

The Basilica of Sacré Coeur de Montmartre as a historical monument



4652584

AR2A011 Architectural History Thesis
TU Delft 2022/2023

Figure 1: The modern day Sacre-Coeur of Montmartre with the dead of the 'bloody week' in 1870 burried underneath the church (Own work, 2023; Darjou, 1871).

Outline

Abstract

Introduction

Chapter 1: Case Study – The Basilica of Sacré-Coeur de Montmartre

- 1.1 Historical Context
- 1.2 History of the Basilica of Sacré-Coeur de Montmartre
- 1.3 Significance of the Basilica in religious, political, and architectural history
- 1.4 Controversial aspects of the Basilica's history

Chapter 2: The Public's Opinion

- 2.1 The political aspects of the Basilica's construction site
- 2.2 The history of the devotion responsible for the existence of the monument
- 2.2 La Commune (Paris, 1871)
- 2.3 Late 19th-century public opinions
- 2.4 Today's opposing viewpoints on recognising the Basilica as a historical monument

Chapter 3: Contested Heritage

- 3.1 The concept of contested heritage and its importance in historical preservation
- 3.2 The ethical and moral implications of preserving a heritage site with a problematic history
- 3.3 The role of collective memory and cultural identity and power
- 3.4 The impact of cultural and religious differences
- 3.5 The impact of tourism

Chapter 4: Navigating the Challenges of Contested Heritage

- 4.1 Changes in norms and values over time impact contested heritage
- 4.2 The preservation of monuments to represent a period in time despite their problematic history
- 4.3 Who is permitted to make changes?
- 4.4 Social and political factors that Influence the Preservation of the Basilica

Conclusion

Abstract

Contested heritage has become a topic of significant importance in recent years, particularly in preserving historical monuments. This thesis examines the challenges of contested heritage through the case study of the Basilica of Sacré-Coeur de Montmartre, a religious monument recently recognised as a historical building despite its controversial past. Drawing on a variety of sources, including historical research, interviews, documentaries, and articles, the thesis seeks to address several questions related to the justification of recognising the Basilica as a historical monument, the impact of changing norms and values over time, and the role of social and political factors in the preservation of historical monuments. By exploring the various aspects of the Basilica's history, significance, and contested heritage, this thesis contributes to a broader understanding of the challenges in preserving historical monuments while acknowledging their complexities. Furthermore, it provides insights to inform future preservation efforts and promote a more nuanced understanding of contested heritage.

Introduction

Contested heritage is a subject that has gained increasing attention in recent years. Despite being recognised for approximately 25 years, it remains a topic of ongoing debate, with possible changes in perspectives on different norms and values over time. Cultural heritage, particularly immobile cultural heritage, is central to this discussion. In this thesis, the issue of contested heritage will be explored through the case study of a religious monument, the Basilica of Sacré-Coeur de Montmartre, which was recently recognised as a historical building on December 8th, 2022. The choice of this case study is significant given that the Sacré-Coeur has been viewed as a controversial building by a portion of the French population since its construction. This is mainly due to the site's history, as it is at this location that the French national forces executed ten to fifteen thousand Communards during the 'Semaine sanglante' [bloody week] in 1871 (Loyer, 1993; Méheut, 2022).

Through this case study, this thesis aims to answer several questions. Firstly, the extent to which the recognition of the Basilica of Sacré-Coeur de Montmartre as a historical monument can be justified. This shall be done by analysing how changes in norms and values over time impact contested heritage, whether monuments should be preserved to represent a period in time despite their complicated history or whether changes should be allowed, and finally, by looking at who is permitted to make those changes. Additionally, this study will explore how social and political factors can influence the preservation of a historical monument.

Various sources will be drawn upon to address these questions, including existing historical research, interviews, documentaries, and articles with opposing viewpoints. Firstly, the literature praising and repelling the historical significance of the Basilica shall be analysed. Jacques Benoist's study on the Basilica of Sacré-Coeur de Montmartre evokes religious history, political history, architectural history and spirituality. Being a former chaplain of the church, he had no difficulties showing many qualities present in the monument or its location. The Montmartre Hill has been considered an important religious and artistic site since the Middle Ages adding to its cultural significance (Benoist, 1992). The criticism towards the Basilica in the years before his thesis has sometimes given Benoist the tendency to overly justify the meanings of the Basilica (Loyer, 1993).

However, geographer David Harvey's research on the Basilica exposes the contested political aspects of its construction site, uncovering the politics behind the development of the Basilica. He then exposes the 'deep fissures about late 19th century Parisian and national politics' (Harvey, 1979). In his book, *France and the Cult of the Sacred Heart: An Epic Tale for Modern Times (Studies on the History of Society and Culture)*, historian Raymond Jonas (2000) goes beyond the aftermath of the construction of the Basilica. He completely reconstructs the history of the devotion responsible for the monument's existence, starting at the beginning of the Sacred Heart. Both works analyse how opponents of recognising the Basilica as a historical monument argue that its construction represents a controversial moment in French history: The Commune massacre in 1871, associated with nationalist and religious ideologies no longer relevant or desirable. Inspired by medieval France, its design has been criticised as an attempt to impose a romanticised and idealised version of the past on the present. The Basilica's location on Montmartre Hill, a political and social unrest site, complicates its status as a heritage site (Jonas, 2000; Harvey, 1979). Recognising the Basilica as a historical monument would legitimise its contested history and reinforce its symbol of oppression against those historically marginalised (Ville de Paris, 2022).

There have been studies on the subject, and many newspapers, novels, illustrations, and movies shall be used to understand the thesis' questions. For example, Emile Zola's novel *Paris* (1898) depicts an image of the Basilica as a figure of evil: "a mythical force working to destroy the city." Through his writing, Zola used descriptive passages to share his political views of the time (Emery, 2001). The articles written by John Walker (1878) in *Le Monde Illustré* show the 1878 Exposition Universelle, including the Basilica of Sacré-Coeur de Montmartre, through different ironic allusions to the past censored by the government.

These illustrated texts sometimes aimed to remind the reader of his traumatic past (Wilson, 2005). On the other hand, the selective repertoire of Marville's taken photographs for the exposition excluded the 'to be forgotten' destroyed parts of Paris during the revolts of 1871 and the Franco-Prussian war (Wilson, 2005). Using the anachronistic tool of filmed interviews, Peter Watkins (2000) moves the viewer into the setting of 1871, making the viewer feel deeply involved. The information *La Commune (Paris, 1871)* brings, gives perspective to the subject and raises questions regarding currently written articles and those from that period.

It is essential to underline that recognising the Basilica of Sacré-Coeur de Montmartre as a historical monument is part of a more extensive discussion regarding contested heritage. Heritage sites are not fixed or static but are subject to evolving interpretations and meanings. Recognising specific sites as historical monuments may reinforce dominant narratives, exclude marginalised voices, and neglect or erase other aspects of their history. Preserving heritage sites can also promote cultural exchange and understanding and acknowledge and reconcile with the past (UNESCO, 2019). The philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche's view on his 'historical sickness', really adds to how to process this contested cultural heritage: "that for the health of a single individual, a people, and a culture, the unhistorical and the historical are equally essential." (Nietzsche, 1874).

Recognising the Basilica of Sacré-Coeur de Montmartre as a historical monument requires a nuanced understanding of contested heritage. Proponents emphasise its architectural and cultural value, while opponents question its associations with controversial histories. Preservation decisions should carefully consider the social and political factors and aim to represent marginalised voices, providing a more accurate depiction of the past rather than just dominant narratives. This thesis contributes to a broader discussion on approaching contested heritage, recognising the importance of preserving historical monuments while acknowledging the challenges and complexities involved. Ultimately, this thesis aims to provide a nuanced understanding of the challenges and complexities of contested heritage and offer insights to inform future preservation efforts.

