Week 1 – Friday
W4b

Self-representation of ancient civilisations in text and art

Case study: The Theory of cultural memory

HPAR4006

What makes civilisation?

Dr. Katharina Zinn

Readings

- Assmann, J; Czaplicka, J. (1995). Collective Memory and Cultural Identity. In: *New German Critique* 65(1995). pp. 125-133 → available online http://www.jstor.org/stable/488538
- Assmann, J. (2008). Communicative and Cultural Memory. In: Astrid Erll, Ansgar Nünning (Hg.), *Cultural Memory Studies. An International and Interdisciplinary Handbook*, Berlin, New York 2008, S. 109-118 → on MOODLE

Assmann, Jan: *The Mind of Egypt: History and Meaning in the Time of the Pharaohs*. New York: Metropolitan Books, 2002. p. 9.

- We are what we remember, which is another way of saying that we are nothing other than the stories we can tell about ourselves and our past.

Popper, Karl Reimund. 1972. *Objective Knowledge: An Evolutionary Approach*. Oxford, Clarendon Pr. p. 107f.

- *Experiment 1*. All our machines and tools are destroyed, and all our subjective learning, including our subjective knowledge of machines and tools, and how to use them. But libraries and our capacity to learn from them survive. Clearly, after much suffering, our world may get going again.

Popper, Karl Reimund. 1972. *Objective Knowledge: An Evolutionary Approach*. Oxford, Clarendon Pr. p. 107f.

- *Experiment 1*. All our machines and tools are destroyed, and all our subjective learning, including our subjective knowledge of machines and tools, and how to use them. But libraries and our capacity to learn from them survive. Clearly, after much suffering, our world may get going again.
- *Experiment 2*. As before, machines and tools are destroyed, and our subjective learning, including our subjective knowledge of machines and tools, and how to use them. But this time, all libraries are destroyed also, so that our capacity to learn from books becomes useless.
- (…) In the second case there will be no re-emergence of our civilization for many millennia.

Therefore

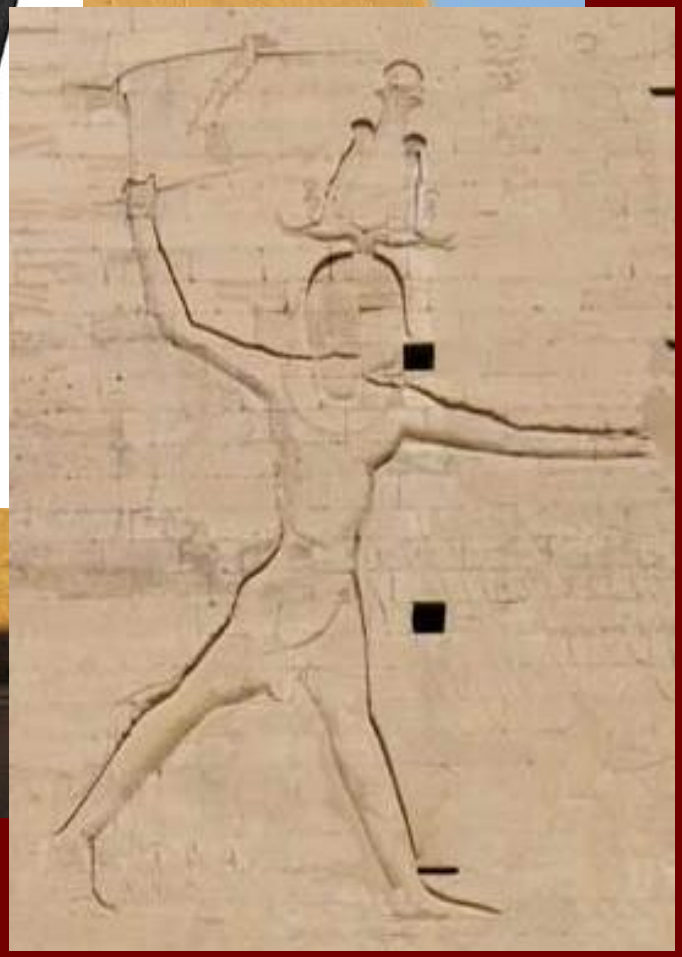
- What does a civilisation need?

