

# Chapter 11

## (Re)Building a Bridge: Landscape, Imagination and Memory in Mostar



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**Abstract** Stari Most (‘Old Bridge’) is one of Mostar’s most iconic structures and highly regarded as the symbol of the city. Stari Most was destroyed during the Balkans War in 1993, where it collapsed in the Neretva River below. It must be noted that for Mostar to attract visitors, Stari Most was reconstructed (completed in 2004). While this bridge symbolises the city’s heritage, memories of its destruction during war remind visitors not to forget the tragic events of the early-1990s. Insight from the geography literature helps us explore conceptual meanings of cultural heritage landscapes, geographical imaginations and memory—to help critically understand crucial turning point in Mostar’s recent history. The chapter frames what Mostar and Stari Most endured during the brunt of war (where its unique heritage met a tragic fate, at least temporarily) to the (re)building of Stari Most and its defining presence as the city’s key attraction once again.

**Keywords** Mostar · Bosnia and Herzegovina · Landscape · Imagination · Memory · Imaginative memorialisation

### 11.1 Introduction

Mostar, located in central-southern Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), is a city with a cultural landscape initially influenced by Ottoman and Moorish architectural design. Stari Most, displayed in Fig. 11.1, is the most significant remnant of engineering and architecture in Mostar. This bridge is also figurative because the city is named after its bridge keepers (Rukaj 2011). This suggests a form of symbolic heritage embedded in the city’s name, tangibly and intangibly. When the bridge was destroyed in 1993, this ended (or temporarily eliminated for almost 11 years) that defining feature in the city’s cultural landscape that spanned the Neretva River since 1566 (Yarwood 1999). This then became a symbolic casualty of Mostar’s tangible, and intangible, heritage. The person who ordered the bridge’s destruction was Slobodan Praljak, a former Bosnian Croat forces commander, and who famously committed suicide live on trial

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© Springer Nature Switzerland AG 2020  
N. Wise and T. Jimura (eds.), *Tourism, Cultural Heritage and Urban Regeneration*,  
The Urban Book Series, [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-41905-9\\_11](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-41905-9_11)



**Fig. 11.1** Stari Most, the old bridge in Mostar spanning the Neretva River (photograph by Nicholas Wise)

in a courtroom at The Hague. He was quoted as saying ‘it’s just an old bridge’ in 1993 (Radio Liberty 2019). In 2013, Praljak was found guilty and accused of ordering the destruction of Stari Most in Mostar, but these actions and the criminality of the offence remain complex and contested. When we consider change in Mostar today, what we see is a new bridge that looks old, but we need to consider some of the deeper narrative(s) at play here surrounding the making, unmaking and (re)making of Stari Most as a symbolic heritage feature in Mostar’s urban landscapes. BiH and Mostar were devastated by brutal conflict in the early-to mid-1990s, and this took a toll on elements of heritage across the country.

As this chapter will conceptualise, (re)building Stari Most (Old Bridge) was the first step towards regenerating tourism in Mostar. This chapter addresses each of the themes covered in this book, namely tourism, cultural heritage and urban regeneration. First, some insight and inspiration from the geography literature concerning landscapes, geographical imaginations and memory and how this helps us critically and conceptually understand these crucial turning points in Mostar’s recent history have been addressed. The chapter frames what Mostar and Stari Most endured during the brunt of war (where its unique heritage met a tragic fate, at least temporarily) to the (re)building of Stari Most and its defining presence as the city’s key visitor attraction once again. We live in a world that is continually being built. New buildings are planned while others are rebuilt, or (re)built. I use (re)building in its post-modern sense in this chapter because one could argue that aesthetics are simply arbitrary and subjective. Landscapes change as well as meanings, but from a cultural heritage point of view, are we speaking back to something by (re)embedding memory back into a landscape that was destroyed as a way of connecting people and a place with

