth century cultural and political construction; it is not self-evident or somehow embedded in the area itself.

It is interesting to see how the ideas of Europe and of a cross-border region were presented long before the Euregio was founded. In this context, however, what is most important is to analyse the way in which Lejeune selects and represents the region’s early medieval heritage. He starts his historical overview with a chapter on the first millennium, offering an impression of the landscape (with an emphasis on mining and rivers) followed by paragraphs on St. Servatius, St. Lambert, Charlemagne, and the Ottonian kings. In other words, the accent is on the early medieval history of the saints and the role they played in the later development of the cities, whereas the prehistoric and Roman periods are essentially neglected.

Lejeune refers to the Early Middle Ages again later by citing the seventeenth century poet Joost van den Vondel’s *Klachte op den Ondergang van de Rijksstede Aken*, a lament for the destruction of Aachen by a fire in 1656. Here, the figure of Charlemagne is evoked and directly addressed concerning the destruction of the city that holds his bones, ashes, sword and crown.100 Lejeune concludes his analysis with a few more references to the Carolingian period. He draws a parallel between the time the cities were in the heart of the Carolingian empire and his own days, in which the Euromarktet and the ECSC have dissolved the borders between the cities. Their importance in the history of Europe is emphasised alongside their industrial and demographic importance in contemporary Europe.101 According to Lejeune, the relevance of European integration is understood better in Aachen, Liege and Maastricht than elsewhere in Europe, because these cities straddle the border between the Germanic and Roman peoples, whose separation has long been accentuated by political boundaries. These cities advocate European integration with greater conviction because, he claims, they lie in the heart of
Figure 3.4. A reference to four generations of churches is integrated in a wall on the otherwise empty St. Lambert Square, Liege in 2012.
Charlemagne’s realm, which originated in the same desire for integration. The illustrated portion of the book, which presents pictures of landscape, art, architecture, interiors and contemporary street life, is also full of references to the Early Middle Ages. It starts with about ten details of relics and artworks, showing images of St. Servatius, St. Lambert and Charlemagne, followed by many other pictures of religious artworks and of the architecture of several early medieval churches in all three cities, as well as Charlemagne’s palace in Aachen. Thus, it is mainly in terms of their religious and art-historical context that Lejeune presents the cities’ early medieval history. He constantly emphasises similarities among the three cities, and he does not forget to include the rural areas lying in between them. His emphasis on what he sees as the coherence of their shared past is clear in both the text, where he offers as single story rather than a separate description for every city, and in the illustrations. For example, he highlights architectural similarities between Aachen’s cathedral and Church of Saint-Jean in Liege, as well as in the facades of other buildings, along with the intimate quality of all three city centres. The final illustration shows Liege’s monumental statue of Charlemagne. The caption boldly asserts:

Waar eens het eerste Keizerrijk van het Westen wortel schoot, blijven de drie steden hun roeping getrouw: zij zullen onder het teken van Karel de Grote de taak vervullen die hen toevalt.

[Where once the first Empire of the West took root, the three cities remain faithful to their calling: under the sign of Charlemagne they will accomplish the task that falls to them.]

The Early Middle Ages in Spurensicherung

More than three decades after Lejeune’s analysis of the three cities of Aachen, Liege and Maastricht appeared, a new regional archaeological project was initiated by the Office for the Preservation of Archaeological Monuments of the Rhineland in Germany, entitled Spurensicherung/Relevés d’empreintes/Speurwerk (“Securing Traces”) and consisting of an exhibition and a publication. The exhibition took place in 1992 in Aachen, followed by Liege, Brussels, Maastricht, and Luxembourg, and was presented in three languages: German, Dutch and French (with summaries in English).

The immediate occasion for the project was the opening of the borders within the European Union on January 1, 1993, in accord with the European Single Market Act of 1986. It was financed primarily by the Ministry of City Development and Traffic of the German state of North Rhine-Westphalia, and the project’s patrons were that state’s minister, Franz-Josef Kniola, and the secretary-general of the European Council, Catherine Lalumière. The project received further political legitimisation thanks to the inclusion of no less than eleven prefaces in the publication, written not only by the patrons, but also by ministers of the Netherlands, Flanders, Wallonia, and the head of the German-speaking community in Belgium, along with several high-ranking Germany politicians and officials.

The European context of the project is repeatedly emphasised in these prefaces, with frequent references not just to the opening of the national borders, but also to the Valetta Treaty of 1992, which has had a great impact on archaeology in Europe. The Euregio is praised as a place where European ambitions for cultural exchange between neighbouring areas have been realised in several concrete projects. According to the back flap, the is aimed to present “the preserved and researched testimonies for the identity and communality of the peoples of Europe in a future Europe without borders.” Again, as in Pays sans frontière, the desire for a Europe without borders is clearly formulated. The Euregio serves as a symbol of this ambition because it embodies the European ideal by forming a unity despite the borders and
cultural differences that divide it. Lejeune’s 1958 publication presented the heritage of Charlemagne, together with the importance of the steel and coal industries, as the foundations for this regional cooperation and togetherness. In Spurensicherung there are no such references to historical themes.

Like Pays sans frontière, this publication provides an intellectual foundation and legitimisation of a Euregional way of thinking and working, beginning with the discipline that is best able to define a shared origin and past, namely archaeology. At the same time, the book’s Euregio-based approach to the past is offered as something based on a self-evident fact, which obviously it is not.

The book is divided into four main parts, as if it were concerned with investigating a crime scene:

- the scene of the action – (here) archaeology and history of the Euregio
- the factual conditions – risks related to the underground archive
- securing traces – institutions involved in the conservation of archaeological monuments;
- the evidence – catalogue.

The editors appear to have tried to give as complete a picture as possible of the archaeological practice in the region at the time of publication. The first part consists of eight essays, ordered chronologically, on the archaeology and history of the region. One of these, by Titus Panhuysen, focuses on the period of 300 to 1250 and the way in which the region changed from being on the periphery to becoming the centre of European history. This part of the book covers the transformation processes at work in society between the Late Roman times and the High Middle Ages and reports on the traces of them found by archaeologists in the Euregio. Since the late 1970s Panhuysen has been active as an archaeologist in Maastricht, first as a town archaeologist and later as a researcher at the University of Amsterdam. Panhuysen describes the Roman and Merovingian periods in some detail and

asserts that Charlemagne’s rise to power and the location of his power base in the Meuse and Mosel area put today’s Euregio at the focal point of European history.112 He observes that because of the fragmentation of Charlemagne’s empire in the tenth century “[d]issention broke out in the area in which the idea of European unity was born.”113

The other references to the early medieval history of the Euregio are to be found in the catalogue portion, which consists of descriptions of twenty-five sites in the region. The article on Aachen notes that very little excavation work has been carried out on the Carolingian period, except for the area around the Cathedral.114 In addition, several short notices refer to traces of Frankish settlement, and these have served to establish the likelihood of continuity in human habitation, for example in Jülich, Neerharen-Rekem and Voerendaal.115

More attention to the early medieval period is paid in the article on St. Lambert Square in Liege. Here, the authors proudly present the remains of two or three generations of early medieval churches that are strongly associated with St. Lambert and St. Hubertus and the early episcopal see. These traces are placed in the context of 50,000 years of human history beneath the cobblestones of the streets of Liege.116 The article on Maastricht focuses completely on the findings of Roman, Merovingian and late medieval goods, some produced locally and some imported from afar. It does not focus on one historical theme in particular, but the Merovingian period is well represented. The article offers a map of Maastricht keyed to accounts of the excavations carried out there.117 A report on the excavations of Haagsittard include descriptions of Merovingian findings among those of other peoples who had occupied the site.118 A final glimpse of the early medieval heritage of the region is caught in the report of the excavations undertaken in and around the Demer Valley, where traces were found of a Carolingian domain, the origin of the current village of Donk, on a river dune near the Demer River. The settlement of the valley is described in seven subsequent periods, of which the Carolingian are the latest.119

It is important to note that Spurensicherung is meant to be a book for a broad audience, not one written only for archaeologists, but given the jargon it contains and the technical nature
of the illustrations, it is more suited to readers trained in understanding archaeological illustrations. The tone of the book and its approach are exemplary of archaeological publications of that date.

The Early Middle Ages in the 2018 ECOC competition

In 2018, the Netherlands will be the home of a European Capital of Culture, and Maastricht has run as candidate on behalf of the Euregio Meuse-Rhine. Eleven public organisations have been working together on this effort, which was coordinated by VIA2018, an organisational and artistic team based in Maastricht. The partnership received an INTERREG subsidy of 1.4 million Euros to develop the candidacy.

Like Pays sans frontière and Spurensicherung, the publication prepared for this project, Europe Revisited, contains a heavy dose of political legitimation. It not only has three forewords by prominent officials from Maastricht and Limburg; it is completely financed by its institutional partners, and it very obviously represents the cultural ambitions of the local and regional governments.

The title was eventually granted to another Dutch candidate, Leeuwarden, in 2013 by the Council of the European Union. All the candidates formulated their ideas and ambitions for the event by organising pilot projects and producing a bid book. The first version of the Maastricht bid book, published in March 2012, offers great insight into how public institutions, in cooperation with the cultural field, define the Euregio in cultural terms. It tells what the Euregio wants to be and which histories it wants to be remembered (and which are to be left out). Although written from a specific perspective and with specific goals in mind, the bid book is a reflection of the Euregio’s overall self-image. For this case study it is particularly interesting to analyse how the region’s early medieval past is represented (or not), in both texts and illustrations, in this simultaneously regional and European context.

The bid book bears the title Europe Revisited (Dutch title: Europa herondekt), referring to the 1992/93 Maastricht Treaty, which represents an important moment in the establishment of monetary unity in Europe, but also contained a small section pertaining to cultural matters. The candidates’ goal is to rewrite this forgotten section 25 years after the Treaty and to offer Europe a redefinition of its identity at a time when the Continent is in crisis. This identity, they assert, should be based on diversity; and the region sees itself as an ultimate ‘breeding ground’ for defining such an identity, since it has a transnational character and an attractive cultural and linguistic mix. In short, it can be seen as a miniature version of Europe. Like the other two publications, this one, too, considers the historical and cultural unity of the Euregio to be self-evident, even though it is really a contemporary, political construction.

Four themes are used to structure the candidates’ vision: “Speaking in Tongues”, focusing on the region’s multilingualism; “Remembering the Future”, linking cities and landscapes to customs and rites, both past and present; “Mirroring Europe”, opening up the Euregio’s horizon to allow it to better reflect its European identity; and finally “Living in Europe”, contributing to the realisation of a lively Europe.

The aspect of the bid book most relevant to this chapter, though, is its representation of the Early Middle Ages. Looking at its references to that period, the reader gets the impression that the latter functions primarily as a European backdrop to the candidates’ efforts to win the competition for the status of cultural capital, since the emphasis is placed on the whole area’s having been a part of the first big European empire. This is the period when the region occupied a central position in European affairs. Charlemagne is called “Pater Europae” and even connected to the birth of the Euro currency in the Treaty of Maastricht in 1992, grouping together two moments when all eyes were on the Euregio (which of course was not called that at the earlier time). It is revealing that several references to Charlemagne are made in one of the prefaces and in the introduction to the candidates’ presentation of their vision for the candidacy. At that key juncture, half a page is allotted to illustrating a fourteenth century bust of Charlemagne that is now kept in the treasury of the cathedral in Aachen.

While Charlemagne surely merits mention here as the
creator of an initial version of European unity, with Aachen as his power base, the physical traces he left in the region are hardly referred to. His legacy is only appropriated to prove the region’s relevance to the wider European context. A picture of Charlemagne’s statue in Aachen with the European flag right behind it (by Andreas Hermann) on page 11 illustrates their use of Charlemagne as a symbol. This is also true of the reference to the Charlemagne Prize, which is awarded annually by the city for services to the cause of European unification, as well as of the announcement of the big Charlemagne exhibitions in Aachen in 2014.125

The early medieval period is referred to not only in relation to Charlemagne as the symbol of the role that the Euregio has played in European history, but also as the beginning of the Catholic tradition, which has always been a defining element in the region’s history and still plays an important part in daily life of the population. The significance of the early medieval bishops in the region’s cultural and religious traditions is conveyed by illustrations of processions and religious rituals in the bid book.126 Tradition, religion and rituals are deemed relevant because they are part of contemporary vernacular culture. They are points of departure in several of the pilot projects included in the competition entry, such as the Fashion Procession and a play based on the activities of those who carry images of the saints in religious processions.127 The roots of Catholicism and its regional saints thus still resonate in contemporary rituals and traditions and are therefore figure in the candidacy of Maastricht and the Euregio. This continuing relevance is reflected in the inclusion of a large picture of the 2011 procession in Maastricht, showing the “Noodkist”, or “emergency box”, with relics of St. Servatius being carried through the streets. Another, smaller picture of a procession carrying the reliquary bust of St. Servatius is placed alongside a text on carnival and vernacular culture.128

A third, though very minor way, in which the early medieval period is referred to concerns the role of architectural and spatial development of the region. The cult of St. Lambert and the power later exercised by the prince-bishops in Liege are mentioned as examples of how the Christian tradition influenced the development of one of the region’s centres and their importance to Europe is mentioned.129 The only reference to the spatial or architectural heritage of the Early Middle Ages is found in a very small picture of the Aachen Cathedral below a map of the city.130

One more remark should be made concerning the bid book’s 216 illustrations (excluding maps and logos). Only five of those refer directly to the heritage of the Early Middle Ages, sometimes in combination with other references. As a point of comparison, two pictures depict local hero and internationally known violinist André Rieu, and no less than thirteen illustrations are devoted to the growth of the mining and chemical industries in the region. The latter is a remarkably high number, since none of the cities in the region have a particularly industrial past.131 (Industrial development occurred primarily in the rural areas of the region.) Illustrations of St. Servatius’s shrine and bust appear here; for although he lived in the late Roman period rather than the Early Middle Ages, his cult originated in the Early medieval period.132

Before turning to a different region in the next section, I will draw some conclusions concerning the Euregio Meuse-Rhine and the three publications analysed above. First, all three of them present the Euregio as a self-evidently coherent cultural and geographical area, whereas it is mainly a (recent) political construction. National borders and linguistic differences (French, German, Dutch, and various dialects) are still important in fostering a persistent sense of division, or a sense of being part of other regions.

The figures of Charlemagne, St. Servatius, St. Lambert, and, to a lesser extent, St. Hubert, play important roles in the representations of the region, serving as major links in connecting early medieval heritage to the modern Euregio. In Pays sans Frontière their religious, architectural and art-historical importance is stressed, while in Europe Revisited the role of the saints is assessed in the light of the continuing importance of Catholic processions and traditions for the identity of the region. As described in the previous section, these figures have a strong historical relationship, but are represented in the bid book as individual icons who lived during the earliest development of several individual cities in the region. Each figure is closely associated with one location in the region, namely the site of his grave or...
primary location of his relics: Charlemagne with Aachen, St. Servatius with Maastricht, and St. Lambert and St. Hubert with Liege. Not surprisingly, these locations are the oldest and most central places in each city and have a predominantly religious origin; and the presence of these figure’s graves and relics gave rise to cults around their remains. This is the reason why they are still important figures still today. These relics and their cults, anchored as they were in the heart of the region’s religious and political power bases, influenced its historical development. Thus, these figures are not only reminders of the early medieval past of the region; they also symbolise historical continuity in the individual cities. Charlemagne occupies a special position in this context. Not only do his throne, grave and relics lie in the heart of Aachen; he is also brought to the fore whenever the importance of the Euregio to Europe as a whole is to be emphasised. Thanks to him the Euregio enjoys the special position of having once been the heart of a vast empire ruled by a figure now called the founding father of Europe. Charlemagne is evoked to legitimate the role that the Euregio envisions for itself – a Europe in miniature and an example of Europeanness thanks to its past as Europe’s heartland. The mining and steel industries are assigned a parallel task in virtue of their importance in the history of all three border areas and their status as stepping stones in the unification of modern Europe.

At least this is the case in Europe Revisited (2012) and Pays sans frontière (1958). Many similarities can be found in the way the early medieval past is represented in these two publications, especially when it comes to the role that is ascribed to Charlemagne. It seems as if very little has changed in that respect between 1958 and 2012. One difference between the two can be found in the attention Europe Revisited devotes to processions and religious ceremonies, in contrast to Pays sans frontière, which focuses on non-religious images of modern life in the three cities. Spurensicherung (1992) adopts a slightly different position. Unlike the other two, this publication strives to be as encyclopaedic as possible, thereby avoiding the need to make choices about which parts of history are more important than others. Obviously, this also adds to the fragmentation of the storyline. Scanning the book for references to early medieval heritage, I was astonished to learn how few excavations have been undertaken and that so little evidence is left of the Carolingian period, except, again, for the centres of Maastricht, Aachen and Liege. The ambition to be as all-embracing as possible blurs the fact that archaeologists also select what they research and represent and directly influence the preference of one era over another. It is clear that for the Merovingian and Carolingian period archaeologists have mainly chosen to excavate only very specific places in the region, namely the heart of Liege and several sites in Maastricht. In the latter case, St. Servatius’ heritage is investigated in the context of the continuity between the Roman and the early medieval occupation of the city.

The result of emphasising these four iconic figures, along with their connection to the three city centres and to a number of municipal traditions and rituals, is that the region’s early medieval heritage is presented as being essentially urban in character. An unfortunate result of such a selection process is that the landscape and the overall regional context of this heritage are lost from view.
ALSACE: EARLY MEDIEVAL HERITAGE IN A FORMER EUROPEAN BATTLEFIELD REGION
Alsace, the smallest region in France, lies in a plain west of the Rhine, which marks the border with Germany. Its capital, Strasbourg, is one of the capitals of modern Europe. Situated between the Vosges to the west and the Rhine to the east, Alsace has long been subject to German and French influences – and to their political dominance. This position of in-betweenness culminated in the period between 1870 and 1945, when Alsatians changed nationality no less than four times. It was the scene of fierce battles between French and German troops in three successive wars: the Franco-Prussian War of 1870, and the First and Second World Wars. This role as a contested borderland in the heart of Europe gained symbolic meaning in the postwar period when over twenty European institutions chose Strasbourg as their base, including the European Council and the European Parliament (which also reside partly in Brussels).

Alsace has a strong identity and self-image based on its unique mixture of cultures. The four changes of nationality under successive French and German dominance after 1870, with the accompanying suppression of culture and language, have been the predominant factors in shaping the self-image of the Alsatians. With each change, Alsatians, to a greater degree than other citizens of these two countries, faced the demand to prove that they were valuable to the nation into which they had just been integrated. Many different aspects of the region’s vernacular culture, landscape, art, politics, history and religion have been deeply marked by its involvement in the conflicts between these two major powers. The French language and Germanic regional dialect have played particularly important roles in regard. Evidence of a collective war trauma is ubiquitous in today’s Alsace, and its past is never remembered in a neutral fashion. The historiography of its complicated wartime past has been dominated by pro-French authors and is thus politically biased. This Franco-German rivalry is not only central in its political history, but also in many family histories. Families were torn between German and French partisans: brothers fought against each other on the battlefield, wives left their husbands to go back to their home country, and fathers abandoned their sons for choosing the “wrong” side. In the postwar period, re-interpretations of the past have complicated the situation even more.

An often-cited description of Alsace, dating from the postwar years, is still accurate to a large degree:

L’ Alsace n’est pas ceci, et elle n’est pas cela. Elle est ceci et cela à la fois et, en plus, quelque chose qui n’est ni ceci, ni cela. Elle est ceci par la race et cela par la langue, ceci par les moeurs et cela par la sensibilité, ceci par le coeur et cela par l’esprit.

This is the context we must keep in mind as the role of early medieval heritage in Alsace is studied. This section starts with an introduction to some historical and institutional aspects of the region and then proceeds to discuss in some detail three places which were of great importance in the early Middle Ages in the region and beyond. As will become clear, the appearance and meaning of these places in contemporary Alsace is shaped by the successive re-interpretations of history during and following the period 1870-1945.

The construction of Alsatian identity after 1870

In the period after the Franco-Prussian War, Alsace came under German control as the imperial territory of Alsace-Lorraine. Regional politics and public debates were defined by strong loyalties towards either the Germans or the French, as well as by some attempts to find a middle way. Stefan Fisch speaks of a strong sense of Alsatian identity which manifested itself in both the cultural and political realms and which caused tension in the ways that the notions of nation, region, and Heimat were understood at that time. German language politics forbade the use of French in primary schools and by officials and clergies, along with all French first names like Louise and Marie. Only the Catholic Church kept its right to use French in religious education, an element of its Francophile and anti-Protestant/German...
German rule in Alsace after 1871 stimulated the appreciation of ‘regional culture’ – which has also been called a “double culture” – and the construction of an Alsatian identity. As in many regions and countries across Europe, the Alsatian middle class started studying, conserving and collecting regional (mostly rural) folklore, literature, art, architecture, and other forms of heritage. In 1898 a new magazine was founded by artists and writers seeking to foster the preservation and study of the region’s cultural heritage: the Revue Alsacienne Illustrée – Illustrierte Elsässische Rundschau. Several years later the plans for a regional ethnographic museum came to fruition with the opening of the Alsatian Museum in a restored Renaissance building in Strasbourg. Heightened French patriotic sentiment among members of the middle classes and protests against German rule went hand-in-hand with the musealisation of Alsatian regional culture. On opening day, French flags of 1793 lined the museum’s courtyard and members were dressed as French soldiers from those days, to the great annoyance of the German authorities. Having withstood German attempts to close it down, the museum still exists today, a symbolic reminder of how the construction and concretisation of Alsatian regional identity took place not despite but because of Franco-German conflict. Banned in 1914, The Revue Alsacienne Illustrée magazine is now a valuable collector’s item.

The construction of Alsatian identity in the period after 1870 was a more complex matter than just “applying the categories of Germanness and Frenchness”. Detmar Klein argues that in its period as a Reichsland, Alsace developed a proto-national identity as a way to protest against political and cultural Germanisation: “Cultural Alsatianness was the backup for the battle on the political front, supporting the ... fight for full political emancipation and against total cultural Germanisation ...”.

During the First World War around 220,000 Alsatian conscripts were mobilised under the German flag, while several thousand men voluntarily joined the French Army. German oppression and the policy of Germanisation intensified in these years.
Treaty of Versailles of 1919, however, stated that region was to be “reintegrated” into France, signalling yet another change in nationality for its population. Alsace was divided into two départements: Haut-Rhin and Bas-Rhin. Many German institutions and policies were maintained, and the French authorities promised to respect Alsatian freedom, traditions and habits. It was as an expression of the Alsatians’ happiness upon their return to the French Republic that the illustrator Oncle Hansi (pseudonym for Jean-Jacques Waltz) created his most famous and pro-French work, with which many Alsatians still identify (which says much about the generally pro-French interpretation of the past).

Reintegration into the French Republic, however, did not bring what the Alsatians had expected. Shortly after the War, the so-called malaise alsacien became visible. Alsace differed in many ways from the rest of France, which had become more centralised and less religious over time. Politicians and administrators lacked a knowledge of the Alsatian situation, and when French officials and engineers took over the vacancies left by the Prussians, their strong assimilationist politics caused disillusion and disappointment in the region. This provided fertile soil for a new political movement that fought for its Heimat and for regional autonomy. Catholic leaders mobilised a protest movement when Parisian officials made plans to abolish all religious schools, as they had already done in the rest of the Republic, where church and state were strictly separated. Catholics, liberals, and Communists alike argued strongly for Heimatrechte in the face of centralising policies directed from Paris, giving rise to an autonomy movement in which linguistic, religious, and cultural issues occupied a central place. The history of Alsace as a unified cultural entity lying between two nations was celebrated again, building on the heritage of the Revue Alsacienne Illustrée and the Alsatian museum.

Hitler’s rise to power and the threat of war caused growing pro-French sentiments among Alsatians, except for small groups of National-Socialist sympathisers. The eventual German occupation immediately resulted in Germanisation policies, an intense propaganda campaign, and a vigorous growth of identity politics. French professors and officials, as well as monuments, advertisements, regional dialect, and even the French beret had to vanish in order to strip Alsace down to its German core. As already mentioned, great numbers of Alsatian men (the Malgré-Nous) were forced into military service, most often to fight on the Eastern front. Many others were deported to France because of suspected Francophile sympathies. Towards the end of May 1945 Alsace was liberated by Allied Forces.

In the postwar years a new relationship between France and Germany led to a change in the position of Alsace relative to these two major powers. At first, the relief felt at again being part of France faded because of the economic and social malaise the region began to experience. Those accused of collaboration with the Nazi regime were prosecuted, resulting in serious problems in both the political and personal spheres. The rural areas, especially, developed a collective inferiority complex vis-à-vis the rest of France, and this, in turn, led to a renewed focus on their folk traditions. This is also the context in which the open air museum Ecomusée was founded in 1980, to preserve traditional rural Alsatian buildings that were threatened by neglect or demolition.

An important moment for Alsace came in 1972 with the establishment of administrative regions as part of France’s new decentralisation policy; as a result, Alsace became a single, more or less autonomous region. Teaching and television programs in Alsatian (German) did not commence until as late as the 1990s, by which time the dialect had almost died out. Starting in the 1980s support for the extreme political right, the Front National, grew stronger there than in other parts of France. At the same time, the European unification process was being warmly welcomed in Alsace, since it brought relative political stability, peace, and economic prosperity to a region which had suffered so much from war. The cooperation of Germany and France meant the end of an era of being fought over by these two states. Strasbourg had been the seat of the European Council since 1949, and it became one out of three meeting places for the European Parliament in 1971. Today it is one of the centres of European Union.
The Early Middle Ages in today’s Alsace

The first mention of Alsace as a region occurs in a seventh century chronicle, but the name was already used shortly after the Roman period to indicate the district or *pagus* between the Vosges and the Rhine. The origins of the name are debated, but it might be related to an old Germanic phrase, referring to the Allemani, a Germanic people living on the left bank of the Rhine. The Romans left their imprint on the region in the form of an extensive road system and administrative divisions that were maintained by the later dioceses of Basel and Strasbourg. In the tenth century Alsace was to be divided into a *Nordgau* and a *Sundgau*. The Romans had also left behind a network of imperial residencies and estates that would later form the basis for the royal estates and the organisation of Frankish rule in Alsace.152

Frankish dominance began with the victory of the Franks over the Allemani near Cologne around 500 AD.153 The region was geographically coherent, very fertile and had lain in the periphery, away from the centre of power. Agricultural village settlements existed on the banks of the smaller rivers that cross the hills and plain, safely away from the danger of the flooding of the Rhine. The Merovigian kings, who ruled Alsace as part of the Austrasian kingdom, built multiple palaces and fortifications throughout their territories. Several were in Alsace and two of them were used frequently in the late sixth and early seventh centuries: a fortress at Seltz and a palace at Marlenheim.154 This was also the period when the cultural and linguistic borders between the proto-French and proto-German worlds were established which later on played such an important role in the creation of Alsace’s regional identity and, more recently, in its cultural politics.

After the mid-seventh century the Merovigian kings ceased to rule in Alsace, and a clan called the Etichonids from Burgundy became patrons of numerous monasteries, helping them consolidate their political power. One of them, Adalrich (or Etichon), was Duke of Alsace, and he built up his realm by founding and controlling, together with his kin, an impressive list of monasteries. The latter included, among many others: Ebersheim, Gregoriental, Granval, Weissenburg, St. Stephen, Honau, Hohenmünster and Niedermünster. Adalrich’s daughter Odilia became the abbess of the latter two, one of them situated beside and the other on an old Roman mountain-top stronghold which later became known as Mount Ste. Odile.155 The monastery of Murbach was founded in 727 by Pirmin and Count Eberhard, Adalrich’s grandson.156

Within three generations the Etichonids had secured control of Alsace and created hereditary rule. Their friendly relations with the Carolingians led to a peaceful increase of royal control by Pippin after the revolts of the Allemannic people in the region in 740. Alsace was thus an exception among the Carolingians’ newly gained territories, as it was brought under their rule peacefully, after which time the ducal title disappeared.157 The Carolingian kings reorganised the bishoprics in the region and granted the regional monasteries support and immunities, greatly expanding the wealth and power of foundations like Weissenburg and Murbach, which possessed a famous library.

Charlemagne possessed several palaces in the region: Marlenheim, Illzach and Koenigshoffen. His grandsons had temporarily dethroned their father at the so called field of lies located somewhere near Colmar. In 842 Louis the German and Charles the Bald conspired against their brother Lothair and divided their father’s realm between them. Their alliance was made official in the so-called ‘Oaths of Strasbourg’, which were written in Latin, Tudesque, and Roman. The latter two are the linguistic ancestors of modern German and French, respectively. The following year the empire was divided between all three brothers at Verdun, with Alsace becoming a part of Lothair’s Middle Realm, thereby creating a border between the Roman-speaking east and Allemannic Alsace.

In 870, the Treaty of Meerssen divided Alsace into two duchies: Nordgau and Sundgau, but not long after that the region was attacked by raiding Magyars, and for defensive reasons it became part of the Swabian duchy. King Henry I of Saxony imposed his authority on Lothairingia, and King Otto I restored Charlemagne’s empire under the name of Holy Roman Empire in 862, making it part of the German realm for the next 700 years.158

Thousands of books have been written about Alsace, its identity
and turbulent history since its emergence as a single geographical and cultural entity. These numerous studies of the region’s past159 fit into a discourse on Alsatian identity in which the balance between French and German (originally Frankish and Allemannic) influences on its history is discussed over and over again in the course of recounting its centuries-long role of as a battlefield between these two peoples.160 Political, social and cultural developments in the years after 1870 have entirely coloured the interpretation of the Alsatian past and led to a great emphasis on tracing the predominant influences in the construction of the region’s character and self-image.161 In many texts from the period 1870-1939 an author’s political point of view concerning the German-French conflicts can easily be inferred from his or her interpretation of the region’s past.162 In fact, the pro-French attitude of many researchers is still very evident in work being published today.163

The concern with Alsace’s past is broader and better institutionally organised than in any other region of France. In the years after the First World War, the University of Strasbourg was left without professors and researchers, all of whom had left, either voluntarily or under pressure, because of their German background. The search for new, more neutral fields of research led to the foundation of a research institute for Alsatian history, and it is still the only French region with such an institute.164

This interpretation of the past in terms of German and French influences, combined with the assumption that the region is a single historical entity, has also determined the way in which early medieval history is studied and interpreted. According to the discourse which dominates the majority of publications on the subject, the most important part of the Alsatian history does not begin until 1648, the year Alsace ceased to be part of the Holy Roman Empire (i.e. German territory) and was incorporated into the French monarchy.165

The Middle Ages and the long period before that, therefore, play only minor roles in Alsatian memory. In some histories, the Middle Ages are seen as the protracted and painful period of the birth of modern Alsace,166 or their description is limited to a preliminary chapter.167 It should be noted that several political events which occurred in that earlier era are significant in the history of Europe as a whole, the oath of Strasbourg being the most prominent. These oaths, dating from 842, thrust Strasbourg for a time into the centre of European history; for it was there that the Carolingian kings Louis the German and his brother Charles the Bold forged an allegiance against Lothair, their older brother, who was then the emperor. This moment is often referred to as an important one in the national histories of Germany and France, because it signalled the initial formation of these two proto-countries, in terms of both territorial and linguistic divisions – the oaths were written in Latin and in old versions of German and French. Yet in the historiography of the region, this event receives much less attention than the formation of the Duchy of Alsace, which was the first territorial entity in the area that bore the name.168

This focus on the regional nobility in the historiography of early medieval Alsace and the relative lack of interest in Charlemagne, his predecessors and heirs is significant, all the more so considering the family ties between the royal family and the Alsatian nobility: Hildegard (758-783), who became Charlemagne’s second wife and mother of Louis the Pious, was the daughter of the Alsatian Duke Gerold of Vinzgouw.169 Despite her prominence and international fame, some other figures of Hildegard’s family are much better known. Richardis (ca. 840- ca. 895), daughter of the count of the Alsatian Nordgau, married Charles the Fat and became Empress of the Roman Empire. According to legend, Richardis was accused of adultery by her husband, who demanded a divorce. She proved her innocence by surviving the ordeal of fire, after which she became the first abbess of Andlau, a place associated with a wild bear. After her death, she was buried there and was declared a saint by Pope Leo IX (an “Alsatian” pope) in 1049.170 Richardis is venerated mainly as the patron of Andlau.

The absence of any prominence accorded to Frankish kings or to supra-regional historical topics from the early medieval period is evident not only in the regional historiography, but also from the dearth of local monuments and the lack of any mention of the Frankish roots of many Alsatian towns and cities. For example, today’s Sélestat (Sclatislati) was where Charlemagne celebrated Christmas in 775. Apart from a Boulevard Charlemagne, few remains of his dynasty’s existence are visible in the city. Another
example is Strasbourg, the place where those historic oaths were taken in 842 and whose centre was named a world heritage site in 1998 by UNESCO,\textsuperscript{172} which described the central island, as meriting protection as “[an] image of medieval and post-medieval Christian society.” The ensembles and objects named in this description all date from the thirteenth century or later, including the principal one: the cathedral. References to physical remains or histories of the early medieval period are totally absent in the text,\textsuperscript{172} despite the early medieval roots of the church and its role as the setting for the famous oaths. One of the few references to the early medieval period is to a series of stained glass windows dating from about 1200 in which sixteen monarchs are depicted, including, Charles Martel, Charlemagne, Pippin the Short, the Ottos, and Frederick Barbarossa. In the cathedral, several statues dating from around 1290 depict kings on horseback, including Clovis, Dagobert and other monarchs who were generous to Alsace and to Strasbourg.

The Early Middle Ages in today’s Marlenheim

The village of Marlenheim is a rural place 20 kilometres west of Strasbourg, in the area where the Alsatian plane meets the first hills of the Vosges. As already mentioned, for four centuries Marlenheim was the residence of Merovingian and Carolingian kings, but not much is known about this royal palace, which was built in the area of an earlier Roman settlement. The most important question remains, from an archaeological point of view, where the palace complex was situated. In the excavations that have been executed so far, no traces of the complex have been found.\textsuperscript{173} Thus, the location of the palace remains a mystery.