Amenhotep, Son of Hapu

- architect, priest, scribe, public official, held a number of offices under Amenhotep III
- born at end of Thutmose III's reign, in the town of Athribis (north of Cairo)
- father was Hapu, mother Itu
- organizing the labour and supplying the manpower for the Pharaoh's projects (civilian and military)
- Architect: supervised several building projects (A III's mortuary temple at western Thebes)
- After death: reputation grew, was revered as philosopher, healer → worshipped as a god of healing

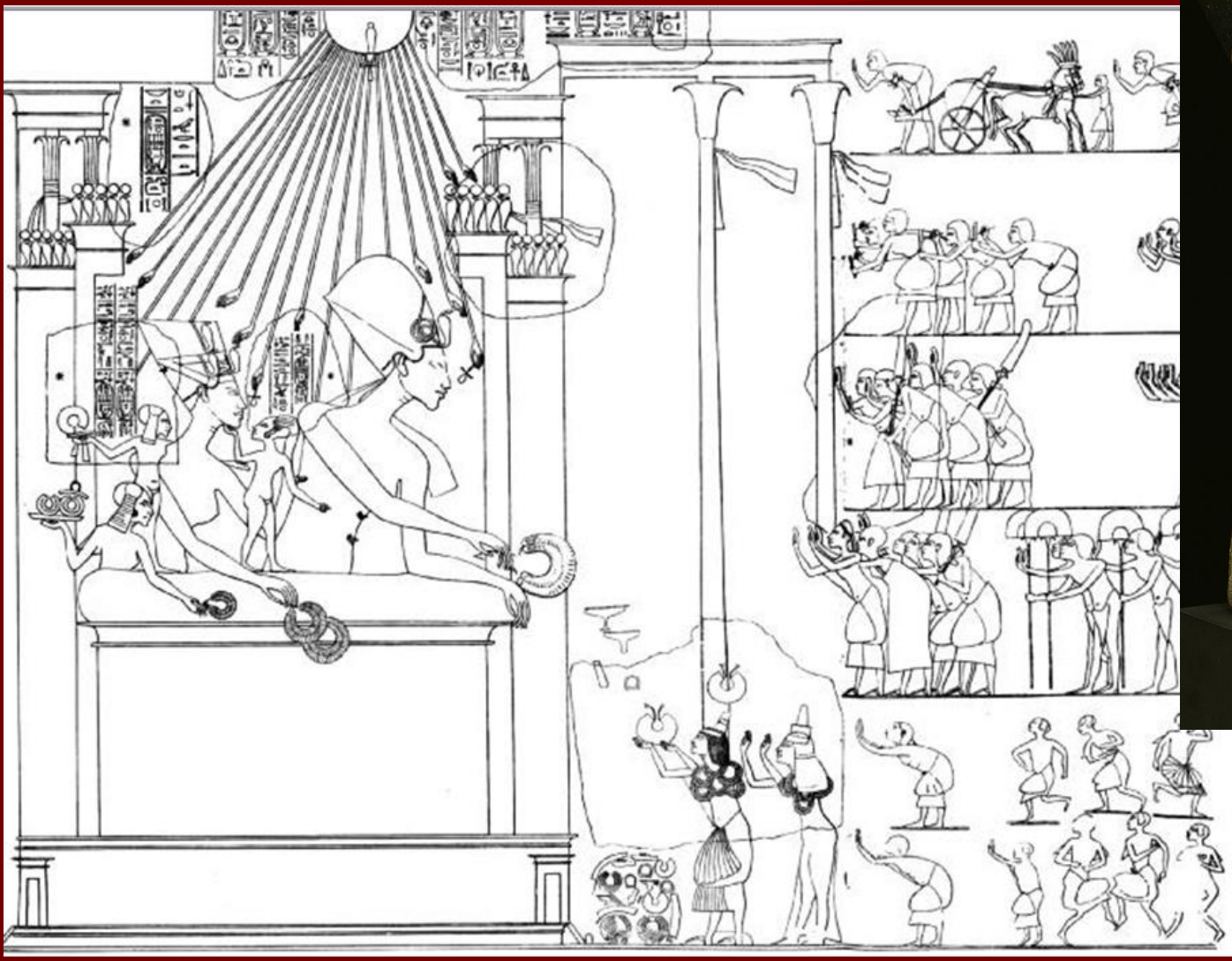
Narmer Palette (31st century BC), found in Hierakonpolis, now Egyptian Museum

