1 Introduction: layers of memory

> Emperor Prithviraj Chauhan prevented foreign invaders opposed to our way of life from realizing their dream of overwhelming Hindustan, unto death. Salute with reverence that embodiment of fame, Prithviraj . . . an archer able to hit (the source of) a sound unerringly, who made the ultimate sacrifice in defense of the motherland.[1]
>
> Prithviraj Chauhan Smarak, Ajmer, 1996

Prithviraj Chauhan as site of memory

The sentiments quoted above are expressed, in Hindi, on the plinth of a bronze statue of Prithviraj Chauhan in a memorial park honoring him at Ajmer.[2] The phrases "defense of the motherland" and "foreign invaders opposed to our way of life" identify Prithviraj as a patriot, one who put the concerns of the nation above his own interests to the extent of making "the ultimate sacrifice" of his life. Readers of this inscription would understand that the foreigners alluded to were Muslims; visitors to the park might also know that Prithviraj was defeated in battle by (Shihab al-Din) Muhammad Ghuri, a warlord from Afghanistan. The victory over Prithviraj in 1192 CE was the first in a series of successes for Muhammad Ghuri's armies that culminated in the founding of the Delhi Sultanate in 1206. In turn, this ushered in almost six centuries of political domination in North India by Muslims of Central Asian and Afghan origin.

Prithviraj has been cast as a representative of the Hindu people in their age-old struggle against foreign oppression since the late nineteenth century, when Indians first began to conceive of themselves as a nation under colonial rule. In their struggle for freedom from the British, nationalists frequently cited martial figures from the past such as Prithviraj as a counterweight to the British

[1] *Samrāṭ pṛthvīrāj cauhān ne hindustān ko padākrānt karne ke videśī vidharmī ākrāmkoṁ ke svapna ko jīvan paryant sākār nahīṁ hone diyā digdigant kīrtivān ṣaḍbhāṣāvid acūk śabd vedhī tīrandāj dharm mātṛbhūmi rakṣārth sarvasva nyauchāvar kartā yaśomūrti pṛthvīrāj ko saśraddha naman.*

[2] I am grateful to David Ludden and to Lloyd I. Rudolph for making me aware of this park.

construction of (non-Muslim) Indians as effeminate and cowardly. The militant form of Hindu nationalism that has gained ground in India over the past several decades similarly appropriates medieval warrior heroes, but its message is aimed at South Asian Muslims rather than the British. It is no coincidence that Prithviraj's memorial park was created at a time when the government of Rajasthan state, where Ajmer is located, was controlled by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), the political party supported by Hindu nationalists. The BJP's frequent recourse to India's pre-Muslim past is well known and is even acknowledged in its constitution, which states: "The BJP is pledged to build up India as a strong and prosperous nation, which is modern, progressive and enlightened in outlook and which *proudly draws inspiration from India's ancient culture and values*" [emphasis added].[3]

I have chosen the Ajmer memorial park as the entry point into my study of Prithviraj Chauhan's cultural significance because it both demonstrates his continuing importance today and exemplifies the ways in which earlier imaginings of the king have been appropriated and redeployed for newer purposes. While the use of Prithviraj as a nationalist icon is obviously a modern practice, the king's current meaning as a symbol contains residues of older conceptions. This is evident in the Ajmer park inscription's description of Prithviraj as "an archer able to hit (the source of) a sound unerringly," a reference to a famous episode from *Pṛthvīrāj Rāso*.[4] In this epic, which first appears in writing some 400 years after Prithviraj's death, the king does not simply die soon after his defeat, as modern history books would have it.[5] Instead, the *Rāso* tells us that Prithviraj was taken captive and blinded. Prithviraj's loyal court poet, Chand Bardai, hears of his lord's imprisonment in Ghazni, the enemy's capital, and makes the long journey to Afghanistan. There he tricks Shihab al-Din (later, Mu'izz al-Din) Muhammad bin Sam of Ghur, popularly known in India as Muhammad Gori, into permitting an exhibition of Prithviraj's legendary skill at archery.[6] The blind Prithviraj, who is supposed to shoot an arrow through seven metal gongs thrown up in the air, instead aims at the sultan's voice and

[3] Bharatiya Janata Party, "Constitution and Rules: Bharatiya Janata Party," www.bjp.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=135&Itemid=444; accessed June 4, 2012.

