CHAPTER 1

Introduction

1.1. MEMORY BEYOND HISTORIOGRAPHY

'We are all suffering from a consuming historical fever' wrote Friedrich Nietzsche in 1873 CE,[1] but his diagnosis now seems truer than ever before. Our culture, it is widely agreed, is obsessed with memory. David Lowenthal, for instance, speaks of a 'heritage crusade' and points out that we have enlarged the concept of heritage 'from the elite and grand to the vernacular and everyday; from the remote to the recent; and from the material to the intangible'.[2] Non-professional associations that are devoted to the preservation of local traditions or to the past of a community are thriving in the Western world, be it the *Freiburger Narrenzunft* ('Freiburg carnival guild') or the *Boston Historical Society*. Memorials are not a recent phenomenon, but, to give an example from Europe, the gigantic Shoa memorial in the centre of Berlin and the fierce public debate about it illustrate their current prominence.[3] In North America, the National Mall in Washington DC is a particularly striking example of a nation's attempt to monumentalize its past in the heart of its political power.[4] The boom of museums of all kinds has prompted some writers to dub the increasing efforts to preserve the past as 'musealization'.[5]

Our obsession with the past has also left its imprint in scholarship. Previous generations of scholars were convinced that historical awareness could only develop in literate cultures. Oral societies, both past and present, were believed to exist in a realm of timelessness without a sense of history.[6] Now, however, it is widely acknowledged that, while not all cultures may develop

[1] Nietzsche 1954: I 210 (my translation). [2] Lowenthal 1996: 14.
[3] On the debate about the '*Mahnmal Mitte*', see Jeismann 1999.
[4] Cf. Bodnar 1992 on public memory in the United States in the twentieth century CE.
[5] Cf. Preiß et al. 1990; Zacharias 1990; Huyssen 1995: 13–35.
[6] There are, however, remarkable exceptions. In anthropology, see Schott 1968; in prehistory, see Kirchner 1954. For a recent survey, see Holtorf 2005.

historiography, memory plays an important role in nearly all societies. The concepts of 'collective',[7] 'social'[8] and 'cultural'[9] memory suggest that groups of all sorts, ranging from the *Ventura Surf Chapter* to the *Académie française*, rely on the memory of specific events. The application of the term 'memory' to collectives has not remained without criticism,[10] but it is hard to deny that, on the one hand, individual memories are socially mediated and, on the other, individuals harbour memories related to groups to which they belong. While the concepts just mentioned vary in many regards, they all emphasize the significance of memory for the identities of individuals as well as of groups. Across cultures and ages, the past is an important tool for defining who we are and what we ought to do in the here and now.

Memories can be preserved in the various forms of 'texts, pictures, artifacts, buildings, songs, rites, customs'.[11] A large array of genres and media beyond historiography have therefore been examined as bearers of memory. Inspired by Pierre Nora, historians have become fond of '*lieux de mémoire*'.[12] The 'archaeology of the past' allows material relics to be interpreted as testimonies to the relation of humans to their past[13] and anthropologists such as Marshall Sahlins have transformed 'people without history' into 'islands of history'.[14] Not only material relics and oral traditions but also other media such as dance are being investigated as bearers of memory.[15]

An application of this broad interest in memory to ancient Greece promises to yield rich returns. As B. A. van Groningen noted, the Greeks were 'in the grip of the past'.[16] More recently, Nicole Loraux has examined the funeral speeches as semi-official history of Athens; the 'New Simonides' has forcefully confirmed Ewen Bowie's thesis that elegy could contain

[7] Halbwachs 1980. [8] Connerton 1989. [9] Assmann 1992.
[10] See, for example, Confino 1997, and, for further literature, Grethlein 2003a: 26–7.
[11] Assmann 2000: 524.
[12] Cf. Nora 1984–92. For an application of this approach to German history, see François/Schulze 2001; for an application in the field of Classics, see Jung 2006. For further broad approaches to memory in history, see n. 34 below.
[13] See, for example, Bradley and Williams 1998; Bradley 2002.
[14] Sahlins 1985; 2004. See already Rosaldo's study of the Ilongots (1980). For studies in attitudes towards the past in a wide range of cultures, see e.g. the papers in Layton 1994. Tonkin 1992 combines an investigation of oral history in Africa with many parallels from other cultures. On memory in modern Greece, see Herzfeld 1986; 1991; Sutton 1998.
[15] See e.g. Kuhnt-Saptodewo 2006, who examines dance on Java as a commemorative act.
[16] Van Groningen 1953. Dunn 2007, on the other hand, argues for a 'presentism' in the second half of the fifth century BCE. He argues that in various genres a new emphasis on the present comes to the fore. However, besides the fact that many of the phenomena described by him can be found earlier, I am not convinced that the past lost its relevance to the extent that Dunn argues for. Even some of his test cases such as Euripides rather attest to the continuing significance of the past. Moreover, the awareness of human fragility that he diagnoses in the sophists, particularly in Antiphon, can not only be traced back to Homer, but should be disentangled from the idea of 'presentism'.