the past. Or is rebuilding merely for spectacle and/or attraction purposes, which in turn challenges us to look at a landscape and consider it a 'heterotopia' (see Foucault 1986; Relph 2001). Conceptually, we need to question if a newly built bridge in Mostar truly replicates (the original) Stari Most. While it may appear the same at the surface (tangible), does it still hold the same symbolic meaning (intangible)? Or are there now more defining powerful forces in play, beyond or even weaved into its contemporary narrative that now begins to commodify a cultural landscape just so that people can gaze upon something that once was. Therefore, can something be truly rebuilt, or is it merely (re)built, knowing that the imagination can be simply a way of remembering something. For the visitor who had never connected with, seen or crossed the original bridge, does the new bridge just act as a tourism relic that one can visit to reconnect time and space?

## 11.2 The Cultural Landscape and 'Imaginative Memorialisation'

Research on memorialisation has received much attention among social and cultural geographers who interpret landscapes (Schein 1997; Foote 2003; Dwyer 2004; Hoelscher and Alderman 2004; Dwyer and Alderman 2008; Wise 2011; Wise and Mulec 2015). Past memories embedded in landscapes contribute supplemental meaning to a place identity, existence and heritage (see Barthel 1996; Hoelscher 1998; Alanen and Malnick 2000; Osborne 2001; Bélanger 2002; Whitehead 2009; Jimura 2019). In conceptualising memorialised landscapes and tragic influence, Foote (2003) presents a four-fold typology noting that such spaces can often relate to one of the following themes: sanctification, designation, rectification and obliteration. Such insight is complemented through the notion of symbolic accretion, which focuses on supplemental meanings that extend the narrative of landscape scenes and associated memory (see Dwyer 2004). Both perspectives will be used as reference points to support/position meanings encountered in this chapter and some images are included to supplement the narrative that is detailed. Such landscapes are symbolic to narrations of the past, similar to intended features such as plaques or dedicated monuments, but contexts are represented subliminally. Through representation, Schein (1997, 660) suggests 'discourse materialized'. This perception refers to features in the landscape, both tangible and intangible, because these are powerful intermediaries of place, history and memory.

Imaginative geographies help refer us to specific places landscapes and meanings are constructed through contexts of knowledge and representation (Agnew and Duncan 1989; Duncan and Ley 1993; Said 1993; Gregory 1994; Guy 2004). Gregory (1994, 11) states: "discourse refers to all the ways in which we communicate with one another, to that vast network of signs, symbols, and practices through which we make our world(s) meaningful to ourselves and others". Therefore, memories embedded in the landscape communicate to us past events and thus become insightful narratives of

time and space, past and present, thereby reinforcing images and establishing imaginations. Drawing from Said (1993, 7), by relaying historical experiences, he suggests there is “a new urgency about understanding the pastness or not the past, and this urgency is carried over into perceptions of the present and future”. To expand on this idea, landscapes and places are often defined, over time, by the events that unfold. Whether events are expressed through the media, via images, or textual accounts, these presentations act as intermediaries influencing how landscapes and places are imagined (see Agnew and Duncan 1989). For example, Robertson and Hall (2007, 20–21) argue: “heritage, identity and cultural landscapes draw on discursive practices that are, of themselves, complex and contradictory, so we must view such landscape representations as similarly capable of generating contestation and conflict”.

By integrating contexts presented in the literature on landscape memory and imaginative geographies, this chapter suggests that depicted landscapes can be conceptualised as ‘imaginative memorialisation’. Discourses of memory mediate knowledge and understanding of past events, whether positive or tragic, to reinforce place images and imaginative geographies. However, memories of the past are not always immediately memorialised. Imaginative memorialisation in this sense then suggests post-war landscapes reinforce tragic images and memories—and therefore communicate remembrance, whereas rebuilding is seen as a way of recovering (Wise and Mulec 2012). Moreover, imaginative memorialisation suggests further critical engagement with the image of a place, acknowledging semblances of heritage and change, from a geographical landscape perspective. This relates to Steinberg and Taylor’s (2005) suggestion that we need to focus our attention on the legacies of conflicts and how landscapes narrate place imaginations. As a result, the remaining war-torn landscape preserves and disseminates meaning, and then when attempts are made to rebuild then we must (re)interpret the landscape.