Chapter 1: Historical Context

1.1 Origins and Significance

The initial idea, by Felix Fournier, bishop of Nantes from 1870 to his death in 1877, to build the Basilica of Sacré-Cœur de Montmartre can be traced back to the Franco-Prussian War of 1870. Following the French defeat in the war, France was in a state of political and social disorder (Harvey, 1979). The country was divided between those who supported the monarchy and those who wanted to establish a republic. The Catholic Church in France saw this as an opportunity to reassert its influence and become more involved in the political and social affairs of the country (Jonas, 2000).

When Cardinal Guibert, the new archbishop of Paris, climbed the hill of Montmartre in October 1872, he said: “It is here, it is here where the martyrs are, it is here that the Sacred Heart must reign so that it can beckon all to it.” He was referring to the Christian martyrs, specifically Saint-Denis and his companions, when he made this statement about the location of the Sacré-Cœur Basilica on Montmartre. Saint-Denis was the first bishop of Paris, and he was beheaded along with his companions, Saint Rusticus and Saint Eleutherius, in the 3rd century during the Roman Empire’s persecution of Christians. Montmartre, which means “Mount of the Martyr” in French, is believed to be the site where these executions took place. Thus, the location holds significant historical and religious importance for the Christian community. (Harvey, 2004). The hill of Montmartre was chosen as the site for the Basilica because of its long association with religion and its historical significance (Jonas, 2000). In the Roman period, two pagan temples dedicated to Mars and a more significant temple dedicated to Mercury were located on Montmartre’s hill (Jonquet, 1890). In the Middle Ages, a Benedictine abbey was built on the hill, becoming a pilgrimage place (Jonquet, 1890). The location was also the site of the famous Battle of Montmartre during the Paris Commune in 1871 (Harvey, 1979). By building another catholic church on top of this hill, M. Chesnelong, the President of the General Assembly of Catholic Committees of France, was told to be true that it would mean the catholic regeneration of France, as said by Jonquet (1890): “This is the eye and the heart of France! This is our sacred mountain, relic of the past, treasure of the present, hope of the future!” (Jonquet, 1890).

Montmartre was an important location for a pilgrimage site due to its natural elevation, which made it stand out and appear sacred. Climbing to the top of the mountain was seen as a symbolic ascent to heaven, and for pilgrims, it represented a journey from the ordinary world to the divine, as Guibert might have understood. Crossing boundaries between the profane and the sacred was essential to the pilgrimage experience (Jonas, 1994).

1.2 The history of the devotion responsible for the existence of the monument

The devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, which the Basilica of Sacré-Cœur de Montmartre was built to honour, has a long history in Catholicism (Jonas, 2000). The devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus originated in the Middle Ages when mystics and visionaries claimed to have had supernatural experiences of Jesus, revealing his heart as a symbol of his love for humanity. However, it was not until the 17th century that the devotion gained widespread popularity, mainly due to the efforts of St. Margaret Mary Alacoque, a French nun who claimed to have received visions of the Sacred Heart (Bainvel, 1917).

St. Margaret Mary Alacoque’s visions inspired devotion to the Sacred Heart throughout France and beyond (Bainvel, 1917). The devotion was particularly popular among the French aristocracy, who saw it as a way to reaffirm their Catholic faith in the face of growing secularism and the influence of the Enlightenment. The devotion was also closely tied to the political and social upheavals of the time, as many saw it as a way to counter the forces of revolution and modernity (Morgan, 2008). At the end of her career, Alacoque experienced a significant and remarkable revelation that established a new level of devotion for the movement: Jesus revealed that he desired the King of France (Louis XIV) and his entire court to dedicate themselves to the Sacred Heart (Morgan, 2008). This desire evoked the request to build a



Figure 2: The Sacré-Cœur under construction, 10 march 1882 (Vitek, 2020)

chapel honouring the Sacred Heart, which he did not fulfil (Jonas, 2000). This did not mean the end of the idea. The followers of the Sacred Heart continued to have hope that one day Jesus' plans would become a reality. The request of the Sacred Heart to Louis XIV is not for them a mere historical fact; "they see it as always current, as always to be realised." (Bainvel, 1917).

In the 19th century, the Sacré-Cœur became a significant symbol for royalist politics. Catholic elites and French clergy used it to call for a renewed partnership between the king and God. The Restoration clergy also used the Sacred Heart in their missionary efforts to re-Christianize France. The portrait of heroic Vendéen generals in Bourbon-sponsored salons also mythologised the Sacred Heart. During the problematic events of l'année terrible [terrible year] 1870-1871, such as France's defeat in war, failure to defend the Pope, and the violence of the Commune, Catholics sought solace in the Sacred Heart and its salvation narrative. To this end, numerous dioceses consecrated themselves to the Sacred Heart, and the idea of building a "church of the national vow" dedicated to the Sacré-Cœur in Paris was conceived at that moment (Jonas, 2000).

In 1870, just a few years after the Franco-Prussian War, a group of French Catholics began lobbying to construct a basilica dedicated to the Sacred Heart on the site of the old Montmartre Abbey. The proposed Basilica symbolised France's Catholic heritage and promoted devotion to the Sacred Heart worldwide (Jonas, 2000). This proposal got supported by Catholics such as Pope Leo XIII, who was deeply committed to promoting Catholicism in a world increasingly dominated by secularism and nationalism. He saw the devotion to the Sacred Heart as a way to unite Catholics worldwide and promote a sense of solidarity and common purpose (Benoist, 1992).

1.3 Construction

The construction of the Basilica of Sacré-Cœur de Montmartre began in 1875 and was completed in 1914, although it was only consecrated in 1919 due to the First World War (Harvey, 1979). The Basilica

was designed by the French architect Paul Abadie, who was chosen through a design competition. Many architectural styles, including Romanesque and Byzantine, influenced the Basilica's design. The Basilica's most distinctive feature is its large white dome, seen from many parts of Paris. The Basilica's interior is also impressive, rich in mosaics, stained glass, and gold and silver windows (Jonas, 2000).

1.4 Controversy

However, the Basilica of Sacré-Cœur de Montmartre is not without controversy. While it has been celebrated as a symbol of faith and cultural heritage, it has also been a source of conflict and criticism. Some argue that constructing the Basilica was a political statement and a means of asserting Catholic dominance over other religions and beliefs. Others criticise the use of public funds for its construction and the displacement of residents during the building process (Jonas, 2000).



Figure 3: Paul Abadie. Perspective view. 1874. (Richard-Bazire, 1988).

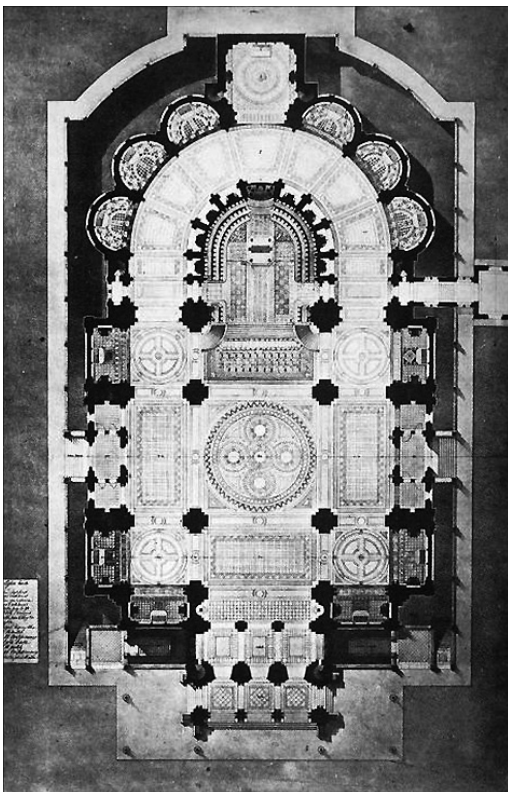


Figure 4: Paul Abadie. Plan. 1874. (Richard-Bazire, 1988).

