MOSTAR Bosnia-Herzegovina

Mostar: results of the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina

Mostar represents the whole history and the present political situation of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

In this war, Serbian terrorists try to destroy every building and every book. From April 1992 they destroyed four bridges in the city center and 12 bridges in the surroundings. The only one which survives is the Old Bridge, but it is seriously damaged.

Administrative and court buildings and all information offices are damaged. Every cadastre register and archive document was burnt down.

The following buildings are destroyed too:

The buildings used for medical care and social welfare, nine of the eleven primary schools, kindergartens, the university campus, the Students Home and the Pupils Home, the National Theater and Puppet Theater, the complex of the Youth Center with its library and its gallery, the University Library, every hotel in the town and its surroundings

The hydroelectric power plants and industrial city zone, the heart of life in Herzegovina was destroyed, burnt down and pitilessly looted.

Dozens of production studios and laboratories disappeared in flames, while a large part of the industrial infrastructure is destroyed: telecommunications in total, more than half of electricity transmission lines with main transformation stations, the water pipelines broken on many places, all gasoline stations, railway terminals and the city airport.

More than 50 % of housing buildings in the town with 130.000 inhabitants are destroyed

Terrorists' attacks are targeted at the cultural heritage in particular, aiming to destroy the symbols of the town and to weaken the psychological strength of its citizens. Here are a few examples:

Musala- the central city square, with Kyose Kathode Mosque complex, The Musical School (1880), The Public Bath (1912), Hotel Neretva (1890), Villa Neretva (1976) and The Tito's bridge (1936) on the river Neretva;

The St. Peter and Pavao Church (1866) with the Franciscan Monastery. This church was renovated in 1991, and then totally burnt down in 1992;

The Cathedral "The Mother of The Church"(1978) with the Bishops Residence, where 50.000 books were fired,

The New Orthodox Church was totally destroyed too

But, the principal target of the Serbian aggressor is Mostar's historical city core , the symbol of the town, the symbol of the permanence and the well-known entity of Mostar and Bosnia-Herzegovina

The towers and the Chardak in the Old Bridge complex were also burnt down. Two main streets which lead to the bridge with more than one hundred buildings, were totally destroyed

The Museum (1895), the Archives (1892), Hotel "Ruza" (1978), the Symphonic Orchestra (1904), The Haji Mehmed Bey Karadjozbey Mosque, The Koski Mehmed Pasha Mosque, The Vuchiyakovitch Mosque, Tabachitza Mosque, The Municipality Hall, The Mufti office are among the several hundreds of buildings in the Old town which had the same fate

In the span of a few months the city was reduced to an urban ruin. This is a horrible crime against the town, against its history and its tradition

In conclusion, a message

National pride may help to save some of the monuments which are considered to be relevant for national glory, but others will be destroyed for this same reason. This is what happened and is happening now in Mostar, in all Bosnia-Herzegovina and in many places in the world.

Mostar survived this crime and has to launch a revival process.

The world must stop the disintegration and annihilation of our cultural heritage, because it is the base of our future.

It is our sincere hope that architects, urban planners, historians, artists, scholars in all fields of science will come together to create, with the support of craftsmen, entrepreneurs and the whole society, a powerful technology which would appeal and enable mankind to ensure an integral and dynamic conservation of the world cultural heritage

Dr. Amir Pasic

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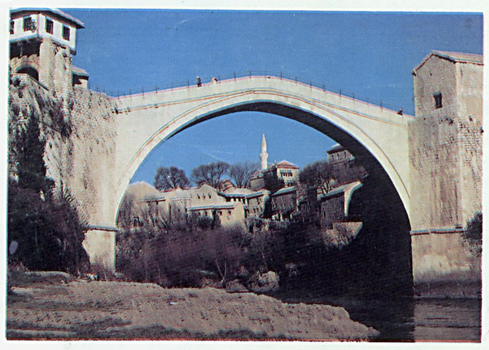
Mostar: Historical background

The city of Mostar was established in the Ottomari period, between 1468, when the Ottomans conquered southern Bosnia and 1474, when the town was named Mostar.