### **11.3 A Bridge in the (Cultural) Landscape of Mostar: Geographical Imaginations and Place Memory**

Built and situated on the Neretva River in the south of BiH, the city of Mostar was planned and developed during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. In its early days it was considered an Ottoman frontier town (UNESCO 2019). Stari Most was a defining feature of Mostar, the capstone of the city as it connected traders and townspeople for centuries. To conceptualise the cultural landscape, we are directed to the work of Denis Cosgrove who talks about landscapes, spaces and places as modes of production that have social and economic value (Cosgrove 1984, 1998). From here we can understand that landscapes are symbolic and embedded in the fabric and everyday place narratives as a form of expression (Schein 1997; Adams et al. 2001). Meanings inscribed into landscapes are complex, plural and multi-layered (Robertson and Hall 2007; Wise 2014). This multi-layered meaning will begin to become more apparent later in this chapter, as meanings embedded in spaces, places

and landscapes change over time. If we consider Stari Most from the perspective of Foucault (1986), who contends that time is linear, thus interpretations significantly alter based on points in history (or a critical continuum of time and space). Stari Most constructed in Mostar was a continuation of an Ottoman Landscape. This bridge was erected as a cultural expression and a landscape feature based on the diffused architectural style at the time of construction. What we will see, as time evolves through this paper, is that the bridge is interpreted differently. Stari Most, as a target during a time of war, shows how its interpretation by the opposition forces saw such a landscape feature as something reflecting what they sought to destroy, and thus its symbolic presence then was seen as something that needed obliterated from the landscape. Later, with desires to (re)construct the bridge, its symbolic presence was now one of value, and the landscape becomes something that could be gazed upon and commercialised for profit and place promotion to (re)store a memory of the (re)connected people.

When the Ottomans arrived in Mostar, there were already bridges spanning the Neretva River. But when Stari Most was constructed in 1566 this signified the start of a town that would come to look inherently Ottoman. Yarwood (1999, 1 *original emphasis*) writes that from the mid- to late-1500s “a typical Ottoman town emerged at this time on both banks of the river, with a bazaar, public baths, *hans*, thirty mosques, seven *medreses*, residential quarters or *mahallas* and fortifications”. With each of these symbolic Ottoman townscape elements placed in Mostar on both sides of the Neretva, the bridge was more than just a defining architecturally relevant structure. It existed to ease mobility through a rugged terrain whereby materials, ideas and goods could be transferred, built in a style that conformed to the cultural landscape at the time—thus reflecting time and place. Mostar’s economic situation was said to have peaked around about the late-1600s to early-1700s, correlating with the declining influence of the Ottoman Empire. By mid- to late-1878, the Austro-Hungarians annexed Hercegovina and sought to modernise Mostar. Yarwood (1999) explained the city was transformed “from an oriental backwater into a European city in a very few years”. This push by the Austro-Hungarians to modernise Mostar saw a new cultural landscape layered amidst the Ottoman cultural features, thereby blending landscape features and architectural styles depicting different times. Despite the Austro-Hungarian influence, the Ottoman character would remain, but divided. The west of the city would transform with a neo-classical urban plan, and the east side also saw some intervention with a new hotel, baths and a music school build, but in Moorish style (Yarwood 1999).

Between WWI and WWII, urban development was yet again influenced by new actors, with the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes. Post WWII, the Federal People’s Republic of Yugoslavia (1945–1963) and the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (1963–1992) saw Mostar transformed again. Mostar became an influential regional city after WWI. It was the capital of Herzegovina, and new powers brought nascent changes to the built urban landscape. Le Corbusier-style high-rise residential buildings began to dominate the city, especially to the north and west to accommodate growth and allow for the wide boulevards common with socialist urban planning. Beyond the high-rises, as expansion continued west, villas with large gardens were