Chapter 2: The Public's Opinion

The controversy surrounding the Basilica's construction is rooted in the complex social and political climate of late 19th-century France. The country was divided between those who supported the monarchy and those who wanted to establish a republic. In Victor Hugo's *Les Misérables* (1869), the backdrop of 19th-century France captures the nation's struggle to find stability, as it constantly shifted between monarchy and republic amidst a turbulent period of revolution and restoration. Traditionally supporting the monarchy, the Catholic Church sought to reassert its influence in French society (Harvey, 1979). Furthermore, some saw the Basilica's construction as a symbol of Catholic dominance over other religions and beliefs. Some saw the Basilica's location on the hill of Montmartre, which had long been associated with religion, as an attempt to assert Catholic hegemony over Paris by "the enemies of religion", as named by the Archbishop of Paris. The controversy surrounding the Basilica's construction reflects the more considerable tensions between religion and politics in late 19th-century France (Harvey, 1979).

The Basilica of Sacré-Coeur de Montmartre's construction involved much politics and controversy. At the time, the site where the Basilica now stands symbolised the Paris Commune, a radical socialist and revolutionary government that briefly controlled Paris in 1871 (Jonas, 2000). The government viewed the site as a symbol of the working class and sought to turn it into a public park. However, after the Commune was defeated, the government changed its plans and built a church on the site (Emery, 2001).

The decision to build the Basilica on the site of the former Commune was seen as a deliberate attempt to erase the memory of the Commune and its ideals (Harvey, 2004). Therefore, the construction of the Basilica was highly controversial and sparked protests and debates among Parisians (Emery, 2001).

2.2 *La Commune (Paris, 1871)*

Through his original portrayal of the Paris Commune of 1871 and its conflicting ideologies and power struggles, Peter Watkins' film *La Commune (Paris, 1871)* (2000) offers a nuanced view of the historical context and political aspects of the event while also engaging with the controversial legacy of the Sacré-Cœur as a symbol of reactionary forces.

The Paris Commune was a radical and revolutionary government that emerged after the Franco-Prussian War and the fall of the Second French Empire in 1870 and only lasted for 72 days. The war had been a significant defeat for France, with the Prussian army invading and capturing Paris in January 1871. In the chaos that followed, a provisional government was established, which included figures from various political factions but could not address the profound social and economic problems facing the city and the country (Tombs, 2014). On March 18th, 1871, a group of working-class activists and revolutionaries, many of whom had been involved in the Parisian socialist and anarchist movements, seized control of the city hall and declared the establishment of a new government known as the Commune (Tombs, 2014). The Commune was based on the principles of direct democracy, social justice, and workers' self-management, and it quickly gained support from a broad section of the Parisian population (Jellinek, 2013). However, the Commune faced significant opposition from the French government and military, who saw it as a threat to national security and the existing social order. In May 1871, the French army launched a brutal assault on the city, using artillery and infantry to crush the Commune and kill thousands of its supporters (Tombs, 2014).

In *La Commune (Paris, 1871)*, Watkins (2000) depicts these complexities through different historical reenactments and contemporary improvisation, using a large ensemble cast of non-professional actors and incorporating various media techniques. The film shows how the Commune comprised various political groups, such as the socialists, anarchists, and republicans, who had different visions for the future of Paris and France. Watkins (2000) emphasises the diversity and solidarity of the Commune but also portrays its internal conflicts and disagreements, particularly over issues such as the military's role, prisoners'

treatment, and the relationship between the Commune and the Parisian people.



Figure 5: The dead of the Commune, (Pignon Ernest, 1971)



Figure 6: Communards and guns posted on a barricade at the start of the rue de Charonne. Photo taken on March 18, 1871 in the axis of rue du faubourg Saint-Antoine (Larousse.fr, n.d.)

A particularly noticeable passage in this film is when an intertitle tells the viewer how the French educational system did not agree on any financial aid towards the film's production. It is then also told how this film is dedicated to French directors that were kept quiet while trying to bring forward the truth about the story of the Commune (Watkins, 2000). Even to this day, this part of French history is not taught in French schools. This shows us how sensitive the topic is for some, while others attempt to forget or ignore it (Ministère De L'Education Nationale Et De La Jeunesse, 2023).

Overall, *La Commune (Paris, 1871)*, by Watkins (2000), offers a complex and critical view of the Paris Commune and its aftermath. The film shows how the Commune represented a radical challenge to the existing order and a complex coalition of different groups and ideas. It also engages with the ongoing debates about the meaning and legacy of the Commune. By blending historical accuracy and contemporary relevance, *La Commune* offers a powerful and thought-provoking reflection on the enduring relevance of revolutionary politics and the ongoing struggles for equality and democracy.

2.3 Late 19th-century public opinions

The articles written by John Walker in *Le Monde Illustré* (1878) on the 1878 Exposition Universelle, the selective repertoire of Marville's photographs for the exposition and Emile Zola's novel *Paris* (1898) demonstrate the attempt to erase the traumatic memory of the Franco-Prussian War and the Commune of 1871 in Paris. These 'to be forgotten' destroyed parts of Paris during the revolts of 1871 and the Franco-Prussian War, show the opposing sides of the Sacré-Cœur and reveal the ideological, political, and cultural implications of the omission of the past (Wilson, 2005).

In her study, Wilson (2005) analyses several aspects of Walker's articles during the 1878 Exposition Universelle in which the writer promotes the official view of a new Paris during a time of censorship concerning the Commune. Wilson (2005) shows here, by emphasising Nietzsche's (1983) 'active will not let go', how Walker's texts, 'Promenades à l'Exposition', gave its bourgeois readers a subtle glimpse of their recently lived past.

In the April 20th, 1878 issue of *Le Monde illustré*, Walker begins a series of articles focusing on reviving the fabled city of light. This new fairytale city, distinct from the "decadent" Paris of the Second Empire, which had also been characterised as "féerique" (fairylke), was then supposed to be a perfect example of moral order, civilisation, progress, and technological innovation. In this edition, he states that the city's workers worked tirelessly to construct the exhibition pavilions at night. He then compares the workers to "gnomes" building a magical palace under the orderly guidance of a fairy wielding her enchanted wand ("à l'ordre magique de la baguette d'une fée"). Upholding ancient superstitions, such as comparing the workers to "gnomes", was encouraged as a way to give respect to established traditions. The likes of conservatives favoured this approach over providing these 'gnomes' with a scientific education, as possession of knowledge by the working class and potential revolutionaries can, as they believed, result in disorder and, eventually, uprising. (Lidsky, 1999). Moreover, Wilson (2005) notices the politically subversive reference of the 'magical order' to the conservative 'moral order' installed by Patrice de MacMahon. Marshal MacMahon was the general leading the French Armed Forces to win the battle of the 'bloody week' (Gaudibert, 1972).

This being said, in *Le Monde illustré* of the following week, Walker immediately seeks to diminish the reader's concerns regarding any revolt in his 'Promenades à l'Exposition': "To see the innumerable crowd that surrounds the big enclosure of the Exhibition with a black ribbon, [...]. More than a hundred thousand people had to make this painful pilgrimage on the day and the day after Easter, [...]." By metaphorically speaking of this crowd as a 'black ribbon', the writer portrays the crowd as mourning and remembering (Donagan, 1994). Furthermore, the use of the word 'pilgrimage' is described by Wilson (2005) as an ironic metaphor denouncing the underlying character of the Palais de l'Exposition Universelle of 1878. She

then opposes how the Sacré-Cœur de Montmartre is supposed to be a “symbol of the nation’s return to God” compared to Palais de l’Exposition, which stands for “its return to the same hard-nosed capitalism championed by the ‘evil’ Second Empire” (Wilson, 2005).

