

# MEMORY AND IDENTITY :

## The Role of Heritage in Modern Society

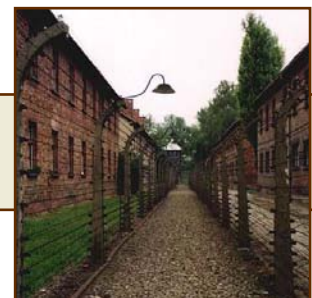
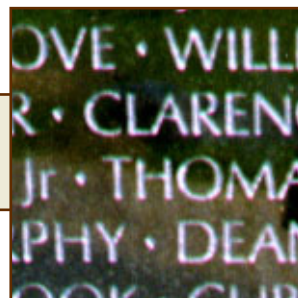
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International Colloquium  
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Sponsored by the Province of East-Flanders,  
the Provincial Archaeological Museum - Ename,  
the Flemish Heritage Institute (VIOE)  
and the Ename Center for Public Archaeology

**13-14 January 2005**  
**Provinciehuis East-Flanders**  
**Ghent, Belgium**

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## PROGRAM AND SELECTED ABSTRACTS



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## The Theme

As part of their continuing program of public discussion and reflection on the role of heritage in modern society, the Province of East-Flanders, the Provincial Archaeological Museum Ename, and the Ename Center for Public Archaeology have organised a two-day event to present a range of perspectives on conflicting memories and contrasting historical visions—and to reflect on the role of public heritage as a powerful tool for social reflection and intercultural dialogue.

At a time when official presentations of Heritage are increasingly seen in the context of patriotic commemoration or touristic development, sites of tragedy or difficult memory (famous battlefields, massacre sites, war memorials, concentration camps, political prisons) are problems for heritage planners all over the world.

Sites of conflicted memories both symbolize and embody problems of intolerance and difficult co-existence. Yet can or should these places be seen merely as “tourist attractions” of a different kind? What is the potential of these places for reminding us of history’s lessons and influencing contemporary civic debate?

This event brings together historians, archaeologists, and heritage professionals from Europe, Vietnam, the United States, South Africa, Israel, and Palestine to discuss how the material remains of difficult and tragic historical events have been meaningfully and sensitively used to contribute to public discussion and education on modern issues of national identity, armed conflict, ethnic violence, and intolerance.

## The Colloquium

In order to more fully explore the idea of how material heritage can be an important tool in contemporary discussions of intolerance and conflict, the first day will be devoted to the treatment of difficult heritage in Flanders and the Netherlands. The second day will feature presentations about other places and themes where heritage and memory have direct and powerful modern implications.

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## Thursday 13 January

### New Approaches to Heritage in Flanders and the Netherlands

15h00-15h30	• Registration and Coffee
15h30-16h00	• Opening Remarks:  <b>Jean-Pierre Van Der Meiren</b> , Deputy for Culture and Social Affairs of the Province of East Flanders <b>Dirk Callebaut</b> , Director of the Flemish Heritage Institute <b>Neil Silberman</b> , Director of the Ename Center for Public Archaeology
16h00-16h20	• Flemish Center for Folk Culture (Vlaams Centrum voor Volkscultuur) <b>Björn Rzoska</b> "Using Intangible Heritage as a Means to Interpret Contested Remains of the Past"
16h20-16h40	• Association for World War Archaeology (Flemish Heritage Institute) <b>Marc Dewilde, Pedro Pype, and Mathieu de Meyer</b> "The Challenge of Studying and Preserving the Remains of World War I"
16h40-17h00	• Dutch Council for Culture <b>Riemer Knoop</b> "Policy Recommendations to the Dutch Government Concerning World War II Heritage"
17h00-17h20	• Heritage Solutions <b>GerhardMark Van der Waal</b> "Dealing with Faulty Heritage: Case Studies from South Africa and the Netherlands"
17h20-18h30	• Closing Remarks and Refreshments

