

Introduction

The Impact of Conflict on Cultural Heritage: a Biographical Lens

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The concern of this volume is the web of meanings and connotations that are associated with particular places as a result of war, conflict and their aftermath¹. It is about how cultural heritage is both affected and generated by conflict, and how such heritage is subsequently interpreted, responded to, and used. The aim is to contribute to the understanding of how places are rethought and remade during post-conflict phases, including reconstruction. In particular, the volume aims to analyse how places are not just ‘the heritage of war’ but actively participate in the recovery and remaking of communities including their claims on place and belonging. Belonging within the growing literature on the agents of memory of war (e.g. Ashplant, Dawson and Roper 2004, Bevan 2007, Gegner and Ziino 2012, Winter 2001), this volume demonstrates that the aftermath of conflicts can be analysed through the changes wrought to particular places as they absorb the impacts of conflict and emerge with altered roles, connotations, and meanings. This, however, does not mean that place is a passive receptor. On the contrary, place itself, just like people and institutions (Gegner and Ziino 2012: 3), can exercise agency an aspect of the complexity of post-conflict heritage construction that has been little explored. This focus allows us to pay particular attention to the post-conflict heritage landscape, more fully exploring the relationships between the different agents that contribute to its formation. The gaze of this volume is therefore on the particular, the minute, and the at-times seemingly banal changes that post-conflict reconstruction activities introduce to the places we live in and with: showing how even the most subtle changes can have significant long-lasting effects on relationships to place.

There are several reasons for this focus. First, it responds to the recognition that the complex phenomena of post-conflict heritage needs to be analysed and contemplated at different scales, including studies of the instrumentalisation of decisions, and scrutiny of the links between actions and effects. Secondly, it acknowledges the importance of materiality and aims to introduce this under-explored dimension to debates about post-conflict heritage. Thirdly, by investigating place the volume responds to the need to shift the gaze from the impact of conflict on particular monuments or collections to encompass a broader

understanding of heritage that appreciates the significance of the temporal and geographical dimensions of place and how these contribute to the wider meanings of heritage. Fourthly, the focus retains the intimate relationship between heritage, place and identity helping to demonstrate their interconnectedness.

The particular focus of the volume is on what may loosely be termed reconstruction activities, taking this focus as the analytical lens through which we examine the impact of conflict and its aftermath on social identities – in particular, the construction of meaning and the sense of belonging in places. These complex relationships can be analysed from a number of angles and at different scales. Here we have chosen to investigate the biographies of particular places. Through its specificity, this allows us to pinpoint how cultural heritage is affected or indeed made by conflict, and how it can become activated by post-conflict reconstruction and recovery activities. Place was selected as a means of addressing both the concrete impacts and the intangible marks that conflicts leave on the fabric of specific sites: buildings, monuments, bridges, parks, or squares. Place is a powerful focus because it is at once the means and the medium for reconstruction and recovery efforts. In addition, there is clear evidence that places imbued with symbolism prior to the outbreak of conflict have often been targeted for deliberate destruction. This gives such places additional layers of meaning post-conflict causing them to become foci of attention during reconstruction. History shows us both how commonly such places are deliberately destroyed or damaged and how often they have been used as tools for the rebuilding of belonging and meaning. This makes the concept of biography of place a forceful tool for analysing in detail how meaning of place is reconstituted during conflict and post-conflict, and the particular role that heritage plays within these processes.

Accordingly, this volume presents the biographies of a number of places that, through a series of circumstances born of modern European conflicts, came to play important historical roles in their particular localities and in the shared imaginary of Europe as a whole. Each place has in various ways been affected by conflict and reshaped by post-conflict activities, tensions, and intentions. The aim is to explain the importance of such places for the reconstruction of society after conflict and to show how they are used in various ways to voice concerns, claims, and interpretations of the conflict, to ‘move on’ or to silence memory. Embodying certain discourses, these sites become significant, influencing how societies come to formulate accounts of events and how they envision the future. What the case studies clearly indicate is that some places become iconic representations of complex events, gaining

an array of meanings that transform them into signifiers for understandings that go well beyond their own context-specific histories and which sit apart from official heritage valuation and management policies. Irrespective of their 'heritage value', such sites become 'invested places' that are owned by larger communities. The authors explore these dynamics by analysing the processes through which some sites become iconic, their destruction becoming 'memory events' and their very names signifiers for wartime violence. They also try to contemplate what sets such sites apart from other sites affected by similar events. When looking at these sites we therefore try to look beyond the layers of symbolism to understand what actually happened at and to the place. Indeed one of our aims is to track the processes through which places acquire or lose meaning, how particular understandings are generated, but also how these may be manipulated or changed. The biographical approach allows the authors to hone in on particular places, analysing how the processes of interpretation and reinterpretation unfold through time, and how claims about historical events are shaped through different post-conflict stages and experiences and by different kinds of actors. In so doing the volume also explores how conflicts can continue to live on in different forms as a result of the reconstruction and remaking of places. Our overall ambition is to aid the understanding of post-conflict reconstruction processes and their impacts by connecting wide-ranging, theoretical appraisals of reconstruction and memorialisation to the insights that arise from analyses of the specific physical places through which they are articulated.