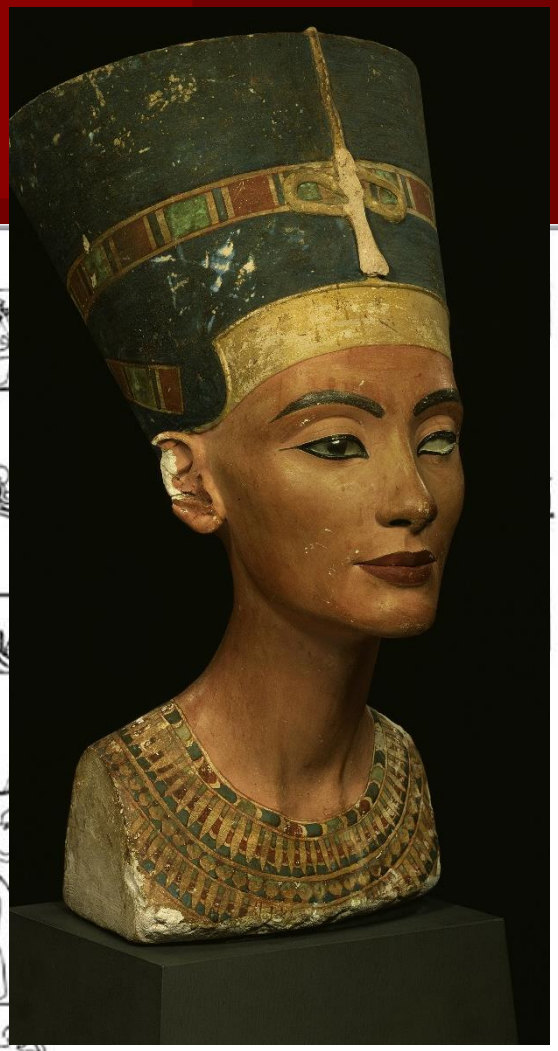
Edfu



Window of appearance reward scene – Tomb of Ay, Amarna

Bust of Nefertiti, Berlin ÄM21300





BUT

- What happened to Amarna in its aftermath but still during the time of AE?

The Aftermath

- During Dynasty 19, Amarna Age was expunged from memory
- Amarna kings (save Horemheb) removed from king-lists and other records

Restoration Stela of Tutankhamun

Now when His Majesty appeared as king, the temples of the gods and goddesses, starting from Elephantine [as far as] the Delta marshes . . . were fallen into decay, their shrines had fallen into ruin, having become mounds overgrown with [...]-plants. Their sanctuaries were as if they had never been, their halls were a trodden path.

The land was in confusion, the gods forsook this land. If an army was sent to Asia to widen the boundaries of Egypt, it met with no success at all. If one prayed to a god to ask things of him, he did not come at all.

“cultural memory” – the concept of *traces*, *massages* and *memories* (after Assmann: The Mind of Egypt: History and Meaning in the Time of Pharaohs)

- **Clear difference between:**
  - **traces**: archaeological evidence
  - **messages**: meaning of events, ideas or institutions for the contemporaries of the past culture
  - **memories**: how is the past actually remembered

Empty or unspecific cartouches – examples of cultural memory, but not traces of "historical" pharaohs or memories