[4] The Hindi phrase is *acūk śabd vedhī tīrandāz.*

[5] Historians often report that Prithviraj was "captured and killed" at the second battle of Tarain in 1192, in accordance with the thirteenth-century text *Tabaqāt-i Nāṣirī* (e.g., K. M. Panikkar, *A Survey of Indian History*, 4th edn. [Bombay: Asia Publishing House, 1977], p. 130). Other scholars follow the earliest account of the battle, from *Tāj al-Ma'āsir,* in saying that Prithviraj Chauhan was reinstated as king of Ajmer for a short while but was later executed for his continuing opposition to Ghurid rule (e.g., S. A. A. Rizvi, *The Wonder That was India*, vol. 2 [Calcutta: Rupa & Co., 1987], p. 20). Both of these Persian accounts are described in Chapter 2.

[6] Nowadays, Muhammad Ghuri is often referred to as *gorī* in Hindi, but in *Pṛthvīrāj Rāso* he is generally known as *sāh* (Shah), *suratān* (Sultan), *sāhi-sāhāb*, or *sāhābdīṃ.* Shihab al-Din, the Perso-Arabic equivalent of the latter name, is what I most often use in referring to this king.

instantly kills him. Although many scholars have denied this fanciful ending to Prithviraj's life, the inscription here testifies to its persistent hold on the popular memory of Prithviraj.[7]

Past imaginings of Prithviraj Chauhan inflect the Ajmer memorial's representation of him in yet another readily visible way. On a second inscription on the statue's plinth, he is called "the last Hindu emperor," a label used repeatedly by James Tod in *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan* (published in 1829–32), the first work of Western scholarship on the region where Prithviraj was based.[8] Yet this designation is manifestly untrue: another Hindu king from Prithviraj's own era was at least as powerful,[9] and numerous other Hindu rulers flourished in South India and elsewhere subsequent to Prithviraj's time. Nonetheless, since James Tod's time, Prithviraj has routinely been described as the last Hindu emperor, as he is at Ajmer and in many modern narratives. Tod, in turn, was influenced by medieval Indo-Persian historiography, which treated Prithviraj's defeat as a major milestone in the Turkic/Muslim conquest of North India.[10] The Ajmer statue's inscriptions are a vivid illustration that Prithviraj, as a site of cultural meaning, comprises multiple layers of significance that have accrued over the centuries. The objective of this book, therefore, is to excavate the various layers of Prithviraj's meanings, tracing the genealogy of his history as a symbolic figure from the medieval era to the present time.

In approaching Prithviraj Chauhan as a "site of memory," I am inspired in part by Pierre Nora's multi-volume editorial project *Les Lieux de mémoire* (1984–92).[11] The *lieux de mémoire* examined in this pioneering series of

[7] Even the eminent scholar of Rajasthan, Dasharatha Sharma, who accepted some aspects of *Pṛthvīrāj Rāso*'s account such as Prithviraj's abduction of the Kanauj princess, is explicit in stating that the king was not taken to Ghazni after his defeat in battle "as averred by some Hindu writers" (*Early Chauhan Dynasties*, 2nd edn. [Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1975], p. 96).

[8] I refer throughout this book to the 1920 edition prepared by William Crooke, who updated the erratic spellings of Indian proper names in Tod's original edition: James Tod, *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan*, ed. William Crooke (Delhi: Low Price Publications, 1990) [henceforth *Rajasthan*].

[9] E.g., Satish Chandra, *Medieval India from Sultanat to Mughal, Part 1: Delhi Sultanate (1205–1526)* (Delhi: Har-anand Publications, 1997), p. 24.

[10] While Indo-Persian histories typically started their account of India's conquest with Mahmud of Ghazni's father, Sebuktigin (d. 997 CE), they also devoted considerable attention to Muhammad of Ghur and his victories. In some cases, as in the mid fifteenth-century *Tārīkh-i Mubārakshāhī,* the narrative begins with Muhammad of Ghur, by whom "Islam was established in Delhi and the countries of Hindustan" (Yahya ibn Ahmad Sirhindi, *Tārīkh-i Mubārakshāhī*, trans. K. K. Basu [Baroda: Oriental Institute, 1932], p. 4).