where wealthier residents would settle on the city's periphery. People moved to Mostar as industrialisation commenced during the Yugoslav period, with significant expansions to industry made during the 1950s–1960s. According to Yarwood (1999) larger companies manufactured aircraft parts, cars and computers, and factories emerged for aluminium, wine, tobacco and food processing. While Mostar was experiencing growth through manufacturing and processing plants, a large amphitheatre was constructed. Another unique attraction of Mostar is its iconic physical setting in the mountains that helped the city attract visitors. Mostar had a truly diversified economy by the end of the 1960s, but with influence and opportunity, this resulted in the city becoming increasingly ethnically diverse as well. However, Yarwood (1999) found that the city residents lived in unison, education was fully integrated and friendships/acquaintances regularly crossed socially constructed ethnic boundaries. But beyond Mostar there existed wider forces that clearly did distinguish among diverse groups and this resulted in geopolitical and ethnic disputes over territory (Dahlman and Tuathail 2005) and this ethnic diversity is what led to tensions and made Mostar a key focal point during war in the Balkans in the early 1990s (Klemenčič and Žagar 2004). To show this diversity, in 1991 a census of Mostar showed that the city comprised 126,067 residents, “divided into 29 per cent Croats, 34 per cent Muslims, 19 per cent Serbs, 15 per cent Yugoslavs and three per cent other groups” (Yarwood 1999, 2).

Social and cultural geographers concerned with heritage would argue that today what we see is a heterogeneous landscape hodgepodge, with styles spatially adjacent to one another in a place transformed over time. The placing of a bridge and its early significance is important despite the centuries of change in Mostar. The geographical imaginations at play and the place memory of the bridge since the Ottoman's influence seemed to wane from the narrative amidst this brief history of Mostar's expansion. Different groups brought different influences and this transformed the urban planning of the city. There was much happening around the city as it grew and as new industry brought regional and international export earning potential to Mostar. But despite all this growth, Stari Most, even if not a focal point of different waves of expansion, sustained its tangible presence in the middle of Mostar connecting the old towns on either side of the river. Attention and issues concerning memory and narratives of cultural heritage became distracted, but the presence of the bridge remained embedded in the fabric of Mostar's cultural landscape. Perhaps as economic expansion became the focus, the bridge remained as a relic of times of the past. According to Schama (1995, 14), landscape and memory is “a way of looking; of rediscovering what we already have, but which somehow eludes our recognition and our appreciation”. Cultural landscapes offer insight into human imprints based upon history and change, or pertinent to the focus of this study, tragic events and war (Foote 2003), as we will see in the next section. The landscape has the power to define heritage and become an imaginative discourse; however, much complexity is added when researchers examine memorialisation and change over time (see also, Hoelscher and Alderman 2004; Dwyer and Alderman 2008; Wise 2011). Heritage and imaginative discourses are narratives that may be continuous or may become frozen in time, or as we see in Mostar from 1993, a new focus on built cultural heritage challenges us to

focus once again on something as symbolic as the Stari Most. Given Mostar's urban morphology, the focal point of Stari Most would become prevalent again as war in BiH erupted in April 1992 and the bridge at the centre of Mostar's symbolic centre would meet its fate as Croat mortar shells destroyed the bridge on 9 November 1993.

#### **11.4 Stari Most Caught in the Crossfire: The Impact of War on Cultural Heritage**

War threatens the cultural and historical heritage of places, especially symbolic landscapes (see Lunn 2007; Figal 2008; Winter 2008; Wise and Mulec 2012). Moreover, war and tragedy casts burdening images/imaginings of fear, deterring people from visiting affected places (Ashworth and Hartmann 2005; Clouser 2009). As mentioned above, there has been much scholarly research focusing on place image and post-war landscape memory over the last decade. Numerous discourses influence place imaginings and communicate images consumed by outside audiences. In some places, war is commemorated, while other places attempt to remove images of war and violence by putting more emphasis on heritage preservation (Vitic and Ringer 2007). But what links these discussions in the literature is the focus on heritage, as heritage represents an important component of European preservation agendas, as attention is dedicated to 'old town' quarters, monuments and defining historical landmarks (see Goulding and Domic 2009; Wise and Mulec 2012).

