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Université de Bretagne Occidentale



res a look at cities under
reconstruction
urbanae

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(eds.)

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CONTENT

- 7 Armelle Maltey
Foreword
- 9 The Editors
Visions, Objectives and Content of the “Res Urbanae” Cooperation Project
Brest, Dresden and Brno: A Look at the Reconstruction

INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM “RECONSTRUCTED CITIES, CITIES UNDER RECONSTRUCTION”

- 14 Amandine Diener, Daniel Le Couédic
International symposium “Reconstructed Cities, Cities under Reconstruction”
Introduction

Session 1: Memory and the Imagination

- 19 Yvon Mullier-Plouzennec
Brest Elevated in Words
The Poetics of an Urban Plan in the Age of Enlightenment
- 29 Stefan Hertzog
Residential Palace – Zwinger – Neumarkt
Unfinished Projects by August II for Dresden (1709–1729)
- 37 Ole W. Fischer
Reconstructions in Frankfurt: Modern, Critical, Ironic?
The New Old Town
- 49 Mazen Haïdar
Lessons from Post-traumatic Reconstruction in Beirut
From a Tabula Rasa to Reclaiming the Lost City
- 59 Olivier Ratouis
Reconstruction and the Collective Memory
Reflections based on the Experience of Dunkerque

Session 2: Reconstruction: Which Doctrines?

- 69 Francesco Gastaldi, Federico Camerin
The Reconstruction Plan of Genoa
The Plan of 'Missed Opportunities'

- 80 Silvia Malcovati, Ilaria Maria Zedda
The Reconstructions of Berlin
Searching for a Lost Urban Identity between Architectural Theory and Practice
- 90 Éloïse Brégant-Belin
The Reconstruction of Falaise (1944–1970)
How Promoting the Town's Mediaeval Heritage Revitalised its Image
- 99 Moussa Belkacem
Rebuilding Elsewhere
The Villages of the Rhineland Sacrificed on the Altar of Lignite
- 107 Patrice Gourbin
Reconstruction in France after the Second World War
A Melting Pot for Architectural and Urban Creativity in the 20th century

Session 3: Cultural Transfers

- 116 Églantine Pasquier
Reconstruction and Philanthropy
The Carnegie Endowment for International Peace and Reconstruction of the Village of Fargniers in the Department of Aisne (1922–1928)
- 128 Jovial Koua Oba
Brazzaville
Patterns and Trends in the Post-war Reconstruction after 1997
- 137 Fabien Bellat
Reconstruction under the Soviet Influence
A Mutilated Memory
- 147 Ahlem Ben Abdessalem, Mariem Brik, Nawel Bani
The Maison Minima
Achieving a Balance between Modernist Functionalism and Local Expertise in the Design of Living Spaces

Session 4: Becoming a Heritage Asset?

- 156 Patricia Monteiro
Rising from the Ashes
The Renewal of Lisbon's Downtown in the Aftermath of the 1755 Earthquake

165 Chiara Roma, Luca Maricchiolo
**Morphological Persistence in Zadar Historical
Centre Reconstruction**

174 Christophe Bourel Le Guilloux, Gilles Ragot
**The Reconstruction in Nouvelle-Aquitaine
(1940–1965)**
Study and Heritage Recognition Process

183 Rita Khalaf
From ‘Historic City’ to ‘Survivor City’
Mosul Old City Patrimonialization Process

ARCHIVES

194 Véronique Langlois
The Cinémathèque de Bretagne
Audiovisual Archive, a Research Resource

WORKSHOPS AND EXHIBITIONS

202 Helena Zemánková
Brno
An Industrial City under Reconstruction

214 Kerstin Zäschke
Brest–Dresden, Reinventing the City
History, Destruction and Reconstruction after 1945

220 Amandine Diener, Patrick Dieudonné
Brest–Dresden, Reinventing the City
Inner City Blocks, Problems and Potentials

225 Claudia Marx
Brest–Dresden, Reinventing the City
Brest, Pontaniou Reimagined

232 Helena Zemánková
Brest–Dresden, Reinventing the City
A new future for Pontaniou

237 Sonia de Puineuf, Hans-Georg Lippert
**Brest–Dresden/Dresden–Brest: Urban Imagination
under (Re)Construction**

ART AND THE CITY

272 Sonia de Puineuf, Gwenaëlle Magadur, Gwendal Huet (Wen2),
Stéphane Couturier
Art and the City. Constructions, Deconstructions
Panel discussion with artists

282 Ivana Radovanovic
“Converging Visions”, 2023
Sound work of art resulting from the artist residency in Brest &
Dresden

AUTHORS

IMPRESSUM

Armelle Maltey
President of the Maison de l'Allemagne in Brest

FOREWORD

This book marks the culmination of an international project led by partners from three European countries (France, Germany and the Czech Republic) on the topic of cities under reconstruction.

As President of the Maison de l'Allemagne, the Franco-German cultural association that initiated the project, I can see how far we have come from the first contacts made in the midst of the pandemic to the present day. We have succeeded in combining the skills and efforts of the Université de Bretagne Occidentale in Brest, the Technische Universität Dresden and the Vysoké Učení Technické in Brno to organise meetings and create events involving a wide range of players: students, researchers, architects, artists, etc. This book sets out the structure of the project: workshops, colloquia, artist residencies and exhibitions.

The Latin title of our project - *Res Urbanae* - , which means *Urban Affairs*, has its origins in the three letters (R, E, S) shared by the names of the two cities that formed the starting point for our thinking: Brest and Dresden, 1600 km apart but which suffered the same fate of almost total destruction during the Second World War.

These three letters are also found in the latin word *Resilientia*. Resilience - understood as the ability to

overcome trauma - was highlighted in our project because it implied the idea of multiple reconstruction: that of the city, but also that of its imagination. Thinking of the city as a space in perpetual (re)construction, where utopias of all kinds collide, means measuring the importance of human creativity, and revealing the desire to recover from the hard blows inflicted by history. By taking a close look at several cities facing reconstruction in different contexts (the post-war period for Brest and Dresden or the end of the Cold War for Brno), we have tried to reveal the diversity of our European cultural space. This diversity is our wealth and must also be our strength, particularly in the face of the urban and environmental challenges that lie ahead. Let's hope that our project makes a contribution!

Finally, I would like to thank the European Union, the Région Bretagne, the Freistaat Sachsen, the city of Brest, the Goethe Institut, the Franco-German Youth Office (OFAJ/DFJW) and the Brest Rotary Club for their financial support of the project; and the Centre d'art contemporain Passerelle (Brest), the C. Rockefeller Center (Dresden), the Cinémathèque de Bretagne (Brest), the Ateliers des Capucins (Brest), the Verkehrsmuseum Dresden and the Zentrum für Baukultur Sachsen (Dresden).

RES URBANAE



RES URBANAE

The Editors

VISIONS, OBJECTIVES AND CONTENT OF THE “RES URBANAE” COOPERATION PROJECT

Brest, Dresden and Brno: A Look at the Reconstruction

The collaborative work on the theme of reconstruction between academics from Brest, Dresden, and Brno is an outcome of both academic partnerships nurtured over many years and the shared trajectory stemming from the urban history of these cities. Having been destroyed during the bombardments of the Second World War, Brest and Dresden embarked on reconstruction processes which, despite the differences in timeframes, methods, and contexts – primarily political – found common ground in some of the objectives. After reconstructing the built environment, which entailed a form of mental reconstruction to compensate for the trauma suffered, it was necessary to reconcile a respect for this legacy with the challenges posed by new viewpoints about these places. In the 1990s, while both cities were taking pride in having recovered or recreated their identity by completing their projects more or less definitively, thoughts were beginning to turn to recognising reconstructed cities within the sphere of heritage. At the same time, this sphere extended to the large-scale redevelopment projects which, for single industry cities like Brno, had resulted in a deskilling which was as significant, materially, and symbolically, as the destruction caused by the war.

Over the course of their history, Brest, the royal coastal city, Dresden, the “Florence of the Elbe” and Brno, the “Moravian Manchester” have encountered intersecting challenges in relation to their reconstruction. They are also valuable cases to study as they are undergoing further transformation. This fact has justified our approach of considering these cities to be like other regions which are

still in the throes of metamorphosis, as it can be argued that their reconstruction processes are not yet finished.

In recent years, the city of Brest has seen major transformation, notably within its reconstructed perimeter – with the arrival of a tramline – and with the construction of important facilities such as the Plateau des Capucins and its cable car. The ‘heart of the metropolis’ will continue to develop with the forthcoming creation of a park on the banks of the river Penfeld, as championed in Paola Viganò’s plan. Future transformations also include the Siamorphose project to regenerate the reconstructed centre and its main thoroughfare of the rue de Siam. This project has been initiated by the Brest métropole authorities and its planning and development society. In Dresden, the not yet completed project to redevelop plots in the city centre near the Frauenkirche has been accompanied by discussions on whether to renovate and transform some blocks (like Prager Strasse) or demolish and rebuild them (like Altmarktgalerie). In Brno, numerous industrial wastelands, located on the ring on the outskirts of the historic city centre, have been transformed into cultural or commercial centres, offices and accommodation in response to accelerated urban growth. The project to relocate the railway station to address contemporary mobility issues also shows an ongoing commitment to rebuilding the city on itself.

A Joint European Project: *Res Urbanae*

To explore these issues, the Creative Europe programme served as a way to strengthen the partnership between

France, Germany and the Czech Republic through a joint project, *Res Urbanae*. This project has given a practical application to initiatives developed by the University of Western Brittany and its geoarchitecture laboratory, the faculty of architecture at Dresden University of Technology, the faculty of architecture at Brno University of Technology, and the Maison de l'Allemagne in Brest, a not-for-profit cultural association that promotes Franco-German cooperation.

Res Urbanae explores current creative phenomenon in urban planning and development and the emerging capacity for resilience in cities under reconstruction, particularly in Brest, Dresden, and Brno. More broadly, it looks at finished urban transformation projects and proposals which were never achieved but that still offer inspiration for new approaches to transformation. It examines the somewhat turbulent relationship these cities have with their buildings – due to a symbolic deficit – and initiatives to promote, revive or instil a sense of heritage in these reconstructed areas. Overall, the project seeks to understand the debates and issues that reconstruction in its broadest sense generates. It also seeks to understand the place of identity in rebuilding the image of these cities. Various educational and scientific activities have been initiated over the last two years (2022–2024). These encouraged both an exploration of the past and reflections on the future. This publication is the outcome.

Reconstructed Cities and Cities under Reconstruction

40 years after the first symposium on reconstructed cities in Brest, it was necessary to give an account of the new scientific and artistic approaches reconstruction projects bring about today. Having acquired deeper knowledge and collected numerous new sources, there was a need for a review. And over the years which had gone by, stakeholders in reconstructed cities had used the time to initiate or support new heritage revival and promotion processes. In view of this, have these initiatives rebuilt

an identity and filled the symbolic gap which weighed so heavily on these urban centres in their early years?

Questions concerning doctrines, cultural transfer, image, and heritage recognition were embraced through four themed sessions. They provided an opportunity to consider cross-cutting issues, such as the resilience of cities, urban renewal, and utopias – or at least the desires which inspire stakeholders to create, inhabit and raise the status of tomorrow's cities (see the introduction to the symposium by Amandine Diener and Daniel Le Couëdic in this volume). It could be argued that this suspended moment in time was a way for reconstructed cities to reconnect with urban history.

The Brest-Dresden-Brno Axis: The Project Site

Working groups, seminars, visits and workshops offered an opportunity to develop educational activities based on strategic sites whose futures are currently generating debate. In Brno, the industrial wasteland of Mosilana helped to further understanding of the processes at play in a project to transform a former textile factory in the centre of the city, where there is significant land speculation (see the article on the design workshop in Brno by Helena Zemánková and Amandine Diener in this volume). In Brest, attention focused on the centres of city blocks, that is, the spaces between groups of buildings which have not been developed and often take the form of internal courtyards with garages. Like the former Pontaniou prison, near the Ateliers des Capucins development on the right bank of the river, today, these are challenging sites which the city authorities are acquiring to enhance the quality of life for residents, in terms of housing, and more broadly, to strengthen the attractiveness of the area on a metropolitan scale. The discussions these sites sparked also inspired thinking on ways to redevelop and reuse these spaces (see the articles on projects in Brest by Amandine Diener, Patrick Dieudonné, Claudia Marx and Helena Zemánková in this volume).

This forward-looking impetus was supported by joint reflections on reconstruction operations in Brest and Dresden after the Second World War, giving way, more broadly over the long term, to different senses of reconstruction depending on whether projects were imagined, dreamed or actually achieved (see the articles on the comparative study of Brest and Dresden by Sonia de Puineuf, Hans-Georg Lippert and Kerstin Zäschke in this volume).

The theme of art in reconstructed cities has come into several investigations. Diverse works shown at exhibitions – photographic, pictorial and recorded (see the article by Ivana Radovanovic in this volume) – and the debates sparked during a panel discussion (see the transcription of that panel discussion by Sonia de Puineuf in this volume) were a reminder of how precious the vigilant eye of the artistic world is; always ready to raise relics, palimpsests and representations that have become all too common from the dust.





International Symposium

**“Reconstructed Cities,
Cities under Reconstruction”**

Amandine Diener, Daniel Le Couédic

INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM

“RECONSTRUCTED CITIES, CITIES UNDER RECONSTRUCTION”

Introduction

Brest, Friday 20 and Saturday 21 January 2023

Reconstructed towns or the slow road to history

Given the lack of interest in France in towns and cities which were rebuilt between 1960 and 1970, no-one could have predicted the unexpected success of the first international symposium on this topic in Brest in 1983. In revisiting the “identity crisis”, these places went through and the difficulties their residents felt in finding an identity, the symposium stimulated a completely new discussion.¹ The question was how these towns and cities, which were new but inhabited by long-standing communities, could re-establish their long-term position having been removed from this picture for a short moment. In Brest, the topics covered – “Reconstructed Cities and their Centres” and “Perceptions and Images of Reconstructed Cities” – according to an extensive chronology (the reconstruction of Rome in the 4th century was discussed), met with an unusual response, as the former minister Eugène Claudius-Petit (1907–1989) emphasised in his opening lecture. As well as fostering an alignment between researchers, elected representatives and the

administrators of these cities, the presentations and discussions helped to pinpoint the general feeling within these communities. Until this time, this feeling had been wrongly attributed to practical shortcomings. However, as in the case of Brest, for most of these towns this really was not the case. In fact, what they were suffering was a “symbolic deficit”.²

More broadly, the issues discussed and the way they influenced planning policies in these cities in the years that followed, confirmed the idea that these cities could be viewed as useful laboratories of urban planning for every other town.³ Gradually, discussions on reconstruction began to consider problems connected to the mass redevelopment projects undertaken in single industry cities such as Brno. These cities were experiencing comparable trauma, physically and symbolically, to the trauma caused by destruction during the world wars. In cities such as Dresden and Brest, which were working to re-establish their identities, the structural changes of the 1980s and 1990s unleashed a new wave of upheaval and debate. The processes of heritage revival in these cases followed

- ¹ Dieudonné Patrick, “Presentation”, *Villes reconstruites: du dessin au destin*, vol. 1, Paris, Ed. L'Harmattan, 1994, p. 7. Proceedings were published after the second symposium in Lorient in 1993.
- ² Expression coined by Marc Wiel, appointed as director of the Agence d'Urbanisme de la Communauté Urbaine de Brest et de son Environnement in 1981 and reported in Le Couédic Daniel, Popescu Carmen, Sattolo Rachel, *Brest ou l'art et les artistes au secours d'un déficit symbolique des villes reconstruites*, Rapport de recherche Institut de Géoarchitecture, ministère de la Culture/BRAUP/INHA, 2006, p. 42.
- ³ For France, we cite the first work on the subject: Kopp Anatole, Boucher Frédérique, Pauly Danièle, *L'architecture de la Reconstruction en France, 1945–1953*, Paris, Ed. du Moniteur, 1982, 188p.

similar trajectories, especially as their ageing buildings often required restoration.⁴

The second international symposium, which was held in Lorient in 1993, established two observations. The first concerned the extensive number of exploration sites. As the total or partial destruction of settlements due to war, natural disaster or planning choices is a continuous part of human history, it was almost impossible to keep a simple inventory of reconstruction projects. The second concerned the memory of lost towns and cities, which, far from fading over the years, produces an endless stream of recollections, reminiscences, and revisions. These observations which were predominantly based on towns reconstructed after the Second World War, revealed an urgent need both to obtain direct testimonies and to collect information and documentation at the most important sites. It was becoming urgent to do this as little scientific research had focused on these sites. There was a looming risk however, as while further destruction was perhaps unlikely, the public, like the experts, considered these sites to be marginal at best, and sometimes even worthy of contempt. This lack of interest presented a danger.

From that point on, slowly but surely, an awareness of the heritage of these cities was instilled and we can see the effects of this today. Reconstructed towns are now an undisputed topic of research due to the exceptional conditions in which they were achieved and also because of the interest granted to architectural output and design

from the 1950s. In France, Royan “the most 1950s town in the country⁵” and the first to introduce a planning policy dedicated to its preservation, and Le Havre, which enjoys UNESCO status⁶ have clearly taken advantage of this. The number of events dedicated to reconstructed cities multiplied as much in France⁷ as it did in Germany, the Czech Republic and elsewhere. Bolstered by information from new sources (archival and iconographic) and benefiting from the interest in heritage promotion that was coming, these events inspired biographies of the main actors, accounts of the reconstruction works and their consequences,⁸ and new typological approaches and techniques. However, although local and regional events multiplied, no international symposium comparable to those of 1983 and 1993 had been organised to consider reconstructed towns from a comparative perspective. The *Res Urbanae* programme made such a project its ambition.

The problems facing these ageing, built environments today, the urban renewal projects affecting them and even recent geopolitical developments, have made it essential to re-examine the very concept of reconstruction. Until this point, reconstruction was understood in a broad sense, favouring a transnational and transhistorical reading of the processes that were or are implemented. Now however, the timeframe of immediately after the First or Second World Wars could be extended and the issues, as in 1983 and 1993, broadened to other forms of

4 Here we cite the “Copropriété à l’œuvre dans les centre-ville reconstruits” project, jointly run by the CRENAU laboratory (Nantes) and the Laboratoire Géoarchitecture (Brest), winner of the “Ré)gé(n)rer les copropriétés, connaître et comprendre les copropriétés, les mobiliser pour la ville durable” call for projects launched by Urban Planning, Construction, Architecture in 2021.

5 The expression is regularly repeated on websites and Royan’s tourist literature.

6 Abram Joseph, *Le Havre, patrimoine mondial*, Paris, Nouvelles Éditions Place, 2007.

7 For example, the symposium on “Le patrimoine immobilier des années 50–70. De la stratégie à l’action” organised by Saint-Nazaire agglomération-Carene in 2015; the symposium on “Les archives iconographiques et audiovisuelles de la Reconstruction, de 1940 aux années 1960”, organised as part of the programme “Architecture du XX^e siècle, matière à projet pour la ville durable du XXI^e siècle” initiated by the BRAUP at the Ministry for Culture; the study day “Première Reconstruction en Hauts de France”, organised by the DRAC, the Saint-Quentin authorities and the Office de Tourisme et des Congrès du Saint-Quentinois; the study day “Architecture et urbanisme de la Seconde Reconstruction en France: nouvelles recherches, nouveaux regards, nouveaux enjeux”, organised by the Paris-Val de Seine and Normandie ENSAs. Additionally, the research programme undertaken by ENSA Normandie in 2019, “Ressource culturelle et projet urbain, les villes moyennes de la Reconstruction en Normandie” Patrice Gourbin, Caroline Maniaque, Camille Bidaud, Robert Blaizeau, Quentin Brouard-Sala, et al. “Ressource culturelle et projet urbain. Les villes moyennes de la reconstruction en Normandie”, 2021-ARCHIXX-GO, BRAUP; ATE Normandie EA 7464; ENSA Normandie; DRAC Normandie; Région Normandie; Commune de Vire-Normandie; Ville de Lisieux; Ville de Coutances; Ville de Saint Lô. 2021. hal-03760836].

8 Le Gallo Yves et al., *Brest alias Brest. Trois siècles d’urbanisme*, Liège, Mardaga, 1992; Ragot Gilles (dir), *L’invention d’une ville, Royan années 50*, Paris, éd. du Patrimoine; Cahiers du Patrimoine, n° 65, juin 2003.

destruction than those caused by armed conflicts. This has prompted a focus on both completed urban transformation projects and on proposals which remained on paper, given that the latter express, if not utopias, then at least new possibilities for planning and development. We also wanted to consider the factors which inspired different stakeholders – from the lead architects to local residents – to come up with the towns of the future. To show how complex these phenomena are, we took a multidisciplinary approach which combines historical, social and economic, urban planning, architectural and artistic perspectives. The symposium therefore brought together some 20 speakers from varied backgrounds, geographically and professionally (academics, doctors, artists, and professionals) and from a range of disciplines. Contributions came from the worlds of architecture, planning, landscaping, art history, literature, and the visual arts.

New issues, new challenges?

The papers presented at the symposium explored and developed four themes which examined, in this order, the memory and imagination associated with reconstructed cities, the doctrines behind these projects, the cultural transfers and hybrids which came into play and the processes of heritage recognition and protection that have emerged. In other words, what do we understand today by ‘reconstruction’? Is the term restricted to the built environment, as the proponents of rebuilding ‘faithfully’ believed, or is it also about the social cohesion and public spaces posited by Habermas? Can the long term resume its path when its initial frame of reference has been replaced? Is it possible to recover the memory of a place after reconstruction? How can communities reconcile themselves with these towns which unduly replaced those where they had built their lives? Is there an understanding of the strange nature of reconstructed cities and do reconstruction projects result in a hybrid? Lastly, what historical merit might these cities have today?

Memory and the imagination

This first part of proceedings opened with a chronicle of two uncompleted projects: the royal square dedicated to Louis XVI in front of the castle in Brest (Plouzenneq), and the highly comparable project dedicated to Auguste II in Dresden (Hertzig). These proposals from the Age of Enlightenment, which were impeded by political and military obstacles, inspired significant enthusiasm among some contemporaries who were captivated by this new design for their town, but also provoked fierce opposition in the name of memory and due to mismanagement.

The wonderful paradox of the ‘new old town’ of Frankfurt (Fischer) took us to the edges of pop culture and the ‘complex and contradictory’ influences – as it is now unavoidable to mention Venturi⁹ – of folklore, historicism, and regionalism.

The repeated trauma suffered by the city of Beirut (Haïdar) rekindled a debate which has undoubtedly become impossible for older reconstruction projects. Should the traces and scars of conflict be erased and within what timescale? This venture into the twists and turns of the negative and evil created resonances, which we could liken, perhaps inappropriately, to the obvious passion the residents of Brest have for Gwenaëlle Magadur’s *ligne bleue*. This work tracing the outline of the former city walls – and which could almost be described as performance art – awakened countless overlapping memories.

Today, the idea of evoking the collective memory – a rather vague concept 30 years ago – has become more sophisticated, making it possible for us to consider the full complexity of the relationships forged between somewhat indefinable and often interconnected groups. Was someone primarily a resident, a homeowner, a homeless person, or an official? Bearing in mind that when it came to granting temporary housing, priority was given to people who were “useful to rebuilding the town”? The definition of essential professions in the recent lockdowns

⁹ His book, *Complexity and contradictions in architecture* (1966), was published in French with the title *De l’ambiguïté en architecture*, Dunod, 1971, rééd 1996.

has shown us just how “fragile and ambiguous” the contours of groups can be (Ratouis).

Reconstruction: which doctrines?

Moving on to the theme of doctrines, analysis of plans has progressed considerably in recent decades. The ‘lost opportunities’ of Genoa (Gastaldi and Camerin) echoed the formula Eugène Claudius-Petit had used, from 1945 onwards, to discredit all of France’s reconstruction projects. This now widely contested expression rang out as a call to carefully consider all the uncertainties, compromises and procrastinations which characterise periods of rebuilding where shortages and deprivations are a factor that should not be overlooked. Even when a clear intention emerged, as in Falaise (Brégant-Belin), a long adaptation period was necessary for it to acquire the impetus of a true doctrine, even provisionally.

The case of the Rhenish villages sacrificed to mining operations (Belkacem) provided a useful counterpoint. It showed that periods of urban transformation, however instantaneous they may seem, have lasting consequences for the lives of those affected. The long-term outlook and the very structure of the population are transformed. So, which memory should we favour? And which one will history remember?