Only two kilometres to the south of Marlenheim, in the small village of Kirchheim, traces of a large complex have been found, but they could not be linked with the Marlenheim palace with certainty. Other theories suggest that the palace must have been located between today’s Kirchenheim and Marlenheim, but speculations continue about the location of the palace, which is mentioned in early medieval documents.\textsuperscript{174}

When visiting today’s Marlenheim, the most striking characteristic of the village is its viticulture: the hills around it are covered
with vineyards; in the village around ten caves offer their products and wine-tastings; and the internationally known Alsatian route du vin brings many wine lovers to the village every year. Nowhere in Marlenheim is a reference to be found to its rich past, which includes the presence of kings and a royal palace, or to the mystery in which the story is shrouded. The only way the village refers to its royal past is in the names given to certain streets in the newer residential area that has been developed since the 1970s: St. Richard, King Dagobert, Charlemagne, the Carolingians, St. Odile and Childebert. But consistency is not observed, since the names are not restricted to medieval figures – other streets in the same area named after the Malgré-Nous, the Romans, Robert Schumann and André Malraux.

The Early Middle Ages in today’s Murbach

After leaving the plains of Alsace and entering into the hilly Vosges area, one enters a narrow valley, densely covered with dark woods and old trees, right under the Grand Ballon, the highest mountain in the Vosges. Climbing up a narrow road from a small village called Buhl, one enters deeper into the valley. Leaving behind the last houses scattered along the roadside, one catches sight of the arch under which passes the road leading to the former abbey of Murbach. On the left lies an herb garden, its existence a reference to the most famous Alsatian book: the twelfth century illustrated Hortus Deliciarum, which was produced for the abbess of Hohenbourg and which unfortunately was lost in a Prussian bombardment in 1870 (!).175

Just as it did a millennium ago, the abbey of Murbach lies in a remote place hidden away from business, the tourist industry, and traffic. Even religious life has almost come to a standstill; for the monks have left the abbey, and mass is said only once every few weeks. The scale of the complex and the impressive remaining westwork of the former abbey hint at its importance and wealth in the early medieval period, but otherwise the visitor is left in total ignorance concerning its rich past.

As mentioned above the monastery of Murbach was founded in 727 by a missionary called Pirmin and Count Eberhard, the grandson of Adalrich, the famous first duke of Alsace.176 Leodegar is known to have been the patron of the monastery, and Charlemagne supported it by granting financial privileges and stimulating the development of a scola and a rich (and famous) library of over three hundred titles. An attack by Hungarian marauders in 926 killed several monks and probably caused severe damage to the complex, ending its first period of flourishing. It was left without an abbot for thirty years, but King Otto I re-established the monastery’s rights and gave it many gifts. After undergoing a reform around the year 1000, Murbach was abandoned again in the twelfth century; but it was re-inhabited and rebuilt under an abbot named Bertold (1123-1149). It was in his days that construction began of the earliest church of which traces have been found. (It was built almost completely as planned.) Murbach developed into a powerful and wealthy monastery and had several dependent monasteries in the region: Bergholzzel, Goldbach, St. Amarin and St. Mary. Even the city of Lucerne in what is now Switzerland belonged to the growing properties of the Murbach monastery, whose landholdings peaked in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. A fire destroyed a large portion of the abbey in 1382.

In the second half of the sixteenth century the monastery was increasingly led by prominent figures, not all of whom had a religious background. The monastery buildings were entirely reconstructed around 1600 and it was abandoned for fifteen years after being plundered. Over a century later, the abbey church was demolished and replaced by a new building. The monks had left temporarily for Guebwiller, but then decided not to return permanently after the construction was finished, and shortly after that their convent was suppressed in the French Revolution.177 The monastery complex was demolished, together with large parts of the abbey church. The remaining westwork was turned into a parish church, which was listed as a historic monument by the French government in 1840. A vast restoration was begun around twenty years later, while it was still under French rule.178 For most of the twentieth century, the wooded Murbach valley, in which the abbey is situated, was inhabited by a community of poor farmers and as agriculture and village life steeply declined, the parish church lost even more of its former importance.179 The
most recent restoration of the church took place between 1982 and 1986, supported by the city of Lucerne.
and 1986, supported by city of Lucerne.\textsuperscript{180} No traces of the Carolingian abbey have yet been found in the valley, even though it must have been comparable in size to St. Gallen and Fulda.\textsuperscript{181} Today, the peacefulness of the abbey and its wooded surroundings are considered its main assets. The local community has therefore actively tried to keep the area free from commercial tourism.\textsuperscript{182} The only way the abbey is promoted among tourists is through descriptions in travel guides and in connection with the route of Romanesque architecture in Alsace, on which Murbach is one of nineteen itineraries.\textsuperscript{183} The only type of service in the area is that offered by a small restaurant near the entrance of the complex. Historical interest in the abbey is organised through the historical societies called Amis de Murbach and the Luzerner Verein der Freunde von Murbach (based in Lucerne, which is a sister city of Guebwiller/Murbach) and their periodical \textit{Acta Murbacenses}.

The power, wealth and fame enjoyed by Murbach Abbey in Carolingian times as well as in the later Middle Ages are known mainly to professional and local historians. It receives virtually no promotion on the part of the region’s tourist industry, apart from being mentioned in travel guides and as a part of a (fairly small-scale) route devoted to Romanesque architecture. A part of the complex is maintained at present, but Murbach has not generated sufficient interest to make it into a well-known monument testifying to the region’s early phase of wealth and power, or to draw attention to the role the monastery once played in international culture, economics and politics.

**The Early Middle Ages today at Mount St. Odile**

The brief analyses of Marlenheim and Murbach raise questions about the contemporary relevance of early medieval history to these local communities, but also to Alsace as a whole. It appears that little attention has been paid to these once important places in regional history, even though they could potentially serve as symbols binding Alsace’s past to that of many other parts of Europe and to Europe as a whole. Marlenheim, Murbach (and also, perhaps, places like Colmar, Sélestat and Strasbourg) do not seem to evoke the memory of the Merovingians and Carolingians, nor does one detect any sign of the desire or necessity to do so, despite the persistence of stories of that epoch and the obvious presence of its remains.

There is, however, a place in Alsace where the early medieval past does play the main role in the story of Alsatian identity and memory - a “history in the heart of history”.\textsuperscript{184} This place, which dominates the region in a very literal as well as a symbolic way, is Mount St. Odile, the home of Alsace’s patron saint, who overlooks the plains of Alsace from her mountaintop perch. An hour’s journey on foot from the nearest village, the convent of Hohenbourg rises high above the Alsatian plain to the east. The visitors, surrounded by dense forests, takes a centuries-old network of footpaths to the convent, where they are rewarded by magnificent, if often foggy views over a large part of the region. This is where St. Odile supposedly was the first abbess of the convent and where her remains, and those of her father, Count Adalrich, are kept. Odile, who was born blind, was not accepted by her father until, cured from blindness by a miracle, she returned and nursed her father on his deathbed.

The Etichonids, as the Adalrich family clan is called, were not the first people to occupy the mountaintop. Traces of human presence date back as far as the Neolithic period, and the most mysterious and monumental ruin on the mountain is known as the \textit{Heathen Wall}, a 10-kilometer long wall built out of massive blocks of rock that encircles the summit. Speculation has long abounded regarding the dating and function of the wall, by both German and French researchers, who have been very eager to interpret the wall as a defensive system against attacks from the west or from the east, respectively. The latest research yields an estimated date of about the second century BC.\textsuperscript{185} The mountaintop plateau was probably also used by the Romans. Merovingian and Carolingian finds are scarce, though written sources suggest that Hohenbourg was used as Adalric’s castle, but, in any case, certainly not solely as the location of a monastery.\textsuperscript{186} It is not known exactly when the Hohenbourg convent was founded, but according to legend the (German-speaking) Duke Adalric founded it, and the first abbess was his
Figure 3.8. Visitors enjoy the view on Mount St. Odile in 2012.

Figure 3.9. The text above the entrance of the Mount St. Odile Convent, translated as: “Here flourished the holy patroness Odilia, mother of Elsass, and she rules always.”
daughter Odile, who died in 720. Her burial site soon became a place of pilgrimage. The early tenth century biography of St. Odile attributes several miracles to her. Her fame grew, eventually spreading throughout large parts of the Holy Roman Empire.

In the early thirteenth century the saint’s fame and the fortunes of her convent started to decline. A century later, her forearm was transported to Prague as a relic, because of her much-venerated status in Bohemia. The Hohenbourg convent survived several fires, until a very destructive one in 1546 led to its closure. It was left in ruins for sixty years, after which time the Premonstratensians claimed it and rebuilt it; and the saint grew in popularity again in the course of the seventeenth century. The supervisor of the reconstruction, Adam Peetz, wanted to elevate St. Odile to the status of the Catholic beacon of Alsace, taking over this role from the Cathedral of Strasbourg, which had become a Protestant church. His attempt met with no success, since the Thirty Years’ War forced the nuns to flee from the mountain, leaving the complex neglected for over a decade. Nevertheless, the notions of St. Odile as the symbol of Alsace and of the mountain as the “soul” of the region were spread the Premonstratensian priests, who, originating mainly from Normandy, Picardy, Champagne, and Lorraine, were French-speaking. On the other hand, the majority of the pilgrims were German speakers. Once again, in 1681, fire caused great destruction to Hohenbourg, but funds were raised from many parts of the Empire and the buildings were soon restored and expanded.

There is no archaeological evidence that the Hohenbourg convent has early medieval roots, unlike Niedermünster, the monastery St. Odile supposedly founded at the foot of the mountain, where the first phase of construction dates from around 700. A miraculous cross attracted many pilgrims to this monastery on their way up to the mountaintop. Successive fires, the Peasant Revolt, and its use as a quarry form the 16th to 19th centuries resulted in the almost complete destruction of the Niedermünster complex. Today, the convent is almost forgotten, as is its cross, which did not survive the French Revolution.

One might assume that the Reformation would have led to the end of St. Odile’s reign on the mountain, but the contrary happened; for with Strasbourg Cathedral’s transformation into a Protestant church Alsatians Catholics sought to replace it with another major place of worship. This entailed an important shift in the symbolic and religious meaning of the mountain to the region. In the eighteenth century, the Protestant elite also started showing interest in the mountain, its history and tradition of pilgrimage, and Protestant authors of the time contributed greatly to the fame of St. Odile and the mount, as well as to the broad acceptance of her as a guardian of Alsace. Publications by both Catholic and Protestant writers in the nineteenth century further increased the saint’s prestige.

The French Revolution did, however, signal a major break in the history of the mountain: the convent was secularised and sold as French national property. In the announcement of the sale, St. Odile is again called the patron saint of Alsace, and it was claimed that her relics attracted around thirty to forty thousand pilgrims annually. This enraged the bishop, since the attraction of the relics was mentioned as an economic incentive to potential buyers. The estimated value of the property was 250,000 francs, but it was eventually sold for only 18,000 francs to a Strasbourg locksmith. Since 1853 the complex has been owned by the diocese of Strasbourg. This was the moment when the mountain came into the hands of a regional institution, helping to reaffirm the status of St. Odile as the Alsatian patroness. In the publications on Mount St. Odile the role of the Church and its strategies receive little attention. The status and history of the mount are not presented as self-evident phenomena, which implies attention to its actors and appropriation of the past. But the perspective is directed towards actors outside the diocese, overlooking the most important actor in the recent history of the mount. The diocese is also the main contributor to the continuity of its function and the modern representations of St. Odile.

In the meantime, the nature of the interest people took in St. Odile and her mountain changed in character. Her life story became more and more embedded in the romantic mythology of Alsace, expressed in the series of publications called *Odiliana* (1812-1953). Moreover, her image became less and less religious in character, and secular poems, songs and theatre plays were written in honour of the saint and the mountain.

The Sisters of the Cross have inhabited the convent since
1889. The buildings have undergone major transformations in order to accommodate not only the sisters but also the growing numbers of pilgrims and visitors, and they now include a restaurant and a hostel.\textsuperscript{183}

Under German rule, many Alsatians left the region for other parts of France, taking the cult of St. Odile with them, making her better known in France, and eventually she became a patron saint of all of France. An important moment in the history of St. Odile and the mountain is 1899, the year in which the last German emperor, Wilhelm II, and his wife visited the mountain during their travels to the Reichsland, undertaken to confirm its permanent attachment to the Empire.

It is significant that the emperor’s visit took place at the time when St. Odile and her mountain were growing more and more into symbols of Alsatian identity. The painters, poets and writers who were closely associated with the bilingual Revue Alsacienne Illustrée - Illustrirte Elsässische Rundschau and who were part of the so-called “Alsatian Awakening” movement, found in St. Odile, Adalric, and the mountain important sources of inspiration.\textsuperscript{194} Charles Spindler, Joseph Sattler and Paul Kauffmann are only three of the many artists who chose St. Odile as a subject in their work. Spindler, who wanted to assert cultural independence vis-à-vis Germany through his paintings, showed a particular interest in the history of medieval Alsace.\textsuperscript{195} The political connotations of this artistic movement meant that the figure of Odile became even more deeply involved in the region’s identity politics.

In 1869 a drama was written about the life of St. Odile from a pro-German perspective. After the war, the manuscript was lost and not found again until thirty years later, right after the emperor’s visit to the mount. This was seen as an omens: St. Odile accepted the occupation. Not long afterwards, several plays in the same vein were written, all centred around the theme of acceptance and submission to the challenges of life with thankfulness to God. In these works the duke of Alsace symbolises the heathen region that was Christianised during Odile’s lifetime.\textsuperscript{196}

On the eve of the First World War, several authors tried to remake St. Odile and her mountain into nationalistic, Alsatian symbols.\textsuperscript{197} It is clear that the saint and her lieu de mémoire was being used for political ends, which definitely did not contribute to her popularity among all parties. This was the reason why she was no longer worshipped and was abandoned by the diocese of Strasbourg in 1913.\textsuperscript{198} during the final phase of Germany’s dominion over the region.

Following the war, the popularity of the saint increased again under French rule. In honour of the recovered provinces, two churches consecrated to St. Odile were built in the area of Paris, the heart of France. One of these churches was constructed entirely of Alsatian bricks and in the pinkish colour of the Vosges. For the foundations, the same sandstone was used as had been for the Cathedral of Strasbourg, and the bell tower is the still the highest one in Paris.\textsuperscript{199} While the construction of these churches was primarily a celebration of the recovery of Alsace, they also reflect the always complicated relationship between the capital of the highly centralised French state and the symbolic capital of Europe, Strasbourg in Alsace. The political symbolism of St. Odile was even further enriched, as she was now also called the “guardian of the border” (gardienne de la frontière).\textsuperscript{200} In the aftermath of the First World War her image became transformed into that of patroness of peace. In depictions of the saint, the accent shifted from the miracles she performed to gestures of comfort, blessing and protection, intensifying the process of secularising of her image. In addition, her profile and that of her mountain evolved into a kind of logo, used by numerous artists in commercials and publications.\textsuperscript{201}

Another attempt to re-establish St. Odile’s popularity was the celebration of the twelve hundredth anniversary of her death in 1920. Tens of thousands of pilgrims visited the mountain. Only three years later access to the convent was finally made easier thanks to the construction of a road up to the top; and in 1924 a monumental statue of the saint was placed on top of the church tower, overlooking the valley and Alsatian plain. In the 1930s and again after the Second World War major construction was carried out at the complex, increasing its monumental character as well as its ability to host pilgrims in dormitories and restaurants. This development went hand in hand with the establishment of “perpetual adoration”: every week a different group of pilgrims comes to the mountain to adore the saint. This “institution” was
widely publicised in the region and formed a very important way of confirming or “anchoring” the symbolic meaning of St. Odile and the mountain for the region. The most recent important moment in the history of the mountain and of the role of St. Odile in the region came immediately after the end of the Second World War. In 1946 she was officially recognised as the patron saint of Alsace, French again following the German occupation.

Several patriotic plays were written and performed in that period. Attachment to France was expressed both explicitly and implicitly in these texts, some of which even presented the figure of St. Odile as an embodiment of the region. In one of these stories, Odile, going against her parents’ wishes, refuses to marry a German nobleman, who is quite obviously characterised as an enemy who wants to gain control of the lands and wealth of the Alsatian duchy. In another play from 1947, St. Odile’s mother embodies France, forced to watch with her hands tied as her daughter, an incarnation of Alsace, is taken away from her. Her son sacrifices his life in an attempt to bring back his sister, symbolising the young French soldiers who died for their country. The analogies between the saint’s life, on the one hand, and the region and its political situation, on the other, turn to caricature when the Heathen Wall and the Maginot Line are introduced into the story to save Odile and defend her from the German bridegroom.

Mount St. Odile has not experienced any decline in popularity in subsequent years. In 1988 Pope John paid a visit to the convent, drawing renewed attention to the mountain and its saint. The convent is still inhabited, masses are attended by as many faithful as the church can accommodate, and around one million visitors climb the mountain either on foot or by car or bus every year.

Before turning to the general conclusions of this chapter, I offer some final remarks on the role of early medieval heritage in Alsace. As the last section has shown, the perspective from which its history is studied and interpreted is deeply affected by the wars between France and Germany after 1870 and their impact on the region. Its history has been very thoroughly researched, but generally by authors whose main concern has been to establish
what is German and what is French in the region’s past, both in recent and in more distant times. Many attempts have been made to characterise Alsatian identity, resulting in a rich display of geographical, cultural and linguistic knowledge, well-rooted in the region’s historic position as the borderland between the French and German cultural realms. Not surprisingly, since the Second World War the tenor of most scholarly writing has become explicitly or implicitly pro-French.

This section also showed that its regional identity was first explicitly formulated and cultivated under the German occupation in the years before the First World War. While the region has always tended to more or less sympathetic towards France, it has changed back and forth over time between German-tolerant and anti-German. Alsace’s identity was constructed in times of conflict. It was passively involved in struggles that were fought, as it were, over its head; but they demanded major sacrifices in the form of human lives and were accompanied by vigorous campaigns of cultural propaganda.

The region has approached its heritage in accord with this perspective on its past, which, as I have shown, has been interpreted through the lens of war and conflict between two major powers. The early medieval period is most often seen as the region’s pre-history, in which can be found the historical roots of its identity – in terms of geography, toponymy, and linguistics. The heritage from that period is preserved only very selectively (as is the case in many other regions of Europe). Merovingian and Carolingian kings and their palaces seem not to have been of much use or interest to most Alsatians, as the case of Marlenheim-Kirchheim has clearly demonstrated. No monuments, reconstructions, festivals or other references to that epoch are to be found, except for the naming of several new streets after historic groups and figures. The brief analysis of Murbach showed that one of the most powerful monasteries in the region in the Middle Ages was largely demolished and is now maintained as a parish church, remaining on the absolute periphery of the region’s historical consciousness.

The major exception to all this is the role of St. Odile, an early medieval saint who in recent centuries has achieved the status of patron saint of Alsace. Her memory is anchored in several ways: in her lieu de mémoire and her relics, as well as in many paintings, sculptures, churches, plays, songs, poems, books, and, not least, in the ceremonies and pilgrimages on her mountaintop throughout the year. Her heritage has proved to be flexible enough to be valued by both pro-German and pro-French patriotic parties; for she spoke an old version of German and was initially adored in the German world, but later even more so in France. She also proved to be a very suitable symbolic figure in the period of the “Alsatian Awakening”, as she was the daughter of the first duke of Alsace. This made it possible for her to transcend her role as a saint just for Catholic believers and to become the patron saint of a multi-religious region. Her image and the meaning of her life changed considerably over time, but she has always managed to regain popularity despite marauders, fires, destruction, the Reformation, revolution, and war.
This chapter explored the roles that early medieval heritage plays in the construction of regional identities in Euregio Meuse-Rhine and Alsace, by analysing the public policy, the use of places and cultural projects and placing this in the context of European unification.

The theoretical point of departure for this chapter is the work of David C. Harvey, who emphasises the ways in which traditions, heritage, continuity and notions of identity are all related in the medieval world. Harvey’s work is especially relevant as he links the construction of identity and the role of the past in that process to daily practices, habits and repetitive meaningful actions by a large group of people. These habits represent assumptions about what is reasonable and what is not. Harvey then connects contemporary versions of the past and the generation of a specific heritage to processes in which the medieval Church established its authority.

This chapter has offered new case studies demonstrating the value of Harvey’s ideas, as it illustrates how the continuity of early medieval heritage has depended on, and still does depend on, continuous processes of re-interpretation and re-use, changing its character and meaning over time. It has also shown that religious traditions, in combination with the keeping of relics at specific cult sites, are an important factor in the continuity of early medieval heritage. My findings allow to draw several conclusions regarding these matters.

First of all, it is important to remember that heritage from the Early Middle Ages does not exist in some pristine original form; for it has been re-used, re-interpreted and strategically appropriated throughout its “lifetime”. Every region’s early medieval heritage is a layered heritage, reflecting not only its original state in the Early Middle Ages but also the effects of having been deliberately preserved, restored, changed and re-used by later generations. In many cases, early medieval heritage sites also contain Roman remains, since many cities, villages, castles, churches and monasteries developed at the sites of former Roman settlements and strongholds.

In most cases, the appropriation of the Early Middle Ages in later centuries has been related to the legitimisation of power relations. The exact ways in which this process worked differed with the varying situation and goals of the “appropriator”, but the goal was always to establish continuity with the past. The most frequent approach was to “root” one’s position of power firmly in history by referring to a self-chosen predecessor. Because of the heritage strategies used by many powerful early medieval figures, the legacy of the Roman Empire is omnipresent. Consequently, early medieval heritage always includes some use of past in the past.

Strategies for the exploitation of early medieval heritage generally call upon several key aspects of that period: language, places of memory, relics, and religious traditions. In both Alsace and the Meuse-Rhine region current language borders date roughly from the Early Middle Ages and, especially in Alsace, have profoundly influenced discourse on regional identity. The Germans and the French have both employed language as at once a marker of identity and a strategic tool in their respective national identity politics. The language frontiers in these two regions are probably the most vivid elements of their early medieval heritage, although they are not recognised and valued as such in the production of books and in other heritage practices that have been the main concerns of this chapter.

Places of memory constitute another central aspect of early medieval heritage in today’s Europe. Heritage strategies and practices very often have a focal point, a lieu de mémoire, where various aspects of the past are conserved and presented to the public. Among these places of memory, churches and monasteries are particularly numerous. Not only did the Church have an important formative role in early medieval belief, society and politics; it was also the main actor in appropriating this heritage and guaranteeing its continuity. As has I have shown in multiple cases, the origin of the cult of saints within the Church stems from the early medieval period. St. Servatius, St. Lambertus, St. Hubertus and St. Odile have received considerable attention in this chapter. Their burial place, the churches and monasteries they founded and the locations of their relics are the focal points of their remembrance and adoration, and they ensure a form of continuity. These places still play an important part in today’s regions, whether as a major building in the city (Aachen and Maastricht), as a central square (Liege), or as a place of worship,
showed that in Alsace, the Franco-Prussian War of 1870 ignited the construction of an Alsatian identity, in which the early medieval heritage played a major role, especially around the figure of St. Odile, the daughter of the first duke of Alsace. In the Euregio Meuse Rhine, several crucial moments in the process of European Unification gave rise to publications that defined the region as an entity in historic terms, emphasising the importance of the region in the Early Middle Ages: the 1950s, 1992 and the election of Dutch European capital of Culture 2013.

I have showed that the Euregio Meuse-Rhine regards itself as an example and fore-runner of European unification, emphasising its own cross-border cooperation and history with European significance on the foreground. Alsace can be regarded as a symbol of the conflict that has been overcome, as it was at the centre of the German-French conflicts, and has therefore been chosen as one of two locations of the European Parliament.

The role of early medieval heritage for what may be called the “European identity project” is, it has to be admitted, at best marginal. The Cradles of European Culture: Francia Media is an exception in this regard, but it still has to prove its relevance and success as a teller of stories of an early medieval Europe united in diversity. The events in Aachen in 2014 celebrate Charlemagne as a European figure also connect early medieval heritage to the ideal of a united Europe. There, the challenge is to resist the temptation to focus solely on the figure of Charlemagne himself and to also include his political strategies and their effects on Europe as a whole.

This continuously re-appropriated heritage, in the form of language, places of memory, relics, and religious traditions came to play a role in the construction of a regional identity different moments in time in Alsace and the Euregio Meuse-Rhine. I have
Luv van Impe et al., “Archäo-
Spurensicherung: Archäolo-
gische Denkmalpflege in der Euregio Maas-Rhein - Relevés d’Empreintes: La Protection des


Ibid., 119.


Bauchhenß, Spurensicherung, 355, 497 and 333.

Ibid., VIII.

Ibid., my own translation from German.

Ibid., my own translation.
129 Europe Revived, 64.
130 Ibid., 75.
132 Przeworski, “Maatschappij.”
133 See for liege: the Archipel; and Maastricht: Die Stadt
Seventies Project by the University of Amsterdam and publications by Trax Prakken and Hans Peeters.
134 The find of Allesa as a battle field comes from Frédéric Hoffet, Psychanalyse de l’Alsace (Paris: Flammarion, 1951), 47.
136 Hoffet, Psychanalyse, 27.
138 Ibid.
139 Ibid., 163.
140 Habitations, “Mass-producing Traditions.”
142 Dietmar Klein, “Folklore as a Weapon: National Identity in German-ruled Alsace, 1850-1914,” in Folklore and Nationalism in Europe During the Long Nineteenth Century, eds. Timothy Baycroft and David Nakpil Gorden (Bril, 2012), 163.
144 Ibid.
145 Bernhard Mate and Elisabeth Clemenz, interview by author, Strasbourg, September 25, 2012.
146 Grasser, Une Histoire, 93-5.
150 Fisch, “Das Elsass,” 123.
153 Grasser, Une Histoire, 125.
154 Hummer, Politik und Power, 35.
155 Ibid., 46-54.
156 Hummer, Politik und Power, 58.
157 Ibid., 57-60.
158 Grasser, Une Histoire, 178.
161 Mate and Clemenz, interview.
165 Metz and Clementz, interview.
167 Philipp, Zeitgenossische Erinnerungen, 84.
168 Metz and Clementz, interview.
169 Ibid., 34; Hoffet, Psychanalyse, 35.
171 Grasser, Une Histoire, 5.
172 Büttner, Geschichte des Elsas, 70-105.
173 Trendel, l’Alsace, 49.
174 Philipp, Die Klosterkirche Murbach, 96.
175 Ibid.
180 Hummer, Politik und Power, 58.
181 Ibid.
186 Ibid.
187 Ibid.
192 Le Minet, “Le Site de la Révolution.”


197 Schneider, “La Patronne.”

198 Schneider, “La Diffusion du culte.”

199 Église de Sainte Odile, 15e arrondissement.


201 Ostheimer and Schneider, “La Figure.”

202 Schneider, “La Patronne.”

203 Ostheimer and Schneider, “La Figure.”

204 Stahl, “Sainte Odile.”

205 Le Minor, “Le Site.”

206 Harvey, “Continuity, Authority,” 49.
BATTLEFIELD OF HISTORIES

Competitive heritages in the Arnhem Nijmegen region (the Netherlands)
The Arnhem Nijmegen region is a rapidly urbanising area in the Netherlands. Its name already betrays part of its identity problem: it is a geographic area in which two expanding cities both have strong autonomous historical identities, and in which they are competitors as much as they are partners, whether in business, culture or politics. Both cities cherish their particular heritages; each has its own memories and traumas. This is the background against which a brand new identity for this “composite region” is being promoted by governments and private organisations. The focus of this chapter is on the application of these heritages and memories in various identity-building activities, such as regional branding, spatial planning and cultural events.

Relevance and objectives

The relevance of this case study to the overall thesis lies in showing how histories, memories and heritages are incorporated in strategies for the construction of a new regional identity. It makes clear how several historical themes are in competition for public attention, money and a place in new spatial designs. This case study provides a framework for analysing how this “battle of histories” functions and can therefore help to put regional marketing and the use of heritages in a new perspective – one that focuses on heritage strategies in urban networks that are expected to develop a viable identity within a short period of time.

The Arnhem Nijmegen region is a good example in this regard, because of the fairly recent formation of this region in terms of political cooperation and city planning, public transport and infrastructure. It is only since 1988 that the cities of Nijmegen and Arnhem, together with eighteen smaller communities, have been working together, currently under the name Arnhem Nijmegen City Region, to coordinate the relatively rapid urbanisation in the area. This is the context in which new political, spatial and communication strategies for the region are being developed. This case study seeks to clarify the ways in which historical themes and heritages are “used” in these “region-building” activities by several governmental, private and civic organisations.

Main question

In order to get a clear picture of how historical themes and heritages are used in the construction of the Arnhem Nijmegen region, the following questions will determine the main structure of our analysis:

What role do histories, memorial practices and memories play in the construction of the identity of the new Arnhem Nijmegen region, given that each city has its own strong historical self-image?

A. What reservoir of histories is present in the Arnhem Nijmegen region according to several recent canons (“concise histories”, often initiated and funded by public authorities)?

B. In what way are these histories used in the construction of the region’s identity?

- By policymakers and communication strategists
- Local, regional and national heritage professionals
- Inhabitants and visitors considered in their role as consumers
- Inhabitants and visitors considered in their role as producers

C. Who decides?

The region: terms and topography

When referring to the geographical region in which Arnhem and Nijmegen are situated, we use the term Arnhem Nijmegen region. It encompasses 20 communities: Arnhem, Beuningen, Duiven, Doesburg, Groesbeek, Heumen, Millingen aan de Rijn, Montferland, Mook en Middelaar, Lingewaard, Nijmegen, Overbetuwe, Renkum, Rheden, Rijnwaarden,
Rozendaal, Ubbergen, Westervoort, Wijchen and Zevenaar. The region has about 720,000 inhabitants and has an area of approximately one thousand square kilometres.  

The region, which has an administrative organisation called Arnhem Nijmegen City Region (Stadsregio Arnhem-Nijmegen or SAN in Dutch), was established as a result of the national Memorandum Spatial Planning of 1988 under the name of Knooppunt Arnhem Nijmegen. It was originally supposed to become a separate urban province, but this did not happen. The regional administration, which received its current official name in 2006, has focused on infrastructure, mobility and housing projects.

**Theoretical starting points**

The newly prominent notion of the urban network is useful for understanding how social, cultural and economic policies are shaped, now that the activities in our daily lives have become more regionally than locally oriented. It also offers the most suitable scale to face the problems of population decline, which is surely a relevant concept for the Arnhem Nijmegen region. For it is illuminating to perceive the latter as one daily urban system, an entity that is shaped by patterns of the lifeworld, based on the connections between various complementary urban nodes. It has become common knowledge that these urban networks are joining forces in the search for a new, often post-industrial identity.

Terlouw’s categorisation of regional identities as being either thick or thin was already mentioned in the theoretical chapter. In short, he maintains that traditional, thick regional identities are based on social and cultural characteristics in a certain geographical area and are focused on shared history, on the stable and on the old. In this time of globalisation and regional specialisation, a new, open, network-based form of regional identity is emerging, one that is also being stimulated by the individualisation of social networks. These thin regional identities are future-oriented and are mainly communicated by administrators and specific stakeholders. Terlouw showed that regions that are able to combine thick and thin aspects of their identity and blend them into one strong hybrid identity have the most effective identities in economic and political terms.

This approach to defining success factors for regional identities concords with the ideas of the regional marketing expert Hospers, who claims that regional marketers do not have control over the product they promote and that some regions are more easily promoted than others. Regional identity makes all the difference; inhabitants
need to feel connected to the region. Hospers’s rule of thumb is that regions with hyphens or a geographical direction in their name are generally less easily marketed, because hyphens indicate that an area consists of more than one unit, and geographical directions are vague.⁶

In order to make clear distinctions between several key terms used throughout this chapter, we follow Hospers in distinguishing three central notions of place: identity, image and brand.

- Identity is what a place offers.
- Image is how it is perceived.
- Brand is the promise of what is positive enough about a place to make residents want to stay and outsiders want to come.⁷

Terlouw speaks of “communicated identities by regional administrations”.⁸ This formulation comes close to Hospers’s definition of regional branding.

- Events in the past that have later taken on meaning as influential happenings, such as the Treaty of Utrecht or the Battle of Arnhem.
- Public attractions, such as the Louvre in Paris, the Reichstag in Berlin, or the outlet Batavia Stad in Lelystad.
- Recurrent events, such as the International Four Day Marches in Nijmegen, the carnival in Rio de Janeiro, or the film festival in Cannes.
- Famous persons, such as Elvis Presley in Memphis, Gaudi in Barcelona, or the Limburg Brothers in Nijmegen.
- Local products, such as cheese from Gouda, Sachertorte from Vienna, or delftware pottery from Delft.
- The physical environment (see below).⁹

The role of the physical environment has been treated in the influential academic classic The Image of The City by Kevin Lynch, published in 1960. Lynch’s research showed that people perceive a city primarily as a “built image”. He asked residents to draw mental maps of their environments, and he found that a city’s image is essentially composed of five elements: paths, edges, districts, nodes and landmarks. Some parts of the cities Lynch researched (Boston, Los Angeles and Jersey City) made a strong impression on individuals more easily than others. He called the “imageability” of a place “that quality in a physical object which gives it a high probability of evoking a strong image in any given observer.”¹⁰ According to Lynch and Hospers some cities are more easily recognised than others because of their architectural and other physical characteristics; and this, it turns out, significantly affects their attractiveness and their long-term economic performance. And the same phenomenon has been observed for regions.¹¹

The challenge of creating a single urban network with a unified identity often creates a climate of contested pasts and landscapes. Bender uses the concept of contested landscapes in order understand how the landscape - in her case that of Stonehenge - is appropriated and contested. “I want to explore,” she writes, “not only the different ways in which, over a period of a thousand years, those with economic and political power and the necessary cultural capital have attempted, physically and aesthetically, to appropriate the landscape, but also how these appropriations have been contested by those engaging with the land in quite different ways”.¹²

This is the same kind of contestation that we will encounter in the Arnhem Nijmegen region. A complex system of interactions take place, in which the physicality of “living in the world interlocks with processes of appropriation by different groups”.¹³ In our case study, I will discuss several parallels between local and regional branding strategies, the images of Arnhem and Nijmegen, and several spatial development projects in the region. The focus will be on the way in which historical themes function in the interactions between identities, images, and brands. As will become clear, the region does not yet have a coherent identity. It is a new one with competing histories, groups, and places, and there is no one story that is shared by the whole region. This does not mean, of course, that no historical identities are promoted in it. Such attempts are being made; they are part of communication strategies, cultural events and spatial planning processes that are inspired by specific historical events. As we will see, however, only a handful of these initiatives have successfully defined
an identity for the region. Rather than promoting coherence, most of them have had the opposite effect of strengthening competition between histories, cities, and identities.