Temple of Hathor, Dendara

Temple of Hathor, Dendara

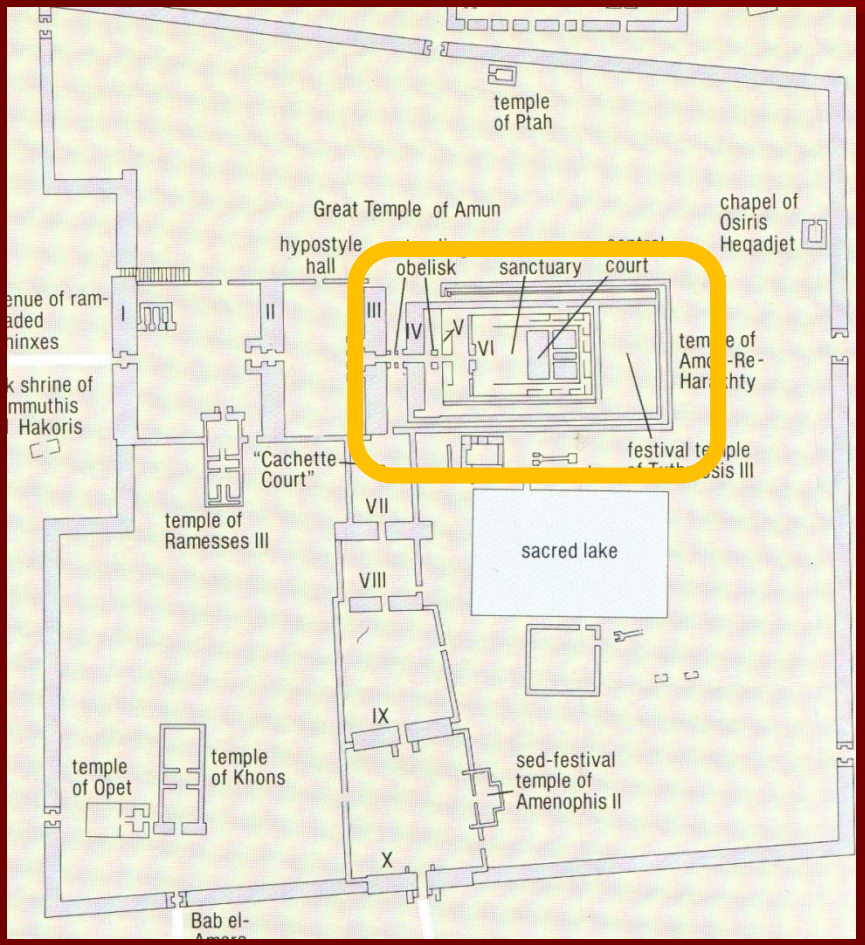
Roman Period

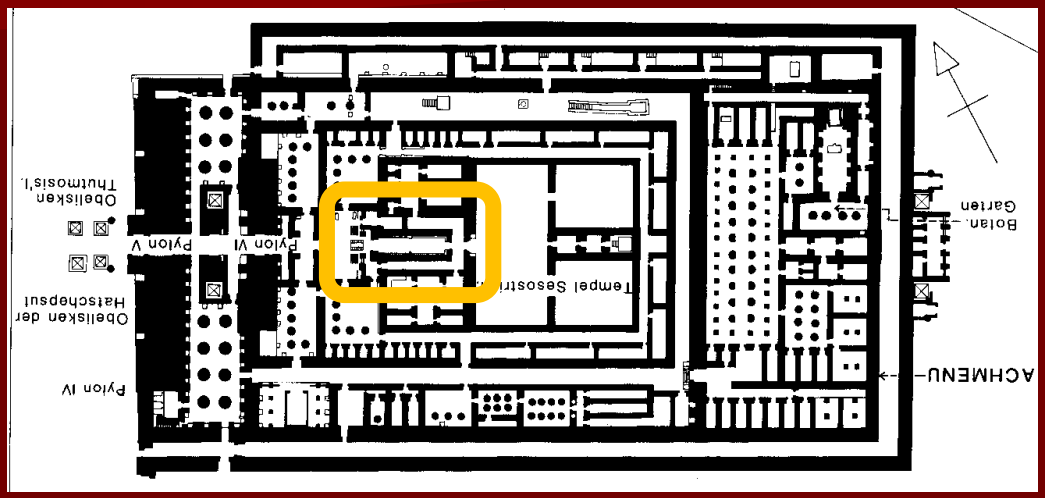
- Romans installed own administrative system (well documented in papyri)
- greatest changes: in everyday life
  - included the introduction of agricultural implements and practices → Eg. important for grain supply for Rome
  - iron-working
- Egyptian culture gradually became subsumed by that of the Roman empire
- But the messages AND cultural memory was uphold – while separated from historical events