historical narratives; Rosalind Thomas has discussed oral traditions; the concept of the 'archaeology of the past' has been applied to ancient Greece by Susan Alcock and Carolyn Higbie's study of the Lindian chronicle has elucidated the commemorative function of votives in temples.[17] While these studies have illuminated individual genres and specific aspects, historiography has remained the central focus of scholarship on ancient memory.[18] Even studies that are devoted to other genres tend to take Herodotus and Thucydides as their benchmark, viewing, for example, epic and elegy as predecessors to the rise of historiography.[19]

Given the prominence that historiography has for us, this focus is understandable. And yet, not only did Herodotus and Thucydides not supersede the pre-existing commemorative genres that continued to exist, but one may doubt whether historiography was the primary medium of memory in classical Greece.[20] On the contrary, it is likely that oratory and poetry reached a broader audience and were more influential in shaping perceptions of the past. Besides downplaying their relevance, the common teleological view prevents us from reading non-historiographic media in their own right. In particular, it leads to privileging the question of historical accuracy over others, an issue that is at the core of modern scholarship but the importance of which has been challenged for ancient historiography[21] and is even more questionable in the case of other genres.

At the same time, our tendency to take historiography as the prime genre of memory leads to a distorted view of its rise in the second half of the fifth century BCE. We are inclined to concentrate either on the influence of other genres in the historians' narratives or to focus on the dialectic of tradition and innovation within the genre of historiography.[22] These are

[17] Loraux 1986a; Bowie 1986; 2001; Thomas 1989; 1992; Alcock 2002; Higbie 2003. Further works may be mentioned: Hornblower 2004 juxtaposes Pindar with Thucydides. For an examination of the idea of history in the *Iliad*, see Grethlein 2006a. Another group of works focuses on the memory of particular events: Pallantza 2005 examines the reception of the Trojan War after Homer. Jung 2006 reconstructs the memory of Marathon and Plataea in classical antiquity. Luraghi 2008 investigates the construction of the Messenian past.

[18] See, for example, Deichgräber 1952; Gomme 1954; Chatelet 1962; Mazzarino 1966; Starr 1968; Lasserre 1976; Meier 1990; Fornara 1983; van Seters 1983; Sauge 1992; Shrimpton 1997; Marincola 2001; Clarke 2008.

[19] See e.g. Snell 1952; Strasburger 1972 on Homer; Steinmetz 1969 on elegy. Boedeker 1998 presents an important survey of memory in fifth-century Athens in art as well as in literature, but she privileges historiography too, as the outline of her argument reveals, 185–6: 'Then I will consider the paradox that historiography itself develops relatively late in a city so rich in memorials of its great past deeds …'

[20] On this question, cf. Marincola 1997: 20–1.

[21] See, for example, Wiseman 1979; Woodman 1988.

[22] For Homer's influence on Herodotus and Thucydides, see, for example, Strasburger 1972; Rengakos 2006a; 2006b. For the influence of tragedy on historiography in general, see Walbank 1960; on Herodotus, see Stahl 1968; Saïd 2002; on Thucydides, Cornford 1907; Finley 1967; Macleod 1983a;

beyond doubt interesting questions, but it is equally important to see that, intruding into the crowded field of memory, the historians had to justify their new approach against the established genres. While recent studies such as *Herodotus in Context* by Rosalind Thomas (2000) have deepened our understanding of the first historians by contextualizing them in the intellectual milieu of their time, little has been done to view the rise of historiography against the background of contemporary media of memory.

