Introduction

On February 24, 2022, Russia launched a large-scale invasion of Ukraine. Russian dictator Vladimir Putin expected a three-day campaign to topple the Ukrainian government and establish military control over the neighboring country. Instead, the attack ushered in a brutal and costly war on multiple fronts that is still ongoing two years after the invasion. The scale of destruction has far surpassed that of the war Russia had already been waging against Ukraine in that country's south-eastern Donets'k and Luhans'k regions since 2014. So has the loss of life. Ukrainian soldiers have died defending their country on the battlefield; civilians have been murdered by indiscriminate and deliberate Russian missile attacks on residential areas and in massacres and forced disappearances on occupied territory. The casualties suffered by Russia's own military have significantly exceeded those of any other campaign Russian soldiers have been involved in since the Second World War.[1]

Since the very first weeks of the war, Russian soldiers, politicians, and proxy administrators have expended considerable effort interacting with monuments on newly occupied territory. They have paid particular attention to war memorials, whether dating from Soviet times or built in independent Ukraine: memorials commemorating the dead of the Second World War first and foremost, but also those dedicated to a range of other military conflicts throughout the ages. They have destroyed, damaged, or removed some of these monuments; renovated or modified others; and soon started installing memorials of their own, all the way from small plaques to large statues. Even as the war was raging, they also used memo-

1 For an account of the war and its causes, see Serhii Plokhy, *The Russo-Ukrainian War: The Return of History* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2023).

rials as venues and backdrops for numerous ceremonies commemorating past wars. War memorials and associated practices have been among the main motifs of Russian war propaganda, especially videos, photos, and news reports produced for domestic audiences. Ukrainians, for their part, have used war memorials as symbols of defiance and resistance.

Why have the Russian invaders cared enough about war memorials to divert scarce resources to destroying, maintaining, or building them amid a massive war? Why have they removed some memorials and spared others? What is the point of commemorating past victories and defeats while bombing Ukrainian cities, and how did commemorative ceremonies in the occupied territories change over the first year of the war? What has been the broader impact of monument-related practices beyond the local settings in which they have occurred? And what does the Ukrainian case teach us more generally about how memorials to past wars can be used to justify new conquests? These are some of the questions this book explores, based on a detailed study of the treatment of war memorials in Russian-occupied Ukraine during the first year after the large-scale invasion.

War memorials and territorial claims

In times of controversies over statues of past oppressors, debates about monuments often center on representations of the past and the ways in which they continue to haunt the descendants of the oppressed.[2] Yet monuments also play a significant role in situations of actual physical violence. In particular, every new war affects memorials to past wars: suddenly appearing as precursors to the ongoing conflict, they are treated as sources of patriotic inspiration or reminders of the cost of war and are often expanded to inscribe today's fallen into a longer history of military prowess and sacrifice.

In addition, physical reminders of a shared past or a previous military, administrative, or religious presence can offer invaders a pretext

2 For an overview of recent debates, see Ann Rigney, "Decommissioning Monuments, Mobilizing Materialities," in *The Routledge Handbook of Memory Activism*, ed. Yifat Gutman and Jenny Wüstenberg (Abingdon; New York: Routledge, 2023), 21–27; Sarah Gensburger and Jenny Wüstenberg, eds., *De-Commemoration: Removing Statues and Renaming Places* (New York; Oxford: Berghahn, 2023). See also analyses of individual conflicts over statues worldwide in EuroClio's *Contested Histories* project at https://euroclio.eu/projects/contested-histories.

for conquest and allow oppressors to justify their continued rule. This often takes the form of a claim that such monuments are not being properly maintained and treated with the appropriate respect. The protection of Christian churches and monasteries was among the rationales for nineteenth-century Russian, French, and British "humanitarian" military intervention in the Ottoman lands.[3] During both the First World War and the Mandate period, the presence of vestiges of Crusader castles in the Levant provided the British and French with a justification for colonial rule.[4] In the twentieth century, monuments to the Battle of Kosovo of 1389 were used to sustain Serb claims to modern-day Kosovo.[5] This type of justification for conquest came to the fore in the latter half of the nineteenth century, responding to the rise of a modern public opinion with an interest in monuments that needed to be swayed in favor of military intervention.