Finally, it should be noted that in this chapter the notion of authenticity will frequently recur; for much of the current competition and debate about heritage is centred around it. Indeed, the experience of authenticity is one of the key issues in the Arnhem Nijmegen region, where several different forms of authenticity play a part in the dynamics of heritage and identities. First of all, there is authenticity of place and of material. The former refers to the “real” place where an historic event took place, for example the John Frost Bridge in Arnhem is the authentic place of the last decisive phase of battle in the Second World War. The latter refers to the “realness” of historic material, such as the Roman and medieval archaeological soil archive that is still in place on the Valkhof in Nijmegen. Other forms of authentic experience can be called referential, relational and creative. Referential authenticity is attributed to an historic event or practice that is consciously and self-evidently created, such as the annual commemorations of the forgotten bombing of Nijmegen in 1944, which now constitute part of a tradition of remembrance. Relational authenticity is the experience of authenticity; in other words, it occurs through the personal engagement of individuals in historic events, such as telling the story of a specific past event one has witnessed. Creative authenticity refers to the artistic uniqueness that may be attributed to the form of an object or place.
§4.2

HISTORIES IN THE ARNHEM NIJMEGEN REGION
The historical background offered in this chapter is not intended to give a detailed description or a complete analysis of the region’s history. Instead, it will draw on regional and local historical canons in order to sketch out the “reservoir” of historical themes that are relevant to the Arnhem Nijmegen region of today.

One cannot write a complete history of a city or an area just by neatly dividing it up into ten periods and fifty ‘windows’, which is how many historical canons in the Netherlands are structured. There is no perfection to be found in a mathematically ordered overview of the historical identity of a region. The canons, which seek to describe the essence of the past in isolated chapters written by experts, are characterised by respect for historical detail and depth, but they have little relation to the present, let alone the future. And yet their production is thriving: the past decade has witnessed the appearance in the Netherlands of many regional and local canons, following upon the creation of a national canon in 2007. This trend may be seen as a response to the fear of losing connection with the past and anxiety about national identity at a time when debate on integration and the emergence of a multicultural society was at its peak.

Nevertheless, these canons can provide a suitable background for this chapter, because it is their intention to convey an “objectified” overview of past events. They are written by teams of experts in each town or city. The website of the Canon van Gelderland was a main source for this section of the chapter, as well as the local canons of Arnhem and Nijmegen and to a lesser extent Rheden. This overview is mostly chronological in order, although some exceptions are made when the thematic organisation requires it. Finally, it is worth noting that, in general, these canons offer very little geographical context for the historic events they record.

The description will reflect the way the regional and local canons describe the region’s history. Specifically, they do not approach Arnhem and Nijmegen as neighbouring cities with a partially shared and partially complementary history, but, instead, treat them as separate entities, in competition with each other since the later Middle Ages. Historically and geographically speaking, it would be fruitful to describe the histories of both cities as belonging to that of one larger area. As will become clear later in this chapter, the approach found in these canons is just one example of the problems facing Arnhem and Nijmegen in their efforts to form a single region with a shared past.

**Pre-history**

About 150,000 years ago, in the penultimate ice age, glaciers slid from the north to the area now called the Netherlands. These thick layers of ice formed lateral moraines which created the relief of the Veluwe and Nijmegen-Kleef. During the last ice age, about 12,000 years ago, permafrost caused the soil to be bare and the winds to shift sands, so that the latter covered large parts of the region’s surface. The Rhine and the Waal Rivers cut through the valleys, constantly changing their courses, causing erosion, and often creating dramatic differences in relief.

This is the natural environment in which Neanderthal men lived in the region as early as 70,000 years ago. Hunter-gatherer encampments dating back to around 5500-5000 BC have been found in today’s Schuytgraaf (a new neighbourhood of the city of Arnhem) and Nijmegen. The Veluwe, Overbetuwe and Renkum are dotted with burial mounds – some as much as 5000 years old; these dominate their purposefully planned surroundings.

The settlement of the first farmers in the region occurred around 3700 BC near Oosterhout, and archaeological findings in Nijmegen contain the grave of a local warlord, who was buried along with a wooden chariot.

**Romans**

Around 19 BC the first Roman soldiers arrived in what we now call the region of Arnhem and Nijmegen. The Rhine and the Old Rhine formed the northern border of the Roman Empire. Fortresses and watchtowers, connected by a road parallel to the river, formed the so-called “Limes”. An initial Roman encampment in the region was constructed on the Hunnerberg and a smaller one on the Kops Plateau around 10 BC. Fifty years later, a castellum was built in Arnhem’s Meijnerswijk as an outpost of the empire. In the same period, along the road to the encampment on the Kops Plateau, a town came into existence: Oppidum Batavorum. It was abandoned
after Batavian troops burned it down in 70 AD, and a new town named *Ulpia Noviomagus* was built two kilometres to the west; it was surrounded by a stone defensive wall and a deep ditch in the second half of the second century. Soon afterwards, a major part of this town, too, was burned down and abandoned. After this, people lived around the Valkhof, where a last Roman fortification was built. A watchtower along the Roman road was constructed in today’s Heumensoord. Around 400 AD all Roman army units left the northern border to return to the imperial capital. Other Roman fortifications no doubt existed in the region, but they left no traces, probably because of the constantly changing flows of the Rhine and the Waal.

### Early Middle Ages

In the fifth century the Merovingian elite took over power from the withdrawing Roman forces. The fortified Valkhof in Nijmegen and the settlement near the Waal were occupied and must have functioned as a regional administrative centre. The Frankish kings became more influential in the region in the eighth century AD. A small monastery near today’s Elst was formed to convert the regional population to Christianity, which had been steadily growing in strength since the fourth century.

Charlemagne, who expanded the Frankish empire between 768 and 814 AD, chose Nijmegen to be one of his residences, since he saw himself as the legitimate heir of the Western Roman Empire. After 777 a Valkhof palace and a neighbouring town were built, along with several farms in the surrounding area. Charlemagne’s main political goal in this region was to integrate the Saxon elite politically, culturally, and religiously into his realm. At that time, Arnhem consisted of a small church and several farmhouses, but it expanded in the coming centuries. Charlemagne was succeeded by Louis the Pious, who regularly held meetings in the Valkhof palace. After his death, the empire was divided among his three sons. This part of the empire was more than once visited by Viking raiding parties; they plundered Nijmegen in 881, leaving no trace of Charlemagne’s palace.

### High Middle Ages

Internal conflicts and Viking raids undermined the influence of the Frankish kings, and in the course of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries the counts of Gelre took possession of their territory, including the Anhem-Nijmegen region. In the middle of the twelfth century the German emperor Frederick Barbarossa had a great stronghold constructed on the history-laden Valkhof, including an impressive tower. In the fourteenth century, Arnhem and Nijmegen were granted municipal rights, giving these rapidly growing communities more autonomy. Nijmegen had always asserted its autonomy, but it lost this when it became part of the duchy of Gelre in 1247.

The new municipal rights led to the construction of city walls — initially made of earth and later transformed into brick walls with towers and gates — along with other public buildings and structures, such as town halls, harbour cranes, weighing-houses and clothmakers’ halls. In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, outside the cities, on the sandy soils in the region, the *marke* system was introduced, in which the farmers of each community organised the distribution and use of land as a communal matter, in order to prevent problems like sand drifts.

In these same centuries religious orders, aristocratic military leaders, churches, and monasteries began to play an increasingly important role in the region. Many churches were built, such as the St. Stephen’s in Nijmegen in 1273 and numerous smaller ones dotted the region, often replacing earlier wooden structures. Many monasteries, convents and beguinages have existed in the region; the earliest mentioned belonged to the Knights Commanders of St. John in Nijmegen (1214 AD) and Arnhem (around 1200 AD). Most of these organisations had their own chapel or church, and sometimes they cared for the sick and elderly, copied books, or housed students.

Sailors and merchants formed the biggest group of entrepreneurs in the city of Nijmegen, earning most of their income by supplying the royal and religious elite. Their trading networks reached as far as England, Scandinavia, Flanders and North Germany; the main commodities were wine, salt, charcoal, oxen, herring, wheat,
Sixteenth century

After decades of power struggles between the regional counts and dukes and the Habsburgs and Burgundians, the Burgundian sovereign Charles V became the new ruler in Gelre in 1543, and he made Arnhem into the capital of Gelre, one of 17 districts of the Netherlands. Only 38 years later, the Eighty Year’s War began in the Netherlands, in which seven provinces united and declared themselves independent of the Spanish crown. Gelre and, especially, the city of Nijmegen suffered from being on the front lines, switching sides several times. In the end they were permanently “reduced” by the Protestant Republicans.

The Reformation, which played a very important role in the Dutch-Spanish conflict, was also felt in the Arnhem-Nijmegen region. Catholic religious services, guilds, fraternities and traditions were forbidden; Catholic officials were replaced; and churches were looted. In the same period, the Jesuit Petrus Canisius from Nijmegen campaigned for the Counter-Reformation in various parts of Europe, for which he was declared a saint in 1925.

Seventeenth century

Nijmegen, a border city, played a strategic role in the Republic’s defence system. Its walls were attacked between 1600 and 1800, and they were repaired and strengthened several times to protect it from Spanish and French attacks. In 1635, the city suffered an epidemic of the Black Death – probably caused by the presence of ten thousand soldiers – which killed over six thousand people. The long-running conflict between France, the Dutch Republic and Spain and its allies was ended by the negotiations which took place in Nijmegen between 1676 and 1679.

Arnhem was also heavily fortified in the seventeenth century, and it was mapped in detail by the land surveyor Nicolaas van Geelkercken. (His map was printed by Joan Blaeu.)

In 1654 the Quarter University was founded in Nijmegen, after the city lost the competition to become the home of a Gelders university to Harderwijk (a subregion within Gelders). One of its students was Gerard Noodt, a jurist who pleaded for freedom of conscience for people of all beliefs.

Competition from other cities, the Black Death, and a French invasion in 1672 eventually resulted in the closing of the university in 1679. Meanwhile, the art of printing underwent considerable development in Arnhem. Family-run presses produced many regional historical chronicles, maps and the first weekly newspaper in the Northern Netherlands.

During the course of the sixteenth century, the Rhine had silted up more and more, obstructing trade and weakening Arnhem’s defence system. In response, the Pannerdensch Kanaal was excavated between the Waal and the Lower Rhine after 1671 in order to improve the river’s water supply.

Political turmoil in the eighteenth century: “Plooierijen” and patriots

The eighteenth century was an age of turmoil in the region. Rivalry between several politically powerful families resulted in local political conflict and murders (“Plooierijen”). This unrest eventually led to a new democratic movement whose adherents became known as...
the Patriots, and they rebelled against the Stadholder Willem V. The conflict ended with the French invasion in 1794–95. All the former local politicians were replaced, and the Patriots came to power in the new “Batavian Republic”. Less than 20 years later this regime was toppled by Prussian troops, and the princes of Nassau were restored to power.\textsuperscript{55} During the Batavian period the Convention of Gelderland decided to demolish the Valkhofburcht of Barbarossa, despite the strong protests of the community of Nijmegen.\textsuperscript{56}

**Gelders’ Arcadia**

In the seventeenth century, the regents started to spend their summers outside the cities. Often, farmhouses or former monastic properties were gradually transformed into estates, essentially summer retreats which also had an economic function. In the eighteenth century, former colonists from the Dutch East Indies established themselves in Arnhem. A century later, rich merchants and industrialists were not interested in the flat, cultivated grounds favored by the previous ruling elite, preferring, instead, hilly, woody environments for their villas, where they tended to spend more time than just the summers.\textsuperscript{57}

**Changes in the nineteenth century**

The Netherlands became a kingdom in 1817, and Arnhem was made the capital of the province of Gelderland, giving it important regional administrative and judicial functions.\textsuperscript{58} Another big change that year was the annexation of several Klevian enclaves.\textsuperscript{59} The nineteenth century brought more freedom for Catholics in Nijmegen. They were granted permission to build a permanent church, and they founded several congregations and many other organisations. Catholic industrialists became part of the regional elite, and the city’s first Catholic mayor took office in 1898.\textsuperscript{60}

The spatial layout of Arnhem and Nijmegen drastically changed in the nineteenth century. The fortified walls of the cities were demolished, freeing up space for urban development. Arnhem tore down its walls after 1829 and developed luxurious suburbs, parks and promenades around the medieval city centre in order to attract rich citizens and former colonists to the city. Many cultural and social organisations and institutions were also founded, such as associations, a concert hall, and exhibition spaces.\textsuperscript{61} Nijmegen followed Arnhem’s example, though not until 1874, successfully transforming itself into an attractive residential area for the wealthy.\textsuperscript{62}

In the second half of the nineteenth century, in order to better the poor living conditions of the lower classes, the local governments and (particularly in Nijmegen) the Catholic charitable organisations worked to improve hygiene and health care. Hospitals were founded, sanitation measures were introduced in public spaces, water pumping stations were built, and the city was provided with sewers and water works.\textsuperscript{63} The traditionally high number of soldiers in Nijmegen rose even further around 1900, making it necessary to construct several large barracks at the edge of the city.\textsuperscript{64}

**Industrialisation**

Already in the seventeenth century several villages on the Veluwe had developed into a centre for paper production, which they remained well into the nineteenth century.\textsuperscript{65} Around that time other industries were beginning to grow rapidly in the region, such as brick factories in the river valleys, a soap factory, and a printing house in Nijmegen, along with a textile factory in Arnhem (the latter employed many children).\textsuperscript{66} Steam power was the great engine of industrialisation and it also drastically changed transport and trade. Steam boats, trams and the railroad connection in 1845 between Amsterdam and Arnhem shortened travel times and lowered transport costs, especially for Arnhem.\textsuperscript{67}

Arnhem had kept the smoking chimneys away from its lush green centre for a long time, not making the big industrial leap until as late as 1911, when it allowed, for example, the construction of the Enka textile factory.\textsuperscript{68} In the wake of industrialisation, women, Catholics, and Protestants all formed their own associations to secure higher wages, improved working conditions, and more rights for women and religious organisations.\textsuperscript{69}
**First half of the twentieth century**

Thanks to its many private estates, parks and woods, the area surrounding Arnhem and Nijmegen began to blossom as a tourist destination in the late nineteenth century. The Sonsbeek estate became a communal property, and the Burgers’ Zoo and the Open Air Museum were founded. A group of painters established themselves in Oosterbeek to be able to work in the natural surroundings of the Veluwe. More time for recreation also led to the foundation of new sports clubs, such as the football club NEC. Another fast-growing sports phenomenon were the Four Days Marches, permanently hosted by Nijmegen after 1925.

Both Arnhem and Nijmegen built several new residential quarters, among them the first working-class area and also the very first Dutch garden city, Sparrows Quarter (Mussenbuurt) in Arnhem. The position of Nijmegen’s Catholic community continued to strengthen in the twentieth century, finding expression, for example, in the foundation of the Catholic University of Nijmegen in 1923. This trend culminated in the 1950s, when over a hundred Catholic churches, congregations, schools, hospitals, old-age homes, and museums dominated social and cultural life in the city. In the 1930s, relief work was instituted to minimise the effects of the worldwide economic crisis, and this resulted in many infrastructural projects, such as Goffert Park in Nijmegen and two bridges over the Rhine and the Waal, in 1936, connecting the northern and southern parts of the region.

**The Second World War**

In 1940, at the beginning of the Second World War, around 2,700 Jews lived in the cities of Arnhem and Nijmegen, many of whom were later persecuted and deported during the German occupation of the Netherlands. Only 1,400 of them survived the Holocaust.

The year 1944 saw great destruction in both cities. In February, American bombers caused massive damage and around 800 deaths in Nijmegen, upon returning from an aborted mission in Germany and searching for a target of opportunity. Seven months later Operation Market Garden took place: an audacious Allied attack by air (Market) and land (Garden), intended to capture a corridor to the Ruhr area. In Arnhem the Allied soldiers unexpectedly encountered German troops, and days of heavy combat followed before the last Allied troops surrendered at the Rhine bridge in Arnhem. The city was heavily damaged and evacuated for 8 months following the battle. Nijmegen also suffered from fierce fighting; it was taken by Allied forces after several days, once more becoming a border city. It marked the northern border of liberated area, and was thus part of the front line until February 1945. As a result, it suffered another 800 casualties.

**Postwar history**

It took many years for Arnhem and Nijmegen to complete their postwar reconstruction. Indeed, for Nijmegen this amounted to the reconstruction of the entire city centre. New economic and health care organisations were established in the region, including many service-oriented companies and many rehabilitation centres in Arnhem. In these same years, Arnhem developed as an art and fashion centre with a strong counterculture, while Nijmegen focused on industrial development, attracting companies like Philips. It also expanded in the 1960s by developing new quarters like Dukenburg and Lindenholt. Both Arnhem and Nijmegen made great advances in their respective expansions by crossing a river: Arnhem started building south of the Rhine in the 1950s, and Nijmegen crossed the Waal, though not until about fifty years later. In these postwar years many migrant workers came to the region, finding employment in the local industries and turning Arnhem and Nijmegen into vibrant multi-cultural cities.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>150,000 BC</td>
<td>lateral moraine of Arnhem</td>
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<tr>
<td>c. 2500 BC</td>
<td>burial mounds of Warnsborn</td>
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<tr>
<td>40 AD - 400 AD</td>
<td>Cultellum Meijerswijk, Roman soldiers, Roman towns, Merovingian elite</td>
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<tr>
<td>40 AD 900 AD</td>
<td>Aiernem, letter of city privileges</td>
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<tr>
<td>1233 AD 1492-1538</td>
<td>Charles of Gelders, The city vs. Dukes and rulers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1530-1536 1578-1579</td>
<td>Rhine shift, icons noism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1650</td>
<td>city map of Van Geerkerken</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18th century</td>
<td>country house Zypendaal, political conflicts, the Plooierijen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1792-1902 1795-1813</td>
<td>Enlightenment and science, French occupation, Catholic emancipation</td>
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<tr>
<td>1817-1853 1829-1853</td>
<td>Anhem: provincial capital, demolition of fortifications, healthier living</td>
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<tr>
<td>after 1817</td>
<td>Anhem: provincial capital</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1845</td>
<td>train connections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1850-1901 1870</td>
<td>expansion of the city: Heuvelink plan, emancipation movements, The beginnings of modern Nijmegen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19th century</td>
<td>newspaper: Anthemsche Courant, child factory workers, factories, barrack and soldiers in garrison city, The De Leur brothers: artists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960-1964 1945</td>
<td>Depression, The bridge over the river Rhine, The bridge over the river Waal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1940-1945 1944</td>
<td>Second World War, Battle of Anhem, occupied city, domestic destruction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1945-1964 1945</td>
<td>Chris Matsen, postwar reconstruction, service industries, industrial city</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>new care for the disabled: Het Dorp, Joris Ivens, filmmaker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>outside the pale: art in Anhem, Garnhamveld, Leidschg.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900-2000 1955</td>
<td>army base and international missions, multicultural quarter Spiljerkwarter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993-1995 1935</td>
<td>double city: north and south of the river, Nijmegen crosses the river Waal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>After 2000</td>
<td>Burgers' Zoo and Gelredame</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 4.1.** The “windows” of the Arnhem and Nijmegen Canons, placed in chronological order and parallel to each other as much as possible.
§4.3

BRANDING HISTORIES IN A NEW AND DYNAMIC REGION

- CHOSEN LEGACIES -

- BATTLEFIELD OF HISTORIES -
Arnhem and Nijmegen do display marked differences in their historical development and character, but they are also similar in several important respects. As the previous section showed, these similarities do not receive much attention in their respective canons nor in the provincial canon. Rather, the cities are described as each other’s competitors throughout their history. In fact, the canons leave one with the impression of a region that does not want to tell the story of a shared past, but rather sees its two main cities as separate entities, competing with each other in the past as well as in the present.

All the same, the Arnhem Nijmegen region is a fast-growing urban region in which these cities are rapidly growing towards each other. In the Fourth Report on Spatial Planning of 1988 the region was named a Daily Urban System (DUS), that is to say, an urban network of national and international importance, a designation which stresses the importance of spatial planning on a regional scale. The regional government, officially the Arnhem Nijmegen City Region, has been established to coordinate the urbanisation process throughout its territory. It not only wants to conceive its spatial planning and infrastructure initiatives at that scale; it has also launched a publicity campaign called “Arnhem Nijmegen, Cool Region”, in order “To put the region firmly on the map and make the region digitally findable for visitors and companies from home and abroad!” Regional marketing can be defined as: “The long-term process and/or the policy instrument consisting of several coherent activities aimed at attracting specific target groups to a specific area and keeping them there.”

It is not only Arnhem Nijmegen City Region which is promoting the region as a single entity with a shared past. The Regional Office for Tourism (RBT KAN) also undertakes to attract visitors to the region. Both organisations feature the historical aspects of the region in their publicity campaigns, though in different ways. Although these two organisations are active in promoting the region as a whole, drawing on its history and trying to present a coherent image, there are many initiatives that compete with and undermine their efforts. Not only does each city have its own marketing projects; they compete to create the stronger profile, as well as in the organisation of spatial planning and of local cultural activities. This section focuses on these competing historical identities and promotional images, showing how the latter and heritage in general are used to reinforce the division of the region into a southern and northern half.

**Branding of histories in local and regional policy**

In the Arnhem Nijmegen region, several local and regional governments promote different interpretations of the region’s character and use histories in different ways in their public relations campaigns. The Arnhem Nijmegen City Region, the province of Gelderland, and the cities Arnhem and Nijmegen all have their own strategies for appropriating the past when they tell their own stories of (a part of) the region. This section focuses on how historical themes and icons are utilised in their respective strategies and policies. As this overview will show, all the levels of governments involved recognise the diversity of landscape and the historic differences in the area, but treat these characteristics differently.

**The province: unity in diversity**

The Arnhem Nijmegen region lies mainly in the southern part of the Dutch province of Gelderland. Politically speaking, the region was created by the national government and assigned certain tasks, while Gelderland also has responsibilities in those same fields, though for a larger area (around four times as big). Since 2000 the province of Gelderland has been working with the concept of Belvoir, in an effort to develop an integrated cultural-historical policy. In this concept the province is divided into ten different areas, each with specific cultural-historical coherence, based on both the physical landscapes and the cultural historical structures that are part of these landscapes. The concepts is closely linked to national heritage policy under the name of Belvedere. This coherence is named the identity of the area; and the various elements of its cultural history are seen as making up the DNA of each of them. When taking a closer look at the Arnhem Nijmegen region on the Belvoir map, one sees that it overlaps with no less than six of the ten Belvoir areas: Rivierengebied, Zuidelijke
The region: battlefields in the river landscape

The Arnhem Nijmegen City Region plays a coordinating role in the fields of infrastructure, economics and public transport. In its regional plan, it declares that the three most important aspects of the region’s identity are: the river landscape and the ice-pushed ridges surrounding it, along with the resulting greatly varied landscape; its function as an infrastructural hub, combined with a high concentration of knowledge-based industries; and its internal cultural-historical boundaries, together with its water barriers, borders and the military front lines that have crisscrossed the region. To quote the plan: “The identity of the region can also by characterised in terms of an ever-changing border region.... A hidden cultural richness with which the region can strongly identify and [can draw on in developing] a self-image.”

In the Regional Plan, the administration is looking at the region as a single entity, with a shared past in terms of landscape and (to a certain extent) politics. This conception already reveals that its division by rivers, frontiers, battlefields and borders is the most central theme in the history of the entire region. The Regional Plan is not the only policy document in which the Arnhem Nijmegen City Region tries to define a shared identity for the whole region. In the Masterplan dijk en kolk (“Levee and Breach,” my own translation) it also takes the region’s identity into account as it works to determine the most appropriate future changes in the rivers and regional roads while at the same time showing respect for the historic landscape remains. Dijk en kolk states that the region consists of a complex of many different landscape elements, helping to make it a unique region, but also making it harder to work on regional spatial planning in a clear and coherent way. Therefore one of its major concerns is to find and foster unity amidst diversity. The master plan chooses the long-running struggle with water as the central cultural-historical theme, naming dykes and rivers as connecting structures in the region. The document also emphasises the importance of using cultural and historical connections between Arnhem and Nijmegen to reinforce the corridor between these two “mirror cities.”

It should be noted that both the regional plan and Dijk en kolk were formulated by landscape and urban designers, which explains the
accent on landscape elements and the stress on material historical remains as carriers of regional identity. Both of them see the river landscape and ice-pushed ridges as the most characteristic elements of the region. As will be shown below, Arnhem Nijmegen City Region’s characterisation of the region in these policy documents is far from consistent with the one promoted in its own “Cool Region” publicity campaign. In an interview, the chairman of the Arnhem Nijmegen City Region’s board, Jaap Modder, explains this difference in terms of the educational background of their respective authors and emphasises the difficulty of speaking of the region as if it had a single, homogenous identity. Not only is Arnhem a Protestant city and Nijmegen a Catholic one, but the highway link between them has existed for less than 80 years (the Waal and Rhine bridges date from 1936-1937). The rivers form borders that divided the region already in Roman times (when they were known as the Limes), and the area lying between Arnhem and Nijmegen has been a battlefield in many conflicts since then. Nijmegen was oriented towards the south and it still is today. This has created major cultural, social and historical differences between the two cities. As an old joke puts it: a funeral in Nijmegen is always merrier than a wedding in Arnhem. This disparity is reflected in the policy documents of the Arnhem Nijmegen City Region, which attempts to acknowledge the differences while at the same time presenting them as the ingredients of the region’s particular character, which is precisely that of displaying an overall unity amidst abundant diversity.

Nijmegen: the Netherlands oldest city

In 2008, Nijmegen’s marketing department launched the new campaign “Forever Nijmegen” (“Altijd Nijmegen”), directly referring to its historical character and antiquity. The city’s authorities claim that it is the oldest city in the Netherlands, and they view its 2000 years of history as its prime selling point. But the municipality has one big problem in this regard: that history is scarcely visible in its public spaces, despite occasional excavations which temporarily reveal certain aspects of its past. The 1944 bombings and postwar reconstruction, together, have completely destroyed the city’s historic centre. It is therefore not surprising that the past plays only a minor role in the formation of its public image, given that the urban environment is a very important determinant in the construction of a city’s image.

Since 2005, the year in which Nijmegen celebrated its 2000th anniversary, the city’s past has been increasingly promoted and visualised. This reinvention of Nijmegen’s history is the product of the interplay between initiatives formulated by its municipal historians, on the one hand, and its marketing professionals, on the other. It has been supported by an extensive infrastructure encompassing institutions, engaged citizens, and academic researchers, and includes many local initiatives around historical events, among them re-enactments. Thus, in Nijmegen interest in and use of historical themes by the local government is constantly being renewed; in short, history has boomed since the anniversaries celebrations. National trends, political currents, and strong individual initiatives by influential politicians (such as former mayor Thom de Graaf, who has a deep interest in the history of the Second World War), all play a part in determining which aspects of local history are treated as more important than others.

To gain an understanding of and to be able to anticipate public opinion concerning the treatment of the city’s past, the municipality conducted a survey on the matter in 2011. A majority of those polled thought that the two best candidates for creating a strong historical profile for the city were the Roman period and, to a lesser degree, the Middle ages. In a master plan developed in the wake of this research, the city’s cultural history department chose to promote five themes from the city’s past: the Roman period, the Middle Ages, the Treaties of the Peace of Nijmegen, the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century, and the Second World War and reconstruction. The House of History of Nijmegen (Huis van de Nijmeegse Geschiedenis) and visualisation projects will give shape to the city’s ambition to accord more prominence to these themes.

The five historical themes Nijmegen uses in its city branding and other policies do not peacefully co-exist: advocates for each theme compete for funding and public attention. Currently the most successful theme is the Second World War, which is receiving ever more attention in terms of projects, commemorations,
research and publications. The bombardment of Nijmegen was not commemorated publicly until as late as in 1993, but ever since then it has been an annual event. For a long time, the bombing was thought to have been a mistake on the part of Allied pilots. This uncomfortable circumstance meant that it could not easily be publicly commemorated earlier. Now, interest in the Second World War has compensated for this, and this part of Nijmegen’s history is winning out over other historical themes when it comes to funding projects and public attention.\(^{111}\) And the War is not only capturing local attention: Nijmegen is also competing with Arnhem to become the nation’s primary location for its commemoration, and efforts are underway to build a national Second World War museum in Nijmegen.\(^ {112}\) But just as the case with the province of Gelderland, local heritage professionals are not working on it, because of the intangible character of its heritage.

Nijmegen, as noted above, is promoting interest in its history by developing as many as five historic themes. It is interesting to see what parts of the city’s history are being left in the shadow of this ‘winning team’. Most significantly, Nijmegen has been known as an important centre of Dutch Catholicism from the nineteenth century onwards, a position strengthened by the foundation of the Catholic University there, which then attracted many orders and congregations focused on knowledge and learning to the city. By the 1950s, Nijmegen housed the largest number of Catholic congregations, monasteries, convents, churches, and schools and other related institutions in the Netherlands. But since that time many organisations have downsized or disappeared, and even the university changed its name to Radboud University in 2004. What remains are many complexes, churches and other buildings which have taken on a different function but which still show something of Nijmegen’s Catholic past. It seems that the city is turning to parts of its past which are no longer visible in order to make itself more attractive, as if it is longing for something lost instead of using its available physical remainders to strengthen its identity.

Arnhem: a green and creative city, not a site of wartime memories

Whereas the municipality of Nijmegen vaunts the continuity of its long history, Arnhem does not incorporate any specific historical characteristics in its marketing campaign. The latter, called “Made in Arnhem”, was initiated and developed by the regional tourist Board RBT KAN, because the city does not do its own marketing but leaves it up to that board. The city’s “green” character and its rich creative and cultural climate form the heart of the campaign.\(^{113}\) Although the latter draws on no specific historical themes, the greenness of Arnhem certainly has its roots in the close proximity of the Veluwe, an area of estates and luxurious residential neighbourhoods developed in the nineteenth and early twentieth century.\(^ {114}\) It is significant that the campaign makes no references to Arnhem’s role in Operation Market Garden, considering that latter is the event by which Arnhem is best known internationally.\(^ {115}\)

Arnhem’s heritage department works relatively independently from its marketing department and does not favour one historical theme over the other. This even-handedness contrasts sharply with the attention that the Airborne Museum Hartenstein in nearby Oosterbeek is drawing to its new ‘Airborne Experience’: an immersive spatial environment centred on the Battle of Arnhem (1944) seen from the perspective of the Allied forces. Nevertheless, most of Arnhem’s current heritage projects are in the field of green heritage: greenbelts, nineteenth century estates and suburbs, and military history, including the Battle of Arnhem. In line with its overall marketing campaign, the city tries to connect its success in the fashion industry to the redevelopment of the former worker’s area known as Klarendal. A new theme has recently been added to Arnhem’s heritage projects: the Roman history of the relatively new area of Meijnerswijk. Arnhem never had a strong connection with the Roman past of the region, but since the excavation of a Roman castellum south of the Rhine, an older layer has been added to the city’s history.\(^ {116}\)

The municipality’s heritage professionals and archaeologists appear to have adopted the Roman past; for they are paying a great deal of attention to the castellum. At the same time, they are leaving
the best known part of the city’s history on the sidelines, namely, its role in Operation Market Garden in 1944. Like Nijmegen, Arnhem seems to be overlooking the histories that are right at hand while longing for elements of its past that have long since disappeared from the city’s physical structure and the memories of its inhabitants.

Regional cooperation

An examination of the policies and strategies of four different governmental organisations in the Arnhem Nijmegen region has shown that only the Arnhem Nijmegen City Region is trying to conceive the region as a single entity – a conception which it tries to convey by emphasising the unity to be found amidst the great diversity of landscape structures and material remains of its past. This is the only approach to history and identity that has a truly regional character. The provincial policy emphasises the fragmented character of the area, while Arnhem and Nijmegen both have very different city marketing campaigns and try to compete with each other rather than to define themselves as neighbouring cities with shared heritages, goals and perspectives.

Historically speaking, Arnhem and Nijmegen have been rivals in many respects since the Middle Ages. The tension between the two cities, separated by two rivers, is ancient and rooted in their respective self-images. They each have their own agendas, canons, and unique attractions. Nijmegen’s citizens are deeply involved in their local history, while Arnhem sees itself as an up-and-coming, creative city with a vibrant artistic community. They do share the same history to a significant degree, though the way that history affected each city, of course, varied considerably, as the example of the Second World War clearly shows. Instead of working with the memory of the Second World War as a shared past, the two cities have recently started a competition about which of them has the greater claim to “own” this past. Arnhem’s identification with the Second World War has existed since Mayor Thom de Graaf’s initiatives, and now Nijmegen has also adopted the War as a major historical theme, thus bringing it into direct competition with Arnhem. Neither side has shown any interest in a shared presentation or commemoration of these events, despite the many opportunities available in this regard. For example, a meeting was organised recently by the Gelderlander newspaper to explore the benefits of a joint canon for Arnhem and Nijmegen, something which could shed new light on both shared and differing parts of the cities’ histories. The reactions were very positive, but the idea has not been acted upon in any way.

ECoC 2018

When the Dutch cities were invited to compete for the honour of being named European Capital of Culture in 2018, RBT KAN organised meetings at which governments, cultural organisations and the tourism industry were to explore the possibilities for the Arnhem Nijmegen region. Over 60 parties committed to the initiative, which offered a great opportunity for a future candidacy. It appears that some politicians wanted to investigate the possibilities all over again in a more conceptually oriented way, leaving aside the work that was already done and slowing down the whole process. Surprisingly, the region never followed through on this and offered no candidate, thereby missing a great opportunity for improving the region’s marketing, image, and internal cooperation.