In taking into account these considerations, this study aims at a non-evolutionist reconstruction of ancient attitudes towards the past. I juxtapose non-historiographic media of memory with historiography not so much to trace a development as to examine the different modes of remembering the past that coexisted. Needless to say, Herodotus and Thucydides open a new chapter in the history of memory, but since scholarship tends to foreground and focus on historiography, new facets of its rise, as well as of memory in general, can be elucidated by an approach that views Herodotus and Thucydides as part of a large field of commemorative genres. Besides identifying differences between these genres, I also aim to chart the common ground that distinguishes ancient Greek memory from concepts of history in other ages.[23]

My examination is limited in two regards: first, with a few exceptions, I concentrate on material from a single century to permit a synchronic reading. The rise of Greek historiography as well as, compared to other times, the richer textual transmission have made the fifth century BCE the most attractive choice. Second, I only rarely take into account archaeological material and discuss mainly literary texts. This restriction does not reflect the assumption that texts offer more interesting information – recent archaeological research gives ample evidence of how much art and material relics reveal about memory[24] – but, given the breadth of the question, it seems preferable to keep the focus as sharp as possible and to limit the analysis to literary genres.

As Mikhail Bakhtin and his circle emphasized, literary genres are not merely forms, but forms of knowledge.[25] It therefore makes sense to examine them as bearers of specific ways of representing the past. In

Shanske 2007. On tradition and innovation within the genre of historiography, see in particular Marincola 1997. See also Clarke 2008, whose examination of local historiography significantly broadens our understanding of the genre.

[23] For a stimulating collection of articles on the construction of time in Greek antiquity, see Darbo-Peschanski 2000.

[24] Besides the works on the 'archaeology of the past' mentioned in n. 13, see also Francis 1990; Castriota 1992; Csapo and Miller 1998; Hölscher 1998; Boardman 2002.

[25] Cf. Bakhtin 1981: 3–40; 259–422. See also Stierle 1979: 96, who draws on the concept of experience to define genres. Tonkin 1992: 50–65 applies the notion of genre to oral history. For a collection of important modern approaches to genre, see Duff 2000. The literature on genre in antiquity is vast, see e.g. Rossi 1971; Rosenmeyer 1985; Conte 1994; Depew and Obbink, 2000a.

particular, I will analyze to what extent the attitude towards the past and the scope, i.e. the historical agent and time covered in the narratives, are shaped by two generic features. In the oral world of the fifth century BCE, genres were still mostly defined by the occasion of their performance.[26] I will therefore assess prevailing modes of memory against the background of the socio-political and performative setting of their respective genres. At the same time, while being less defined by formal features than genres in the Hellenistic Age, fifth-century genres have specific narrative forms. This raises the question of the 'content of the form'. More specifically, I will try to elucidate whether narrative forms express attitudes towards the past, as I have claimed for the *Iliad*.[27] Narratives not only tell temporal sequences (narrated time), but they also unfold themselves in time (narrative time). It is worth asking whether the temporal organization of a narrative corresponds with its view of human life in time.[28] I will thus examine the presentation of the past in both historiography and other literary genres, depending on their socio-cultural setting and narrative forms.

1.2. A PHENOMENOLOGICAL MODEL OF THE IDEA OF HISTORY

If we not only look beyond historiography but also discard it as the yardstick, one question arises: how are we going to assess and compare the various commemorative genres? In this study, I replace an evolutionist perspective with an approach that draws on phenomenological and hermeneutical philosophy.[29] History is not the central topic of this tradition, but some of its adherents have reflected upon history and developed a characteristic view of it from which our current interest in memory, I believe, can greatly benefit. The phenomenological and hermeneutical approach is

[26] Cf. Depew and Obbink 2000b: 3–4. [27] Grethlein 2006a: 180–310.

[28] For a theoretical discussion that starts from Ricoeur, see Grethlein 2006a: 180–204.

[29] I follow an 'etic' approach, i.e. I employ a theoretical framework with terms unknown in ancient Greece. An 'emic' approach, on the other hand, would rely on terms and concepts used by the object of the study (cf. Goodenough 1980: 104–19). One of the central aspects of my study, chance, has received, under the name of *tyche*, much attention from ancient Greek authors ranging from Hesiod (e.g. *Theog.* 360) to Lysias (e.g. 13.63). The concept of *tyche* becomes particularly prominent after the fifth century BCE in authors such as Menander (e.g. fr. 296) and, in historiography, Polybius, who frequently evokes *tyche* as an explanation for events which cannot be explained causally (cf. Walbank 1957: 16–26). I have nonetheless chosen to base my approach on the concept of contingency, as elaborated by Bubner 1984 and Marquard 1986. The notions of *tyche* in Greek texts are manifold and disparate – the polyphony of the term seems to mirror the phenomenon which it tries to denote. The concept of contingency, on the other hand, allows me to trace acts of memory back to their roots in temporality and, as we shall see, provides us with a typology that is useful for comparisons.

congenial for a study that tries to take into account a wide array of commemorative media while removing historiography from its centre.