On legal instruments and established practices

The consistent connection between war and heritage is the main concern underwriting this volume. Examples are wide-ranging, including cases from remote and recent history and from different continents, and they consistently illustrate how heritage can be called upon to back political claims, legitimise power, or inflict harm on opponents. The destruction can take many forms (Viejo-Rose 2007:103) including deliberate targeting, misuse, looting, vandalism, and iconoclasm. A key moment in the official recognition of this relationship dates back to the Napoleonic wars, when the vast scale of rampant looting and destruction was acknowledged in the Congress of Vienna (1814-1815). This concern was furthered through the development of nation-states throughout the 19th century as they boosted their sense of identity through references to a national past (e.g. Champion and Diaz-Andreu 1996), resulting in increasing awareness of national ownership of cultural heritage. As a result, the notion of national cultural property became increasingly important in the definition

of identities, belonging, and boundaries (Anderson 1983). This national re-framing of heritage was accompanied by various attempts to develop formalised and binding legal instruments including some pertaining to cultural property during war. These were not heritage laws as such, but rather regulations included under rules of war. The Lieber Code of 1863, prepared during the American Civil War (1861-1865), is often cited as the first stage in this process of codification (Schindler and Toman 1988). It detailed the conduct of Union soldiers, ordering them to protect art, libraries, scientific collections and instruments ‘against all avoidable injury’, and to acknowledge and protect ‘cultural objects and sites in occupied territories’ (Boylan 1993). The Lieber Code was instrumental for the subsequent formulation of the Hague Conventions on land warfare of 1899 and 1907 and other international treaties. Today the 1954 Hague ‘Convention on the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict’ and its subsequent protocols of 1999 are core instruments; the principles for cultural property set out in these conventions have become part of customary international law (Toman 1996).

A number of significant issues pertaining to our understanding of heritage and its protection are embedded within this legal history. First, concern about the deliberate destruction of heritage as opposed to collateral damage gradually developed to become an area of explicit concern. The distinction was clearly acknowledged in the 1954 Hague convention, and has become even stronger emphasised in more recent texts such as the 2003 UNESCO ‘Declaration concerning the Intentional Destruction of Cultural Heritage’. Secondly, the legal texts reveal a complex relationship between heritage and conflict, notably in their use of the term ‘cultural property’ rather than heritage. This terminology, of course, connects heritage to concepts of ownership and material value, and focuses concerns on return and reparation – a conceptualisation that overlooks the complexities of immovable and intangible heritage and introduces an unhelpful (and often inaccurate) assumption of ownership being well-defined. Thirdly, as a further consequence of the focus on heritage as property, the legal concern is limited to physical destruction and reconstruction, leaving no measures available to protect against the misuse and appropriation of heritage.

These attitudes to heritage are carried forward into post-conflict reconstruction efforts. In practice, reconstruction plans often focus entirely on tangible cultural heritage with scarce recognition of its intangible dimensions, and are carried out within a simplistic understanding of ownership and heritage-value. There is also a strong tendency for heritage reconstruction to be undertaken separately from concerns about social recovery with the

result that links between different aspects of communities' recovery are poorly understood and the importance of cultural dimensions remain underappreciated. Heritage reconstruction guidelines are primarily formulated according to architectural conservation practices such as those in the Venice Charter of 1964, which express the ideal that the integrity of the monument and its meaning should not be distorted (Venice Charter of 1964, Article 14-15). This means returning to or maintaining the monument in its authentic state, employing minimal interference, and clear marking of new materials are high priorities. This derives from a position that sees the original state as the authentic form, thus leaving it unclear how later historical additions and changes, including those caused by conflict, may have become part of the monument or site and may need to be acknowledged in its reconstruction. In short, this reflects an attitude towards heritage that presumes it can exist in isolation from what happens around it and to it. On the one hand, post-conflict reconstruction of heritage is carried out as if it involves a purely technical process, a matter of stone and mortar, rather than of meaning and symbolism. On the other hand, post-conflict reconstruction as a social project is usually discussed from the point of view of politics and policy, where security, rule of law and governance overshadow explicitly-interrelated issues to do with memory and cultural impact. The collaborative effort presented in this volume has therefore been guided by what we have identified as a pressing need to analyse reconstruction processes historically to understand what is actually involved, and how this is never just a project of physical conservation, but always also part of the reconstruction of a new meaning-scape. Without analyses of the seminal decisions and dynamics that drive the reconstruction of places, in their multi-faceted complexities, the nature and consequences of these processes will continue to evade us. The chapters in this volume therefore seek to connect the material aspects of reconstruction with their symbolic, social, and political dimensions to understand them as processes, and thus trace how meanings are generated, shared, contested, and transformed.

On the agency of materialities: heritage, sites, and place

In the past two decades the ways in which we look at cultural heritage have evolved dramatically, and we are beginning to come to grips with its complex nature and its multi-faceted ramifications. The outer boundaries containing the concept are still being pushed to test the flexibility of the concept – the limits of where it can be taken before it collapses into a vague 'everything is heritage' mode. Yet this experimentation does not mean that the concept

is not robust. Increasingly, the word ‘assemblage’ is being used to explain the combination of material and immaterial, mortar and emotions, values and interpretations that together comprise our understanding of what makes cultural heritage (e.g. Bille 2011). Into the assemblage are included partner concepts of legacy and inheritance that, while not synonyms for heritage, are nonetheless part of it.