Mostar was a zone of conflict during the Bosnian War of the Balkans from 1992 to 1995 and saw its heritage, old town and old bridge threatened. As noted, Stari Most met its fate in November 1993 when it was destroyed at point-blank range by Croat forces. Slobodan Praljak famously (but casually) referred to Stari Most as 'just an old bridge', and as the previous section suggests, as Mostar expanded, perhaps there was some symbolism to that statement that this was just an old bridge as the new areas of the city expanded and played an important role in Mostar's industrial and economic growth. This war had an adverse impact not only on the city's image, but also its heritage. Thus, symbolic cultural landscapes would be targeted by oppositional forces.

As narratives of the war continued to emerge in Mostar, the focal point was increasingly linked back to the city's old quarter around the iconic Stari Most. Across Mostar the impacts of the siege during war in the Balkans were clear, and as the city emerged from conflict the memories of war were not possible to dismiss. Bevan (2006), for instance, examines the annihilation of symbolic structures. When structures symbolising heritage, tradition and identity are impacted or removed from the landscape, Bevan (2006, 8) suggests this is "to deny a people its past as well as a future". Contrary to this thought, this chapter suggests, conceptually, Mostar's urban scene represents a manifested memorial of the Bosnian conflict of the early 1990s. Transposed layers of the landscape take on alternative forms of meaning altering images of places. Moreover, and pertinent to critical interpretations, insight into the meaning of landscapes

transformed through war suggests addition by destruction as scars of conflict remain, post-war. As we know from the above section, much of the heritage 'old town' core of Mostar (present day tourism area) mixes memories of the city's unique Ottoman heritage alongside remaining physical impacts of the Balkans War. In recognising the importance of interpreting layers of meaning, Mostar's urban landscapes during the early- to mid-1990s were symbolic with memories of war and semblances of heritage, communicated as depleted, offering an imaginative geography of violence and destruction, or this unmaking of Mostar.

What needs questioned here is: why is symbolic cultural heritage caught in the crossfire during war? Stari Most was specifically targeted based on what Foote (2003) would refer to as the obliteration of memory, or what Tyner (2009) would perhaps interpret as the erasing of space. As conflict intensified in the Balkans between the different forces, sides began to take aim not only at the killing of opposition forces, but to also take down elements and tangible features in the landscape that was symbolic to the history of the opposition group, and this is where this significance of Stari Most to the Muslim history of Mostar links to the Croats taking aim at the bridge. But the bridge arguably was not simply targeted because it was built during the Ottoman times, it had come to represent more than that and it was a symbol of a multi-cultural city renowned for a place where numerous ethnic groups resided peacefully. War, however, can alter mindsets and change or challenge previous meanings. Thus destroying Stari Most in Mostar is not just an attack on the heritage or identity of one group, but it could be perceived as an attack on something that was a symbol of multi-culturalism, and thereby attempting to alter this narrative of togetherness in an attempt to rewrite a future narrative of a city in favour of one more dominant group. Thus, these 'anti-geographies', as Tyner (2009) explains, are an attempt to un-write or erase the past so that a new future can be constructed.

### **11.5 (Re)Building as Regeneration: 'If You (Re)Build It, (Will?) They Will Come'**

Academics have addressed issues linked to war tourism, post-war tourism, memories and destination image formation/promotion in the former Republic of Yugoslavia countries (see Hall 2002; Hughes 2008; Rivera 2008; Wise 2011; Wise and Mulec 2015; Forde 2016). As these issues have been addressed elsewhere, this chapter now conceptualises how rebuilding, or (re)building, as a form or regeneration is an attempt to restore a narrative of heritage and reconnect people with a place's unique symbolism. Regeneration then in this sense needs to be considered as both tangible and intangible. It is tangible in the fact that the presence of the bridge exists and now once again connects Mostar's old town across the Neretva River, and is intangible in the sense that Stari Most can once again symbolise the city's namesake and its image is used as a means of attracting visitors to see and understand the history of the bridge as that iconic centrepiece of Mostar since 1566.