The city was organized around the medieval fortress close to the bridge on Neretva river. This fortress was mentioned for the first time on April 3, 1452, in a letter of Dubrovnik's merchants. The name Mostar means bridge keeper, a word of Slavic origin.

The medieval bridge was replaced by a solid wooden structure by 1481, but only the stone bridge finished in 1566 could support the intense military and commercial turnover.

The new bridge enlivened and activated the city. The charshiya became larger, the city's fortification system was expanded and a number of mahalles were established.



The Old Bridge 1990 /photo Zlatko Tulitch/

The Old Bridge (1566, Mimar Khaireddin) represents the center of gravity for the total urban system. It is a monument of exceptional value from the artistic and scientific points of view, representing a masterpiece of bridge construction (one stony arch span of 28.7 m, with vault depth only 77 cm) and architectural design, in connection with both the natural phenomena of Neretva river and the surrounding urban construction.

Mostar lies on two rivers, Neretva and Radobolya. This natural resource was used successfully for different crafts, including 19 watermills in the Charshiya only, a tannery and a hamam, numerous gardens and a water supply system.

The city reached its circumference by 1670, with around 10.000 inhabitants, which would not change until 1878, date of the Austrio-Hungarian occupation.

The Muslim population was dominant throughout the history of the city. Muslims developed their cultural activities considerably during the Ottoman period. Many medreses were established. Numerous learned persons, writers and poets lived in Mostar, some of whom gained fame here, far from their native country. Mostar became the seat of the Mufti until 1650.

The first news about the Christian population in Mostar date from 1575.

Mostar became the seat of the Orthodox Metropolit in 1767, and of the Catholic Bishop in 1847.

The existing church complexes were set up in the 19th century, as follows: the Old Orthodox Church in 1833, the New Orthodox Church in 1873 and the St. Peter and Pavao Church in 1866.

People of different religions lived and worked together in the charshiya and had the same way of life in nearly identical housing structures.

The Austrio-Hungarian occupation covered the period from 1878 until 1918. It was a time of new economic development and intensive growth of the city.

The new city center was developed in the free zone on the West side of Neretva river, close to a railroad system.

Several administrative buildings, the Public Bath, three modern hotels, six primary schools, the Franciscan Monastery, the new Bishop Residence, the new Metropolit Residence were built.

More than one hundred business and apartment buidings were constructed. They were arranged according to a new geometrical scheme of streets.

Three new bridges were built on Neretva river to connect the two banks.

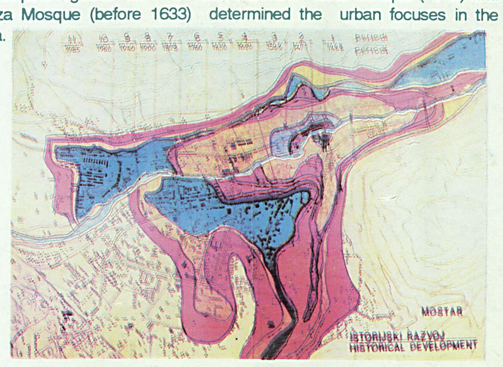
During preparations for World War I, a new military camp was established and the fortification system on the surrounding hills was built.

Mostar had a clear and distinct urban scheme inspired by the Eastern model. The housing area separated the city area from the charshiya. The micro housing regions-mahalle, 32 in number, represent groups of about 40 dwelling complexes brought together around the center of the mahalle-mosque complexes.

The bridge over the Neretva river, the fortifications and hans became the core around which ran several streets with rows of craftsmen's shops and some more solidly built merchant's storehouses. This meeting place of roads emphasized in the bridge was the center of the city and also a production and social center. There was no room for apartments or family life.

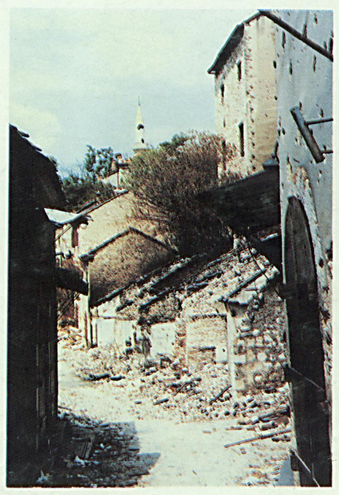
The charshiya in Mostar was most significant during the construction of the Old Bridge between 1550 and 1570, when only three legators built its mosque complexes, 153 shops and many other useful structures. At that time were built the Haji Mehmed Bey Karadjozbey Mosque (1557, on the list of Koca Mimar Sinan buildings), The Vuchiyakovitch Mosque (1518), The Keyvan Kathoda Mosque (1552) and The Nezir Aga Mosque(1550).