## Friday 14 January

9h00-9h30	• Registration and Coffee
9h30-11h00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>European Memory: From Holocaust to Coexistence?</b>  <i>Speakers:</i>  <b>Max Polonovski</b>            Chief Curator of Jewish Heritage, Ministry of Culture, France  <b>Thomas Lutz</b>            Director, Memorial Museums Department, Topography of Terror Foundation, Germany   <i>Respondent:</i>  <b>Tomasz Kuncewicz</b>            Director, Auschwitz Jewish Center, Poland</li> </ul>
11h00-11h30	• Coffee Break
11h30-13h00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Israel and Palestine: Conflicting Histories, Conflicting Dreams.</b>  <i>Speakers:</i>  <b>Uzi Dahari</b>            Deputy Director, Israel Antiquities Authority  <b>Adel Yahya</b>            Director, Palestine Association for Cultural Exchange   <i>Respondent:</i>  <b>Ludo Abicht</b>            University of Antwerp, Belgium</li> </ul>
13h00-14h00	• Lunch
14h00-15h30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Vietnam: Reflections of War, a Generation Later.</b>  <i>Speakers:</i>  <b>Dwight Pitcaithley</b>            Chief Historian, US National Park Service  <b>Nguyen Quoc Hung</b>            Vice Director of the Cultural Heritage Department, Socialist Republic of Vietnam   <i>Respondent:</i>  <b>Jean-Louis Luxen</b>            French Community of Belgium, Former Secretary General of ICOMOS</li> </ul>
15h30-16h00	• Coffee Break
16h00-17h30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>South Africa: Memories of Apartheid and Beyond.</b>  <i>Speakers:</i>  <b>Carmel Schrire</b>            Department of Anthropology, Rutgers University, USA  <b>Sandra Prosalendis</b>            Deputy Director, Arts and Culture Human Sciences Research Council, South Africa   <i>Respondent:</i>  <b>Francis P. McManamon</b>            Chief Archaeologist, US National Park Service</li> </ul>
17h30-18h30	• Concluding Panel Discussion

## Saturday 15 January : Optional Excursion

9h00	• Departure from Ghent to Ename/Oudenaarde
10h00-13h00	• Guided Visit to the Provincial Museum Ename, the Archeological Site of Ename, the St. Laurentius Church and the Ename Center for Public Archaeology.
13h00-14h00	• Lunch in Oudenaarde
14h00-16h00	• Concluding Panel Discussion and Open Forum
16h00-16h30	• Coffee and Refreshments
16h30	• Return to Ghent

## ABSTRACTS - Thursday January 13

# New Approaches to Heritage in Flanders and the Netherlands

### Speakers:

**Björn Rzoska**  
**Flemish Center for Folk Culture**  
**(Vlaams Centrum voor Volkscultuur)**

### **"Using Intangible Heritage as a Means to Interpret Contested Remains of the Past"**

Clearly the commemoration industry is working on full power these days. The celebration of '60 years of liberation', the battle of the Ardennes (also called the 'Battle of the Bulge'), the flood of books, television-documentaries, exhibitions and glossy brochures on a wide variety of heritage topics are impressive and still growing. Remarkable in this is the fact that contested remains of the past seem to be neutralized by a process of 'heritage-isation'. Moreover, there seems to be a tendency to use oral history as a means to interpret and 'dis-arm' contested remains. In this paper I try to establish the ways in which this attempted and whether these are successful.

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**Marc Dewilde, Pedro Pype, and Mathieu de Meyer**  
**Association for World War Archaeology**  
**(Flemish Heritage Institute)**

### **"The Challenge of Studying and Preserving the Remains of World War I"**

The province of Western Flanders in Belgium contains a particular kind of heritage: the World War I remains. Because this heritage is threatened by the plans for the extension of the A19 motorway the Flemish Heritage Institute made an extensive historical and archaeological study of these remains. For this purpose a special World War I archaeology Department was established. Because of financial reasons the initiative was taken to establish the Association for World War Archaeology (A.W.A.). A brief description of this initiative and its results will be presented.

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**Riemer Knoop**  
**Dutch Council for Culture**

### **"Policy Recommendations to the Dutch Government Concerning World War II Heritage"**

On March 1, 2003, the Netherlands State Secretary for Culture asked the Council for Culture for its opinion on the desirability of a general policy framework with regard to WW II monuments. The State Secretary requested the

Council to pay special attention to:

- a possible exceptional meaning of monuments from the WWII period
- the interests of war victims and their relatives
- feelings within society at large.