[11] *Les Lieux de mémoire,* 7 vols., ed. Pierre Nora (Paris: Gallimard, 1984–92). They have been translated into English in two separate sets: *Realms of Memory: Rethinking the French Past*, 3 vols., ed. Lawrence B. Kritzman and trans. Arthur Goldhammer (Columbia University Press, 1996–8); and *Rethinking France*, 4 vols., ed. David P. Jordan and trans. Mary Trouille (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001–10).

books did not consist only of places or monuments that were meaningful to French society and culture, such as Versailles or Verdun, although initially Nora had intended to focus on a narrow range of memorials "in which the collective heritage of France was crystallized."[12] Over time, however, his interpretation of the word *lieux* broadened, so that he preferred the word "realms" to "sites" when it came to the English translation of his project's title. The symbolic realms he identified were far-ranging, including clusters of meaning around the tricolor French flag, the Museum of the Desert devoted to the history of French Protestants, and the village cafe. "Sites of memory," in Nora's usage, could refer to "any significant entity, whether material or non-material in nature, which by dint of human will or the work of time has become a symbolic element of the material heritage of any community."[13] For Nora, it is how these sites relate to the present, how the past is remembered today, that is first and foremost.[14]

Like the many sites of memory examined by Nora and his associates, Prithviraj Chauhan has become implicated in a sense of identity revolving around the modern nation-state. His significance as a patriotic symbol accounts for much of his appeal today, and is what may most intrigue scholars of the modern era. As a precolonial historian, however, my interest extends beyond Prithviraj Chauhan's recent significance. In a departure from the overall thrust of Nora's project, with its concentration on the modern meanings of "realms of memory" related to the nation-state, I wish to review the major stages of Prithviraj's development as a heroic figure, both before and during the advent of the modern. While I have framed this book with discussions of two public memorials of the Chauhan king from the present time – the Ajmer park in this introductory chapter and a Delhi park in the epilogue – the rest of the book deals with the long span of time from Prithviraj's late twelfth-century reign up to the last days of colonial rule in the 1940s. Unearthing how Prithviraj was thought of *before* he was appropriated for nationalist causes is just as important, to my mind, as understanding how nationalism transformed his meaning. As earlier imaginings of Prithviraj provided a resilient pool of symbolic possibilities that were reconfigured time and again for varying purposes, the full resonances of his current significance cannot be appreciated without knowledge of the range of his previous meanings. In addition, I wish to demonstrate in this book that the past – that is, history – was indeed important

[12] Pierre Nora, "From *Lieux de mémoire* to *Realms of Memory,*" in *Realms of Memory,* vol. 1, p. xv.
[13] Nora, "From *Lieux de mémoire* to *Realms of Memory,*" p. xvii.
[14] His colleague David P. Jordan says of Nora, "He is obsessed by how the past is remembered in the present, the way it entwines itself, inextricably, around contemporary thought" (David P. Jordan, "Introduction," in Nora, *Rethinking France*, vol. 1, *The State* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001], p. xxv).

to the peoples of precolonial India, who resorted to it actively and creatively in making sense of their present circumstances.

Although questions about how and why medieval kings have been repeatedly recollected in later times have rarely been broached in Indian historiography, recent scholarship on European kings who became sites of memory illustrates the utility of such an approach. The greatest concentration of texts, images, and representations cluster around the figure of Charlemagne, the Carolingian emperor who reigned from 786 to 814. The remarkable range of literary genres and patronage contexts in which this large mass of material was produced resulted in an "extraordinary plasticity" in how Charlemagne was depicted,[15] from forceful conqueror to wise saint to passive king countermanded by his vassals. Yet, despite the diversity in remembrances, some recurrent themes can also be identified: of Charlemagne's reign as a Golden Age, of him as an exemplary just king, and most especially the notion that "he stands in some sense as the originator and legitimator of the contemporary world."[16] Charlemagne was regarded as a foundational figure, a king who ushered in a new age and could thus be evoked in later times in order to authenticate the legitimacy of a person, practice, or institution. Because of these associations, Charlemagne was an important component of the French nation's sense of its self until the late nineteenth century. After France was defeated by Prussia in 1870, Charlemagne was abandoned as a symbol of French identity, partly due to his link to Germany.