These mosques together with The Koski Mehmed Pasha Mosque (1618) and Tabachitza Mosque (before 1633) determined the urban focuses in the charshiya.



Historical development of the town

The Kujundziluk street: dukkans before the war /photo Cemal Emdem/.

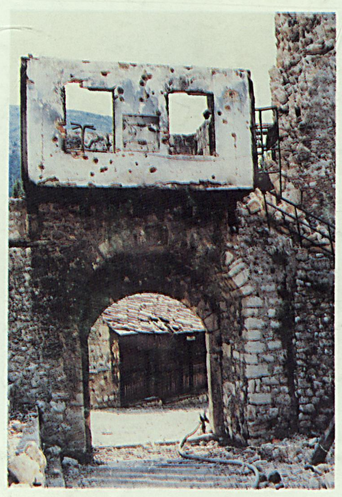


Kujundziluk street, total destroyed in 1992.

The Koski Mehmed Pasha Medrese restored in 1979, architect Amir Pasic

Tabhana restored in 1986, architect Amir Pasic, demolished in 1992.

Destroyed storehouses in Kujundziluk /photo Studio Hadzitch/



Chardak on the Old Bridge destroyed in 1992.

For the implementation of the project, basic information and historical data were collected, architectural surveys were conducted, photographs were taken and a questionnaire with 22 elements (value of lots, analyses of uses, in-depth structural investigations), was circulated for more than 2000 structures.

The data and information were in the preparation of the urban restoration plan (scale 1:200) for the historical city core, the Master plan (scale 1:500) for the old town and the plan for forty-kilometer-street facades (scale 1:100).

In this way, from an individual structure to a site and vice-versa, we made evaluations and proposals for interventions.

For every intervention or new construction, a standard design process was used, respecting, necessarily, the basic information concerning structures or areas.

Development of the documentation and different interventions on the structures were undertaken as parallel activities.

The area covered by the whole process grew larger and larger, from 0,10 sq. km.-the charshiya in 1979 to 2,8 sq. km. in 1985 and 4,7 sq. km. in 1991 -the Old town.

Restoration started with the Old Bridge because it symbolises Mostar. This was an appropriate beginning in order to satisfy the psychological need for permanence.

The restoration and renovation process was enlarged to cover other monuments in the city core: the towers close to the Old Bridge (1979-1983), The Koski Mehmed Pasha Medrese (1979), The Clock Tower (1982), The Vuchiyakovitch Mosque (1988) and Keyvan Kathoda Mosque (1989-1992).

In the same time, more than 150 small business structures for rent were restored, together with the complete infrastructure of the old town including the water supply system, the sewage system, the hydrant system, lighting of the streets and illumination of monuments. Several new buildings were interpolated in the contact area.

In the other part of the city more than fifty historical structures were restored, among which are the very important St. Peter and Pavao Church (1989-1991), The Franciscan Monastery (1990-1992), The Old Orthodox Church (1985-1987) , The Sharitch Mosque (1988) and Haji Memiya Cernica Mosque (1990).

"The Aga Khan Award for Architecture" 1986 was given to the conservation project of Mostar Old Town, in recognition of its outstanding contribution to Muslims' architecture. This was a great encouragement to our efforts, especially regarding the introduction of new technology in the urban conservation process and the development of education and training in this field.

From 1988 onwards, we started a permanent collaboration with "The Aga Khan Program for Islamic Architecture at M.I.T. and Harvard University", Cambridge, Mass., USA.

Results of the urban conservation

Several interrelated components of Mostar's urban conservation project can be mentioned, to contribute to the development of urban conservation in general:

a. Balance between the mix of people and uses.

