Book Reviews
World Heritage, Urban Design and Tourism: Three Cities in the Middle East

Luna Khirfan
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Given the civil war engulfing Syria and Iraq, ongoing conflicts in northern Lebanon, tens of thousands of refugees fleeing embattled cities and Israel’s recent claim to ‘nationalise’ yet more land in the north of the Dead Sea for more settlements on Palestinian land, this book and its theme are a welcome jolt of information on the Middle East. That its author attempts to straddle three usually siloed fields: tourism, World Heritage and urban design research studies— is both welcome and overdue. All three realms have common ground and much to gain by cooperative working and some more humility.

What does war and mass-migration (temporary or not) mean for some Middle Eastern cities that include some of the world’s longest-settled urban areas? How is the historic urban landscape approach, increasingly coming into fashion in UNESCO and cultural heritage circles, relevant or applicable in such testing, shifting times and places?

Reports on the Middle East are so inflected with international, regional and national political agendas, it is hard to know what to think, or believe. This meeting place of east and west—a vital link in extensive trading and pilgrimage networks since ancient times has long been fought for. Its cities have risen from deserts and have been ground into the dust by invaders, conquered and retaken in ongoing efforts to control territories and profits from trade, and they have faced pressures from growing hordes seeking access to holy sites and profitable pilgrimage businesses.

Luna Khirfan is an academic from the University of Waterloo, Canada and she writes about historic urban landscapes, place-making, place-experience and various ‘viewers’ or ‘users’, particularly focussing on tourism. This book is based on her PhD research on such themes. Khirfan chooses three case study projects in Aleppo in Syria (before the current bombings from 2012 onwards), Acre in Israel and Al-Salt in Jordan to contrast three types of place-making strategies. Her approach is inter-disciplinary, examining key relationships between heritage conservation, city urban space design (for instance, gathering and circulation routes, public and private spaces) and tourism development in each.

Some are (or in Aleppo’s case, were) thriving or functioning urban sites with established local and some international tourism—with the potential to grow. Others such as Al-Salt are sadly well off the circuit and present challenges to establish a tourism base that ‘fits’ local culture comfortably. While this might present employment and social benefits for locals, it can inevitably bring change and friction. Even providing basic community services such as functioning sewerage, water and walkable footpaths for the elderly to get about is a fundamental challenge. Where
outside projects with funds and agendas bypass such basic human needs in the rush to meet their own project targets and deliverables, the questions remain—will they succeed or last?

Khirfan’s choices of case studies and analyses are instructive, pointing to well-intentioned foreign international aid funds, a mixture of attitudes amongst providers, intermediaries and community groups. These projects generally use outside (foreign or remote urban) heritage and other experts to make urban interventions in historic cities or rural districts. Some succeed far better than others—and this is the chief focus of her book.

It is intriguing how good and how poor the ‘fit’ can be—whether a project team, or government agency’s approach is ‘top-down’ or ‘bottom-up’ and whether any or meaningful community consultation precedes and continues to inform projects as they unfold. Bureaucratic systems such as existed (past tense) in Aleppo bypassed community consultation or made it a mere puppet show of window-dressing, which led to a lack of coordination of one set of services going into historic precincts and major disruption to services and daily life. This led to active opposition to the project and withdrawal of goodwill. It is equally interesting to see how selective and quixotic the ‘product’ and ‘stories’ each place is deemed to be telling or selling to the tourism market. ‘Crusader’ heritage dominates Acre’s offer, yet Muslim and Palestinian non-Crusader histories continue to offer a far richer story for tourists and operators—were any interested, or made aware of them.

Divided into three parts, the first examines the context of the three fields of tourism, World Heritage and urban design research studies and the reality of each case study’s city structure, functioning, population, culture and issues. The second discusses place-making, how significance at various levels is determined, strategies to make urban improvements (e.g. circulation or shopping) and public participation. Khirfan makes much of local distinctiveness, of place, peoples, and cultures. The third outlines place-experience and offers conclusions.