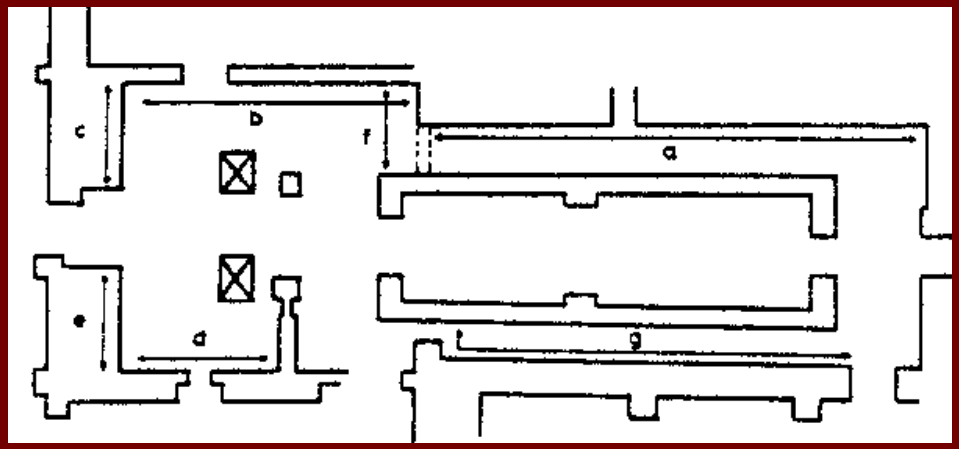
Account of the Battle of Megiddo

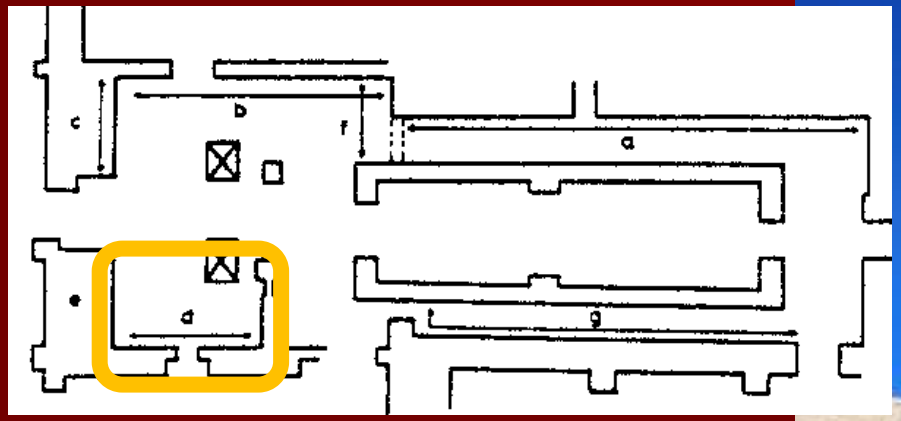
- Now, all that his majesty did to this city, to that wretched foe and his wretched army, was recorded on each day by its the day's name. Then it was recorded / stored upon a roll of leather in the temple of Amon this day.
- *jw=sn smn ḥr ꜥr.t n.t ḥw.t-nṯr n.t Jmn m hrw pn*

