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## **Remembrance of Things Past:**

Collective Memory, Sensory Perception, and the Emergence of a New Interpretive Paradigm

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Where is heritage interpretation going? How have the basic concepts and techniques of communicating the significance of World Heritage and other heritage sites been transformed in the decades since the Convention was ratified? This lecture will examine the historical roots of heritage interpretation from antiquity to its classic modern expression in Freeman Tilden's Interpreting Our Heritage (1955). It will question the relevance of expert-driven presentation—even with the most politically correct intentions, interactive digital applications, and other mass communications media—in the midst of simultaneous processes of globalization and tribalization that have come to typify the early decades of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. What new narrative forms are emerging? What new relationships between past and present—between heritage sites and their associated modern communities—will compel a new paradigm of interpretation to emerge? This lecture will examine the notions of multiple significance and concepts of “evolving” authenticity expressed in the newly formulated Nara +20 text (2014). These directly challenge some of the basic tenets of Outstanding Universal Value and classical conservation doctrine that have long served as the foundation of interpretive techniques. It will argue that traditional modes of interpretation can either safeguard or destroy traditional community values. It will conclude with some concrete examples from various world regions of how didactic, linear approaches to heritage interpretation are quickly giving way to richer, more inclusive forms of public discourse that promote a dynamic process of collective meaning-making rather than focusing on the communication of an authoritative script.