In addition to the multiple reinterpretations of the notion of modernity it gave birth to, the case of Berlin (Malcovati and Zedda) served as a reminder that due to its pace at least, the urban landscape creates a real estate landscape. And reparcelling this is not without its consequences. Normandy (Gourbin) also lived through the ‘modernist turn’ which took hold, in a seemingly quite blatant way from Caen to Caudebec. This was not without its share of resistance however – due to arguments concerning land and ‘sacred and inviolable’ private property on the one hand and to what can be called the ‘stylistic’ identities which most architectural designs had to compromise with on the other.

Cultural transfers

On the question of transfers, the ‘new town’ of Fagniers highlighted the multiple challenges that ‘simple’ American philanthropy translated to in practice. Although today, the search for a ‘perfect example of destruction’ has an uncomfortable ring to it, the manner in which American soft power expressed itself seems to have stemmed from a well-meaning concept of modernity based on the rarely challenged attributes of comfort and well-being.

In Brazzaville (Oba), reconstruction appears to have inspired a way to transform the experience of colonialism. This paper showed that the memory of former towns is not just about their walls, it is also about the lead architects and the builders, whose substitutions we now analyse with a keener eye, and about transforming architectural design.

Under the Soviet influence (Bellat), the inertia seemed to increase and the ideological negotiations, governing every last detail of the outline, were more pressing. In Warsaw and in Minsk, the ideological posturing behind urban planning was even more voracious, and has had a negative effect on even the most recent attempts to make changes. In such a context, cultural transfer takes on all the radicalism of a transfusion, even though here and there, low-level resistance succeeded in influencing the debate.

Modernity which may seem to have been well executed can be just as complex. Through the ‘Maison Minima’ (Brik), we were able to move beyond and to mitigate the current abhorrence for the excessive radicalism which afflicted the constituent doctrines of the Modern Movement. Without a doubt, their urbanistic presuppositions were sometimes destructive, but in practice, the absolute purity they demanded was only rarely applied. On the other hand, their architectural knowledge, often imbued with modesty in the face of vernacular traditions, led to some worthwhile hybrids.

Becoming a heritage asset?

An examination of Lisbon's distant trauma (Monteiro) gave us perspective on some of the characteristics attributed inappropriately to towns which were rebuilt 80 years ago. The sense of urgency, the standardised, systematic approach, and the desire to 'take advantage of the opportunity' to improve an earlier situation decisively, motivated Carlos Mardel and the Marquis of Pombal just as much and perhaps more than they did Jean-Baptiste Mathon and Georges Tourry. It was also necessary to choose between preserving or modifying the hierarchy which urban design creates between those important places it favours. Conservation matters are equally crucial and as the example of Lisbon clearly shows, no building or heritage asset can be considered permanently immune to contest, destruction, or defacement.

Two centuries later, what was the best approach – between Saint-Dié and Warsaw – after Zadar was destroyed (Roma and Maricchiolo)? The competition reflected this tension through the search for compromise. We know that a town's memory is also made of projects which were not completed. With these archives, all the terms of the debate, between renovation and maintaining layouts, can provide a valuable reference, including for future transformation projects.

A rarer phenomenon, the 'survivor city' of Mosul (Khalaf) shows two sides to the heritage revival process. On the one hand, the destruction raises awareness of the heritage value of assets which can be saved. But the very process of attributing value to heritage assets, by reorganising hierarchies and priorities for restoration, can pose a risk to other features considered to be of less interest.

To finish, we refined methodologies for compiling inventories, collecting information, and identifying sources. The meticulous and ambitious project conducted in Nouvelle-Aquitaine (Ragot and Le Gouilloux) provides the first steps for future research by giving more visibility to disperse sources. Through labelling systems and protections, the project will reinforce the attention given

to these heritage assets, which will undoubtedly spark further curiosity.

Over the space of 30 years, another development, which was certainly foreseeable, has come into play with the gradual disappearance of the direct protagonists of the 1945 reconstruction projects. Moving, in some ways, from testimony to history, we need to bring back those now silent voices. We know that in Brittany, in addition to sources from traditional archives, the film archive at the Cinémathèque de Bretagne (Langlois) can help us to revive what we might have thought was buried forever, and to reproduce, as far as is possible, the infinite complexity of 'stricken' urban lives. The diminishing availability of witness accounts is, of course, the historian's common lot and to address this, albeit rather imperfectly, we have no shortage of instruments, even if these were sometimes created for other periods. To amplify the voices of key actors who are now inaccessible once more, we still have interpretive tools, much like a musician recreating an ancient symphony with assiduous respect for the sources but in the light of different contemporary clarifications. We can read between the lines of accounting statements on war damage or the minutes of meetings, but research on more recent reconstruction projects also help us. Armed with new methods and new tools, research can now focus on more specific questions or venture into new areas.

Yvon Mullier-Plouzenec

BREST ELEVATED IN WORDS

The Poetics of an Urban Plan in the Age of Enlightenment

At the end of the 18th century, the city and arsenal of Brest enjoyed sensational popularity, attracting visitors from all over Europe.¹ This city and port, which were built at considerable speed, rarely left people who stayed there indifferent.² Although its military structures generally made a good impression because of their monumental and functional character, the same could not be said for its civilian spaces which were often disparaged for their lack of hygiene, facilities and taste.³ This situation stemmed primarily from a lack of ambition regarding urban improvements on the part of the municipal authorities. Obligated to deal with the most urgent matters first, due to exponential growth of the population,⁴ the authorities usually took a wait-and-see approach and simply made an additional contribution to projects led by other public authorities.⁵

In the last years of the Ancien Régime, an impressive urban and landscaping plan was devised and swiftly countered by Brest's town councillors. Designed by the Parisian architect Claude Jean-Baptiste Jallier de Savault (1739–1806) and supported by the Minister of the Navy, it envisaged the development of a royal square dedicated to Louis XVI at the site of Brest Castle. The opposition from the mayor and local officials on the grounds of

principle generated a heated written exchange which, in contrast to the authorities' counterarguments, highlighted the practical and symbolic foundations of the proposal in an almost lyrical way. Alongside the practical and financial arguments, various memoranda written by the architect mention the aesthetic, symbolic and poetic rationale which his opponents struggled to discredit. Here, we present the full force of this position, considering it from the perspective of the cultural environment of an artist in the Age of Enlightenment.

A royal square for the largest arsenal in the kingdom

Standing at the gateway to the Atlantic and due to its military character, Brest was one of those cities where fortifications were essential at a time when many cities in the kingdom were razing their old city walls to the ground. The new walled centre and the urban fabric commissioned by Sébastien Le Prestre de Vauban (1633–1707) on 29 October 1694, provided a framework for urban development throughout the following century.⁶ The plan, which defined the layout of streets on the left bank of the river, anticipated a rapid growth in the population, which

- ¹ On this point, see the articles by Annie Henwood, including, "En Juin 1782, Brest recevait le fils du Tsar...", *Les Cahiers de l'Iroise*, n° 113, 1982, p. 21–24; "L'empereur Joseph II à la découverte de la marine et de la France de l'Ouest (June 1777)", *Annales de Bretagne et des pays de l'Ouest*, t. 91, n° 4, 1984, p. 351–368.
- ² On urban growth in Brest in the modern period see Annie Henwood "La ville dans ses murs" in Dieudonné *op. cit.*, p. 56–69.
- ³ The harsh judgement of the Marquis Charles de Langeron, commandant of Brest castle, is reported in Patrick Dieudonné (ed.), *Brest alias Brest: trois siècles d'urbanisme*, Liège, Mardaga, 1992, p. 19; see also Jacques Cambry, *Voyage dans le Finistère [...]*, Paris, Cercle social, 1798, t. 2, p. 129–130.
- ⁴ Bruno Baron, *Élites, pouvoirs et vie municipale à Brest, 1750–1820*, PhD thesis, Brest, University of Western Brittany, 2012, p. 107 et seq.
- ⁵ See Yvon Plouzenec, "Essai sur les promenades maritimes à Brest au XVIII^e siècle", in Janine Barrier, Claire Ollagnier, Josiane Sartre (eds.), *Les Arts réunis. Études offertes à Daniel Rabreau*, Paris, NEL, p. 439–446.
- ⁶ Philippe Henrat, "L'urbanisme à Brest aux XVII^e et XVIII^e siècles", *Études d'Histoire maritime*, Actes des 107^e-108^e Congrès nationaux des Sociétés savantes (Brest-Grenoble 1982–1983), Paris, CTHS, p. 187–190.



Fig. 1: Camus, Map of Brest and Recouvrance, 1782, source: Paris, BnF, Maps and Plans department.

increased from 2500 residents in 1672 to almost 33,000 in 1790.⁷

In view of this growth, Brest's town officials had no option but to deal with the most urgent matters first by spending significant sums on maintenance works, paving, water supplies and lighting.⁸ In the absence of adequate resources and preoccupied with the everyday urgencies, the city authorities were incapable of considering any kind of improvement programme before the last years of the Ancien Regime. Indeed, it was not until 28 July 1786, that the *Plan d'alignement des rues & embellissement de la ville de Brest* – drawn up by the civil engineer Pierre-Joachim Besnard (1741–1808) and the architect of *Domaine du roi* Maury – was approved by the King's Conseil d'État.

This belated effort from the municipal authorities coincided exactly with the emergence of a superb opportunity for an improvement programme in the city. As on 15 May 1785, the King announced his wish to see a statue in his image erected in Brest – a gift the Estates of Brittany (States Provincial) had offered him some months earlier.⁹ Erecting such a monument necessarily required an architectural and urban programme, to provide an appropriately majestic setting for the royal sculpture.¹⁰ On this specific point, two contradictory positions quickly emerged. On the one hand, the municipal authorities envisaged installing the statue on the Place du Champ-de-Bataille, a former military training ground in the centre of the left bank district which had become a public promenade in the second half of the century. On the other, Charles Eugène Gabriel de La Croix, Maréchal de Castries (1727–1801) – and Minister of the Navy having granted his 'special protection'¹¹ to the

city – believed the statue should be placed at a site near the port or the harbour. (Fig. 2)

This divergence was not limited to a simple disagreement about topography. Underneath, it reflected a deep symbolic dissonance between the beliefs of the officials of Brest and the beliefs of the Minister. The former – who were motivated by concern for saving money – thought that the monument would “add the perfect decorative finish to a square where the main ornament is the residence of the commander of the Navy”, and wondered “where else could the statue be more inspiring and lifelike? Where else would it be a more noble and impressive sight?”¹² Far from being innocent, these two rhetorical questions illustrated and glorified the theoretical view that a royal square must be placed in the centre of the city.¹³ In contrast, the Maréchal de Castries believed that “it goes without saying that the castle is the most appropriate site [to receive the monument]. It would look out across the harbour and the entrance to the port which are Brest's most important features”.¹⁴ Through these words, he expressed his desire to see a royal maritime square, which was not dedicated exclusively to the civilian population in Brest, but also recognised the naval population posted in the arsenal.

A controversial urban plan

To bring his vision to reality, the Maréchal de Castries approached a Paris-based architect and gave him the sensitive task of designing an urban project that would embody this.¹⁵ The two men met early in the summer of 1785 and the architect travelled to Brest in September of the same year. His visit was positive because at this point,

⁷ Claude Nières, *Les villes de Bretagne au XVIII^e siècle*, Rennes, PUR, 2004, p. 33.

⁸ Costs relating to urban development and building represented on average 46.35% of the council's annual budget in the second half of the 18th century (Bruno Baron, *Élites, pouvoirs et vie municipale à Brest, 1750–1820*, thèse de doctorat, Brest, Université de Bretagne occidentale, 2012, p. 114).

⁹ On the political history of this project, see Yvon Plouzennec, “Quelle place royale pour Brest ? Tensions politiques autour du projet de Claude Jean-Baptiste Jallier de Savault”, *Histoire urbaine*, vol. 48, n° 1, 2017, p. 155–176.

¹⁰ Alexandre Gady, “Les places royales en France au XVIII^e siècle”, in Alexandre Gady, Jean-Marie Pérouse de Montclos (eds.), *De l'esprit des villes: Nancy et l'Europe urbaine au siècle des Lumières, 1720–1770*, Versailles, Artlys, 2005, p. 63–70.

¹¹ AMMB: BB25, fol. 48(v).

¹² ANF: H1 426, n° 210, *Mémoire de la ville de Brest, en demande de la statue de Louis XVI, dédiée à Sa Majesté par les États de Bretagne, en 1784*.

¹³ Richard R. Cleary, *The Place Royale and Urban Design in the Ancien Régime*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2011, p. 8–9.

¹⁴ ANF: Marine, B3 769.

¹⁵ Yvon Plouzennec, 2017, *op. cit.*



Fig. 2: Nicolin, Map of Brest [...] (detail), 1777, source: Archives municipales et métropolitaines de Brest.

the municipal councillors knew nothing of the Minister of the Navy's ideas and believed that Jallier de Savault had only come to work "with Mr Besnard, the engineer, to draw up the plans and estimated costs for decorative items to be placed in the square where the statue will stand".¹⁶ On his return to Paris, the architect produced an initial plan which included three variants. Each one seemed to strive for compromise between the desires of the Maréchal and the desires of the city authorities. All were sited opposite the harbour but more or less immediately next to the Place

du Champ-de-Bataille (Fig. 3). These consensual proposals were visibly not to the Minister's taste, as this plan was dropped and Jallier de Savault was eventually asked to devise a fourth plan which, this time, fully reflected the Minister's initial desire to see the monument erected at the castle. (Fig. 4)

Brest's municipal officials learned the details of this new plan in February 1786.¹⁷ The following May, the chevalier André de Fautras (1728–1814), the city's emissary to the King's court, showed them a drawing and two memoranda

¹⁶ AMMB: BB25, fol. 48(v).

¹⁷ AMMB: BB25, fol. 80(v).



Fig. 3: Claude Jean-Baptiste Jallier de Savault, Plan of part of Brest showing three proposed locations for the statue of Louis XVI, 1785, source: SHD Vincennes.

which presented the envisaged improvement programme.¹⁸ Although they felt cheated and categorically opposed the principle of placing the statue so far from the centre of the city, they were not able to produce anything resembling an argument until the autumn and gave no response to the architect or to their emissary. As there was no obvious opposition, the process initiated at Versailles continued its natural course and on 28 May 1786, the King and his council approved Jallier's fourth plan.¹⁹

When the new session of the Estates of Brittany opened in Rennes on 23 October 1786, the municipal council did not have any documents prepared to defend its point of view. It was not until 7 November that the magistrates approved a print run of 400 copies of a memorandum "to be distributed while the Estates were in session".²⁰ The *Mémoire sur l'emplacement le plus propre à recevoir la statue du roi à Brest [...]* was printed after this meeting, but because of a legal irregularity, amendments had to be made, delaying distribu-

¹⁸ Brest Historical Defence Service (now SHD-Brest): BR-L 1991 / 51.

¹⁹ ANF: Cartes et Plans, F14 1021912.

²⁰ AMMB: BB25, fol. 111(r).



← Fig. 4: Claude Jean-Baptiste Jallier de Savault, Unrealized project for a Place Louis XVI, from which the King would control the port, the roadstead and the Goulet by placing it on the grounds of the château, without harming the establishments planned by the Navy on the site, plan, about 1785, Musée des Beaux-Arts de Brest métropole.

↘ Fig. 5: Claude Jean-Baptiste Jallier de Savault, Perspective view of the Place Louis XIV project, 1786, pen, wash and water-colours, 325 x 514 mm, Paris, Musée du Louvre.

tion again.²¹ Conscious of the urgency, François Raby (1736–1812), the mayor of Brest and the city’s representative at the Estates of Brittany, eventually commissioned a new memorandum from a Rennes-based lawyer, Gohier. This new plea to locate the King’s statue at the site of Place du Champ de Bataille was presented to the provincial assembly on 14 December 1786,²² almost one month after Jallier de Savault’s plan had received “the unanimous vote of the Estate”.²³ Despite this partial victory for the architect, the conclusions of the memorandum from Raby and Gohier were finally accepted following the report from the Commission du Commerce et des Ouvrages Publics.²⁴

It must be said that the prevarications of Brest’s municipal councillors in producing their memoranda created unfortunate confusion, forcing Jallier de Savault to produce two written retorts. The first, entitled *Réponse de M. Jallier de Savault [...], auteur du projet que Sa Majesté a choisi & signé pour l’emplacement de sa statue à Brest [...]*

(décembre 1786),²⁵ referred to the memorandum that the council failed to present to the provincial assembly (when it met in November). The second, entitled *Observations présentées à nos seigneurs les États de Bretagne, par M. Jallier de Savault [...]* (20 janvier 1787),²⁶ was written in Rennes where the architect was staying to be in a better position to counter Raby and Gohier’s conclusions. The power of the arguments Jallier de Savault expressed in the first obsolete memorandum and the belated second memorandum did not appear to make any impression on the provincial representatives who decided in favour of the Place du Champ-de-Bataille plan.

The obscured eloquence of the architect

This failure clearly stems from the unfortunate delay in disseminating the arguments and not the eloquence expressed in the architect’s retorts. These two texts follow a highly sophisticated structure based on the centuries-old principles of rhetoric. In the memorandum *Réponse*, the

²¹ SHD-Brest: BR-L 1991 / 52.

²² SHD-Brest: BR-L 1991 / 37.

²³ SHD-Brest: BR-L 1991 / 52.

²⁴ Archives départementales du Finistère: 2C18.

²⁵ 11 page document printed in Paris at the Imprimerie Polytype (ANF: Marine, B3 780, no 81).

²⁶ 21 page document printed in Rennes at la Veuve Vatar & de Bruté de Remur (Bibliothèque de Rennes Métropole: inv. 441672).

author begins by legitimising his plan and justifying his stance:

It would appear, given the choice and decision of his Majesty, that Mr Jallier could dispense with responding to the memorandum from Mr Mayor of Brest; but it will be no less gratifying for him to have, before the eyes of the gentlemen of the Estates, the same success at the court of reason and taste.

He therefore cannot hide that he was particularly surprised by Mr Mayor's memorandum as he had flattered himself that his plan had Mr Mayor's approval.

Last May, Mr le chevalier de Fautras [...], who had been appointed to represent the interests of the gentlemen of the city council to the Ministry, sent them [...] Two memoranda with a plan containing an explanation of this project; and at the beginning of June, he advised them that his Majesty, having preferred this project to several others [...] had approved it on the 28th day of May this year.

With Mr Mayor not having honoured them with any response, Mr Jallier believed that his silence could be a snub but was not a disapproval.

The author then proceeds to develop the argument, taking the words of the municipal authority to demonstrate his points, mischievously and mockingly:

First of all, in appraising the location where Mr Jallier would place the statue and attributing it with the epithets of undeveloped and remote, Mr Mayor, is at present correct; but he knows very well that it will be furbished and inhabited when the funds for the castle have been released, the square cleared and the avenues widened, showing what transformations are possible with skill and creativity.

[...]

[The plan] combining a sense of decency, charm, convenience, and safety, according to Mr Mayor, involves placing the King's statue in the area known in Brest as the Champ de Bataille.

Now, this Champ de Bataille is a long, irregular square surrounded by strangely shaped houses [...], an ungainly theatre facade and tasteless, irregular private residences, and it bears more resemblance to a crossroads than a public square. It is almost impossible to decorate as there are no streets opening onto the centre and from where the statue could be seen.



Lastly, the King's statue in Brest, a gateway to the ocean, with no reputation for its commerce or industry, and which only exists and enjoys renown because of the Royal Navy, for whom it is a sanctuary, would not be seen either from the sea or by seamen or sailors, and would be imprisoned in an enclosure of houses built in a barbarian style, just like in cities in the interior of the most unfamiliar countries to the Navy!

This section of the text methodically exposes the points of agreement between the two parties and therefore represents the most important stage. The close links between this reasoning and the words he critiques justify the necessity of formulating a new retort following the memorandum written by Gohier and Raby.

After this rational preamble, the architect seeks to influence minds by concluding his argument with a lyrical oratory. This is almost word for word identical in the *Réponse* and *Observations* memoranda.

So, at last, Brest will have a place where one can conveniently enjoy the view of this Goulet [roadstead], a place of general interest, at all times and at any hour of the day. Here, the manoeuvres of squadrons, their changes, everything, through to the movements of the smallest ship, will provide an interesting sight; the most sumptuous and impressive festivals could be held here, at sea and on land, and the beauty of the site will create twice the impression. From here, one will be able to contemplate the magnificent spectacle of a departing fleet, inspired by the view of its king, parading under his eyes, as it were, with the promise that it will come back victorious. And, looking forward to its return, when, intoxicated with joy and glory, the noise of its ships' cannons, the cries of happiness of the sailors and the cheers of the people, it can place the trophies of this triumph at the King's feet! This sacred image of his Majesty rising above the vast crowd

covering the square's amphitheatre evokes to those who can see it the tableau of an adored father amidst his immense family, jostled, surrounded by his children, and receiving the homage of their wishes, their love and their respects!²⁷ (Fig. 5)

The way in which this discourse develops proves that the architect, in some ways, borrowed from the three pillars of the art of rhetoric as defined by Aristotle, namely, *ethos*, or the author's legitimisation of his objective; *logos*, or demonstration, and *pathos*, or the emotional effect sought. In his treaty on this topic, Aristotle expounds that "proofs furnished by the speech are of three kinds. The first kind depends on the personal character of the speaker [ethos]; the second on putting the audience into a certain frame of mind [pathos]; the third on the proof, or apparent proof, provided by the words of the speech itself [logos]".²⁸ In 1749, the Abbé Gibert, one of the professors of rhetoric at the Collège Mazarin, revisited the principle of the *ethos-logos-pathos* triad in his treatise *La Rhétorique ou les Règles de l'Eloquence* [Rhetoric or the Rules of Eloquence]. In the first book dedicated to oratorical fabrication, he relies on the thoughts of Aristotle to assert that "there are sound reasons to say that there are three means of persuasion: *proofs* or *arguments*, *morals*, and *passions*".²⁹

Although there is no specific evidence to suggest Jallier de Savault had read the works of Aristotle or Father Gibert, we do know that his literary knowledge was extensive. When he died, in 1806, 2218 tomes and 1112 booklets were found in his apartment³⁰ – a noticeably sizeable collection compared to the libraries of other architects from his time.³¹ In all likelihood, Jallier de Savault was an avid reader with interests extending well beyond those concerning his position as an architect. This position

²⁷ *Réponse de M. Jallier de Savault [...]*, décembre 1786 (ANF: Marine, B3 780, n° 81).

²⁸ Aristote, *Rhétorique*, Livre I, chapitre 2, § III, 1356a, quoted by Jean-Baptiste Jeangène Vilmer, "Argumentation cartésienne: logos, ethos, pathos", *Revue Philosophique de Louvain* n° 4e série, t. 106, n° 3, 2008, p. 460.

²⁹ Balthasar Gibert, *La Rhétorique ou les Règles de l'Eloquence*, Paris, 1730, p. 51.

³⁰ ANF: Minutier central des notaires de Paris, Étude LXX, 760. Inventaire après décès du Sr Jallier, 5 nov. – 23 déc. 1806.

³¹ Laurence Chevallier, "Trois bibliothèques d'architectes au Siècle des Lumières", *Revue française d'histoire du Livre*, n° 126–127, 2005–2006, p. 159–176; Annie Charon-Parent, "L'Antiquité dans quelques bibliothèques d'architectes français du XVIII^e siècle", *D'une antiquité l'autre: la littérature antique classique dans les bibliothèques du XV^e au XIX^e siècle*, Lyon: ENS éd., Institut d'histoire du livre, 2006, p. 159–170.

is consistent with the tenets declared by Jacques-François Blondel, founder of the École des Arts and lecturer at the Académie Royale d'Architecture. In his treatise *De l'utilité de joindre à l'étude de l'architecture celle des sciences et des arts qui lui sont relatifs*, he wrote:

Lastly, we recommend that our trainee architects read. As one of our modern authors said somewhere, reading is one of an honest man's duties. It is necessary to read to educate oneself, to console oneself and to improve oneself

[...]

Without literature, [the architect] is unable to make any progress in his diction which is becoming so essential to be able to confer with the great and the good, scholars and gentlemen. Through the study of literature, the eloquence of la Chaire, le Barreau, even the theatre, will enlighten him on an endless number of topics relevant to his practice, through their aid, he will be able to correspond honourably with rulers, the prelate and magistrates.

[...]