Battle over museums

That competition rather than cooperation governs relations between Arnhem and Nijmegen can be easily illustrated by considering the plans for two historical museums in the region: the National Museum of History (NHM) and Museum WWII, a national museum for the Second World War. In 2001 a national debate began over the supposed lack of historical awareness in the Netherlands and over the need, or not, for a museum of national history. Thom de Graaf, then the minister in charge of governmental reform, developed initial plans for a national House of Democracy; and the latter project was subsequently combined with other initiatives to become the proposed Dutch Museum of National History. In May 2007, Ronald Plasterk, Minister of Education, Culture and Science, invited three
cities to submit proposals for the realisation of the museum: The Hague, Arnhem and Amsterdam. Two days later Nijmegen joined the list of candidates.

In June 2007, several cities, Nijmegen among them, requested that an open competition be held for the location of the new museum. By the end of that month, Plasterk chose Arnhem – for a number of reasons. First of all, he favoured a regional distribution of cultural institutions as opposed to clustering. Also, Arnhem proposed to open the museum as early as 2011, and building the new museum there offered a potential synergy with the Netherlands Open Air Museum, which would be in the same neighbourhood.

One week later, Nijmegen whose new mayor since January 2007 was Thom de Graaf – held a press conference announcing a new campaign for a Second World War Museum. This might be a coincidence, but I assume that it was not.

The story of the Museum of National History did not end there. The disappointment and discussion which followed Plasterk’s selection of Arnhem was not confined to the Dutch House of Representatives. Nevertheless, the preparations continued; a new organisation was established to consider the possibilities for the museum, including other locations in Arnhem which might be more feasible. As a result, the former Public Housing building was recommended. This location, next to the John Frost Bridge along the banks of the Rhine was more feasible in terms of parking places, environmental issues, accessibility, construction time and costs. Another argument was that the new location was better suited to the museum, since the Rhine had been the border of the Roman Empire, and it also symbolises the historical importance of the Netherlands’ relationships to trade, landscape, and water. The John Frost Bridge is also an important symbol of the Second World War in the Netherlands.

The Dutch House of Representatives voted for the original location next to the Netherlands Open Air Museum in June 2009. However, the location of the museum remained a subject of national discussion, one centred mainly, it must be said, on the availability of parking facilities. In 2011, the new State Secretary of Culture, Halbe Zijlstra, announced that there would be no state funding for the construction of a physical museum, only subsidies for a virtual one. New, cheaper locations were then considered, such as Soestdijk Palace, but in the end none of these options were chosen because political support for the museum had faded. Nijmegen lost the competition for the Museum of National History early on, but Arnhem, too, failed to bring it to fruition. However, Nijmegen did follow through on its plans for a new Second World War Museum, which would bring together the collections of several museums in the region. In 2013 the municipality symbolically sold the former Vasim building, in the former industrial quarter that is now part of the Waal Front development, to the Foundation Museum WWII for one euro.

The Romans long belonged to Nijmegen and the Second World War to Arnhem. Now it seems as if Arnhem, in focusing on Meijnerswijk, wants a part of Nijmegen’s identity. Nijmegen, in turn, wants to be just as important in our memory of the Second World War as Arnhem, among other ways, by claiming for itself the Museum WWII. It almost seems as if each city is competing for a portion of the other’s historical identity. Obviously, this does not fit in with a strategy to become more connected to each other; it arises from an urge to compete for telling the more attractive story.

Online regional branding: a content analysis

This chapter considers the question of what role historical themes and heritages play in the construction of an identity for the Arnhem-Nijmegen region. To answer it we need to determine what historical themes are used, what histories are being told, and what kind of heritage practices exist in the region. Equally important is the question of who is performing these practices and for what reasons. These questions are hard to answer, but one good way to begin is by analysing the content of the region’s promotional websites, which lets us see what kind of heritage themes are used to promote the region for (potential) inhabitants, visitors and investors. It could also give us some initial data concerning who is using the various “heritage layers”, and for what purpose.
Coolregion

The Coolregion website is one of the main communication tools for the marketing campaign known as “Arnhem Nijmegen Cool Region”. Developed by the Working Group Arnhem Nijmegen Cool Region, it conveys a strong positive image of the region. The principal supporters of this campaign are Arnhem Nijmegen City Region, the Chamber of Commerce Central Gelderland, the representatives of small- and medium-sized companies (MKB-Midden), the Regional Office for Tourism Arnhem Nijmegen (RBT KAN), and the Confederation of Netherlands Industry and Employers (VNO-NCW Region Arnhem Nijmegen); and it is co-financed by the European Fund for Regional Development. The website is explicitly designed as a trilingual information portal for prospective visitors, inhabitants, students, researchers, investors and sportsmen, and all areas of the region are represented.

On the Coolregion website historical qualities are frequently mentioned in the section meant for potential visitors. Noteworthy in this context is the fact that the website refers not sporadically as a historical period in itself and, in those cases, it was mostly in relation to the Valkhof (more about this in the results section).

The analysis is based on references in the content texts of websites and not, for example, on pictures; for texts can be more precise in references to particular historical themes than pictures. Words or sentences were counted in the tallies when a reference was made to a particular period or theme when an historical date was mentioned. Pages that referred to only one historical theme were counted once, but if they referred to more than one theme, they were counted accordingly. This method of counting also extends to instances when texts referred to an unspecified historical character or to “a rich history” or to multiple, unspecified historical layers. This particular score was given for words like: eeuwenoud (“centuries-old”), van oudsher (“of old, from early days”), van weleer (“in olden times”), historische stades (“historical towns”), sinds jaar en dag (“from early days”) and rijke geschiedenis (“rich history”). References to the landscape, the Rhine, or nature were not counted if their historical character was not explicitly mentioned. Finally, words as nostalgisch (“nostalgic”), ambachtelijk (“craft”), authentiek (“authentic”), gerestaureerd (“restored”), and monumentaal (“monumental”) were not scored.

Here, I preface the results of the content analysis with a short overview of the three websites, indicating their characteristics and the way in which they refer to historical themes in the region.

Sources

Three promotional websites in the region were analysed, including their sub-sites (but not the external links they referred to). Taken together, these websites, which have different owners, goals and target groups, offer an astonishing amount of information concerning how the Arnhem Nijmegen region is promoted.

My procedure was to count the number of times that a text referred to a regional historical theme. These themes were formulated after a quick survey of the websites and of the terms and periodisation they employed. In accord with this strategy, the Frankish period is for example not separated from the rest of the Middle Ages (although the latter period accounts for almost a thousand years of history). Besides, the Frankish times were only mentioned sporadically as a historical period in itself and, in those cases, it was mostly in relation to the Valkhof (more about this in the results section).

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the course of a day. Some of the organisations or companies presented are mentioned in more than one section of the website and are scored accordingly; often they are presented in several different texts, in accord with the thematic setup of the website. The content of the tourist package deals section was not included in the analysis in order to minimise overlap.

This is by far the largest of the analyzed websites. Most importantly here, it also contains more than half of all the references to historical themes in our analysis. Most texts on the websites are provided by cultural organisations and companies in the tourism industry such as hotels, restaurants, conference centres, organisers of day-trips etc. Several others are written by employees of the RBT KAN. That explains the large number of sub-sites and also the large number of references to a wide range of historical themes. Accordingly, the scores on this website do not represent a selection of historical themes made by the owners of the website, but rather a selection made by a large part of the regional tourism industry.

SpannendeGeschiedenis

SpannendeGeschiedenis (Exciting History) is the regional web portal for historical information intended for both visitors and inhabitants of the Arnhem Nijmegen region. It was developed by several governmental and cultural organisations, including the province of Gelderland, several local communities, the Regional Office for Tourism Arnhem Nijmegen (RBT KAN), the “Geldersch Landschap en Geldersche Kasteelen”, the Archive of Gelderland (Gelders Archief), and the Tourist Office for Gelderland and Overijssel (Gelders-Overijssels Bureau voor Toerisme). Several museums and other historical organisations support the project as partners. As in the case of VVV ArnhemNijmegen, the package deals presented on this page were left out of the analysis.

SpannendeGeschiedenis presents three periods of the region’s history that the initiators of the website consider to be the most important: the age of the Romans and Batavians, the Middle Ages, and the Second World War. For these themes, the website offers information on 16, 36 and 40 locations, respectively, that are strongly related to them. The information on each theme is accessible by clicking on dots on a map of the region, a calendar with activities, or a timeline. The number of very specific references to historical dates and themes is remarkable, as is the virtual absence of any references to the overall history of the region’s several unspecified historical layers. It is also striking how little context information on geography and space is offered on the website. Landscape, spatial context, and distances to other historical sites are hardly ever mentioned.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Historical themes</th>
<th>Total score</th>
<th>VVV Arnhem Nijmegen</th>
<th>Cool-region</th>
<th>Spannende Geschiedenis</th>
<th>De Stads-regio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A Prehistoric</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B Roman and Batavian</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>26</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C Medieval</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>43</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D Industrialisation</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E Nineteenth century and the fin de siècle</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>17</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F Second World War</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>56</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G River landscape, relation to water</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H Other themes</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I Historical “layeredness” or unspecified historical character</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>514</strong></td>
<td><strong>292</strong></td>
<td><strong>55</strong></td>
<td><strong>161</strong></td>
<td><strong>6</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.2. Results of the online content analysis in absolute figures.
The region’s history seen through many different eyes

A comparison between the three websites offers insight into how several groups in the region want to present their favourite historical themes to a broader audience. Whereas Coolregion is constructed and managed by the regional administration and its representatives, the content of VVVArnhemNijmegen is mostly formulated by entrepreneurs in the tourist industry. The content of SpannendeGeschiedenis is produced by heritage professionals working for local and regional governments giving voice to their approach to how the region’s history should be presented to visitors.

Almost half of the references on VVVArnhemNijmegen fell into the category of ‘Historical stratification or unspecified historical character,’ On the Coolregion website, too, many references fell into this category (27%). Entrepreneurs in the tourism industry apparently consider generic historical character to be an attractive feature. The same holds for the organisations behind Coolregion. It is remarkable that there were only 2 references in this category on SpannendeGeschiedenis. Almost all the references to history or heritage were much more explicit and were therefore counted in a different category. This is most likely because the content of SpannendeGeschiedenis is written by heritage and history professionals with very different goals than those who run the other websites.

Historical themes

It is clear that the prehistoric past does not play a major role in any of these websites. The Roman period is referred to more often by the heritage experts on SpannendeGeschiedenis and communication specialists on Coolregion. Local entrepreneurs on VVVArnhemNijmegen refer to the Roman period in only 3% of the cases. The medieval period is a more popular heritage theme, as appears from the figures for all three websites.131

The nineteenth century and the fin de siècle scored relatively high on VVVArnhemNijmegen, perhaps because restaurants, hotels, B&Bs, and other organisations often refer to the historic building or historic surroundings in which they are situated, and many monuments in this region date form this particular period, partially explaining its relatively high score. Industrialisation in the Arnhem Nijmegen region is hardly mentioned in any of the three websites that were analysed, and the relatively few references to it focus on brick-making, which was closely associated with the rivers in the region. On VVVArnhemNijmegen, several sub-sites referred to the Panoven, a recently opened visitor’s centre devoted to the history of brick production in the region. Indeed, it is remarkable how little reference is made to the river landscape, since the previous policy analysis and historical framework show that this theme is one of the few that are pertinent to most parts of the region.

It is also remarkable that the heritage of the Second World War receives only 11 and 9 percent of the respective reference scores on VVVArnhemNijmegen and the Coolregion websites, as compared to one-third of the scores on SpannendeGeschiedenis. It is beyond the scope of this brief analysis to explain why this difference appears, but we might conjecture that it is related to the different goals the websites set for themselves. SpannendeGeschiedenis, which is managed by governmental organisations and written by experts on history and heritage, is designed to inform visitors and inhabitants of the region about its history, and it has no direct commercial interests. The content of VVVArnhemNijmegen is created by entrepreneurs and organisations in the tourism industry, who obviously have a direct financial interest in their online presentations. Likewise, the content of Coolregion is written for promotional purposes, in this case, long-term economic development in the region. It is quite possible that, from a commercial point of view, the heritage of the Second World War is not yet considered not to be “safe” or picturesque enough for people to identify with. For heritage experts and governmental organisations, however, the heritage of the Second World War doubtless looks very different, since it is one of the histories that make the Arnhem Nijmegen region unique in The Netherlands, and even in Europe. For both visitors and inhabitants, the memories of Operation Market Garden constitute one of the most vital parts of the region’s history, and so the creators of SpannendeGeschiedenis no doubt took this into account.

I executed this analysis between 9 and 22 November 2011; the earliest phase in writing this book. It is significant to note that all visited websites have changed in the mean time, some have been expanded with more historical themes (like SpannendeGeschiedenis,
which now has 8 historical themes) or have changed into other websites (like Coolregion). However, this does not make the outcomes of this analysis redundant, it rather shows that (political) strategies behind these websites have thus changed relatively quickly.
The eyes of the public

This section describes how histories figure in the construction of the region’s identity by both inhabitants and visitors - and each of these groups, we should bear in mind, are consumers as well as producers of histories and heritages.

Public image

No research has been conducted yet on the image of the Arnhem Nijmegen region as a whole, which is why, for the moment at least, the only possible way to achieve a satisfactory understanding of the images of Arnhem and Nijmegen is to consider them separately.

Nijmegen enjoys a positive image in the eyes of Dutch citizens: 78% of them view Nijmegen favourably, according to a study by the consultants of LA Group. The city’s own inhabitants also rate it highly: 84% feel connected to the city, and 73% report they are proud of it. As described above, Nijmegen bases its profile on its claim to be the oldest city in the Netherlands, but its historical character plays only a very minor role in the image that inhabitants have of their town. Also, only a very small number of visitors are drawn to the city by its history. This is perfectly logical; it is impossible for a visitor to experience these historical qualities because of wartime destruction and postwar redevelopment. As Kevin Lynch’s studies showed, physical structures such as buildings and landmarks play a very important role in creating the general public’s image of a city. It seems that in the case of Nijmegen the physical environment prevents the city from having an historical image, despite the city’s promotional activities.

Nevertheless, Nijmegen’s residents appreciate the city’s focus on the past. This fact is probably related to the average education level: about half of Nijmegen’s citizens have either a university or a higher vocational training degree. Another reason might lie in the trauma that the destruction of the Second World War and postwar redevelopment inflicted on the city centre. Every material or immaterial bit of history is cherished by the inhabitants and strongly defended against change or destruction. A survey showed that they consider the best way for their city to promote itself is through its Roman heritage (40%), followed by the Middle Ages (22%). It also showed that Arnhem is associated as a competitor in the remembrance of WW2. Thus Nijmegen is seeking to stress its historical character, despite the non-historical nature of its image among the general public and despite the invisibility of these particular historical periods in its current public space.

When members of the Dutch public were asked in 2011 what their first association with ‘Arnhem’ was, the answers most often given were its wartime past and the film about it. The other most frequent responses were the Gelredome, the Vitesse football club, and the city’s green surroundings. Arnhem is also thought of as an attractive city to go shopping in. The character of the city was essentially described as beautifully old and full of atmosphere in a survey from 2002, two characteristics that might be strongly related. In this older survey, Sonsbeek Park and the Eusebius Church were the most frequently named traditional attractions in Arnhem.

These surveys show that, with respect to the importance of the past in the present, the public’s image of Arnhem differs substantially from the one promoted in the city’s marketing campaign Made in Arnhem. Surprisingly, the general public emphasises Arnhem’s wartime past and the film A Bridge Too Far, i.e. the historical character of the city, whereas the city marketing campaign ignores the War and accentuates creativity and green spaces. It seems as if Arnhem has a much more historic and atmospheric image than the city campaign acknowledges – despite the continuing presence there of historical structures. A clear example of this discrepancy is the fact that the campaign promotes its creativity and fashion industry, although only 1% of the respondents associated Arnhem with fashion.

Arnhem seems to promote aspects of the city that are explicitly non-historical, whereas the general public knows its wartime past and appreciates the historic atmosphere of the city. When it comes to historical character, the public image and city branding campaigns point in opposite directions in both Arnhem and Nijmegen. Arnhem has it, but does not want to be known for it, while Nijmegen lost it but still wants to be seen as the Netherlands’ oldest city all the same.
Initiatives

The involvement of the region’s inhabitants in history goes further than just reading about it. The commemorations of Second World War events (such as those at the Airborne Monument in Oosterbeek, the John Frost Bridge in Arnhem and the Swing Monument in Nijmegen) are visited by large audiences every year. The inhabitants of both Arnhem and Nijmegen feel very much connected with the wartime past, whether they are long-time inhabitants or newcomers. Busses full of people from the new neighbourhood Schuytgraaf visited the commemoration of the Operation Market Garden in Ede where around 800 parachutists are dropped above the Heath of Ginkel every year.

For the past several years the inhabitants of Nijmegen seem to be much more involved in historical activities than those of Arnhem. The annual Limburg brothers festival has around 650 re-enactors from Nijmegen dressed in medieval clothing, and it is mostly organised by local citizens. The same is true for the Roman festival and many other historical activities in Nijmegen, including reconstructions and the use of historic buildings and structures in many spatial planning processes, with the goal of letting people experience the past in a more “vivid” way. This advocacy for reconstructions, especially of medieval and Roman buildings, concords with the views of the inhabitants of Nijmegen, as a public survey from 2011 has shown.

The commemorations and other history-related events have increasingly taken on the form of spectacles and festivals. Good examples of this development are the great success of the Limburg brothers festival, the creation of a new historical route in the region called “Exciting History”, and the Second World War commemorations on the Heath of Ginkel and other places, which have been transformed from rather low-key ceremonies into demonstrations and reenactments designed to make the past into something exciting that can be “experienced” by the average citizen.
§4.4

ROMANS AND FRANKS AGAINST THE ALLIED FORCES
In this section I analyse several spatial planning processes and their outcomes in the Arnhem-Nijmegen region in an effort to determine how heritage themes are being used to create an identity for locations undergoing (re)development. To this end, I will briefly discuss four recent examples: the Schuytgraaf project in Arnhem, Lingezegen Park in the Betuwe, the Waal River Front development in Nijmegen, and the plans for reconstructing a medieval tower on the Valkhof, also in Nijmegen.\textsuperscript{147}

**Schuytgraaf**

Schuytgraaf is a large development project 5 kilometres southwest of Arnhem's city centre.\textsuperscript{148} With approximately 6,250 new houses, this area provides housing for approximately 15,000 people. KCAP of Rotterdam designed Schuytgraaf's master plan: it is a patchwork of 25 smaller “enclaves” all with different housing densities and separated by green corridors. These enclaves were worked out in detail by several other architecture firms in individual development plans, giving Schuytgraaf a great variety of living areas.\textsuperscript{149}

**Cultural history in Schuytgraaf**

The project’s name derives from the historical designation for an area in which a canal is excavated to act as a water container (“schutgraaf”).\textsuperscript{150} KCAP’s 1994 master plan took the existing structures, including the schutgraaf, in the formerly agrarian landscape of the Overbetuwe as a point of departure, and it also left many of them in place. The designers wanted to integrate built and natural structures, making Schuytgraaf into a transition zone between city and countryside. The existing landscape elements, too, were used as much as possible to help realise this idea.\textsuperscript{151}

In the late 1990s archaeologists uncovered many remains from various ages: a hunting camp from the Stone Age, traces from the Middle and Late Iron Ages, a Roman settlement, and a medieval farmhouse, among others. During the last months of the Second World War, the front line ran straight across Schuytgraaf, and the remains of unknown German and British soldiers have been found, as well as parts of a German aircraft. The interest of amateur historians of the Second World War in this material was much greater than the means, knowledge and experience that professional archaeologists could mobilise to document and research it properly. Many of the traces went undocumented. Others were documented, but not every archaeologist’s training is sufficient to allow him/her to interpret the traces of material dating from as recently as the 1940s.\textsuperscript{152}

The high archaeological value of the Iron Age findings led to their conservation *in situ*, making it impossible to develop Schuytgraaf’s central area, near the Arnhem-Schuytgraaf railway station.\textsuperscript{153} A design competition was held to develop an alternative use for this area, one which would respect the archaeological archive by not planning any built volumes, but which would still provide a suitable entrance to Schuytgraaf and ultimately become the ‘memory’ of the new development area\textsuperscript{154} – in other words, a design which tells the story of Schuytgraaf’s past. The committee did not recommend one period of history in preference to the others, nor did it prescribe what interpretation of “authenticity” it favoured, leaving that decision to the candidates, as well as the choice of what story would be told and how to tell it. The winning design was produced by Chora, an architectural office from London:

> “The monument will be a field with a landscape based on the natural flood zone of the nearby Rhine River. It will contain specially designed railings with texts about the archaeological finds that remain in the ground, and four pavilions housing different programs and forming the settings for the last layer, i.e. the parachutes, whose shapes are freely based on the different stages they assume in the course of a jump from a plane.”\textsuperscript{155}

In this winning proposal most historical layers will be represented by panels on exhibition railings. The Chora team selected the most recent historical layer to be a key element in this design, which serves as a monument to the Polish parachutists who landed between today’s Schuytgraaf and Driel. They felt that the latters’
Figure 4.7.
The winning design for Schuytgraaf was “De Landing” (The Landing, my own translation). The photograph shows studies for the parachute-like pavilions in various stages of landing.

Figure 4.8.
Artist impression of the future terrain with parachute-like pavilions in Schuytgraaf.
role had been neglected in the memorials to Operation Market Garden and therefore wanted to pay tribute to them here.

Although the original KCAP plan contained other functions for the archaeological field, the KCAP architects think that the stories and meanings of the Chora design add a valuable layer to the existing master plan. The KCAP and Chora designers agree on the importance of integrating local histories in the spatial design of Schuytgraaf, including the history of water and landscape management. Yet, a discourse analysis by Robert Opdorp shows that the designers’ ideas about incorporating histories in a development plan by referring to them within the actual space in which they occurred do not always have the expected results. Most inhabitants of Schuytgraaf, who form the main target group for the designers’ storytelling, do not have any idea of the area’s history, because they lack physical supports to aid them in recognising these histories. The designers assume that in the planning process for a new residential area, identities can be created for it by using references to local history. However, Inhabitants tend to “adopt” relatively little from the stories planners and designers want to tell about a historical, but completely transformed area.

The case of Schuytgraaf also demonstrates that when various groups value the elements of local heritage differently, this fact can give rise to competition among, say, the public, a design jury, and archaeologists. This competition was so intense that war buffs illegally dug up Second World War paraphernalia, rescuing it from the destruction they feared, but at the same time destroying the archaeological soil archive and along with it the possibility of gaining greater insight into the recent history of Schuytgraaf. Within the next few years, the “winning” period will be the Second World War; the new pavilions in the heart of Schuytgraaf will, it is true, protect the older remains, but they will emphasise the landing of Polish airmen in Operation Market Garden (1944) through a poetic display of parachute-like forms. It is quite remarkable that this is occurring in Arnhem; for until now the city has found it too painful to actively recall the Battle of Arnhem other than in traditional commemorative ceremonies and monuments.

While various forms of authenticity did come into play in the background in the case of Schuytgraaf, in the following case, that of the Valkhof, a heated public debate is underway centred around different ideas about what is authentic and about what should be evoked and protected.

**Reconstruction of the Valkhof tower**

In 2005 Nijmegen celebrated its 2000th anniversary with a full year of historical projects and festivities. One of the former was the reconstruction in scaffolding and printed cloth of the twelfth century tower (donjon) on the Valkhof. Once a part of the castle of Barbarossa, it was almost entirely demolished in 1796, and soon afterwards a park was laid out based on a design by the famous garden architect Johann David Zocher, Jr. and incorporating the remains of the castle: the chapels of St. Nicholas and St. Martin.

For several decades groups have been campaigning for the reconstruction of the main tower (donjon) of Barbarossa’s castle on the Valkhof. The fact that it was demolished by the regional government in Arnhem intensifies the feeling of loss among local history enthusiasts. A reconstruction would restore a part of Nijmegen’s past glory as a regional power center, so little of which is evident today. This temporary reconstruction signaled a new phase in the reconstruction debate, because on that occasion the Valkhofvereniging (“Valkhof society”) circulated a petition among the visitors in support of the permanent reconstruction of the donjon. In 2006 an official referendum was held among Nijmegen’s citizens, in which 60% of them voted for reconstructing the tower. Its reconstruction would not only be a reminder of Nijmegen’s past glory; it would also be an opportunity to experience the tower and the Valkhof as it really was. Thus, in this reconstruction debate, we see a form of referential authenticity clashing with other forms of authenticity.

The results of the referendum obliged the city administration to carefully consider the feasibility of a reconstruction. This was a complicated task, since both the Zocher park and the archaeological remains beneath it are national monuments; the Valkhof is also part of a townscape conservation area and, therefore, cannot be easily be altered. Another problem is posed by the serious lack of historical sources: no floor plans are available, leaving us with only paintings from the sixteenth century onwards, most of which picture the Valkhof as a symbol of Nijmegen, with little hesitation.
Figure 4.9.
Valkhof Park in 2012.

Figure 4.10.
Reconstruction of the Valkhof tower in 2005.
about conveying minor topographical and architectural inaccuracies. Moreover, many alterations may have been made to the tower in the centuries between its construction and the time when these paintings were made.

In the meantime, the city council of Nijmegen has embraced municipal history as the basic selling point in the city’s marketing campaign. Nijmegen is said to be the oldest city in the Netherlands, but hardly any visible traces exist to support that claim. Reconstructing the Valkhof tower would be a fine opportunity to partially restore the city’s historical appearance. Additionally, it would generate more tourist interest and create an attractive new business area in the city - further reasons for the council to approve the reconstruction plans.

Yet the local heritage experts and the national service for cultural heritage have objections to the reconstruction, because of the potential damage to the national monuments and the townscape conservation area. Heritage professionals see it as their task to protect what is authentic in terms of place and material. Heritage expert Sandra Langereis adds the objection that the demolition of the Valkhof castle by the province of Gelderland, despite local protests, was an act of breaking with the past and is part of the biography of the Valkhof. The same impetus accounts for the development of the Romantic Zocher park, in which the ruins of the castle were meant to offer strollers opportunities for the nostalgic contemplation of Nijmegen’s great past. Langereis stresses the creative authenticity of the Valkhof park as a monument of park design. She pleads for a biographical approach to the Valkhof, in which the current park can be read as a palimpsest: the result of centuries of building and demolition, of carved-in histories and deliberately erased traces. Rebuilding the long-lost tower would mean erasing a part of Nijmegen’s more recent and no less valuable history. The current result of centuries of breaking down and building up again should be approached as an authentic whole, as well.

The ongoing debate over the reconstruction of the Valkhof tower displays the dynamics at work between a number of competing views: the inhabitants’ wish for an authentic historic experience; the city’s desire for better branding through visualising Nijmegen’s antiquity; real estate interests; and the opinion of heritage experts, who would rather preserve the authentic place,
History in Lingezegen Park

In Lingezegen Park, the historical landscape features in each domain will be used as starting points for the development of that specific area, especially in terms of topography. The Roman past will also be evoked by means of the “Roman Ribbon” (Romeinse Lint), which will follow a portion of an ancient course of the Rhine River and connect several archaeological sites.

In the domain known as “De Park” the structure of the medieval castle was so well suited for designing an urban park that the landscape architects used it as a key element in this part of the park. Also, several small “pockets” will be developed, offering miniature versions of a more traditional park experience in the middle of the virtually unchanged landscape of the area. These pockets may be centred around historic places such as a pool, farmhouse or a chapel, but they might also provide space for new artworks. It may be said that in this master plan Roman heritage is used most concretely in the overall park design, whereas the heritage of the river landscape is used mostly in a pragmatic fashion, leaving the individual landscape architects free to make their own decisions with regard to specific topographical features. In some cases, as with the medieval castle De Park, existing elements have been pragmatically re-used in the park, with no preference shown to any specific historical theme or period. In the past, local entrepreneurs have made proposals for a Roman theme park in Lingezegen, and while the park will be developed as a public project, commercial interests have been encouraged to suggest new initiatives that fit in with the overall structure and purpose of the park. It may be noted that more recent parts of the area’s history, such as the Second World War, have not been included in the plans for the park.

Lingezegen Park

Lingezegen Park will be developed in the Betuwe, as a kind of counterweight to the predominantly urban character of the region; for it will combine agrarian land use and landscape experience. The park will be the result of a master plan and an administrative agreement, dating from 2008-2009, between the communities of Lingewaard, Arnhem, Nijmegen, and Overbetuwe, the Arnhem Nijmegen City Region, the Dutch Forestry Commission, the district water board (Rivierenland) and the province of Gelderland. Situated in the heart of the region, it will form a buffer between the rapidly growing “urban clouds” of Arnhem and Nijmegen, ensuring that both sub-regions will maintain their autonomy, while remaining part of the same urban region. Covering approximately 1,500 hectares, divided into five domains, each with a specific character of its own, the park will offer as many different landscape experiences as can be found in the Dutch river landscape as a whole. To achieve this result, the existing qualities in each domain will be dramatised and intensified to create the desired landscape experience.

Lingezegen Park is expected to increase the region’s attractiveness as a place to work and to live and is meant to contribute to a healthy competition with other urban networks. Secondly, the park is meant to serve as a local recreation area for the 160,000 inhabitants living nearby and to constitute a link with other nature reserves in the region. Thirdly, the park will function as a reservoir thanks to the creation of an artificial lake. While its main target population is local, the master plan also provides room for initiatives on a “region+” scale with respect to its landscape.

material and multilayered past of the Valkhof than undertake a reconstruction which, given the absence of source material, would necessarily be historically inaccurate. As of today, it is still not clear which form of authenticity will win the competition over the future of the Valkhof.
note that the ‘Grift’, the oldest barge-canal in the Netherlands and an important cultural-historical connection between Arnhem and Nijmegen, has not been chosen as a central element in the park’s design, because it is situated mostly outside its present limits.\textsuperscript{164}

\textbf{Waal River Front development}

In Nijmegen-West, a former industrial area called the Waal River Front (Waalfront) is to be transformed into several new residential and commercial areas. This development is of interest in our context because of the gradually increasing attention being given to cultural history, especially in Nijmegen, where it is apparent in many sectors other than spatial planning. It is strongly related to the Belvedere policy and its motto “preservation by development” (“behoud door ontwikkeling”).\textsuperscript{165}

\textbf{Planning process}

After over two decades of discussions the city council completed the \textit{Koers West} plan, giving direction to the transformation of former industrial lands into residential and commercial areas, including the Waal River Front.\textsuperscript{166} The impetus to integrate cultural history into the planning process came from the local heritage experts Kien van Hövell and Hettie Peterse. Here, cultural history has been given an autonomous role, involving mostly the Roman era, the industrial era, and the nineteenth century fortifications; but it is only very loosely related to the spatial layout of the area.

In order to properly document the cultural history of the Waal Front, in 2004 the cultural history department of Nijmegen initiated a Belvedere project called “Cultuurhistorie in Zicht!”, formulated by a team of experts, the resulting cultural history profile became the basis for later studies by a multidisciplinary design team. The latter’s \textit{Ideas Book} (Ideeënboek) included three scenarios for working with the cultural history of the Waal Front area as the project evolved; these included rather literal translations of heritage into design ideas and visualisations. The archaeological archive gradually became more important, leading
to an emphasis on the Roman period, which was the least visible historical topic but had the strongest connection to Nijmegen’s “branding” ambitions. It also posed the biggest challenge for the designers, namely working within the constraints imposed by the area’s archaeology.

Re-use of historic buildings and other structures plays a central role in the ideas book and its scenarios. The scenarios, however, did not meet the high expectation of the city council and its original advisors. For example, heritage expert Hettie Peterse regrets the lack of attention given to the industrial layer, because this is the most visible part of the city’s heritage and is very specific to this area. Also, Yana van Tienen observes a lack of connection between the historic layers and notes that historic lines in the Waal Front area are not really integrated in the ideas book. Finally, the book’s very title indicates that is a gathering of ideas, not a coherent consideration of the area and its problems as a whole. Nevertheless, this Belvedere project did have the positive result of drawing permanent attention to cultural history in the planning process of the Waal Front area.

Van Tienen, moreover, has developed a methodology for working with cultural history in spatial planning processes. Many of her suggestions, including some for implementing the “historic layers” approach, have been taken into consideration by the master plan team. This team was led by landscape architect Lodewijk Baljon and architect Liesbeth van der Pol and started work at the end of 2005. In the masterplan, the same historical layers were chosen as starting points as had been earlier in the planning process, but their translation into physical form was slated to be done in a fairly traditional manner. One change the designers made was to retain the old dike and the railway as important relics of the city’s cultural history. In 2006 Nijmegen celebrated its 2000th anniversary, and the attendant emphasis on its Roman origins led to the relatively large role accorded to the Roman era in the final formulation of the master plan.

In 2012 the economic crisis obliged the city to change some parts of the master plan, making it more flexible and more attentive to the preservation of historic remains from the industrial era. This modification might please the local cultural history network (CPRN), as their critique of the master plan has
pointed out, among other things, its failure to give a substantial role to the industrial structures that are still very much present in the area. More generally, the network do not agree with the way cultural history is integrated, emphasising, for example, the fact that no Roman objects or structures are going to be reconstructed in a literal way.

The examination of the Waal River Front planning process has shown that history is playing an important role in the redevelopment of the area. The selection of historical themes was made by the local heritage experts and has been maintained throughout the whole planning process so far. The main accent has always been on the least visible and oldest historical theme: the Romans. As in many other spatial planning processes it has proved hard for the designers to develop a plan with creative and original references to a layered past, despite the availability of a substantial body of relevant historical knowledge. The plan’s three themes – Romans, fortifications, and industrial heritage – were divided spatially and translated quite literally into street patterns and building volumes. Although, overall, the local heritage experts are quite content with the role of history in the project, Nijmegen’s residents and the cultural history network do not agree with the ways in which references are made to the past and nor with the treatment of its physical remains. In the eyes of the inhabitants, the plans are too rigorous in demolishing what is still there and too subtle in bringing back what has disappeared.
§4.5

CONCLUSIONS
To provide the historical background for the analysis of the appropriation of heritage and history in the construction of identities in the Arnhem Nijmegen region, I drew on several local and regional “canons.” Contemporary historiography tends to view the cities of Arnhem and Nijmegen as separate but competing entities, and it pays virtually no attention to their geographical context. Although the experts acknowledge the benefits of a regional approach to history, they have made no attempt to treat these cities as parts of the same area, with proper recognition of both their many differences and their many similarities.