In all of these cases, there is a dynamic of erasure and invented tradition at work. This is also in ample evidence in the Russian occupation of Ukraine. In laying claim to supposed vestiges of an older past, conquerors implicitly or explicitly assert that the most recent period in the history of a territory and set of monuments is but a blunder, one that needs to be expunged from the historical record so that an older past and the newly glorious present can be joined together like two pieces of a puzzle that were meant to be connected. Yet invariably, the monuments they find and the practices associated with them bear the mark of the previous period: the British, French, and Russians found Christian castles and monasteries in the state in which Ottoman laws on religion and antiquities shaped them, not in some primordial pre-Islamic condition. In 2022, the Russians did not simply restore Soviet war memorials to an original pre-1991 or pre-2014 state as they often claimed; rather, as we show in this book, they adopted many of the practices of memorialization and

3 Davide Rodogno, *Against Massacre: Humanitarian Interventions in the Ottoman Empire, 1815–1914: The Emergence of a European Concept and International Practice*, Human Rights and Crimes against Humanity (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2012), 98, 100, 287.

4 Dotan Halevy, "Ottoman Ruins Captured: Antiquities, Preservation, and Waqf in Mandatory Palestine," *Journal of the Ottoman and Turkish Studies Association* 5, no. 1 (2018): 91–114.

5 On the design history of some of these monuments, see Bratislav Pantelić, "Designing Identities: Reshaping the Balkans in the First Two Centuries: The Case of Serbia," *Journal of Design History* 20, no. 2 (2007): 131–44.

commemoration developed in independent Ukraine and started claiming them as their own.

In supporting territorial claims, war memorials and man-made monuments in general are part of a broader spectrum, which also includes what has been called "imperial relandscaping" and, more specifically, efforts to alter the natural landscape to make it conform to ethnonational stereotypes: "Jewish" pine trees in Israel/Palestine, "Russian" birches, or "Ukrainian" guelder roses in Ukraine.[6]

Such pretensions are often exclusionary, treating monuments as evidence that a territory primordially belongs to a certain group, whereas others living there have less of a claim on the land. Memorials erected by those with less of a claim on the territory are then declared illegitimate, inauthentic, and unworthy.[7] France and Germany removed some of each other's war memorials and other monuments in Alsace-Lorraine each time the region changed hands between them in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries;[8] some post-Habsburg states destroyed symbols of Austro-Hungarian military glory as they became independent in 1918; and the Soviet Union eliminated Estonian, Polish, or Romanian war memorials in territories it annexed in 1939 and 1944.[9]

This kind of sanitization can be swift and thorough, but often it is gradual and incomplete. In some of the cases just mentioned, individual examples of the offending memorials survive to this day. Yet while sometimes attention is directed to monuments only after the end of military conflict,

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6 On "imperial relandscaping," see Jill H. Casid, *Sowing Empire: Landscape and Colonization* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005). On ethnonational tree-planting, see Irus Braverman, *Planted Flags: Trees, Land, and Law in Israel/Palestine* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009). On the reverse phenomenon of using tree-planting to make a landscape look more cosmopolitan, see Tsypylma Darieva, "Rethinking Homecoming: Diasporic Cosmopolitanism in Post-Soviet Armenia," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 34, no. 3 (2011): 490–508.

7 Anthony D. Smith, *National Identity* (London: Penguin, 1991), 30.

8 Malgorzata Praczyk, *Reading Monuments: A Comparative Study of Monuments in Poznań and Strasbourg from the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2020).

9 On the de-Polonization of L'viv, see Tarik Cyril Amar, *The Paradox of Ukrainian Lviv: A Borderland City between Stalinists, Nazis, and Nationalists* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2015). On the Estonian case, see, for example, Ants Hein, "Denkmäler der sowjetischen Ära in Estland," in *Bildersturm in Osteuropa: die Denkmäler der kommunistischen Ära im Umbruch: eine Tagung des Deutschen Nationalkomitees von ICOMOS, des Instituts für Auslandsbeziehungen und der Senatsverwaltung Berlin in der Botschaft der Russischen Förderation in Berlin, 18.–20. Februar 1993*, ed. Florian Fiedler and Michael Petzet, ICOMOS—Hefte des deutschen Nationalkomitees, XIII (Munich: Bayerisches Landesamt für Denkmalpflege, 1994), 69; Rahvusarhiiv (Estonian State Archive), ERAF.1.3.501, ERAF.5.5.65.

at other times it is an integral part of conquest and occupation practices, diverting resources from actual combat.