The conclusions in a nutshell are that the involvement of local culture and communities is critical. Communities deserve respect and time and effort needs to be put into consultation (early on and ongoing) to gain support from, and to include them in any desired changes. Commodifying and ‘selling’ packaged culture to tourists can be counter-productive, pushing those wanting a ‘real’ or cultural experience away to find their own way. Commodifying culture can also put off the locals, who tourism is touted to bring benefits (and new facilities) to. Some professional modesty and inclusiveness would be a good start. Hiring Arabic (or other language) speakers and placing them on the ground to consult and include locals in decisions and actions is a good second step. Being prepared to change fixed plans when realities point up faults or omissions is also recommended in terms of sustainable actions or outcomes.

I recommend that every World Bank, International Monetary Fund or other funding-related expert-in-the-making, be given this book and a training course based on its case-study focus!

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The Ethics of Cultural Heritage

Edited by Tracy Ireland and John Schofield
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In recent decades, the concept of cultural heritage has evolved from the material and the monumental to include the intangible, and minority and Indigenous groups have increasingly shown alternative and sometimes conflicting ways to interpret, value, and manage cultural heritage. It is now widely acknowledged that cultural heritage is not just a neutral technical practice, but entangled with geopolitics, economics, and diplomacy. These developments raise new ethical questions and demand the reconsideration of questions from the past, making The Ethics of Cultural Heritage a timely volume.
The book is the fourth volume of the series *Ethical Archaeologies: The Politics of Social Justice*, edited by Cristobal Gnecco and Tracy Ireland. The series questions what ethics are in the increasingly diverse discipline of archaeology, in which values are no longer shared or stable. The other volumes in the series are concerned with conflict archaeology (Gonzalez-Ruibal and Moshenka 2015), praxis and multiculturalism (Gnecco and Lippert 2015), and different conceptualisations of archaeological ethics (Haber and Shepherd 2015). *The Ethics of Cultural Heritage* moves beyond archaeology and approaches cultural heritage in its broadest sense. Besides archaeology, contributors hail from a range of disciplines, including anthropology, sociology, philosophy, history, architecture, and media studies. Their geographical backgrounds are less diverse. With the exception of Susan Barr, who is based in Norway, contributors are connected to either Australian or British institutions. Arguably, this lack of diversity undermines the credibility of the series’ aim to challenge and transform the hegemony of the Western cosmology. However, it needs to be mentioned that the use of case studies from India, Papua New Guinea, Cambodia, and Panama does provide a broader perspective.

*The Ethics of Cultural Heritage* is 219 pages long and consists of twelve chapters. The introduction by Tracy Ireland and John Schofield provides a historical overview of the topic. Conservation was long seen as something inherently good and ethical, but today the ethics of cultural heritage are more concerned with human rights and social justice. Ireland and Schofield introduce the structure of the book, which is divided into two parts. Part I is titled ‘Ethical Domains’ and consists of seven chapters. Each chapter addresses the ethical challenges facing a particular domain of cultural heritage: digital heritage, tourism, community engagement, climate change, the repatriation of human remains, heritage in settler societies, and stewardship. Part II is titled ‘Ethics in Practice’ and consists of four chapters in which case studies are used to discuss ethical questions that emerged in specific situations.

The division of the book into two parts is not always completely convincing. For example, Part I includes a chapter by Susan McIntyre-Tamwoy, Susan Barr, and John Hurd, which consists of excellent examples of how climate change affects Indigenous and colonial heritage in Australia, traditional lifestyles in arid high deserts, and arctic heritage. Through these examples, good insight is offered into the types of ethical questions cultural heritage practice will face with regard to climate change. However, the theoretical engagement with the topic is limited, particularly compared to the other chapters in Part I. The McIntyre-Tamwoy et al., chapter may have been better suited in Part II, which focuses on ethics in practice, through case studies and real-world situations. Meanwhile, the majority of the chapter by Ana Luisa Sanchez Laws in Part II explores the concept of trust and what role it plays for museums, before considering what this means for the Museo de la Libertad y la Democracia in Panama. This more theoretical chapter could have been equally well suited in Part I.