Finally, in the *Le Monde illustré* of May 10th 1878, written after the opening of the exposition on May 1st, Wilson (2005) notices how the heavy rains of that day are described as “a terrible downpour, a veritable deluge comes down on the crowd”. These thunderstorms are often used to describe revolutionary uprisings. Walker then proceeds again to diminish the reader’s concerns by referring to the past: “A Roman might have drawn back, but Parisians are not superstitious [...]” Here, Wilson (2005) interprets ‘Roman’ as the past Emperor Napoleon III. By doing so, Walker would credit strength to the reader and the rest of the Parisians as they endured and survived the Franco-Prussian war (Wilson, 2005). Walker’s use of words continues to have more underlying meanings as he uses the specific word ‘deluge’, which can be considered a biblical metaphor to describe the arrival of a new era after the end of the Second Empire (Walker, 1878). When the opening ceremony begins, the sun finds its way through the clouds, announcing hopeful times (Wilson, 2005).

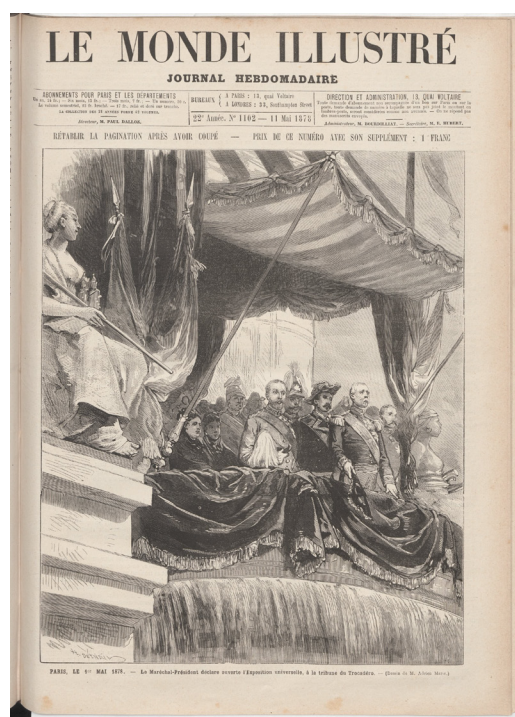


Figure 7: Front page of *Le Monde Illustré* n°1102. The Marshal-President declares the Universal Exhibition open, at the tribune of the Trocadero. — (Drawing by Mr. Adrien Marie.) (Walker, 1878)



Figure 8: The Great Works of the Exhibition, the Pont d'Iéna raised and widened. (Drawing by Mr. Férat) (Walker, 1878).

Furthermore, Marville's photographic series of Paris, commissioned by the city's officials in 1865, documented the city's transformation under Baron Haussmann's urban planning (Wilson, 2005). This album, *Album du vieux Paris* [Album of the old Paris], contained almost 425 images. The Exposition Universelle also used these photographs (Wilson, 2005). However, it was noticeable that reminders of the horrors of the Commune, and in general, everything related to the Second Empire, were silenced. As such, only the newly constructed boulevards and buildings were portrayed, and the photographs of the destroyed buildings and neighbourhoods were excluded (Delloye, 1878).



Figure 9: Passage aux Deux Portes, de la rue des Innocents, Paris Ier, 1866 (Marville, 1865-1878)



Figure 10: MRue de l'Aiguillerie, de la rue Sainte Opportune, Paris Ier, Circa 1865 (Marville, 1865-1878)



Figure 11: Rue de Sully, Paris IVe, 1876 (Marville, 1865-1878)



Figure 12: Place Dauphine, vers le pont Neuf, Paris Ier, Vers 1865 (Marville, 1865-1878)

Emile Zola's novel *Paris* (1898) can be seen as a cultural representation of historical reality. It reflects the social and political context of late 19th-century France, particularly the tensions between the state, the Church, and the working class. The construction of the Sacré-Coeur de Montmartre, as depicted in the novel, was controversial, and its funding by wealthy elites reflects the power dynamics of the time. Moreover, Zola's portrayal of the church as a manipulative force attempting to distract the working class from their social and economic issues resonates with the historical context of the time, in which the Catholic Church and conservative forces were seen as obstacles to social progress and political change (Cook-Gailloud, 2010).

However, it is also important to note that Zola's novel is a work of fiction, and as such, it should not be taken as a strictly factual account of historical events. While the novel's themes and characters are rooted in historical reality, Zola's artistic interpretation and literary style may exaggerate or distort certain aspects of the historical context. Therefore, while *Paris* can be seen as a cultural representation of historical reality, it should be read and interpreted critically, considering its literary merits and historical context.

Furthermore, Zola shows how the Sacré-Cœur's construction reflects the state's corrupt and oppressive nature. The state's decision to finance the church's construction reflects the collusion between the government and the Catholic Church. Zola portrays the state as an agent of the bourgeoisie, which uses religion to maintain power and suppress the working class. Being the founder of the Naturalist movement in 19th-century literature, he embraces scientific objectivism. Describing Paris as a field of intelligence where the future grows and the Sacré-Cœur of Montmartre as the new crown the government and Church put in place, he denounces the Basilica as an 'idolatrous temple, built to glorify the absurd.' (Zola, 1898). Zola criticised the Catholic Church and the Sacré-Cœur for failing to address the social and economic issues faced by the working class in Paris. The church's construction was meant to reassert the dominance of the Catholic Church over the people and distract them from the social and economic issues they faced. However, Zola shows how the church failed to solve the problems of the working class and only displayed the bourgeoisie's power. Zola also criticised the design of the Sacré-Cœur de Montmartre, arguing that it was a throwback to an earlier era and did not reflect the modern values of France. The Basilica's neo-Romanesque style was out of place in a modern city like Paris. Zola argued that the Sacré-Cœur de Montmartre's design symbolised France's backwardness and refusal to embrace modernity (Cook-Gailloud, 2010).

"The Sacré-Cœur, standing on the hill like a gigantic plaster cake, was visible from every corner of Paris. It was like a heavy stone hanging over the city, a symbol of the Church's domination, a monument to the triumph of ignorance and superstition over reason and progress. The basilica was a mockery of the secular government, a sign of the Church's power and privilege. It was a monstrous edifice that seemed to sneer at the suffering and poverty of the people of Paris, a grotesque monument to the hypocrisy of those who claimed to be the guardians of morality and virtue." (Zola, 1898).

In conclusion, the exclusion of the 'to be forgotten' destroyed parts of Paris during the revolts of 1871 and the Franco-Prussian War reveals the opposing sides of the Sacré-Cœur. It highlights the ideological, political, and cultural implications of the omission of the past. The selective representation of Paris at the 1878 Exposition Universelle and Marville's photographic series demonstrates the attempt to erase the traumatic memory of the past and construct a modern, progressive image of the city. However, Zola's novel *Paris* calls for remembering the past and acknowledging its impact on the city's present and future.



Figure 14: Percement de l'avenue de l'Opéra, Paris Ile, 1877 (Marville, 1865-1878)



Figure 15: Marché aux veaux, Paris Ve, 1868 (Marville, 1865-1878)



Figure 16: Rue du Marché aux Fleurs, du quai Desaix, Île de la Cité, Paris IVe, 1865 (Marville, 1865-1878)



Figure 75: Boulevard Henri IV, de la place de la Bastille, Paris IVe, 1876 (Marville, 1865-1878)

2.4 Today's opposing viewpoints on Recognising the Basilica as a historical monument

The Basilica of Sacré-Coeur de Montmartre has been debated in France for many years. Some argue that the Basilica is an important historical monument that should be preserved for future generations. They highlight its architectural significance and role in French religious and political history (Méheut, 2022). However, others argue that the Basilica symbolises French colonialism and religious domination and should not be recognised as a historical monument. They point to the controversy surrounding its construction and the erasure of the memory of the Paris Commune (Harvey, 1979). Some argue that the Basilica's recognition as a historic monument could legitimise its complicated history and association with Catholic dominance in France (Jonas, 2000).