The research that underlies the texts in this volume made a conscious choice to move beyond considering traditional sites of heritage, such as monuments and museum collections, to look closely at how particular places become so laden with symbolic meaning and affective associations that they are thought of as cultural heritage by various groups within society or by the state. By so doing we hope to enrich our understanding of heritage and more specifically the multiple ways in which conflict creates and transforms it. Motivating this decision was also our concern that while there has been growing interest, thinking, and writing about cultural heritage, this development has yet to be mirrored by equally substantive work on how cultural heritage fares in situations of armed conflict and their aftermath, despite a recent a growth in the study of heritage sites representing or embodying conflict or contestation – often collectively termed ‘dissonant’ heritage (Tunbridge and Ashworth 1996), ‘difficult’ heritage (Logan and Reeve 2008, MacDonald 2009), ‘heritage that hurts’ (Uzzell and Ballantyne 1998), or ‘dark’ tourism/ ‘dark’ heritage (Lennon and Foley 2000, Carr 2012). We have also seen a growing concern with the relationship between war and memory that includes deliberations over the role of heritage within this relationship (e.g. Gegner and Ziino 2012, Winter 2001). Nonetheless, we still lack in-depth analysis and comparative studies of the nature of such sites, including debates about on what basis we identify some as ‘sites of conflict’ or ‘war heritage’ while ignoring others. To understand this intuitive nomenclature, we need to scrutinize the processes through which such sites come into existence, their varied impacts, as well as examine what causes the meanings associated with them to change over time. This volume aims to link such considerations to detailed factual investigations.

It is well-known that heritage sites act as anchors of symbolic meaning in urban and rural spaces, that they contribute to the construction of places, and that they are crucial to the relationship between people and their built environments. Not all places are the same, however, and why and how some become linked to heritage in a significant manner is not well understood. At one level, their construction as significant heritage depends on recognition and agreements; it is in this sense that heritage has as argued to be a process or

discourse rather than as merely tangible remains (Smith 2006). Nonetheless, we argue that the places themselves – their physical character – also matters, and that understanding the impact of materiality, and the effects and influences that tangible heritage may have, is essential to detailed analysis of such places.

This concern with materiality appears to sit in an interesting tension with recent discussions of the concepts of site and especially that of place, as there have been calls for more nuanced insights into how such spatial entities are created and how they are contingent on their construction through meaning-making and action. Within such discussions ‘site’ is often used to imply a physical location, whereas ‘place’, it is argued, is created through meaningful engagement or is considered to represent the social construction of ‘placeness’. The tension is only an impression, however, as both site and place need anchorage; both concepts comprise materiality even if this characteristic has not been the subject of substantial consideration in recent theorisation. The exception to this, of course, has been in phenomenological approaches to landscape in which the physical setting plays a formative role through its impact on how an individual interacts with space (e.g. Tilley 1994).

Here we aim to demonstrate that materiality is an important aspect of place. It affects our phenomenological encounter with particular places through both their physical presence and their visual effects; but impact goes beyond the bodily encounter. Places are also loci for experiences and events, means of recall, and foci of memory. Through these connections places provide testimony to events: they are the proofs. They are the tangible results of bombings, battles, reconstructions, decay and dismantling. Places exist in networks of references, citing other places through repetition or borrowing of forms, and in their materiality places carry meaning – linked to other places and over generations. Our experiences of the built environment that we inhabit, and our formation of connections to it, are profoundly influenced by its materiality.

In terms of conflict and post-conflict activities these tangible qualities of place are important, helping to explain why such places become targeted – both for destruction and reconstruction. First, their physicality creates an obvious focus for attention and activities, wherein alterations to their physical form can be observed and responded to: the ‘message’ of the destruction is unavoidable. Secondly, as argued above, they matter because within this physicality lie intangible dimensions which are part of the reasons why some places are imbued with symbolic meaning and emotions and others are not. Places can therefore be used

as tools both for the destruction and for the rebuilding of society, including ephemeral aspects such as belonging and meaning, sense of value, and notions of integrity.

Conflict affects the heritage in a manner that can be tangible, immediate, and visual, and through this it also affects the intangible meanings and associations linked to such heritage; post-conflict reconstruction similarly affect both dimensions. Moreover, because of the close interconnections between tangible and intangible heritage, it is difficult to damage the one without also affecting the other. Understanding the quality of materiality is therefore essential to our task, as it provides the tangible focus of experiences, practices, and meanings. The aim of the volume is therefore not only to explore how war impacts on certain places but also how these, irreversibly transformed by the conflict, shape behaviour and attitudes in turn.

Responding to this challenge, the present volume provides the biographies of a number of places, analysing how through their tangible presence and transformation they came to play specific roles in post-conflict processes of rebuilding and recovery. In some cases the particular buildings or sites studied became memorial sites, in others they became sources of conflict and dissonance, and yet in others they were used for the purpose of reconciliation or in the creation of new identities. Comparison across the cases can therefore serve to illustrate the variegated ways in which place has agency, how in the aftermath of conflict it shapes attitudes and creates atmospheres, and how it acts as a signpost of meanings both old and new. Collectively the cases therefore help to illustrate some of the diversity of how these connections are drawn and redrawn.