The Council nominated an ad hoc Committee, which decided to broaden the advice from WW II monuments to include objects from other publicly debated periods from the nation's past. Four themes were chosen: slavery, colonialism, and WW II (both prosecution and resistance). "Contentious heritage" was felt to cover a wide range of subjects and periods, due to continually changing views on history. In addition, during the hearings the concept of "forgotten heritage" surfaced, retaining the memories of immigrants, or other minority groups, that had thus far not been clearly recognised.

The Committee noted that the contentiousness of many monuments is enhanced by the public character of their contexts. By the process of "musealisation" undergone by movable objects and documents, i.e. by their removal from the original contexts and their transfer to less publicly accessible areas, they are almost completely safeguarded from being misunderstood in the way sketched above. Given a continually changing appreciation of history, new views and new interest groups are about to surface every day, and the arguments underlying the legal protection of each object should therefore be periodically re-assessed, as should the very list of protected immovable objects itself.

This presentation will summarize the details of the Committee's work and eventual recommendations as well as the conclusion that sensitivities with regard to historical heritage occur not only with regard to heritage that is contentious but also with regard to heritage that has been forgotten. Other government institutions should further analyse the forgotten heritage category, as a potentially valuable aspect of policy formulation.

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**GerhardMark Van der Waal**  
**Heritage Solutions, Netherlands**

**"Dealing with Faulty Heritage: Case Studies from South Africa and the Netherlands"**

The intention of this presentation is to offer some suggestions on how to deal with faulty heritage based on experience in South Africa and the Netherlands. Examples of faulty heritage will come from these countries and concern the following themes:

1. Exploration
  - a. What role does heritage play in society? Who determines this role?
  - b. Absent and present heritage. Things we see and don't see. Conditioned perception.
  - c. When does heritage become faulty? Religious and patriotic defence mechanisms.
2. Provisional conclusions
  - a. Attributes of a society that makes value judgments on heritage.
  - b. Types of value systems that lead to this attitude: a strategy model.

3. Transcending time and culture: tolerance.
    - a. How does tolerance operate?
    - b. Learning from the past: integrate faulty heritage in society.
    - c. Benefits:
      - i. Increase participation
      - ii. Reduce conflict
      - iii. Accelerate economic growth
      - iv. Prevents amnesia (destruction through ignorance, repetition of previous mistakes)
  
  4. Practical suggestions to resolve the paradox (love your enemy)
    - a. Acknowledge and accept (social attitude and technical process)
    - b. Identify and publish
    - c. Conserve and maintain
    - d. Use/recycle (also economically) and enjoy
  
  5. Can we apply this approach with regard to cultural conflicts today in Europe?
    - a. Inclusion of Islamic countries into Europe (e.g. historical roots).
    - b. Position of cultural minorities in Western Europe (e.g. support assertiveness).
    - c. Responsibility of policy-makers (e.g. expanding legal definition and thematic/typological scope of heritage).
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**ABSTRACTS - Friday January 14, 2005****Session 1****Europe: From Holocaust to Coexistence?**

What is the potential role of sites connected with the tragic events of World War II in fostering education and discussion about tolerance and ethnic coexistence in contemporary Europe? Have world heritage sites and other historical monuments such as Auschwitz, the Anna Frank House, and war memorials throughout Europe been able to convey their significance and potential message in the very different demographic landscape of Europe today?

**Speakers:**

**Max Polonovski**  
**Chief Curator of Jewish Heritage**  
**Ministry of Culture, France**

It should seem natural that around the most emblematic places of human suffering, a general consensus could be reached, so that they would remain as monuments devoted to memory and to education, so that they would set an example to struggle against the causes which released the mechanism of barbarity.

The former camps of Auschwitz and Birkenau, of which the 60th anniversary of liberation will be celebrated in a few days, became, due to their better condition than the other destroyed extermination camps, the symbol of the destruction of European Jewry. However, the perception of these sites is not unequivocal, and conflicts of interpretation have developed since the end of the II World War.