*Persuaded that one arrives at the sciences, literature, the arts, via the same path, meditating on the route which men of genius in all genres of talent have followed, he will seize everything relevant to his needs. He will take notes, excerpts, and familiarise himself with the art of writing.*³²

As an architect of his time, Jallier de Savault therefore put his literary knowledge to good use, or perhaps we should say his knowledge of poetics, to defend his plans. As Antoinette Nort, has pointed out, in the 18th century, “the notion of poetry extended beyond the sphere of what we understand by this term today”.³³ At that time, this word reflected all worthy literary genres. Although the poetic conclusion of Jallier de Savault's *Réponse and Observations* stands out, the influence of ‘poetic’ trends which were in vogue during that era are also clear to see.

From the perspective of form, this paragraph reflects the influence of descriptive poetry – a genre which architects at the end of the century particularly favoured when developing their arguments (this is the case with Ledoux and Boullée).³⁴ This poetic trend flourished under the pen of other poets such as Saint-Lambert (*Les Saisons*, 1769), Roucher (*Les Mois*, 1779) and Delille (*Les Jardins*, 1782). In these texts, the purpose is to “name things, to describe the features of a landscape precisely and to portray them poetically to create a visual description”.³⁵ In the same way, Jallier de Savault's peroration steers our views by painting an imaginary scene that brings his plan to life: “here, the manoeuvres of squadrons [...] the most sumptuous and impressive festivals [...] From here, one will be able to contemplate the magnificent spectacle of a departing fleet, inspired by the view of its king, parading under his eyes, as it were”³⁶.

Here, the structure of the argument has an emotional effect, but by extension it also showcases the architect's extremely picturesque and grandiose project. This bears relation to two similar philosophical trends: the philosophy of sensualism developed, notably, by Condillac in his *Traité des Sensations* (1754) and the theory of aesthetics and the sublime expounded by Burke in *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (translated into French in 1765). The architect's words show that by offering a similar character to the purpose of the site, his urban plan was consistent with the tenets of architecture parlante. Moreover, the specific character of this maritime site is designed to offer passers-by a truly sublime panorama. The vastness of the harbour, the rapid variations in light and colour with the passage of time, the infinity of the ocean beyond the Goulet, are just some of the elements likely to arouse feelings of wonder and admiration.

³² Jacques-François Blondel, *De l'utilité de joindre à l'étude de l'architecture celle des sciences et des arts qui lui sont relatifs*, Paris, chez Desaint, 1771, p. 39–41.

³³ *op. cit.*

³⁴ Antoinette Nort [33], § 20 et suivants [www.fabula.org/lht/18/nort.html].

³⁵ *op. cit.*

³⁶ *Réponse de M. Jallier de Savault [...]*, décembre 1786 (ANF: Marine, B3 780, n° 81).

Despite all his rhetorical skill, Jallier de Savault never managed to bring his grandiose plan to reality. After the Estates of Brittany had voted against his proposal, ministers decided to bend to the will of the Province. With the departure of the Maréchal de Castries in June 1787, this ambitious plan lost its ardent advocate, and the architect lost his biggest champion. In spring 1788, the commander of the Navy announced that “Mr de Jallier’s project would be highly incompatible with planned works which are necessary for supplies”³⁷ and abandoned the idea of a royal square at the entrance to the port of Brest once and for all. Such was the unfortunate outcome of a theoretical project which controversially, and for a time, elevated Brest to the realms of the sublime through the might of a pen.

³⁷ Lettres du comte d’Hector à M. de la Luzerne, 31 mars – 16 avril 1788 (ANF, Marine, D2 27, fol. 304–305).

Résumé

À la fin de l’année 1786, une joute verbale au sujet d’un projet d’embellissement urbain s’engage entre l’architecte parisien Claude Jean-Baptiste Jallier de Savault (1739–1806) et les autorités municipales de la ville de Brest. Issue d’un désaccord quant à l’emplacement le plus propre à recevoir un monument sculpté dédié à Louis XVI, cette controverse donne lieu à la rédaction de plusieurs mémoires visant à prouver la supériorité des vues de chacune des parties. À l’instar d’autres architectes de son temps, Jallier de Savault use de l’art oratoire avec une grande aisance et organise son discours de manière méthodique, alternant légitimation, argumentation et émotion. Les deux imprimés qu’il rédige pour défendre son projet en décembre 1786 et janvier 1787 font apparaître un riche panel d’effets rhétoriques dont certains sont empreints de subtiles accents poétiques. Malgré l’échec de son dessein, sacrifié sur l’autel de la conciliation politique, l’artiste parvient ainsi, le temps de cette controverse, à sublimer la cité du Ponant par la force de sa plume.

Zusammenfassung

Ende 1786 kam es zwischen dem Pariser Architekten Claude Jean-Baptiste Jallier de Savault (1739–1806) und der Stadtverwaltung von Brest zu einem verbalen Schlagabtausch über ein städtisches Verschönerungsprojekt. Da man sich nicht einig war, wo ein Denkmal für Ludwig XVI. am besten platziert werden sollte, wurden mehrere Memoranden verfasst, um die Überlegenheit der Ansichten beider Seiten zu beweisen. Wie andere Architekten seiner Zeit nutzte Jallier de Savault die Kunst der Rede mit großer Leichtigkeit und organisierte seinen Vortrag methodisch, wobei er zwischen Legitimation, Argumenten und Emotionen wechselte. Die beiden Druckschriften, die er im Dezember 1786 und Januar 1787 zur Verteidigung seines Projekts verfasste, zeigen eine reiche Palette an rhetorischen Effekten, von denen einige subtile poetische Anklänge aufweisen. Trotz des Scheiterns seines Projekts, das auf dem Altar der politischen Versöhnung geopfert wurde, gelang es dem Künstler während dieser Kontroverse, die Stadt am Ponant durch die Kraft seiner Feder zu sublimieren.

Stefan Hertzig

RESIDENTIAL PALACE – ZWINGER – NEUMARKT

Unfinished Projects by August II for Dresden (1709–1729)

My text deals with Dresden in its most glamorous era, the so-called 'Augustan' period. It covers the years between 1697 and 1763, when Saxony was united with the Kingdom of Poland and Dresden became a European capital. This period was full of unfinished architectural projects, including several plans by architects Gaetano Chiaveri (1689–1770) and Johann Christoph Knöffel (1686–1752) for a new royal palace near the Elbe, on today's Theatre Square, during the reign of Elector Frederick Augustus II (as King of Poland Augustus III, 1696–1763). Also known is a monumental design for a city extension in Dresden following the demolition of the Renaissance fortifications in the years after the Seven Years' War in 1756 – 1763.

However, among this impressive mass of unfinished architectural projects, the plans under King and Elector Frederick Augustus I, known as 'Augustus the Strong' (as King of Poland Augustus II, 1670–1733), are certainly the best known and most spectacular. The plans for a new monumental royal palace in the Roman High Baroque style by the architect Matthäus Daniel Pöppelmann (1662–1736) are at the centre of these considerations. From the outset, the palace was planned in conjunction with the Zwinger, which was to serve as the garden, royal orangery and forecourt of the planned palace. And at the end of the king's life, these plans were also to be combined with a general remodelling of the Neumarkt – i.e. the area surrounding Dresden's Frauenkirche – which had been designed by the French architect Zacharias Longuelune (1669–1748).

The Residential Palace

The Dresden Palace is essentially a Renaissance building that was constructed approximately between 1550 and 1600. After several renovations and alterations, the current exterior façades facing the city date from the late 19th century; they are a work of Wilhelmine historicism. After the destruction of 1945, it was decided to restore the original 16th century architecture in the large central courtyard of the palace, a project that is now almost complete. Most of the façades of this courtyard were not stone-faced, but covered with sgraffito, i.e. grey and white frescoes consisting of several layers of plaster and created using a technique imported from Italy. Looking back, we know that this Dresden Renaissance palace, the palace of Augustus the Strong's youth and the entire first period of his life, must have been one of the most beautiful and important palaces in Germany.

The central break in its history was a major fire in 1701, which destroyed around half of the building. A drawing from this time shows that the roofs on the left-hand side (facing east) had disappeared, while the roofs on the right-hand side, facing west, had been preserved.

All projects began in 1703 with a truly monumental plan by architect Marcus Conrad Dietze (1658–1704) for a palace to replace the western city fortifications. Needless to say, this was a utopian vision that could never have been realised. Of course, it soon became clear that such a project was absolutely unrealistic – due to the financial situation, but also because of the consequences for urban planning. However, it is interesting to note that much later, around 1715, Matthäus Daniel Pöppelmann once again submitted a design for a monumental palace

on this site: with its wings, the various courtyards and the rich façade decoration, this palace would have been one of the largest and most magnificent in the whole of Europe. However, as there are no further plans or information on this project, we believe that it was just a dream, a visionary representation project for Elector August II.

Instead, it was decided to retain the existing palace (its antiquity was combined with a historical and political message, in which August II's memory of his ancestors also played a role) and to remodel it in the Baroque style (comparable to Versailles in this respect). The plan was to more or less retain the central courtyard, but to transform the building's ground plan into a large 'H', probably modelled on Nicodemus Tessin the Younger's palace in Stockholm, and to add a large forecourt. This 'general plan' remained the central scheme for the Dresden Palace until the end of all planning.

It was in this context that Johann Friedrich Karcher (1650–1726, originally a garden architect) came up with his first ideas, which were modelled on Claude Perrault's (1613–1688) famous east façade of the Louvre in Paris (Fig. 1). However, the most important designs were those by Matthäus Daniel Pöppelmann for a new, monumental main façade facing Schlossstrasse. (Fig. 2) These plans in the Italian High Baroque style, of which there are several variations, were drawn up after the architect travelled extensively to Austria, Italy and especially Rome in 1709/10.¹ With the magnificent window decorations and the mass of columns on the portals, the intention was

most likely to copy and even surpass Andreas Schlüter's Berlin Palace. During the so-called 'Three Kings' Meeting' of 1709 in Potsdam and Berlin, which was attended by the Polish king as well as the Danish King Frederick IV (1671–1730) and the Prussian King Frederick I (1657–1713), Augustus the Strong visited the Berlin Palace and was deeply impressed by it. Today, after the recently completed reconstruction of the Berlin Palace, we can well understand August's emotional experience. But Berlin was not the only point of reference. As far as the general structure was concerned, the idea was also to combine it with elements of the Escorial in Madrid² (e.g. the central pediment or the four towers at the corners) and – once again – the Louvre in Paris, whose domes were to be copied. All this together would have created a magnificent picture of contemporary royal architecture. And we know from ongoing research that there was indeed a final design for the Baroque-style palace, of which we have a whole collection of plans of all the relevant façades.

None of this was completed. It was the lavishly celebrated wedding of his son to Archduchess Maria-Josepha of Habsburg (1699–1757) in September 1719 that ultimately forced Augustus the Strong to carry out a simple renovation of the palace as it was, with plain façades. As far as the interior was concerned, the rooms and halls on the main floor (the first floor in Dresden) were remodelled based on the interiors from the Palace of Versailles (Versailles again!), which Augustus had known and loved since his Grand Tour between 1687

Fig. 1: Johann Friedrich Karcher (?): Dresden, Project for a new residential palace, before 1709, source: Dresden, Saxon State and University Library, SLUB/HS Mscr.Dresd. L.4, fol. 10 .





Fig. 2: Matthäus Daniel Pöppelmann: Dresden, Project for a new residential palace, ca. 1711, source: SLUB/HS Mscr.Dresd. L.4, sheet 4.

and 1689. These included ceiling paintings by Louis de Silvestre (1675–1760) and French wall coverings with gilded ornaments. Since September 2022, we have been able to admire the representative rooms of the palace, which were destroyed in the Second World War, again following their extensive reconstruction.¹²³

Ultimately, the only realised result of Augustus the Strong's plans for Dresden Palace was the Palais Beichlingen, built in 1715 in the city centre for Wolf Dietrich von Beichlingen, the Grand Chancellor and Chief Court Marshal of the Saxon court, which was later divided into two independent buildings (Palais de Saxe and British Hotel). It utilised some of the motifs of the royal palace designs, such as colossal pilasters and columns, which are otherwise not found at all in the architecture of Dresden's palace buildings.

The Zwinger

The Zwinger – probably the most famous building in Dresden – has a superficially very strange name: The German verb 'zwingen' means 'to compel' or 'to squeeze', a 'Zwinger' in the military sense is what is known in English as an 'innerbailey'. It was a square-like space within the structures of the city fortifications that had largely lost its military function, was often used for festivities of the Saxon court and did not yet denote the magnificent Baroque complex that we all know. Looking at the Zwinger in its present form, one might think that it follows a simple and ingenious design concept: a square courtyard in the centre with two extensions in the shape of the Greek letter omega, one towards the city wall and the other towards the city centre. This courtyard is then framed by various galleries with round arches, pavilions and an axial

- 1 A research project by art historian Peter-Heinrich Jahn on Matthäus Daniel Pöppelmann's plans and designs for Dresden Palace is currently underway at TU Dresden. It will explore numerous previously unprocessed sources and promises a considerable increase in knowledge. However, as the results have not yet been published, only the research from the 1920s and 1970s is presented here.
- 2 Stefan Hertzog, Kristina Friedrichs, Henrik Karge, *The Japanese Palace in Dresden. Porcelain palace – state monument – museum. Konzeption und Baugeschichte*, Michael Imhof Verlag, Petersberg 2019, p. 28–34, 197–205.
- 3 Hans-Christoph Walter, "Die künstlerische Ausgestaltung der Festetage im zweiten Obergeschoss des Dresdner Residenzschlosses 1719", in Landesamt für Denkmalpflege Sachsen (ed.): *Das Residenzschloss zu Dresden. Volume 3: From Baroque splendour to the great palace renovation in the 19th century (Forschungen und Schriften zur Denkmalpflege Volume IV, 3)*, Michael-Imhof Verlag, Petersberg 2020, p. 100–132.



← Fig. 3: Dresden, Zwinger with Crown Gate (left), Mathematical-Physical Pavilion (centre) and Wall Pavilion (right), 2019, photo: John Hinnerk Pahl, Dresden.

→ Fig. 4: Zacharias Longuelune: General plan of the palace (centre), Zwinger (top) and Neumarkt (bottom), ca. 1730, source: Saxon Main State Archives Dresden.

passageway crowned with a spire (the so-called crown gate). However, this seemingly clear impression conceals a very complicated history.⁴⁵

At the beginning, in 1709, there was only one staircase along the longitudinal axis of the city fortifications, where the so-called Wall Pavilion, which surrounds this staircase, is located today. It served as access to the terraces, which were arranged to the side in order to situate the king's precious orange trees. This also explains the official name of the Zwinger throughout the 18th century: it was the Orangerie Royale (in French!). Shortly afterwards, until around 1714, due to the cold weather in Central Europe, the first arcades and two of the large corner pavilions were built in the western part of the complex (i. e. towards the city fortifications), the Mathematical-Physical Salon in the south and the French Pavilion in the north (Fig. 3).

Matthäus Daniel Pöppelmann, the architect of the Zwinger, undertook several study trips on behalf of the Elector, travelling to Austria and Italy in 1710 and to France and the Netherlands in 1715. After his return, not

only was work on the Zwinger intensified, but above all the various designs were further developed and improved. Through the ingenious mixture of artistic ideas, not only from France, but also from Italy and Bohemia (e.g. from Christoph Dientzenhofer), Pöppelmann created a veritable flood of magnificent plans from 1715 onwards, which represent the culmination of all projects for the Zwinger. Among them are many different variations for other pavilions and turrets, some of them in the form of a waterfall, for example. Two paintings by Johann Alexander Thiele (1685–1752) show us what the ensemble would have looked like in the end: the white façades, blue roofs and some gilded decorations would have made the Zwinger look almost like porcelain.

One of these images, but even better a very important general plan, shows us the connection between the Zwinger and the planned new Baroque palace building: the Zwinger would have been nothing more than the garden or forecourt of the monumental palace (Fig. 4). A striking feature is the open space to the north, towards the Elbe (where the theatre square with the Semper Opera House is located today). The plan was to connect this space to the Zwinger by means of further galleries and to erect a round pavilion or tower – we do not know exactly – at the end of these galleries, which would have served as a vantage point for the garden of the Dutch Palace on the other side of the Elbe.⁵

In the end, very little of all this was completed: in 1715/16 the mentioned above Wall Pavilion in the west

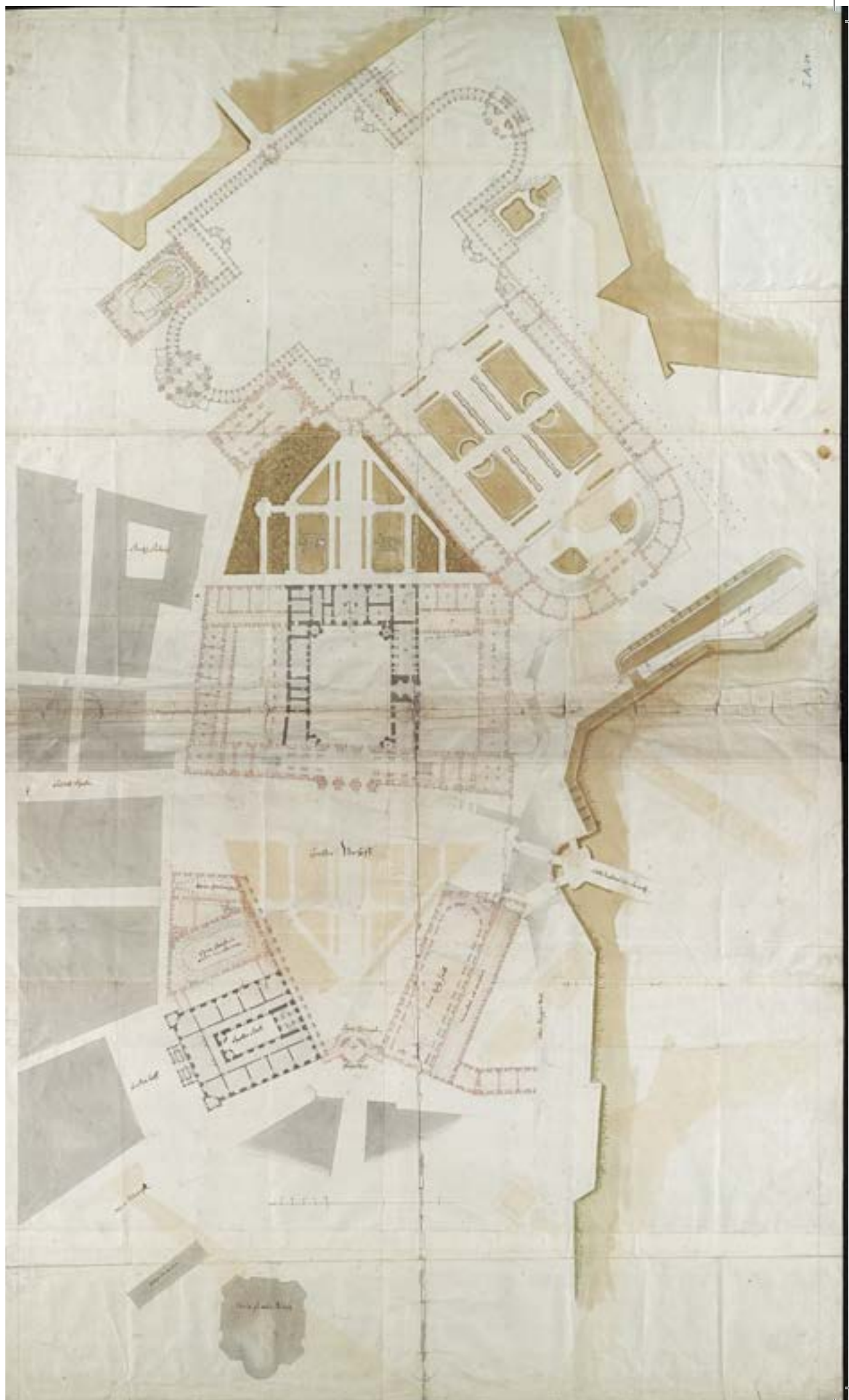
⁴ Hermann Heckmann, *Matthäus Daniel Pöppelmann: Leben und Werk*, Deutscher Kunstverlag, Berlin 1972, p. 101–160. Fritz Löffler, Willy Pritsche, *Der Zwinger in Dresden*, VEB E. A. Seemann Verlag, Leipzig 1979. Michael Kirsten, "Der Dresdner Zwinger", in Harald Marx (ed.), *Matthäus Daniel Pöppelmann. The Architect of the Dresden Zwinger*, Münster Verlag, Leipzig 1990, p. 148–174.

⁵ Peter Heinrich Jahn, Markus Wacker, Dirk Welich, "Back to the Future. Visualising the Planning and Building of the Dresden Zwinger from the 18th until the 19th century", in Stephan Hoppe, Stefan Breitling (eds.), *Virtual Palaces, Part II. Lost Palaces and their Afterlife. Virtual reconstruction between Science and Media*, arthistoricum.net, Munich 2016, p. 267–302.

with the famous herms by Balthasar Permoser (1651–1732), and the Long Gallery with the Crown Gate in the south – an impressive symbol of Augustus the Strong’s reign in Poland.

Once again, it was the magnificent wedding of his son in 1719 that forced the Elector-King and his architect to find a solution for the completion of the Zwingerhof that was as simple as it was ingenious: They built a repeat of the three pavilions on the city fortifications once again to the east, facing the city, but due to the short time available, partially made of only wood and with stucco decorations. It was not until the late 18th century that sculptors, who already belonged to the early classicist period, completed these works. And in the end, of course, it was the large amount of sculptures – no fewer than 672 by various famous sculptors (such as Balthasar Permoser, Johann Christian Feige, Johann Christian Kirchner and others) that still make up the fame of the Dresden Zwinger, even if almost all these sculptures have now been replaced by copies in cast stone or other techniques.

After substantial destruction of the complex during the Second World War, it was rebuilt



until 1965 under the direction of architect Hubert Georg Ermisch (1883–1951). Today, after a period of neglect in the later phase of the GDR, renovation work is being constantly carried out. However, efforts are also being made to restore the building to its Baroque splendour, e.g. by re-arranging the orange trees in the Zwinger courtyard (around 80 of them; in the 18th century there were demonstrably 300 orange trees) and through the planned true to original reconstruction of the marble hall in the French Pavilion (again, a decoration based on the Versailles model...).

The Neumarkt

Today, after the reconstruction work of recent years, the Neumarkt, located in the north of the historic city centre, together with the Frauenkirche by George Bähr (1666–1738) (Fig. 5)⁶ forms the regained heart of the city. The layout of this area dates to the high Middle Ages, recognisable by the irregularly laid out and curved streets. In contrast, the façades of the Baroque-style houses form an ensemble of great urban harmony, which is due to the fact that building regulations were introduced for all buildings in the city in the 18th century. They were relatively restrictive in all aspects of urban planning, such as the overall height, the height of the floor levels and the height and shape of the roofs, but not in the details of style and decoration.⁷

At the beginning of the 18th century, however, Augustus the Strong had a completely different vision for the Neumarkt, as the planned new palace building made it necessary to regulate and redesign this space. In any case, a wide, representative forecourt was needed opposite the main façade of the palace, preferably in the form of a semicircle or triangle. The architect Zacharias Longuelune

(1669–1748), master builder to the court in Dresden from 1713, presented a proposal for this in one of his last designs for Augustus the Strong around 1730. In order to maximise the size of the forecourt, Longuelune planned to demolish the arcades of the so-called Stallhof and the old 16th century Kanzleihaus. In their place, he wanted to build an opera house and a comedy theatre on the south side, next to the stable building, which he wanted to retain. Between these buildings and a new riding school on the north side, there was to be a large central triumphal portal for the entire residence, a situation that is reminiscent of the Palace of Versailles. (Fig. 4)⁸

A plan by Johann Christoph Naumann (1664–1742), drawn as early as 1717, depicts the area surrounding the old Frauenkirche, which at the time was nothing more than a small late medieval church. Naumann wanted to give the existing Töpfergasse a regular, straight form, for which the old powder tower – remodelled in Baroque style – was to serve as the destination (today the Coselpalais stands on this site behind the Frauenkirche). It is very striking that in this plan by Naumann, five years before the first designs by George Bähr, the Frauenkirche had already found its later form: a square with bevelled corners, which would certainly have been crowned by a dome.