Prithviraj Chauhan too is often remembered as standing at the cusp of two ages. But rather than being the founder of a new era in the manner of Charlemagne, Prithviraj represents the waning of an earlier epoch, for he died fighting against warriors who brought with them ideas and practices that were new to the region. In that sense, he might be better compared to King Arthur, the Celtic (British) king who was engaged in fighting the newly arrived Saxons, in a futile effort to stem the forces of historical change. Prithviraj and Arthur were both regarded, by later generations, as valiant and tragic warrior heroes whose lives marked the end of an epoch. Furthermore, although Prithviraj's historicity is not in doubt, we have little information from his own time period and so have little idea of what was unique and particular about this king. Thus, in the haziness of his historical contours, Prithviraj more resembles the legendary Arthur than the well-documented Charlemagne. Even if we cannot sketch a full picture of the historical Prithviraj or be certain that King Arthur ever existed, an analysis of how they were imagined by subsequent

[15] Robert Morrissey, *Charlemagne & France: A Thousand Years of Mythology*, trans. Catherine Tihanyi (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2003), p. 8.
[16] James Fentress and Chris Wickham, *Social Memory* (Oxford, UK, Cambridge, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 1992), p. 156.

generations can help us in understanding those later periods of time. In the case of Arthur, scholars have remarked on the proliferation of narratives about him during the eleventh and twelfth centuries. This was a period of conquest and colonization that brought the foreign Normans in contact with Britain's existing Saxon and Celtic peoples, suggesting that King Arthur was "a social signifier, whose function was to smooth over the ideological conflicts."[17]

The examples of Charlemagne and Arthur demonstrate that past rulers often served as a means of unifying or defining communities, especially in moments of crisis. This was as true in the pre-modern period as in the more recent era of nation-states and applies equally to the non-European world. Much was made in earlier scholarship about India's alleged lack of historical consciousness and the dominance of society over the state, which has led to an assumption that narratives about pre-modern kings were either scarce and/or sociologically irrelevant. In his analysis of modern history-writing in India, for instance, Partha Chatterjee dismisses the importance of what he calls "puranic history" – that is, accounts of the past which involve divine intervention, apply norms of righteousness as explanatory factors, and focus on the deeds of kings. Since this older type of history did not relate to the people as a whole nor accord them any participation in the business of ruling, it was merely "a history of kings," rather than "the history of this country."[18] Here Chatterjee is disingenuous, however, in implying that political leaders cannot serve as symbolic representatives of their citizens in the modern age, and that kings were never signifiers for large-scale communities (whether of region, caste, or religion) in the age before nations. This book shows that, to the contrary, ideas about kings could circulate widely at certain times and places because they were meaningful for specific segments of the society. Furthermore, precolonial narratives about kings must be recognized as political in character (and not quasi-religious, as Chatterjee's designation of "puranic" suggests): not only because they concerned power, but also because of the notions that they conveyed concerning the right to rule, political ethics, and allegiance.

In line with the recent work on Charlemagne and King Arthur, I proceed with the assumption that there is a certain logic to the changing conceptions of kings such as Prithviraj Chauhan. Whether done consciously or not, transformations in a king's career were attempts to make the past more comprehensible to the audience of the present. So, for example, by the sixteenth century Prithviraj was described in texts as the lord of Delhi rather than of Ajmer, in

[17] Laurie A. Finke and Martin B. Shichtman, *King Arthur and the Myth of History* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2004), p. 38. For a study of the Arthur narrative in the early Middle Ages, see N. J. Higham, *King Arthur: Myth-making and History* (London and NY: Routledge, 2002).

[18] Partha Chatterjee, *A Nation and Its Fragments* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), pp. 76–115.

a response to Delhi's long tenure as North India's premier political center. Another well-known adjustment in historical realities concerns Charlemagne's enemies in the battle of Roncevaux in 778: said to be Basques in the ninth century, they had been converted into Saracens by the time of the Crusades in the eleventh and twelfth centuries.[19] As in Charlemagne's case, alterations in Prithviraj's life story were not made arbitrarily, but in order to make him more relevant to new communities, new places, and new occasions. Integral to this study of Prithviraj Chauhan, then, is the pinpointing of the critical junctures in time at which memories of the king were reformulated in novel ways.

When representations of the past are adjusted to make sense in the present, they can be deployed for contemporary objectives. As Gabrielle Spiegel puts it:

> The prescriptive authority of the past made it a privileged locus for working through the ideological implications of social changes in the present and the repository of contemporary concerns and desires. As a locus of value, a revised past held out for contemporaries the promise of a perfectible present.[20]

In her influential monograph on the rise of vernacular historiography in thirteenth-century France, Spiegel argues that anxiety over their deteriorating economic and political status led the Flemish aristocracy to commission historical texts that cast a spotlight on their superior social antecedents in the new genre of vernacular prose. Through recollection of a past in which their social class, and forebears, had been even more privileged, the Flemish aristocracy could obscure and deny their declining power in the present day.