The Conseil de Paris held a critical debate on October 11th, 2022, which resulted in the decision to classify the Basilica of the Sacred Heart, its annexes, and the Square Louise Michel as historical monuments (see appendix 1). This outcome reflects the majority view of the council members, who recognised these sites' architectural, historical, and cultural significance within Parisian society. By approving the classification, the council has ensured the preservation and protection of these landmarks, securing their place in the city's collective memory. The decision has implications for the Montmartre district and the city of Paris. As historical monuments, the Basilica and its surroundings will receive increased attention, resources, and investment for maintenance and restoration, potentially boosting tourism and the local economy. The classification also celebrates the contributions of feminist and revolutionary Louise Michel, ensuring that her legacy is recognised and remembered. The next step has been taken as Montmartre Hill seeks to be enlisted as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. (Ville de Paris, 2022). However, the outcome has been subject to controversy. The debate highlighted the tensions between different interpretations of the city's past and the role of heritage in shaping its identity. Some participants argued that the classification of the Basilica would convey a conservative historical narrative that overlooks the complex and contested legacy of the Paris Commune and other Republican movements. The approval of the classification may deepen social and political divisions in Paris, potentially alienating those who identify with the struggles and aspirations of the Paris Commune (Ville de Paris, 2022). In response to these concerns, proponents of the classification emphasised the importance of recognising and preserving the diverse layers of history embodied in these sites rather than exclusively focusing on a single narrative. By classifying the Basilica of the Sacred Heart, its annexes, and the Square Louise Michel as historical monuments, they argued

that a more inclusive and nuanced approach to the city's heritage could be adopted, acknowledging and respecting the complex histories of these landmarks represent (Ville de Paris, 2022).

In conclusion, the favourable Conseil de Paris' decision to classify the Basilica of the Sacred Heart, its annexes, and the Square Louise Michel as historical monuments mark a significant moment in the ongoing conversation about the politics of memory and the role of heritage in shaping the identity and values of a city. The Basilica of Sacré-Cœur de Montmartre is a significant cultural and historical landmark in Paris. Its construction was influenced by the complex social and political climate of late 19th-century France, and it serves as a symbol of the country's Catholic heritage. However, the controversy surrounding the Basilica's construction is a reminder of the complex relationship between religion, politics, and society. (See figure 17, an illustration of opposing viewpoints.)



Figure 17: Anti-clerical poster depicting a priest as a vulture perching on the Sacre Coeur in Paris (Oge, 1898).

Chapter 3. Contested Heritage

Having seen the historical context and the different points of view over the years, it is essential to fully understand the topic of contested heritage and look at it as objectively as possible.

3.1 The concept of contested heritage and its importance in historical preservation

Contested heritage is a complex issue that has garnered significant attention in recent years. The term refers to the debate and disagreement over preserving historic sites and monuments (Labadi, 2010). The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) World Heritage Centre recognises that preserving such sites is vital to understanding the development of human civilisation and protecting cultural diversity (UNESCO, 2021). However, preservation efforts are complicated when a site has a complex history. The ethical and moral implications of preserving such sites have been fiercely debated (Harrison, 2012).

3.2 The ethical and moral implications of preserving a heritage site with a problematic history

Friedrich Nietzsche's concept of 'historical sickness' speaks to the dangers of over-reliance on history (Nietzsche, 1874). Nietzsche believed an attachment to the past could create a distorted sense of identity and power. He argued that history should not be seen as an end but rather as a means of understanding the present and creating a better future (Nietzsche, 1874). In the context of contested heritage, Nietzsche's ideas suggest that while preserving the past is important, it should not be done at the expense of creating a more just and equitable present: "This is the natural relationship to history of an age, a culture, and a people: summoned up by hunger, regulated by the degree of the need, held to limits by the plastic power within, the understanding of the past is desired at all times to serve the future and the present, not to weaken the present, not to uproot a forceful living future." (Nietzsche, 1874).

3.3 The role of collective memory and cultural identity and power

Preserving contested heritage sites requires balancing the need to acknowledge and learn from the past with the ethical and moral implications of doing so. One key consideration is the role of collective memory and cultural identity in preserving heritage sites (Labadi, 2010). Heritage commonly involves tangible and intangible entities passed down from previous generations. However, Harrison (2012) states that heritage should be seen as a continuous process of creation and recreation, characterised by attitudes and relationships towards the past. This corresponds with others who argue that heritage should be considered dynamic and adaptable, responsive to the changing present (Harrison, 2012). For example, preserving Confederate monuments in the United States has been debated, with some arguing that the monuments are an important part of Southern cultural identity. In contrast, others argue that they glorify a legacy of racism and slavery (Harrison, 2012). These debates illustrate the importance of engaging in critical dialogue and active participation from all stakeholders, including local communities, in preserving contested heritage in the built environment.

3.4 The impact of cultural and religious differences

Another critical consideration in preserving contested heritage sites is the impact of cultural and religious differences. Cultural and religious differences can impact how different groups view and interpret heritage sites (Silverman, 2007). For example, preserving religious sites can be complicated when they have significance for multiple religious groups with conflicting views on how they should be preserved (Silverman, 2007). Similarly, preserving colonial-era buildings can be complicated when those buildings are seen as symbols of oppression by the descendants of colonised peoples (Harrison, 2012). These considerations highlight the importance of engaging in collaborative and inclusive preservation efforts

that consider all stakeholders' views and perspectives.

3.5 The impact of tourism

'Tourismification' also plays a significant role in contested heritage in the built environment. Tourists often seek out heritage sites to connect with the past and experience cultural authenticity (Labadi, 2010). However, tourism can also negatively impact contested heritage sites, such as overcrowding, commercialisation, and the degradation of the site's cultural significance (UNESCO, 2021). In some cases, tourism can even aggravate existing conflicts over contested heritage sites. For example, in Jerusalem, tourism has contributed to tensions between Jewish and Muslim communities over preserving religious sites (Cohen-Hattab & Shoval, 2014).

In conclusion, contested heritage is an important and complex issue that requires careful consideration of ethical, moral, cultural, religious, and economic implications. Preserving contested heritage sites in the built environment requires balancing the need to acknowledge and learn from the past with creating a more just and equitable present. Engaging in critical dialogue and active participation from all stakeholders, including local communities, is essential for creating inclusive and collaborative preservation efforts. While tourism can bring economic benefits, it is important to consider the possibility of overcrowding, commercialisation and degradation. Ultimately, preserving contested heritage sites requires a commitment to ongoing critical reflection, collaboration, and dialogue that prioritises the needs and perspectives of all stakeholders.

Chapter 4: The Challenges of Contested Heritage

4.1 Changes in norms and values over time impact contested heritage

The Basilica of Sacré-Coeur de Montmartre is a prime example of how contested heritage can be shaped by changing norms and values (Ashworth & Graham, 2017). Its construction was controversial due to its association with the conservative and nationalistic sentiments that dominated French society during the late 19th century (Jonas, 2000). Over time, the way society perceives the Basilica has evolved, reflecting the broader changes in social, cultural, and political values (Lowenthal, 2005). As a result, the monument has acquired new meanings and associations, highlighting the dynamic nature of cultural heritage and its potential to adapt and remain relevant (Ashworth et al., 2007).

4.2 The preservation of monuments to represent a period in time despite their problematic history

The case of Sacré-Coeur demonstrates the importance of preserving monuments, even those with problematic histories, to serve as reminders of the past and to foster dialogue about historical events and their impact on the present (Smith, 2006). By maintaining such structures, society can critically reflect on the values and ideologies that shaped them and how these values have evolved over time (Ashworth & Graham, 2017). Preserving heritage through this method can lead to a deeper understanding of history and prevent the elimination of diverse narratives essential to cultural identity. (Harrison, 2012).