On destruction and construction: the relationship between cultural heritage and war

Armed conflict critically impacts on cultural heritage in all its variety of forms and manifestations: acts of war – of heroism, sacrifice or massacre – force new places to the fore, and boundaries shift and gain importance in their firmness or porosity. Furthermore, conflicts are replete with materiality: uniforms, weapons, maps, insignias, and ration packs. They transform everyday objects and places. The thick texture of meaning common to heritage sites becomes irrevocably transformed by conflict as they absorb new symbolic dimensions and come to have different affective connotations for communities.

The relationship between cultural heritage and conflict is one that involves a dynamic of construction, destruction, and reconstruction: new heritage sites emerge as a result of conflict even as existing ones are targeted, obliterated, and reinterpreted. Existing research on the impact of armed conflict on cultural heritage tend to focus either on its destructive effects

on the physical integrity of monuments and objects and on architecture and collections, or on the attempts to mitigate that destruction, increasingly expressed in terms of ‘cultural emergency relief’ (e.g. Goldewijk, Frerks, and van der Plas 2011). While these are all important contributions, what this volume addresses is the often-neglected dimension of conflict as transformative of cultural heritage, how it engenders new sites and adds new symbolic dimensions to existing ones even as others are destroyed and disappear. It thus adds to the emergent research areas concerned with the creation of war heritage (e.g. Gegner and Ziino 2012), but aims to bring attention to the processes and mechanisms involved in order to avoid treating heritage merely as a victim or product of war: rather, than approaching it as a co-author of its own history. Heritage places have an extra dimension of agency for they are effective communicators of the various dimensions of the relationships between people, their pasts, and their surroundings. This approach shows that the effectiveness of this communicative dimension does not appear to be diminished by apparent contradictions in the message it sends forth. The memorial site at Verdun is both one of mourning and loss, and one of creation of a national spirit, pride, and hope for a different future. Dresden’s Frauenkirche can be simultaneously a symbol of hope and of suppression, just as Gernika’s rebuilt square can be an aspiration both to tradition restored and the establishment of a new order. Such cases show how places may contain semantic contradictions without losing their evocative power.

Conflict transforms how landscapes are read and buildings understood; battles and atrocities imbue certain places with new significance even as others seem to be forgotten. This can be observed in media coverage of wars in which dramatic headlines single out specific places or events, such as “The Tragedy of Guernica. Town Destroyed in Air Attack” (The Times, 28/Apr/1937), or more recently, “Mostar’s Old Bridge Battered to Death (NYT, 10/Nov/1993). As a result, certain heritage sites are prioritised, drawing horrified gazes to their destruction. But as argued above the relationship between cultural heritage and armed conflict runs far deeper than such material damage, and raises questions arise about intentionality and consequences that accompany the destructive acts (Viejo-Rose 2011: 53-58), and which deeply influence their long-term impact. Cultural heritage can be deliberately targeted in order to damage an opponent’s morale or its tourist industry, to send a message indicating the apparent cultural distinctiveness of the ‘other’ – representing the enemy as a visibly identifiable and homogenous unit – or to defy the international community, threatening and installing fear. The consequences of this form of violence pan out over a long

period: from the immediate shock and grief, to a protracted period of mourning over the loss, to longer-term feelings of resentment, to a generation that grows up without the materiality of that cultural referent. This volume shows that only by considering the long-view is it possible to begin to appreciate the full impact of violence on cultural heritage.

Post-conflict reconstruction efforts are crucial in determining the nature of this impact. Even when buildings and monuments are rebuilt in the aftermath, the narrative of their destruction remains mixed in with the new mortar. This impossibility of recovering the damaged heritage sites as an untainted original by restoring them to their pre-conflict state is clearly a reality on the ground, though belied by most reconstruction rhetoric and guidelines. Different examples of these tensions are explored in the volume. In the cases of Gernika and Dresden, we investigate the transformation of the symbolic meaning of places that were already highly symbolic before they were subjected to catastrophic aerial bombardments, whereas in the case of Belgrade's Generalštab the symbolism relates directly to the building's destruction.

Meaning and materiality in the aftermath of conflict: a slippery relationship

The impact of conflict on heritage is thus not limited to the conflict itself, for cultural heritage is equally used and transformed during post-conflict phases when efforts are aimed at the recovery of society. Moreover, the interpretations and propagandistic uses of the conflict and its destruction of heritage usually last well into the post-war period and taint the reconstruction (Viejo-Rose 2011). In the aftermath, cultural heritage can therefore be used to serve a number of functions acting simultaneously as receptor, container, and reflector of intention, meaning, and emotion. Whether it is rebuilt, restored, ignored, or preserved in a ruined state, each action will be presented and interpreted as part of the construction of the new, post-conflict, society. New heritage sites emerge as a result of this process.

