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WHEN MEMORY REPEATS ITSELF: THE
POLITICS OF HERITAGE IN POST CIVIL WAR
LEBANON

In 2005 the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization accepted Lebanon's archaeological site of Nahr al-Kalb into its Memory of the World Programme, turning it from national heritage into a globally memorable text. I argue that it is not the content of the commemorative inscriptions but the mode of repeated commemoration that makes it possible to reinterpret potentially divisive markers of Lebanon's past into icons of national unity and a shared humanity. By focusing on the intersection of public monumentality, repetition, and the construction of community identity based on the logic of resemblance, I show that governmental elites at times of political transition need to make public interventions into the past to bolster their legitimacy, new commemorations are confined by rules and conventions of public memorializing, and the logic of resemblance inherent in commemorative processes can be used to convert a fragmented history into a memory of unity and strength.