The only building to be completed according to this plan was the new guardhouse of the Guards Corps. As this beautiful little building was the latest in the High Baroque style in the area at the time, it quickly became something of an attraction in the city. Naumann had also planned to erect a new building directly opposite the guardhouse to replace the 16th century Gewandhaus (i. e. the market hall with a large hall on the upper floor). This new building, which would again have been a market hall or a multi-purpose public building, was to be connected

⁶ Landesamt für Denkmalpflege Sachsen, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden (eds.), *George Bähr. Die Frauenkirche und das bürgerliche Bauen in Dresden*, (exhibition catalogue), Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden, Dresden 1999. Heinrich Magirius, *Die Dresdner Frauenkirche von George Bähr. Entstehung und Bedeutung*, Deutscher Verlag für Kunstwissenschaft, Berlin 2005.

⁷ Stefan Hertzog / Walter May / Hennig Prinz, *Der Historische Neumarkt zu Dresden. Seine Geschichte und seine Bauten*, Michel Sandstein Verlag, Dresden 2005, p. 8–32 et 14–27.

⁸ Heinrich Gerhard Franz, *Zacharias Longuelune und die Baukunst des 18. Jahrhunderts in Dresden*, Deutscher Verein für Kunstwissenschaft, Berlin 1953, p. 18–25. Walter May, August Christoph Graf von Wackerbarth (1662–1734) und seine Rolle bei der Planung der Dresdner Frauenkirche, in *Die Dresdner Frauenkirche. Jahrbuch zu ihrer Geschichte und zu ihrem archäologischen Wiederaufbau*, vol. 6, Hermann Böhlau Nachfolger, Weimar 2000, p. 65–87.



Fig. 5: Dresden, Frauenkirche and Neumarkt reconstructed, 2012, photo: John Hinnerk Pahl, Dresden.

to the guardhouse by arcades or lattices. The old houses from the Middle Ages or the Renaissance would have been hidden behind these arcades, transforming the irregular square into a regular trapezoid.⁹

But none of this was realised either. The famous paintings by Bernardo Bellotto (1722–1780) from the

middle of the 18th century show us the state of the Neumarkt at that time with the Frauenkirche and the guardhouse. But this picturesque appearance of the square with its mixture of Renaissance and Baroque buildings was not what Augustus the Strong and the Saxon court had in mind. For this reason, in an audience with the architect George Bähr in 1730 (we have reliable information about this), the king suggested that the new guardhouse be torn down again: after seeing Bähr's plans, Augustus wanted to show the Frauenkirche in all its beauty instead. However, this only became possible after the extensive destruction caused by the Seven Years' War in 1760. Thanks to the long design process, the Frauenkirche with its slightly curved façades and high dome now fitted in perfectly with the urban lines of the square. The demolition of old houses from the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, the reconstruction of the damaged Baroque houses and the construction of new houses in accordance with the regulations issued in the meantime meant that the private buildings now also contributed to the harmonisation and unification of the Neumarkt.

Conclusion

Throughout its history, Dresden was never a place of monumental structures and grand architectural gestures, as the Augustan era (like all absolutist powers) originally intended to create. Even in the 19th century (think Gottfried Semper [1803–1878]), with its opera house, picture gallery and private buildings), and until its destruction in 1945, Dresden remained a fascinating mixture of small-scale urban structures (often dating back to the Middle Ages) and buildings and façades that were always of classical, elegant and refined style (regardless of whether this style originated in the 18th century or was more recent). All these aspects together accounted for the city's fame.

⁹ Tobias Knobelsdorf, Das Gewandhausareal am Dresdner Neumarkt – Geschichte und Bedeutung, in *Die Dresdner Frauenkirche. Jahrbuch zu ihrer Geschichte und Gegenwart*, vol. 23, Schnell & Steiner, Regensburg 2019, p. 71–122. Tobias Knobelsdorf, Die ehemalige Hauptwache am Dresdner Neumarkt – ein Bau von Johann Christoph Naumann (1664–1742), in *Die Dresdner Frauenkirche. Jahrbuch zu ihrer Geschichte und Gegenwart*, vol. 24, Schnell & Steiner, Regensburg 2020, p. 75–104.

Résumé

L'histoire de la construction de Dresde a toujours été riche en projets architecturaux inachevés, et ce à toutes les époques. Le XVIII^e siècle, et plus particulièrement l'époque dite «augustéenne» sous Saxe, «Auguste le Fort», prince-électeur Auguste I^{er} de Saxe et, en union personnelle, roi Auguste II de Pologne, constitue le point culminant de cette période. C'est à cette époque qu'ont été planifiés les projets de loin les plus somptueux et les plus spectaculaires, qui n'ont jamais été réalisés.

Le château de la résidence de Dresde est resté jusqu'à aujourd'hui un bâtiment renaissance à quatre ailes, qui a été recouvert de façades contemporaines à la fin du XIX^e siècle. Après le grand incendie du château de 1701 et les projets de construction monumentaux et totalement irréalistes qui s'ensuivirent, de Dietze (1701) et Pöppelmann (1715), on décida de conserver le bâtiment historique, surtout au niveau de la cour intérieure, et de simplement habiller l'ancien château d'un nouveau bâtiment en forme de «H». Les premières idées de Karcher (1709) s'inspirèrent de la façade est du Louvre de Perrault à Paris. Mais c'est Pöppelmann qui a réalisé les projets les plus célèbres après son voyage en Italie de 1709, sous l'influence du château de Berlin de Schlüter, ainsi que de l'Escorial près de Madrid.

La construction du Zwinger de Dresde a presque toujours été liée aux plans d'un nouveau château résidentiel. Ce complexe aujourd'hui régulier d'une cour carrée avec deux annexes en forme d'oméga a une histoire compliquée. En 1709, seul un escalier menait au rempart, qui fut ensuite recouvert d'un pavillon. À gauche et à droite, deux autres pavillons ont été construits au-dessus des galeries. Vers 1715, les voyages de Pöppelmann à l'étranger suscitérent de nombreux projets imaginatifs pour le complexe: Il était prévu comme esplanade ou jardin pour le nouveau château et devait être étendu jusqu'à l'Elbe. Aucun de ces projets ne fut réalisé, si bien qu'en 1719, pour les festivités du mariage du prince héritier, on refléta la pièce en oméga déjà existante de l'édifice vers le côté ville.

Le Neumarkt, la zone entourant l'église Frauenkirche de Dresde, a été construite au cours du XVIII^e siècle selon les dispositions d'un règlement de construction sur le plan médiéval irrégulier existant, auquel se référerait également le projet de construction de l'église de George Bähr. Au cours du premier tiers du siècle, cette place a fait l'objet de nombreuses planifications en rapport avec le nouveau château de la résidence, en direction de l'ouest. De tous ces projets, aucun n'a pu être réalisé pour des raisons de temps et de finances, à l'exception de la Hauptwache, qui a été démolie par la suite.

Zusammenfassung

Die Baugeschichte Dresdens war während all ihrer Epochen stets reich an unvollendet gebliebenen architektonischen Planungen. Das 18. Jahrhundert, und hier insbesondere die sogenannte „Augusteische Epoche“ unter August dem Starken, Kurfürst August I. von Sachsen und in Personalunion König August II. von Polen, bildet dabei den Höhepunkt. Zu dieser Zeit wurden die mit Abstand prachtvollsten und spektakulärsten, niemals ausgeführten Projekte geplant.

Das Dresdner Residenzschloss ist bis heute ein vierflügeliger Renaissancebau geblieben, welcher im späten 19. Jahrhundert mit zeitgenössischen Fassaden verkleidet wurde. Nach dem großen Schlossbrand von 1701 und nachfolgenden monumentalen, völlig unrealistischen Neubauplanungen von Dietze (1701) und Pöppelmann (1715), entschloss man sich, den historischen Bau vor allem im Bereich des Innenhofes zu erhalten und das alte Schloss lediglich mit einem Neubau in Form eines „H“ zu verkleiden. Erste Ideen von Karcher (1709) entstanden nach dem Vorbild der Pariser Louvre-Ostfassade von Perrault. Die berühmtesten Projekte hatte aber Pöppelmann nach seiner Italienreise von 1709 unter dem Einfluss des Berliner Schlosses von Schlüter, sowie des Escorials bei Madrid gefertigt.

Fast immer verbunden mit den Planungen für ein neues Residenzschloss war die Errichtung des Dresdner Zwingers. Die heute regelmäßige Anlage aus einem quadratischem Hof mit zwei omegaförmigen Annexen hat eine komplizierte Entstehungsgeschichte. Im Jahre 1709 führte nur eine Treppe hoch zum Wall, später wurde diese mit einem Pavillon überbaut. Links und rechts davon erbaute man über den Galerien zwei weitere Pavillons. Die Reisen Pöppelmanns ins Ausland bewirkten um 1715 zahlreiche phantasievolle Projekte für die Anlage: Sie war als Vorplatz oder Gartenanlage für das neue Schloss vorgesehen und sollte bis zur Elbe erweitert werden. Von diesen Projekten wurde nichts verwirklicht, sodass man 1719 für die Hochzeitsfeierlichkeiten des Kronprinzen das bereits vorhandene Omega-Stück des Baues nach der Stadtseite hin spiegelte.

Der Neumarkt, das Areal um die Dresdner Frauenkirche herum, wurde im Laufe des 18. Jahrhunderts nach den Bestimmungen eines Baureglements über dem vorhandenen unregelmäßigen mittelalterlichen Grundriss bebaut, auf den sich auch die Planung des Kirchenbaus von George Bähr bezog. Im ersten Drittel des Jahrhunderts war dieser Platz das Objekt zahlreicher Planungen, die in westlicher Richtung mit dem neuen Residenzschloss in Verbindung standen.

Von all den genannten Planungen konnte man bis auf die später wieder abgebrochene Hauptwache aus Zeit- und Finanzgründen nichts verwirklichen.

Ole W. Fischer

RECONSTRUCTIONS IN FRANKFURT: MODERN, CRITICAL, IRONIC?

The New Old Town

Prelude: What ever happened before March 1944..

With the fall of Frankfurt's urban fortifications in the early 19th century, both the areas of economic activity and preferred housing moved out of the urban core to the north and west, while the Old Town, the medieval city center, turned into a poor people neighborhood. Nevertheless, already the municipal administrations of the late 19th century undertook building campaigns in the historic core, such as the Neo-Gothic update of the medieval town

hall *Römer* (1889, 1896–1900) and the large extension of the city hall complex (*Neues Rathaus*, 1898–1906), or the urban-infrastructural breakthrough for the tramway along the Braubachstrasse (1904–1906). (Fig. 1, 2)

In 1922 the Bund tätiger Altstadtfreunde, a local history and preservation group, was founded by Fried Lübbecke (1883–1965) to protect the history and image of Frankfurt's Old Town, dubbed at the time as the largest intact medieval city center in Germany. Parallel to the Neues Frankfurt, the famous modernist worker housing

program on the outskirts, the Altstadtfreunde focused on image, identity and belonging rather than historical matter-of-factness. While they rallied for gothic timber frame houses, they cared less about the building stock from renaissance, baroque and neo-classical periods in the city center, not to mention the precarious housing conditions of the urban poor living in the Old



Fig. 1: Areal view of historic Old Town Frankfurt towards the *Römer* from the tower of Cathedral St Bartholomew before 1940, source: Bildarchiv Foto Marburg .



Fig. 2: Aerial view of Frankfurt New Old Town towards the *Römer* from the tower of Cathedral St Bartholomew today, photo: author 2023.

Modern Recons- truction after World War II: Goethehaus, Paulskirche, Römer

In the aftermath of the allied bombings on 18 and 22 March 1944, and the fire that consumed the entire Old Town,¹ the postwar social-democratic Frankfurt municipality decided for a new urban grid and rebuilding effort inspired by modernist principles, with a few exceptions. The most important one was the reconstruction of the Goethe-Haus inside and out (1947–1951), despite fierce criticism against “historicist copy”, “falsifying the testimony of history”

Town. Yet Lübbecke and his followers successfully raised awareness for the historic value of the disintegrating core of the city, and despite partial losses such as the buildings taken down for the *Neues Rathaus* or Braubachstrasse, a process of preservation and upkeep started during the 1920s and 1930s, followed by a building inventory and photographic documentation of the Old Town after the first allied bombing raids hit Frankfurt in 1942. Precisely this photographic archive enabled the reconstruction – or, as we will see, rather re-invention – of Frankfurt’s New Old Town after 2007.

as well as “political restoration”.² Similarly, the Imperial Cathedral St Bartholomew (aka *Dom*) underwent reconstruction (1947–1955), yet already with modifications, such as the destruction of 19th century historicist restorations which had been introduced after the cathedral fire of 1867. However, these historical reconstructions remained rare cases, as the partial rebuilding of the city hall *Rathaus am Römer* (1947–1950) and moderate modern interpretations (1950–1952) demonstrate. The *Römer* as well as other landmarked buildings underwent a process of negotiation between historic relics and moderate interpretation, including also the neighboring buildings *Salzhaus* and *Haus Frauenstein* on the Römerberg north

¹ Along the Römerberg square, *Haus Wertheim* (south side) was the only original building that survived both bombing and bulldozing after the war (renovated 1963–1964), while the neighboring neo-classicist *Haus Freudenberg* was taken down in 1970 to make room for the brutalist extension of the Historic Museum, which itself was replaced again by the current extension of Lederer+Ragnarsdóttir+Oei (competition 2008, built 2011–2017).

² Wolfgang Voigt, “«Ruf der Ruinen» oder Rekonstruktion – Altstadt, Paulskirche und Goethehaus nach den Luftangriffen des Zweiten Weltkrieges”, in Philipp Sturm, Peter Cachola Schmal (eds.), *Die immer Neue Altstadt. Bauen zwischen Dom und Römer seit 1900 / Forever New: Frankfurt’s Old Town. Building between Dom und Römer since 1900* Berlin, Jovis/DAM, 2018, p. 64–73, here: p. 68.



Fig. 3: *Salzhaus* and *Haus Frauenstein* on the *Römerberg* north side, Frankfurt, destroyed during WWII, reconstructed 1950–1952, examples of post-WWII moderate modern interpretation, featuring the glass mosaic *Phoenix* by Wilhelm Geißler, 1955, photo: author 2023.

side. On the scale between *truthful reconstruction* and *modern rebuilding* (*Wiederaufbau*) these are located more towards interpretation: the architects kept the remaining sand stone ground floor of the ruin, while they translated the lost timber frame upper floors into a reinforced concrete structure, including the steep rooflines of medieval houses, but left the marks of war destruction and intervention clearly visible. (Fig. 3)

Even further along this scale towards interpretation went the rebuilding of the neo-classical Paulskirche (1789–1833), where the burnt-out red sandstone shell received a modernist fill-in interior topped with a low-pitched roof in 1947–1948 by Rudolf Schwarz (1897–1961).³ This dialectical treatment of old and new was meant to turn the *locus* of the first democratic assembly of German nations of 1848–1949 into a memorial of both World War II and of the democratic spirit rising from the ashes. Last in this count of reconstructions is the *Steinerne Haus*, seat of the Kunstverein Frankfurt, the local art society. While its exterior was reconstructed in 1959–1962, its

interior and extension speak of then contemporary sensibilities. The architects aimed for an opposition between historic reconstruction and uncompromising modern exterior, which today neighbors directly to the New Old Town. And not surprisingly, these layers of postwar history with partial reconstruction and modern reinterpretation are under attack from protagonists of *historical truthful reconstruction* such as Freunde Frankfurts – which is the current name of the Bund tätiger Altstadtfreunde founded in 1922 mentioned above – and the populist Pro Altstadt group.

Postmodern reconstruction: Eastern façade of the Römerberg, 1981–83

One can distinguish the postwar period from a second phase of reconstruction of the Frankfurt Old Town which began in the mid-1970s with a citizens' participation. Faced with a large empty space between (rebuilt) Römer town hall and the (partially reconstructed) Imperial Cathedral, the magistrate (city council) offered

³ *Ibid.*, p. 65.

three simple alternatives between a) reconstruction, which scored 41%, b) historical interpretation, with a small lead of 46 %, and c) modernist architecture, which only received 4% of the already small number of responses.⁴ While this vote was non-binding, it speaks volumes about the shift in political and cultural climate amongst Frankfurt citizens during the 1970s, which derived partially from growing concerns about history and cultural heritage and partially from revolt against technocratic urban renewal of Frankfurt West End. In 1977 the conservative Christian Democrats (CDU) won the municipal elections with a campaign focused on urban planning and city image, and the new political majority proposed a *historical reconstruction* of the Römerberg square eastern façade (aka *Samstagsberg*).⁵ The new conservative mayor Walter Wallmann⁶ embedded this reconstruction effort within a larger cultural program of the Frankfurt Museumsufer, a grouping of new and old museum buildings along the front of the river Main, which can be seen as part of the urban transformation to a post-industrial service sector society focused on cultural consumption and urban competitiveness. The east side of the Römerberg square – across the partially reconstructed town hall *Römer* – had been cleared from rubble since 1947. And parallel with the houses *Salzhaus* and *Frauenstein* on the Römerberg north side discussed above, two historically inspired houses had already been erected on the east side in 1952, but they were taken down again in 1962/1963 to make way for a new underground parking garage and metro line.

What followed in 1979 was a first competition for the reconstruction of the Dom-Römer area, won by Ernst Schirmacher, Klaus Peter Heinrich and Karl-Georg Geiger, architects who would later be commissioned with the eastern façades. But rather than moving towards realisation, a second competition took place in 1980 for the *Schirn*, named after the medieval market stalls on this location and the Schirngasse in east-west direction. This complex was originally conceived as a mixed-use music, art and culture complex with reference to the newly opened Centre Pompidou in Paris, but houses today predominantly a *Kunsthalle*, a museum with changing exhibitions (built 1983–1986). Here, the design brief left it open to participants if they reconstruct the Römerberg east side façades, hence the politicians handed over the decision to a competition jury.⁷ The winning design by the Berlin office Bangert, Jansen, Scholz and Schultes (BJSS) included not only the reconstruction of the eastern façade of the Römerberg square, but also contemporary interpretations for an additional row of 14 historic houses along the north side of the historic Saalgasse which was to be restored as urban form south of the new museum.

Designed as postmodern interpretations of four-story gable-fronted buildings on a rigid grid of 7,50 by 10m parcels, these houses on the Saalgasse fill in the space between the *Schirn's* central block, its east-west axis, and the historic urban footprint. This concept aimed for a closed street block façade in memory of the prewar urban context and for individual differentiation by distinguished designers, supported vigorously for by DAM director Heinrich Klotz, the doyen of post-modern architecture in Germany.⁸ The

⁴ Moritz Röger, "(Re)Konstruktion von Geschichte – Die Debatte um die Römerberg-Zeile", in Sturm, Schmal, *op. cit.*, p. 100–107, here: 100–101; however, the city received a very low return of 961 responses of 70'000 copies sent out see: *Ibid.*, p. 107, footnote 6 referring to the data set of the city's participation process in 1975.

⁵ The idea of reconstruction came already up under the previous social democratic mayor Rudi Arndt in 1974, picked up momentum in 1975 by the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (FAZ) in 1975, and can be seen as part of the larger movement of the European Architectural Heritage Year (1975).

⁶ Walter Wallmann, CDU (1932–2013) Frankfurt mayor 1977–86. Note that Alexander Gauland, co-founder of the right-wing populist party AfD ("Alternative for Germany") in 2013, was Wallmann's personal assistant, speech writer and mayor's office director 1977–86. This connection between urban reconstruction and right-wing populism has been pointed out repeatedly by Stephan Trüby, see: *idem*: "Die Einstecktuchisierung verrohter Bürgerlichkeit. Über die Neue Frankfurter Altstadt als politische Initiative von Rechtsradikalen", in *Rechte Räume*, Basel, Birkhäuser, 2020, p. 137–150.

⁷ Oliver Elser, "Die Schirn – Mord am Dom oder Befreiungsschlag?", in Sturm, Schmal, *op. cit.*, p. 108–117, here: 109: Max Bäcker chaired the competition jury, with the founding director of the German Architecture Museum DAM Heinrich Klotz and the mayor Walter Wallmann amongst the jurors.

⁸ See for example, Heinrich Klotz, *Revision der Moderne. Postmoderne Architektur 1960–1980*, Munich, Prestel, 1984, catalogue to the exhibition at the DAM of the same name.

Fig. 4: Houses on the Saalgasse, Frankfurt, destroyed during WWII and reconstructed 1980–1982, examples of post-modern free interpretation roughly based on the historic urban footprint; photo: author 2023.

12 designers were selected from the prize winners and runner ups of the *Schirn* competition (August 1980), amongst others Adolfo Natalini/ Superstudio, Charles W. Moore, Hermann and Christoph Mäckler, who will play an important role as consultant for the New Old Town.⁹ (Fig. 4)

In difference to these postmodern reinterpretations that break with postwar modern rebuilding patterns in the former old town only as far as the quotation of historic urban fabric is concerned, while the interpretation of the medieval row house typology is distinctly contemporary, the six buildings (plus *Schwarzer Stern*) on the Römer east side were reconstructed from archival documentation on their original plots and executed specifically with traditional crafts techniques of timber frame. Yet also these *historical truthful reconstructions* do not show the actual building condition documented in 1942, nor do they refer to any other historical layer, but rather speak of the projections of the late 19th century on gothic old town, such as the exposed



timber structures, that traditionally were clad with slate or plastered over to look like stone buildings. The municipality commissioned the aforementioned architects Ernst Schirmacher for the eastern façade and Klaus Peter Heinrichi with Karl-Georg Geiger for the *Schwarzer Stern*. Especially the latter is a telling case for the Frankfurt's Old Town, since its ruins up to the first floor were saved until the early 1960s, before they were taken down for the

⁹ Peter Cachola-Schmal, "Die Postmoderne Saalgasse – Sind die Häuser aus dem Jahr 1986 die Blaupause für die neue Altstadt?", in Sturm, Schmal, *op. cit.*, p. 118–123, here: 119.

metro line – only to be reconstructed from scratch in 1981 on the same site without a single stone of original material left. In addition, the *historical truthful reconstructions* of the six houses of the eastern façade of the Römerberg are limited to exactly that – their façades. Their core is built in concrete and they back up directly against the postmodern development of the *Schirn* by BJSS which roughly follows historic precedent of deep narrow-gabled, arcaded houses on this location, clad with sandstone base and reddish plaster.

Truthful Historical Reconstruction of the New Old Town

These postmodern attempts of reconstruction – both the vague interpretation of the historical urban footprint of the *Schirn* and the *historical truthful reconstructions* of the eastern façade of the Römerberg square – were not able to reconnect the east-west-axis between the *Römer* town hall and the imperial cathedral St Bartholomew, because this area was blocked by the brutalist *Technisches Rathaus* (Technical town hall). This oversized late modernist ensemble of plinth and three clumsy towers with chamfered corners (competition 1963, realization 1970–1974) had replaced the remaining existing or rebuilt historic structures along the Braubachstrasse and *Hinter dem Lämmchen*. Symbol of the failed urban renewal policies of the 1960s and 1970s as well as of social-democratic welfare state brutalism of this period, the *Technisches Rathaus* had been a target of urban restoration campaigns from its inception on.

Since the city of Frankfurt had sold the property during the privatizations of the 1990s and rented it back (PPP) it was out of reach of municipal planning. With the termination of the leasing contract for the year 2007 in sight, the magistrate decided to hold an urban design competition in 2004, won by Frankfurt office KSP Engel & Zimmermann in September 2005. The competition asked

for 20'000 sqm mixed-use offices, housing and hotel as well as retail on the ground floor on a 7'700 sqm site, which should respect the historical urban condition prior to its destruction in 1944, especially the *Coronation Way* (Krönungsweg) and the visual axis between the town hall *Römer* and the Imperial Cathedral St Bartholomew. The winning proposal by KSP fills the tight site with very dense flat-roofed urban blocks and stone-clad façades reminiscent of 1980s neo-rationalist architecture. Despite the unanimous 1st rank vote for the project by a jury of architects and politicians, there were also two designs that proposed an urban repair reconstructing the pre-war old-town footprint – but they remained without rank.¹⁰ Immediately after the announcement of the jury result, the short-lived right-wing group Bürger für Frankfurt (BFF)¹¹ launched a political campaign demanding a *historical reconstruction* of the entire site, which was tabled at the time by the majority coalition (CDU, SPD, Grüne, FDP), only to return the next year supported by a large majority of all democratic parties from left to green to liberal and conservative. Also, the aforementioned preservation group Freunde Frankfurts rallied against the project, called for *historical reconstruction* of the old town to the condition prior 1944, which gained momentum with support of the local conservative press (*Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* FAZ) and several public hearings. These activities from local historians, preservationists, conservatives and right-wing populists were countered on the institutional side by the city planning office as well as the architects' lobby: on October 18 2005 the German Architecture Museum (Deutsche Architekturmuseum DAM) in Frankfurt organized a podium discussion, where architects and planners opposed any form of historical reconstruction – in favor of either a contemporary design or of a *critical reconstruction* of the urban form based on the prewar footprint, volume and motives modelled after the *Internationale Bauausstellung* (IBA) Berlin of 1984/1987.