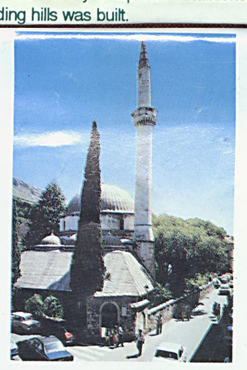
The Old Town continued to perform the different functions of a city center, We aimed to organize the Old Town for the citizens of Mostar and to balance their movement in daily and weekly life.

The citizens' participation in the urban conservation process was developed like one of the project's components. They participated in the legal decision-making process for each program in the framework of the project, and also as owners or users of structures in the area under the urban conservation process.

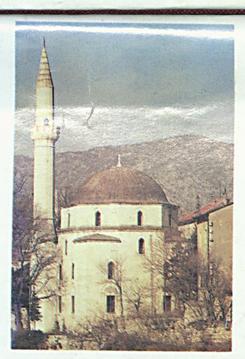
The urban conservation project of an area should integrate the past with the collective contemporary consciousness. This aspect is very much emphasized in Mostar and Bosnia-Herzegovina, where three cultural concepts founded on the different religious bases co-exist in close contact.

This was one of the numerous reasons for accepting and developing the universal approach in urban conservation, and the reason why it is necessary is to motivate all levels of the society to participate in or to understand th econservation process.

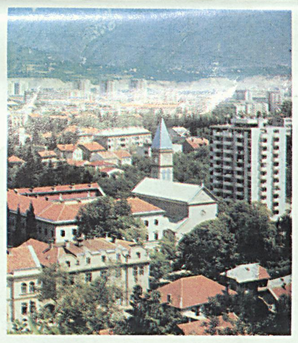
This project stimulated, changed and controlled the inherent dynamics of the place.



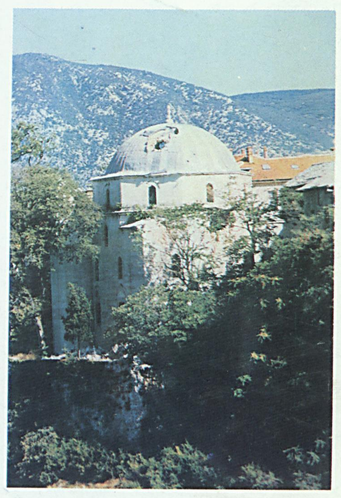
The Haji Memed Bey Karadjozbey Mosque/1557/,destroyed in1992.

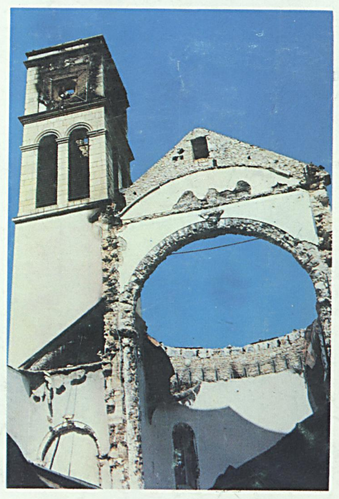


The Koski Mehmed Pasha Mosque before and after the war.



The catholic "St.Peter and Pavao" church, built in 1866, destroyed in 1992.





Through administrative reforms, a modern cadastre and land office was set up, which was very useful until today.

The charshiya, the old city center, died slowly. In this period several structures were constructed; "foreign bodies" were put in the old organic urban milieu, and several new short streets were opened for the new traffic scheme.

Similar trends continued in the old town, after 1918. As a result of these changes in the urban structure, we defined eleven different historical and urban layers in Mostar.

Urban conservation

The idea of the urban conservation project implemented in Mostar appeared in an initial form thirty years ago and it was developed in time. This idea was institutionalized in 1977 with the establishment of the "Stari Grad" institute.

"Stari Grad" undertook to develop an integral concept of urban conservation.

This concept was developed step by step. It started with the charshiya-the historical city core, then spread on the old town- the historical city core with its contact areas, and finally on the whole city. It integrated all important sites with their contact areas in the entire urban system.