When occupying parts of the Soviet Union, the Nazis and their allies destroyed a number of Soviet monuments: statues of Bolshevik leaders first and foremost, but also some war memorials. (In response, when the Red Army recaptured the occupied territories, it razed most of the military burial sites that the Germans, Italians, or Romanians had created for their soldiers.[10]) German plans went further: the architect Wilhelm Kreis designed gigantic "fortresses of the dead" that were to be built in conquered territories to celebrate German victory. The largest of them, a 130-meter-tall Etruscan-style structure, was to be erected on the banks of the Dnipro in Ukraine.[11] In addition, Nazi projects for ethnic cleansing and German resettlement in Eastern Europe were fueled by historical fantasies such as the idea that the Goths, one of the many groups that had historically inhabited Crimea, had been Germans and had ruled over the peninsula. Inspired by nineteenth-century German nationalism, this prompted Nazi leaders Adolf Hitler and Alfred Rosenberg during the German occupation of Crimea to invest resources into searching for traces of a Gothic presence that might serve as a pretext for creating a Gothic District (*Gotengau*) in the area.[12]

In all of the cases cited so far, war memorials were removed, altered, or installed as evidence that one ethnic or political group had no business commemorating its military victories and defeats in a given territory, whereas another did: starting in 1944, the Soviet Union removed monuments to the Estonian Liberation War against the Bolsheviks in 1919 just

10 See, for example, V.Iu. Pankov, "Germano-ital'ianskie zakhoroneniia na territorii pravoberezhnoi chasti Gomelia v gody Velikoi Otechestvennoi voiny," in *Aktual'nye problemy Velikoi Otechestvennoi voiny na territorii sovremennoi Gomel'skoi oblasti (k 75-letiiu nachala Velikoi Otechestvennoi voiny): materialy nauchno-prakticheskoi konferentsii*, ed. N.N. Mezga, K.S. Mishchenko, and S.V. Riazanov (Gomel': BelGUT, 2016), 208–16.

11 Gunnar Brands, "From World War I Cemeteries to the Nazi 'Fortresses of the Dead': Architecture, Heroic Landscape and the Quest for National Identity in Germany," in *Places of Commemoration: Search for Identity and Landscape Design*, ed. Joachim Wolschke-Bulmahn (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 2001), 215–56; Nina Janz, "Totenhügel und Waldfriedhöfe—die Gräber und Friedhöfe für gefallene Wehrmachtssoldaten während des Zweiten Weltkriegs zwischen individueller Gräberfürsorge und nationalsozialistischem Totenkult," in "War Graves, War Cemeteries, and Memorial Shrines as a Building Task (1914 to 1989)/Die Bauaufgabe Soldatenfriedhof, 1914–1989," ed. Christian Fuhrmeister and Kai Kappel, special issue, *RIHA Journal*, June 2017, no pagination.

12 Norbert Kunz, *Die Krim unter deutscher Herrschaft (1941–1944): Germanisierungsutopie und Besatzungsrealität* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2005), 41–73.

as it was erecting memorials to the liberation of Estonia from Nazi rule. What makes the Russian-Ukrainian case—and more largely Russia's geo-commemorative grievances against other Soviet successor states—special is that the past is acknowledged as shared, but the group currently in control is accused of having betrayed that common legacy by insufficiently honoring its memorials.