¹⁰ Philipp Sturm, "Der Städtebauliche Ideenwettbewerb Technisches Rathaus, 2005", in Sturm, Schmal, *op. cit.*, p. 134–139, here: 135: reconstructions were proposed by Christoph Mäckler and Zvonko Turkali, both Frankfurt.

¹¹ Klaus Jürgen Göpfert, "Die Altstadt – Ein politisches Lehrstück", in Sturm, Schmal, *op. cit.*, p. 124–133, here: 128: "Antrag 1988 vom 20.08.2005: Technisches Rathaus. Den Abriss als Chance nutzen."

Similar to the 1970s and 1980s with mayor Wallmann, politics play an important role: after an interim period of social-democratic mayors after 1989, the conservative Christian Democrats won the office back in 1995 with the long-term Frankfurt mayor Petra Roth (1995–2012, CDU). Her goal was to consolidate the municipal finances, amongst others through privatisation of the public housing sector. Roth's administration was deeply involved in the redistribution of housing opportunities within the city, with long-term consequences. In 2006 Roth decided to ignore the municipal planners and take the lead of the counter-initiative: she tabled the city's architectural competition results and called for a *historical reconstruction* of the area between town hall *Römer* and the cathedral as part of her campaign. After gaining re-election in March 2006, she headed the first conservative-Green coalition in Frankfurt (CDU-Grüne), in which both parties agreed on the *historical reconstruction* of the Dom-Römer area as their central urban initiative. Parallel a digital model of the historic old town was presented to the city council (supported by the preservation group *Freunde Frankfurts*)¹² and the architect DW Dreyse was commissioned to gather historical data in *Dokumentation Altstadt*, based on the archive collected by the *Freunde Frankfurts/Bund tätiger Altstadtfreunde* in 1942.¹³ In October 2006 the city planning office organized a citizens' workshop Old Town that recommended to rebuild the historical urban footprint of the area and to reconstruct four "art historically significant buildings".¹⁴ In 2007 the municipality

purchased back the *Technisches Rathaus*, which it had sold in 1994,¹⁵ in order to take it down and blast the way for the New Old Town as the project was called from now on. In March 2007 a group of city council members visited the reconstructed old towns of Dresden, Nurnberg and Ulm, which fed into the proposal "M 112 Dom-Römer Areal" accepted on 20 June 2007, that called for reconstruction of already six buildings at a total budget of 106 Mio € – plus the cost for the *Technisches Rathaus* of 72 Mio €.¹⁶

On 15 May 2009 the municipality incorporated the Dom-Römer GmbH and on 10 December passed the urban design code and by-laws (*Gestaltungssatzung*) crafted by the aforementioned Frankfurt architect Christoph Mäckler, professor at the Technical University Dortmund, who was elected as head of the external consulting team (*Gestaltungsbeirat*).¹⁷ Mäckler distinguished himself as severe critic against modern architecture and postwar rebuilding, as a protagonist for urban reconstruction and had founded the German Institute for the Art of City Building at TU Dortmund. He and his colleagues use this institutional platform to propose the study of traditional European urban form prior to World War I as precedent for contemporary urban design, in line with the aesthetic principles of Camillo Sitte.¹⁸

A first step towards implementing the New Old Town was an architecture competition decided in December 2009 for the *Stadthaus*, which asked for a façade reconstruction of four historical buildings (*Goldene*

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 130: the CAD-3D model was built by architecture student Jürgen Mangelmann with the support of the geographer Jörg Ott.

¹³ DW Dreyse, Volkmar Hepp, Björn Wissenbach, Peter Bierling, *Dokumentation Altstadt*, Frankfurt am Main, 2006.

¹⁴ Göpfert, *op. cit.*, p. 130: the buildings to be reconstructed: *Goldene Waage* Markt 5, *Neues Rotes Haus* Markt 17, *Haus zum Esslinger* aka: *Haus Tante Melber* Hinter dem Lämmchen 2, and *Goldenes Lämmchen* Hinter dem Lämmchen 6.

¹⁵ Philipp Sturm, "Der Städtebauliche Ideenwettbewerb Technisches Rathaus, 2005", in Sturm, Schmal, *op. cit.*, p. 134–139, here: 135; see also: "Umbau statt Abriss – neue Pläne für Technisches Rathaus in Frankfurt", in *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung (FAZ)*, November 8 2004 (url: www.faz.net/aktuell/rhein-main/frankfurt/stadtplanung-umbau-statt-abriss-neue-plaene-fuer-technisches-rathaus-in-frankfurt-1194573.html, last access on Jan 6 2023).

¹⁶ Göpfert, *op. cit.*, p. 131–32, additional reconstructions of *Klein-Nürnberg* and *Alter Esslinger*.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 132: other members of the *Gestaltungsbeirat*: Arno Lederer (who built the extension to the Historische Museum in 2008 replacing a brutalist building on the South end of the Römerberg Square from 1973), Fritz Neumeyer (who played a significant role for *critical reconstruction* in Berlin in the 1980s and 1990s) and Petra Kahlfeldt (who is currently *Senatsbaudirektorin* in Berlin favoring reconstruction, since 2021) as well as Björn Wissenbach (a Frankfurt local historian and city guide).

¹⁸ Cf. Christoph Mäckler, Deutsches Institut für Stadtbaukunst (eds.), *Handbuch der Stadtbaukunst. Anleitung zum Entwurf von städtischen Räumen*, 4 volumes, Berlin, Jovis, 2022.

Waage, Rotes Haus and houses Hinter dem Lämmchen)¹⁹ combined with a public building hovering over the archaeological zone north of the *Schirm*. In fall 2010, in a second step, the Dom-Römer GmbH held an architecture competition for the façades of the New Old Town, since the reconstruction of the urban footprint of the 35 plots on the 7'700 sqm site was already a political given. The public ownership of the parcel asked for lease-hold contracts through the city owned Dom-Römer GmbH. In March 2011 the city announced the winners amongst the 56 architecture offices – 38 offices participated after prequalification, 18 were directly invited – that provided plans for altogether eight historical truthful reconstructed façades based on documentation²⁰ and some pieces of *spolia*, whereas 27 buildings were historic interpretations (so called *Nachempfindungen*). The jury divided the offices into groups for individual plots (between three to five competing for each) and applied a rigid design code provided for by the Gestaltungsbeirat chaired by Christoph Mäckler who functioned also as jury president. The code asked architects to design houses with basalt base, red sand stone façade, slate pitched roof, vertical windows with maximum opening to wall ratio based on historic precedent.²¹ In order to judge the combinatory ensemble character of the various designs with each other, the jury employed façade images mounted on magnets to compare the street view *en bloc*. And despite receiving first rank designs for new interpretations seven more private clients opted for *historical truthful reconstructions*, bringing their total number up to 15.²² This added to the already five existing reconstructions of the 1980s on the Römerberg square east side, which edges directly to the New Old Town.

Once the façade designs were decided upon and the condominiums sold to affluent private clients, construction started in April 2010 with taking down the *Technische Rathaus*. Mayor Petra Roth laid the foundation stone in 2012 and construction continued until May 2018 with the Frankfurt office Schneider-Schumacher as coordinating project architects for the entire site, who supervised both historical truthful reconstructions with specialized crafts (stone, timber, stucco) and new interpretations as well as the contemporary reinforced concrete structure behind these façades. This was no small feat since all the 35 houses had to be erected on top of the pre-existing parking garage and metro station, which made a comprehensive transfer sub-structure necessary to mediate between the rational grid of parking garage columns below ground and the reconstructed medieval footprint above.²³ Ironically, here the legal construct of the city-owned Dom-Römer GmbH allowed for up to contemporary code realization of floorplans within a hyper-dense, pre-modern urban envelope of attached party-wall houses and narrow alleys which should have been suppressed and replaced by exactly these modern building codes: since modernist planners had considered these housing conditions of historic old town as too dense, too dark, and non-hygienic.

The house *Goldene Waage* (from 1619) was amongst the first four houses decided for historic reconstruction in 2007, since it had been already part of the Frankfurt municipal museum of history and itself a collection item for the historic Old Town, when it was purchased by the city in 1898 to exhibit itself as well as a collection of translocated interiors. However, the *historical truthful reconstruction* of the façade today shows the red exposed timber frame structure that was uncovered underneath

¹⁹ Moritz Röger, "Die Wettbewerbe Stadthaus Am Markt, 2009 und Dom-Römer-Areal, 2011", in Sturm, Schmal, *op. cit.*, p. 140–145, here: 141.

²⁰ Vgl. DW Dreyse, Volkmar Hepp, Björn Wissenbach, Peter Bierling, *Dokumentation Altstadt*, Frankfurt am Main, 2006; *Haus Rebstock* Braubachstraße 19 and Braubachstrasse 21.

²¹ Röger, *op. cit.*, p. 144.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 144; *Zur Flechte* Markt 20, *Goldene Schere* Markt 22, *Eichhorn* Markt 24, *Schlegel* Markt 26, *Grüne Linde* Markt 13, *Altes Rotes Haus* Markt 15, *Würzgarten* Markt 28.

²³ Till Schneider, Joachim Wendt, "Wie baut man eine Altstadt im 21. Jahrhundert?" in Sturm, Schmal, *op. cit.*, p. 150–155, here: 154; technically the entire reconstruction was treated as a single permission for one building addition to the existing parking garage located on parcel 199/41 – and not as individual houses.



Fig. 5: Hühnermarkt of the *New Old Town Frankfurt*, destroyed during WWII, site of the former Technisches Rathaus (1974–2010), historical truthful reconstruction 2010–18, photo: author, 2023.

the stucco cladding during restoration by Franz von Hoven in 1898. Today’s reconstructed *Goldene Waage* replicates the turn of the century gothic version of the building. (Fig. 5)

Looking at the texts that accompany the reconstruction of Frankfurt’s New Old Town, themes mentioned by former mayor Roth and other protagonists revolve around “identity” and “belonging” (*Heimat*), “truthful history” and “collective memory”, “heart of the city” and “citizens’ engagement” (preservationist group *Freunde Frankfurts* aka *Bund tätiger Altstadtfreunde*), “city image” (aesthetic considerations) and city marketing (tourist attraction) with the latter being highly successful. Yet both the official documents and the applauding critics remain astonishingly silent about the historic circumstances that led to the destruction of Frankfurt’s old town: the fires caused

by allied bombing during World War II and its originating context, the Nazi regime, the German war of aggression, and the Shoah. While the official discourses around the New Old Town claim to address history, memory and truth, the wish to correct wrong decisions of the past, it is exactly the historical cause and effect that remains under-exposed. Instead both the politicians and the press refer to the destruction of WWII with metaphors of natural catastrophe (“rain of bombs”, “firestorm”) and take on a victims’ role (“urban repair”, “healing”). This stands in contrast to the first phase of the postwar rebuilding effort, when politicians, architects and the press thought of reconstructions as memorials of a history lost (“never again”).²⁴ In addition, while at that time modern architecture and urban design promised a new start for a war-torn society, today the distrust amongst politicians and the

²⁴ Which itself is a narrative that has been employed both during WWII by Nazi propaganda – leaving the ruins as memorial for so-called war atrocities committed by the allies – as well as after the war by modernist architects, planners and politicians to remember the German fall from civilization, see: Voigt, in Sturm, Schmal, *op. cit.*, p. 70–71; there is no question, however, that the German air force began with the war against culture in 1942 by specifically targeting British cultural artifacts (so called *Beadeker Blitz*).

larger public against contemporary design is widespread beyond conservative and right wing circles – and against pluralistic urban culture in general.

Beyond ahistorical and homogenizing tendencies, the project of the New Old Town can also be framed as class politics, since the conservative political majority spent public funding for premium condominiums and high-end retail clad in historic façades – while the historic old town in the late 19th century had been low class housing mixed with craft workshops. The 53 condominiums in 35 houses with sizes between 35 to 190 sqm went for sale in 2012 for 10,000 €/sqm and above. Still, they were only able to cover about half of the overall costs of 200 Mio € (from a first estimate in 2007 of 77 Mio €), which left the city of Frankfurt with a deficit of more than 100 Mio €. ²⁵ The costs kept rising for various reasons: first the repurchase and destruction of the *Technische Rathaus* (asbestos), then structural challenges for integrating the pre-existing metro and underground parking garage, and finally for the reconstruction itself, where the Dom-Römer GmbH and its architects revived premodern materials and crafts (sand stone portals, timber framing, ornaments, slate siding, etc.) while the internal structure was executed with contemporary methods.

frames for urban experiences such as Christmas markets, wedding images or vacation snapshots similar to theme parks or festivals. But rather than alluding to a postmodern indulgence into copy and fake of popular consumer culture in the footsteps of Venturi, Scott Brown, Izenour and their famous *Learning from Las Vegas* ²⁶ nor providing a critical reading of the disappearance of urban public space into the simulacrum of theme parks and themed cities, as Michael Sorkin did, ²⁷ the author would like to conclude with expanding a thought suggested by the German architectural historian Winfried Nerdinger, who referred to contemporary reconstructions as “regional romanticism, invented history and tradition” similar to the dirndl dress in Bavaria, as a form of “pseudo-folklore”. ²⁸

And if one dares to compare the Frankfurt’s New Old Town to the dirndl dress, there are surprising parallels opening up: both originate from reinvented traditions of the 19th century urban elites and middle classes. The urban bourgeoisie sported the dirndl for their trips to the countryside respectively for participating in folklore festivals such as the Munich Oktoberfest or the Cannstatter Wasn. Originally designed by the Jewish brothers Moritz und Julius Wallach for the Volkskunsthause (Folk Art House) in Munich in 1890, the dirndl was quickly mistaken for the typical traditional folk clothing of South German women. ²⁹ The Wallach brothers took some historic inspirations from traditional rural outfits of female servants and unmarried young women, yet the design of tight top, deep neckline (décolleté), and wide base is not typical for folk costumes, but originates rather in aristocratic female dresses of the 18th century. And while real historic traditional garments of the South German peasants and village folk denoted strictly class, occupation (craft/guild), religious denomination, marriage status,

Reconstructions: modern, critical, ironic? – Yodel in Frankfurt’s New Old Town

Ironic or cynical – the interpretation depends on either the intentions of the client, of the planner, of the public, or of the individual. Neither locals nor visitors take the New Old Town serious as authentic historical environment. And rightfully so – since one understands that these are contemporary buildings clad in pseudo-historical attire, constructed history to be enjoyed as backdrop images and

²⁵ Stadt Frankfurt am Main Revisionsamt (ed.): “Schlussberichte über die Prüfung der Jahresabschlüsse 2020”, revised 29.07.2022. While the municipality claims to have no funding for providing much needed public housing and below market rate apartments, of which many were abolished through privatization in the 1990s and 2000s, it was able to fund this project at all cost and even despite another political change in 2012 to social democrats.

²⁶ Robert Venturi, Denise Scott Brown, Steven Izenour, *Learning from Las Vegas*, Cambridge, MA, MIT Press, 1972, revised edition 1977.

²⁷ Michael Sorkin, *Variations on a Theme Park. The New American City and the End of Public Space*, New York, Noonday Press, 1992.

²⁸ Röger, *op. cit.*, here p. 103, cf. Winfried Nerdinger, “Die Erfindung der Tradition in der deutschen Architektur 1870–1914”, in *idem* (ed.), *Geschichte Macht Architektur*, Munich, Prestel, 2012, p. 69–79.

²⁹ Eric Hobsbawm, “Inventing Traditions”, in Eric Hobsbawm, Terence Ranger (ed.), *The Invention of Tradition*, Cambridge University Press, 1983, p. 1–14, here: p. 1.

ethnic group, etc.,³⁰ the dirndl was worn as leisure attire by urban women irrespective of these categories. In the beginning, the dirndl and its male version, the *Lederhosen* or short leather pants, were relatively uncommon for general visitors of folk festivals and were worn primarily by members of folk societies, folk singers, and waitresses. Yet during the 1970s things began to change, parallel to the rediscovery of urban heritage and old towns:³¹ folk festivals, folk music and folk societies gained momentum. Since the 1990s the dirndl is not reserved for traditionalists and older generations any longer, but has re-invented itself as fashionable outfit across all groups who want to participate in folk events such as Oktoberfest, which in itself rebranded as largest folk festival of the world with uncounted local offspring in cities, towns and villages across continents. Today, folk outfits have taken over the scene to such an extent, that young urbanites and tourists dress up in expensive dirndl and lederhosen attire in order to participate *en mass* in rituals of collective eating, drinking and singing of this pseudo-folklore tradition.

If one reads the pseudo-traditional costume of the *Tracht* as equivalent to the *historical truthful reconstruction* of Frankfurt's New Old Town, they point to the same originating contexts of the late 19th century: historicist regionalism and national romantic folklore, which continued into the 20th century (Altstadtfreunde founded 1922). And these historic developments run parallel – and not counter – to modern urban culture, especially in Frankfurt where the Neues Frankfurt of modernist worker settlements and campaigns for restoring the old town take place simultaneously. While (invented) folk traditions were instrumentalized during the Nazi period, from which they recovered only slowly in postwar German society, the period of the 1970s marks a transitional moment. Today dirndl and lederhosen have been

taken up as country chic by a diverse urban youth with a tongue-and-cheek attitude, similarly to the European Song Contest, costume parties or open-air festivals. Similarly, one can find the vastly international young urban professionals from Frankfurt's financial sector gathering around the reconstructed *Hühnermarkt* of the New Old Town for aperitif, micro-brews, “traditional” pastry, craft coffee or luxury shops together with visitors from near (Hessen) and far (China), enjoying the architectural backdrop of reinvented traditions. As with digital reconstructions of historic urban environments for the gaming industry (such as *Assassin's Creed*) the dirndl and the New Old Town are cherished for their effect, not for their authenticity. While some nerds might analyze and discuss historic details, the technique behind the effect, and the plausibility of these inventions – the general public understood that history is here to be consumed. As Boltanski and Esquerre have shown, history is our best-selling commodity – even if it is completely new.³²

³⁰ Monika Ständecke, *Dirndl, Truhen, Edelweiss: die Volkskunst der Brüder Wallach*, Munich, Jüdisches Museum, 2007 (exhibition catalogue at the Jewish Museum Munich June 27–Dec 30 2007).

³¹ European Heritage Year 1975, cf. the aforementioned founding director of the German Architecture Museum Frankfurt DAM Heinrich Klotz positioned himself as preservationist while still residing in Marbach, see: Heinrich Klotz, Roland Günter, Gottfried Kiesow (eds.), *Keine Zukunft für unsere Vergangenheit? Denkmalschutz und Stadtzerstörung*, Giessen, Schmitz, 1975.

³² Luc Boltanski, Arnaud Esquerre, *Enrichissement. Une critique de la marchandise*, Paris, Gallimard, 2017, in English: idem, *Enrichment. A Critique of Commodities*, Cambridge, Polity Press, 2020.

Résumé

La vieille ville historique de Francfort a été détruite pendant la Seconde Guerre mondiale, en particulier lors des deux raids aériens des 18 et 22 mars 1944. Les premiers appels à la reconstruction ont immédiatement suivi, ce qui s'est manifesté en 1946 par un projet de reconstruction de l'église Paulskirche en tant que site historique du premier parlement national allemand de 1848 (1947–48). Une reconstruction historiquement fidèle de la maison natale de Goethe a suivi (1949–51), ainsi que des projets de reconstruction de bâtiments monumentaux importants, tels que l'hôtel de ville (*Römer*), alors que le magistrat a voté contre une reconstruction à grande échelle de la vieille ville en faveur d'une reconstruction moderne du centre ville.

Alors que les efforts de déblaiement du centre historique de Francfort ont duré jusque dans les années 1960, une deuxième phase de reconstruction a débuté dans les années 1970. D'après débats entre les protagonistes du modernisme, de l'interprétation historique et de la reconstruction à l'identique se sont poursuivis, mais les marées politiques ont changé sous l'impression du mouvement du patrimoine culturel et de la critique post-moderne et se sont matérialisées par la reconstruction de sept façades historiques à ossature en bois sur le côté est de la place Römerberg (1980–83).

Au cours de la première décennie du XXI^e siècle, une troisième phase de reconstruction a débuté avec ce que l'on appelle la *nouvelle vieille ville* ou le *projet Dom-Römer*: à la suite d'un vote en 2007, la ville a démolit l'hôtel de ville technique brutaliste en 2010 en faveur de la reconstruction d'une partie de la vieille ville d'avant-guerre entre l'hôtel de ville (*Römer*) et la cathédrale impériale Saint-Barthélemy (*Dom*). Une fois dégagé, le site de 7000 m² a permis la construction de 35 bâtiments, dont 15 ont été désignés pour une reconstruction à l'identique des façades, tandis que les autres étaient des interprétations historiques basées sur les bâtiments à ossature en bois d'avant-guerre, les places et les ruelles (construits entre 2012 et 18). Cette phase se distingue par un mélange de reconstructions à l'identique et d'interprétations historiques, toutes basées sur des concours d'architecture dans le cadre d'un plan directeur urbain et d'un code de conception stricts. Le nom – «nouvelle vieille ville» – indique déjà la nature paradoxale de cette reconstruction située au-dessus d'une ligne de métro et d'un parking. Par rapport aux phases précédentes de reconstruction moderne et critique, cette phase peut être qualifiée d'ironique: les musées, magasins, restaurants et cafés haut de gamme offrent une authenticité ironique d'expériences artisanales destinées aux touristes internationaux et aux Francfortois, à l'instar de la mise en scène du dirndl et des pantalons de cuir que les jeunes citadins arborent pour participer à l'Oktoberfest.

Cet article aborde la *nouvelle vieille ville* de Francfort non pas d'un point de vue purement historique, ni en reprenant le débat bien ancré entre *modernistes* et *traditionalistes* (Philipp Oswalt, Stephan Trüby vs. Matthias Alexander, Dankwart Guratzsch), mais en proposant d'interpréter les reconstructions d'après-guerre de Francfort par phases, en retraçant le changement vers une attitude paradoxale de traditions inventées.

Zusammenfassung

Die historische Altstadt Frankfurts wurde während des Zweiten Weltkriegs zerstört, insbesondere bei zwei Luftangriffen am 18. und 22. März 1944. Unmittelbar danach gab es erste Bestrebungen zum Wiederaufbau, die sich 1946 in einem Projekt zum Wiederaufbau der Paulskirche als dem historischen Ort des ersten deutschen Nationalparlaments von 1848 (1947–48) manifestierten. Es folgten eine historisch getreue Rekonstruktion des Geburtshauses von Johann Wolfgang v. Goethe (1949–51) sowie Wiederaufbauprojekte für bedeutende Monumentalbauten wie das Rathaus (*Römer*), wobei sich der Magistrat gegen eine großflächige Rekonstruktion der Altstadt und für einen modernen Wiederaufbau der Innenstadt aussprach.

Während die Enttrümmerung der Frankfurter Altstadt bis in die 1960er Jahre andauerte, begann in den 1970er Jahren eine zweite Phase des Wiederaufbaus. Die erbitterten Debatten zwischen den Protagonisten der Moderne, der historischen Interpretation und der identischen Rekonstruktion hielten an, doch unter dem Eindruck der Denkmalschutzbewegung und der postmodernen Kritik wendete sich das Blatt und mündete in der Rekonstruktion von sieben historischen Fachwerkfassaden an der Ostseite des Römerbergs (1980–83).