Tourism is a chance for people to explore landscapes and associate memories. However, it is important to preserve and convey memories that tell time and preserve history so that the focus is not only on an object as an attraction, but as something that serves a functional purpose. Stari Most, as repeated in this chapter, was more than a centre point as it connected the city and allowed for the flow of ideas and early trading. But once something is destroyed and rebuilt, can the narrative ever be the same? This is why there is a need to further conceptualise landscape and memory, while recognising geographical imaginations, because once something is rebuilt, it may serve a similar purpose of function, but it also becomes an attraction. Post war, landscapes become memories, and they visually convey insight into a place's tragic or contested past. Clouser (2009, 7) suggests, "the power of a landscape can be seen in its ability to mold thoughts, evoke memories and emotions, reinforce and create ideologies, and to relay to the world the values and priorities of place". To visitors, landscapes not only have the power to guide interpretations of war/conflict, but they offer perceptive analysis into these imaginative geographies that may be dedicated towards heritage preservation. This is made evident by UNESCO (2019), where it states online: "the reconstructed Old Bridge and Old City of Mostar is a symbol of reconciliation, international co-operation and of the coexistence of diverse cultural, ethnic and religious communities". Jimura's (2015) work would confirm this point given the impact heritage attractions have on place and local identities. Here this coexistence once again enters the narrative, but while UNESCO is reiterating the historic significance of Stari Most, can we also consider that (re)building something as a form of regeneration plays along with attempts to attract visitors, and thus regenerate an urban tourism agenda to restore an economy going forward. Without the bridge Mostar is without a key part of its symbolic cultural heritage—and thus sits without a key focal attraction.

It was evident that a new bridge that needed was constructed over the Neretva River. Rebuilding Stari Most as it once was, was seen as a symbolic gesture. As the memory of war in the Balkans persisted in the mind of those looking to make vacation/holiday plans, many saw the countries like Croatia, BiH, Serbia and Montenegro as countries recovering from conflict, so it would be a slow start when trying to re-attract tourists to the region. Studies conducted by Mulec and Wise (2012) and Wise and Mulec (2012) found when looking at the image of destinations in Serbia and Croatia, respectively, that people were initially hesitant to travel to the region even in the early-2000s. BiH and destinations with potential recovering from war were arguably left at a disadvantage because memories of war were preserved in the landscape, even though destinations across Croatia sought to fade memories of war (see Wise 2011). Wise and Mulec (2014) then considered the impact of war on BiH looking specifically at Sarajevo since 2005 found that images and memories of war were still found a decade later. However, destinations across BiH presented themselves as cities recovering and wishing to educate visitors. Cities across BiH were described as 'open-air museums' in the media, while other media sources encouraged people to come and see the impact of war and learn about how the destination has developed since the war ended. While many places that people visited across BiH were considered what Wise (2011) referred to as 'landscape remembrance', Mostar's

city officials took a different approach when deciding to rebuild Stari Most. Planners in Mostar began restoration and (re)building efforts of Stari Most on 7 June 2001 and the bridge once again reconnected both sides of the Neretva River on 23 July 2004, more than a decade after its obliteration. According to Armaly et al. (2004) the cost to rebuild Stari Most was USD \$15.5 million.

Reconciliation can help people in a place symbolically reconnect with a tragic event, but one can also argue that rebuilding/(re)building also results in new commercial value (Armaly et al. 2004). The presentation of Stari Most on the BHTourism (2019) website explains: “when the Stari most, or Old Bridge, collapsed from tank shelling in 1993 it was like the heart was ripped out of most Mostar natives”. Moreover, a large mural displayed on a build in Mostar depicted this complex journey (or maze) towards reuniting both sides of the Neretva River, shown in Fig. 11.2. While