It is not unusual for countries that used to be part of a single political entity to acknowledge a shared legacy that continues to shape a bond between them. The cult of Simón Bolívar in Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Panama, Peru, and Venezuela comes to mind, or the veneration of Rabindranath Tagore in India and East Bengal/East Pakistan/Bangladesh. In these and other cases, interpretations of the meaning of the founding figure evolve over time and differ across national borders. This can lead to disputes over who remembers the legacy correctly. Usually, however, such disputes concern individual figures. In the Russian-Ukrainian conflict, by contrast, what is at stake is the treatment of a large number of dead bodies and of innumerable grave markers spread over a vast territory. In addition, the cult of the Great Patriotic War of 1941–45 has played a crucial if hotly contested role in both Ukraine and Russia over the past decades, unlike other historical cases: thus, the dead of the Austro-Hungarian army in World War I were being buried at a time when the empire was already disintegrating into national entities, and what cults emerged after 1918 typically focused on the fallen of individual nationalities rather than the entire imperial army.[13]

Accusations of historical revisionism and blasphemy have been central to Russia's criticism of the way in which the Great Patriotic War—or the Second World War—is commemorated in other post-Soviet states such as Ukraine. Russia's ideology was succinctly expressed by a Russian soldier filmed in Ukraine for a Victory Day propaganda video: "We are not occupying anyone, we are not hurting anyone here. We have a common past." The characteristic presentation of the soldier, who was masked and pseudonymous, belied that statement and graphically demonstrated the contradictions between Russian discourse and the reality on the ground.[14]

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13 *Sztuka w mundurze: Krakowski Oddział Grobów Wojennych 1915–1918 / Art in Uniform: The War Graves Department in Kraków 1915–1918*, ed. Beata K. Nykiel, Agniezska Partridge, and Kamil Ruszała (Kraków: Międzynarodowe Centrum Kultury / International Cultural Centre, 2022).

14 https://t.me/VGA_Kherson/1826, May 8, 2022.

Russian justifications for the war against Ukraine since 2014 and especially after the full-scale invasion of 2022 have amply referenced monuments. In doing so, they have built upon a long-standing tradition. Indeed, war memorials and pictures of such memorials had already been used in Soviet times in propaganda and education, particularly school history textbooks, for the specific purpose of visualizing a republic's or region's belonging to the family of Soviet nations by showcasing its contribution to the joint war effort.[15] In the ongoing war, Russian propaganda has frequently claimed that the Ukrainian government and nationalist forces are destroying monuments to any Russian presence in Ukraine, to the shared Soviet past, and especially to the Great Patriotic War of 1941–45, or leaving them to decay and preventing local residents from maintaining them.[16] During the 2022 invasion and occupation, monuments, and particularly war memorials, were central to propagandistic illustrations of the benefits of Russian rule.

Especially during the first four months of the occupation, Soviet war memorials were among the main markers of "liberation" in (pro-)Russian online and offline media. These media established visual connections between, on the one hand, the well-known symbolic canon of liberation from Nazi rule and victory over Germany in the Second World War and, on the other, what Russia presented as liberation from a new Nazi regime. The central rituals involving Great Patriotic War memorials included (re-)kindling eternal flames and hoisting the Victory Banner associated with the Soviet conquest of Berlin in 1945—rather than, or alongside, the Russian flag.[17]

Conversely, the Russian occupiers made a show of removing or destroying recent Ukrainian monuments to those involved in fighting against

15 Mischa Gabowitsch, "Visuals in History Textbooks: War Memorials in Soviet and Post-Soviet School Education, 1945–2021," *Journal of Educational Media, Memory, and Society* 15, no. 1 (2023): 99–128.

16 In this book, we use the Soviet and Russian term "Great Patriotic War" when referring to narratives or memorials that employ the term and reference the period from 1941 (rather than 1939) to 1945. Regarding popular attitudes in Ukraine toward the designations "Great Patriotic War" and "Second World War," see André Liebich, Oksana Myshlovska, and Viktoriia Sereda, "The Ukrainian Past and Present: Legacies, Memory and Attitudes," in *Regionalism without Regions: Reconceptualizing Ukraine's Heterogeneity*, ed. Ulrich Schmid and Oksana Myshlovska (Budapest–New York: Central European University Press, 2019), 111–13.

17 Mykola Homanyuk, "Reich, Union, Rossija: Die Symbolpolitik der Besatzer in der Ukraine," *Osteuropa*, no. 12 (2022): 13–45.