Despite these complex links, the aftermath of conflict is a weakly-defined area of cultural politics and although there are some legal precedents and frameworks available for reparation and repatriation activities, such as the 1954 Hague Convention. there are no clearly-formulated guidelines for post-conflict reconstruction planning, responses, and directions aimed at developing a sense of shared vision. The guidelines that do exist, moreover, are often fragmented in terms of differentiated tasks spread out and formulated by a wide array of institutions with varying agendas and more-or-less short-term aims. In practice, the reconstruction of material cultural heritage is therefore commonly separated

from the thinking about the urgent and pressing needs of societies emerging from conflict. In recovery planning culture is set well down the list of priorities, which are headed by ‘hard’, though undoubtedly crucial, political goals such as security and rule of law. As a result, the reconstruction of cultural heritage is primarily formulated according to architectural and museum conservation guidelines, such as the 1964 Venice Charter, that indicate professional ‘best practice’ for the conservation and restoration of monuments generally. This approach to the management of post-conflict heritage focuses on technical processes and does not provide nuanced guidance on the essential influences and importance of symbolism, nor how these influences are intricately linked to societies through a fine mesh of associated ideas, beliefs, and traditions. In this volume, we seek to bring these two dimensions back together and explore how what happens to cultural heritage during conflict and in its aftermath ultimately impacts on the reformulation of community values and identities. This is why the title of the volume emphasises the (re)construction of meaning as a fundamental characteristic of cultural heritage in post-conflict scenarios.

Biography of place

The concept of biography has in recent years been applied outside its original reference to the stories of an individual or group, used increasingly as an approach to the study of things as well as landscape and place. The concept of the biography of things is, for example, widespread within cultural studies. Influenced by writing such as Kopytoff’s 1986 article “The Cultural Biography of Things”, it is argued that people and things are entwined, or that they inform each other: “[a]t the heart of the notion of biography are questions about the links between people and things; about the ways meanings and values are accumulated and transformed.” (Gosden and Marshall 1999: 172). In its application to portable things the concept of biography has also been useful for acknowledging and analysing the changing meanings of objects and of seeing the relationship between people and things as a kind of entanglement (Appadurai 1988). Although it may be criticised for maintaining an anthropocentric understanding of how the world is constituted, such arguments did replace earlier approaches that tended to present things as passive reflections of society and people’s intentions. Granting importance to the biography of things also carved the way for later arguments about the agency of objects leading to increased recognition of the formative influence objects may have and how they assert an agency on their environment, including

affecting meanings and actions (e.g. Gell 1998) or arguments for the blending of human life and things (Latour 2005, Olsen 2010: 129ff).

Surprisingly, the concept, and thus the analytical lens that the biographical approach can provide, has mainly been used for the study of portable objects. Other kinds of materialities, such as places, have not been equally explored, ignoring the potential for enhancing analyses of places both as artefacts of material practices and as agents. Granting things and places agencies would move us ‘towards understanding them as co-constitutive of the world, as beings in the world alongside other beings’ (Olsen 2010:9). This does not, however, mean that they *per se* are all similar or equal, as different agents act on the world in distinct manners; but the mutual dynamic between people and things (in which we include places), is an essential aspect of how we make and experience the world. Olsen even argues for an increased mixing, stating that “... more and more tasks are delegated to nonhuman actors, and more and more actions are mediated by things” (ibid: 9), and further that

... these other entities do not just sit in silence waiting to be embodied with socially constituted meanings. Landscapes and things possess their own unique qualities and competences that they bring to our cohabitation with them. Throughout history, the property of soil and water, bone and stone, bronze and iron, have been swapped with those of humans. (Olsen 2010:10).

Only few studies have explored ‘biography of place’ as an approach. Amongst these are Sian Jones’s examination of the cultural biography of the 8th-century AD Hilton of Cadboll cross-slab in northern England (2004), Yannis Hamilakis’ work on the Parthenon marbles (1999: 303-320), Wendy Ashmore’s discussion of biographies of Place at Quirigua, Guatemala (2009), and Kate Brown’s account of the history of the borderland between Russia and Poland (2005). In this volume we depart, in part, from these earlier works not only because of the character of the conflict and post-conflict places that our research focuses on, but primarily because we aim to use the biographical lens as a means of close-grained analysis rather than as a metaphor or a tool for the production of narratives. Rather than a singular version, we maintain that biographies can have many strands, and that despite their temporal nature, biographies are not necessary sequential in terms of effects and understandings. As argued above, we also wish to stress the agential character of places themselves.

Potential of approach

The use of a biographical approach helps to emphasise the fluidity and dynamism of places, warning against singular monolithic interpretations of heritage by policymakers and heritage management professionals. The different case studies in this volume show how places change through time acquiring new meanings layered upon older ones, how these meanings can be manipulated and history appropriated, and how various physical aspects of places are part of their affective agency. In the process of presenting these places, variations on Pierre Nora's seminal concept of the *lieux de mémoire* (Nora 1984-92), realms of memory, are explored. Yet here we apply his notion to physical sites, rather than to the more metaphysical ones he presents (Nora 1984-92). Indeed, throughout this volume it is the assemblage of the material and the symbolic realms that sits at the heart of the analysis, and which makes it possible to hone in on the very processes and tangible qualities through which these sites come to act as reference points, markers in narratives of shared history and belonging.