Several factors contributed to blur the perception of the site. The first one is political. The Communist regime imposed a doctrine which made no difference among the victims of fascism. A nationalist factor plays an obvious role as much as Auschwitz, located in Poland, was the main place of persecution of Poles involved in the resistance to the German occupier. I shall not raise the issue of prejudices, but we should not underestimate the psychological and human factor. As soon as an administration is set up, with competent agents, it is difficult to make them accept an international body which would control or interfere in their field of competence. Moreover, the perception of this heritage is influenced by the evolution of the contemporary world and the versatility of people.

The resistance to enlighten the visitors about the real proportion of Jews among the victims in Auschwitz is similarly met in France. Recent examples and projects show how the interpretation of History is still instrumentalised. Since 1945, genocides, wars and contemporary conflicts are compared to the Holocaust and challenge it in a kind of competition. A disembodied and unnamed genocide means that the site were it took place and the education program which is connected, will be emptied of their signification. As said Albert Camus, "To misname things is to add to the misery of the world".

**Thomas Lutz**  
**Director, Memorial Museums Department**  
**Topography of Terror Foundation, Germany**

The role of Germany as the perpetrator country - with only a small number of Nazi victims from this country itself - committing genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity during World War II is neglected and suppressed in both post-war German states. The examples of Memorial Museums can explain the different kinds of suppression of the involvement of the German society and government symbolically.

The rediscovery of the "authentic" sites - since the end of the seventies in West-Germany - has a very important impact to change the culture of memory of the Nazi crimes and the societal acknowledgement of the many groups of victims for whom the post war situation often was a second persecution. Totally new are the concepts of "Counter Monuments" (James Young) and "Negative Memory" (Volkhard Knigge) which describes the critical approach towards the own society and the endeavor for reconciliation with survivors of the Nazi crimes. After the unification of Germany the work of memorial museums has become officially more recognized and supported. One result is that the memorial museums were also more used for official political purposes and their credibility and seriousness could be endangered. The Holocaust memorial which will be inaugurated in May 2005 is an example for this new development.

At the end of the lecture, the actual situation of memorial museums is described as a mirror of the actual debates in Germany which focuses again the victims of the own society and the post war period. Also few questions will be stressed which must be answered for the future development.

**Respondent:**

**Tomas Kuncewicz**  
**Director, Auschwitz Jewish Center**  
**Oswiecim, Poland**

## Session 2

### Israel and Palestine: Conflicting Histories, Conflicted Dreams

The Holy Land is rich in historical and archaeological landmarks, yet their interpretation and meaning is a matter of widely differing perspective and appreciation by the peoples of Israel and Palestine. To what extent can these two peoples share a common vision of the past, or at least share a common responsibility for preserving the full material record, without selectively highlighting certain elements and ignoring others that seem less relevant to their own identity?

#### **Speakers:**

**Uzi Dahari**  
**Deputy Director,**  
**Israel Antiquities Authority**

Every society needs symbols; however, the symbols are of no value when there are no ideals behind them, when the symbols are in lieu of ideals, when the symbols represent empty slogans or when they represent a single ideal rather than a complex set of values. It is our right as Israelis to maintain the vision of Greater Israel, just as it is the right of the Palestinians to dream of a Greater Palestine that is entirely Islamic. However, it is preferable that visions remain within the realm of dreams or as philosophic desires.

Harnessing archaeology in order to create a national heritage is permissible and desirable for the generations of dreamers and founders and it can also be a positive thing later, but only if it is based on scientific and historic truth that stands persistent testing, and does not minimize periods, cultures and historic events that are not connected with its heritage.

We have to distinguish between archaeological sites (even if they represent one people or religion, they are part of the generations' regional historic and cultural heritage); and religious sites (that belong to and are sacred to one religion but must be respected and maintained by members of other religions); and national commemorative sites (that are associated with the cultural heritage of a single society). It is to be hoped that Israel's national commemorative sites and those of the Palestinians will quickly become archaeological sites and will be part of the cultural heritage of the entire Near East.