Russia in different historical eras. In doing so, they echoed countless historical cases in which conquerors destroyed monuments whose depictions of nationhood and resistance could challenge their claim to newly occupied territory. Like other conquerors before them, they also sometimes left monuments intact when they could fit them into their own politics of history, or simply out of oversight or lack of resources. The Ukrainian side likewise used monuments and images of monuments, including World War II memorials, as symbols of Ukraine's unbroken fighting spirit, of continuity between the struggle against fascist invaders then and now, and of wanton destruction by the Russian military.

Drawing on visual studies, memory and heritage studies, and ethnographic approaches to commemoration, this book explores the treatment of war memorials in the Ukrainian territories newly occupied by the Russian military since February 24, 2022. Based on sources collected during the conflict itself while one of the co-authors was living in Russian-occupied Kherson and later in a Kharkiv bomb shelter, our study is a fine-grained history of one important aspect of the Russian-Ukrainian war.

At the same time, this work attends to wider theoretical and comparative concerns, which are addressed in greater detail in the first chapter. Contributing to memory studies, we use the ongoing war as a case study of what happens when grand narratives of the politics of history meet a complex local memorial landscape and of how competing claims to a shared heritage play out in situations of armed conflict. Regarding visual studies, we seek to go beyond the traditional approach to the study of monuments, which looks at what they represent and how, to study how monuments themselves are represented in different media. We are also interested in how conflicts, including military conflicts, about rival interpretations of history are also clashes of different temporalities, drawing lines of continuity between different historical events and eras in different ways.[18] Addressing heritage studies, we seek to expand the scholarly conversation about monuments in times of war beyond the time-honored topic of preserving and protecting built heritage,[19] which is already being stud-

18 Eviatar Zerubavel, *Time Maps: Collective Memory and the Social Shape of the Past* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004); Mischa Gabowitsch, "Regimes of Temporality," in *The Routledge Handbook of Memory Activism*, ed. Yifat Gutman and Jenny Wüstenberg (Abingdon; New York: Routledge, 2023), 48–51.

19 See, for example, Steven Maddox, *Saving Stalin's Imperial City: Historic Preservation in Leningrad, 1930–1950* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2015).

ied with regard to the Russian invasion of Ukraine,[20] to how war drives the rediscovery, reinterpretation, and modification of monuments—just as it did during the Second World War, when members of the Red Army and Soviet political agencies were amazed to discover forgotten imperial-era monuments to Russia's wars against Sweden, France, or the Ottoman Empire, and drew inspiration from them for the memorialization of the war against Hitler's Germany.[21] Finally, our book also speaks to the sociological literature about situated cognition and the importance of the "material equipment" of a situation for the justification of action.[22]

Structure, scope, sources, and methods

Our sources were collected through the systematic monitoring of every *raion* (district) of Ukraine newly occupied in part or in full by Russian forces, for whatever length of time, since February 24, 2022, covering parts of the Chernihiv, Kharkiv, Kherson, Kyiv, Mykolaïv, Sumy, and Zaporizhzhia *oblasts* (regions), as well as those parts of the Donets'k and Luhans'k regions that had not been part of the self-proclaimed People's Republics and were brought under Russian control after the 2022 invasion.

For every such territory we went through both pro-occupation and pro-Ukrainian Telegram channels[23] as well as local and regional news websites, including those published in the self-proclaimed Donets'k and Luhans'k People's Republics (DNR and LNR), national media from both Ukraine and Russia, and international media. We collected photos, videos,

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20 See, for example, Marc R. H. Kosciejew, "Endangered Cultural Heritage in the Russia–Ukraine War: Comparing and Critiquing Interventions by International Cultural Heritage Organizations," *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 29, no. 11 (2023): 1158–77.

21 Mischa Gabowitsch, "Monuments in Times of War: Stalin's National Turn and the Rediscovery of Military Memorials" (Stalinism and War conference, Higher School of Economics, Moscow, May 24–26, 2016).

22 Bernard Conein, Nicolas Dodier, and Laurent Thévenot, eds., *Les objets dans l'action: de la maison au laboratoire* (Paris: Éditions de l'École des hautes études de sciences sociales, 1993); Luc Boltanski and Laurent Thévenot, *On Justification: Economies of Worth*, trans. Catherine Porter (Princeton; Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2006); Laurent Thévenot, *L'action au pluriel* (Paris: Éditions La Découverte, 2006); Bernard Conein, "L'action avec les objets: Un autre visage de l'action située?," in *Cognition et information en société*, ed. Laurent Thévenot (Paris: Éditions de l'École des hautes études en sciences sociales, 2020), 25–45.