4.3 Who is permitted to make changes?

Decisions regarding the preservation and management of contested heritage sites like the Basilica of Sacré-Coeur de Montmartre should involve a wide range of stakeholders, including government bodies, heritage professionals and local communities (Waterton & Smith, 2010). This inclusive approach ensures that diverse perspectives are considered, and the site's significance is evaluated balanced and equitably (Waterton & Smith, 2010). Establishing clear guidelines and criteria for decision-making is essential and grounded in principles of transparency, accountability, and respect for cultural diversity (Logan & Reeves, 2009). By involving a broad range of stakeholders in the decision-making process, heritage sites can better reflect the multiplicity of meanings and values they hold for different groups while promoting dialogue and understanding (Graham & Howard, 2012).

4.4 Social and political factors that Influence the Preservation of the Basilica

The preservation of the Basilica of Sacré-Coeur de Montmartre, like other cultural heritage sites, is influenced by a range of social and political factors, such as its status as a national symbol, the role it plays in the local community, and the broader cultural and political context in which it is situated (Graham & Howard, 2012). For example, the Basilica's association with French nationalism and the Catholic Church has resulted in varying degrees of support and opposition for its preservation over time, reflecting the changing political atmosphere and the progression of societal beliefs. (Graham & Howard, 2012). Montmartre played a significant role in the Christian pilgrimage tradition and still does today, as the Basilica is an important site for Catholics. Many Catholics worldwide visit the Basilica to pray and seek spiritual guidance. The Basilica contains an image of the Sacred Heart of Jesus in a large gold casket where pilgrims come to pray (Harvey, 1979). Furthermore, the Basilica's popularity as a tourist destination can also impact preservation decisions, as stakeholders balance the need to maintain its historical and architectural integrity with the practical challenges of accommodating large numbers of visitors (Graham & Howard, 2012). Preserving the Basilica is a complex and ongoing process that must continually adapt to the changing social, political, and cultural landscape (Graham, 2002).

In conclusion, the case of the Basilica of Sacré-Coeur de Montmartre highlights the importance of pre-

serving monuments with contested histories, as they can serve as catalysts for dialogue and critical reflection on the past. The management and preservation of such sites should involve diverse stakeholders, ensuring that decisions are made transparent, accountable, and inclusive. The preservation of the Basilica is influenced by many social and political factors, which must be carefully considered and navigated to ensure that the monument remains a valuable and meaningful part of France's cultural heritage for future generations.



Figure 18: Tourists near the Sacre-Coeur of Montmartre (Traub, 2019).

Conclusion

This thesis explores the recognition of the Basilica of Sacré-Coeur de Montmartre as a historical monument, looking into the complexities of contested heritage. The case study reveals the importance of understanding cultural heritage in the context of the Basilica's controversial history and significance. Critical aspects of the analysis include the historical context, conflicting viewpoints, ethical and moral implications, the role of collective memory and cultural identity, power dynamics, and the impact of cultural and religious differences. A central question addressed in this thesis is whether the Basilica's recognition as a historical monument can be justified. The study indicates that changes in societal norms and values over time complicates the preservation of monuments with complex histories. Additionally, the influence of social and political factors on the preservation of historical monuments and the decision-making process must be considered.

The thesis highlights the diverse perspectives and interpretations of the Basilica's history and significance by examining various sources such as historical research, interviews, documentaries, and articles. These viewpoints emphasise the fluid nature of contested heritage, which evolves and changes meaning over time. Understanding the historical context of a heritage site, including its establishment, involved parties, and the events leading to its creation, is crucial. For the Sacré-Cœur of Montmartre, its construction began as a political and religious reconciliation effort following France's defeat in the Franco-Prussian War and the subsequent Paris Commune.

The thesis also emphasises the importance of considering social and political factors and accurately representing marginalised voices when preserving heritage sites. Acknowledging the various cultural and social perspectives surrounding contested heritage sites and involving local communities and stakeholders in decision-making is essential. In the case of the Sacré-Cœur, preserving the site promotes cultural exchange and understanding while acknowledging and reconciling with the past. However, balancing preservation with education and awareness about the site's complex history is vital. This could involve developing informative materials and exhibitions that offer visitors insights into the different perspectives and interpretations, contributing to a better understanding of the site's historical context and cultural significance.

In conclusion, this thesis contributes to the broader discussion on contested heritage by emphasising the importance of preserving historical monuments while acknowledging the challenges. Recognising that heritage sites are subject to evolving interpretations and meanings and that preservation decisions should carefully consider social and political factors for accurate historical representation is essential.

References

- Ashworth, G., Graham, B., & Tunbridge, J. (2007). *Pluralising Pasts: Heritage, Identity and Place in Multicultural Societies*. Pluto Press (UK).
- Ashworth, G., & Graham, B. B. (2017). *Senses of Place: Senses of Time*. Routledge eBooks. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315243467>
- Bainvel, J. (1917). *La dévotion au Sacré-Coeur de Jésus: doctrine, histoire*. Quatrième édition, revue et augmentée. PARIS GABRIEL BEAUCHESNE, Rue de Rennes, 117.
- Benoist, J. (1992). *Le Sacré-Cœur de Montmartre*. Editions de l'Atelier.
- Cohen-Hattab, K., & Shoval, N. (2014). *Tourism, Religion and Pilgrimage in Jerusalem*. Routledge.
- Cook-Gailloud, K. (2010). Les Trois Romans expérimentaux d'Émile Zola: " Lourdes, Rome", et "Paris". *Nineteenth-Century French Studies*, FALL WINTER 2010—2011, Vol. 39, No. 1/2 (FALL WINTER 2010—2011), pp. 131-153. : University of Nebraska Press
- Darjou, A. (1871) *L'illustration*- Bibliothèque historique de la Ville de Paris
- Delloye, Ernest (1878). *1878 Exposition: Notes et souvenirs*. Paris: Baltenweck.
- Donagan, B. (1994). Did Ministers Matter? War and Religion in England, 1642–1649. *Journal of British Studies*, 33(2), 119–156. <https://doi.org/10.1086/386048>
- Emery, E. (2001) *The Power of the Pen: Emile Zola Takes on the Sacré Coeur Basilica*. The Documentary Impulse in French Literature, Montclair State University.
- Gaudibert, P. (1972). *De l'ordre moral*. FeniXX.
- Graham, B., & Howard, P. P. (2012). *The Ashgate Research Companion to Heritage and Identity*. Ashgate Publishing, Ltd.
- Graham, B. (2002). Heritage as knowledge: Capital or culture? *Urban Studies*, 39(5-6), pp. 1003–1017. Sage Publications, Ltd.
- Harrison, R. (2012). *Heritage: Critical approaches*. Routledge.
- Harvey, D. (1979). Monument and Myth. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 69(3), 362–381. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2562969>
- Harvey, D. (2004). *Paris, Capital of Modernity*. Routledge.
- Hugo, V. (1896). *Les Misérables: Abridged*.
- Jellinek, F. (2013). *The Paris Commune of 1871*. Read Books Ltd.
- Jonas, R. (2000). *France and the Cult of the Sacred Heart: An Epic Tale for Modern Times*. Univ of California Press.
- Jonas, R. (1995). Le Sacre-Coeur de Montmartre de 1870 a nos Jours by Jacques Benoist. *The Journal of*

Interdisciplinary History, Summer, Vol. 26, No. 1. MIT Press.

Jonas, R. (1994). Restoring a Sacred Center: Pilgrimage, Politics, and the Sacré-Coeur. *Historical Reflections / Réflexions Historiques*, Winter 1994, Vol. 20, No. 1, Faces of Marianne: Political, Sexual, and Religious Themes during the French Third Republic (Winter 1994), pp. 95–123. Berghahn Books.

Labadi, S., & Long, C. (2010). *Heritage and Globalisation*. Routledge.

Larousse, É. (n.d.). *La Commune : barricade rue de Charonne* – Média LAROUSSE. https://www.larousse.fr/encyclopedie/images/La_Commune__barricade_rue_de_Charonne/1315398

Lidsky, P. (1999). *Les Écrivains contre la Commune*. Paris: La Découverte. First published by Maspéro in 1970.