Im ersten Jahrzehnt des 21. Jahrhunderts begann mit dem sogenannten *Dom-Römer-Projekt* eine dritte Phase des Wiederaufbaus: Nach einer Abstimmung im Jahr 2007 ließ die Stadt 2010 das brutalistische Technische Rathaus abreißen, um einen Teil der Vorkriegs-Altstadt zwischen dem Rathaus (*Römer*) und dem Kaiserdom St. Bartholomäus (*Dom*) zu rekonstruieren. Auf dem 7000 Quadratmeter großen Grundstück konnten 35 Gebäude errichtet werden, von denen 15 für eine identische Fassadenrekonstruktion vorgesehen waren, während die übrigen als historische Interpretationen auf der Grundlage der Fachwerkgebäude, Plätze und Gassen aus der Vorkriegszeit errichtet wurden (2012–18). Diese Phase zeichnet sich durch eine Mischung aus originalgetreuen Rekonstruktionen und historischen Interpretationen aus, die alle auf Architekturwettbewerben im Rahmen eines straffen städtebaulichen Masterplans und Designcodes basieren. Schon der Name – „Neue Altstadt“ – weist auf den paradoxen Charakter dieser Rekonstruktion hin, die über einer U-Bahn-Linie und einem Parkhaus steht. Im Vergleich zu den früheren Phasen des modernen und kritischen Wiederaufbaus kann diese Phase als ironisch bezeichnet werden: Die edlen Museen, Geschäfte, Restaurants und Cafés bieten eine ironische Authentizität handwerklicher Erlebnisse, die auf globale Touristen und Einheimische gleichermaßen zugeschnitten sind, ähnlich wie die inszenierte Tracht aus Dirndl und Lederhose, die junge Städter tragen, um am Münchner Oktoberfest teilzunehmen.

Dieser Artikel nähert sich Frankfurts *Neuer Altstadt* nicht von einem rein historischen Standpunkt aus, und er probt auch nicht die festgefahrene Debatte zwischen *Modernisten* und *Traditionalisten* (Philipp Oswalt, Stephan Trüby vs. Matthias Alexander, Dankwart Guratzsch), sondern schlägt vor, Frankfurts Rekonstruktionen der Nachkriegszeit schrittweise zu interpretieren und den Wandel hin zu einer paradoxen Haltung der erfundenen Traditionen nachzuzeichnen.

Mazen Haïdar

LESSONS FROM POST-TRAUMATIC RECONSTRUCTION IN BEIRUT

From a Tabula Rasa to Reclaiming the Lost City

Introduction

Starting from a reflection on the meanings of trauma, this contribution will explore the links between the reception of destruction by Lebanese citizens and their post-war recovery and reconstruction practices. Using the example of the Lebanese war (1975–1990) as a starting point, we will then approach the issue of semantic transformations of the scars of war within the built environment of Beirut. Omnipresent by the end of the armed conflict in the early 1990s, today these traces are scattered throughout the city. Their disappearance, which may symbolize a certain desire to come to terms with past trauma, is also due to a constant process of urban regeneration that leaves little room for any reminder of that violent past. Once we have explored the reception by residents of these war traces on the built environment across different periods, we will examine the particular case of the rehabilitation of the Beirut National Museum more closely. Located on the former demarcation line, this example will be analysed as a representative model of the integration of cultural heritage into post-trauma recovery.

How perceptions of the conflict have evolved over time

The conservation of built heritage impacted by armed conflict embraces broader issues of the perception of time, the nature of the conflict, and the place it occupies in society's collective memory. While exploring a citizens' different narratives of a traumatic period, war history can hardly be limited to the beginning and end of hostilities. The

construction of memory of an armed conflict, particularly an internal one, will likely cover the entire period from the first manifestations of violence to a possible peace agreement, passing through all the various stages of its evolution on the ground.

The process of the acceptance or rejection by Lebanese society of war scars, whether on ordinary or iconic buildings, deserves to be explored at each different epoch and not merely through the final moment of reconstruction. Regardless of the strategy adopted in rehabilitation, post-war projects can be intrinsically related back to the origins of what can be designated as 'evil'. In other terms, the approach behind operations on buildings that bear witness to armed conflict can be analysed in relation to the vicissitudes of war and not just the so-called period of peace and rebirth.

When evil is talked of as a series of violent acts, as when Lebanese people use the designation 'events' to refer to the 1975–1977 period, each moment seems to trigger a strong separate threat to stability. One or more events can invade normality by destabilising and contaminating it. Evil violates daily life and becomes a black spot that must be eradicated if trauma is to be overcome. The term 'event' retains the meaning of threat. It is an evil that hurts but can nonetheless be cured.

Throughout the long Lebanese war, the perception of explosive traces evolved to the rhythm of the conflict. Erased from interior spaces or those easily accessible to users, they are often left on the exterior of buildings where repair operations seem less urgent or even superfluous



↑ Fig. 1: A three-story building partially rehabilitated in the Parc district close to the former demarcation line, photo: author, 2019.

(Fig. 1). An archaeological reading of Beirut's urban fabric reveals that the trace of an explosion is only dealt with when it constitutes a risk or a major inconvenience to the interior space.¹ Well before any intervention on damage takes place, questions arise regarding the need for any such operation and the practical method to be adopted. Questions may also be asked by tenants about the validity of the moment chosen for the intervention. Between superficial scars and large breaches caused by explosions, preference is given to sealing the larger ones. Rather than plastering concrete

→ Fig. 2: The Beirut National Museum during the war, source: Farès el-Dahdah.

blocks, priority in rehabilitation works is given to replacing defective carpentry. Between exterior surfaces and living space, priority is given to the interior. Rear façades may be treated in a much more utilitarian way and with less or no concern for restoring their original condition. While works may be limited to securing the interior and hastily rebuilding damaged elements, they also pave the way to modifications. These range from the slight, like changing the original wall covering, to the invasive, like creating new openings or blocking up original doors and windows.

¹ Mazen Haïdar, "Les pratiques de réparation spontanées durant la guerre du Liban: vers un nouveau récit du bâti de la ville de Beyrouth" in Alice Sotgia, Federica Gatta (eds.), *L'Habiter comme patrimoine*, Marseille: Imbernon, 2020, 58–71.

Deprived from any unified repair works at the large scale of the building, secondary façades become an open field for transformations of all types carried out directly by the residents. As some unrestored buildings still show today, each form of war impact is treated according to how exposed it is to neighbours and passers-by. Whatever the extent of the damage, rehabilitation projects seem to focus mainly on the most visible surfaces of buildings. Although dictated by a limited budget, such operations tend to be well received initially because of the positive change they bring after a long period of decay. As the positive impact of the initial repair attempt diminishes, however, attention is increasingly drawn towards the other visible traces of unattempted repairs, pending since the end of the war.

The war as seen through reconstruction and conservation projects

Our exploration of the reception of the war and its impact is concerned both with tangible and intangible traces in equal measure. Given the variety of these effects, reconstruction and restoration initiatives on ordinary and exceptional buildings also vary. Moreover, the actors involved in an armed conflict are as essential as an element for the writing process in war historiography as the outbreak, duration, and ending of the conflict itself. While the general tendency is to consider reconstruction a key moment in the narrative of a city at war, it seems as crucial to consider in a historical reading how the conflict has been perceived by citizens.



Questions that arise in post-war reconstruction projects generally, and perhaps logically, might take an offensive stance towards the harm inflicted on a building. Dealing with a modern or historical site affected by conflict usually start from the goal of ‘transmission to future generations’, to quote the international charter for the Conservation and Restoration for Monuments and sites.² Other intellectual reflections point out the potential value of war scars for restructuring new perceptions of architectural heritage. Often aimed at reclaiming iconic buildings, there is a tendency in post-war projects to sublimate the wound by conserving and highlighting the state of ruin. There seems to be some difficulty establishing a more balanced vision where war scars are neither systematically eradicated nor intentionally exalted.

In their essay ‘La restauration des architectures monumentales dans l’après-guerre entre conservation, transformation et effacement des traces du passé’, Francesco Mazzucchelli and Maria Rosaria Vitale describe restoration as a form of rewriting memory and in particular post-war restoration as a revision of the trauma dictated by the exceptional character and emotional impact of an event.³ The evils of war seem to undergo a rationalisation process that puts at stake several parameters, including the duration of the conflict, the possibility of identifying and naming or not the various adversaries, the fate of the parties at the end of the conflict period, demographic trends, and changes in the social structure of a given place, etc.

Any constructive interpretation of trauma requires a certain distance from the tragic event. This second scenario shows historical maturity in allocating value to the preservation of the disturbing memory within any given reconstruction attempt. Instead of simulating rebirth through a return to the past, this approach recognises evil as part of a bygone period that is unlikely

to re-emerge. No longer restricted to astonishment, the tragic event takes on qualities that aim at reassembling history: tragedy becomes synonymous with ‘cooperative negativity’. The absence of an element, be it a column or a wall, is then inscribed as the result of an atrocious event and suggestive of new practices of use and no longer as a symbol of an atrocity that recalls loss. A breach in a wall can then be perceived as part of a transformation process similar to any other change due to time or weathering, such as patina or chromatic alteration.

According to this logic, traces left by armed conflict on a building do not take their value only from the memory they represent but also from their durability in peacetime. In other words, the capacity of the trace to stimulate curiosity or interest among visitors to and users of a building does not depend on the importance of the historical moment that generated it: the simple presence of this sign within a new temporality places it as a real irruption of the past into the present. Breaches in walls or traces of fire on a monument or a residential building become relevant symbols: they narrate not only the explosive moment but also repair practices and the widespread attitude of neglect for external surfaces. The different layers on the façade of a building enrich an official narrative that is generally reduced to two moments, ‘war’ and ‘reconstruction’.

The Beirut National Museum: a memory in the making

The symbolic charge of the Beirut National Museum places it among the most eloquent symbols of Lebanon’s war heritage. In our reflections on the relationship between people and a traumatic past, we may find in this monument a supporting document that is worth exploring in all its various facets. Built under the French mandate, the National Museum symbolised official history through

² International Charter for the Conservation and Restoration for Monuments and sites (1964), IInd International Congress of Architects and Technicians of Historic Monuments, Venice.

³ Mazzucchelli F. and Vitale M., “La restauration des architectures monumentales dans l’après-guerre entre conservation, transformation et effacement des traces du passé”. In Alonso Caraballés, J. and D. Wells, (eds.), *Traces, Empreintes, Monuments, quels lieux pour quelles mémoires? De 1989 à nos jours*, Limoges 2014: Pulim, p. 13–39.



Fig. 3: Main exhibition hall at the Beirut National Museum during the war, showing artefacts protected by reinforced concrete formwork, source: Farès el-Dahdah.

its archaeological collection.⁴ Between 1975 and 1990, the building was immersed in daily ‘events’, becoming the backdrop for clashes between various armed factions (Fig. 2). Located on the former demarcation line and the main checkpoint between the eastern and western parts of the city, the building and its façades have long borne witness to the civil war. Disfigured by traces of shrapnel and gunfire, it became a symbol of segregation, given its location on the front line. Established during the first battles, the long north-south axis included a number of crossing points between eastern and western Beirut, the best known of which was the ‘Museum alley’ or checkpoint. The sequence of hostilities on the front line contributed to the development of a new definition of

the museum. From one of the tourist hubs of the capital, the site assumed a less attractive image, associated with violence and daily aggression.

The area’s accessibility, unlike the devastated and completely no-go city-centre, and the visual experience of passers-by as they crossed the borderline played on the demystification of the meaning of the museum itself. The monumental building, heavily hit by bullets and missiles of all calibres, seems to have lost its supremacy in the Lebanese imagination, as it was put on the same level as any other residential building affected by the fighting.

The confrontation between traumatic traces, to be removed, and negative testimony, acceptable in a certain normality, is amply discussed in French philosopher

⁴ Beirut National Museum, built between 1930 and 1937, by the Lebanese architect Antoine Nahas and French Pierre Leprince Ringuet. Considered the first public museum in Lebanon, its mission was to house the finds from the various archaeological digs that took place during the French mandate (1918–1943).

François Jullien's *Du mal/Du négatif*. In his analysis of the subtle gap between the two terms, Jullien addresses the question of the constructive role of what would commonly be designated as evil. The negative, unlike evil, he says, reveals unexplored and even unimagined resources:

*We have to rethink today, on a new basis, the cooperating destiny of the negative; in particular, to distinguish between what is destructive and doesn't produce anything (which we will call evil to begin with) and what would be an activating, mobilizing negative, as it puts under tension, promotes, innovates, intensifies.*⁵

According to Jullien, there are various forms of evil, which can be distinguished into destructive and unproductive harm, while the negative can play a role in improving the general system. Accepting evil gives it a new definition that evolves from the sense of a sharp break into the sense of a discontinuity. Paradoxically, this very discontinuity emphasises the validity of what is originally thought of as positive. This distinction directs us towards that indissociable duo, 'war' and 'peace'. But it also reminds us of the different designations of the Lebanese conflict, as 'events' and 'war'. In general, evil would be embodied in a narrative of 'war', while a 'series of incidents or events' represents, for its part, a less invasive and perhaps more cooperative situation. But is integrating violence into normality a sign of evil in itself?

Post-war conservation of the Beirut National Museum depicts the evolution of the relation between the Lebanese and their past allegorically. At the end of the war, in October 1990, the museum was severely damaged, like the entire area surrounding it on the demarcation line. Hit directly during countless battles by weapons of different calibres, the building also bore the traces of the occupation of different exhibition spaces by armed factions: countless

graffiti, traces of fire in some corners, and breaches in the walls made by snipers to let them shoot at the western part of the city. The interior was the object of protective interventions during the war carried out by the General Directorate of Antiquities, led by curator Maurice Chehab (Fig. 3). Protected in concrete formwork from 1982,⁶ the colossal sculptures on the ground floor survived repeated looting and fighting.

Before any repair work was begun on the building, an exhibition entitled 'Uprooted Heritage'⁷ was held in the interior space of the museum, in November 1993, on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the country's independence. The event was intended as a last reminder to the Lebanese population of the devastation of war before it would be erased completely. Transformed into a memorial of the long civil war, the space conveyed a clear message: the National Museum publicly acknowledges the harm of the armed conflict but at the same time projects itself into the future by symbolising a new image of unity and solidarity among Lebanese. Closed for nearly 18 years, the museum opened its doors to the public for this temporary event. Indirectly, the state of desolation of the building was attributed to the protagonists of the conflict, whose graffiti remained clearly visible. On the other hand, the scenography conveyed the final burial of the war under the illuminated concrete formworks. After this powerful adoption of tragic history, the museum was later marked by a radically restorative and innovative intervention⁸ that left little space for war scars. In contrast to the approach of the exhibition, the museum conservation project did not aim to preserve any signs of the Lebanese war: The façades were fully restored to their original state and the gaps caused by shrapnel filled in systematically (Fig. 4, 5). Even though

⁵ F. Jullien, *Du mal / du négatif*, Paris 2004, Le Seuil, p. 19. Translated from the French by Mazen Haïdar.

⁶ Protected by sandbags and metal barrels in 1976, sarcophagi and large sculptures on the ground floor of Beirut National Museum were later totally covered in 1982 by reinforced concrete formwork. This important measure was a crucial protective action that saved a large part of the collection from destruction and looting.

⁷ 'Uprooted Heritage', Beirut National Museum, 1993 organized by Anne-Marie Afeich, Amélie Beyhum, Farès el-Dahdah, Claude Doumet-Serhal, Suzy Hakimian, Carole Sabbag, Helen Sader, Helga Seeden, and Mona Yazbeck.

⁸ The restoration and rehabilitation of the interiors of the Museum were carried out by the office of the French architect Jean-Michel Wilmotte. For more information on the project, see Wilmotte, J.M. (1997). *Projet: Musée National de Beyrouth. National Museum News*, 6ème numéro (1997).

temporary – it lasted only ten days – the ‘Uprooted Heritage’ exhibition not only offered a constructive interpretation of the trauma but also denounced the systematic erasure of memory of it. The preservation of traces of the 1975–1990 war in peacetime – in 1993 – reflected a need for a gradual restoration project for this heritage building, where war scars, even if destined to disappear in future, would first be situated as an object of collective memory work. In an article entitled ‘Redefining the Lebanese Past’, the anthropologist Lina Gebrael Tahan pays tribute to the exhibition, while disapproving of the museum’s strategy of ‘renewal’:

It should be noted at this point that the only time the museum was authentically represented to the public was during the exhibition ‘Uprooted heritage’. [...] Today the name ‘Mathaf’ has been vigorously and obsessively cleaned from its twenty years of connotation: it appears clean, glossy, serene, imperishable and empty, without story to tell.⁹



↑ Fig. 4: The Museum's main façade in 1996, during rehabilitation works, source: Farès el-Dahdah.

↓ Fig. 5: A recent view of the main façade of the Beirut National Museum, photo: author, 2019.





↑ Fig. 6: Barakat building, known today as 'Beit Beirut', photo: author, 2017.

↓ Fig. 7: Beit Beirut, façade detail, photo: author, 2017.



After having embodied Lebanon's official history for so long, the Beirut National Museum became an eloquent expression of the nation's fragilities throughout the conflict. Following post-war rehabilitation work, it has readopted the role of didactic monument of the country's ancient history, not least by erasing the evidence of the tragic chapter of the civil war from its walls. A video documentary played to the museum's visitors does, however, continue to illustrate the tragic history silenced by the post-war restoration project. Through a scene immortalising the moment of the demolition of the reinforced concrete forms and the rebirth of ancient artifacts, the digital medium becomes an essential tool for ensuring continuity and coherence to the site's history.

Conclusion

Analysing the nature of a conflict gives a better understanding of post-trauma narratives and recovery. In the case of the Lebanese war, the long sequence of destruction, segregation, and spontaneous reconstruction initiatives has left a profound mark on people's attitudes toward their built environment. Healing from trauma implies taming negativity and minimising any suffering it has imposed. Reduced to its basic forms, the renaissance of a neighbourhood may be celebrated by the return of a number of its inhabitants or the relaunching of commercial activity, for example.¹⁰

Twentieth century heritage in Beirut has long offered a concrete expression of painful memories. These can have the mission of protecting a tragedy from forgetting and drawing lessons from the past in order to rebuild the future. When it comes to the conservation of built heritage, intervention on war scars depends, first of all, on the temporality within which this operation takes place: the decision to silence scars on a façade, to balance their visual impact by sealing one part and freezing another, or to enhance these signs by magnifying their presence are all different strategies, dictated by distance in time from the tragic event.¹¹ Standing on the demarcation line,

a few hundred meters away from the National Museum, the Barakat building, known today as Beit Beirut, is well placed to illustrate this tendency (Figs. 6 and 7). Launched in 1994 by architect and activist Mona Hallak, the campaign to safeguard the Barakat building (built in two stages, between 1924 and 1932, by architects Youssef Aftimos and Fouad Kozah respectively), not only highlights the architectural value of the building but represents above all a testimony to the lengthy armed conflict. Today, the residential building of the Barakat family, rehabilitated between 2012 and 2014, preserves bunkers built by snipers, graffiti, and the impact of countless explosions. Although perceived by many Lebanese as an important war memorial, the conservation approach, which introduced metallic prostheses to missing elements on the façade, was strongly criticised by several experts as invasive and for exploiting disturbing signs.¹⁰

Away from the context of reconstruction, a statement by philanthropist and writer Georges Boustany (2020) is particularly interesting in this respect. As part of a partnership with the Lebanese French-language newspaper *L'Orient-Le Jour*, Boustany has, since April 2015 (i. e., 40 years since the beginning of the war and for more than six years), been republishing each day the issue of the newspaper from 40 years ago, accompanied with a short summary of his own, on Facebook. Followed by many thousands interested in this important chapter of Lebanese modern history, the page, entitled 'La guerre du Liban au jour le jour', offers an important record of this period in all its aspects, especially some generally left out of war historiography, like urban practices, survival techniques, or leisure and other activities in relatively calm periods. After the 2020 explosion and the impoverishment of the country, Boustany decided to suspend this documentary work:

*The explosion of the port of Beirut and the terrible existential crisis we are going through has just shown that the war in Lebanon did not end in 1990. I am saddened and weary to see that we have lost not only innocent people, hundreds of thousands of homes and what is left of our beautiful heritage, but also our illusions about peace being restored. [...] Telling the story of the day-to-day war in Lebanon should then logically continue over the next forty years at least.*¹¹

In explaining his decision to interrupt his project, the writer mentions a certain weariness in documenting out of the past what is now part of the present. On the other hand, the call of many followers for him to reconsider his decision, just as many neighbourhood initiatives are emerging and strengthening links between residents and where they live, perhaps shows a certain evolution towards 'cooperative negativity'.

⁹ Among post-war reconstruction projects adopting the conflict's traces as an important testimony we can mention the rehabilitation project of the Neues Museum in Berlin led by the architect David Chipperfield between 1997 and 2009. Temporality played an important role in the decision-making process of this emblematic site. More than fifty years after its destruction, this 19th century building has benefited from an intervention that took into account the war's history instead of erasing it.

¹⁰ Among these voices was that of Mona Hallak, an architect and civil society activist, who launched a campaign to protect the historic building in 1994. The rehabilitation project for the Barakat building was led by Lebanese architect Youssef Haïdar.

¹¹ Boustany, G. (2020). La guerre du Liban au jour le jour www.facebook.com/75aujourlejour/posts/2659871204285701 [Accessed on 31st August 2020].

Résumé

Cet article explore les liens entre la réception de la destruction par les Beyrouthins et la reconstruction d'après-guerre. À partir de l'exemple du conflit armé libanais (1975–1990) et de la réhabilitation du Musée national de Beyrouth, situé sur l'ancienne ligne de démarcation, cette contribution aborde le sujet des transformations sémantiques des cicatrices de la guerre dans l'environnement bâti de Beyrouth. Omniprésentes au début des années 1990, ces traces sont aujourd'hui dispersées dans la ville. Si cette disparition peut symboliser un besoin social d'oublier un passé traumatisant, elle semble être causée, plus vraisemblablement, par la régénération constante de la ville qui remodèle son paysage urbain. Comment la perception de ces traces explosives a-t-elle évolué au cours du conflit? Quelle signification avaient-elles avant les opérations de réparation et quelle valeur ont-elles acquise à la fin de la guerre du Liban? Par ailleurs, dans quelle mesure le processus d'écriture de l'histoire de la guerre s'est-il reflété dans la reconstruction du patrimoine monumental? Tout en se concentrant sur l'évolution de la perception du traumatisme dans la reconstruction d'après-guerre, cet article examine comment l'histoire de la guerre peut évoluer du mal vers une négativité coopérative.

Zusammenfassung

In diesem Artikel werden die Zusammenhänge zwischen der Bewältigung der Zerstörung durch die Bewohner Beiruts und dem Wiederaufbau nach dem Krieg untersucht. Am Beispiel des bewaffneten Konflikts im Libanon (1975–1990) und des Wiederaufbaus des Nationalmuseums von Beirut, das sich auf der alten Demarkationslinie befindet, befasst sich dieser Beitrag mit den semantischen Transformationen der Narben des Krieges in der gebauten Umwelt von Beirut. In den frühen 1990er Jahren allgegenwärtig, sind diese Spuren heute über die ganze Stadt verstreut. Auch wenn dieses Verschwinden ein gesellschaftliches Bedürfnis symbolisieren mag, eine traumatische Vergangenheit zu vergessen, so scheint es doch vor allem auf die ständige Erneuerung der Stadt zurückzuführen zu sein, die ihre urbane Landschaft umgestaltet. Wie hat sich die Wahrnehmung dieser explosiven Spuren während des Konflikts entwickelt? Welche Bedeutung hatten sie vor den Instandsetzungsarbeiten und welchen Wert haben sie nach dem Ende des Libanonkriegs erlangt? Inwieweit spiegelt sich der laufende Prozess der Aufarbeitung der Kriegsgeschichte in der Rekonstruktion des monumentalen Erbes wider? Dieser Artikel konzentriert sich auf die sich verändernde Wahrnehmung des Traumas beim Wiederaufbau nach dem Krieg und untersucht, wie sich die Geschichte des Krieges vom Bösen zu einer kooperativen Negativität entwickeln kann.

Olivier Ratouis

RECONSTRUCTION AND THE COLLECTIVE MEMORY

Reflections based on the Experience of Dunkerque

The destruction of a town is clearly deeply damaging to the memory of individuals and social groups. It is not just material items (buildings, physical urban reference points) that are reduced to ruin or destroyed “fully or in part” – to use the French government’s preferred expression to categorise the built environment¹ – but systems of representation and symbolic worlds too. It is reasonable to speculate that architectural spaces (housing, public facilities) and urban spaces have a direct effect on individuals’ memories. Frances Yates had demonstrated this, conversely, when describing “theatres of memory” such as the structure of an abbey, or a district in the town, which create *loci memoriae*.² It is well known that the large-scale destruction of towns and cities during the Second World War was unprecedented and linked to progress in aviation and the threat of total war promulgated to influence public opinion. By destroying streets, buildings and sweeping away urban spaces, war completely changes the relationship that individuals and local groups caught in its wake have with a world now best described as ‘lost’. In short, it would be reductive to consider buildings destroyed by war – considerable as these losses undoubtedly are – as the only aspects of individual and collective heritage to be lost. Social relationships, traces, and even those ‘seemingly trivial’ aspects of everyday life which are valuable to someone are just as much of a loss. The sociologist Maurice Halbwachs (1877–1945) demonstrated the importance of spaces as infrastructure of social continuity.³ He posited that for a

group, spaces help create a comforting image of continuity. Hence, there can be no collective memory without a spatial framework. The sudden destruction of urban spaces is even more brutal because of this.