Following the example of Spiegel and other scholars of medieval Europe such as Patrick Geary, I attend to the "social logic" of texts about the Indian past: who commissioned them and for what purpose.[21] As a historian, I am more interested in the social spaces occupied by texts than in their literary or aesthetic character. Among the most important functions of historical narratives was the consolidation of collective identities, because the presence of a shared past provided solidarity to social groups in the present. Without audiences to whom that vision of the past was meaningful, historical accounts – particularly in the pre-modern period – would not have been preserved and transmitted into the future, where they might be reconfigured to suit new identities being articulated in different contexts.

[19] Fentress and Wickham, *Social Memory*, p. 59.
[20] Gabrielle M. Spiegel, *Romancing the Past: The Rise of Vernacular Prose Historiography in Thirteenth-Century France* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), p. 5.
[21] On "social logic," see Spiegel, *Romancing the Past*, p. 9. Also, Patrick J. Geary, *Phantoms of Remembrance: Memory and Oblivion at the End of the First Millennium* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994).

While the *idea* of Prithviraj Chauhan was repeatedly adapted to changing conditions (and employed for a variety of functions) over the king's long career as a cultural hero, I believe there were constraints on the extent of modification that could occur. Each time Prithviraj was imagined anew, it was never from scratch but always in relation to – whether in contestation, elaboration, or affirmation of – existing formulations, which limited the range of possible permutations. As Geoffrey Cubitt writes, "The past is flexible, but its flexibility at any particular moment is significantly conditioned by its previous history of use."[22] There was continuity in the *process* of remembering the Chauhan king, and some elements of his biography were typically reworked and carried forward, although in new contexts and new configurations they might have another significance. I emphasize this point, as it is relevant to the ongoing debate on the extent to which precolonial knowledge and practices continued into India's colonial era.[23] The use of the past to derive meaning for the present was an activity that Indians engaged in long before the advent of colonialism, and earlier conceptions could have resonances that endured for centuries.

Almost all of the material relating to Prithviraj Chauhan that I consider in this book is now found in written form, although it may have earlier had a performative dimension. The reader might ask why I do not frame my study as an exercise in historiography, as Spiegel did in reference to her thirteenth-century texts, rife though they are with improbable occurrences and unlikely continuities. Spiegel utilizes an expansive notion of history, one that is informed by the ideas of Northrop Frye and Hayden White, among others, and is therefore fully cognizant of the constructed nature of all historical narratives.[24] In a somewhat similar vein, Romila Thapar eschews the memory-studies approach in favor of a broad definition of what constitutes history in *The Past Before Us*, her ambitious new book on historical perspectives in ancient and medieval Indian literature. However, Thapar prefers the term "historical tradition" to designate texts which reflect a historical consciousness that might not qualify as history writing, strictly defined. An analysis of historical traditions is justified, she claims, since "irrespective of the question of the presence or absence of historical writing as such, an

[22] Geoffrey Cubitt, *History and Memory* (Manchester and NY: Manchester University Press, 2007), p. 203.

[23] For an overview of the debate, see Indira Sengupta and Daud Ali, "Introduction," in *Knowledge Production, Pedagogy, and Institutions in Colonial India*, eds. I. Sengupta and D. Ali (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2011), pp. 3–7. See also, William R. Pinch, "Same Difference in India and Europe," *History and Theory* 38.3 (1999): 389–407.

[24] Gabrielle Spiegel, *The Past as Text: The Theory and Practice of Medieval Historiography* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1997), p. xiii.

understanding of the way in which the past is perceived, recorded, and used affords insights into early Indian society."[25]