Coined by Wilhelm Dilthey and Paul Yorck von Wartenburg, the concept of historicity ('*Geschichtlichkeit*') does not signify that something actually happened; in opposition to metaphysics and positivism, it rather points out that humans are always in history and somehow relate to it.[30] As Wilhelm Schapp noted, we are 'entangled in histories'.[31] In *Being and Time*, Martin Heidegger pushed this tradition further and argued that the 'vulgar time' of history is embedded in the level of historicity, which itself rests on the ground of temporality ('*Zeitlichkeit*').[32]

The link between memory and temporality is as plausible as it is fruitful. Not only is human temporality characterized by the ability to think about the future as well as to turn back to the past, but, whenever we remember the past, we confront our temporality. Viewing acts of memory as attempts to cope with temporality provides us with a framework broad enough to take into account various engagements with the past, ranging from monuments to historical scholarship, without privileging the latter. A phenomenological approach also goes beyond the functionalist approach that underlies some of the most influential current concepts.[33] The models of 'cultural memory', '*lieux de mémoire*', 'invented traditions' or 'intentional history' all have in common that they focus on the use of the past.[34] I believe, however, that the deeper starting point of temporality draws attention to crucial aspects neglected by these concepts and, in addition, lets us also better understand the manifold ways in which the past is used.

Temporality therefore provides the starting point from which I will develop a matrix of modes of memory. The temporality of human life is based on contingency, which tradition defines as '*quod nec est impossibile nec necessarium*.' Denoting what is, logically and ontologically, possible, but not necessary, contingency not only defines the realm in which human life unfolds, but also forms our ability to look ahead and back in time.[35]

[30] See in particular their correspondence as published by von der Schulenburg 1923 and Yorck von Wartenburg 1956. On the concept of historicity, see Bauer 1963; von Renthe-Fink 1964.

[31] Schapp ²1976. [32] Heidegger ¹⁶1986: 372–404.

[33] I make this argument more fully in Grethlein (forthcoming b).

[34] On 'cultural memory', see Assmann 1992; on '*lieux de mémoire*', see Nora 1984–92; on 'invented traditions', see Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983; on 'intentional history', see Gehrke 1994; 2001; Foxhall and Gehrke (forthcoming). While most of these approaches are linked to historical research, Rüsen (1983; 1986; 1989) and Baumgartner ²1997 offer purely theoretical functionalist concepts.

[35] The term contingency stems from the translation of *endechómenon* from Aristotle's logic by Boethius, who seems to follow Marius Victorinus. On recent debates, see *Neue Hefte für Philosophie* 24/25 (1985); Makropoulos 1997: 7–32; v. Graevenitz and Marquard 1998a. Troeltsch 1913 is still a most valuable study.

Contingency is most often understood as being identical with chance. However, as Rüdiger Bubner has shown, it is the frame for actions as well as for chance. Where things are neither impossible nor necessary, human beings can act, but are at the same time constrained by chance.[36] There are thus two sides to contingency. I suggest they be called 'contingency of action' and 'contingency of chance'.[37]

Contingency, as the frame for both actions and chance, results in a tension between expectation and experience in our consciousness.[38] On the basis of previous experiences, expectations about the future are formed and guide our actions. If the outcome of our actions corresponds with our plans, our expectations are fulfilled. On the other hand, our expectations are disappointed if something crosses our plans. Such disappointments can be due to deficient planning or chance, implying also unforeseen actions of others. In all these cases, the new experience, as built on the old expectation, is the basis on which further expectations are formed.[39] Thus, contingency inscribes itself into human consciousness in the form of a dynamic interplay between expectations and experiences.