Logan, W., & Reeves, K. (Eds.). (2009). *Places of pain and shame: Dealing with “difficult heritage.”* Routledge.

Lowenthal, D. (2005). Natural and cultural heritage. *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, 11(1), 81–92.

Loyer F. (1993) *Jasques Benoist: Le Sacré-Coeur de Montmartre. De 1870 à nos jours*, Paris, Editions Ouvrières, coll. “Patrimoine”, 2 vol., 1992. 1280 p., 176 ill. n. et bl.. In: *Revue de l’Art*, 1993, n°102. pp. 71-72;

Marville, C., Chambord, J., & Carnavalet, M. (1981). *Charles Marville, Photographs of Paris at the Time of the Second Empire on Loan from the Musée Carnavalet*, Paris: French Institute/Alliance Française, New York, May 13-June 26, 1981, Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven, Connecticut, July 1-August 16, 1981, Wellesley College Museum, Wellesley, Massachusetts, September 4-October 18, 1981 : [catalogue].

Méheut, C. (2022). In Long-Contested Move, Paris Makes Sacré-Coeur a Historical Monument. *The New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/10/12/world/europe/paris-sacre-coeur-landmark-status.html>

Morgan, D. (2008). *The Sacred Heart of Jesus: The Visual Evolution of a Devotion*. Amsterdam University Press.

Nietzsche, F. (1874). ‘On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life’, trans. R.J. Hollingdale, in J.P. Stern (ed.), *Untimely Meditations*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Oge, E. (1898). *La Lanterne*. Journal Republicain Anti-clerical. <https://catalogue.swanngalleries.com/Lots/auction-lot/EUGENE-OGE-%281869-1936%29-LA-LANTERNE-1902-55x39-inchesCharles?saleno=2099&lotNo=43&refNo=580561>

Pignon Ernest, E. (1971). *The dead of the Commune*. Exhibited at the Musée d’Art Moderne et d’Art Contemporain Nice between 2016 and 2017.

Richard-Bazire, A. (2018). Le concours pour la construction du Sacré-Cœur de Montmartre, une désillusion, *Livraisons de l’histoire de l’architecture*. <http://journals.openedition.org/lha/1021> ; DOI : <https://doi.org/10.4000/lha.1021>

Silverman, H., & Ruggles, D. F. (2007). *Cultural Heritage and Human Rights*. Springer.

Smith, L. (2006). *Uses of heritage*. Routledge.

Tombs, R. (2014). *The Paris Commune 1871*. Routledge.

UNESCO. (2019). *Expert meeting on sites associated with recent conflicts and other negative and divisive memories*. UNESCO IIEP, Paris, France. Report

UNESCO. (2021). *World Heritage Centre*. Retrieved February 21st, 2023, from <https://whc.unesco.org/en/about/>

Traub, C. (2019). *The Sacré Coeur in Paris: A Complete Visitor's Guide*. TripSavvy. <https://www.tripsavvy.com/sacre-coeur-visitors-guide-4122149>

Ville de Paris. (2022, October 11). *[LIVE VIDEO] Mardi 11 octobre 2022 - Conseil de Paris* [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y1DSW4ywvUE>

Walker (1878) 'Promenades à l'Exposition', *Le Monde illustré* n 1098-1100-1102. Librairie Nouvelle.

Waterton, E., & Smith, L. (2010). The recognition and misrecognition of community heritage. *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, 16(1-2), pp. 4–15.

Watkins, P. (2000). *La Commune (Paris, 1871)* [Motion picture]. France: Rezo Films.

Wilson, C. (2005). Memory and the politics of forgetting: Paris, the Commune and the 1878 Exposition Universelle. *Journal of European Studies*, 35(1), 047–063. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0047244105051156>

Zola, É. (1898). *Paris*. The Macmillan Company.

Appendix 1 – Transcription

Eric Lejoindre

To be honest with you, I was surprised to discover that what is still the most visited church in Paris was not classified. The classification procedure that was launched two years ago obviously made sense. This procedure allows us to include in this classification the annexes of the Basilica, which are also remarkable, and of course, the square Louise Michel with its landscaping and its three monumental staircases. I want to take advantage of this deliberation to address one and a friend whom she salutes to Danielle Vaillant and Bertrand de La Noe, who mobilised a lot at the time to rename the square at the bottom of the Sacré-Coeur, which was called Adolphe Villette era and to name it Louise Michel as a very useful nod to the history of this Parisian space. This classification is part of the campaign's continuity, undertaken to protect historical monuments of religious buildings belonging to the City of Marche, which began in 2011. In 2020, it resulted in a vote inviting us to allow the protection of the Basilica as a historical monument. This classification is also part of the work we have carried out for more than a year to register Montmartre as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The Basilica and the square are part of the rich heritage of this emblematic 18th-century district and a component of its long history, a long history which I will not go into in particular. I imagine others will, but that is not the subject of the vote. This vote has only one objective: protecting a heritage that no one dreams of imagining not being protected. This classification will allow us to continue to do what we do, that is, to tell the story and, in particular, to tell the story of the Commune as we were able to celebrate it for its 150th anniversary, precisely, at the foot of the Sacré-Coeur. Finally, it was also a friendly wink because Paris does not forget. I invite you, dear colleagues, to vote for this deliberation for what it is, the protection of Parisian heritage.

Paul Simondon

Thank you, Eric Lejoindre. The floor is with Raphaël Primet.

Raphaëlle Primet

My dear colleagues, the question of the classification of the Sacred Heart cannot be done without controversy. Presented as a simple administrative formality or as a belated recognition of the formerly despised 19th-century architecture, we feel this action is a profound attack on the action of the communards and our republican history. We recognised an action last year through multiple events, including at the foot of the Hill of the Sacré-Coeur in the now aptly named Square Louise Michel. This deliberation disregards the historical dimension of the place to focus only on the heritage aspect. How to evoke this monument without talking about its relationship to the town? Why choose to approach this question only under heritage and religious language? To mention in the explanatory memorandum that the choice of the place responds in particular to a lack of churches in this former village annexed by the city of Paris in 1860 is at the very least risky when one knows the history of the choice of the place whose the bloody origins of the building were thought against the French Revolution of 1789 and the Commune of Paris. So indeed, we have avoided the telescoping of dates between the classification of the Basilica of Montmartre and the anniversary of the Commune of Paris.

The fact remains that this classification remains an affront to the memory of the Communards, who had been able to lead for 62 years in 12 days the most modern, broadest and most fruitful revolution of all those which have illuminated history. A revolution which advocated the separation of Church and State, the legal and compulsory education which organised the ceiling of salaries and imposed equality between women and men. However, the Commune is also a bloody week that repressed the Parisian people and their 72 days of hope with the apparent objective of traumatising the population and dissuading them from any future revolution. The culmination of this repression is the erection of this odious religious edifice on these dead, estimated at nearly 30,000. This bloody week was buried under a building of so-called eternal whiteness by choice of this white stone which has the particularity of secreting a white substance under the effect of water, the cullet. This makes the choice of location and building architecture even more

challenging. The modification of the status of this Basilica is therefore not neutral, as this building was built in a context of the moral order, which follows a century of so-called moral decline from the French Revolution to the Commune of Paris.