23 For an overview of Russian-managed Telegram channels for the occupied territories, see Andrii Zakharov, Anastasiia Lotar'ova, and Olesia Herasymenko, "'Nezabarom perelashtuietes'.' Iak Rosiia zakripliuet'sia na okupovanykh ukraïnskykh terytoriiakh," *BBC News Ukraïna*, April 29, 2022, https://www.bbc.com/ukrainian/news-61277532.

and texts documenting any modifications to *intentional monuments*[24] *commemorating any armed conflict and anyone participating in or affected by such a conflict* (our working definition of a "war memorial"), as well as ceremonies and other events involving such memorials. Most of these sources were collected very soon after they appeared online; a significant number of them disappeared from the original sites of publication soon thereafter but have been preserved in our archive.

We also collected a number of printed sources, primarily newspapers printed by the occupation administrations. These were supplemented with field observations and photographs made in and around occupied Kherson as well as in most free Ukrainian regions (20 out of a total of 27[25]), sources about the history of the monuments in question and of their uses in commemorative ceremonies, as well as informal online and offline interviews with local residents and, finally, written reports by undergraduate students living in several occupied towns and villages in the Kherson region.[26] This interplay between digital and on-site ethnography proved particularly fruitful for our work. While our sources for Kherson and its region are particularly fine-grained due to Mykola Homanyuk's presence, intimate familiarity, and dense network of contacts in the region, the sources collected there helped orient our search for online sources regarding other regions. For historical background and comparison, we also occasionally refer to archival sources that Mischa Gabowitsch collected in archives in Ukraine and other former Soviet republics in the course of his research on the history of Soviet war memorials. In addition, we also draw on the results of several focus groups and a quantitative survey of Kharkiv residents that Mykola Homanyuk conducted in October–November 2022.[27]

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24 Alois Riegl, "The Modern Cult of Monuments: Its Character and Origin [1903]," trans. Kurt W. Forster and Diane Ghirardo, *Oppositions*, no. 25 (1982): 21–51.

25 Cherkasy, Chernihiv, Dnipropetrovs'k, Donets'k, Ivano-Frankivs'k, Kharkiv, Kherson, Kyiv and the Kyiv region, Kirovohrad, Luhans'k, Mykolaïv, Odesa, Poltava, Rivne, Sumy, Ternopil, Volyn', Zaporizhzhia, and Zhytomyr.

26 The bulk of the sources were collected by Mykola Homanyuk, with additional data collection, especially at the writing stage, by Mischa Gabowitsch. With few exceptions, references to our informants are anonymized to minimize risks resulting from sharing information with us. Many of them remain on territories occupied by Russia and are therefore in constant danger. Others are on active duty in the Ukrainian army and, if taken prisoner, could be singled out for special reprisals.

27 The focus groups were conducted on October 30, and the survey (N: 914) between November 10 and 22. Both were designed and conducted by Mykola Homanyuk and Ihor Danylenko with some input at the design stage from Mischa Gabowitsch. For an overview, see

Chronologically, we focus on the first year of the full-scale invasion and the ensuing occupation, from February 24, 2022, to February 24, 2023. This allows us to cover an entire annual cycle of commemorative events associated with war memorials, ending with those in honor of Russia's "Defender of the Fatherland" day on February 23 and of course events associated with the one-year anniversary of the invasion itself. We also draw on occasional examples from territories that were already under the control of the self-proclaimed Donets'k and Luhans'k People's Republics before the 2022 campaign, from Crimea, from regions that have remained under Ukrainian administration, and from Russia.[28] However, we did not systematically collect sources from those areas, where the dynamics have been different. Nor did we include sources about monuments not directly related to wars, such as Lenin statues, although Mykola Homanyuk has systematically addressed these elsewhere, showing that they have been far less significant in legitimating the invasion than war memorials.[29] Overall, our book focuses squarely on areas that came under Russian control in 2022 and the role war memorials have played in the occupation.