Places do have biographies. This volume argues that using a biographical approach helps to reveal the entanglement of places, people, and events, providing a helpful analytical means of focusing on temporality and of recognising different kinds of time. As with things, where the biographies "can make salient what might otherwise remain obscure" (Kopytoff 1986: 67), writing and analysing the biography of places makes it possible to simultaneously discuss the unfolding of processes, analyse their effects, and trace their changing meanings: how they are redefined and used. When emphasising the effect of temporalities we refer to how meanings, connotations, and associations accrue around places through time – places are never blanks devoid of meaning, even when they apparently face total departure from earlier stages. The idea of a new beginning, for example, is itself a constructed idea that attempts to distance the present from the past. Places carry the imprint of what happens to them, including their participation in wider conflicts and events, even if discourses are constructed so as to distance them from their own contexts. Each stage is a chapter in a life history that can carry profoundly potent social and symbolic meanings (Ashmore 2009: 16).

Acts of forgetting or silencing are also part of biographical constructions. For instance, when considering the example of the Frauenkirchen in Dresden (chapter 4) it is clear that although the firestorm in some ways created a *tabula rasa*, the event which caused the erasure of the place is central to its memory and has deeply affected subsequent thinking, feelings, and actions connected to the site. Subsequent self-presentation of the place, whether

as a faithful reconstruction of what once used to be or as a totally new entity, will contain versions of those meanings. The chapters also remind us that we do not yet comprehend properly how long this will continue – will the memory of the firestorm in Dresden continue to haunt the self-identity and the projection of the image and ideas of the place for generations to come. or do such events gradually cease to determine the ways we understand a place? The analysis of Franco's reconstruction of Gernika is informative in this regard. Gernika was one of Franco's adopted cities and the reconstruction of its civic places, such as its Town Hall square (chapter 3), were undertaken according to his vision of the 'new Spain' whose virtues were to be expressed in architectural styles and urban layouts, among other domains. In effect, the reconstruction combined an imperial style with the use of various regional details (and a few imitation and invented elements) resulting in an eclectic style that dominated the dictatorship's reconstruction projects. Nonetheless, through time, this square has been absorbed into the town's urban identity and is used today as a platform for a variety of civic activities including commemorations of the bombing. More surprisingly, perhaps, there have been no significant subsequent efforts to restore buildings only partially damaged or later claims for a return to the original architecture of the town. This contrasts with the continuous debates over the number of deaths from the bombing of Gernika, or discussions of the collaboration of various sectors of society in the atrocities. Whereas writing the history of Gernika's destruction and setting the facts of the destruction are still hotly debated topics in the town, the architectural changes wrought through the Franco regime's redesigning of the town seem to have been accepted to the point of being almost forgotten.

Other examples debated in this volume also point to the effects of time. The battlefield of Dybbøl in Denmark (chapter 1) has in recent years undergone a dramatic reassignment in terms of how its history and meanings are officially presented, with the site being increasingly used to perform conciliatory events between Germans and Danes or used as part of the leisure industry – rather than blandly continuing its role as a national memorial park. This is in interesting contrast to the Ledra Palace in Nicosia (chapter 7), which began its life as a part of a luxury leisure industry, got caught up in the frontlines of conflict, was used as a site for negotiations that ultimately failed, and became the headquarters of UN peace-keepers, today gradually falling into a state of dereliction. The analysis of such places suggests that with time the accrual, or layering, of meaning can be deliberately used to alter perceptions of places. Comparatively analysing sites affected by recent conflicts, such as places in Bosnia, Cyprus, and Serbia forcefully demonstrates how the change in meaning is

often a deliberate part of political instrumentalisation: such changes can, as demonstrated in the analysis of the Kozara and Slana Banja case studies from Bosnia (chapter 8, 9), take place within a strikingly short span of time. Both cases reveal the explicit political strategies behind changes in the meaning of monuments and memorials once intended as memory-markers for all of Yugoslavia. The biographies of places are not random; their layering of meaning cannot be conceptualised merely as a palimpsest, as that interpretation loses sight of the various long-term effects of crucial events and the often explicit and deliberate re-awakening and re-use of earlier meanings, and the ability of society to absorb or negate others. This use of heritage as backdrops for performing reinterpretations of identity comes through in all of the cases

Another important point is the presence of different kinds of time within the biographies. By this we refer to how time is not experienced as sameness nor can its effects be considered through a simple linear timeline. Time is perceived in terms of events, watersheds, ruptures, and seminal points, some of these producing a condensation of time: of time standing still or collapsing. Such points and characteristics are crucial to the biography of places and to how events are often recalled or re-remembered and acted on in various ways. The contribution of this approach to the study of post-conflict reconstruction is therefore that it provides a means of close scrutiny of the complexity of meaning for places that were violently destroyed in a manner that affected their materiality as well as the fabric of their meaning. Moreover, such places were destroyed, reconstructed, abandoned, and recovered throughout time. The biographical approach helps to convey these narratives of change and multiplicity, and to acknowledge the complex linkages and the forms of their stories. It is only through such an approach, which at once hones in on specifics and yet allows a broad chronological scope to be encompassed, that we can hope to achieve a new level of understanding about the fate of cultural heritage during conflicts and its subsequent reconstruction, and how both of these apparently different interventions can have profound and transformative effects on communities.