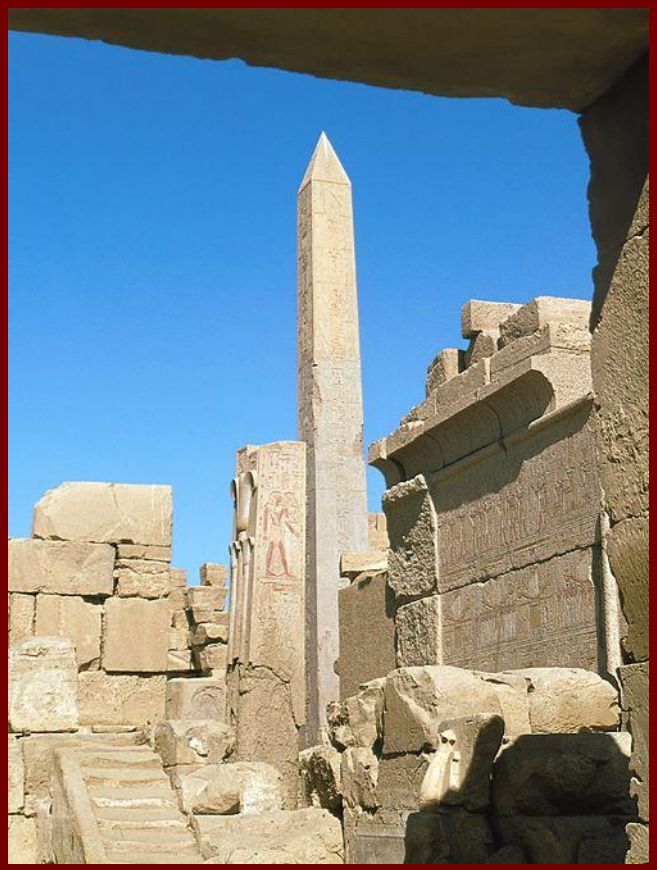
Karnak: Hall of Annals (record of Battle of Megiddo)











Memory

- Memory = enables us to form an awareness of selfhood (identity): both on
  - personal and
  - collective level
- Identity = related to time
  - human self is a "diachronic identity," built "of the stuff of time" (Luckmann)
- synthesis of time and identity = effectuated by memory

Time – Identity - Memory

Level	Time	Identity	Memory
inner (neuro-mental)	inner, subjective time	inner self	individual memory
social	social time	social self, person as carrier of social roles	communicative memory
cultural	historical, mythical, cultural time	cultural identity	cultural memory

Memory: Halbwachs, Freud and Jung

- depends, like consciousness in general, on socialization and communication
- can be analyzed as a function of our social life *(*Maurice Halbwachs: *Les cadres sociaux; La memoire collective).*
- enables us to live in groups and communities
- living in groups and communities enables us to build a memory
- psychoanalysts (Sigmund Freud, Carl Gustav Jung) developed theories of collective memory, but adhered to first (inner + personal level): collective memory not in the dynamics of social life but in unconscious depths of human psyche

Memory: Warburton

- Aby Warburg (art historian): "social memory" → third, the *cultural level*
- = first one who treated images (as cultural objectivations) as carriers of memory
- studied the "afterlife" *(Nachleben) of* classical antiquity in Western culture (called "Mnemosyne“ = ancient Greek term for memory, the mother of the nine Muses)
- specialized in what he called *Bildgeddächtnis (iconic memory)*, but reception history as form of (cultural) memory could be applied to every other domain of symbolic forms (Gombrich)

Memory: Thomas Mann

- adapted reception history as form of (cultural + social) memory in his four Joseph novels (1933-1943)
- most advanced attempt to reconstruct a specific cultural memory (here that of people living in Palestine and Egypt in LBA)
- But also to conjure up European cultural memory + Jewish foundations in times of Antisemitism (J. Assmann, *Thomas Mann)*
- Neither Warburg nor Mann used term "cultural memory”

Cultural Memory

- concept = explicitly developed only during the last twenty years
- since then seen connection between time, identity, and memory in their three dimensions of the personal, the social, and the cultural!
- term "communicative memory“ introduced in order to delineate the difference between Halbwachs' concept of "collective memory“ + our understanding of "cultural memory" (A. Assmann)
- difference between communicative and cultural memory expresses itself also in the social dimension , in the structure of participation

Cultural Memory - definition

- **Cultural memory is a form of collective memory, which is shared by a number of people; conveys to these people a collective (cultural) identity.**
- Halbwachs, however, the inventor of the term "collective memory,“ kept concept of collective memory apart from traditions, transmissions, and transferences
- these = subsumed under the term "cultural memory”
- Preserves Halbwachs's distinction by breaking up his concept of collective memory into "communicative" and "cultural memory," but by including of cultural sphere (excluded by him) in the study of memory

Cultural Memory - definition

- Cultural memore is not replacing Halbwachs’ idea of "collective memory" with "cultural memory“
- but distinguish between both forms as two different modi memorandi, ways of remembering