Ireland and Schofield (2015: 8) finish their introduction by acknowledging that there are ‘inconsistencies and some significant differences in the approaches of the authors.’ This is particularly true for Part I, where authors face the challenge of discussing very broad ‘domains’ in only 15-20 pages. Some authors provided a very general introduction to the various ethical challenges in their domain, whereas others decided to focus on one particular aspect. For example, Emma Waterton explains the potential of the concept of parity of participation for ethical questions related to community participation and Andreas Pantazatos argues that the notions of care and respect should be considered as the normative foundations of stewardship. On the other hand, the chapters by Sarah Colley and Steve Watson, on digital heritage and tourism respectively, are of a more general nature and touch on a wide range of ethical issues facing these domains.

The four case studies in Part II have the potential to be instructive for heritage practitioners facing similar situations. For example, Richard MacKay and Stuart Palmer propose a framework to help in ethical decision-making and show how it was applied during the development of a community-based tourism project at Angkor in Cambodia. Yet, set frameworks will not always be able to provide answers to ethical challenges in cultural heritage practice. This is clearly demonstrated by Elizabeth Bonshek, who collected pots from Wanigela in Papua New Guinea for a museum. She shows how establishing a fair price for the pots was far from...
straightforward. The context of a society that does not completely participate in a mainstream cash economy, as well as the importance of a personal relationship with the potter, made it necessary to look beyond conventional codes of ethics for a solution.

The reader will not find a comprehensive overview or a deep theoretical engagement with the ethics of cultural heritage, but this is not the aim of the book. Rather, as the examples of MacKay and Palmer and Bonshek show, the variety of approaches of the authors shed light on ethical questions from several different angles. The Ethics of Cultural Heritage will be helpful for scholars, practitioners, and students who are looking for a good introduction to the ethical concerns that play a role in contemporary heritage practice and it presents an excellent point of departure for further research.

References

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Heritage Conservation in Japan’s Cultural Diplomacy: Heritage, National Identity and National Interest
Natsuko Akagawa

In the post-Second World War period, Japan’s evolving heritage conservation policy has contributed to its national identity at home and abroad. In researching her path-breaking study of contemporary Japan’s utilisation of heritage policy and practice, Natsuko Akagawa has scrupulously examined government archives and reports, conducted interviews and visited heritage sites. She is alert to the theoretical and methodological challenges inherent in teasing out the relationship between the world heritage system and national interest, and the ways that both the tangible and intangible heritages of its built, natural and social environments are core to Japan’s history and culture.

Akagawa traces the evolution of the heritage conservation movement in Japan from the time of the Meiji restoration to the present moment. After 1945, Japan had to find new non-imperialist expressions of identity, and some of the monuments or art works identified as being of national significance were confiscated or de-listed by the Allied Occupation force because they were seen to have militaristic values or be otherwise ultra-nationalistic. By the 1980s, the swift pace of economic development and urbanisation had re-established Japan as a world economic power. With the concept of nihonjinron or ‘Japanese-ness’ gaining widespread popularity, the Japanese government pointed to the importance of its cultural heritage, not only through the protection of temples and shrines by also through the preservation of vernacular architecture and the recognition of intangible crafts and traditions, perhaps best epitomised by the kabuki performance.