Following this historical overview, I considered how historical themes and heritages are used in provincial, regional and local branding campaigns and policies. Heritage experts working for the province of Gelderland devised a schema consisting of 10 categories of historical landscape features, of which six are present in the Arnhem Nijmegen region. This “mosaic” of landscapes is not worked out in such a way as to yield a coherent overall framework; nevertheless, the regional government (the Arnhem Nijmegen City Region) is trying to define a regional identity based on these historical landscape features. Acknowledging the broad variety of landscapes represented by this schema and the significance of the many historical boundaries within the region, it has chosen as its two main concepts “unity in diversity” and “region of many borders and lines”. The city of Nijmegen has decided to promote its long history as the core of its marketing campaign, whereas Arnhem does not refer to its history in any way in its campaign, except ‘indirectly’. The emphasis is put on the ‘green’ character of the city, without mentioning that this green character is shaped by historical parks, greenbelts and surrounding woods.

What is most striking about these branding campaigns is how thoroughly they seem to ignore the respective public images of the two cities. For branding strategies to be effective, they need to maintain a close correspondence with the public image of a place. Yet, in their branding campaigns Arnhem and Nijmegen each promote something that does not come anywhere close to its existing image – it might be longed for, but it is not there (anymore). Thus, Nijmegen presents itself as the oldest Dutch city, but its public image has no historical dimension at all; it is almost completely devoid of the physical remains and reconstructions that would presumably make its branding campaign successful. At the same time, it ignores its rich and physically present history as the centre Dutch Catholicism, of which the university, formerly named “Catholic”, is just a single, if notable highlight. Arnhem, on the other hand, is widely seen as a town with an historical atmosphere, Sonsbeek Park being one of its prime assets; but the city promotes its current creativity and forgets about most of its past. The Battle of Arnhem, for instance, is not part of its branding campaign “Made in Arnhem”, even though it is the only event for which Arnhem is internationally known and the main reason it attracts foreign visitors.

In short, the building of an identity at the regional scale has not been successful so far. One reason for this, it seems, is that the Arnhem Nijmegen City Region’s branding campaign, “Cool Region”, does not mesh well with the policies being pursued by the same administrative body, which emphasises different aspects of the region than the campaign does. The many landscape varieties – especially rivers and hilly moraine ridges – and historical borders in the region are its essential attractions according to the Regional Plan 2005-2020, but the analysis of the Cool Region website shows that the heritage of the river landscapes is mentioned in only 5% of its historical references. Most of the latter are of an unspecific nature; the next most frequent are to the Middle Ages.

It can be concluded that competition rather than cooperation characterises the various efforts that have been made so far to create an identity for the region. This kind of competition between neighbouring localities or areas is what Hospers calls “ordering by bordering”. Arnhem and Nijmegen have not yet discovered how to create a joint regional marketing strategy which takes advantage of their complementary strengths.

A battlefield of histories

This chapter not only showed how differently Arnhem and Nijmegen profile themselves in their marketing campaigns, with both turning away from their respective public images and ignoring
significant parts of their recent history; it also pointed out that each city covets parts of the other’s heritage. On the one hand, Arnhem is eagerly supporting and publicising the Roman archaeological finds in Meijnerswijk, thereby giving itself a longer history and connections with an historic topic with which Nijmegen is much more closely associated. The city officials and inhabitants of Nijmegen, on the other hand, are feeling the competition of Arnhem when it comes to commemorating the Second World War, which is one reason it is campaigning to be the site of a new national museum dedicated to that war. And, in general, when it is a question of dealing with other historical themes or heritages, the various local and regional governments act quite independently of each other, all emphasising different parts of the past and thereby telling different stories about the region, seemingly with no interest in coordinating their efforts.

Arnhem and Nijmegen are ‘mirror cities’ and are literally growing closer together over time, but these factors are not at all reflected in the way each city writes its own history, which is essentially to ignore its counterpart across the river. The absence of cooperation and the existence of several autonomous branding strategies and policies are in accord with the first impressions offered by this chapter’s historical framework: two separate and competing cities. The separation between Arnhem and Nijmegen is felt not only in the way they tell their histories. Now that both cities have crossed their river - Nijmegen to the north and Arnhem to the south - they wish to build a new buffer between their two condensing urban clouds. Park Lingezegen will be formed as a counter to this urban expansion, with the Linge River forming the ultimate east-west barrier between them.

Politics, designers, marketers, experts and inhabitants

This chapter has shown how differently the governmental bodies in the region appropriate the past in their policies and branding strategies. Various groups of stakeholders also assert different and sometimes competing claims to aspects of the past and use them differently in branding and, especially, spatial planning. The region’s past is interpreted, appropriated, and contested by politicians, designers, heritage experts and inhabitants alike. Here, I want to go beyond sketching the multi-vocality of the heritage discourse in the Arnhem Nijmegen region and draw how these appropriations of the past and the historical environment work and compete with each other.

To begin with, heritage experts play an important role in the process of deciding how parts of the past are appropriated and how history is used in city branding, heritage policies, and spatial planning. More often than not, the expert’s opinion differs from that of citizens, especially regarding those spatial planning processes in which references are made to historic events or structures. Whereas the heritage expert generally tries not to prefer one historical period over another, pleading instead for a layered, nuanced and balanced account of the past, the general public, as well as certain organisations and interest groups tend to prefer more exciting and “real” ways to experience the past. Examples from this chapter are the immensely popular commemorations of Operation Market Garden during which many parachutists land on Ginkel heath, the campaign for the reconstruction of the Valkhof tower, and the growing popularity of the re-enactments held during the annual Limburg Brothers Festival.

In some cases, however, it is the designer who makes the definitive selection of which historical topic will play the main role in a project and who decides how it will be presented. This was the case with Chora’s design of the exhibition pavilions devoted to the events of the Second World War at an archaeological site which also possessed prehistoric remains. It is also the case in Lingezegen Park, where only one historical reference (to the Roman era) is included in the master plan and where the individual designers were allowed to freely select parts of the historic river landscape for preservation and, sometimes, dramatisation.

In this chapter I have discussed several instances in which conflicts arose over the how the past should be represented. One key element in these struggles concerns the experience of “authenticity”. As the cases of Schuytgraaf and the Valkhof have shown, different stakeholders have different interpretations of what kind of authenticity should prevail. This material leads me to conjecture that in the heritage field some forms of authenticity are defended with more authority than others, as the position of stakeholders and the authority of their judgement and arguments varies.
**Trends**

The case of the Arnhem Nijmegen region shows that the role of history in government policies, branding campaigns, and spatial planning processes is subject to various trends. This is particularly the case in Nijmegen, where a ‘renaissance of the past’ has been taking place since the city celebrated the 2000th anniversary of its founding. In Arnhem and in provincial policies historical themes are also changing, mostly due to political and economic developments.

**Arnhem Nijmegen: a thin region full of borders**

Above, I discussed Terlouw’s analysis of regional identities, in which he argues that they can vary from thick to thin. An area’s traditional social and cultural characteristics are the basis for thick regional identities, that are rooted in a shared history, stability and the old. Thin regional identities are more open, variable and network-based. Globalisation and the development of individualised international networks have contributed to the emergence of this kind of future-oriented identities. Terlouw showed that regions which are able to combine thick with thin aspects of regional identity in a way which yields one strong hybrid identity have the most effective regional identities in economic and political terms.

In administrative terms, the Arnhem Nijmegen region is a recent creation (1988), and it is still finding its bearings with regard to the distribution of responsibilities among the various levels of government. With respect to its view of its own past, the region is not historically oriented and does not focus on the old and stable. The regional government, in fact, is still working on the problem of constructing an historical identity for the area. Its conceptions are not yet coherent nor are they supported by all parts of the administration. The Arnhem Nijmegen City Region officially promotes an identity based on economic issues, on present and future urbanisation, and on the area’s easy accessibility. The level of identification achieved by other organisations among the public at large is minimal at best. The identity communicated by the Arnhem Nijmegen City Region is thus comparable to the kind that Terlouw, in discussing the Ostwestfalen-Lippe region in Germany, calls thin on account of its economic purpose and future-oriented character. The identity of such thin regions, he states, can easily wind up virtually disappearing, because it is not rooted in the past and is not nourished by other organisations or by the general public.

A thin regional identity is open, future oriented and has a narrowly defined goal which targets professionals with their own specific agendas. It is unlikely that a thin regional identity could rely heavily on an appropriated past, as this would mean a loss of flexibility and inclusivity in the future. Unless a specific part of the past is useful for specific purposes – and is managed in such a way as to be flexible enough to change in the future and inclusive enough to resonate with the entire target group of a thin identity - the role of heritage is bound to be minor in this particular form of regional identity.
Verhoeven, D. I. van Nijmegen, De Vies and Roselofs, De canon van Arnhem, 2011.
19. Verhoeven, De canon van Nijmegen, 89-90.
22. Verhoeven, De canon van Nijmegen, 19.
23. De Vies and Roselofs, De canon van Arnhem, 123.
25. Verhoeven, De canon van Arnhem, 33.
27. Verhoeven, De canon van Nijmegen, 35.
29. De Vies and Roselofs, De canon van Arnhem, 1415.
30. Verhoeven, De canon van Nijmegen, 35. Note that the development of the Landscape around the cities is not included in the canons.
31. Note that land and water management, that has been vital for the region’s development is left out of the canons and is thus not represented in this historical overview.
34. De Vies and Roselofs, De canon van Arnhem, 167.
35. Verhoeven, De canon van Nijmegen, 443.
36. Ibid., 469.
37. De Boer-Pinxt, Canon van Rheden, 30.
38. Verhoeven, De canon van Nijmegen, 513.
39. De Boer-Pinxt, Canon van Rheden, 23.
40. Verhoeven, De canon van Nijmegen, 513.
41. Ibid., 55.
42. De Vies and Roselofs, De canon van Arnhem, 223.
43. Verhoeven, De canon of Nijmegen, 61.
47. Verhoeven, De canon van Nijmegen, 747.
48. Ibid., 947.
49. Ibid., 781.
50. Ibid., 901.
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DYNAMICS OF MEMORY IN THE POST-CARBON ERA:

Industrial heritage and identity in the Ruhr area (Germany)
§5.1

INTRODUCTION
Industrial heritage is a topic that has received very considerable academic and public attention in the Ruhr area. And for good reason. The transformation of the region in the post-industrial era is an outstanding example of how industrial heritage can be used as an instrument for regional rejuvenation. What was left as a carcass of the coal and steel era has become a key building block of a new regional identity. One might say that there was no choice but to use these remains in transforming the Ruhr area into a post-industrial landscape and society; but the advantages of this tactic were very obvious for other reasons as well. The mine complexes, factories, railway systems, miners’ settlements and slag heaps reminded the region of a trauma and of the optimism it had lost after the mines started to close. Over the course of five decades the landscapes have been transformed from painful scars into temples of culture in which the rebirth of the region is celebrated. Of course, this process took place in several phases: it did not happen overnight. Disused industrial complexes were often demolished and forgotten, but at a certain moment they began to be treated as part and parcel of the region’s heritage and eventually were enlisted in a campaign to improve its self-image. By following this shift from painful reminders of the past to celebrated bearers of identity, I want to show how different stages of heritage practices and strategies succeeded each other in the Ruhr area. This might offer some clues about how a region’s identity can, as it were, change while remaining the same, even when it suffers great losses and even when the social and economic dynamics and the spatial scale are immense. The memory of the industrial or carbon era and the way it changed over time, serves as the guiding theme of this chapter.

Objectives

In this chapter, I analyse the relationship between a region’s heritage and a traumatic part of the past in shaping its identity. I use a diachronic approach in an effort to show how a specific memory can turn into an element of a region’s identity and how its effect on that identity can change with virtually every decade. I will recount how the Ruhr area in Germany reacted to the sudden decline of its heavy industry around 1960, and what role the remnants and memories of this era have played since that time. This approach allows me to explore the assumption that memory evolves in the course of time, just like heritage practices and strategies. The role of the industrial heritage in the Ruhr area is exceptionally well suited to illustrate this phenomenon, as it is possible to analyse it over the relatively long period of approximately five decades. As will become clear, the identity of the area has changed drastically in many ways, and yet the role of its industrial inheritance will be seen to have remained essentially very stable.

The main question

In accord with the objectives of this chapter, I attempt to answer the following research question:

What was the role of industrial heritage in the (re)construction of the regional identity of the Ruhr area after the Zechensterben (i.e., after the end of the steel and coal mining era)?

To this end, I describe the general situation and changes in the approach to industrial heritage in the Ruhr area after the late 1950s, the time when the mines in the region started closing down at a rapid pace. I start by discussing several theoretical points of departure and then provide a brief historical overview introducing some key characteristics of the Ruhr area in the nineteenth century, when mining grew into the dominant industry. In the following sections I will discuss the changing role of industrial heritage during three subsequent phases, using several examples which offer insight into the dynamics of memory on a local scale. The cases of the Opel factory in Bochum, the Dortmunder U, and the mines of Zollern 2/4 and Zollverein 12 are chosen for their roles as stepping stones in the story of how the Ruhr area tried to recover from the loss of its heavy industry. By now these well-known and often-discussed examples have, to a certain degree, even taken on a mythical status, as the narrative of what is called Industriekultur has become increasingly self-referential. I also selected a few other examples precisely because they do not stand out and thus are in some ways more representative of general developments in the region. This will allow us to penetrate the issues more deeply than many other publications, which limit themselves to the region’s iconic projects. These lesser known examples, such as the former mines Erin 1/2/4/7 in Castrop-Rauxel and Lothringen 3 in Bochum-Gerthe, along with the project SchachtZeichen in 2010, provide an informative context for the more often discussed iconic examples and thus enrich our understanding of the dynamics of the memory of the industrial era after it came to a close.
Identity, forgetting and generations of memory

In this chapter, I will approach the memory of the mines (and their death) in the Ruhr area in a diachronic way, since memories change in the course of time, and I want to show how this process of change has functioned and continues to function in this particular post-industrial region. These changes occur on at least three distinctive levels or scales, which are strongly intertwined: the individual, the intergenerational, and the group.

The first level where processes occur that influence the dynamics of memory is that of the individual. Here we see how individuals cope with a human catastrophe, such as a war, a natural disaster, or an abrupt change in the world they live in which is accompanied by some kind of significant loss. The witnesses of such a traumatic event – among whom we can count those who experienced the sudden collapse of heavy industry in the Ruhr area – have an influence on how the memories of such an event are shared, documented and institutionalised. In many of these cases we should also be attentive to the desire to forget. Memories of individuals are socially framed, and they may change in the course of a person’s lifetime.
From sociological studies like that of Fred Davies, we learn that the desire to re-live certain parts of our past, fed by nostalgia, is typically something that comes with age. The period of late adolescence and early adulthood appears to be “the prototypical frame for nostalgia for the remainder of life.” Not only is there a certain period in life where the focus is on memories imbued with nostalgia; the desire to remember and tell stories about the past seems to increase when individuals enter the later stages of life. Around the age of retirement, many people feel the urge to build their own cultural legacy – to document their memories and pass them on to future generations. This is the moment when individuals start researching their family tree, and going back to the place where they were born, grew up or lived as young adults. For many years, they may not wish to bring back certain memories, especially traumatic ones. It is only when people get older, decades after a dramatic event or an abrupt change that they feel the urge to return to that moment in their lives and pass their memories on to younger generations. And, of course, people have more time and energy to invest in their past after retirement than before, giving them the chance to fully document and pass on their individual and personalised versions of the past.

Individuals’ memories of the industrial era are not restricted to trauma and a sense of loss. The identities of individuals living two or three generations after the closing of the mines can also be shaped by the role the past plays in social mobility. Political sociologist Stefan Goch argues that upward mobility and the search for alternative milieus to the labour background people come from can lead certain members of the middle class to link their personal histories to the history of regional change. He argues that this phenomenon sparked the increase in the regional and historical awareness in the Ruhr area from the 1970s onwards.

According to Hirsch: “postmemory describes the relationship that the “generation after” bears to the personal, collective, and cultural trauma of those who came before – to the experiences they “remember” only by means of the stories, images and behaviours among which they grew up.” Although the memory of the industrial age is not comparable to the trauma experienced by the witnesses. Survivors and loosers of the war and persecution whom Hirsch is primarily writing about, a similar kind of intergenerational transmission of memories also occurs in the Ruhr area. In its culture of postmemories, too, the character of the memories borne by later generations has undergone fundamental changes as compared to the memories of those who witnessed the events.

The second level on which the dynamics of memory are in play is intergenerational. Memories of the First and Second World War have been extensively researched in this regard and have been shown to change significantly in character in the course of their transmission to later generations who were not eye-witnesses to the events in question. American literary critic Marianne Hirsch has coined the term postmemory for the memory of those who grew up in the generation after the occurrence of a traumatic event. As a daughter of Jewish survivors Second World War, Hirsch uses this term in the context of wartime memories but formulates it in such a way that it can also be useful for the analyses of the dynamics of memory in other contexts.

The third level on which the dynamics of memory can be observed is that of the group, which may be as large, for example, as the inhabitants of a region or a country, of a society or even an entire civilisation. How civilisations in general cope with a traumatic past and search for a new identity has been the subject of much philosophical and historical thinking. A traumatic historical event can cause members of a civilisation to abandon their former self, at the cost of the great pain, and acquire a new one. These transformations are always accompanied by a ruthless abandonment of the old identity; but the latter persists as an absence – a “cold heart.” Historian Frank Ankersmit compares this presence of the former self with a scar which is the only visible reminder of a lost limb. He writes not only about traumas that can be caused by war or destruction, but also about those that can arise from other radical changes which make it impossible for a civilisation to maintain its identity. Ankersmit mentions the French Revolution and industrialisation as examples of the latter type. In this chapter I will argue that the end of the industrial period was a traumatic experience on a regional scale that forced the Ruhr area to abandon an earlier identity and forge a new one around the “cold heart” of the abandoned mines.

These scars of a former identity become visible in the myths that a society possesses and that it associates with the natural and pre-historical world. Myths are placed outside the historical past and are therefore “immune to historical (re)interpretation.” This very process, however, provokes a strong counter-wish to historicise and form narratives about the past. According to Ankersmit, as one does this, one tends to lose oneself in historicisation; instead of writing history, one will mainly describe how society has dealt with its “cold heart”, rather than write about the cold heart itself. Paradoxically, historical writing does not exclude...
“myths”. Rather, the opposite occurs: the more history we write, the more myth we generate.

Ankersmit is not the only scholar who considers the so-called “memory boom” to be the reaction of a civilisation to a sudden loss of a former self, a former identity. Others speak of a heritage turn or a shift towards a culture of memory, or a culture of loss. The notion of a disengagement with the past after a radical change in society also resonates with the work of Jay Winter, who has described how European societies remember the First World War. In his analyses of that war in literature, the visual arts and social actions, Winter finds expressions of trauma similar to the mystification of traumatic moments discussed in Ankersmit’s work. Symbolic language, replete with many romantic and religious references, was used to express the grief and bereavement experienced both during and after the war.

To take on a new identity, one must effect a dissociation from the past through the process of forgetting, as in the case of the death of the mines. Ankersmit distinguishes several forms of forgetting, and the one most relevant for the case of the Ruhr area presents a paradox. To dissociate from a former identity one needs to forget, but one does not forget what one has forgotten. This is what Ankersmit calls the pain of Prometheus, referring to the mythological figure of Prometheus who stole fire from the heavens for mankind, for which he was cruelly punished: every day an eagle descended upon him and ate away his liver. A symbol of the pain mankind must endure in return for enlightenment and civilisation, he reminds civilisation of the lost paradise that it had to surrender in the course of history. After witnessing such things, people “bear in mind what was forgotten”. A civilisation drags along a former self within its current self; its identity is defined by what it has abandoned. It is these lost identities, remnants of traumatic pasts, which define a society’s present identity, according to Ankersmit. He sees moments of loss, abrupt change and trauma as constructive moments for the identities of people and societies as a whole. Ankersmit can thus be seen as a member of a group of geographers and historians who consider change to be the prime constructor of identities, as opposed to others, who see stability as the main factor in the construction of identities on both the individual and the collective levels.

**Generations of memory**

Apart from the way a trauma can resonate for decades on a variety of levels, there are several other developments in society that influence the dynamics of memory in the post-industrial phase of the Ruhr region. The most important one is the emergence of the memory phenomenon in the second half of the twentieth century, which Sharon Macdonald describes as “the notable increase of attention to the past—and attention to that attention.” According to the American historian Jay Winter this is only one of the waves of preoccupation with memory that have occurred in the twentieth century. He himself has focused on remembrance of the First and Second World Wars and the way in which individual efforts to remember war are elements of so-called generations of memory. He recognises a first generation of memory in the first quarter of the twentieth century, in which a broad fascination with memory was fuelled by a generation of prominent literary, academic, professional and artistic figures whose work appeared roughly between 1890 and 1920. Winter refers to people like the sociologist Maurice Halbwachs, the neurologist and psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud, and such writers as Thomas Mann and James Joyce. These prominent figures contributed to the circulation of many narratives of memory through large parts of the world. National measures designed to preserve monuments came into existence, for example through the National Trust in Britain (since 1895), and the new political regimes in Europe needed to invent or unearth an illustrious past to give stability and unity to their newly formed states. After the First World War, the memory cult became a universal one of remembrance of loss and suffering. Through the erection of war memorials in every German and French town, along with the appearance of countless publications, artworks and films, “this cult of memory became a cult of mourning.” This first generation of memory was transformed rather than created by the remembrance of the victims of the First World War.

Winter recognises that a second generation of memory emerged in the 1970s and 1980s, again centred around mourning for those who suffered in a World War, but in this case there was a time lag before the memory boom emerged. The narrative of the heroes of the Resistance, which was popular in the post-World War Two years, had faded and the younger generations adopted a much more critical perspective on their parents’ role in the that war. The Age of the Witness had begun, in which the victims of the Holocaust were heard and honoured by a wide public. There was a shift in audience (from the first to the second post-war generations), a shift in speakers (from heroes to victims), and a shift in the media that disseminated messages of mourning and remembrance - film, television, and tape recordings gave survivors the opportunity to tell their stories to a wide public.

What Winter calls the second generation of memory has been studied by many scholars from different disci-
plines. Their efforts revolve around the public attention given to the past and to its preservation and commemoration, which has increased dramatically in the Western world since the 1970s. This development has been given many names—such as “memory boom”, 22 and “re-memory epidemic” 23—and aspects of it have been discussed as a “heritage crusade”, 24 or a “heritage industry”. 25 Macdonald analyses this development and names it the memory phenomenon in order to avoid the negative connotations conveyed by catch phrases incorporating the language of pathology (“craze”, “fever”, “obsession”). 26 The memory phenomenon is part of what she calls the memory complex to indicate how tightly memory, heritage and identity are intertwined.

Creative industry

As will become clear in this chapter, the memory phenomenon is not the only development in society influencing the dynamics of memory in the Ruhr area. The emergence in the 1970s of assertive citizens demanding participation in political decision-making and urban planning is one of several “waves” which have influenced how the industrial era is remembered in the Ruhr area. Another is the growth of ecological awareness, which became well integrated in policies and projects in the Ruhr area starting in the 1980s. A final influential development in policy making and economic affairs is the increasing acceptance of the belief in “creative industry”, as a generator of economic growth. The ideas of Richard Florida (The Rise of the Creative Class) and Jane Jacobs (“new ideas need old buildings”) 27 are well known in city planning circles all over the world, but were especially influential in the Ruhr region.

These various “waves” moving through present-day society are not restricted to the Ruhr area, of course, but their combination in the context of its specific regional conditions has resulted in a distinctive influence on the dynamics of its memory of the industrial era.

I will next provide an historical introduction to the Ruhr area during its industrial and post-industrial eras, and in the sections following that I will analyse the development and dynamics of the memory of the industrial period in the last fifty years, dividing it into three different phases. I will end the chapter by drawing some general conclusions pertaining to the changes in the memory of the industrial era, set within the conceptual framework provided by the ideas of Hirsch, Ankersmit, and Winter.
§5.2

THE CARBON ERA, ZECHENSTERBEN AND STRUKTURWANDEL
In analysing the heritage practices and strategies of the last six decades in the Ruhr area, I will need to provide some background on its earlier history, since I will be discussing the way in which the remnants from its industrial heyday have been interpreted and appropriated in the post-industrial era. I will draw on the work of the many historians who have dedicated numerous books and essays to the rise and fall of the area’s mining and coal industries. As I will discuss below, this avalanche of historical scholarship is not only a rich historical source; it is also a symptom of *Prometheus’ pain* and the role that industrial heritage has played in the region’s identity over the past decades.

### Coal and steel in Europe

The industrialisation process, which started and took off in Great Britain in the early eighteenth century, encompassed cotton textiles, as well as the coal and iron industries, all of them the beneficiaries of new engineering and technological developments. After 1709, coal gradually replaced charcoal derived from timber as the basic fuel for the blast-furnaces of the iron industry, thereby inextricably linking the coal and iron industries. In that century, Russia was the largest iron producer in Europe, but around 1800 Great Britain took the lead. Several regions in continental Europe which disposed of large quantities of coal in their subsoil quickly entered on the path towards industrialisation, but the patterns and timing of their development differed from those of the British “example”. Great Britain and the Ruhr area are both situated in what is called the northwest European “coal belt”, which runs from Silesia in today’s Poland through the Ruhr area, Belgium, and northern France, extending as far as England and Wales. Belgium was the first among these other countries to industrialise, developing a strong iron industry based on the availability of cheap local coal and technology imported from Britain. The German Silesian and Ruhr regions followed suit, but Belgium remained the largest coal producer in Europe throughout the nineteenth century. In most industrialising regions in Europe, the iron industry became the most important consumer of coal, and in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, these regions depended heavily on coal production in Britain. France remained relatively under-industrialised in terms of coal and iron production until the railways stimulated the exploitation of the coalfields in Pas de Calais and elsewhere in northern France in the second half of the nineteenth century.

The well-established assumption that Britain was a model for the industrialisation on the Continent has been somewhat qualified by Rondo Cameron and others, who argue that its industrialisation occurred with many deviations from the British pattern. Coal and human capital were indeed the two basic factors in the complex process of industrialisation in all parts of Europe, but the variety of ways in which this process occurred is great.

The term *Industrial Revolution* itself has also been disputed, because it implies an abrupt discontinuity, whereas the rapidity of change in industrial processes is now thought to have been considerably exaggerated in some cases. Cotton was an exception, but the development of the iron, coal and engineering industries was for the most part gradual and took a long time to be completed.

### The Ruhr area in the pre-steam era

The production of coal and steel has shaped the landscape of the Ruhr Area very markedly, but mining activities there could not expand until the first half of the nineteenth century. Before that, it was mainly agricultural in character, with several villages and small towns that had grown along the Hellweg, an historic trading and pilgrimage route of Roman origin which became of great importance in Carolingian days. Salt was the main trade good in those areas, and it was also known about even earlier than that. Coal was initially obtained by digging shallow holes in the slopes of river valleys, but in the late Middle Ages coal miners began using adits or tunnels. The use of gunpowder enabled mining on a larger scale in the late seventeenth century.
The carbon era

Industrialisation in the Ruhr area followed upon the technological developments that enabled miners to dig further and, most importantly, deeper. In the southern part of the area, the Flöz, or layers of coal, lie not very far below the surface. Further to the north, however, these layers are very deep, hidden away under a hard layer of marl. Early coal mining, therefore, was concentrated in the southern part of the region and was accomplished by using tunnels in elevated areas, where they were not subject to flooding. As technological developments progressed, so too did the depth at which coal could be extracted. The development of coal mining in the Ruhr area thus traced a geographical arc from south to north.

A key advance was the improvement of pumping systems, that enabled the miners to dig shafts under groundwater level. The most important technical development was the introduction of the steam engine in the Ruhr area around 1830, which made it possible to use water pumps and thus extract correspondingly greater amounts of coal. Until then, mine shafts could reach a maximum depth of 46 meters. Starting in the 1830s, new steam engines, already in use in British mines a century earlier, made it possible to build stronger water pumps and brought the coal layers in the northern part of the Ruhr Area within reach, and indeed not much later the first mine shaft reached the coal layers underneath a thick layer of hard marl. Around 1860, mining shafts as deep as 250 meters were in use, and the mining fever advanced further north every year. But the increase in production was not achieved overnight. In the first decades of the nineteenth century, the average Ruhr mine employed around 9 miners, and around 1840 all the mines in the region combined produced only a tenth of what their English competitors did. Later on, lifts replaced ladders for descending to still greater depths, and by the mid-nineteenth century horses were being utilized underground. In 1900, some eight thousand horses (Grubenpferde) worked in the mines and were kept in underground stables. The development of a jackhammer powered by compressed air in 1908 was another important step in the long history of mechanisation of underground mining.

The first generations of mine buildings in the Ruhr area did not differ much in appearance from the local house architecture. Utilitarian buildings resembled farm houses, as did the houses built for the miners, as the Nachtigall mine (1731) in Witten illustrates. The introduction of the steam engine changed the typology of mine buildings, since a head-frame had to be constructed over the mine shaft, next to the machine room where the steam engine powered the winding gear. This became the central feature of each mining complex. In the nineteenth century the pithead frames or towers, called Malakoffs, were constructed from brick, imitating sacred and, particularly, feudal military architecture, including in the decorative schemes of their masonry. After 1890, the Malakoffs were replaced by several generations of iron head-frames (Fördergerüste).

The deepening of the mines and the increase in the coal yields were, of course, not isolated processes. Coal literally fuelled the industrialisation of Europe, which again increased the demand for this fuel. The steel industry moved to where its fires could be stoked and thus found its place close to the coal mines. Extensive rail networks were laid out throughout the Ruhr area to connect supply and demand of the black gold both within and outside the region. This intense economic activity transformed the region completely within several decades. Spatially, land ownership and the quality and the depth of coal under the surface essentially determined the locations of the mines. No classic urban development took place in the Ruhr area, since workers flocked around the centres of employment. The Ruhr area turned into a complicated mosaic of rural land, mining landscapes, working-class settlements, and an extensive network of railways. Competition between the cities in the Ruhr area, such as Dortmund, Bochum and Essen prevented the region from merging into one big coal metropolis. For example, railway gauges differed from city to city on purpose to keep the local economies merging. The production of coal was further heightened when reparations had to be paid after the Franco-Prussian (1870-1).

All this industrial activity required labourers, preferably strong, healthy and skilled. After 1870, many labourers from eastern Germany came to the Ruhr area to work. A housing shortage followed, and city planning could not keep up with the exploding...
population of immigrant workers. Many of them stayed in the region, although substantial numbers also returned to Prussia. Mine owners needed to develop houses for their employees, and by 1914 40,000 miners lived in housing built by the companies.

It became a normal practice to involve architects in the design of new mining complexes, including the miners’ settlements. Towards the end of the nineteenth century, these complexes increasingly began to resemble Baroque castles and palaces. Rich historicist designs were created to conceal the real function of the complex, as is the case with the historicist brick buildings around a green courtyard at the Zollern 2/4 mine in Dortmund, which was constructed around 1900. Its machine hall (1912) illustrates the shift toward a more constructivist conception of mine buildings; it is constructed in steel and richly decorated in the Art Nouveau style.34

During the First World War, the Ruhr Area was called the Waffenschmiede of Germany, as it played a vital role in the production of armaments. At the end of the war, with demand diminished, the production of coal decreased and almost came to a standstill. For several years, no new mines were created, but at the same time there was a shortage of labourers. Immigrant workers, prisoners of war, and women were employed alongside skilled miners who were called back from the front lines to work underground. Reparation payments, years without long-term investments, and the French occupation of the Ruhr Area led to years of inflation and misery. A rapid rationalisation program, however, made up for the setback, and coal production further increased in the 1920s. The number of points of production was lower, but total coal production increased.

The end of the war heralded a new chapter in mine architecture. In the 1920s new mining complexes were built to integrate the engineered, steel winding towers and the rest of the mine complex. The mine known as Zollverein 12 in Essen (opened in 1932 and listed by UNESCO since 2001) was designed by architects Schupp and Kremmer in monumental, cubical volumes, integrating the steel tower in a complex of symmetrically shaped Bauhaus-style buildings. As noted above, in 1920 the Settlement Association of the Ruhr Coal Area was founded to coordinate industrial and urban development in the region.

The worldwide depression caused severe misery in the Ruhr area because of its dependence on just a few heavy industries, but towards the end of the 1930s, production records were broken again. The outbreak of the Second World War was accompanied by the recruitment of many miners to fight at the front lines, and soon their place was taken by (predominantly Russian) prisoners of war: in 1941 they already numbered 31,000 men, and by 1945, 150,000.35 Since the Ruhr area was of great strategic importance, its cities, mines, factories, and infrastructure were favourite targets of Allied air raids in 1944. Many citizens died in these raids, and inner cities were severely damaged. Mines and factories also suffered losses, of course, but not all were damaged to the same extent. When Hitler realised that he would lose the war, he ordered that all mines and infrastructure had to be demolished and the cities be burned down, but in the end his orders were not followed. After the war, when Allied forces took over control of the region, they restarted industrial production and coordinated the distribution of Ruhr coal and steel over the Continent. The German Federal Republic (Bundesrepublik Deutschland) was founded in 1949 in the western portion of Germany, and two years later the formation of the European Coal and Steel Community signalled that West Germany would be a major participant in determining in European steel and coal policies.36 A new optimism reigned in the Ruhr region in the heyday of postwar prosperity, which is referred to in Germany as the Wirtschaftswunder (“economic miracle”). This also led to new highs in coal production, which set a record of almost 125 million tons in 1956.37

Zechensterben

In the early postwar years, the demand for energy on the Western European primary energy market was almost completely satisfied by worldwide coal production. It was not until 1957 that a worldwide shortage of coal occurred – and this would also be the last time. As prosperity grew, the import of oil from Middle Eastern and North African countries began to increase, transforming the international energy market. Oil became cheaper than coal, and the strength of former coal-mining regions began to decline.
1957–8 and 1962–3 were the years in which the least cost-efficient producers came under intense pressure because of business cycle downturns. Overall coal use declined rapidly in many sectors. Larger industries shifted from using coal to oil to fuel their production; and trains were no longer pulled by coal-burning locomotives, but by diesel and electric engines, as was the case for ships. In addition, households replaced coal and coke with light fuel oil and centrally-generated electricity. Finally, European coal experienced growing competition from cheaper South American coal.