We itemized our collected sources using standardized index cards, recording data about the location, appearance, and history of the monuments, post-occupation changes to them, as well as any other relevant observations. Following the initial monitoring stage, we went through all the collected sources and inductively noted patterns and themes, discussing our impressions and comparing them with the results of research both of us had previously done on war memorials in Ukraine and elsewhere. The process of writing and discussing the text generated additional questions and made us go back to the sources already collected and to also look for new ones. However, it was not our objective to document every single case of interaction with war memorials or to provide a quantitative analysis. Rather, we were interested in discovering different types of interac-

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Mykola Homanyuk and Ihor Danylenko, "Symvolichnyi prostir mista: viziia kharkivian," *Kharkivska sotsiolohichna merezha* (blog), December 2022, http://soc.kh.ua/doslidzhennya/strong-symvolichnyj-prostir-mista-viziya-harkiv-yan-strong; Oleksiy Gnatiuk and Mykola Homanyuk, "From Geopolitical Fault-Line to Frontline City: Changing Attitudes to Memory Politics in Kharkiv under the Russo-Ukrainian War," *Hungarian Geographical Bulletin* 72, no. 3 (2023): 239–56.

28 Johanna Fabel provided valuable research assistance regarding DNR/LNR and Russian sources.

29 Julie Deschepper and Mykola Homanyuk, "The Returns of Lenin: (Ab)Uses of Monumental Heritage in Russian-Occupied Ukraine," Unpublished Manuscript, n.d.

tion. Thus, in this book, we present and analyze the entire range of roles that war memorials played in the 2022 occupation.

Chapter 1 discusses some of the theoretical presuppositions of our work. In particular, we discuss the move beyond interest in the creation and destruction of monuments to the study of what happens in between: the complex biographies and shifting meanings of monuments and the ways in which they are often modified in their lifetimes. We also argue for moving beyond the study of individual monuments as such to looking at memorial landscapes or *monumentscapes*. This in turn helps us better understand the link between monuments and territory—something that has proven so crucial in the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

Chapter 2 lays out the historical background and provides a brief overview of independent Ukraine's hybrid memorial landscape. Here we dwell particularly on recent changes to war memorials in rural Ukraine, which constitute the most widespread type of memorial in the country and, consequently, the one the Russian invaders interacted with most often.

In the main body of the book, our prime focus is on the actions of the occupiers and their collaborators. Thus, chapter 3 discusses how the invaders destroyed or modified some war memorials, and their reasons for sparing others. We also document their use of monument maintenance or destruction as a punishment or reeducation measure, as well as monument theft. In chapter 4, we explore how they strove, pretended, or planned to rebuild or renovate existing monuments and to erect new ones as symbols of Russian rule not only in the newly conquered territories but also in Russia and the parts of Ukraine already under Russian control.

Chapter 5 analyzes how both sides and their supporters used images of war memorials in their online and offline propaganda. Our main focus here is on how different formats and camera angles propel or illustrate different narratives about the war and how they establish different—hierarchical or equal—relationships between monuments and people.

In chapter 6, we look at how Ukrainians used war memorials to respond to the invasion: by spreading anti-occupation messages, by toppling monuments now seen—rightly or wrongly—as markers of Russian imperial rule, and by rebuilding and (re-)Ukrainianizing the memorial landscape of areas liberated from under Russian control. In this part of the book, we also refer to some of the complex ongoing discussions about Ukraine's built heritage.

Finally, it is impossible to separate the Russian treatment of war memorials in Ukraine from the commemorative ceremonies and other rituals that are centered on these memorials. Monuments were typically destroyed, altered, restored, or built specifically in preparation for dates such as Victory Day (May 9), generating most of the visual sources we collected. Thus, our discussion throughout this book touches not only on the monuments themselves but also on the associated practices and symbols. In addition, chapter 7 focuses squarely on these symbols and practices as well as the commemorative calendar the Russian occupiers instituted. Readers entirely unfamiliar with the Soviet and post-Soviet culture of war commemoration and the associated memory wars and symbols might want to consult this chapter first before returning to the main body of the book.