



19th Annual Cambridge Heritage Research Symposium

11-12 May, 2018

In the last decade, critical heritage studies have highlighted the importance of authority in different historical and social realities. Heritage theories, however, have been chiefly formulated from the standpoint of Western democracies. While authority is a relative property, common to all state (and non-state) societies, the extremes of authoritarian political regimes have always exerted a special influence on cultural heritage. Despite being articulated in very diverse ways in the different contexts in which it takes place, this influence has produced remarkable similarities through space and time.

From European dictatorships of the 20th century to military regimes all over the world, this research seminar will seek to comparatively explore the relationship between cultural heritage and authoritarianism. The discussion will be articulated through four key subthemes:

1. The authoritarian uses of the past. How are material remains (including archaeological data) mobilised by regimes? What are the outcomes of these processes?
2. The transition from and to authoritarianism. What is the impact of transitional periods in determining heritage destruction, reinterpretation and memory work connected to the regime?
3. The material and immaterial legacy of authoritarianism. What is the role of (past) authoritarian experience in contemporary society? Is it always framed as a taboo or does it continue to loom large and trigger inflammatory debates?
4. The boundaries of authoritarianism. What are the differences between what can be conceptualised as heritage of authoritarianism and discourses typical of current (representative) democracies? Is this difference qualitative?

Through the exploration of these aspects, this seminar will considerably improve our broad understanding of the relationship between authority and heritage within and beyond authoritarian contexts, enriching the scholarly debate and reaching out to the broader world of practice.

Please send abstracts of no more than 300 words to Flaminia Bartolini (fb282@cam.ac.uk) by the 28th of February 2018. To register for the seminar, please write to Minjae Zoh (mz369@cam.ac.uk).