As economic growth tapered off in the course of the 1960s, the situation worsened for Western European coal producers. For many regions in the northwest European coal belt this spelled the beginning of the end of the coal mining era. The European Coal and Steel Community tried hard to protect the community’s indigenous coal producers with import quota and other policies, and this managed to slow down the retreat from coal. Nevertheless, the regions affected lost many of their heavy industries. They were relatively inflexible in moving towards the adoption of different industrial activities and in investing in the emerging service sector. A similar process encompassing mine closures, strikes, despair, unemployment, social problems, and environmental issues occurred throughout all these regions of the northwest European coal belt, though with differences in severity and timing.

Many countries extended the protectionist intervention measures they had already taken in the 1920s and 1930s, nationalising the mining companies, as well, in order to coordinate measures to rationalise industry and cut back on production. Until 1958, many countries chose to encourage autarky as the path to socio-economic stability. In Belgium, the conditions of the mines in the southern Walloon and northern Campine mining regions differed greatly, but the national government opted for a long-term phasing out of all the coal mines. A different approach was tried in the Netherlands, where an enormous reserve of gas was found in the subsoil of the province of Groningen in 1962–63. The country opted for a strategy of drastic cutbacks in coal mining within a short period of time, mainly because it preferred to use indigenous gas in the production of electricity. In France, policies were developed to keep the mines open, and these proved to be effective until the late 1960s, after which time a gradual retreat from coal went alongside an increase in social benefits and investments in redevelopment. After 1958, most Western European coal-producing countries changed to strategies of strict rationalisation and a controlled retreat from coal mining.

In the Ruhr area the great dying out of the mines, known as das Zechensterben, hit hard and unexpectedly in 1958. It was, however, foreshadowed by a number of minor layoffs. Miners were given paid free shifts, Feierschichte, but no-one sensed that this meant the beginning of the end of an era. In 1958 dozens of mines closed – in an uncoordinated, chaotic way. Many of them, it is true, were almost exhausted, but the general indignation lasted for an entire decade (1958–1968), during which productive mines were closed down and thousands of miners lost their jobs. The German government tried in vain to maintain an annual production of 140 million tons of coal, a figure that took on magical significance to those who feared the inevitable end of the mining era. Panic, fear, and despair led to protests throughout the Ruhr region as many miners lost their jobs. The table below shows that the number of mine employees was cut in half between 1960 and 1970. In 1968, all the mines in the region were joined together to form one corporation: Ruhrkohle AG, which took over the coordination of all mining activities in the Ruhr area.

Yet, this move did not sound the death knell for all the mines in the region. The older mines in the south were closed, but in the north, several new shafts were sunk, to reach the great coal reserves in the northern part of the Ruhr region that lie much deeper under the earth’s surface and therefore are harder to mine. These mines used modern techniques to extract the raw material more cheaply and to combat the otherwise unbearable heat 1300 meters below the earth’s surface. These modern shafts were still used for extracting coal as late as 1985, but the Zechensterben appeared to be inevitable for these mines, too; for the international price of coal sank dramatically in 1985 and coal subsidies were lowered in 1997. This brought about a second wave of mine closures and unemployment in the region, this time in the Emscher zone. Nowadays, two mines are still working in the region: Auguste Victoria in Marl and Prosper-Haniel in Bottrop.
Both of them are slated to close by 2018, when European coal subsidies will be ended.

After the demise of the mines, their waste was re-used to fill the underground shafts and as construction material for roads. Large waste hills, or *Halden*, still dominate the landscape in the Ruhr region. Their shape and size developed from pointed and cone-shaped to large and flat, reflecting the technological advances in the machines and trucks that dump the waste.

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Mining regions in Europe

Typologically speaking, mining regions across Europe - and probably also in other parts of the world - display very similar spatial development patterns. Most often, the mine is the centre of a community. It has its own mining waste hill, shaft, and installations in which the coal is selected and cleaned. Sometimes mines have adjacent secondary industries, such as cokeries, petrochemical plants, and gas tanks. The location of these mining complexes is most often determined not by infrastructural considerations, but, mainly, by the availability and accessibility of the underground coal layers. After the establishment of a mine, a settlement develops around it to house the employees who work it. Sometimes existing settlements are expanded, and sometimes entirely new settlements are created, often in the middle of agricultural or woodland areas. Heavy infrastructure in the form of waterways and, especially railways are developed to connect the coal mines to the transport network and to users of the coal, such as steel industries. Regions that have developed mainly around the mining industry often exist of a vast urban sprawl, without a dominant central city, criss-crossed by heavy infrastructure and embracing a mosaic of countless patches of agricultural land. In an attempt to rearrange this type of landscape city planners have developed concentric networks of roads in several former mining areas, such as in Limburg in the Netherlands. The same counts for the Ruhr area.

Like their spatial development, the closures of the European coal mines regions also display a number of similarities. In the industrial era, mining offered employment, economic prosperity, and prestige. After the closure of the mines, the affected regions experienced poverty, high incidence of lung disease, despair, and various social and environmental problems. In short, mining was no longer associated with pride and prosperity. Once the mines started closing down, formerly isolated industrial complexes were left unused in a landscape already disadvantaged by fragmentation. This is how the former coal belt turned into a “rustbelt”, leaving many regions facing similar structural problems and similar challenges in confronting an urgent need for transformation.
§5.3

THE BIRTH OF

INDUSTRIEKULTUR
In this section I will show how the optimism of postwar reconstruction and the *Wirtschaftswunder* gave way to the realisation that this euphoric state could not last. The *Zechensterben* (death of the mines) hit the region like a shock wave in 1958, banishing the industrial era to the realm of the past. It took a decade of despair and demolition before industrial landscapes, buildings and the former way of life of the workers could be turned into heritage. This age is often named the era of “industrial culture” – *Industriekultur*.

**From present to past perfect**

In the late 1950s, the older coal mines in the south of the region became exhausted, and the worldwide economic crisis threatened the existence of the younger mines in the north, as well. As we observed above, in the decade after 1958, more and more mines were closed, while others were merged and rationalised. Between 1960 and 1970, the number of mines in Germany dropped from 146 to 69, and the number of employees was cut in half: from 490,000 in 1960 to 253,000 in 1970. National and regional governments started to develop policies aimed at rejuvenating the economy of the Ruhr area, but until the early 1980s they were mainly defensive in character. The regional economic structure was to be maintained; cooperation increased and companies were merged to stay competitive on the global energy market. Local actors held on to the hope that the region’s future still lay in the coal and steel industries. One could say that many of the people involved were not yet ready to use the past perfect tense in referring to what is known as the *Montanära* (the era of coal and steel).

Some more aggressive strategies were also tried, aimed mainly at attracting new forms of economic activity, such as assembly-line industries, in order to keep the region’s numerous unskilled workers employed. Automobile manufacturing began to be seen as a saviour once Adam Opel started producing its new Kadett model at a former mining complex in Bochum. The Ruhr area was not the only former mining region confronting this kind of challenge. In Pas de Calais region of France, Renault built a new factory in 1970 (at Douai), and the truck manufacturer DAF moved its assembly line to Born in the former mining region of Dutch Limburg in 1965-1967, around the time when the state mines were closing. Universities were also founded in the Ruhr region, since investing in knowledge was seen as a basic requirement for building a stronger tertiary sector (*Tertiärisierung*) in the future. The transformation was fully focused on maintaining employment in both the short and the longer term, an ambitious goal given that a majority of the former industrial complexes were demolished after closure.

**Dannenbaum 1 and Adam Opel’s role in the Zechensterben in Bochum**

In 1950, half of the inhabitants of Bochum were working in the mining and coal industries. But between 1958 and 1959 almost 9,000 mining jobs were lost, and shortly thereafter, Bochumer Bergbau AG decided to close three mines in Bochum, leaving a further 6,500 people jobless. In 1960 the first negotiations started between the city of Bochum and Adam Opel GmbH, which was seeking a suitable location for the production of their new Opel Kadett. The city had taken over the terrain of the Dannenbaum 1 mine, east of the city centre, from Bochumer Bergbau, including the risk of subsidence damage caused by the mining activities. The city sold the property to Opel, but kept the subsidence risk and invested heavily in infrastructure to facilitate the opening of the assembly plant. The city also organised and paid for the demolition of the mining complex of Dannenbaum 1. Already by October 1962 the production of the Kadett had begun. One decade later, the presence of Opel in Bochum had taken on a mythical significance; for it proved that the city had been able to fight the crisis in a structured and future-oriented way after many years of chaotic crisis management. This re-use of the former mining terrain in Bochum is, however, an exception in the Ruhr area. In most cities, it appeared to be much harder to compensate for the loss of employment in the mines by creating jobs in new sectors. We may also note that even though the new Opel working environment
Figure 5.6. The Adam Opel complex 1 in 2013.
was cleaner, many former miners from Bochum working there felt deprived of their autonomous working style and missed the sense of closeness among the miners underground.50

On the former Dannenbaum 1 terrain, only one relatively small building is preserved, right outside the Opel compound and the new roads around it. Now painted orange and grey, it is used by a Protestant educational institution for special needs therapists. Ironically, Opel has recently become a source of anxiety for Bochum. The icon of a successful Neuansiedlung, the “saviour of employment” of the 1960s, now presents the city with problems similar to those it confronted fifty years ago. Opel is still the largest industrial firm in Bochum with its 5,200 employees in 2011, but it plans to close down its plant there, which covers an area much larger than the inner city itself. Once again, employees are fighting for their jobs, and the city will face immense clean-up and re-use problems in the very near future.

Despite some early attempts of engineers and artists to research and describe the physical testimony of the industrial era, a culture of memory only really emerged when a population felt a sense of loss, accompanied by the realisation that a certain era had become past perfect. The death of the mines meant the birth of a new era, one in which heavy industry was turned into a memory, a memory of what was most essential in the region’s heritage. At the beginning of the great Zechensterben, the Ruhr area entered the post-coal era (or post-carbon era).51 The very first time a mine building in the region was protected as a historical monument was early as 1956: it was the “Malakoff tower” of Brockhauser Tiefbau, built in 1874.52

Industrial archaeology

Monuments were long defined from a purely art-historical perspective, which excluded industrial buildings and complexes from being considered worthy of conservation. All the same, some attempts to conserve individual industrial buildings originated much earlier than the conceptualisation of the Fabriksalter (age of the factories) as a distinct technical-cultural era with its own culture,53 though this occurred only on a very limited scale.

An interest in the history of technology and its monuments in Germany arose at the beginning of the twentieth century. An early witness of this was the foundation of the German Museum of Masterpieces in Science and Technology in Munich in 1903.54 Initially, groups of engineers started researching and documenting technological achievements as a way of creating traditions for their own profession. In this new form of heritage, the focus was mainly on objects of craftsmanship and technology, and little attention was paid to the Ruhr area. The German Society for the Conservation of Technological Cultural Monuments was founded in 1928, and it published its first survey of technological monuments several years later.55

National Socialism idealised the role of the engineer as a creator of technology and stimulated new industrial developments on a large scale. This approach frustrated the aims of the more tradition-minded conservationists and engineers, who wanted to see greater efforts devoted to preserving the country’s existing industrial heritage. After the Second World War, the determination to reconstruct West Germany’s economy and the euphoria accompanying its miraculous growth did not leave much room for conservation, either. In the 1950s, however, a few individuals did take an interest in the aesthetic qualities of industrial buildings, especially in the Ruhr area. Armed with their cameras, the artist couple Bernd and Hilla Becher travelled through the latter by moped and photographed its industrial complexes, becoming pioneers in conceiving the raw, industrial character of the region as an inspiration for art.

From the 1960s onwards, industrial archaeologists began showing an interest in industrial complexes in the Ruhr area, long before most historians and conservationists did. Interest in such material actually goes back to the nineteenth century, but a prominent recent example is the industrial archaeology movement in England, which was started mainly by amateur archaeologists in the 1950s. The term “industrial archaeology” was first used in a written text by the English author Michael Rix 1955.56 It initially referred to the systematic study of material evidence related to the Industrial Revolution, but it was later extended to “the systematic study of structures and artefacts as a means of enlarging our understanding of the industrial past”.57 The field became a
more firmly accepted academic discipline during the 1960s, but it remained tied to an essentially descriptive rather than an analytic approach, focussing on case studies and artefacts without devoting much attention to questions of process.

In this period, the historical value of the remains of the industrial past began to receive official recognition in Germany. For example, as early as 1967, the government of North Rhine-Westphalia created an inventory of such monuments. The First International Congress for the Preservation of Industrial Monuments was held in Ironbridge, England in 1973. Significantly, the Second Congress took place two years later in the heart of the Ruhr area, in Bochum, and the first chair for technological and industrial history in Germany was established at the University of Bochum around the same time.

**Cathedral of labour: Zollern 2/4**

Each new era has its own nativity scene. For the age of Industriekultur it is the conservation of the Machinenhalle of the Zollern 2/4 mine in Dortmund Bövinghausen. Zollern 2/4, a mining complex dating from the turn of the century, had been taken out of production in 1967. Plans for new developments had already been drawn up when the head of the communal planning agency introduced a note in the consultation procedure stating that the conservation of several of the mine buildings was an urgent necessity. Fascinated by the architectural elements in Art Nouveau style, the editor of an architectural magazine called public attention to it in an effort to prevent its demolition. The Landeskonservator Westfalen-Lippe, the agency responsible for monuments, did not support the editor’s position. Nor did it heed the opinion of Hans Paul Koellmann, the head of the Dortmund Arts and Crafts School, who valued the complex both for its architectural qualities and because it contained typical examples of the industrial buildings of the period. The two men did, however, receive support from artists and from the heads of several museums and galleries. An insistent letter directed to the prime minister of North Rhine-Westphalia eventually led to the complex being listed as a historical monument in 1970. The rescue of Zollern II/IV proved to be a turning point in awareness of industrial architecture on the part of politicians. Before the end of 1969 the minister of culture supported the initiative to list all machine shops or winding towers that were either artistically valuable or good examples of the place of technology in the industrialisation of the Ruhr area.

In the following year, the North Rhine-Westphalian government made millions of marks available in its 5-year plan for the conservation of buildings that were typical of the state’s technological and economic history. This was the first time in Europe that public funds were made available for the conservation of industrial heritage. In subsequent years, the listing and conservation of industrial heritage was further institutionalised and professionalised in the region. In 1979 the Westphalian Industrial Museum was founded, and a way was finally found to re-use Zollern 2/4 permanently.

It was in this initial stage of the appreciation for industrial heritage in the region that the term Industriekultur was introduced by a young, politically engaged intelligentsia. Referring not only to the tangible remains of the industrial era, it also encompassed the life of the ordinary citizen at the time. When members of the public started to organise resistance against the demolition of working-class housing estates in the Ruhr area in the early 1970s, it was not so much on account of industrial heritage per se but more as a protest against an urban redevelopment plan that threatened the existing social structures and life-worlds of these working-class communities. The phenomenon of social activism at the time was, of course, not limited to the Ruhr area; it was paralleled by grassroots resistance to the demolition of outdated neighbourhoods in many cities in Europe. A second motive for the actions of the young intellectuals protesting against these demolitions, was an interest in fostering a more democratically oriented approach to history. An important figure in this context was the cultural theorist Roland Günther, who proved to be an effective leader of the movement. In the wake of these young democratic activists, the residents of the housing colonies joined the effort to conserve their everyday surroundings and the memories of the industrial era they had been a part of.

The earliest incident in this movement occurred in re-
Figure 5.7-8. Zollern 2/4 as an industrial museum in 2013.
action to the planned demolition of the oldest *Arbeitersiedlung* (workers’ colony) in the Ruhr area, Eisenheim in Oberhausen; the demolition was halted by its inhabitants, led by a group of academics who had come to survey the quality of life in the area. In 1972 Eisenheim became the first working-class colony to be listed as a monument. Its rescue served as an example for many other settlements in the region facing the same threat. It is one of several early initiatives that by now have gained mythical status in the Ruhr area as being at the origin of a new paradigm, namely approaching the industrial era as an integral part of the region’s past – as heritage.

The focus of historical interest in the industrial age was mainly on labour and everyday life as cultural phenomena, and thus very much in line with the protection of workers’ colonies against demolition. A large number of museums devoted to industry and to labour opened their doors in the region in the 1970s, many of them built on authentic industrial locations, such as former mines, factories and coke-oven plants. This proved to be a herald of the boom in regional and local industrial museums in the 1980s. In these museums, which were often started by local groups who joined their objects, photos and memories, the emphasis is on practices of living and working which were core of the *Industriekultur*.

The re-use of authentic historic places, combined with the representation of former ways of living and working did not develop solely in the Ruhr area. It is embedded in a broader development, that of the so-called “eco-museum”, a new kind of museum which seeks to create economic opportunities that can help finance the preservation of traditional cultural, agricultural and industrial heritage, and, at the same time, to preserve landscapes and buildings *in situ*, as well as to increase the involvement of local citizens. The movement emerged in the 1970s and was particularly strong in France, but it also spread to Sweden, England and Canada. Both life styles and industrial processes were incorporated in this museum concept, which was often embodied in a well-defined network of local museums and historic sites, run or preserved mainly by volunteers. This somewhat romantic notion of conserving ways of life in their authentic place and setting was not restricted to agricultural or artisanal contexts.

It was also adapted to the ways of life of communities centred around coal mining, and the Ruhr area, in particular, possesses countless examples of the mining version of the eco-museum. The Big Pit in Blaenavon and Rhondda Heritage Park in Trehafod exemplify this museum concept in the former mining area of Rhondda in Wales. (The former of these became a UNESCO World Heritage site in 2000.)

**Industriekultur in the rustbelt**

Between 1958 and the early 1990s, many mining regions in northwest Europe suffered from the closure of mines and the loss of heavy industries. These regions faced a number of similar problems, but the timing of the closures and the scale of the problems differed considerably. In some regions, like the Ruhr, the mines in the regions closed more or less gradually, while in others this happened much more abruptly, as in Dutch Limburg, where all the mines were closed within a single decade, between 1965 and 1974.

The date when the mines were closed as well as the pace of the closures seem to determine how the age of the mines is remembered (or forgotten) in a given region. An important factor here is the gradual growth in the awareness of the value of industrial heritage starting in the late 1950s. The mine closures in Limburg, for example, took place relatively early, and most of the mine heads were removed, the shafts closed, and the complexes demolished. This happened at a time when *Industriekultur* was in its infancy – and existed in only a few regions in Europe. Until well into the 1980s, the majority of the former miners and their families did not want to be reminded of that traumatic part of their past. Only in the 1990s did a real appreciation for industrial heritage grow in Limburg, relatively late in comparison with the Ruhr area or England.

It sometimes happened that an abrupt closure of mines in a region caused a sense of alarm, something that did not occur when this process took place more gradually, over the course of several decades. In the Belgian Campine region, for example, most of the mines were closed between 1987 and 1992, within a
theorist Roland Günther had a great influence on the initial stages of *Industriekultur* in the Ruhr area. Thus, the first phase of *Industriekultur*, which emerged after ten years of demolition and forgetting, was the product of the aesthetic and genuine historical interest of a small number of professionals, on the one hand, and of a grass roots movement to protect existing social structures and ways of life, on the other.

In this section we have seen that *Industriekultur* was born roughly ten years after the death of the mining era. In the first decade after the oil crisis of 1958, demolition and re-industrialisation were the ways in which the Ruhr region tried to keep its head above water and move towards a new future. With architects and artists extolling the aesthetic interest of Zollern 2/4, the beauty of industrial remains could now qualify as a valuable part of heritage, and industrial archaeology was born. In a parallel process, in the 1970s socially engaged intellectuals and inhabitants fought against demolition of the workers’ colonies to protect existing social networks and living spaces from disappearing in the wave of urban renewal projects then underway all across Western Europe. Their interest in preservation was not essentially historical but rather social, and it was embedded in a larger bottom-up, participatory movement that led to protests against the demolition of existing neighbourhoods in many Western European countries. Monument preservationists, however, used this opportunity to reach their own goals, including protecting valuable workers’ colonies from demolition. The role of several individuals as facilitators of the birth of *Industriekultur* should not be overlooked. People like Bernd and Hilla Becher, the Zollern activist Hans Paul Koellmann, and the socially committed historian and cultural

time span of just five years. Strong protests on the part of culture and monument preservationists led to the conservation of a relatively large portion of the industry’s remaining structures. The gradual closure of mines in the Rhondda Valley in Wales produced a very different pattern. Before 1947, almost half of the mines had already closed, but the last ones would continue to function well into the 21st century. The process of decline was so gradual that it appears not have caused any alarmism and therefore led to hardly any action by preservationists. In the end, only very few of the former mines in Rhondda have been preserved and re-used. The closure of the Campine mines, around 1990, took place at a time when the appreciation of industrial remains as a significant element of heritage was already firmly established. This was not the case for Limburg, where the process of closure was also abrupt, but took place long before an appreciation for *Industriekultur* and industrial monuments was widely accepted.\(^{20}\)
§5.4

THE MUSEUM BOOM AND INDUSTRIAL HERITAGE AS A REGIONAL ICON
After roughly two decades of growing appreciation for the historical and aesthetic value of industrial heritage in the Ruhr area, strengthened by a participatory movement that fought for the conservation of old ways of living and existing neighbourhoods, a shift occurred in the place occupied by the memory of the mining. In the 1970s and early 1980s, a wave of "musealisation" and conservation spread across Western Europe and, in the Ruhr area, resulted in a "museum boom" as well as an increasing number of protected industrial sites and complexes. Towards the end of the 1980s, the spirit of ecological thinking found its way into the Ruhr area as well, in the form of an experimental design project meant to stimulate structural change in the region: International Building Exhibition Emscher Park. As I will show, IBA Emscher Park proved to be a catalyst for preservation and experiments in the re-use of industrial complexes. Former collieries became landmarks in a green, "renatured" landscape. It was also in the context of IBA Emscher Park that Industriekultur became part of the discourse about a post-industrial regional identity.

Structural change, neo-industrialisation and lock-in

Until the early 1980s, mining companies and governments tried to bring about structural change in the Ruhr area through strategies that were mainly focused on re-industrialisation within the framework of the existing economic structure. Cooperation between industrial companies was intensified, leading to the creation of large multi-national corporations with worldwide operations. There were, of course, many exceptions to this tendency, like the foundation of new universities in the region and the diversification of industry through the arrival of Opel, but the large industrial concerns still believed that the future of the Ruhr area lay in coal and steel.

This attitude did not change until the mid-1980s, when local actors started to rely less on the past and adopted a more pro-active approach. Perhaps the change came so slowly because the traditional strong ties between government and industry had become detrimental to innovation and flexibility. In other words, this situation, which the economist Hospers calls "economic, institutional and cognitive lock-in", was the result of a consensus culture – a tradition of strong coalitions between governments, institutions and industries – combined with an over-optimistic view of the future of the region’s heavy industries. For a long time, the individuals concerned did not want to believe that the character of the changes in the region was structural rather than cyclical, but in the middle of the 1980s they recognized the failure of the old policies and moved from re-industrialisation to "neo-industrialisation" strategies. New branches were developed around the old industrial core by the large coal and steel concerns themselves, re-orientating their companies towards the future. Thyssen-Krupp, RAG, and others diversified their activities, moving into plant engineering, control services, and environmental technologies. These developments were stimulated by national policies that favoured environmental technology and by local governments that stopped funding re-industrialisation projects. As a consequence, the Ruhr area could benefit from expertise that was already present in the region – a legacy of the coal and steel industries – and apply it to new domains, such as reduction of air pollution, waste disposal, recycling, renewable resources, and energy supply. Adopting a bottom-up approach, the region successfully built upon its industrial past after finally acknowledging that the changes in the region were structural in nature. Neo-industrialisation has so far proved more viable than the re-industrialisation strategies, and, according to Hospers, "it will be the history of the Ruhrgebiet that shows the way to new economic futures."

The Memory Boom

After the birth of the Industriekultur and the initial protection of industrial remains for aesthetic or social reasons, a second generation of memory emerged in the course of the 1980s. From the mid-1970s onwards, the younger generations, more highly educated than their parents and grandparents, evolved into a new middle class in the Ruhr region. This "first generation of upwardly mobile" individuals remained largely entrenched in the milieu and ways of life in which its members had grown up, and it stayed connected to the Ruhr region. They regarded their indi-
The desire for “Renaturation” in IBA Emscher Park

An important landmark in the evolution of the role of industrial heritage was the International Building Exhibition Emscher Park (IBA). This decade-long mega-project, headed by the city planner Karl Ganser (who by now has become a kind of icon in his field), functioned simultaneously as a catalyst, framework, and model funding scheme for more than a hundred local and regional projects in the fields of economy, ecology, and landscape. The IBA Emscher Park, as I will henceforth refer to it, focused on the zone around the heavily polluted Emscher River, which runs roughly from west to east through the northern part of the Ruhr region, where most of the mines closed in the course of the 1970s and 1980s (later than those in the south). The Emscher area includes 17 cities and has around two million inhabitants. Environmental concerns about the drainage of the heavily polluted Emscher were the main reason for starting this mega-project in 1989, which was set up as a kind of workshop for exchanging experiences concerning the regeneration of industrial regions. Other former mining regions have also been “renatured” or “recultivated”, such as the brown-coal mining area between Aachen, Cologne and Mönchengladbach.

IBA Emscher Park is one of many International Building Exhibitions which organised competitions and invited architects and planners worldwide to submit entries, but it is one of the few to have achieved international fame. The environmental consciousness that fuelled the initiative was not restricted to the IBA or the Ruhr area, but was part of a wider growth of ecological and environmental awareness in the Western world in the course of the 1980s. Most importantly, the chain of industrial waste lands in the Emscher area was completely reassessed and turned into a green park-like landscape into which urban areas and industrial remains were integrated. The core of the Park was to be formed the Emscher River, at the time a heavily polluted open air sewer, which was to be brought back to its pre-industrial state - clean, natural, and meandering. A call for proposals was issued, and over a hundred landscape and planning projects were granted funding and support from the central IBA organisation. This is how the regional vision came to be translated into numerous local

individual histories of social mobility as part of the region’s history of structural change, and were largely responsible for the rise of a new culture of memory.

In this period, it appears that a genuine interest in history was the motive for what may truly be called a regional museum boom. The small-scale conservation and musealisation initiatives discussed above grew into a huge boom encompassing many open air museums, industrial museums, and so-called Heimatmuseums. The regions of the Rhineland and of Westphalia each founded an industrial museum, in 1979 and 1984, respectively. They are each located at multiple former industrial sites and are devoted to industrial and social history. Alltagsgeschichte, the history of everyday life, became the focus of most of these museums, with the factory presented as the focus of the daily life and social world of the working class. These industrial complexes were listed, preserved, and restored to fit their new function as the “authentic” places around which the life of the workers was centred.

Inventory lists of industrial objects in need of protection were drawn up in the course of the 1970s, and the institutions entrusted with preservation were reorganised to accommodate their new responsibilities as protectors of industrial heritage. In the 1980s and 1990s, many industrial buildings were listed as monuments in order to assure their preservation. Societies were founded specifically for the preservation of industrial heritage. One of the most influential was the German Society for Industrieckultur (1987), which has served as a consultant to many conservation and re-use projects.

The growing protection of industrial monuments and the museum boom of the 1980s were not restricted to the Ruhr area, of course. They were elements of a larger development that is often called the memory turn or memory shift. Yet, the enormous number of new initiatives, museums, and listings of monuments suggest that the “memory boom” in the Ruhr area was more than simply a prime example of a general development that occurred in many Western European countries; for the area became the most densely populated museum landscape in the world, with almost 150 museums by 1992.
interventions (an approach which was criticized by some, because of fragmented character of the results). Ultimately, many projects, ranging widely in focus and scale, were carried out, and the Emscher area was successfully transformed: it became economically and ecologically healthy, and a good place to live.

The relevance of IBA Emscher Park, however, for this chapter lies in the approach it established for dealing with industrial landscapes and complexes. A close reading of the goals that were initially formulated for the project gives one the impression that it was striving to restore or “renature” the damage inflicted on the Emscher area by industrialisation as a precondition for new developments. Yet, at its core, the vision of the creators of IBA Emscher Park was an aesthetic one: to rebuild a landscape in the form of a park in order to create new opportunities for living, working and nurturing culture. The first memorandum issued by the project called its mission “historical”, citing as an inspiration the foundation of the Settlement Association of the Ruhr Coal Area in 1920. The association had tried to fight the inhumanity of capitalistic city planning, arguing for a settlement design based on green and open spaces, IBA Emscher Park wanted to follow in the footsteps of that approach to planning.

Numerous waste hills, were sealed off, landscaped and planted. They have become leisure landscapes, where numerous activities are now taking place, including, among others, paragliding, skiing, kiting, horse riding, climbing, gravity races, butterfly collecting, and gardening. Some Halden are used for religious processions, open-air worship, and theatre performances; and many of them are now topped with landmark-like art sculptures, for example the Haldeneereignis Emscherblick (or just Tetraëder) on Halde Beckstraße in Bottrop-Batenbrook by Wolfgang Christ and Klaus Bollinger, and the thirty-meter-high mine lamp by Otto Piene on Halde Rheinpreussen Moers-Utfort.

Monuments, re-use and landmarks

The conservation and integration of industrial remains in new park landscapes was planned as an integral part of IBA Emscher Park. It began by grouping individual projects according to a number of main themes: regeneration of the landscape”, “ecological improvement of the Emscher River system”, “the Rhine-Herne canal as an experiential space (Erlebnisraum)”, “working in the park”, “new forms of housing and houses”, “new opportunities for social, cultural and athletic activities” and “industrial monuments as bearers of culture” (Kulturträger). This array of projects clearly shows that the main concerns in the early stages of the ten-year project were ecology, landscape, social improvement and recreation. In their initial memorandum, the IBA organisers acknowledged the value of monuments for the historical and cultural identity of the region. Their main goal was to build up institutional and financial support for several years, while simultaneously developing new ideas concerning conservation. A thorough inventory of buildings worth preserving, along with proposals for future-oriented usage should, they reasoned, prepare the ground for a wide range of new functions and eventually result in the creation of a wide gamut running from entirely restored and re-used complexes to unaltered ruined landmarks of the past. In the first years of IBA, the accent was on “buying time” for monuments and safeguarding them from the demolition hammer.

After several years, IBA Emscher Park had been transformed into a framework for over a hundred projects divided among five principal themes. These projects were geared mainly toward redevelopment, with a strong emphasis on landscape design and spatial planning. Many former industrial terrains were cleaned or sealed and re-used as either recreational or business parks, in most cases conserving one or more parts of the existing industrial building complexes. In IBA Emscher Park, we see early examples of the attempt to redevelop industrial heritage and embed it in a regional development plan. The overall project was, in essence, a landscape design and planning initiative, a fact which is reflected in the kind of solutions that were offered to solve the structural problems of the Emscher area. The accent was on creating new nature and redeveloping hardware to facilitate a transformation from a shrinking society burdened with environmental, employment, and social problems to one which offered healthy living conditions, with a sufficient number of jobs in new sectors and a pleasant social atmosphere. Large sums of public
Figure 5.9. The honorary courtyard surrounded by the boiler house of Zollverein in 2011.

Figure 5.10. Erin around 1958.

Figure 5.11. Erin Park in 2013.
money were spent on realising the one hundred projects involved. Many of them, it may be observed, included public-private partnerships, and some were financed partially by private investment.

The IBA Emscher Park projects were scattered across a vast area, and the former mine buildings, functioned as landmarks or Leuchttürme, essentially “lighthouses of memory”, in new urban and green developments, some on a small scale and others at larger scales. A few well-known examples are the Gasometer in Oberhausen, the Jahrhunderthalle in Bochum, and, most iconic of all, the Zollverein in Essen.

**Gewerbepark Erin, Castrop-Rauxel**

The mining complex of Erin 1/2/4/7 was located just a few hundred meters away from the heart of Castrop-Rauxel, in the northern part of the Ruhr area. Mining activities began there around 1870 and were eventually halted in 1983, leaving the complex of 40 hectares unused and 3,800 employees without work. In the last year of Erin’s operation, a young photography student chose the mine and its employees as the subject for his graduation project. In 395 black and white photos he documented the world of the mine in its final working phase under the title: *The Last Days of the Erin Mine.* Without becoming sentimental, Ulrich Mertens produced a period piece in which he documented not only the daily world of the miners, but also their anger and despair about its impending loss.

Demolition plans were developed and executed quickly after the closure of the mine and its coking plant. A group of concerned citizens founded the Erin Förderturm-Verein e.V. in 1984 to campaign for the preservation of the eye-catching winding tower of shaft 7, built in 1954. The tower was already approved for demolition, but the group’s members fought to save it so that they could link their personal memories to the places that were meaningful to them. The winding tower was protected as a monument as early as 1986 and restored four years later, the first of its kind in Westphalia to be protected by the government of North Rhine-Westphalia. It is the only building of the Erin complex that survived long enough to be integrated into the new service and business park Erin that was developed as one of the projects of IBA Emscher Park after 1994.

Over half of the former mining area is now transformed into a green park, where the focus is on landscape and aesthetic qualities. (The plan was created by Klaus-Wedig Pridik.) Carefully shaped bodies of earth store the contaminated soil and, at the same time, lend structure to the park. Visually, they refer to the landscape of Ireland, the birthplace of the man who founded and named the mine (Erin means “the green island” in Gaelic). The new service and business park, with its classic axial road plan, now includes around forty companies. The monumental winding shaft still dominates the site, which has completely changed in appearance as well as in use. The winding tower stands alone in the middle of a small roundabout as a landmark, the sole remnant of the industrial age.

