



Postgraduate Doctoral Programme

in Premodern History

Department of History, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

in cooperation with

ICOM Croatia

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Targeting, security and cultural property protection in conflicts since the late 19th century

Guest lecture: Saturday 16 June 2018, 11 a.m.

Venue: Conference Room, Faculty Library

In armed conflict cultural property (generally including: historic buildings and monuments, museums and their collections, archives, and archaeological remains; it differs from cultural heritage in that the latter is wider, also including intangible heritage and uses of cultural property) may be intentionally destroyed or looted. This problem has not decreased over time despite that many preventive measures have been taken. The literature on cultural property destruction during armed conflict fails to interpret this trend within a broader framework of understanding the effects of nationalism, identity construction and warfare. Illicit war economies, the prevalence of wars in weak or failed states, and a multitude of actors contribute to intentional cultural property destruction and looting. There is a need to better understand why such incidents occur and, consequently, how an enhanced cultural property destruction prevention strategy could be formulated. Cultural property protection, abbreviated CPP, was developed by nations in Europe and North America in order to provide a means of lessening the damage done to cultural heritage during conflict, and to make it possible to create an international record of what should be protected. One purpose has been to guide post-conflict restoration and research. Current international framework is based on the 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Properties in the Event of Armed Conflict but the convention has both international precursors and domestic ones, going far back in time. This talk aims to contribute to our understanding of how cultural heritage, power and society are related to each other. The meaning of past and present are contested in everyday life, but tend to be so much more in the face of war. Periods of crisis tend to question the character and values of society. Controversies concerning planning for CPP could be around whose responsibility it is to care for and protect heritage. The distribution of responsibility has to do with ownership, funding, organisation and identification with heritage.

Mattias Legnér (Department of Art History, Uppsala University Campus Gotland, Visby, Sweden; Email: mattias.legner@konstvet.uu.se) is Professor in Conservation and Assistant Professor in History, and has in recent years written extensively on the topics of targeting of cultural heritage, CPP, post-war reconstruction schemes, and security issues involving cultural property. In 2016 he led a collaborative research project at Uppsala University involving heritage scholars and peace and conflict researchers. Among his most recent publications are "Post-conflict reconstruction and the heritage process", *Journal of Architectural Conservation* (2018), "Securitizing the past: a discussion on the connections between heritage and security", *Journal of the History and Geography Department*, "Ion Creangă" *Pedagogical State University* 5:1, 5–23, and as co-author of "Heritage under attack: motives for targeting cultural property during armed conflict", *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 23:3 (2017), 248–260.