Helen Walasek, with contributions by Richard Carlton, Amra Hadžimuhamedović, Valery Perry and Tina Wik

*Bosnia and the Destruction of Cultural Heritage* (Farnham, UK: Ashgate, 2015)

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The book *Bosnia and the Destruction of Cultural Heritage* extensively documents the destruction of cultural heritage during the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina, which was mostly a result of deliberate intentional targeting rather than collateral damage. Written by Helen Walasek, a former associate of the Bosnian Institute (London) and a Deputy Director of Bosnia-Herzegovina Heritage Rescue (1994–98), with contributions from other experts, architects, and archaeologists, this book gives a comprehensive and detailed account of the destruction that occurred during the war, and critical assessment of post-war reconstruction projects and challenges faced both by international actors and local communities in a divided and war-torn society. With numerous examples, illustrations, case studies and critical analyses of many issues connected with reconstruction, such as reconciliation and the return of refugees, this book contains an extensive documentation on the subject and is an important contribution to numerous studies of war and post-war dynamics in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Walasek classifies the principal phases of the destruction of cultural heritage, the types of monuments destroyed, and the methods of destruction, indelibly discrediting the early hypothesis of an equivalent and mutual destruction by all the three warring parties. Drawing on the views of other cultural heritage experts András Riedlmayer and Colin Kaiser, she identifies the destruction of cultural heritage as part of ethnic cleansing that had the aim not only to destroy any evidence of the existence of a population, but also to discourage their return. Walasek describes the extensive destruction of religious, primarily Muslim/Ottoman, heritage, the opportunistic and systematic looting of movable cultural property, and the controversial cases of important cultural artefacts, such as the remains of King Stjepan Tomašević from Jajce. Together with an archaeologist Richard Carlton, she provides a critical review of the principal forms of documentation produced by local, regional and international bodies regarding cultural heritage destruction, both during wartime and in the post-war period, the difficulties faced in obtaining correct information, and inaccuracies in these reports, which sometimes were used as politicized tools, especially those made by religious communities. The authors report the findings of their two fieldtrips to Bosnia-Herzegovina (October 2001 and June 2001), the material which was later used by Riedlmayer as documentation during his testimony at the ICTY as an expert witness. Visiting a large number of
towns and villages, they give detailed accounts of numerous cases, finding patterns and similarities. The majority of the most completely destroyed sites were in urban centers where mosques had been razed and replaced by parking lots and markets, while non-sacral Ottoman structures that had a clear function during the war survived, such as the Mehmed-paša Kukavica Han in Foča that is used as a nightclub and the Ottoman-style house, Dom Lovaca, in Prijedor, that currently serves as a restaurant.

In the second part of the book, Walasek also gives an equally comprehensive overview of the often politicized process of restoration of cultural heritage, critically analyzing the role played by the international community that focused mostly on iconic sites, such as the Old Bridge in Mostar, fearing to invest in the reconstruction of religious structures, that could lead to charges in favoring one over the other side and searching for equivalence in restoring the heritage of the three groups, even if this proved impossible. The stories of reconstruction of cultural heritage achieved by the sole efforts of refugees form the most powerful parts of the book. Amra Hadžimuhamedović, a member of the Commission to Preserve National Monuments of Bosnia-Herzegovina and a leading expert in the field, writes about the successful restoration of cultural heritage in Stolac, a town that had contained architecturally unique examples of cultural diversity in the country. The reconstruction was supported by hundreds of Stolac residents working every day on voluntary basis and was an integral part of the return of refugees and displaced persons. Another case study by architect Tina Wik gives an overview of the initiatives of the Swedish organization Cultural Heritage without Borders, and strongly argues for their approach of learning by doing that aimed to train young professionals through conservation and reconstruction projects. Even if the authors recognize the importance of reconstruction for return and recovery process, its role in reconciliation is not so clear cut, since, as Wik concludes, political and professional tensions did not always diminish through reconstruction projects.

The destruction of cultural heritage in Bosnia and Herzegovina was so significant and extensive that it brought new discussions and recognitions in international humanitarian law and its preservation was included in Annex 8 of the Dayton Peace Accords. Valery Perry, an expert in conflict resolution, analyzes the implementation of this sometimes overlooked annex and the work of the Commission to Preserve National Monuments of Bosnia-Herzegovina, while Walasek, in the last chapter of the book, gives an overview of the legal precedents of the ICTY in their treatment of protection and preservation of cultural heritage and other important decisions regarding the International Court of Justice and the Human Rights Chamber for Bosnia-Herzegovina. With extensive documentation and case studies this book is indispensable for