**Industriekultur and the definition of a regional identity**

The IBA Emscher Park mega-project published a second memorandum in 1996 which evaluated its first five years and redefined its future goals. Several monumental industrial complexes were conserved – including their spatial and functional contexts – and redeveloped for new, mainly cultural functions. In order to gain some additional time to learn the best way to evaluate industrial remains and to develop re-use plans for industrial complexes, a new organisation was founded for studying and preserving industrial monuments and *Industriekultur.* It currently also serves as a platform for many other organisations in the field. The second memorandum announced a shift in emphasis regarding its approach to industrial heritage. IBA Emscher Park was going to focus more on organising cultural events related to the monumental complexes in its purview. Industrial monuments would soon become the settings for regional crafts, design, music, exhibitions, theatrical performances and other forms of entertainment. One location in particular was chosen to experiment with this new focus: the former mine and factory complex known as the Zollverein in Essen. A project with national significance was envisioned, in which the preservation of monuments, landscape
and architectural design, and the protection of nature go hand in hand in a park-like setting. Halfway through the IBA project, awareness was growing that culture strengthens the profile of a region and that it is even a necessary requirement for a successful structural change, or Strukturwandel. The second memorandum also calls for stimulating the region’s cultural economy and asserts that IBA has been successful in raising public interest in Industriekultur by connecting cultural events to monumental industrial settings. In the same publication, IBA opened up a new field of activity, namely tourism, redefining the Emscher zone as more than just a post-industrial landscape. A new profile for the region was developed in which Industriekultur was chosen as the essential element, because it was this heritage that lent the region its unique character. This is how master plan for tourism throughout the entire Ruhr region came to be created in 1997, with a focus on developing a Route Industriekultur to connect many of its industrial heritage sites and museums and to promote them collectively.

**Route Industriekultur**

The Route Industriekultur began as a project of IBA Emscher Park in 1997. Planned as a 400-kilometre-long, circular route for both motorists and cyclists, it connects 25 highlights, 16 panoramic viewpoints, and 13 workers’ colonies. Moreover, several former railroad lines have been transformed into cycling routes connecting some of the highlights. Three visitor centres provide information, tour guides and virtual tours through the region; and the online web portal offers package deals, bicycle rentals, and announces upcoming events. The visitor is offered 26 different themed routes (described in printed tour guides) which provide a wide range of possible experiences, pertaining to such domains as social history, “renaturisation,” Strukturwandel, and artistic landmarks, along with many aspects of former industrial activity in the Ruhr area.

One could say that the Route Industriekultur is a typical product of the late 1990s, as it is aimed at attracting tourism to the Ruhr region, redefining its industrial heritage as a unique
selling point. At the same time, the route can be seen as the summation and culmination of Industriekultur, since it gathers together all the ways in which the carbon era and its demise were remembered in the previous decades. Zollern, with its mythical status as the first mining complex that was saved from demolition, the workers’ colonies, social history museums, “renatured” areas, re-used industrial complexes, and artistic landmarks on slag heaps: all these elements of earlier phases in the memory of the Zechensterben are represented along the route. It was inaugurated in 1999 – as part of the IBA Emscher Park finale – with a major night-time event at the Zollverein featuring theatrical performances, dance, music, and fireworks.

**IBA’s finale and its afterlife**

In many ways, IBA Emscher Park is perceived as a successful project which redefined a post-industrial region saddled with many problems, helping to spark its transformation into a region with aesthetically satisfying landscapes and a heritage that is attractive to tourists. Of course, calculating the costs of that transformation is much easier than calculating the benefits of the project in economic terms. Apart from it being an internationally admired example of a successful, large-scale regional rejuvenation project, it also received quite a lot of criticism, as well. First of all, there was the critique coming from the academic world, which complained that IBA organised a very expensive regional experiment without engaging in an active dialogue with academic experts. Secondly, IBA was criticised for making green belts and parks into all-purpose tools. Does turning the former industrial landscape into a big park really solve structural problems in the region? Did green simply become the new grey of the Ruhr area? A third critique of IBA Emscher Park and the cultural initiatives it incorporated was directed at the elitist character that many of these projects are perceived as having.

Ten years after the start of IBA Emscher Park, a grand “Finale” was organised, in which many of the projects were presented to the public, but it was conceived primarily as way to further enhance the cultural profile of the Ruhr area. After a decade of experimenting with the preservation and re-use of industrial heritage, the entire Emscher area was perceived as a national landscape monument, one which boldly demonstrated the success of a dynamic approach to industrial heritage. Respecting history and using it as a potential asset for future development was presented as the new ideal approach to industrial monuments in the Emscher area. The message was clear: Industrial complexes should not be protected against development; rather, they should be protected for development.

It will come as no surprise to the reader that the year 2000, the first year after the “Finale” of IBA Emscher Park, was named Jahr der Industriekultur in North Rhine-Westphalia. Its goal was to raise awareness, attract new volunteers to heritage initiatives, and increase the economic and touristic value of industrial monuments in that state.

IBA Emscher Park was given an afterlife in the so-called Regionale, an event devoted to regional structural politics that is organised in a different area of North Rhine-Westphalia every two or three years. Landscape, tourism and culture continue to play important roles in these events, though in varying ways depending on the specific challenges and characteristics of the area in question.

**Zollverein 12 as an international example**

If there is one symbol of Industriekultur, it is Zollverein’s shaft 12 in Essen. Zollverein was an active mining company from 1847 until its closure in 1986, and it maintained multiple shafts and an extensive underground tunnel system. Shaft 12 was the site at which the extraction of coal, workshops, and preparation of coal and other activities were centralised. Its Bauhaus-style architecture, the work of Fritz Schupp and Martin Kremmer from the early 1930s, made the mine famous in the architectural world. In these years it was also the largest mine in the Ruhr area. After the Second World War, Zollverein 12 was connected underground with other mines in the area, which increased its production and made it the largest mine on the European continent, but this expansion ultimately also led to its closure in 1986, although the Zollverein...
Figure 5.13. The cokery of Zollverein 12 in 2011.
coking plant remained open until 1993. \[108\] Several days before the last miners ended their work, the entire Zollverein complex was listed as a monument and taken over by the Land Development Company of North Rhine-Westphalia. Right at the start of IBA Emscher Park, Zollverein was selected as one of its projects, and the sanitation and restoration of the complex soon got underway. The complex was planned to house cultural and art initiatives and was opened to the public as part of the Finale of IBA Emscher Park in 1999. Two years later, the entire complex was listed by UNESCO as a World Heritage site, both as an example of Modern Movement architecture in industry and as a representative of the historical development of traditional heavy industries. \[109\]

Zollverein 12 became an accessible public space with cultural functions only after the end of IBA Emscher Park. It was intended to become the driving force behind the regional Strukturwandel through substantial investment in cultural facilities and in housing companies that work in creative industries. Rem Koolhaas’ Office for Metropolitan Architecture developed a master plan for the area in 2002, transforming it into a venue for art, culture and design. Today Zollverein consists of a park of 100 hectares of Industrienatur, \[110\] accessible through pedestrian and cycling paths. The former mine buildings house the Ruhr museum, a visitor centre, the Red Dot Design Museum, a dance studio, and several dining facilities, along with a few other cultural organisations. Some parts of the complex are still under renovation and are expected to open in the next few years. Zollverein attracts around 1.5 million visitors annually. \[111\]

Although not all the pertinent official figures are accessible, it is clear that the sanitation, restoration and redevelopment of Zollverein have cost great sums of public money. A journalist, Daniël Wepper, tried to add up all the public investments that have been made over the years and estimated that 440 million Euros were spent on Zollverein, divided mainly among by the EU and the national and state governments. \[112\]

Zollverein’s world heritage listing is different from that of many others, since it is a monumental complex with a strong emphasis on re-use and contemporary culture and creative industries. The symbolic meaning it gained as the token of a successful Strukturwandel proved to be an example to other former mining regions faced with similar challenges. In 2012, both the mining basin in Nord-Pas de Calais in France and four major mining sites in Wallonia, Belgium were also listed as UNESCO World Heritage sites. \[113\] The museum boom of the late 1970s and early 1980s marked a new phase for the role of industrial heritage in the Ruhr region. Around the same time, its large industrial concerns started changing their strategies from defensive and re-industrialising to pro-active, aiming at neo-industrialisation and diversification. Not much later, IBA Emscher Park gave an impetus to experiments with a dynamic approach to industrial heritage, aimed at preservation through re-use and change. \[114\] The project was initiated from an ecological perspective, with preservation of industrial monuments as just one of many goals. The region was characterised mainly in terms of ecological issues, landscape features, and its need for a socio-economic transformation. It was the source of numerous imaginative experiments in re-use, resulting in many projects scattered over the region, each with one main industrial feature functioning as a landmark. Throughout the decade-long project, the role of industrial heritage as the essential feature of regional identity began to emerge ever more clearly, and the awareness grew that it could be exploited to open up a whole new world of tourism, as well as function as the historical setting for the cultural and creative economies of the future. In these years industrial heritage became the symbol of the transformation of the Ruhr area from a problematic and polluted region to one that, by turning its past into a vibrant heritage, managed to find a way forward to a promising future.
§5.5

KULTUR DURCH WANDEL, WANDEL DURCH KULTUR

- CHOSEN LEGACIES -
Not long after the Finale of IBA Emscher Park, plans were made to stimulate structural changes in the Ruhr area through a second mega-project designed to provide new energy, ideas, and funds for the region’s further transformation. Again a program was devised in which regional identities and the remains of the carbon era played prominent roles, though in different ways than they had during the life of IBA Emscher Park. In this section I will discuss the role of industrial heritage and the memory of the Zechensterben in the definition and maintenance of the region’s identity.

**Winning the title**

In 2001, the Ruhr Regional Association decided to enter the competition for the title of European Capital of Culture, an honour that was to be granted to a German city in 2010. It was decided that Essen, the largest city in the Ruhr Area, would be the titular bearer of the candidacy, but that the candidacy itself would apply to the entire Ruhr area (“Essen für das Ruhrgebiet”). The area won the competition for the title in 2006, after campaigning under the slogan: *Kultur durch Wandel – Wandel durch Kultur* (“Culture through Transformation – Transformation through Culture”). In the selection procedure which made it a European capital of culture, the region’s successful efforts to stimulate structural changes through the use of arts and culture were of decisive importance. These changes were meant to lead to the shaping of the region as a metropolis, a process in which culture was seen as much as a cause of these changes as a product of them.

In the same year, the organisation responsible for the coordination of the mega-project was founded under the name Ruhr.2010 GmbH. Two appointed managing directors – Dr. h.c. Fritz Pleitgen and Professor Dr. Scheytt – became jointly responsible for programming the region’s year as a capital of culture. They in turn appointed four prominent personalities in the region as artistic directors, each responsible for one the programme’s major themes: Professor Karl-Heinz Petzinka (“City of Possibilities”), Steven Sloane (“City of the Arts”), Aslı Sevindim (“City of Cultures”), and Professor Dieter Gorny (“City of Creativity”).

A call for project proposals was issued to elicit as many ideas as possible, and, much like the case of IBA Emscher Park, proposals poured in from all parts of the cultural realm from people vying to be included in the official Ruhr.2010 program. A preliminary overview for the capital year’s events was presented in 2008. Two major themes formed the basis of the entire program: *Kreativwirtschaft* (creative economy) and *Industriekultur*.

**Industrial heritage as a stage for events**

In January 2010, the opening of the capital year was celebrated with a large event on the terrain of the Zollverein in Essen, which attracted over 100,000 visitors. Held on a cold and snowy winter evening on the grounds of the most prominent landmark mine of the Ruhr area, a program of shows and activities was presented with the title *Tausend Feuer* (A Thousand Fires), a reference to the old industrial era as well as to the renewed activity of the post-industrial region. The history of coal mining was the main source of inspiration for dance, fireworks, and music by famous Ruhr musicians as well as by the local Bergmannskapelle or miners’ band.

At least 2,500 projects and events took place during the year in which the Ruhr region was a European cultural capital. Beyond the official program, many other activities were organised around it. The role of Ruhr.2010 as an identity-building event was obvious in many of these projects. Industrial heritage often served primarily as a stage for shows, parties, concerts, and exhibitions. It was the backdrop the region employed to show how it was overcoming the loss of mines and its earlier identity. In short, the region was transformed into a kind of mega-stage for events, in which the new status of former industrial objects and landscape elements as landmarks was even further emphasised.

**Dortmunder U**

One of very few projects that involved conservation and the re-use of an industrial complex in the preparation for Ruhr.2010
was the transformation of a former Union Brewery tower in the centre of Dortmund, which started in 2008. Parallel to the development of the coal and steel industries in the Ruhr area, the breweries of Dortmund added another flourishing branch to the city’s economy. One of the largest of these was the Union Brewery, located at the edge of the city centre. The U-tower, as it is called, dates from 1926/7 and was designed by architect Emil Boog; it was used for storage and fermentation of beer until the Union Brewery moved its production out of town in 1994. The tower was topped with the firm’s four-sided logo, lit from the inside and partially covered in gold leaf by Ernst Neufert in 1968. The giant “U” formed a landmark for those in the city centre as well as those passing through by train.

All of the brewery’s buildings were demolished in the years between 2003 and 2007, except for the tower, which was spared because of its status as a monument and a landmark of the city. Plans were made to transform the tower into a centre for art and creativity, and the “U” was included as a key project in the Ruhr.2010 program. Therefore, the planning and reconstruction process took place under great time pressure, since the centre needed to be (at least partially) finished before the start of the European cultural capital year. In the initial plans, only the city’s Ostwall Museum was to be housed in the tower, but later other cultural and creative organisations were added to the list of future users. Among those now occupying space in the tower are the Hartware MedienKunstVerein, the European Centre for Creative Economy, the Technical University of Dortmund, the University of Applied Science and Arts of Dortmund, a commercial restaurant and a cinema. The total costs for the transformation were estimated at around 46 million Euros, financed entirely by public bodies: the European structural funds (50 percent), North-Rhine Westphalia (20 percent), and the city of Dortmund (30 percent). The cultural capital year created the momentum for the financing as well as the basic program of the building. It was planned to be an embodiment of structural change initiated by cultural activities at a disused industrial location. And, in fact, it has become the centre of a new creative quarter and a new landmark to be added to the list of impressive highlights in the region that were already transformed as a part of IBA Emscher Park.

The concept for the redevelopment of the tower was devised by Gerber Architekten (Dortmund), who proposed making the inner spaces of the tower – 15,000 square meters in total – as neutral as possible and creating a new monumental stairway cutting through all floors like a large shaft. Two extensions were attached to the facade in order provide more daylight and offer views of the city. All around the upper “crown” of the tower a bank of LED-lights was installed, projecting parts of the artwork “Fliegende Bilder” by Adolf Winkelmann. Dortmund thereby gained a new landmark and the Ostwall Museum acquired a new location. (Its former building, however, still lacks a new permanent function).

Not everyone was equally enthusiastic about the design, the program for the building, and the realisation of the transformation. The short time available for planning led to suboptimal solutions at the level of the basic design. The white- and grey interior was criticised by art critic Catrin Lorch as being soulless, and the large stairway was characterised as unpractical and aesthetically ineffective. The monument was said to have been stripped of its character except for its outer shell, which merely provides an attractive backdrop for cultural organisations. Another criticism concerns the planning of the actual construction: in 2010, only 40 percent of the building was opened to the public: the other areas were not opened until after the cultural capital year. Moreover, the costs of the transformation were much higher than expected. The final numbers have not been published, but in 2011 the costs had already gone up from 46 to 83 million euros – entirely paid by public funds – and construction work was still ongoing. Doubts have also been expressed about the viability of the concept of the building as a public environment where art and creativity are central. Lorch even goes so far as to assert that the Dortmunder U is a sad example of the mistaken notion that art and culture can bring back to life every industrial ruin or functional building. Investments in creative industries and arts as ‘soft location factors’ do not always immediately pay off.

Despite all this criticism, I find Dortmunder U to be a sympathetic project, in which the Ruhr.2010 slogan “Culture through Transformation – Transformation through Culture” is translated quite literally into a physical example. The costs of a project of
Figure 5.14. Exterior of the Dortmunder U in 2013.

Figure 5.15. Interior of the Dortmunder U in 2013.
this kind are much easier to calculate than the benefits, because a large part of the “profit” cannot be expressed in monetary values. One does wonder, though, if this mega-project, which required such large amounts of public money, is not destined to be one of the last in its kind. The transformation of a postindustrial ruin into a regional landmark and temple of culture with hardly any private investment seems no longer to be feasible. It might be too early to speak of success or failure, but it appears very likely that the Dortmunder U will need to prepare for another transformation: becoming a self-sufficient institution able to survive in times when very little public funding is available to support and maintain the cultural values it has to offer.129

The “dematerialisation” of Industriekultur

The preservation and restoration of industrial complexes now appears to be a goal belonging more to the recent past than to the present day. The Dortmunder U, for example, is one of the very few monuments that were transformed in direct association with Ruhr.2010. Although the number of listings of monuments in industrial terrains was high towards the end of IBA, the number of demolition permits increased again after 1999.130 The attention devoted to Industriekultur, however, did not diminish; rather, it changed in character. Ruhr.2010 was oriented much more towards stimulating creative industries and offering meaningful experiences to broad audiences than towards preserving industrial complexes for the future, as IBA Emscher Park had been. This difference, of course, is partly due to the former’s status as part of the European cultural capital program – aimed at reaching wide audiences from both inside and outside the region – but it also accords with a wider development within the Ruhr region, and elsewhere, which is focused more on experiences than on the hardware of buildings and landscape design. This trend had already become visible in the IBA Emscher Park Finale in 1999, in which the experience of Industriekultur gained importance through new tourism initiatives like the Route Industriekultur. Also, in the years between IBA and Ruhr.2010, leisure activities, artistic events and urban sports were gaining importance relative to industrial monuments and landscapes. Halden and former mine lands are now used for skiing, mountaineering, kiting, diving (in mine shafts), and ice skating. Industrial complexes have been increasingly re-used as multi-purpose event locations, as well as for dance and music studios, artists’ ateliers, and design labs. In relation to all these activities, the tangible industrial heritage has become more of a stage and instrument for all sorts of events in which Industriekultur is referred to through art, performances, and, often, in non-material ways. Examples can be found in the programs of festivals like the Ruhrtriennale, a triennial art festival that takes place at fourteen formerly industrial locations – an event created in the spirit of IBA Emscher Park.131

Ruhr.2010 is a culmination of the shift in focus from preserving and transforming tangible industrial heritage to organizing events and stimulating artistic interpretation and imagination. It seems as if Industriekultur has become essentially self-referential, rather than focused on the history of mining itself. This change has a considerable impact, of course, on the role of the carbon era and Zechensterben in the ongoing discourse concerning regional identity.132 It is no surprise that one of the three major topics in the Ruhr.2010 program was named Mythos begreifen – Kunst der Erinnerung (“Understanding Myth – The Art of Memory”), referring to mystifications of the era of coal and steel, solidarity, the “black gold”, and the era’s demise – all of which helped shape its rich culture. These “myths” are the basis on which the region has been transforming itself into a metropolis.133

SchachtZeichen

One project that illustrates the shift towards a less material, more creative, “mythical” and artistic approach to Industriekultur is SchachtZeichen (Shaft Sign). It consisted of sending up 311 giant, bright yellow balloons, which hovered over the exact locations where once mineshafts were sunk into the depths of the earth, as if they were all pinned to a huge virtual map in the sky. Under every balloon – whether in commercial complexes, parking places, the middle of residential areas, parks or wastelands – activities
Figure 5.16. Landscape view towards Essen and Zollverein 12 during SchachtZeichen.

Figure 5.17. A former coalminer’s club poses with historical photo of the Engelsburg colliery, which is now the Bogastra terrain in Bochum.
were organised at which members of local communities could meet and celebrate together. The balloons, evoking shared memories of the carbon era by marking where the mines had once been, functioned as high-flying monuments to the mining era. The project, as much a land art and heritage intervention as a social initiative, was conceived and initially developed by Volker Bandelow, a geographer, historian and head of the cultural department of Gelsenkirchen, with the aim of acknowledging the connection of members of the local communities with the mining history in their immediate surroundings. SchachtZeichen was organised by and for these people, to assure that they and their links to the past would have a place in Ruhr.2010, in which mainly politically strategic and touristic interpretations of the industrial past were dominant.134

Every yellow balloon, or Zeichen, in the project had a diameter of 3.7 meters and was connected to a small trailer, equipped with helium gas tanks and several ropes to the ground to stabilise them. Two lamps were also installed in each balloon, enabling them to glow at night. The preparation and execution of the project, which took eight days, turned out to be more difficult than anticipated, requiring around 4,000 volunteers to place, guard and maintain the balloons – as well as to arrange for insurance, safety precautions, and catering, to acquire permits, and to organize a number of local activities. Unfortunately, the weather was not very kind to the balloons: fierce winds and heavy rain damaged several of them and hindered some of the activities that had been planned.

The effect of the hovering balloons was mainly local,135 since the project had not generated enough publicity to attract a large number of visitors from outside the Ruhr area. It was also criticised by those charged with more traditional heritage responsibilities for being too kitschy or sentimental.136 Despite their rather considerable number, the impact of the balloons in the landscape was only impressive in a few places; in many areas they were simply spaced too far apart for the Ruhr landscape to be perceived as being dotted with hovering markers of the former mining shafts. Nevertheless, local communities met and celebrated underneath “their” respective balloons and enjoyed the sports, food, music, exhibitions, and other activities that had been arranged for them.137

SchachtZeichen illustrates that the memory of the death of the mines remained a central theme in Ruhr.2010; but it was now presented in a less material and monumental way than in earlier projects. It was not just regional, but very local in character, as well, and aimed at marking the population’s historic roots in specific locations, while, at the same time, confronting them with the current conditions at these locations. Although not flawless, the project did manage to involve thousands of people. Its aesthetic and almost literally “ethereal” character illustrates how the memory of the carbon era was diverted from physical objects, preservation, and transformation, to a more visual and experience-oriented way of remembering, a change that was evident in many other aspects of Ruhr.2010, as well. Industriekultur was, as it were, “dematerialised” by Ruhr.2010, becoming something of a myth-inspired “happening” – a stage for performances, a reverie, in short, an aesthetic event.

**Dynamics and the outside world**

The turbulent changes in the industrial and post-industrial eras which mark the history of the Ruhr area, which we have sketched above, are central to the conception of the region’s identity, as are a large influx of immigrants and various influences from elsewhere in Germany and abroad. During Ruhr.2010, the emphasis on change and foreign influences was strengthened through many projects, for example, one on monuments, paradoxically a field in which effort is normally directed, for the most part, toward keeping things as they were in the past. Under the title Fremde Impulse (Foreign Impulses) several activities centred around an exhibition devoted to monuments in the region that have been shaped by influences stemming from foreign “art and architectural styles, beliefs and governance, people, assets and technology”.138 Fremde Impulse chose a wide time span – from the Roman period to today – but it placed special emphasis on objects from the industrial period, for example the Erin complex.139
Figure 5.18-9. Lohringen 3 in 2013.
More remains than public money can save?

In analysing Ruhr.2010 with an eye to determining the role of the memories of the age of mines and its abrupt ending in shaping the identity of the Ruhr area, I observed that this role has indeed changed but that its importance has not diminished. The focus on memories of the carbon era is shifting away from the classic response, i.e., the preservation of monuments, but away, also, from the successful transformations of industrial complexes achieved under the sway of the IBA Emscher Park philosophy. Industriekultur is currently being reconceived as a stage for events as well as a source of inspiration for artistic interpretations and visualisations. The memories are still connected to physical places, but they seem to have become “de-materialised”, as we saw above in the account of SchachtZeichen. A strong relationship has been forged with companies in the creative industries, which has borne fruit in a number of projects, often heavily subsidised by public funds, as is the case of the Zollverein and other former industrial locations featuring mainly cultural activities. The Dortmunder U is one of the very few transformations of an industrial complex that have been carried out in the framework of Ruhr.2010. It embodies the motto of the cultural capital year, but also illustrates the difficulties of depending solely on public funds for transforming an industrial monument into a venue designed mainly for cultural and artistic programs. I believe this kind of re-use requires a large dose of optimism and can only succeed in times of economic prosperity. After 2010, the global economic situation changed quite drastically, giving rise to the question of whether museums, small creative businesses, and cultural institutions will be able to maintain complexes like the Dortmunder U (or, for that matter, Zollverein and other industrial monuments with a cultural function) and continue to operate them well into the future.

What are the prospects for all those industrial buildings and landscapes in the Ruhr region that have not yet been transformed and are either in ruins or have been left empty? Some will surely remain in their ruined condition, and some others will be used temporarily or informally without governmental involvement or intervention. One example of a disused, monumental complex is the Bahnbetriebswerk in Oberhausen, a railway workshop that includes a roundhouse which functioned as a turntable and engine shed. The complex, which has been out of service since 1959, is close to the centre of Oberhausen. It has, however, not gone unnoticed by photographers and (amateur) ruin-fanciers. The website Rottenplaces, an online archive offering historical information and, mainly, photographs of neglected places, hosts a portfolio of this site, as does the online railway archive Railtrash. Ruhrburo, an initiative of the Dutch artist and Ruhr region expert Hans Jungerius, offers visitors a virtual day tour through Oberhausen’s industrial history, including visits to the railroad shed along the way.

There are countless examples of informal reclamation and re-use of former industrial complexes. Sometimes the buildings are re-used, but more often the lands are adapted to new activities in an informal way, without funding, sponsorship, permits or other official involvement. Examples are to be found mainly in urban gardening, including the harvesting of wild crops and gardening on illegal patches, along with keeping animals; but many others are used for sports, parties, fairs, artists’ events, and camping.

Informal re-use of a former mine and convicts camp

Some industrial remains are used more intensively when they are reclaimed for new, private purposes. One of these is the former mine complex Lothringen 3 in Bochum-Gerthe, not far from the other shafts of the same mining firm. Shaft III of this complex was sunk in 1901 and remained in operation until the closure of Lothringen in 1967. The complex survives as a witness of the mining industry of northern Bochum and includes some interesting architecture, but it is the site of an even darker history. Under the Nazi regime, foreign and convict labourers worked in the Lothringen mines and were housed in barracks-like camps, one of which was newly built around the pithead baths and the electricity building of Lothringen 3 between 1940 and 1941. Not only labourers from Western countries, but also an estimated 215,000 prisoners of war from Russia and other parts of Eastern Europe were forced
to work in the Ruhr area between 1942 and 1944. A substantial number of them lived and worked under extremely rigorous conditions at Lothringen, where nine of the original eleven barracks still exist; after the Second World War they were subdivided into smaller housing units.

In 1983 a student initiative turned the unused barracks into an alternative living community for around fifty adults and children, a function the complex still serves today. Another part of the complex is ruined, overgrown with bushes and used only as a parking lot for trailers. It was not until 2001 that the inhabitants of the barracks learned about the former use of the complex, which came as quite a shock to them. They decided to pay the respect due to this chapter in the history of Lothringen and initiated a project called Bewahren durch beleben (conserving through experiencing). Three actors in period dress guide tour groups through the complex and tell stories about life there during the Second World War. This grassroots initiative was incorporated in Ruhr.2010 and illustrates how a group of idealists managed to preserve a part of an industrial complex without help from the government or any other sponsor and to maintain aspects of its heritage. It also shows how a group of determined individuals working at a relatively small scale was able to reveal the traumatic and contested history of a place to interested visitors.

### Conclusions

With Ruhr.2010 the region hosted a second mega-project with international significance as part of ongoing efforts to vitalize its economy in the post-industrial era. Again, large sums of public money were invested to assure the project’s success. During the preparations and events of Ruhr.2010 the memory of the industrial era and the death of mines changed in character, as did the way in which the region sought to define its identity.

In many ways, Ruhr.2010 can be seen as a continuation of IBA Emscher Park. This is true of its many organisational aspects and financing, as well as of the role attributed to the memory of the industrial era in the definition of the region’s identity. The shift away from a focus on, so to speak, “hardware” preservation, on physical restoration and re-use, towards a greater stress on artistic projects and land art as well as on ways of “experiencing” the past had already begun in the last phase of IBA. And that trend continued in the first years of the new millennium, when the memory of the industrial period turned into something like a “myth”, forming the basis for artistic interpretations, athletic activity, and various types of events. Culture and the creative industries gained importance and came to be seen as the regenerators of industrial complexes, as well as of the region as a whole. Concomitantly, monuments and landscape lost the spotlight, becoming the background for new experiences of the past, “authentic” anchoring points for self-referential, creative and aesthetic experiences of the past.

It is safe to say that Industriekultur has evolved into a powerful marketing tool for the region, which is making use of its industrial past to change its identity: the former industrial region has evolved into a cultural heartland and home of technological innovation. The stories that are told and shown are less linked to real people, real places and real historic events, and increasingly “de-materialised” into a creative, aesthetically pleasing myth of the past. The memory of the industrial era has been made pliable and inclusive and thus much more adapted to the region’s marketing needs.

Industriekultur has also become more and more self-referential, altering and even obscuring earlier interpretations of the region’s industrial past and putting its stamp on present and no doubt future interpretations. The history of the region’s fascination with its own past accords very well with the instrumental use it makes of Industriekultur, as it overcomes past traumas by turning memory into heritage.
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§5.6

CONCLUSIONS
The coal and steel era of the Ruhr region began to decline over five decades ago. Since then, almost all the mines have been closed. The loss of its industrial core has persisted as the key component of the area’s identity, but the ways in which the industrial era and its demise are remembered have changed over time. This is the main conclusion I want to draw based on the analyses in this chapter. The dynamics at work in this transformation of memory are complex and often contradictory. All the same, one can distinguish several distinct phases in the memory of the Zechensterben, each focused on a particular aspect of industrial heritage. I treat these phases chronologically, but each of them represents one of the classic ways of treating historical remains outlined in Chapter 2: demolition, restoration, re-use, leaving decisions for the next generation, and, finally, giving objects back to nature or leaving them available for informal use.

Demolition and forgetting were the first reactions to the abrupt start of the mine closing process in 1958. A decade later, artists, ideologically motivated intellectuals, and inhabitants of workers’ colonies fought for the preservation of industrial remains. Conservation and restoration of industrial heritage became common at the same time that a museum boom was occurring in the region. This classic approach to industrial heritage in the 1980s was initially adopted in the IBA Emscher Park project, which was successful in securing several years of respite for a number of abandoned industrial sites while viable potential re-uses were being sought for them. In the second phase of the mega-project many experiments involving the re-use of industrial buildings and fallow terrains were undertaken. In the last years of Emscher Park, industrial heritage became more and more connected to leisure, to the provision of “experiences” of history, creative industry and to artistic interpretations. This is also the phase in which industrial heritage was linked to the establishment of a regional identity for the first time. In the decade leading up to Ruhr.2010, the memory of the mining era and its ending was once again used as a political instrument: to define a shared basis for the regional cultural mega-project itself. Meanwhile, this heritage was referred to in less physical ways, as monuments and industrial wastelands became stages for events and parties rather than taking centre stage themselves, as had been the case in the 1980s and 1990s. Fewer traditional restoration projects involving industrial heritage were carried out, and only a few large re-use projects were undertaken. Zollverein was probably one of the last of its kind. Dortmunder U illustrated how difficult this approach to industrial heritage has become, as it relies heavily on public enthusiasm and funding. In the last part of this conclusion I will argue that two other ways of dealing with industrial remains – leaving things for the following generations and giving them back to nature – will probably prove to be more viable in the coming decade.

General social trends affecting heritage practices

In the introduction to this chapter I sketched several developments in the past decades that transcend the Ruhr area and are, to varying degrees, characteristic of Western society as a whole. I mentioned the “memory shift” that began in the late 1970s, heralding the boom in interest in heritage and in the past in general. To refer to the growing attention to the past in the last four decades, I have adopted Sharon MacDonald’s term “memory phenomenon”. The museum boom in the Ruhr region, as well as the institutionalisation of heritage conservation in the 1980s, reflect that phenomenon. The emergence of Industriekultur itself should be seen as a part of this overall shift. The evolution of a highly educated middle class which links personal histories of upward mobility to the region’s structural change has, at the very least, increased if it did not actually spark the wave of interest in the region’s industrial past.

During the 1990s, Industriekultur moved to the centre of discussion about a regional identity, and this seemed to endow industrial heritage with an air of sacredness. Using terminology derived from religious architecture, grand names were attached to former sites of coal dust and hard labour: Zollern was named “the cathedral of labour” and Zollverein 12, the “cathedral of Industriekultur”; the nickname of the Dortmunder U is the cathedral; and the closed transformer substation of a regional electricity company, VEW/AEG in Recklinghausen, was dubbed the “temple of technology” or the AEG-church by local citizens.
It is, of course, difficult to determine to what extent the rise of *Industriekultur* and the increasing relevance of the industrial past to discourse about regional identity are part of this larger memory phenomenon and to what extent they are specific to the Ruhr area. The attention lavished on *Industriekultur* in the area has been much greater than in other former mining regions, such as the Rhondda Valley in Wales or Dutch Limburg. The Ruhr still plays an exemplary role for other de-industrialising regions bent on managing structural change and integrating re-used industrial heritage into a transformed landscape, one made clean and green. The listing of Zollverein 12 in 2001, together with Blaenavon Industrial Landscape in Wales in 2000, as UNESCO World Heritage sites set the example for the listing of industrial sites and landscapes in other parts of the rustbelt. To sum up, one could say that the development of *Industriekultur* does not stand on its own and is surely embedded in a broader cultural shift towards memory and heritage; and yet, the Ruhr area is unique with respect to both the intensity of the attraction exerted by its *Industriekultur* and the centrality occupied by that theme since the early 1990s in the discourse concerning its regional identity.

Another broad change influencing the role of the memory of the coal and steel era in the Ruhr area is the increasing assertiveness and activism of civilians, who since the 1970s have been demanding a say in governance and, particularly, in city planning. We saw an example of this trend in the protests of the inhabitants and the young intellectual elite that led to the preservation of a number of workers’ colonies. Their actions were not primarily rooted in an engagement with history, but they nevertheless resulted in the preservation of what are now monuments of the industrial age.

A third trend that goes beyond the changes in the Ruhr region is the rise of ecological thinking and the desire to overcome environmental damage by recreating pre-industrial landscapes. This thinking is reflected in the efforts of IBA Emscher Park to undo the damage to the environment that was inflicted by heavy industry and to “re-nature” the Emscher zone, bringing it back to a pre-industrial state. Indeed, thanks to the Park, the Ruhr region has assumed a pioneering role in experimenting with repairing the environmental damage that is an inevitable component of the legacy of heavy industry.