At the same time, Japan began to use its capacity to provide research and financial aid for the preservation of key heritage sites in several developing countries to show its role as a peaceful ‘global citizen’ but also its leadership within the Asian region. Heritage conservation has been, Akagawa argues, central to Japan’s cultural diplomacy—or what Joseph Nye has called the exercise of ‘soft power’ (2005) within broader foreign policy objectives.
By working through international bodies, and most notably through UNESCO, Japan has been able to influence international heritage policies, training and practice. With the temporary withdrawal of the US and the UK from UNESCO in the mid 1980s, Japan became the major donor of UNESCO’s heritage initiatives and took a more active position on the international peak body. By 1994, Japan’s leadership resulted in the Nara Document on Authenticity, which extended the understanding of authenticity to incorporate diverse cultures. This was the first instance of an Asian nation making a significant intervention into the framing of international heritage. The election in 1999 of Japanese diplomat Matsuura Koichiro as the Director General of UNESCO signalled Japan’s ongoing influence, especially as Koichiro was to hold the position for a decade. In 2003, Japan—not surprisingly given its national policy—played a leading role in the negotiations that eventuated in UNESCO’s adoption of the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage Convention. It did so again in the Convention of the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions in 2005.

Japan has also been a major champion of heritage conservation within Asia, with locally-based projects and research contributing to the success of subsequent World Heritage listings for such sites as Angkor in Cambodia and Borobudur in Indonesia. Although Japan’s aid programs have benefited the recipient nations, they have been driven by Japan’s desire for leadership in Asia as well as in the global arena. The book’s final chapters turn to the Japanese program of Official Development Assistance for heritage conservation in Vietnam. Japan has given its support for over fifty heritage projects in Vietnam, and in doing so has assisted in the representation of Vietnamese national identity while also exerting its own diplomatic influence. Two detailed case studies of Japan’s support for the infrastructure for the Can Chanh Palace and the revitalisation of Nha Nhac Court Music, both in the Complex of Hue Monuments, demonstrate Japan’s cultural diplomacy at work.

While Japan’s post-Second World War history and national identity are distinctive, Akagawa’s book offers a model for understanding the politics of heritage more widely, and for situating heritage within broader studies of nationalism and geo-politics. It is highly recommended.

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**Bosnia and the Destruction of Cultural Heritage**

Helen Walasek

With contributions by Richard Carlton, Amra Hadžimuhamedović, Valery Perry and Tina Wik.

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For many of today’s heritage practitioners and students, the Bosnian War between 1992 and 1995 was the seminal moment that cultural heritage became both a weapon of war, and a deliberately targeted victim of hostilities. For all of the attention this attracted in the international heritage community, this book marks the first comprehensive survey and analysis of the destruction and its consequences.

This analysis is informed by an acute understanding of the political and social history of Bosnia-Herzegovina. It is hard to imagine that a more authoritative and qualified group of experts could be gathered than the authors and contributors to this book. Collectively they bring a wealth of first-hand experience of the extent of the destruction and subsequent international reconstruction efforts, as well as expertise in disciplines that include international law protecting heritage, architecture, archaeology, cultural heritage, and politics. As well as a consummate overview of the destruction that occurred between 1992 and 1995, the book discusses the ways that the international community responded to this and the ways that cultural heritage and its subsequent protection came to be seen as a key consideration for international responses after
times of conflict and natural disaster, as important in the rebuilding and rehabilitation as saving lives and providing shelter and infrastructure.

*Bosnia and the Destruction of Cultural Heritage* begins with a comprehensive analysis of the complexities of the Bosnian conflict by way of the Introduction; background is provided by the appendix: ‘A Brief Introduction to the Cultural Heritage of Bosnia-Herzegovina’. Helen Walasek was the Deputy Director of Bosnia-Herzegovina Heritage Rescue from 1994 to 1998 and was an Expert Consultant for the Council of Europe reporting on museums in Bosnia-Herzegovina after the war. Richard Carlton works in ethno-archaeology and, with Walasek in 2000 and 2001, carried out the first extensive assessment of destroyed historic monuments across Bosnia-Herzegovina, about which until then there was little accurate information; the documentation and assessments made during these trips are the subject of chapters two and three co-written by Carlton and Walasek. Valery Perry has worked extensively in Bosnia-Herzegovina for a number of International NGOs and her contribution to the book is about the post-conflict protection of cultural heritage as it is enshrined by Annex 8: *Agreement on Commission to Preserve Nation Monuments* of the Dayton Peace Agreement, which ended the war in 1995. Amra Hadžimuhamedović is an architect who teaches at the International University of Sarajevo, a member of the Commission to Preserve National Monuments in Bosnia-Herzegovina, and has been closely involved with post-war restoration and human rights programmes. Tina Wik is an architect and was Project Manager in Bosnia-Herzegovina for the NGO Cultural Heritage without Borders.

