

Cultural heritage in peace and conflict – from theory to practice

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Heritage is often at risk and under attack, either directly or indirectly, when violence and conflict escalate. Although targeting cultural heritage sites during conflict is not a new development, the role of cultural heritage in times of peace and conflict has gained international attention in the past few years. Attacks on heritage during violent conflict in Syria, Ukraine and Iraq, as well as contestation around monuments in the US and UK have gained widespread attention. There has also been an increasing amount of funding targeted for the protection of heritage sites in conflict areas. Discussions on the role of cultural heritage practices and sites in provoking conflict, but also as opportunities for building peace have gained prominence (Harrowell & Sellick, 2023). However, much of the focus has been placed on tangible cultural heritage, whereas lesser attention, both in policy and academia, has been on the impact of conflict and war on intangible cultural heritage. This roundtable gathers together both academics and practitioners to discuss the role of intangible and tangible cultural heritage in conflict, from theory to practice. Drawing on number of different case studies, the participants will focus on questions such as how heritage interventions intersect with conflict dynamics and power relations in conflict-affected contexts. What impact this has on building peaceful communities? What is role of both intangible and tangible cultural heritage in conflict? What are the implications for organisations seeking to protect and restore conflict-affected heritage?

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