Another way in which IBA Emscher Park has been a leader is in the development of the idea that industrial heritage can be a cultural and economic source of structural change through the encouragement of tourism. Here, too, the Ruhr area has been an example for other de-industrialising regions. In the years leading up to 2010, when it was the European cultural capital, experiments were set up to stimulate the development of creative industries in former industrial complexes. This is not a phenomenon restricted to the Ruhr region, but here, too, it has managed to stay on “top of the wave”.

Various “waves” of concern with specific issues in governance seem to have reinforced each other, resulting in the particular circumstances which enabled the role of the memory of the industrial age to develop in the way it did. In some cases, the Ruhr area was early in adopting new trends, as was the case for the emergence of industrial archaeology and the protection of individual industrial monuments. This is also true for the listing of Zollverein 12 in 2001, together with Blaenavon Industrial Landscape in Wales in 2000, as UNESCO World Heritage sites set the example for the listing of industrial sites and landscapes in other parts of the rustbelt. To sum up, one could say that the development of *Industriekultur* does not stand on its own and is surely embedded in a broader cultural shift towards memory and heritage; and yet, the Ruhr area is unique with respect to both the intensity of the attraction exerted by its *Industriekultur* and the centrality occupied by that theme since the early 1990s in the discourse concerning its regional identity.

What makes the Ruhr area unique in coping with the loss of heavy industry is the role of its regional and local governments, which have assumed a major share of the responsibility for structural change, including taking on the financial risks and making large long-term investments? The opening of the Opel manufacturing plant in Bochum, for example, was mainly the fruit of that city’s efforts and investments. And full credit should be given to the state of North-Rhine Westphalia for breaking out of the region’s defensive, “lock-in” type of strategy in coping with structural change in the 1980s. I could give many more examples, but by far the most important are the two mega-projects discussed above: IBA Emscher Park and Ruhr.2010. Both of them were initiated and mainly funded with public money and both relied on a tightly knit network of local governments, institutions, and companies for their success. This, however, does not mean that the region always acts a cohesive entity when it comes to structural policies or large investments in its future development.
Post-memory and Promethean pain?

After giving this short overview of the dynamics of memory in the Ruhr area after the death of the mines, I would now like to return to some theoretical remarks that I made in the introduction to this chapter. The sudden death of the mines created a major break in the history of the area, and in a situation marked by disorientation, despair, unemployment and environmental problems, it was forced to cast off its former identity as the industrial powerhouse of Europe with a large, flourishing industry and a bright future. Suddenly the region had to find a new reason for its existence and a new identity, and this required it to reject a part of its past. I want to argue that the Ruhr area shows several characteristics of the Promethean pain that Ankersmit describes. In certain phases of its post-industrial era, it can be seen feverishly trying to redefine its identity around the “cold heart” of its now lost former self. As a result, the old identity becomes the main content of the new one.

Ankersmit discusses the process of forgetting after a traumatic event as one which, paradoxically, allows a society to remember it afterwards. The Ruhr area experienced this period of oblivion and denial during the first decade after the beginning of the Zechensterben, which was marked by demolitions and feverish crisis management. Remembering the industrial era as something describable in the past perfect tense was not yet possible. From the late 1960s onwards an historical attitude did develop, but as late as the 1980s large industrial companies were still denying that the crisis was permanent.

What happens after a civilisation or, in this case, a region, experiences a trauma and needs to redefine its identity? The metaphor of Prometheus recalls the fall from paradise, and it is exactly this nostalgic yearning for paradise that characterises the post-trauma period. The Promethean pain and the wish to ease that pain form a perpetuum mobile, without ever being able to bring about closure and end the trauma for good.

Ankersmit sees the mystification and the “memory boom” as symptoms of dissociation from a former self in response to trauma. As will become clear in this chapter, the memory of the age of the mines has taken on mythical characteristics, and a memory boom occurred some twenty years after the traumatic death of the mines in the Ruhr area. The skyrocketing number of industrial museums and listings of monuments can also be seen in the light of the trauma of the Zechensterben. If so, the memory boom is a symptom of the Promethean pain experienced in the Ruhr area since the death of the mines. It also accords with the phenomenon of the “generations of memory”, whose appearance after the First, as well as the Second World War has been discussed by Jay Winter.

Renaturierung, or “re-naturing”, as a solution to the post-industrial problems in the Emscher area accords well with the growing ecological awareness in the West generally, of course, but I want to argue that it can also be seen as related to what Ankersmit calls “Promethean pain.” The “turn to nature” which is clearly present in the vision of IBA Emscher Park resonates with Ankersmit’s notions. One can see it as a new way of expressing the longing for a pre-historical, paradisiacal state, before the transition from nature to history took place. The return to a natural, green and park-like environment was, in fact, already envisioned by the regional planners in the heyday of the carbon era. This longing for a natural state as a solution to the problems of the post-mining era is just as much a symptom of Promethean pain as is the memory boom that paralleled it in time.

All the same, Ankersmit’s ideas might not be fully applicable to the case of the Ruhr area and its memory of the industrial era. Other processes also seem to have been involved in the activities of remembrance. Towards the end of IBA Emscher Park and continuing through the European cultural capital year of Ruhr.2010, industrial heritage was increasingly used in regional marketing strategies and as a background for festivals and other large events. In this context, the memory of the industrial era is no longer felt as a heavy burden; it has turned, instead, into a celebration and even a tool of commerce and tourism. In this chapter
I have described several moments when industrial heritage functioned as an “aide de memoire” and when interest in the past was clearly genuine. At other times, industrial heritage has been used instrumentally, which is why I believe that Ankersmit’s ideas are only partially applicable to our case.

The mythologising of the past, which Ankersmit sees as a symptom of Promethean pain, can also be interpreted in a different manner. As I showed in the previous chapter, the mythologising of the memory of the industrial age in the past decade or so is occurring at the same time as the strategic appropriation of this past for the purpose of regional branding. Bender describes the mythologising of the past (and the future) as “a way of laying claims, of justifying and legitimating a particular place in the world” or, when it occurs in a less self-conscious manner, as a part of everyday routines. In the context of Ruhr.2010 I believe that this process of mythologising serves to render the past more inclusive and celebratory, so that it can become a positive and generally accepted basis for constructing a cohesive identity for the Ruhr region as a whole.

Will the phoenix arise from its ashes?

Ruhr.2010 has ended and the economic crises of the past few years have changed the perspective on Industriekultur. It is too early to definitively analyse the current trends in the dynamics of the memory of the industrial era, but several preliminary remarks can be made that point in the direction of what the future might have in store for industrial heritage in the Ruhr area.

First of all, the large government cutbacks in spending on monument preservation raises the question of whether the traditional, institutionalised care of industrial complexes can still be guaranteed. Several cities in the region are now making plans to demolish heritage from the industrial age for fear of its falling into decay. The newspaper Die Zeit published an opinion piece on a demolition scandal in Duisburg, where the municipality has planned to tear down the Bruckhausen settlement, built in Art Nouveau style, as well as the workers’ colony Zinkhüttenplatz, both located in the northern part of the city. Bruckhausen is a settlement with ornamented facades, brick villas and broad, plantain-lined streets in the midst of a vast industrial area. It is listed by the municipality as having monumental value and as containing spaces deserving of preservation; yet 121 of its houses have already been torn down or are awaiting that fate. Zinkhüttenplatz is a workers’ colony designed by the well-known modernist German architect Max Taut in the 1950s and consists of 400 rental apartments, all of which are about to be torn down.

Duisburg, like all the other cities in the Ruhr region, is shrinking. (It is expected that the region’s population will drop by almost eight percent by 2030.) The solution for the excessive housing stock is demolition. Critics call this strategy a throw-back to the 1960s and 1970s, when the wholesale demolition of workers’ colonies was seen as the best way to clean up the cities. The part of Bruckhausen that is to disappear is slated to be replaced by a park-like green belt, and the Max Taut-designed housing, by the parking lot for a planned outlet mall. The policy of improving a city by adding some green space is one that is often used in the region, as we saw in the section on IBA Emscher Park, but there are many problems facing a shrinking city for which it might not yield feasible solutions. Not least because demolition and park development are themselves costly undertakings that generally have to be paid for mainly by public funds.

What will the future of the industrial heritage be like? Will complexes be torn down, as in Bruckhausen? And where does all this leave the memory of the industrial era? The Ruhr region, facing an economic crisis, will probably be forced to re-evaluate its by now traditional, institutionalised methods of preserving industrial heritage, for which governments supply most of the funding. Museums and cultural institutions by themselves cannot possibly find uses for all the former industrial complexes, particularly in times when Industriekultur is steeped in artistic and aesthetic interpretations with correspondingly less concern about the fate of the “hardware”, that is, buildings and museum collections.

At this point I return to the discussion of five different approaches to tangible heritage. I have shown how industrial remains in the Ruhr area have been demolished, restored and re-used in the past. I want to argue that different approaches to
current cultural function, while many other places will need to find different forms of use and preservation in the future. The bottom-up approach of local, informal and sometimes temporary initiatives might well become more important for the preservation of industrial heritage than it has been in the past. Industriekultur has been used in an instrumental way for regional marketing for quite some time now, but it is possible that a renewed concern for local history, fed by the enthusiasm of informally organised groups and individuals, will, in turn, bring back a more genuine and deeper interest in the local environment. Creativity, aesthetics, urban gardening, environmental consciousness, and personal development might all contribute to whatever form Industriekultur assumes in the future.

This does not mean that the role of industry in the region has been exhausted. The path dependency of the region’s structural change will continue into the future, as will its neo-industrialisation, and in this regard the path dependency of the former coal and steel industries will be an asset. Among the sectors that have been selected for intensive development are those that are related to knowledge and innovation. A very thick publication on the future of the Ruhr area confidently asserts that it will reinvent itself and arise like a phoenix from out of its own ashes. In fact, though, the Ruhr is not really reinventing itself at all; rather, it is building on what it was before. IBA Emscher Park and Ruhr.2010 were seen as the catalysts of experiment, cooperation and structural change, with an interval of ten years between them. Now that both projects are over, the region is searching for a new mega-project. Attracting a new “project of the decade” is a serious matter for the organisations that have reframed the Ruhr region as a metropolis.

The Ruhr area will not, however, fly off like a glorious firebird, leaving all of its past behind as it soars towards a brighter future; for many of the structural problems in the region have still not been completely solved. All the same, it is true that the past five decades it has spent working towards structural change have made the region cleaner, its population more highly educated, and its economy more future-oriented.
This translation is also used in the official IBA Emscher Park documents, but is, in my opinion, not entirely right. “Wandel” might be translated as “change”, whereas “transformation” implies a (sudden) change of form.


Hospers, “Restructuring Europe’s Ruhr.”


70 Van Widhofen, My industrial roots.


75 Guch, “Beratung unweit Aut.”

74 Hoopers, “Restructuring Europe’s Ruhr.”

73 Stefan Cich, “Von der Koh- lemin.”

85 Translated freely by me from IBA Emscher Park: Werkstatt, 1996.

84 IBA Emscher Park: Werkstatt, 1989, 44.

83 IBA Emscher Park: Werkstatt, 1996.

82 Günther, Im Tal der Könige, 408.

81 Günther, Im Tal der Könige, 217-8.


79 Günther, Im Tal der Könige, 383.

78 Herrmann and Herrmann, Die alten Zeichen, 130.


75 State of affairs: July 2013.


73 “State of affairs: July 2013.

72 Ibid.


79 Günther, Im Tal der Könige, 383.

78 Herrmann and Herrmann, Die alten Zeichen, 130.


75 State of affairs: July 2013.


73 “State of affairs: July 2013.

72 Ibid.


79 Günther, Im Tal der Könige, 383.

78 Herrmann and Herrmann, Die alten Zeichen, 130.


75 State of affairs: July 2013.


73 “State of affairs: July 2013.

72 Ibid.


79 Günther, Im Tal der Könige, 383.

78 Herrmann and Herrmann, Die alten Zeichen, 130.


75 State of affairs: July 2013.


73 “State of affairs: July 2013.

72 Ibid.
Regional identity and heritage are both much explored fields, but very little systematic research has been done on the role of heritage in the construction of regional identities. This is where the present book seeks to make its main contribution. It opened with the question that has guided my research and writing for the past several years: what is the role of heritage in the construction of regional identities? Rather than naively looking for one absolute and definitive answer, I aimed at identifying various aspects of heritage which have proven to be significant in this regard. This led me to write four essays on the role of heritage in regional identities; each of them has a different scope, and each employs a different approach.

The first essay (Chapter 2), which explores the relationship between heritage and regional identity from a theoretical perspective, describes how the concept of the ‘region’ has been perceived and defined by geographers over the course of the last century, recording the transition from essentialist perspectives that focused on stable, rural regions, to approaches that perceive the region as a social category and emphasise change, globalisation, and the importance of external networks. I also addressed the more recent fear of “placelessness” and concerns about the decreasing importance of the region as the immediate lifeworld of people, arguing that regional identity is still a valuable concept. In my interpretation, it encompasses the physical characteristics of a portion of the earth’s surface as well as socio-cultural processes of signification. Moreover, while I contend that heritage plays a role in the construction of regional identities, I do not interpret that concept as standing in opposition to history or memory. Rather, I concur with Macdonald’s plea to regard heritage and identity as overlapping parts of what she terms the memory complex. And I go further, holding that history is part of that same complex, since it is also a means of giving the past a place in the present. I conclude the chapter with my own interpretation of heritage, which might be called “moderately structuralist”. I acknowledge that heritage is constructed in the present, but, at the same time, recognize that it has strong relationship to the past, since it always has a history of its own.

The second essay (Chapter 3) focuses on heritage from one particular era of the past, namely the Early Middle Ages, and examines its role in constructing the regional identities of the Euregio Meuse-Rhine and of Alsace. By analysing the use and meaning of three historic places in Alsace and evaluating three publications on the Euregio Meuse-Rhine from various dates and backgrounds, I was able to demonstrate that the heritage of the Early Middle Ages is present today only because it has continuously been re-interpreted, re-used and re-appropriated to legitimise power relations. In both regions, the Church was, and still is, the main guardian of the continued existence of this heritage, which essentially consists of four aspects: language, places of memory, relics, and religious traditions. In Alsace, these aspects can be seen playing a role from the 1870s onwards, as the conflict between France and Germany heated up and evoked a strong reaction: the construction of a regional identity which sought to negotiate and intermediate position between these two major forces. In the Euregio Meuse Rhine, this process took place on several moments from the late 1950s onwards, on occasions when the region was defined as a coherent whole thanks to the invocation of an obviously shared past. Charlemagne plays the main role in this context whenever the region is presented as a small-scale example of European unification.

In the third essay (Chapter 4) I concentrate on one region and the role of various heritage themes in the present (or the very recent past). The cities of Arnhem and Nijmegen and their surroundings have been defined as a single region only relatively recently, as part of an effort to carry out a major housing development plan and to upgrade infrastructure in the area. In

“Der Pott kocht” was the slogan used to promote the Ruhr region from 1998 onwards. It refers to the region’s industrial past (Pott is shorthand for Kohlenpott: “coal scuttle”) and to its familiar nickname in Germany. At the same time, by stating that it “boils” (kocht), the slogan emphasises change, economic opportunities, and new activities in the region. It also signals the importance of heritage as a component of the region’s identity in times of dramatic transformations. Finally, it illustrates how the past can be appropriated in marketing strategies to help modify the image of a region in the present and future, a process which lies at the core of the heritage issues I discuss in my book.
studying the public policies of the various administrative entities involved – the province, the Arnhem Nijmegen City Region, and both cities – I discovered that there have been very few attempts to define the region as a coherent whole on the basis of a common past. Competition rather than cooperation characterises the various efforts that have been made so far to create an identity for the region, and, in fact, heritage has sometimes been used to reinforce this competition. Moreover, the analysis of four spatial plans in the region indicates that it is not only competition between Arnhem and Nijmegen that is being intensified through the use of heritage, but also competition between various groups, including heritage professionals, designers, and ordinary citizens, among others. One subject of contention is the question of what parts of the past should be chosen for re-use in spatial planning; another is deciding which forms of authenticity should be given priority in re-uses of the past. At the current time, the regional identity of Arnhem Nijmegen appears to be “thin”; and the only role assigned to heritage in defining this identity seems, ironically, to be that of emphasizing its persistent divisions, borders and diversity.

The fourth and final essay (Chapter 5) focuses on one region, the Ruhr region of Germany, and the changing role of heritage and memory during the last six decades with respect to one particular part of its past, namely its industrial golden age. I was able to demarcate various phases in this process, beginning in 1958 with the dramatic death of the mines (Zechensterben), which initiated a decade of forgetting and attempts to move forward as quickly as possible. Then, artists and architects, along with politically concerned intellectuals, started campaigning for the conservation of industrial complexes and worker settlements, on the grounds, respectively, of their aesthetic value and existing social structures. Starting in the late 1970s, this led to a museum boom, in which bottom-up versions of the industrial past took centre stage. Later, the megaproject IBA Emscher Park sparked many experiments with the re-use of industrial remains to help regenerate the region, and Industriekultur became the central focus in the emerging discourse on regional identity. Industrial monuments became landmarks and symbols of change. The next megaproject, RUHR.2010, devoted more attention to the experience of and artistic references to the industrial past, with physical remains functioning more as settings for a variety of activities. Several very broad developments in society contributed to these processes, that go beyond the boundaries of this region. However, I found that Ankersmit’s work on trauma, or Prometheus pain, to be of considerable help in understanding how the industrial heritage in the Ruhr area evolved. The symptoms that Ankersmit describes as typical of post-traumatic periods can be found in the Ruhr region at least until the mid-1990s. From then on, regional marketing strategies sought to turn the industrial past into something akin to a regional mythology and to de-emphasize the traumatic aspects of its declining years. The structural change in the region is still not over, but it seems unlikely that the generous public funding which propelled the region’s regeneration will ever be available again. In the future, bottom-up conservation and temporary re-use are more likely to be major factors in treating the region’s industrial heritage.

The urge for regional identity

As I have mentioned, the perception of regions and their identity has changed dramatically in the past century or so. I explored the changing discourse about the ‘region’ and the emergence of ‘identity’ as a metaphor to capture the characteristics of a region. Early notions of the region tended to be essentialist, and they have been criticised for their anti-modernist emphasis on stability and internal characteristics by structuralist geographers, who, for their part, stress the external relationships in which regions are enmeshed, as well as their maleability and the dynamics of political power relationships. For them, the identity of regions seemed to matter less than their connectedness in a globalising world. Still others, such as philosopher Sloterdijk and many phenomenologically oriented authors, have questioned the emphasis on globalisation and external networks. Following the ideas of this latter group, I have argued that the relevance of regions and of their identities has not been substantially diminished by globalising tendencies. It is the perception of regions that has altered rather than the fundamental ways of how we live and organise our lives.

It is true that the geographers who first took an interest in
the region as such did neglect to take into account the processes of globalisation. This reflected their fear that regions were beginning to lose their traditional characteristics and importance as a result of industrialisation and globalisation. Of course, improved transportation and communications have revolutionised travel and have enabled us to visit places all over the world. They also offer commercial enterprises the possibility of locating their operations in whatever country is the most cost-efficient. Nevertheless, our existence remains fundamentally rooted in specific local and regional settings.

Moreover, in the economic, social and cultural realms, universalising and particularising tendencies often occur simultaneously. In the past decade, regional and local specialisation and branding have emerged as important factors, and regional politicians and administrations are beginning to realize the need to strengthen the identities of their regions from both within and without.

The case studies in this book have shown that the construction of national, but also of regional identities consists of four basic aspects: stories, symbols, space, and the notion of ‘the other’. Regional identities need stories that tie parts of a region together and mark its core characteristics, and the past is an endless source of stories that can be appropriated in building identities. In the case of the Euregio Meuse-Rhine, I described Charlemagne’s court and his rule over large parts of Europe as a story that the city of Aachen strongly identifies with; thus it forms the basis of a strategy of fostering a local as well as a regional identity.

Symbols represent the region and its core values to those within the region as well as those who perceive it from the outside; and these perspectives are not fixed. People can be insiders and outsiders at the same time, for example, when inhabitants view ‘their’ region from the perspective of an outsider in the course of engaging in touristic activities close to their homes. The past can be a fertile source for these symbols. Saint Odile, for instance, has acquainted the status of a symbol of peace in Alsace, as well as in France as a whole.

According to McNeill, national and regional identities also need to be tied to a geographical space, by which he means space as a real-world phenomenon and as something containing landscapes or cityscapes that have a symbolic function or stand for particular values that are associated with a nation and thus are connotative for the nation as a whole. In Chapter 4, I referred to the work of Lynch, who is well known for describing what visual aspects of cities make them “imageable” – a concept which fits well with McNeill’s ideas on space and identity. The industrial remains that have been restored and re-used in the Ruhr region area are good examples of how space can acquire symbolic meaning and play a central role in the construction of regional identities. The industrial remains there have assumed iconic status and now symbolise the transformation of the Ruhr from an industrial to a post-industrial region.

Finally, identities always need an ‘other’ to mark where one’s ‘own’ starts and the ‘other’ ends. The past is often appropriated to assist in this process of demarcation. The case of Alsace shows how the strong presence there of both German and French cultures in the region nourished the formation of a strong regional identity capable of maintaining a ‘self’ during more than a century of intermittent political tension and conflict. Mount Ste. Odile became the core of these identity strategies, since other early medieval sites proved to be less suited the task. In the Arnhem Nijmegen region, sometimes the ‘other’ is not outside the region but within, since its two main cities are mainly each other’s ‘other’. The appropriation of the past fuels the competition between these two cities in many ways. Here, heritage has turned out to be somewhat counterproductive in the construction of regional identity.

Roles of heritage

The use of the past in consciously constructing a region and its boundaries goes back to pre-historic times. The cases in this book show that the appropriation and re-appropriation of the past goes on endlessly. Which parts of the past are most suitable for strategic appropriation in the construction of regional identities? Why do some historical themes seem much more successful than others for this purpose? Although this question deserves more
The recent past is also often appropriated in the construction of regional identities, enabling inhabitants and visitors to connect their own personal memories – or the stories of their parents and grandparents – with a regional context. Looked at the other way around, this part of history is deeply anchored in the population’s memories, making it an appealing theme for regional marketers and politicians. I note that these recent pasts are often traumatic in nature. One example is the role of the memory of the Second World War in the Arnhem Nijmegen region, but the traumatic end of the mining era and its role in the construction of the Ruhr region’s identity also supports this observation. The Ruhr region is actually a special case in this regard. One could argue that the era of steel and coal supplies the region, at one and the same time, a creation story, a golden age, and a recent past. This might explain the popularity of its industrial heritage and its success as a symbol of the Ruhr’s identity. Here the work of Ankersmit is especially illuminating, allowing us to understand how an immediate and drastic change in society can produce a trauma which, on the one hand, leads a society to abandon its former identity, and, yet, on the other hand, carries within itself a new identity – like a scar, or “Promethean pain”. Chapter 5 illustrates how the end of the mining era functioned as such a trauma for several decades in the Ruhr. War or natural disasters can influence identities in a similar way, resulting in a memory boom and the mystification of these traumatic moments.8

In short, our case studies demonstrate the roles played by creation stories, golden ages, and recent heritage in the construction of regional identities. This schema appears to be applicable to regions outside the scope of this book, as well. Normandy, for example, chose the Second World War, especially D-Day, as its central story, while Scandinavia has chosen the golden age of the Vikings to mark its regional identity.

Heritage is political

The selectiveness with which the past is appropriated in the construction of regional identities makes it clear how political the use
of heritage really is. Since heritage draws only on those aspects of the past that are judged to be useful for the present (and presumably for the future), it is inextricably bound up with appropriation and legitimation, making the relationship between the present and the past a contested and contentious one.

Consider the case of the Roman past. The Roman era has been and still is perceived as a cradle of European civilisation, and Charlemagne and many rulers after him – Napoleon and Hitler among them – used this past to justify and symbolise their power by presenting themselves as the legitimate heirs of the Roman Empire. The later popularity of Roman heritage in regional marketing can be explained in part by the long and continuing tradition of appropriation of this past (the past in the past). Another reason for this success is that Roman remains are often easy to recognise. Nijmegen uses its Roman past as its creation story, bolstering its claims to be the Netherlands’s oldest city. Although in the Dutch context the city might be unique as a continuously inhabited place with Roman origins, on an international level Nijmegen is just one of many such. The Roman past, it should be noted, is stripped of much of its contestedness when used in identity strategies. This is true of Nijmegen, but also elsewhere. For example, the northern border of the Roman Empire, the Limes, is of course a dividing element on the Continent, but is now approached as a shared element of European heritage and is used to celebrate a common, European past.

Prehistory appears to be much less suitable than the Roman past for appropriation in the present. This became apparent in Schuytgraaf, where it has been proposed to cover up the Bronze Age heritage with an information site featuring dominantly references to the Second World War. Admittedly, the Bronze Age is a distant past, and many prehistoric settlements were later re-used by the Romans. It seems that the context of a unique creation story should be familiar, as is the case with Roman heritage. As a result, prehistory might well lose the competition to creation stories based on the Roman era. The choice for other popular themes, such as the Second World War, has been a highly political one; for it is often represented not just as a setting of heroic and romantic stories, but also as a battle for justice – a justified war.

The heritage field should thus be viewed as a large political arena, where many parties have a significant role in selecting those aspects of the past which will further their current projects and goals for the future. As we saw in the case studies, these parties may, at one time or another, include heritage professionals, heritage institutions, organised groups of civilians, artists and politically engaged intellectuals, tourism boards, religious organisations, architects and spatial designers, as well as local and regional governments. Politicians, at all levels of government naturally exert a strong influence on the appropriation of the past when it comes to establishing regional identities, but one should not underestimate the role academic researchers play in this regard by virtue of the selection of subjects they chose to study. Indeed, I am well aware that my own work takes place inside a political force field in which the appropriation of the past for the construction of regional identities is a matter continual negotiation.

**Finding a balance in region marketing**

The research of the early regional geographers depicted a world of stable regions, rich in local traditions and particular landscape characteristics. They are “thick regions” in Terlouw’s terminology,7 and their description was motivated in no small measure by a sense of loss and fear of industrialisation and modernity. It seems as if regions were at their “thickest” around the beginning of the twentieth century. More than a century later, the perceptions of regions have changed and so have their...
is often subjected to processes of simplification and neutralisation. We saw this in the case of Nijmegen’s use of Roman heritage, but it is certainly also true of the Second World War heritage in that region. I have also discussed the mystification of the heritage of the industrial era in the Ruhr region, undertaken with the aim of making it more flexible and useful in regional marketing. A similar process can be observed in the selection of UNESCO World Heritage objects, which are stripped of any political meanings and function as symbols of “outstanding universal value”.9

Terlouw’s work indicates that regional identity marketing is more successful if it manages to insert some ‘thick’ characteristics into an open, future-oriented strategy. The Ruhr region provides a successful example of a future-oriented regional identity which manages to incorporate many stories and symbols that are rooted in the past. Regional marketers need to find the right balance for their campaigns: one which includes some significant ‘thickness’ while at the same time remaining ‘thin’ enough to stay future oriented and flexible.

Whether thick or thin, regional identities all need constant maintenance, and this is especially true of their heritage component. As we clearly saw when looking at early medieval heritage in two different regions, no aspects of the past can be viable parts of regional identity without the existence of groups of people who value them and use them to further their own agenda. Otherwise, they will be supplanted by other themes, as happened with the wine tradition in Marlenheim; or places may become deserted, as was the case in Murbach. Mount Ste. Odile has remained a sacred place with precious holy remains for most of the period since the Early Middle Ages, although in more recent times its meaning underwent a radical transformation, leading Ste. Odile to become a regional and, ultimately, a national symbol of peace. In this case, it was the Church, along with regional artists and intellectuals, among others, who kept the memory of Ste. Odile alive; doing so suited their own agendas, whether religious or political.

In the Ruhr area, the tangible remains of the industrial past are omnipresent, and thus it was necessary to somehow include them in the transformation of the region. Nevertheless, it is striking to observe how the meaning of this formative era and the traumatic memory of its decline have been transformed and yet remain at the core of the region’s identity.

Not all heritage needs to remain physically present to play a role in a region’s identity. Parts of the past that are not visible, tangible, or able to be experienced can be (re-) made to be so. The plans for the Valkhof tower in Nijmegen and De Landing in Schuytgraaf in Arnhem are good examples of efforts to appropriate barely visible or invisible parts of the past for identity construction. And, looking beyond the regions analysed in this book, it is not hard to find examples of appropriations of invisible pasts through visualisations, reconstructions - temporarily or permanent - or re-enactments.

Heritage and authenticity

Heritage is primarily connected to the present, since this is the moment when it is constructed. But heritage is generally also tied to the future; for many heritage practices are intended not only to have a meaning in the present but also to influence the image of the past in the future. The “canons” of Nijmegen and Arnhem, for example, are intended to influence the historical consciousness of future generations. The erection of a monument and the restoration of an old industrial building are undertakings with a similar aim: to influence the future. This is why spatial planning and design, disciplines that shape the future, are inherently connected to heritage.

Of course, heritage would not be heritage if it were not also strongly linked to the past. The processes involved in selecting parts of the past to be turned into heritage are not random; the past is appropriated and turned into heritage by individuals and groups who, most often, use the past to legitimate and increase their power. As I stated above, early medieval heritage has been continuously re-appropriated and continues to be so. This is clearly also true of the heritage of the industrial era in the Ruhr region, where, as I have shown, genuine historical interest in the past was only one of many reasons for which its industrial relics have been restored and re-used. Indeed, they have now become central elements in its regional marketing campaign. Although I argue that heritage is made in the present, I have also shown
that heritage itself has a history. And while I do not believe that the old objects and structures that surround us have intrinsic heritage value, I do not deny that authenticity and a strong relationship to the past are important in defining what heritage is.

In Chapter 4, I discussed various forms of authenticity: material, referential, relational and creative. These forms of authenticity can compete with each other, as the case of the Valkhof in Nijmegen illustrates. Some forms of authenticity have more authority than others, and in many cases material authenticity prevails over other forms, as it is well integrated into the Monuments Act and advocated by traditionally minded heritage professionals. However, the heritage field is changing, partly in response to the strong sense of authenticity experienced among re-enactors and other amateurs who engage with the past.

It would require a different study to bring to light the dynamics of the competition between various forms of authenticity in the field of heritage today. This would, in fact, be a valuable addition to the growing academic interest in and more positive assessment of both amateur historians and re-enactors. This ‘bottom-up’ attention to heritage and to its preservation is also a topic of increasing interest among heritage professionals. As the examples in the Ruhr area illustrate, do-it-yourself re-use, temporary solutions, and informal uses of heritage sites are likely to become increasingly dominant approaches to tangible heritage, given that large-scale restoration and redevelopment projects are finding it difficult to attract the substantial funding they would require.

In this book I try to answer a number of basic questions about the role of heritage in the construction of regional identities, but many new questions have arisen in the course of my investigations. For example, can one find a pattern indicating what historical themes are most suitable for regional marketing? As I have shown, the appropriation and use of heritage in regional identity construction and, especially, marketing is highly dynamic affair. For one thing, not all heritage themes last as long as others as carriers of identity. Future research could shed light on the existence of patterns or phases concerning the usefulness, emergence, or decay of heritage themes in this domain.

This brings me back to the Ruhr region. It has been a long time since promotional campaigns in the Ruhr region emphasised the thriving, “boiling” cultural activity in that former coal region. All the same, the transition from an industrial region to a major European cultural centre still forms the core of the region’s marketing narrative. But, how long will this remain the case? The region has not yet abandoned its successful formula for structural change. Indeed, in the wake of IBA Emscher Park and RUHR.2010, the region is now preparing a new “project of the decade”: Klima-Expo.NRW » RUHR. The initial plans reveal that while the trauma of the mining era has receded further into the background, the region has not abandoned the way it has been presenting itself to the world. It has, however, added a new dimension to its image. It has redefined itself as a longstanding centre of expertise in the field of energy, and as such, it believes it can now benefit from its experience of structural change in facing the emerging challenges in the field of regenerative energy. Clearly, it wishes to continue its transformation from one of the most polluted industrial areas in Europe to the avant-garde region in the fields of sustainability and renewable energy. It will be worth watching to see what role heritage will play in this new phase in the construction of the region’s identity.
SOURCES


Welkom in Tongeren! *Kruispunt van verrassend verleden met een hip heden* (Tongeren: Tongeren municipality, undated).


All interviews have been conducted by Linde Egberts. From each interview an audio recording as well as a summary, approved by the listed persons, is available from the author on request.

Lammert de Hoop, Dokkum, June 15, 2012
Kien van Hövell, Nijmegen, December 14, 2011
Carolien Loomans, Arnhem, January 26, 2012
Eric Luiten, Delft, April 12, 2012
Bernhard Metz and Elisabeth Clementz, Strasbourg, September 25, 2012
Olaf Müller, Aachen, August 14, 2012
Mieke Smit and Hettie Peterse, Nijmegen, December 1, 2011
André Stufkens, Nijmegen, January 13, 2012
Dolly Verhoeven, Nijmegen, February 10, 2012
Vincent Vleeshouwers, Arnhem, January 30, 2012
Eric Wetzels, Maastricht, August 13, 2012
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Alphabetical list of the websites on which
Alphabetical list of the websites on which
the content analysis of Chapter 4 is based.
All websites were accessed between November 9 and 22, 2011.
FIGURES, MAPS AND TABLES
All figures have been made by the author, unless mentioned otherwise.

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All maps have been developed by Hein Coumou and Pieter Jannink of MUST urbanists, Amsterdam in 2014.

Some of these maps have been used before in Linde Egberts and Koos Bosma, eds., Companion to European Heritage Revivals (Dordrecht: Springer, 2014). For lay-out reasons, some small discrepancies may have occurred in the indicated scales.

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3.2 European project Francia Media: Cradles of European Culture.
3.3 Euregio Meuse-Rhine.
3.4 Alsace.
4.1 Arnhem Nijmegen region.
5.1 Ruhr region.
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