In his examination of the new temporality that emerged in the Modern Age, the historian Reinhard Koselleck points out, perhaps a bit schematically, that the acceleration of changes starting in the second half of the eighteenth century CE led to a new relation between experiences and expectations:[40] in earlier times, the 'horizon of expectations' ('*Erwartungshorizont*') was created by the 'space of experiences' ('*Erfahrungsraum*'); one expected things similar to one's own experiences. Around 1800 CE, however, the 'horizon of expectations' and the 'space of experiences' disintegrated. Due

[36] Bubner's reflections on contingency stand in the context of his investigation of the relation between history and practical philosophy (1984). For this, Aristotle proves helpful because he embeds chance in a theory of action.

[37] Marquard 1986 (cf. von Graevenitz and Marquard 1998b: XIV) makes a similar distinction in juxtaposing '*Beliebigkeitskontingenz/Beliebigkeitszufälligkeit*' with '*Schicksalskontingenz/Schicksalszufälligkeit*'. On the one hand, Marquard argues, we can do and choose things; on the other, we are affected by events that are beyond our control. However, '*Schicksalskontingenz*' is not a very fortunate coinage, as it brings the ambiguous notion of '*Schicksal*' into play. A similar approach to contingency from a sociological perspective can be found in Makropoulos' analysis of the Modern Age as an epoch with a very strong awareness of contingency. Makropoulos points out the same two aspects (1997: 14–16; 1998: 60) and emphasizes that contingency is not a '*factum brutum*', but is constructed differently in different cultures (1997: 16–18).

[38] On the tension between expectations and experiences, see already Augustine's reflections in the eleventh book of his *Confessiones*, and Husserl's analysis of the temporal structure of intentional life (1928).

[39] However, experiences not only shape our current expectations, but as Liebsch 1996: 32–45 observes, experiences also affect our past expectations in our memory.

[40] Cf. Koselleck 1985: 3–69.

to radical changes, experiences transcended the horizon of expectations and consequently the future could not be extrapolated from the past anymore, but instead turned into an open space.[41] The past, on the other hand, was now perceived as a process with its own dynamic that led to the present, a view that found expression in the new terms 'new time' ('*Neuzeit*') and 'history' ('*Geschichte*') as singulars, signifying the process as well as its narrative account.[42]

While Koselleck's analysis affords an impressive illustration of the link between experience and expectation on the one hand and temporality on the other, it is important to notice that experiences can also disappoint expectations. This is at the core of Hans-Georg Gadamer's definition of experience. In looking to Aristotle, Gadamer emphasizes the negative character of experiences.[43] Real experiences, he argues, refute previous expectations. Though negative, experiences prove productive in so far as they lead to a new view of something. Following G. W. F. Hegel's view, Gadamer sees the productivity of experience as a dialectic process, a 'reversal of consciousness' ('*Umkehrung des Bewußtseins*').[44] He points out the historical character of this process. It takes place in time, and, what is more, human beings become aware of their historicity by experiencing their finiteness.[45]

Gadamer focuses on the tension between experiences and expectations and aligns them in a way different from Koselleck's approach. If we leave aside the discrepancy between philosophical reflection and historical analysis, we can note that, whereas in Gadamer's theory expectations are bound to be painfully disappointed, Koselleck deals with experiences that surpass expectations in a positive way. The structural negativity of experience, which the historian envisages as an experience of the freedom to shape the world, is defined as experience of finiteness in the philosopher's model.

Both modes of experience are relevant and can be traced back to the two aspects of contingency that I have mentioned. In the new alignment of experiences and expectations in the Modern Age, which is examined by Koselleck, the 'contingency of action' comes to the fore: the future opens as a space full of new possibilities that can be shaped by man. On the other hand, Gadamer's concept is based on the 'contingency of chance': contingency makes its force felt in the disappointment of expectations.