This concept of a biography of place, with its implication of progression through different phases as well as formative junctures, transitions, and gradual transformation, helps us to extract and investigate places in terms of change, impacts, and consequences. What was the status of the place before the conflict, how was it (materially, culturally, and politically) affected by the conflict, and what followed afterwards? What were the crucial decisions at each stage of its life? Who made them, with what intentions and within what contexts? These

characteristics are, by necessity, placed within their specific cultural contexts and historical situations. We consider this to be similar to Clifford Geertz's (1973) concept of 'thick description' within ethnography, which may be seen as "... an account of intentions, expectations, circumstances, settings, and purposes that give actions meanings" (Greenblatt 1997: 16), although we add a stronger emphasis on change and process as this may elude a concern simply with thick description. We aim to give the reader a palpable sense of the changing meanings of these mutable and disputed places through time in a level of detail that goes beyond simply referring to the effect and affect of place – providing insight into the processes which produce and maintain these sites, and the cultural myths and meanings that come to surround, and at times consume, them.

Structure of volume

The volume results from a large collaborative research project, funded by the European Union² that explored the uses of cultural heritage in post-conflict reconstruction processes in five countries: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cyprus, France, Germany, and Spain, with case studies added from Denmark and Serbia. The partners carrying out the research came from a wide range of academic backgrounds including archaeology, social anthropology, geography, politics, history, international relations, and environmental psychology.

The case studies brought together here all come from Europe. The focus on a continent with a shared history has greatly enriched the value of the volume in terms of comparisons, and the shared use of a biographical approach provides additional cohesion. Drawing geographical limits has also meant an additional advantage of permitting a significant degree of historical depth. Examples range over nearly 150 years, a temporal scope that allowed us to investigate the short, medium, and long-term effects of acts of destruction and reconstruction. Through these qualities the volume both complements and supplements existing work in other regions (e.g. Logan and Reeve 2008, Purbrick et al 2007), while also making it possible to consider whether certain characteristics – such as the concern with authenticity, traditions of materiality, and the role of civic society – vary from one region to another.

The volume benefits from being the outcome of a research consortium. This means that although each case study has been investigated in its own right and is the intellectual and analytical responsibility of its individual author or research team, the case studies have been discussed, debated, and critiqued during the entire research process by all the authors and

partners in the research consortium. This means that whereas the methodology is not shared in a narrow sense, the case studies have in common a concern with extracting and investigating the biography of each of the places selected – in short, how it came to be as it is now. As a result the case studies address common issues but are informed by their specifics of place and historical and regional context.

Given the need for a detailed analysis as the basis for theorising the effects of post-conflict reconstruction activities, the chapters are all case-study based, and all are concerned with the construction and reconstruction of meaning through the rebuilding of heritage. This means that theoretical discussions on the motivations and impacts of reconstruction are connected to specific physical places where this process is played out. Through empirical studies the nuanced and complex political and social nature of sites and their meanings are identified, and the types of cultural meanings that are drawn and redrawn in the process of societal reconstruction analysed. On this basis the volume identifies similarities and differences in the processes of reconstruction and their effects, and at the same time places these solidly within their specific cultural contexts and historical circumstances.

The *raison d'être* of this volume is that it is possible to identify shared characteristics within the reconstruction processes and locate the underlying mechanisms involved only by widening our knowledge about the specific ways reconstruction of heritage takes place. This means investigating the various forms of meanings that are generated (intended and unintended) and analysing their impacts. This, collectively, is what the chapters aim at. Moreover, the level of details provided in each chapter allows the authors to go beyond merely identifying the effects of conflict on places, in order to engage analytically with the processes that produce and maintain these sites and the cultural myths and meanings surrounding them. The chapters therefore provide insight into the processes behind the changing meaning of these mutable and disputed spaces through time.

We chose to structure the volume loosely based on the dates of the conflicts in question; we say loose because the roots of both the conflicts and the heritage usually reach further back in time than what a specific start date suggests. Within the biographical approach, these roots are recognised as important, as are the continuous impacts and changing configurations and connotations of the ways that destruction is remembered and reconstruction is undertaken.

The breadth of the case studies is based on a careful selection aiming at a wide time span, a range of different types of conflicts, and sites that are at once representative and significant. There are three case studies from the former Yugoslavia, one from Serbia and two from Bosnia and Herzegovina, two case studies from Spain, one each from Cyprus, Denmark, Germany and France. This multiplicity of cases responds to the diversity and complexity encountered in the fieldwork as well as the diverse range of conflicts. The time span ranges from the First Prussian War of 1864 to contemporary conflicts: the 19th century Danish-Prussian war, the First World War, the Spanish Civil War, the Second World War, the Yugoslav wars of the 1990s, and the Cypriot conflict. In each case the short- and long-term aftermaths are considered. The sites were primarily selected for their iconic status and significance within regional, national, and at times international discourses and meaning-making mechanisms. In addition, they represent different kinds of places: battlefields and towns, rural and urban landscapes, single buildings and monuments.

