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Monographs



**WAR AND CULTURAL HERITAGE**

Cyprus after the 1974 Turkish Invasion

Michael Jansen

This slim volume by Michael Jansen is an engaging contribution to the literature on the destruction of cultural heritages by acts of war. As it has been repeatedly pointed out, cultural looting is the second oldest profession. Following the 1974 Turkish invasion of northern Cyprus, an incredible amount of irreplaceable treasures from museums and churches experienced this fate of looting and found their way to the international black market. Part of these treasures—the sixth-century mosaics looted from Kanakaria—became the focus of a trial in the United States, where the verdict restored the mosaics to their rightful owners, the people of Cyprus.

In issuing his verdict, Judge Bauer of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit read from Lord Byron's poem, *The Siege of Corinth*, which graphically describes the destruction of that city caused by war. Then he added:

Byron, writing here of the Turkish invasion of Corinth in 1715, could have as well been describing the many churches and monuments that today lie in ruins on Cyprus. . . . As Byron's poem laments, war can reduce our grandest and most sacred temples to mere "fragments of stone." Only the lowest of scoundrels attempt to reap personal gain from this collective loss. Those who plundered the churches and monuments of war-torn Cyprus, hoarded their relics away, and are now smuggling and selling them for large sums, are just such blackguards.

Jansen places the Cyprus case in the global context of cultural looting, this most daunting lesson of history.

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Michael Jansen received her BA from Mount Holyoke College and her MA from the American University of Beirut, specializing in the politics of the Middle East. Since then she has worked as a regional correspondent for the *Irish Times* (Dublin), *Middle East International* (London), and the *Deccan Herald* (Bangalore). She also contributes columns to *Gulf Today* (Sharjah) and the *Jordan Times* (Amman) and is the author of three nonfiction books and a novel. With the outbreak of the Lebanese civil war, Jansen took refuge in Cyprus, where she has resided since July 1976.