The massive intentional destruction of cultural heritage during the 1992-1995 Bosnian War targeting a historically diverse identity provoked global condemnation and became a seminal marker in the discourse on cultural heritage. It prompted an urgent reassessment of how cultural property could be protected in times of conflict and led to a more definitive recognition in international humanitarian law that destruction of a people's cultural heritage is an aspect of genocide. Yet surprisingly little has been published on the subject.

This wide-ranging book provides the first comprehensive overview and critical analysis of the destruction of Bosnia-Herzegovina’s cultural heritage and its far-reaching impact. Scrutinizing the responses of the international community during the war (including bodies like UNESCO and the Council of Europe), the volume also analyses how, after the conflict ended, external agendas impinged on heritage reconstruction to the detriment of the broader peace process and refugee return. It assesses implementation of Annex 8 of the Dayton Peace Agreement, a unique attempt to address the devastation to Bosnia’s cultural heritage, and examines the treatment of war crimes involving cultural property at the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY).

With numerous case studies and plentiful illustrations, this important volume considers questions which have moved to the foreground with the inclusion of cultural heritage preservation in discussions of the right to culture in human rights discourse and as a vital element of post-conflict and development aid.

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About the Author

Helen Walasek was an Associate of the Bosnian Institute, London, and was Deputy Director of Bosnia-Herzegovina Heritage Rescue (BHHR) for which she worked 1994-1998. She has a Diploma in Museum Studies from University of Leicester. She made many working visits to Bosnia during and after the 1992-1995 war, including as an Expert Consultant for the Council of Europe reporting on museums in Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1995 and 1996. In 2000 and 2001 she carried out two field trips (with Richard Carlton) making the first post-war assessment of destroyed historic monuments across Bosnia-Herzegovina for which there was little accurate information at the time.