The chapters collectively illustrate how particular places come to play specific roles in the reconstruction of society after conflict. The cases include examples in which a site was purposefully reconstructed after events and others where reconstruction was intentionally stalled or where new constructions were prioritised; equally, there are examples of changes in ownership or regime with associated changes in ideological influences. Collectively the chapters help us to identify shared characteristics and locate some of the underlying mechanisms activated through the reconstruction of heritage sites. While the chapters each focus on a particular material site – be it a building, square, monument, park, or battlefield – in all instances the authors have included within the scope of their analysis the discursive and physical *topoi* of the sites examined: their place within a symbolic and spatial topography. The selection of case studies enhances the comparative value of the volume as their range makes it possible to consider destruction and reconstructions over different time scales, different landforms, and different urban and rural heritage-scapes.

A deliberate choice was made to tackle a variety of more and less well-known sites in order to include consideration of why some sites become iconic while others seem to crumble into ruined oblivion or emerge rebuilt with seemingly little attention. Gernika and Dresden clearly belong to the first category, as sites that became iconic representations of complex events, gathering an array of meanings over time that transformed them into signifiers whose readings and uses continue to extend beyond their specific contexts and histories. Such iconic sites have come to represent acts of destruction irrespective of place;

they have become part of a shared collective history, reference points signalling the horrors of war, and core entries in the repertoire of European sites of memory. Both Gernika and Dresden acquired the iconic status of martyrs, their very names signifiers for wartime violence. Other sites such as the battlefields of Dybbøl and Verdun held positions of national importance but were also used to define relationships between former enemies and allies. Urban sites such as the Carabanchel prison in Madrid, the memorial complex in Tuzla, and Belgrade's Generalštab had important symbolic and ideological resonance at the municipal level. Yet other places such as the Ledra Palace Hotel moved in complex ways between local importance and a degree of relevance at the level of international actor, the latter furthermore expressed at military, diplomatic, and humanitarian levels. The example of Kozara similarly changed from being a stage set for the performance of a united Yugoslavia to becoming an exclusively ethnic memorial site.

The state of ruination of place adds a complex mesh of additional meaning, giving poignancy as a 'wounded' building and thus introducing a visual sign of victimhood that can feed post-war identity narratives. The significance of the ruined site as a generator of new meanings can be seen throughout the cases presented here, but most obviously in Dresden's Frauenkirche, Madrid's Carabanchel prison, the Ledra palace in Nicosia, and the Generalštab in Belgrade.

By adopting a biographical approach, the specific and general are united: each case study address how a particular place was used and interpreted during various phases in a conflict and post-conflict scenario. The keen attention to detail and the observation of variations on themes help us to realise that contestation, and particularly tensions over meanings and interpretations of culture, were acute during supposedly peaceful post-conflict phases. One of the very important conclusions drawn from all the chapters is, therefore, that the impact conflict has on heritage is not limited to the actual moments of conflict: rather, cultural heritage is equally used and transformed in the long post-conflict periods when efforts are aimed at rebuilding and recovery. Moreover, the chapters provide telling examples of how interpretations and propagandistic uses of the conflict induced destruction of heritage, taints the motivations for and the aims of reconstruction (Viejo-Rose 2011). This is powerfully documented in the case of Dresden (Chapter 4). Such areas of practice have fewer legal frameworks or guidelines in place than those pertaining to heritage and conflict, despite

their potentially longer-term impact on how communities re-make themselves within these spaces.

‘Biographies of Place’ investigates the life-cycles of places that have been affected by conflict and which, through their post-conflict assignment of meaning, have become important places of memory and symbolic meaning. Through their biography we illustrate how such sites are used to voice and create meanings and how political groups with very different ideological bases draw on them. This approach also reveals the centrality of such places for the recovery of post-conflict societies, for by embodying certain discourses, they can come to influence how communities formulate both accounts of past events and projects for the future.

As David Uzzell suggests in his postscript we often expect cultural heritage to do reconciliation work on its own, and the cases explored in this volume show that place does have a powerful agency -- but it is an agency that is interdependent with our affective, symbolic and cognitive engagement with it. Uzzell also indicates the importance of time, time that might not necessarily heal wounds but rather maintain them. In his analysis, Carsten Paludan-Müller identifies how the case studies could be categorised according to three types of conflicts: concluded, frozen, and terminated but not concluded. What is remarkable is how even those concluded conflicts continue to be a source of contestation and competing narratives, their use for the purposes of fuelling or justifying actions today still at the mercy of divergent interpretations.

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¹ We use the terms conflict and post-conflict rather than war and post-war to embrace a fuller range of armed conflicts and organised violence than is signalled by the term 'war' and to avoid debates about whether a particular conflict constituted a war or not. War is nonetheless the main form of conflict that we are considering, albeit in different forms, and our main focus is the aftermath of war.

² The project (CRIC Cultural Heritage and the reconstruction of Identities After Conflict) was funded by the European Community's Seventh Framework Programme (FP/2007-2013 grant no 217411). Description of the project can be found on www.cric.arch.cam.ac.uk with images available on open access at www.dspace.cam.ac.uk/handle/1810/214815 and videos on www.youtube.com/user/CRICResearchProject and www.vimeo.com/user9075853