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Stad

THE UNIVERSALISTIC SOTERIOLOGY OF HERITAGE

KLAS GRINELL



Soteriology?

Soteriology means theory of (path to) salvation.

Salvation is: "to be saved *from* something bad, *to* something good".

(Thunberg, 1977)

Religion: the belief in and worship of a god or gods, or any such *system of belief and worship*.

Heritage: features belonging to the *culture of a particular society*, such as traditions, languages, or buildings, that were created in the past and still have *historical importance*.



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Secular soteriology of national culture



“the modern [Westphalian] state is built upon a soteriology of rescue from violence” (William Cavanaugh, 2002, p. 2)

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Romanticism and the idea of formation (*Bildung*) as salvation (aesthetic liberation).

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Modernization theory: industrialization produces secularization and the death of religion.

=

a nationalist (modern and secular) soteriology.

After WWII the modern, secular soteriology was reinforced, and institutionalized in UNESCO.

“since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defenses of peace must be constructed.”

[the material for heritage salvation consists of] “the world’s inheritance of books, works of art and monuments of history and science”

UNESCO:s charter (1945)

UNESCO has gone from **inclusive soteriology** – with a mission to save through access to culture and heritage.

Culture and heritage is per definition secular. Religious heritage is transformed into art or national history. They cannot be religiously meaningful or presented with their original soteriological power.

In the 1990-ies UNESCO, turned towards a **pluralistic soteriology**: all cultures are expressions of the same salvific power.



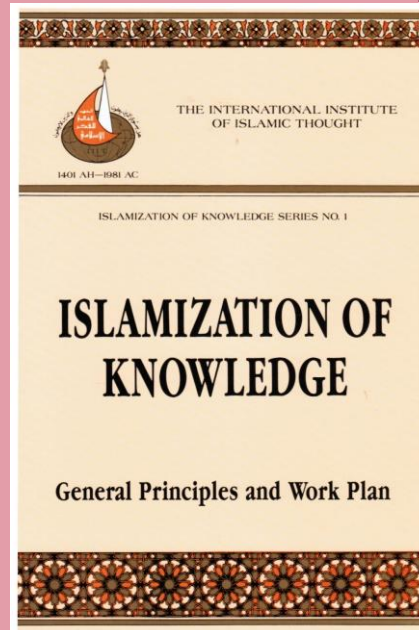
Heritage still has a strong **universalistic and secular bias**.

Religion is accepted as cultural heritage.
No alternative soteriology is possible.



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How much religion can heritage tolerate?



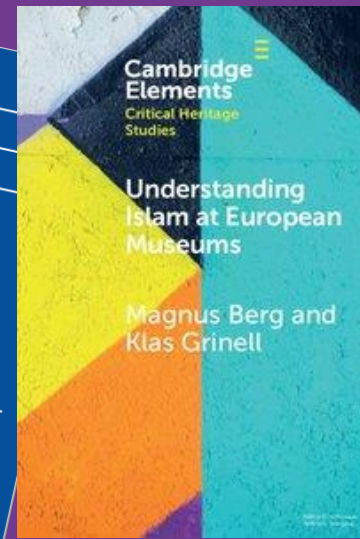
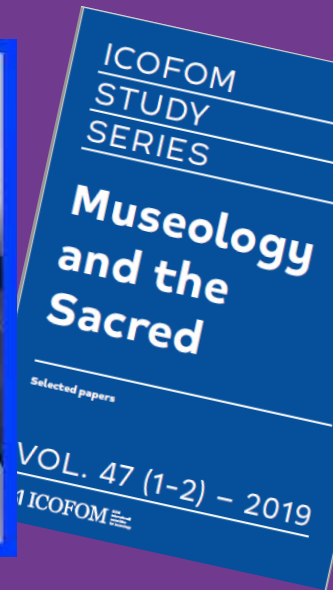
Decolonize
This Museum

Decolonization as yet another
wave of **secular bias** (?)

It is sustainable to care for religious (infra)structures as heritage?



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