In many ways, this conflict and the devastating destruction it inflicted, tested international instruments that had been put in place after the Second World War to protect and preserve sites of local and international cultural heritage significance. The extent to which these succeeded and the complexity of implementing them in the process of post-war restoration and reconciliation are illustrated by Hadžimuhamedović’s case study of her Stolac, where she was born, which saw the determined effort of its displaced community to return and restore its destroyed heritage. Wik gives an account of the restoration and preservation work carried out by the NGO Cultural Heritage without Borders in the year following the end of the war, and also writes about the challenges of implementing international charters and practices in an environment that had experienced such extensive destruction.

Described by Richard Carlton and Walasek in their chapter as a ‘pattern of mutual destruction’ (p156), the writers of this volume assess and observe, describing the political climate that underpinned the conflict without judgement, but never shying away from the gravity of what occurred and the extent of the devastation. What occurred is eloquently described by the English journalist R. Boyes, writing in *The Times* in 1992 and quoted by the authors (pp. 52-53):

> The destruction of Sarajevo’s 19th-century town hall and the burning of priceless manuscripts in the Bosnian National Library reveal the hidden heart of darkness in the cruel Balkan war. After centuries of intertwined cultures, one ethnic group is trying to wipe out another: not merely its soldiers and civilians, but its memory the deliberate shattering of churches, mosques and libraries the living history of a nation is a form of cultural genocide.

As a consequence of the policy of ethnic cleansing that underpinned the conflict, sites that were culturally, socially and religiously significant, including religious places, museums, archives and galleries, were lost both to their own people, and to the world at large. In addition to extreme violations of human rights and international humanitarian law, most specifically the 1949 Geneva Convention. As one reads this account, the true tragedy of the war in Bosnia becomes is revealed—that the intentional destruction, in many cases, was an attempt to erase all traces of the culture of its inhabitants and thus their future survival and cultural identity. This becomes a disaster on a very human scale, at a local level but affecting humanity as a whole. The perpetrators of this ‘mutual destruction’ understood and articulated that this was the purpose of the policy and strategy. This book articulates the very meaning and importance of cultural heritage, both in its own right but as a key element to the recognition and protection of human rights. This is made all the more pertinent today in that the very aspect that was to be destroyed was the evidence of multi-cultural co-existence—in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Orthodox,
Muslim and Catholics lived side by side and this was evidenced by the existence even in the smallest town of places of worship and cultural value that served each.

Despite the widespread international attention the Bosnian conflict attracted, surveys of the destruction and scholarly considerations are few. *Bosnia and the Destruction of Cultural Heritage* documents the destruction in painstaking detail, but through its fine writing, a narrative emerges that is disturbing and moving; the scale of devastation, although comprehensively described, remains incomprehensible. Its strength is in the ways that it not only documents and describes, but in the way it elucidates and illustrates how the wilful destruction of heritage in all its forms, contributes to the liquidation of people and their culture by not only removing their memory, but also erasing all evidence that of a former multi-ethnic tradition. This book makes an important contribution to the international discourse about the links that integrally bind the protection of human rights with the protection of heritage in all its forms; its content is, at once, challenging and compelling, but it is a consummate analysis of a conflict founded on issues that remain all too relevant.

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