**Fig. 11.2** Mural depicting a maze from both sides of the Neretva River to connect Mostar once again by Stari Most in 2004 (photograph by Nicholas Wise)

this display does reiterate the importance of the bridge to Mostar and its people, from a more critical and capitalist standpoint, creating a replica of Stari Most as it once was arguably makes the bridge a commercial spectacle. This means it becomes a vantage point for promotion and profit, and a chance for those within close proximity to use it for its earning potential. Tourism and being within proximity of a destination capstone attraction means businesses can once again commence, or what we see is investment in restoring proximate surrounding areas. The bridge sparked investment here, and thus was a catalyst for subsequent regeneration of surrounding buildings to give owners and investors new earning potential, with new restaurants and hotels offers vantage points of Stari Most, gaining income off a restored cultural landscape. Bridge jumping is something that people have done here for years, jumping off Stari Most 27 metres into the river below. Given this history and popularity of bridge jumping here, since 2015 one of the Red Bull Cliff Diving World Series events happens here—using the iconic bridge for its iconic value and as a spectacle for entertainment.

A bridge of rubble has no commercial value, nor does a city without an attraction. Regeneration is the transformation of space to enhance the value and profitability of a space, for industries such as events and tourism (see Wise 2016; Wise and Harris 2017). So for Mostar, (re)building is regeneration in the sense that the city can now restore its image, it can now market a defining cultural attraction (the new Stari Most) to attract tourists from around the world who once watched the destruction of Mostar and BiH. They can now visit, consume and take pictures of, and walk across the bridge that was a cultural tragedy of war in the early-1990s. Perhaps (re)building a new bridge in Mostar would not have been as symbolic if they did not salvage what they could from the original bridge.

## 11.6 Concluding Thoughts

Can we conclude that memory, image and attraction led to the urban-regeneration of Mostar's cultural heritage? Or does this symbolic (re)building of Mostar lead us to interpret a new confluence of tourism and tradition? These are questions that are not only important in Mostar, but in other chapters in this book where times of war and destruction/atrocities led to new touristic activity where people are brought back to learn about the un-makings in place and the reconstruction of a new narratives that seeks to encourage us not to forget. This is evident in Mostar when someone crosses the bridge from east to west they see a stone from the original bridge setting there telling and reminding us: "DON'T FORGET '93" (see Fig. 11.3).

After Stari Most was reconstructed, tourism began to surge in Mostar as it was an opportunity to see an iconic bridge steeped in cultural heritage and learn about the war that devastated the city. The confluence of tourism and tradition represents an opportunity to rebuild a new service economy as the city sought ways to tell their story. However, while confluence is appropriate when we consider a new local tourism economy that has emerged, there are some that feel tourism is threatening



**Fig. 11.3** Don't forget '93 engraved on a stone from the original bridge placed at the entrance way to the bridge as you enter to cross Stari Most (photograph by Nicholas Wise)

again the city's heritage as high concentrations of tourists flocking to see the new old bridge see this as a threat to maintaining everyday semblances of local life and culture (Rukaj 2011).

War as memory is part of the city's narrative and image, and because the city has recovered this lends to appeal, which results in an iconic attraction. Thus war has become a legacy and tourism part of the image regeneration that is reshaping the urban narrative and continued transformation of Mostar. In some respects, the destruction and subsequent rebuilding of Stari Most in Mostar led to the appeal of the destination alongside restoring its meaning to the immediate resident population. While the symbolism and namesake of Mostar has been restored, tangibly through its physical presence in the landscape and intangibly as a signifier of the city's identity, Mostar's appeal as an attraction is seen by some as a new threat. This

observation aligns with Wise and Mulec's (2012) findings concerning the remaking of Dubrovnik's tourism industry as a contemporary threat to the unique and fragile heritage that has been restored in the Balkans. A city that was said to look beyond ethnic and religious divisions saw the reconstruction of the bridge as a symbolic of reuniting the populations where the flow of goods and exchange of ideas can now continue along with the flow of tourists who visit the city to see and learn about Mostar's past and present as the city strives for a sustainable future.

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