What place might the reconstruction of cities after the Second World War have taken within the collective memory? How did the Reconstruction come to embed itself in the memory of local communities? The French historiography of the Reconstruction has, for many years, focused on understanding public policies led by political actors on the one hand, and on the history of architectural choices and urban planning doctrines on the other.⁴ In this article, we look at how the disruption caused by successive periods of destruction and reconstruction was received, and how it was interpreted by the people it affected. We also begin, cautiously, to consider the Reconstruction within a longer time frame and in relation to the question of memory. We do not claim to give an account of an investigation into testimonies left by residents who lost their homes and communities. Indeed, it seems that there has never been a campaign to collect such information. Rather, we examine the specific nature of urban reconstruction by focusing on the reconstruction of Dunkerque.

Collective memory and the carcass of the ruined city

How does the memory operate with urban destruction? Here, we are interested in the collective rather than the

¹ See the collections of departmental records on war damage.

² Frances Yates, *The art of memory (Ars memoriae)*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966.

³ Maurice Halbwachs, *La mémoire collective*, Paris, Albin Michel, 1997 [1950].

⁴ Olivier Ratouis, “La hiérarchie des savoirs professionnels dans la Reconstruction des villes françaises. 1940–1960”, in Patrizia Bonifazio, Elena Cogato Lanza (eds.), *Les experts de la reconstruction, Gli esperti della ricostruzione*, Genève, Metispresses, 2009, p. 131–142.

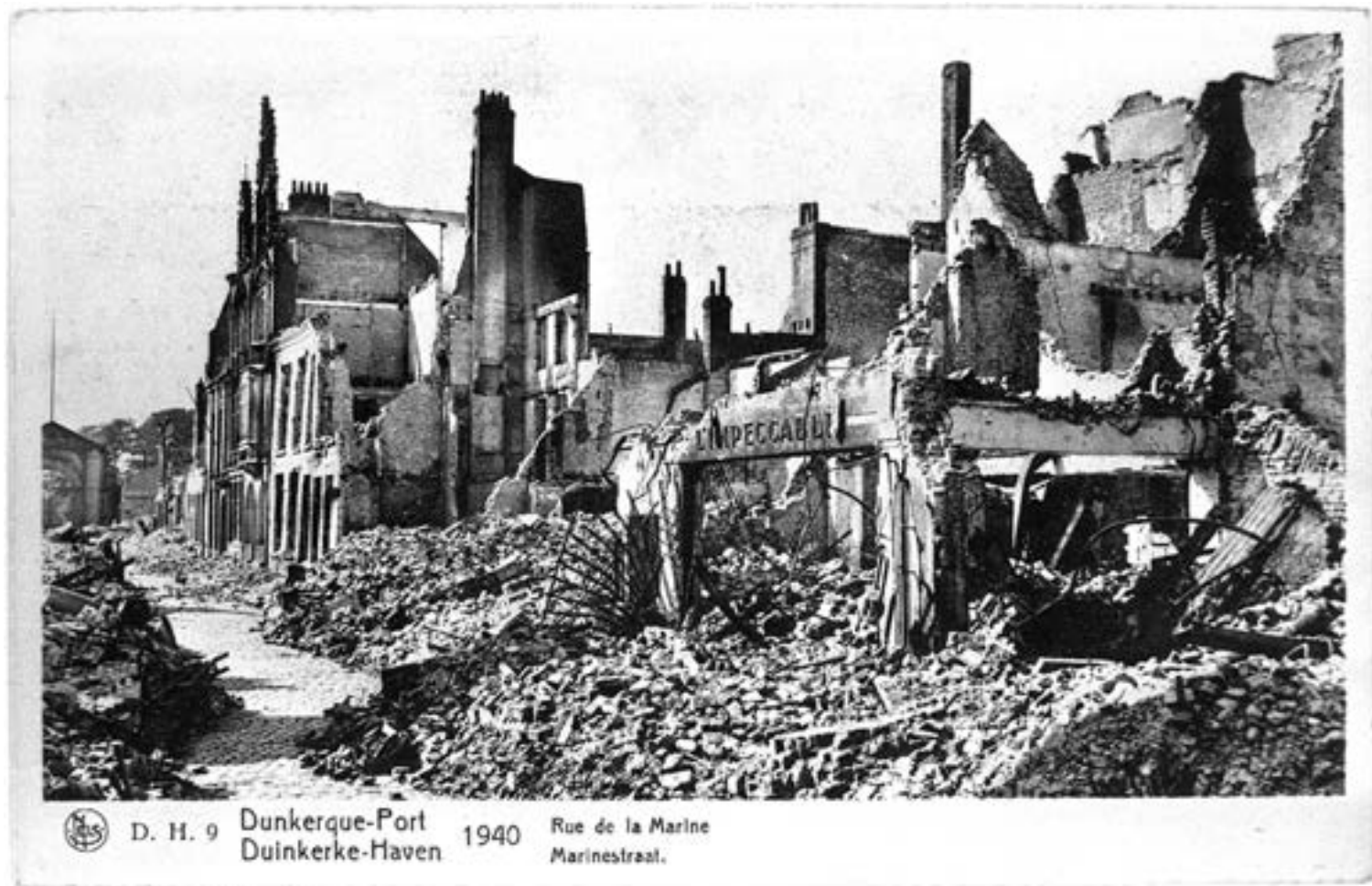


Fig. 1: Dunkerque, Rue de la Marine in ruins. Private collection.

individual memory. The collective memory is more than just the sum of individual memories. Halbwachs shows that personal, individual memories are part of collective memories and the social frameworks behind them.⁵ Anne Raulin goes further, expounding on an “incorporation of the urban framework in the perception of self, to the point at which group identity coincides with its spatial image”.⁶ The widely applied notion of the collective memory is a topic of debate;⁷ it can be understood as a social or shared memory. According to Halbwachs, each group is thought to define its own memory and this very memory

is a fundamental part of the group’s existence. It is this memory that gives the group its stability in the long term. It provides shared frameworks and reference points. In the urban space, time plays a distinctive role.

The way in which this collective memory is expressed is particularly interesting to consider. After the First World War, literature and the many and varied commemorations and ceremonies that took place helped conjure the prevailing image of the war dead as heroes to be mourned.⁸ After the Second World War, the cult of the dead created by the ubiquitous communal monuments

⁵ Maurice Halbwachs, *Les cadres sociaux de la mémoire*, Paris, Albin Michel, 1994 [1925].

⁶ Anne Raulin. “Résilience urbaine à Lower Manhattan. Raccords mémoriels et déni dans l’après-11 septembre 2011”, in Denis Peschanski (ed.), *Mémoire et mémorialisation. De l’absence à la représentation*, Paris, Hermann, 2013, p. 75–94 (75).

⁷ Jay Winter, *Sites of memory, sites of mourning. The Great War in European cultural history*, Cambridge, Cambridge University press, 1995.

⁸ Carine Trévisan, *Les fables du deuil. La grande guerre: mort et écriture*, Presses Universitaires de France, 2001.

to the fallen, the desire for revenge on Germany within France, and the nationalist discourse gave way to prioritise clearing the ruins and reconstructing a country devastated by combat. Very quickly, a kind of international “pacifist competition” also emerged, stemming from the process of constructing Europe in the context of the Cold War. It is reasonable to wonder whether buildings were lionised after 1945 in the way men were after 1918. Carine Trévisan highlights the recurrence of images of the living perched atop burial mounds after the First World War, and of the pieces of mutilated bodies mixed indistinctively (the ossuary at Douaumont was built especially to provide a grave to all the men it was impossible to identify and who could not have their own graves). After the Second World War, it was often a question of rebuilding ‘on top of the ruins’ (Fig. 1); buildings reduced to pieces, just like bodies, were a poignant image, particularly in the press: “the ruins of buildings merge into one; only their carcasses remain” (*Nouveau Nord*, 19 May and 2 June 1945). After World War I, the nation took care of burying the bodies, treating the soldiers as a community.⁹ In 1945, the State took direct responsibility for rebuilding towns. After 1945, the State and its narratives thus turned more towards action than commemoration.

Did people who had lost their homes therefore become a group that carried the collective memory? To use Jacques Guilhaumou’s expression,¹⁰ did they appoint ‘spokes-people’? In a study on towns in the Djerid in Tunisia, Jocelyne Dakhli points out that the notion of the collective memory relies on the premise of the group as an established and ongoing constant, a given.¹¹ John Barzman also emphasises the absence of unanimism among the ‘myths’ associated with the bombardment and reconstruction of Le Havre.¹² Thus, the collective memory is perhaps less a shared single

narrative and more a process by which the individual creates meaning when interacting with others.¹³

Several factors would suggest that local communities were left somewhat fragmented by the pressures of war and with the prospect of a long period of time between destruction and effective reconstruction (10 to 15 years). Were local communities not broadly reconstituted? After all, previous social structures were shaken up significantly due to the numbers of dead and displaced, the families who left during the war and decided not to return, and voluntary and compulsory relocations, such as garrisons moving out of city centres and factories moving to outlying areas.

Contrary to unanimism, who might the various communities or groups of individuals during the Reconstruction be? One group categorically identified by the authorities was the ‘sinistrés’, or people who had lost their homes. But it is reasonable to question the unity of this group as the term referred to property owners and did not include tenants. For these people, in a town with many insanitary residences before the war, the departmental representative explained, however, that after reconstruction “life will be better (...), with healthier and better built accommodation”.¹⁴

In the society which evolved after the Second World War, the people whose voices were heard during discussions therefore tended to be property owners who had suffered losses. The land reparcelling and reconstruction syndicates (ASR) representing them in each town appeared to be a logical forum for discussion (Fig. 2). This situation was consolidated by the French reconstruction procedure, which was based on regrouping and evaluating destroyed property and assets, with strict adherence to the law on property. As a syndicate for property owners, the ASR, in this sense, was meant to bring together “notables de

⁹ George L. Mosse, *Fallen soldiers. Reshaping the Memory of the World War*, Oxford, Oxford University press, 1990.

¹⁰ Jacques Guilhaumou, *L'avènement des porte-parole de la République, 1789–1792: essai de synthèse sur les langages de la Révolution française*, Villeneuve d'Ascq, Presses universitaires du Septentrion, 1998.

¹¹ Jocelyne Dakhli, *L'oubli de la cité: la mémoire collective à l'épreuve du lignage dans le Jérid tunisien*, Paris, La Découverte, 1990.

¹² John Barzman, et al., *Le Havre 44. Nouveaux regards*, Le Havre, Ville du Havre, Oissel, Octopus éditions, 2022.

¹³ Sarah Gensburger, Sandrine Lefranc (eds.), *La mémoire collective en question(s)*, Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 2023.

¹⁴ *Commission de Coordination, Dunkerque, 23 octobre 1952. Archives communautaires de Dunkerque: Série D contemporaine, ASR 1946–1959.*



VILLE DE DUNKERQUE

Ce jour,
Quatre Septembre mil neuf cent quarante-neuf
 sur l'Îlot 2 - Face Nord de la Place Jean Bart
 a été posée la première pierre de la reconstruction
 de la Ville
 détruite au cours de la guerre 1939-1945
 par les Allemands

EN PRÉSENCE DE :

MM. CL. DESHAYES, Sous-Préfet de Dunkerque,
 BIED, Délégué Départemental à la Reconstruction
 Emile DUBUISSON, Président de la Chambre de Commerce de Dunkerque.

L'Administration Municipale :

MM. O. ROBELET, Maire,
 P. HAUW,
 G. GENEVIÈVE,
 L. BOUTOILLE,
 P. ASSEMAN, Adjoint.

L'Association Syndicale de Reconstruction de l'Îlot Carnot: (Îlots 2 et 139)

MM. J. HOCQUET, Président,
 G. ROBELET,
 ALLEMES,
 VANHILLE,
 COLLET,
 LACROIX,
 GERREBOUT,
 FAUSSE,
 DUFLOS.

L'Association Syndicale de Reconstruction de l'Îlot 13:

MM. J. HOCQUET, Président,
 THESCA, Secrétaire,
 RUSSE.

L'Association Syndicale de Remembrement :

MM. J. HOCQUET, Président,
 M. PROVOOST, Vice-Président,
 H. DENYS, Secrétaire,

MEMBRES :

H. DOLAIN,
 J. TRYSTRAM,
 A. CHATROUSSAT,
 E. HENNEBERT,
 P. ASSEMAN,
 M. LANDAIS,
 M. NOTEBAERT,
 A. MENTRE,
 M. LACROIX,
 M. DIERS,
 J. DEHOUE,
 A. VANHILLE.

L'Association Syndicale de Reconstruction de l'Îlot 1:

MM. G. GAMBLIN, Président,
 M. PROVOOST, Vice-Président,
 D'ARCHEZ,
 E. BOUTTEAU,
 SCY,
 Mme MERVEILLE,
 MM. BEVEILLION,
 JANSSEN.

L'Administration de la Reconstruction :

MM. SALMON, Délégué Départemental, Adjoint, Chef du Secteur Nord, Commissaire à la Reconstruction,
 GUIMBERT, Commissaire au Remembrement,
 ALLIOT, Commissaire à la Reconstruction,
 SOLEILLANT, Délégué Départemental Adjoint aux Dommages de Guerre.

Architectes :

MM. NIERMANS, Architecte en Chef,
 T. LEVEAU, Architecte en Chef Urbainiste,
 POUREL, Inspecteur Départemental de l'Urbanisme,
 MOREL, Architecte-Chef de l'Îlot 2,
 ROUSSEL,
 VESLEYEN,
 PAUWELS,
 Architectes d'opération de l'Îlot 2.

Entrepreneur :

ENTREPRISE GÉNIE CIVIL
 à Lens.

← Fig. 2: Dunkerque, 4th September 1949: laying of the foundation stone and list of personalities, source: CMUA.

→ Fig. 3: Dunkerque, Sculpture in rue Saint-Jean, photo: author.

la mémoire” [stakeholders in the town’s memory]. These were also the people who met the Minister Claudius-Petit. All the same, in France, the State’s direct role in managing the Reconstruction¹⁵ meant that local property owner groups had little freedom and in Dunkerque, these groups were even split into several ASRs.

As an individual spokesperson, the journalist Louis Burnod, who was director of the daily, *Nouveau Nord*, made his paper a mouthpiece for the Reconstruction in Dunkerque. The paper, which came back into print on 10 February 1945 while the town was still occupied by German troops, followed the Liberation step-by-step. However, should we not be careful about giving the press the main voice, about making it the spokesperson for one local group, let alone several local groups?

Reconstruction, commemoration

Does the notion of a “place of memory” influence reconstruction? The tie that binds the reconstructed town to longer term history and maintains the collective memory is anything but simple. A variety of commemorative monuments feature among the places of memory recorded in Pierre Nora’s study. The Douaumont ossuary and the “monuments to the fallen” of 1914–1918 more generally are mentioned in relation to the war. The historian Reinhart Koselleck describes these sites as “places that create the identity of survivors”.¹⁶

It is this precise tendency to “honour the memory of those to whom they are dedicated that the chief planner for Dunkerque”, Théo Leveau (1896–1971) challenged, believing that “the billions spent at the time, transposed into children’s playgrounds, squares, or sports and recreation grounds could have preserved their memory in an infinitely more pleasant and certainly more useful way”.¹⁷ He came up with this argument at a time when he had to convince the authorities to fund green spaces and more broadly any other amenities which were not buildings. According to



this view, the Reconstruction itself is considered the best homage one could pay to the fallen. The argument is also an indication that the process of mourning in the period after the Second World War differed considerably from that same period after the First World War.

The personalities depicted in low relief on the walls of buildings erected in the post-World War II reconstruction pay tribute to the labours and ingenuity of the worker and not to the fallen soldier (“the army of the dead” of 1914–1918). So, should we commemorate or rebuild? The

¹⁵ Bruno Vayssière, *Reconstruction, déconstruction. Le hard french ou l'architecture française des trente glorieuses*, Paris, Picard, 1988 ; Danièle Voldman, *Histoire d'une politique: la reconstruction des villes françaises de 1940 à 1954*, Paris, L'Harmattan, 1997.

¹⁶ Reinhart Koselleck, “Les monuments aux morts, lieux de fondation de l'identité des survivants”, in Reinhart Koselleck, *L'expérience de l'histoire*, Paris, Hautes études – Gallimard – Le Seuil, 1997 [1979, p. 177–210].

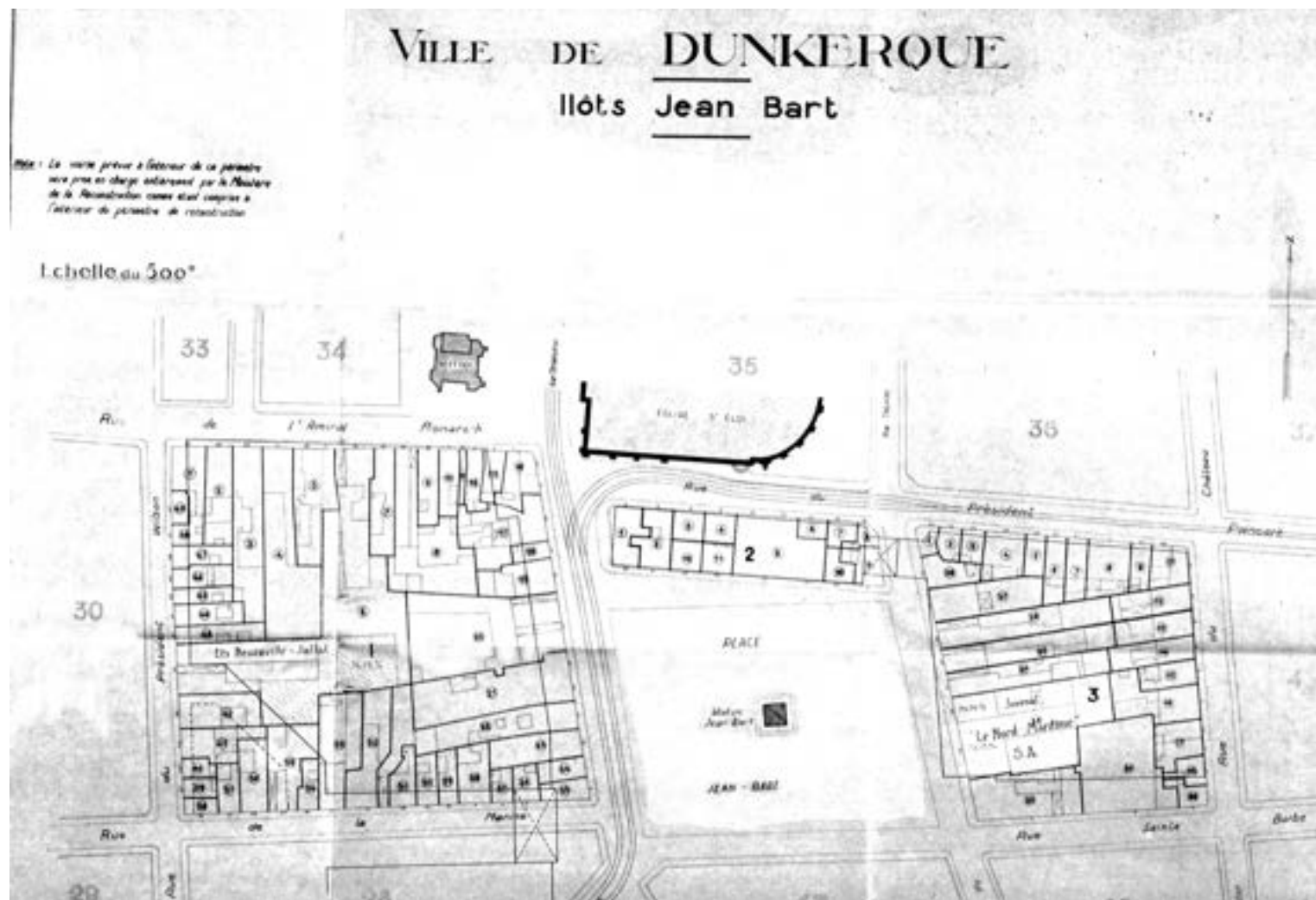
fact is, that in 1945 the loss was not just about people (fallen on the front, far from home) but about landscapes and places as well (the entire French territory was affected by destruction). As such, the rebuilt towns were the equivalent of the First World War monuments to the fallen but for the towns and cities that had fallen.

However, the reconstructed town is not the 'place of memory' of the destroyed town. On the contrary, the reconstructed town erases the destroyed town repeatedly, since it only exists, physically and symbolically, because of the latter's destruction. Herein lies the ambiguity of the symbolic status of the rebuilt town, founded and established on the destroyed town. Rebuilt towns, by virtue of the procedures set by the French administration,

were effectively based on destroyed towns. They were funded by property owners who were federated within ASRs and compensated in accordance with the value of their destroyed assets. These 'war damages' were thus assessed using the plot division of the former town, which influenced the fabric of the reconstructed town.

The reparcelling procedure, and its significance within the overall economy of the Reconstruction, puts paid to the idea of the clean slate to which destroyed towns are thought to have fallen victim, not only because of the war, but because of 'modern' urban planners. Because although indiscriminate bombing razed entire districts and in the case of Dunkerque, a considerable part of the town centre, the tribute the reconstructed town pays to the former town

Fig. 4: Dunkerque, Jean Bart blocks. Superimposed old and new parcels of land. CMUA fonds Niermans land, source: CMUA, fonds Niermans.



is plain to see. In the fullest sense of the term, the former town acts as a backdrop to the reconstructed town which, as the official texts state, “is not a newly created town”. The memory of the old town may not be reflected in the rebuilt town, but it does not vanish completely either. Moreover, and not without some contradiction, the first historian to take an interest in the reconstruction of Dunkerque, Anatole Kopp, argued that the process essentially involved “filling in the gaps”.¹⁸ As if the destroyed town had not really disappeared as it was so recognisable and, therefore, almost still intact. Here, we can understand the tension every returning resident must have felt as they reoccupied their own spaces. Spaces from where they had come but that were also now alien to them.

Aesthetics, symbolism, and reception

Nora refers to places of memory as “points of articulation in a symbolic system of belonging, the visible residue of a past which has become invisible”.¹⁹ How this has been demonstrated from Halbwachs onwards, and from the overall perspective to which Nora subscribes, memory is not a reproduction of the past but a reconstruction of the past. It is part of a dynamic process of organisation. The jointly constructed collective memory of a group defines an identity which can also be highly localised. The various forms of rejecting a past (denial, denigration) are an indicator of conflict between this memory and history. In other words, history provides the local community with components which it endeavours to sort through and choose from to build its identity.

Consequently, it is worthwhile examining Nora’s “points of articulation”, from the description and production of symbols, to how these items are received.

The Reconstruction gave an important place to sculptures in public spaces, particularly on the façades

of buildings (Fig. 3). These sculptures represented social figures (the fisherman, the worker, the architect) and local symbols (fish, various animals, ships) to create an initial symbolic whole. We can assume that the importance of this would have been even more significant 30 years on from the monuments to the fallen of 1914–1918. The ‘Rebirth’ that followed the Second World War succeeded the mourning that followed the First World War.²⁰ Were these low reliefs, depicted all over the town and barely mentioned in discussions, adopted? Taken together they reflect the challenges involved in constructing a “long-term memory”²¹ in such a way. A memory in which the community recognises itself, which shapes its own distinctive ‘world view’ and in which the group organises a representation of itself. It also shows the extent to which the powerful body of workers supplanted the shattered body of the town.

The tangle of streets, as it were, is another point of interest. In line with the philosophy and spirit of re-planting, the rebuilt town copied the basic road grid of the destroyed town and ‘modernised’ it by widening and improving various routes (Fig. 4). The memory of the old town would therefore be present in the new town. According to the architect Jean-Pierre Epron, the town’s heritage value lay less in one or two ancient buildings it had never owned, even before the destruction of 1940, than in its urban layout. The earliest parts of this layout dated back to the 17th century.²² Indeed, the residents did not appear bewildered by the suggestion: “M. Leveau’s plan has won over everyone who has inspected it. It [...] does not change the town’s structure in any way”, the *Nouveau Nord* reported on 3 March 1945. However, the road network, due to the adaptations made and changes to bordering buildings, does not appear to have provided a medium for

¹⁷ Théo Leveau, “L’arbre et l’homme”, in *Urbanisme*, n° 3–4, 1952, p. 86–89.