**Adel Yahya**  
**Director,**  
**Palestine Association for Cultural Exchange**

There is probably no place in the world where archaeology has been given such immediacy as in the Holy Land. That may sound good at first glance, but in fact it is not. Early interest in the archaeology of the country has been quite selective and extremely divisive. It is characterized by an almost exclusive focus on specific sites and layers, and as a result of that we now have an imbalance in our archaeological knowledge of the country. We possess a great deal of knowledge on the biblical period, which leads to overestimating the importance of that time frame, and at the same time underestimating other periods of which we have less information such as prehistory and the Islamic period. This imbalance has to do with the country's internal power relations that compromise the weaker side.

It was not until recently that archaeologists of the Holy Land, including some Israeli and Palestinian archaeologists, realized the need to insulate their studies from political and religious influences. These archaeologists repudiate discrimination against sites and occupations on the basis of their period, political, or religious connotations. They employ scientific methodologies and pursue the same questions pursued by archaeologists in other countries such as studies of settlement patterns, trade, and economy of ancient civilizations. But there are several other conditions that need to be overcome before one can think of a proper policy to safeguard and promote cultural heritage in the Holy Land, not least of which is facilitating access to sites, and abandoning policies of segregations and closures, as well as modernizing antiquity laws. The study of history and archaeology must be neutralized and constellations within historical periods be reevaluated, and above all dissemination of knowledge on all sites and periods should be encouraged regardless of sites national and religious connotations.

Archaeologists can only protect heritage if they succeed in promoting reconciliation between the peoples of the region and they can only do that by committing themselves to the rich history, diversity, and resources of the country, and therefore to supporting an agenda that both protects heritage and promotes change. Palestinian, Israeli and foreign archaeologists working in the Holy Land can and should facilitate the mutual understanding of the past, something that archaeologists in the past did not consider. Reconciliation may not inevitably lead to a "shared version of our pasts" but it will at least maximize the enjoyment of heritage for the local communities and to visitors from abroad, some thing which will certainly benefit all of us economically and politically.

**Respondent:**

**Ludo Abicht**  
**University of Antwerp, Belgium**

## Session 3

### Vietnam: Reflections of War, a Generation Later

More than a quarter of a century has passed since the end of the Vietnam War, but memories are still deep and painful in both Vietnam and the United States. How have the heritage authorities in each country commemorated those memories? What message is conveyed by the presentations of the war in the cities and countryside of Vietnam? How do these heritage presentations relate to the emotional and symbolic impact of the Vietnam War Memorial on the Mall in Washington, D.C.?

#### **Speakers:**

**Dwight Pitcaithley**  
**Chief Historian,**  
**US National Park Service**

This presentation, "Remembering Vietnam: Conflicted Memories on the National Mall," will address the issues of memory manifest in the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C. and the continuing efforts to manipulate the memorial over the almost twenty-five years since its dedication. The author will offer perspectives on the memorial by comparing and contrasting with other Vietnam war memorials throughout the country as well as with memorials erected to commemorate the American Civil War of a century earlier. Remembering Vietnam will offer the views of the author as a historian and as a disabled veteran of the war in Vietnam.

**Nguyen Quoc Hung**  
**Vice Director of the Cultural Heritage Department,**  
**Socialist Republic of Vietnam**

Vietnam is a nation that has experienced many wars of resistance during its 4000-year history. In recent history, since the overthrow of the monarchy and the establishment of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam we carried out two resistance wars—against French colonialism (1945-1954) and American imperialism (1954-1975). These wars have resulted in consequences that we still have to cope with after almost thirty years. That is backwardness and poverty of the post war economy and the lack of manpower in families who lost their relatives in the wars. In addition, there are war wounded and disabled persons, and agent-orange-infected persons who left the infection until their next generations. During the wars of resistance there have also appeared remarkable events and heroes who are honored by the state and people by various ways such as written in historical books and stories; stage plays or film scripts; taken as names for public works such as boulevards and streets, garden parks, schools; engraved on stele; building monuments, and, in the field of heritage, in setting up memorial houses and museums.