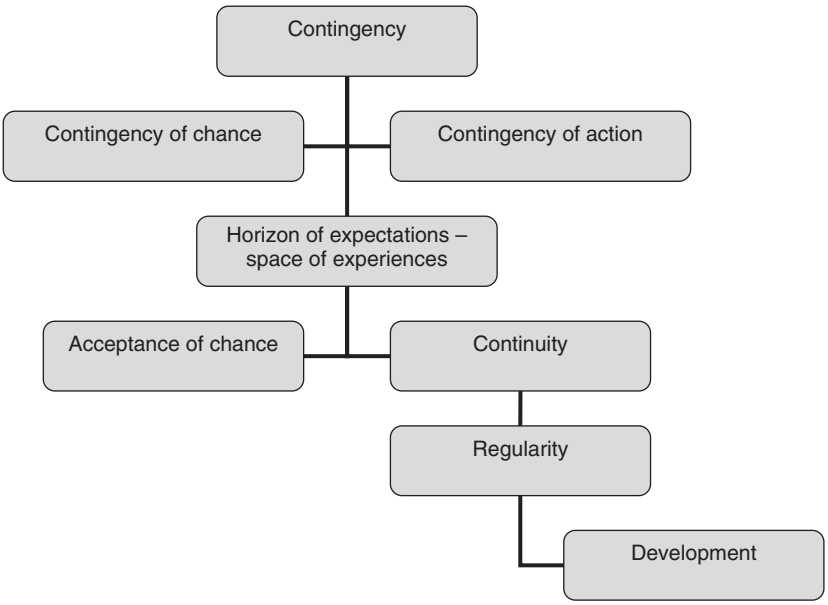
[41] On the new construction of the future, see Hölscher 1999.
[42] See Koselleck 1975: 647–91; 1985: 92–104. [43] Gadamer [5]1986: 346–84.
[44] See *ibid.*: 360. [45] Cf. *ibid.*: 363.

Chance, broadly defined as that which is beyond the control of the acting subject, confounds human expectations and thereby undermines further plans and challenges identities. On what basis can the future be assessed if previous expectations have been thwarted by experiences? How can identities be stable if experiences reveal that we are merely toys in the hand of chance? Therefore, considerable efforts are made to bridge the gap between past expectations and experiences in order to be able to project new expectations onto the future. Three commemorative strategies serve this goal: to start with, past and present can be linked by traditions.[46] Traditions establish the **continuity** that rules out the perilous force of chance and makes the 'space of experiences' and the 'horizon of expectations' match. Furthermore, the wings of chance can be clipped by **regularity**. Here, it is not the assumption of a continuum but of recurrent patterns or even underlying laws that creates the stability necessary for identities and actions. The third strategy relies on the construction of **developments**. Developments are more dynamic than continuities and regularities and allow for change, but nonetheless the very direction of a development tells against the unpredictability of chance. If we add the **acceptance of chance** as a fourth option, we have four different modes of coping with contingency: the temporal unfolding of human life appears under the conditions of chance, continuity, regularity or development. Thus, acts of memory can be classified as accidental, traditional, exemplary or developmental (see Table 1).

Needless to say, these four modes rarely occur in pure form, but are often entangled with one another. For instance, traditional and exemplary views of the past often reinforce one another, and, in such cases, the distinction between continuity and regularity may seem casuistic. However, we shall also come across acts of memory that are traditional without being exemplary and vice versa. Other distinctions are more marked, as is the division into chance and attempts to overcome chance. Within the attempts to overcome chance, the idea of development squares neither with the notion

[46] The following typology is indebted to Rüsen's fourfold agenda of modes of historical narrative (1982; 1989: 39–61). By and large, the notions of continuity, regularity and development correspond with his traditional, exemplary and genetic modes. However, I cannot see that his fourth mode, the critical mode, establishes a form of historical narrative. It merely serves as a transition between the other modes. On the other hand, my fourth way of dealing with temporality, the acceptance of contingency, has no place in Rüsen's scheme. This is due to a fundamental difference: while Rüsen pursues a functionalist view and argues that memory must overcome chance in order to make action possible, in my phenomenological approach the experience of time precedes the use of history. Thus, in commemorative acts, we can note chance without necessarily overcoming it. For an extensive critique of Rüsen, see Grethlein 2006a: 32–41.

Table 1. *Phenomenological model of ideas of history*



of regularity nor with the notion of continuity. As the particular arrangement of the four commemorative modes characterizes acts of memory, the approach outlined here not only traces memory back to its roots in human temporality, but also provides a classificatory scheme for comparisons. More precisely, it is the very mode of coping with temporality that serves as a criterion for the classification.

I suggest calling the particular arrangement of the four commemorative modes in an act of memory its 'idea of history'. Both parts of the term warrant some consideration. To start with the objective genitive, some scholars, most prominently Pierre Nora, juxtapose history with memory.[47] The gist of their argument is that the vanishing of traditions in the Modern Age has triggered our efforts to preserve the past. In other terms, the loss of memory, as incorporated in traditions, leads to the creation of 'history', an artificial reconstruction of the past. While I agree that Nora has identified

[47] Nora 1984–92. For a similar argument with a focus on Jewish memory, see Yerushalmi 1996. See also Lübbe 1977.