These revolutions were experienced as a real insult by the bourgeoisie, which then lost against a powerful take that took Alsace and Lorraine. The construction of the Sacred Heart is written in the continuity of a national monarchist and clerical regime in order to expiate the sins imputed to the Commune, to make the people pay for their revolt to repair this defeat of 1870, to erect this Basilica on the Butte Montmartre, where the events of the Commune began, where the communards had stood up to the Versailles troops of Thiers and defended the cannons made in the past to resist the Prussian invasion, there also where Eugène Varlin was executed in the last hours of the Commune. Erecting this Basilica in this place was an affront, a political bias that aimed to erase the town's memory. So yes, more than 150 years later, the memory remains alive and flayed in front of this building, symbolising many times the most total obscurantism. Besides, Zola did not say about him, "I do not know of more imbecile nonsense. Paris was crowned, dominated by this idolatrous temple built to glorify the absurd. Such impudence, such a blow given to reason after so much work, so many centuries of science and struggle. »

Moreover, the main character of his book Paris did not dream of blowing it up. Many others dreamed of it, including his aubain and even Lionel Jospin, who had gone so far as to say that if he had the power to raze a Parisian building, it would be the Sacred Heart. This is why we are asking to abandon the project of classification as a historical monument of the Basilica of the Sacred Heart. We will vote against this deliberation. Thank you. Thank you, Raphaël Primet.

Paul Simondon

The floor is with Danielle Simonnet.

Danielle Simonnet

We cannot speak of the Sacré-Coeur as a historical monument with only an element of architectural history. In contrast, this place, if there is a place in Paris steeped in history that reveals a particular desire policy, is the Sacred Heart. Frankly, declaring the Sacré-Coeur a historic monument could be akin to apologising for the murder of the 32,000 executed by the Paris commune in eight days. I will tell you one thing. In 1873, when the National Assembly decided to build the Sacré-Coeur, who was in charge? Adolphe Thiers and Patrice de MacMahon. Who were they? Patrice de MacMahon was the head of the Versailles army, which had precisely organised the bloody week from May 21st to 28, 1871, precisely to kill 32,000 people, 32,000 shot in eight days, that is to say, a large part of the people of Paris, the one who had his head raised, the one who was upright and who precisely demanded both be able to defend France and the Republic in a patriotic way and who had this unique political experience, that of the Commune of Paris, in the name of the freedom and self-organisation of the people to meet their needs.

It is suitable for some to take this expression "to atone for the crimes of the commune", but in any case, it was a desire to show the people the domination of those who had thus crushed the communards that built the Sacred Heart. Therefore, we cannot honour the Sacred Heart independently of what it symbolises as a bloodstain on our Republic and this unique revolution, the Commune of Paris. Moreover, I still find it more than paradoxical to celebrate the Commune of Paris and, at the same time to celebrate the Sacred Heart. A minimum of historical political coherence. A minimum of historical political coherence. It is impossible to commemorate the Paris commune as if it were just folklore in our history. No. Either it is a historical reference, and at that time, it is a scandal, and we must, even today, after all these years later, denounce this murder of the 32,000 shot or else we refrain from honouring the Commune of Paris. Moreover, for my part, I could not vote for this deliberation. I will vote against it.

Paul Simondon

Thank you, Danielle Simonnet. The floor is given to Rudolph Granier.

Rudolph Granier

However, let this debate excite you, my dear colleagues, do not hesitate to let us exaggerate anything; we are not on the Mount of Olives, but just in Montmartre in 2022. So, award-winning advisor and Simonnet, you already obtained a little respite there two years ago, and no one understands the only inscription of this iconic monument for the 18th century, iconic for Paris and iconic for France. Moreover, history tells us that the law of 1873 does not mention the town, simply a place of public utility. So, basically, what do I see there? I see in your debates a desire to instrumentalise. Instrumentalize history and instrumentalise the past in contemporary debates.

Moreover, you are so mistaken that summoning up history in such a confused way in the service of your ideology has a name, my dear colleagues. This is called revisionism. So you are looking here; you are looking here out of pride. Moreover, if you allow me, the pride of clumsily becoming a historian. Furthermore, I also condemn historians who tried to become politicians for a moment. The last point, we will not rekindle the incidents of the Commune. But last point, and the incidents of the town hall. The financial possibilities offered by classification as historical monuments are significant, and I do not see any malice regarding the city's finances. This is an excellent opportunity for funding outside the city budget. For all these reasons, whether urban planning, tourism, or artistic and less for ideological reasons, the Sangepori group will vote favourably for this deliberation.

Paul Simondon

Thank you Rudolphe Granier. I give the word to Karen Taieb.

Karen Taieb

Thank you, Mr Mayor, and thank you, my dear colleagues. First of all, thank you to Éric Legendre for his intervention. I know how much Montmartre is close to his heart. Thanks to everyone, to everyone involved. I know this is a topic that brings a lot. Sometimes you could say polemic, but that is not the point. Today, we tend to sum up this classification by that of the only Basilica, particularly in the press. However, it is, and I remind you, a triple classification. First, there is. There is already heritage protection. In October 2020, there was already an inscription, so this monument is already protected. There, it is a triple classification, a triple classification in one with, in particular, the Basilica of the Sacred Heart. These annexes are like the railings surrounding the Basilica and the three staircases. Moreover, as you pointed out, the square Louise Michel. Almost everything is said in this title. During the CRPA, historians recalled that the desire to build the Basilica of the Sacred Heart at this location on the highest part of Paris, the Montmartre hill, originated in January 1871, in particular by the wish formulated by Alexandre Félix the Gentil, following the defeat of France in the war of 1870. However, I understand all the historical and memorial questions, and I recall them. Moreover, in this CRPA, there is no question, through this wish, of forgetting the memorial part and the unbreakable link between the Commune and this part of Paris, this Montmartre hill where these tragedies took place. So today, we salute the heritage and architectural character of the Basilica of the Annexes and the Square Louise Michel through this deliberation built between 1877 and 1923, nearly a quarter of a century. The Basilica of the Sacred Heart was the work of six successive architects. We know the first of them, Paul Abadie, who won the competition in 1874 with exciting architectural plans, and five domes which give it its neo-Byzantine style. The Basilica pleases or displeases. Had. We have always heard several criticisms. In any case, it is indeed a very visited place. Furthermore, the history of art in Paris, in any case, is one of the milestones of the architecture of the 19 and 20 centuries. The Basilica is seen from all sides of Paris, not only by its imposing structure but also by the particularity, as you said, of its Château Landon stone, which has the characteristic of whitening with the rain. Alongside this heritage protection, we must remember the city's history and the bloody events that occurred very close to the future Basilica. Moreover, it seems essential to me to underline the classification of the square Louise Michel in this magnificent triptych garden also with remarkable architectural and landscape qualities, which bears the name of one of the significant figures of the town, as Bertrand Delanoë wished. This was recalled by Éric Lejoindre. Just after the registration of the building in October 2020.

I also immediately wrote to the regional director of cultural affairs, indicating to him that I wanted to put the continuation of the protection on hold, namely the second stage, that is to say, the ranking throughout the year 2021, which was to be fully dedicated to the municipality and the memory of the communards. Moreover, I thank and congratulate my colleague Laurence master for all the events organised in their memory. For this reason, this deliberation now came in 2022. Today, it is also a question of recognising the heritage character of this building visited by more than 11 million people each year, just after Notre Dame, the most visited site in Paris, to recognise above all the architectural prowess which has spanned nearly 25 years, with particularly interesting interior decorations and a crypt of an extraordinary size, with the inscription, the resulting protection of the constraints as for any protected building, but also the possibility for the DRAC to finance up to 20% of possible works. With the ranking, this potential funding would be 40%, which is not negligible. Even if I can reassure everyone, no major works are planned to date since the quality and architectural health of the building is not a problem. However, this may be true in ten, 20 or 50 years. If you vote for this deliberation, the Sacré-Coeur Basilica will thus be the 60 religious building to be protected as a historical monument out of the 95 buildings in Paris. Moreover, I take this opportunity to add that, like this campaign to protect religious buildings belonging to the city, I wanted a campaign to protect historical monuments to be carried out in the same way for our district town halls which Public buildings will be voted on, which are also magnificent buildings that we often owe to the same architects. I can cite, in particular, Ballu or Hittorff. I wanted to bring this to your attention and thank you for deliberating.

--

The votes are visibly divided in favour of the deliberation.