Memorial relics not only show the people's respect to the heroes but seem to be proof of our former generations' skills of military arts. The memorial relics of great historical events and national heroes through the wars of resistance in Vietnam mainly intend to educate for the people the tradition of national construction and defense, humanism, altruism of Vietnamese people toward the enemy. Some of Vietnamese museums and relics are also the place keep the dolorous vestiges resulted from the wars. The objects and pictures shown in museums are the warnings with humankind about the savage and unjust of the wars. The war relics and museums prove that citizen, old persons and children are always the first and the most-affected victims of the war.

The relics, monuments, memorial museums of the war events have displayed the multi-sided values such as:

- Honor the heroes and events of the struggle for national defense;
- Educate the tradition of national protection and building;
- Warn on the war calamity, display the spirit of solidarity and mutual assistance, raise up the spirit of loving each other, together overcome the aftermath of war;
- Bring into full play the spirit of creative active from the war; strive to build a better life in the coming time.

In any case, Vietnamese people will try their best to heal the wounds of war. Together with international assistance and self efforts, Vietnam hopes to overcome the wounds of war so that the lessons from the war will be studied deeper so that people in the world can avoid the scourge of war as happened in our country.

**Respondent:**

**Jean-Louis Luxen**  
**French Community of Belgium**  
**Former Secretary General, ICOMOS**

## Session 4

### South Africa: Memories of Apartheid and Beyond

In the new South Africa, history and historical commemoration represent important ways of coming to terms with the experience of apartheid. Robben Island (the infamous political prison in Cape Town Harbor), the District Six Museum, and sites of early Dutch and British colonial settlement throughout the country have become places of mass visitation and active reflection. How does this ongoing research about South Africa's colonial past and contemporary self-perception reflect or distort the nation's emergence as a multi-racial society?

#### **Speakers:**

**Carmel Schrire**  
**Department of Anthropology,**  
**Rutgers University, USA**

The Dutch East India Company or VOC established the first, permanent, European presence in the South Africa at the Cape of Good Hope in 1652. The settlement serviced the mercantile shipping trade to the Indies and spearheaded European penetration into the north. It lasted for some 150 years until around 1800, when the VOC went bankrupt and the British took the Cape.

The genetic, linguistic and cultural presence of the VOC is patent in many aspects of South African life, but its memorialisation has recently undergone a volte face that echoes the radical political transformation from Apartheid to the New South Africa. Briefly, the VOC Tercentenary of 1952 was celebrated in the face of solid non-white disaffection, with a re-enacted landing of white forefathers, a proclamation of intent from the old VOC Castle, and a vast Show of white economic success in this ethnically diverse land. Fifty years later, when apartheid gave way to majority rule, the VOC became a watchword for oppression and their old Castle, an icon of evil. The past was recast in the very same Castle, to reinstate formerly disenfranchised sections of VOC society by active inversion of memories.

This is standard stuff, characteristic of all revolutions whether violent or not. What makes the South African case interesting is the speed with which scholars have recast their findings, ransacking history, archaeology, linguistics, biology, and race relations to conform to the prevailing political ideology.

**Sandra Prosalendis**  
**Deputy Director, Arts and Culture**  
**Human Sciences Research Council, South Africa**

The District Six Museum has come to epitomise the notion of a 'community museum' in post-Apartheid South Africa, acting as a model for many other

institutions that focus on memory as a route to transformation. A key element in the success of D6M is the emphasis on the venue as an arena or theatre, wherein people can remember their past, understand their present and envisage their future. The Museum creates a space to which people bring issues, rather than a framework for learning. Because the themes of D6M are place and community, the kind of identity issues generated are those of the community rather than the individual. In being a District Sixer, people reflect the non-racial ideal of South Africa in general rather than the (often divisive) specificity of a racially defined category. Class as often as race is the focus of inter-group clashes of interest.

The tension that exists for the Trustees of the D6M is to avoid the narrowness of a sectorial category and appeal to the perception of D6 as an arena of (successful?) social integration. The emphasis on the history of a place rather than an issue or a specific group, allows people to address issues of transformation and future growth as easily as those of displacement and past inequalities. The authority to play this role comes, ironically, from the fact that the D6M has remained outside the official establishment and museum structure in the Cape.

