HERILIGION


HERILIGION: The heritagization of religion and the sacralization of heritage in contemporary Europe
HERILIGION focuses on the heritagization of religious sites, objects and practices in relation to religious and secular experiences connected to these, and thus explores secular and religious forms of sacralization linking past, present and future. Since World War II heritage is increasingly seen as defining identities in times of change. The Europe-centered global proliferation of the idea of heritage constitutes one particular use of the past, especially when applied to religious sites, objects and practices. HERILIGION seeks to understand the consequences of the heritagization of religious sites, objects and practices which were not considered heritage before. Where the object of heritage is experienced as religious, heritagization may lead to tensions and conflicts as it involves an explicitly secular gaze that sacralizes non-religious aspects of religious sites, objects and practices in a cultural, historical, or otherwise secular, immanent frame. HERILIGION will produce new insights which can be used to understand, manage and defuse tensions, benefiting both religious and heritage constituencies in Europe.
The research will take place in Denmark, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, and the UK, or would focus on emerging practical heritage in these countries. In Denmark, the subproject "Secularizing religion and sacralizing heritage" investigates the World Heritage sites of Roskilde Cathedral and the Viking site Jelling. In The Netherlands, "Passion for the Passion" examines the contemporary mass fascination for classic and popular performances of the passion play, including Bach's Matthäus Passion. The Polish project focuses on "Past(s), Heritage(s), Identities within the Cityscape of Kraków". In Portugal, HERILIGION looks at "Heritagization and religious pluralism". And in the United Kingdom, the focus will be on "Celtic heritage and neo-paganism". HERILIGION will compare these places with each other in order to offer a more general, representative theoretical analysis of heritagization in Europe.
The project leader is Prof. Oscar Salemink (University of Copenhagen). The other academic partners are the Meertens Institute - Research and documentation of Dutch language and culture in Amsterdam (Dr Irene Stengs); the Jagiellonian University in Kraków (Dr Anna Niedźwiedź); Centro em Rede de Investigação em Antropologia (CRIA-FCSH) and Centro de Estudos Comparatistas (FLUL-UL) in Portugal (Professor Maria Clara Saraiva); and the University of East Anglia in Norwich (Dr Ferdinand de Jong). Non-academic partners include the National Museum of Denmark, Museum Catharijneconvent in Utrecht; the Ethnographic Museum in Kraków; the National Museum of Ethnology and the Museu de Lisboa – Palácio Pimenta (both in Lisbon); and Hungate Medieval Art in Norwich; civil society organizations and media.