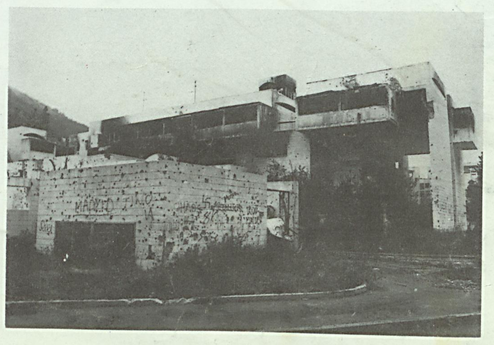
In the conception and implementation of the project, all well-known experiences of urban conservation in the world were examined and adapted to specific cultural and sociological conditions.

Urban conservation means, in Mostar's case, the integral process of preserving the structures and sites and keeping them in full activity and development.

The term also indicates adaptation and re-use, historical preservation, new impulses and continuous development.

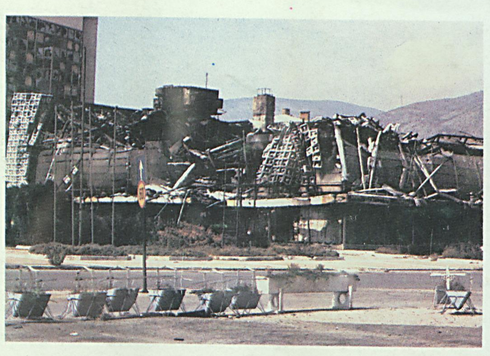
The urban conservation policy took into account all issues related to the planning policies, such as historic preservation, problems of development, infrastructure and other social and economic factors.

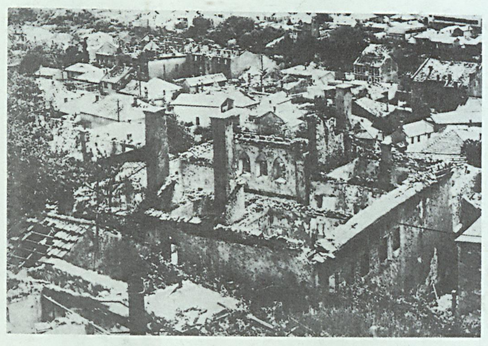
The Kaytaz house/1990/, and destroyed settlement Byelushine.



Department store HIT built in 1972, destroyed in 1992.

Hotel *RUZA* built in 1976, architect Zlatko Ugljen, destroyed 1992.





b. Self-financing system: income received from the area under the urban conservation process was re-invested into the area itself as a result of public/private partnership.

The basic resources were communal taxes and rental revenues of the business structures which were municipal properties.

Each new square meter enlarged the rental base and generated an amount of re-invested money. This process provoked an interest in all groups of owners.

"Stari Grad" controlled one third of the structures in 1991, and made more than one hundred joint-investment contracts with other owners.

In this way the amount of income rose from US$ 50.000 in 1978 to US$ 2.000.000 in 1989. During the same period the rate of growth of income was preserved at the level of 60% per year while the annual inflation rate increased from 60% to 300%.

The Luka Bridge built in 1913,
one of the 16 destoyed bridges in 1992.

Balance of the rents had a very important role in controlling and stimulating the inherent dynamic of the place. A combination of different coefficients gave the rental coefficient for each structure. In this way it is also possible to support unprofitable uses.

In the Old Town there are structures which were constructed during the last six centuries. This fact caused that the value of lots was often greater than the value of buildings. In such cases, the financial burden was distributed from one structure to the whole area , and the building owner could receive a real financial compensation for his property.

c. Educational system.

We organized an educational system which provided for the development of a specific theory of urban conservation. It aimed to identify the essential features of cultural heritage, especially in relation with a multicultural society.

The educational system was conceived on four levels:
general schools graduate postgraduate: plus an international inter-university multidisciplinary postgraduate program.

The departments of architecture and urban planning of the Civil Engineering Faculty, University of Mostar, were permanently supporting our efforts.

Students and young experts participated in every survey or design. As a result, 25 very useful finally projects, 12 MS theses and four Ph.D. theses were produced, concerning Mostar's historical city core, the Old Town and other areas in the city.

From 1988 onwards, an international 8-week summer program was organized, as the preliminary phase of an international miltidisciplinary postgraduate school to became operational in 1996.
For five years the summer program was attended by 44 postgraduate students from 12 countries and 28 professors from nine countries.

MUSALA- the cental city square, destroyed in May 1992.

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