Although I too occasionally apply the label "history" to the texts I analyze here, the use of that word for the rather fanciful literary narratives about Prithviraj might be contested by some scholars. Sharp distinctions between history and memory have often been drawn going as far back as Maurice Halbwachs, who initiated the scholarly analysis of memory in the early twentieth century. Halbwachs did not compare history and memory in a sustained or systematic fashion, yet his occasional comments make it clear that he held what Patrick H. Hutton describes as "a narrow and old-fashioned definition of history as a field of study, one close to the positivist-inspired narrative historiography of the nineteenth century."[26] In contrast to memory, which he characterized as prone to distortion, Halbwachs implies that history was more accurate and objective. He writes, for example, that: "For history the real past is that which is no longer incorporated into the thoughts of existing groups. It seems that history must wait until the old groups disappear, along with their thoughts and memories, so that it can busy itself with fixing the image and the sequence of facts which it alone is capable of preserving."[27] The sense of a rupture between memory and history found in Halbwachs' statement is even stronger in the work of Pierre Nora, who regards memory nostalgically as a phenomenon that is no longer truly living.[28]

Despite the disparaging attitudes toward memory, which has too often been dismissed as an informal, subjective, and popular sphere of mental activity, there are clear advantages to a memory-oriented approach. One is its greater stress on the collective nature of the creation and transmission of conceptions of the past, first formulated by Halbwachs. In his words, "No memory is possible outside frameworks used by people living in society to determine and retrieve their recollections."[29] A person's family setting, religious affiliation, and social class all played a part in shaping memories of the past, in Halbwachs' view, and thus memories are fundamentally social phenomena even if they appear to manifest at an individual level. Indeed, Halbwachs'

[25] Romila Thapar, *The Past Before Us: Historical Traditions of Early North India* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013).
[26] Patrick H. Hutton, *History as an Art of Memory* (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1993), p. 75.
[27] Quote of Halbwachs from Jan Assmann, *Cultural Memory and Early Civilization: Writing, Remembrance, and Political Imagination* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2011), p. 30.
[28] Pierre Nora, "General Introduction: Between Memory and History," in *Realms of Memory* vol. 1, pp. 1–20. For a discussion of this aspect of Nora's thinking, see Anne Whitehead, *Memory* (London and NY: Routledge, 2009), pp. 139–46.
[29] Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, trans. Lewis A. Coser (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1992), p. 43.

emphasis on the collective character of memory is so strong that it has been criticized as a "determined anti-individualism" which refuses to give any role to the individual as agent.[30] As a result, some scholars have adopted the label "social memory" in preference to Halbwachs' "collective memory," since it still signifies the impact of social settings on the shaping of memories without positing the existence of a monolithic collective entity.[31] A second advantage of a memory-oriented approach, which can also be traced back to Halbwachs, is its recognition that ideas of the past exist only in the present. Halbwachs insisted that memories did not actually capture the past, but reconstituted it according to the collective frames of references of the present moment, saying: "in reality the past does not recur as such . . . everything seems to indicate that the past is not preserved but is reconstructed on the basis of the present."[32]

These two premises that are integral to the field of memory studies – that the present shapes our notions of the past and does so within a group context – underlie my decision to define this study not simply as a historiographic endeavor but rather as an exercise in excavating memory. In doing so, however, I go against the current trend in memory studies, which is hugely skewed toward the modern age and especially the traumatic events of the past century. Indeed, one scholar has proposed that the designation "memory" should be restricted to recollections of events that an individual has personally experienced, and not to those beyond an individual's lifetime.[33] Certainly, it is valid to question if we can lump short-term memories – whether collected as oral testimonies or in the form of written memoirs – together with centuries-old conceptions of the past, under the same analytical and methodological rubric.

The distinction made by Jan Assmann between communicative and cultural memory is useful in this regard. "Communicative" refers to memories passed on orally among family and friends for three to four generations or not more than a period of approximately a hundred years. These memories can be called "communicative" since "they are based exclusively on everyday communications," in Jan Assmann's words.[34] Contrasted to this type of short-term recollection is "cultural memory," which encompasses more formal and institutionalized ways of remembering, including fixed symbols, rituals, monuments, and written texts. Cultural memory can extend back to the alleged

[30] Wulf Kansteiner, "Finding Meaning in Memory: A Methodological Critique of Collective Memory Studies," *History and Theory* 41 (May 2002): 181.
[31] Bernd Steinbock, *Social Memory in Athenian Public Discourse* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2013), pp. 8–9.
[32] Halbwachs, *Collective Memory*, pp. 39–40.
[33] Mary Fulbrook, "History-Writing and 'Collective Memory'," in *Writing the History of Memory*, eds. Stefan Berger and Bill Niven (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), pp. 78–83.
[34] Jan Assmann, "Collective Memory and Cultural Identity," *New German Critique* 65 (1995): 126.