Tourism and Heritage: A Love-hate Relationship

Programme Event

International Committee of Historical Sciences | 26–30 August 2026 | Leipzig, Germany

DATE	LOCATION
27 Aug 2026, 08:30 - 10:30	House 1 T-1003
THEME	CONFERENCE
B - Teaching History and Public History	International Committee of Historical Sciences

Overview

The growing popularity of the concept of heritage since the beginning of the 21st and 20th centuries has profoundly changed its relationship with tourism. Initially considered a source of curiosity and knowledge likely to appeal to tourists, heritage, both tangible and intangible, is now feared to be destroyed or altered by the influx of tourists eager to admire or use it. The notion of overtourism, put forward fairly recently by several geographers and sociologists, has reinforced the feeling that tourism and heritage are fundamentally opposed in their objectives and uses. Measures to restrict access to particularly exposed sites make relations between heritage defenders (archaeologists, historians, public administrations) and tourism promoters very problematic. In other words, isn't the protection of heritage, whatever it may be (monuments, cities, nature, objects, traditions, etc.), contradictory to its opening up to crowds of tourists? The aim of this session is to address this question from a historical perspective. To what extent does this question arise in the mid-term or long term? What types of heritage were initially concerned? What types of resistance emerged? Which actors mobilised themselves to defend heritage? Has there been an evolution in the meaning and practices of the relationship between these two concepts?

The session will bring together researchers from different countries and address the issue from various angles: historical, economic, cultural, political and institutional.

Participants

Convenor

- Laurent Tissot (Université de Neuchâtel)
- Veronica Zarate (Instituto Mora, Mexico)

Panelists

- Patrizia Battilani (Université de Bologne)
- Etienne Faugier (Université Lyon 2)
- Bertram Gordon (Mills College)
- Carlos Larrinaga (University of Granada)
- Laurent Tissot (Université de Neuchâtel)
- Johan Vincent (Université d’Angers)
- Veronica Zarate (Instituto Mora, Mexico)

Papers

From dilemma to dialogue: heritage and tourism in the international charters of UNESCO, UNWTO and the Council of Europe

Patrizia Battilani (Université de Bologne)

The difficult equation between preservation and enhancement: tourism, heritage, automobility: the case of Canada, 19th-20th centuries

Etienne Faugier (Université Lyon 2)

Tourism and War: Their Interconnections through History

Bertram Gordon (Mills College)

Links between tourism and heritage in the Spanish case in historical perspective. The example of San Sebastián

Carlos Larrinaga (University of Granada)

Chillon Castle: a monument that loves tourists and is loved by tourists. How long will this last?

Laurent Tissot (Université de Neuchâtel)

The ambivalence of post-war tourism success. From the quest for socio-economic success to the desire to find a balance (Atlantic coast, 1945-1980)

Johan Vincent (Université d'Angers)

'Pueblos mágicos": places of memory or tourist attractions?

Veronica Zarate (Instituto Mora, Mexico)

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