¹⁸ Anatole Kopp, Frédérique Boucher, Danièle Pauly, *L’architecture de la reconstruction en France. 1945–1953*, Paris, Le Moniteur, 1982.

¹⁹ Pierre Nora, “Entre mémoire et histoire. La problématique des lieux”, in Pierre Nora (ed.), *Les lieux de mémoire*, Paris, Quarto Gallimard, 1997 [1984–1992].

²⁰ Olivier Ratouis, “Le tout et la partie: des catégories de l’urbain à nommer”, in *Mots. Les langages du politique*, n° 72, juillet 2003, p. 13–27.

²¹ Françoise Zonabend, *La mémoire longue. Temps et histoire au village*, Paris, PUF, 1980.

²² Jean-Pierre Epron, *Les quartiers de la reconstruction, étude sur Dunkerque*, IFA, juillet 1991.



Fig. 5: Dunkerque, Rue de la Marine under reconstruction, source: CMUA.

an established recognition or for giving the Reconstruction its place in history.

On the contrary, other factors created stumbling blocks and became the focus of explicit disputes. Aesthetic matters are undoubtedly one of the most recurrent causes of controversy when it comes to reconstruction. In the early 1950s, when buildings began to emerge from the ground, such issues gained traction. The standardised nature of buildings was criticised by parties who wanted to see “a little inspiration from the Flemish style”.²³ The sparse decoration and geometric shapes were also stigmatised. These factors led to accusations in the press of ‘Soviet like’ architecture²⁴ thought to have been imposed by the Ministry for the Reconstruction and Urban Planning (MRU), which favoured right angles.²⁵ The flat roofs were a particular cause of consternation (accusations of ‘foreign’

architecture are recurrent)²⁶ (Fig. 5), as was the external appearance of buildings overall.

Architectural modernity and a new relationship with time

Narratives on the destroyed town, the ‘town of before’, and the lost town lead us to an additional line of thinking. Here, there is a noteworthy difference between what is said about the town currently and what it was. Gradually an orthodoxy takes hold. At this stage, the question of constructing the collective memory makes a comeback, as does its interplay with history.

In Dunkerque the theme of a town of Flemish culture and architecture began to take hold. Yet, Dunkerque was not so much a Flemish town as a military ‘colony’ of the French state on Flemish land, located at the border with Flanders and developed in the context of Vauban’s doctrines at

²³ Réunion ASR, juillet 1950 (Archives Départementales, Lille: 118711).

²⁴ *Voix du Nord*, 31 December 1950.

²⁵ For example Raoul Dautry, *Note aux délégués départementaux de la reconstruction*, MRU, 15 January 1946.

²⁶ The significance of issues raised by roofs has been studied in the context of Germany by Christine Mengin, *Guerre du toit et modernité architecturale. Loger l'employé sous la république de Weimar*, Paris, Publications de la Sorbonne, 2014.

the end of the 17th century. Before the war, little Flemish architecture remained. The image of a comfortable town, where people lived well, a possible continuation of the initial Flemish theme, was barely developed. In the first half of the 20th century, Dunkerque was one of the most unsanitary towns in France. Many residents were housed in dark and airless mezzanines. Homes were overcrowded. The Flemish narrative, set out in the form of a critique of the Reconstruction, points to a desire to build an identity.

Moreover, architects made extensive use of brick, the local material, and took inspiration from the Netherlands: Rotterdam's Kiefhoek district, created by the architect J.J.P. Oud (1890–1963), and the South Amsterdam extended district were also built fully in brick. Even though the reconstruction of Dunkerque could be deemed to reflect a more tempered form of architectural modernism, the modernist position supported an erasure of urban memories (Jayo 2022).²⁷

The reconstruction of Dunkerque therefore provides a highly representative example of the process of 'constructing the past', according to Le Goff and Nora's expression (1985).²⁸ This process involves developing local collective narratives, which are expressed by rejecting the characteristics of reconstruction architecture and even more specifically by denying its aesthetics and dismissing modern designs. However, these narratives are not unequivocal. Some positive arguments are made in support of modernity. The qualities of the housing built are regularly emphasised, with the distinction between interiors and exteriors creating a dividing line in how the Reconstruction was received. Architectural modernity (indoor sanitation, large windows, central heating) is synonymous with comfort while the planning aspect (landscaping, façades) is often received more negatively.

Conclusion

There would be merit in examining the social significance of the aesthetic question, which indicates an overinvestment in symbolism. Sources remain incomplete here and it is sensible not to postulate about a unanimous voice. Every person who lost their home had to recover not just their material assets but also their symbolic assets. While the value of the former could be decided through war damages assessed by the State in a rarely disputed way (being individual and not collective), the value of the latter was not supported by guidelines that could be applied consistently outside of any collective memory. Construction or reconstruction of the collective memory therefore happens in parallel to the urban reconstruction itself.

In the years following the war, the image (itself reconstructed) of the lost town is still alive in people's memories. Acting as a memorial icon, largely redesigned as its reality recedes, this almost mythical town challenges the rebuilt town's ability to take on the local collective identity. In Dunkirk, for many years, the figure of Jean Bart, whose statue was the only one to remain among the ruins, symbolised the period of trauma. Today, as it becomes part of heritage,²⁹ the Reconstruction is slowly becoming a cornerstone of the urban narrative, just as the generations who lived through the war are disappearing. This shows that memory is not handed down and fixed. Rather, it is the outcome of selection and of dynamic processes.

²⁷ Martin Jayo, "City memory, from buzzword to a mutating concept", in *Paranoá*, 2022, n° 33, 1–15. doi.org/10.18830/issn.1679-0944.n33.2022.17 Consulté le 15 avril 2023.

²⁸ Jacques Le Goff, Pierre Nora (eds), *Constructing the past*, Cambridge, Cambridge University press – Paris, Edition de la Maison des sciences de l'homme, 1985.

²⁹ William Maufroy, Olivier Ratouis, "Dunkerque et les archives de la Reconstruction", in Boris Labidurie, Christel Palant (eds.), *Les archives iconographiques et audiovisuelles de la Reconstruction en France, de 1940 aux années 1960*, Publications des Archives nationales, 2023, books.openedition.org/pan/5368.

Résumé

L'historiographie française de la reconstruction s'est longtemps centrée sur l'étude des politiques publiques et sur l'histoire des choix architecturaux et des doctrines urbanistiques. Il s'agit ici de se pencher sur la réception de la rupture brutale introduite par la succession des destructions et de la reconstruction, sur son interprétation par ses contemporains, et d'ouvrir une inscription de la reconstruction à la fois dans un temps plus long et dans une interrogation de la mémoire.

L'article entend montrer que les destructions dûes à la guerre induisent la perte non seulement d'un patrimoine matériel personnel et collectif mais aussi des relations sociales, des traces, qui prenaient appui dans l'espace, comme l'a montré le sociologue Maurice Halbwachs. Ce sont dès lors non seulement des mémoires individuelles mais bien des mémoires collectives qui sont associées au traumatisme. À défaut d'enquêtes spécifiques jamais menées, l'article vise plus modestement à identifier quelques perspectives de compréhension.

La ville de Dunkerque offre un cas singulier qui rend compte de la situation des villes en grande partie détruites et reconstruites selon les procédures de l'administration française centralisée. Tandis que les années qui ont suivi la Première Guerre mondiale ont consacré un récit national aux morts, commémorés dans les milliers de monuments aux morts, après la Seconde Guerre mondiale, ce sont les ruines d'un pays dévasté qui dessinent un paysage inédit. Quels sont les groupes porteurs de la mémoire collective ? La réflexion appelle à la prudence. Il apparaît toutefois que les associations syndicales de remembrement et de reconstruction ont un rôle de porte-parole au sein d'une société locale pour partie réduite et dispersée. Il semble plus difficile de postuler qu'elles auraient porté d'une seule voix.

À Dunkerque, plusieurs "points d'articulation" (Pierre Nora) créent un lien entre la ville détruite et la ville reconstruite, support du travail de mémoire: les sculptures présentes sur les bâtiments nouveaux, la trame viaire elle-même. A contrario, le modernisme architectural brise les rêves ambigus d'un passé flamand de la ville du Nord, là-même où les référents proviennent en bonne part des Pays-Bas. La mémoire rencontre le processus de construction du passé. Plus récemment enfin, la reconstruction en se faisant patrimoine devient une clé de voûte de la mémoire locale.

Zusammenfassung

Die französische Geschichtsschreibung des Wiederaufbaus hat sich lange Zeit auf die Untersuchung der öffentlichen Politik und die Geschichte der architektonischen Entscheidungen und städtebaulichen Doktrinen konzentriert. In diesem Artikel wird untersucht, wie der plötzliche Umbruch, der durch die aufeinanderfolgenden Zerstörungen und den Wiederaufbau verursacht wurde, aufgenommen und von den betroffenen Menschen interpretiert wurde. Wir beginnen auch damit, den Wiederaufbau in einem längeren Zeitrahmen und im Zusammenhang mit der Frage der Erinnerung zu betrachten.

Ziel dieses Artikels ist es zu zeigen, dass die Kriegszerstörung nicht nur zum Verlust von individuellem und kollektivem materiellem Besitz führt, sondern auch zum Verlust der sozialen Beziehungen und Strukturen, die sich in diesen Räumen gebildet haben, wie der Soziologe Maurice Halbwachs gezeigt hat. Folglich sind sowohl die individuelle als auch das kollektive Gedächtnis von traumatischen Ereignissen betroffen. Da bisher keine spezifischen Studien durchgeführt wurden, besteht das bescheidene Ziel dieses Artikels darin, einige mögliche Erkenntnisse anzubieten.

Die Stadt Dünkirchen ist ein Einzelfall, der stellvertretend für die Situation der Städte steht, die im Rahmen der von der französischen Zentralregierung auferlegten Verfahren zerstört und wiederaufgebaut wurden. Während in den Jahren nach dem Ersten Weltkrieg ein nationales Narrativ entstand, das den Toten gewidmet war und in Tausenden von Kriegsdenkmälern zum Ausdruck kam, waren es nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg die Trümmer eines zerstörten Landes, die eine neue Landschaft schufen. Welche Gruppen definieren also das kollektive Gedächtnis? Diese Frage ist mit Vorsicht zu genießen. Verbände, die mit der Flurbereinigung und dem Wiederaufbau betraut sind, können als Sprachrohr für Gemeinschaften fungieren, deren Bevölkerung teilweise reduziert und verstreut wurde. Es ist jedoch schwieriger zu behaupten, dass sie mit einer Stimme gesprochen hätten.

In Dünkirchen schaffen mehrere „Artikulationspunkte“ (Pierre Nora) eine Verbindung zwischen der zerstörten und der neuen Stadt, und zu den Erinnerungsprojekten gehören Skulpturen an neuen Gebäuden und im Straßennetz selbst. Andererseits zerschlägt die architektonische Moderne alle vagen Träume von der flämischen Vergangenheit dieser nördlichen Stadt, auch wenn die meisten Referenzen aus den Niederlanden stammen. Die Erinnerung trifft auf den Prozess der Konstruktion der Vergangenheit. In jüngster Zeit wird der Wiederaufbau zu einem Grundpfeiler des lokalen Gedächtnisses, da er Teil des städtischen Erbes wird.

Francesco Gastaldi, Federico Camerin

THE RECONSTRUCTION PLAN OF GENOA

The Plan of 'Missed Opportunities'¹

Introduction

This research provides a reflection on the doctrine of reconstruction in the Italian city of Genoa after WWII. The aim is to expand knowledge on the role of the 1945-to-1950 Reconstruction Plan of Genoa's centre and Sampierdarena (*Piano di Ricostruzione*; PR) and the subsequent 1946-to-1959 General Master Plan (*Piano Regolatore Generale*; PRG) to foster the city-making process during the Reconstruction period (1945 to 1960). The idea is to open a debate on the real impacts of Genoa's PRs, which have been insufficiently studied due to the poor materials released at that époque, thus creating the proper basis to open a new research path. This work is part of the wider interests of the authors in the post-1945 city-making process of Genoa.² This particular subject has not yet been addressed from the specific angle of Reconstruction, which is why the work does not so much present research results as rather asks questions on the basis of the new information provided.

The authors conducted archival fieldwork on Genoa's Historical Archive and relied on a variety of sources from the grey literature in addition to the

scientific literature (i.e. press articles, technical and planning tools, City Council reports, and government legislative documents). The critical interpretation of these sources demonstrates the nature of the PR and PRG, the delays in their approval, their weak regulatory capacity, and the problematic relationship between post-bombing reconstruction, new construction, and the existing building fabric, especially in the historic city centre. The work is divided into four main sections. The first of these provides a review of the extensive literature on the Reconstruction period and PRs, stressing the originality of the post-war debate in Italy. The second and third sections concern the analysis of the 1950 PR and 1959 PRG and, finally, the conclusion discusses the results of the research.

Reconstruction Plans in Italy

World War II left devastation in Italian cities: two million habitable rooms³ were destroyed in Italy during the war, while another four million were damaged.⁴ For this reason, PRs were conceived as emergency planning tools governed by specific rules and limited to relatively small sectors of municipalities that had been

¹ The research was carried out jointly by all the authors. Sections 3 and 4 are by Francesco Gastaldi and Sections 2 and 5 by Federico Camerin, while Section 1 is a common section. Federico Camerin participated as a coauthor within the research project "Urban Regeneration as a new version of Urban Renewal Programmes. Achievements and failures". This project is co-funded by the Spanish Ministry of Universities in the framework of the Recovery, Transformation and Resilience Plan, by the European Union - NextGenerationEU and by the Universidad de Valladolid.

² Francesco Gastaldi, Federico Camerin, "Genoa's Biscione from the 1960s until today. From a stigmatised neighbourhood to a place where it is nice to live", in Maurizio Bergamaschi, ed., *The multidimensional housing deprivation. Local dynamics of inequality, policies and challenges for the future*, Milan, 2022, Franco Angeli, p. 139–140.

³ In Italy, housing is quantified in terms of habitable rooms, which can mean living rooms, dining rooms, or bedrooms.

⁴ Luigi Beretta Anguissola, *I 14 anni del piano Ina-Casa*, Roma, Staderini, 1963, p. 7–8; Vittorio Sala, *045 Ricostruzione Edilizia*, Roma, Luce, 1952, [patrimonio. archivioluce.com/luce-web/detail/IL3000052420/1/ricostruzione-edilizia.html?startPage=0], date of access 10 August 2023.

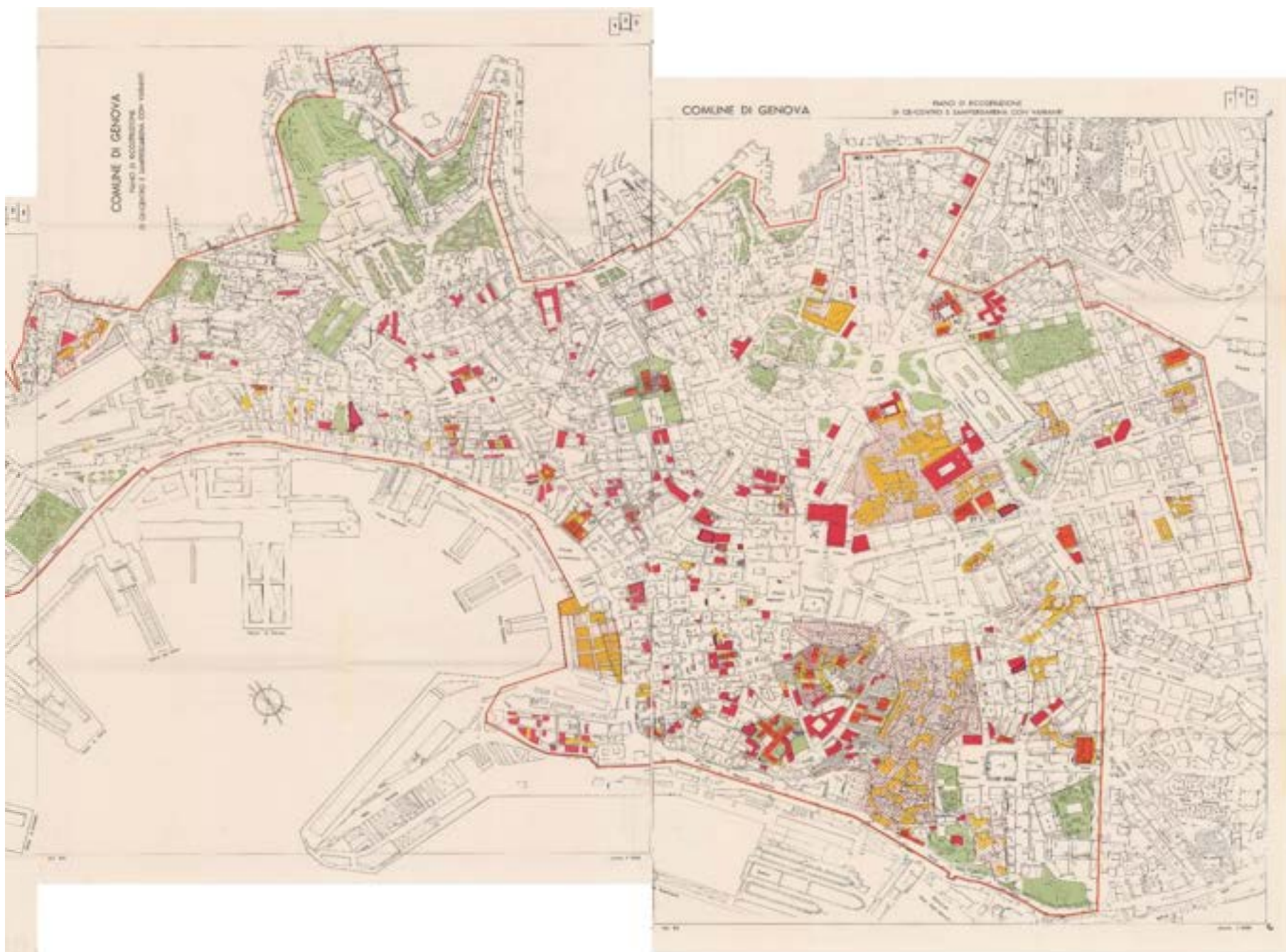
demolished or utterly damaged by the war.⁵ Like other measures such as the INA-Casa neighbourhoods,⁶ PRs aimed to quickly overcome the contingent phase of reconstruction through agile means, and thus left an indelible mark on Italian post-war town planning practice. While PRs often met the need to reorganize and expand urban centres, they were not a conceptual layout to guide future growth and development.⁷ These plans operated separately from the General Master Plans introduced by the 1942 Town Planning Act due to the urgent need to provide new housing, and have been accused of addressing existing urban problems, thereby exacerbating the situation. Italian scholars⁸ pinpointed many critical aspects, such as the fact that only minimal official documentation, if any, had been published on PR content; the tendency to favour private interests over public ones, which led to rent-seeking and land speculation; and the disregard for the existing morphology.

Reconstruction plans found their reason d'être in three main regulations: Legislative Decree no. 154/1945 "Standards for reconstruction plans for war-damaged settlements",⁹ Law n° 409/1949 "Rules to facilitate the reconstruction of housing destroyed by war events and the implementation of reconstruction plans",¹⁰ and Law n° 1402/1951 "Amendments to Legislative Decree n° 154 of 1 March 1945, concerning plans for

Fig. 1: 1950, source: Genoa, Ufficio cartografico del Settore pianificazione urbanistica (GUCSPU).



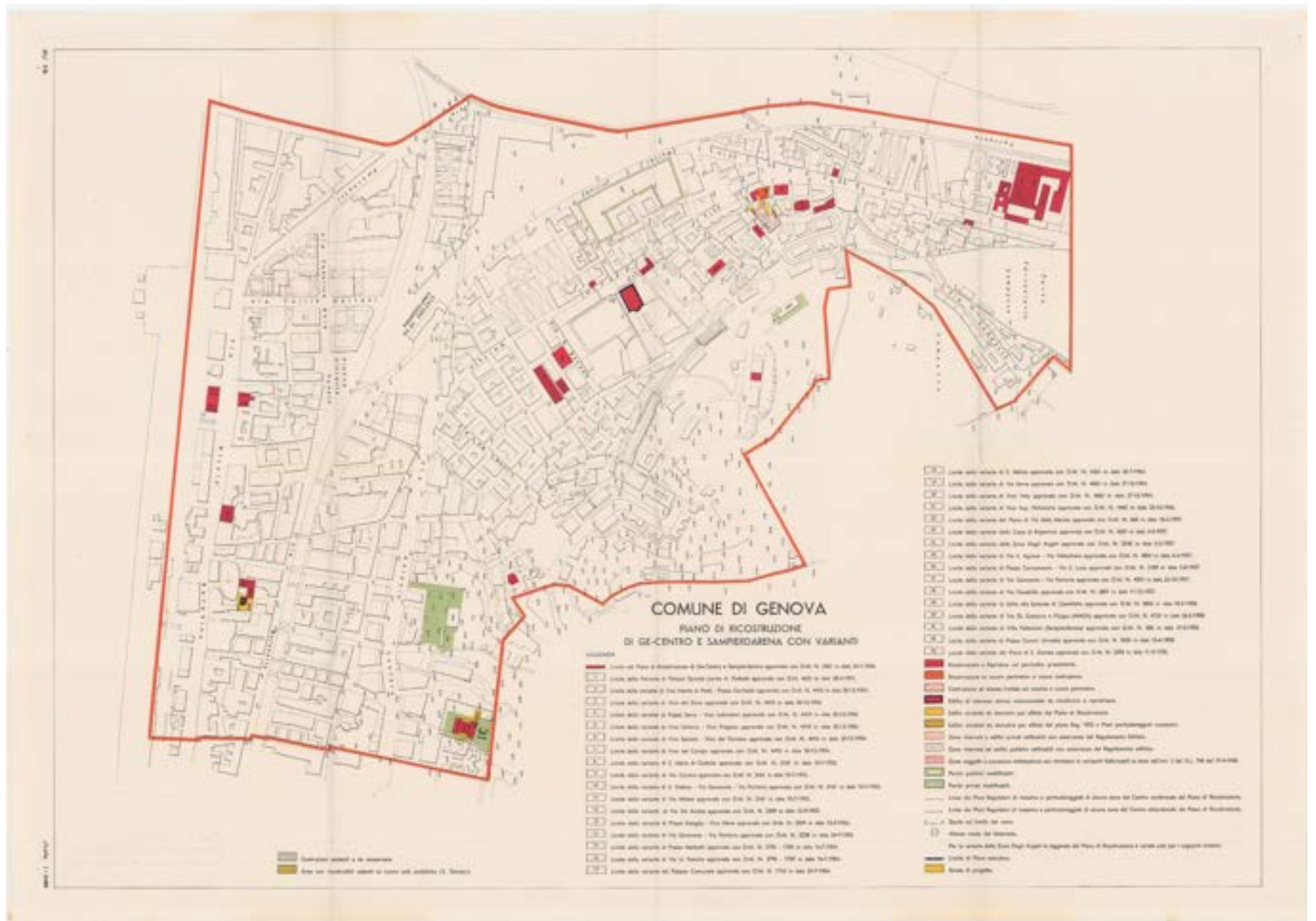
- 5 Carlo Olmo, Temi e realtà della ricostruzione, *Rassegna*, vol. 15, n° 54, 1993, p. 6–19.
- 6 Stephanie Zeier Pilat, *Reconstructing Italy. The Ina-Casa Neighborhoods of the Postwar Era*, London-New York: Routledge, 2014, p. 5–9.
- 7 Francesco Velo, "I Piani europei e la ricostruzione delle città italiane nel secondo dopoguerra. Sviluppo sociale, economico, industriale", in Lorenzo de Stefani, Carlotta Coccoli (eds.), *Guerra monumenti e ricostruzione. Architetture e centri storici italiani nel secondo conflitto mondiale*, Venice, Marsilio, 2011, p. 160–173.
- 8 Giuseppe Campos Venuti, "Cinquant'anni: tre generazioni urbanistiche", in Giuseppe Campos Venuti, Federico Oliva (eds.), *Cinquant'anni di urbanistica in Italia 1942–1992*, Rome-Bari, Laterza, 1993, p. 9–12.
- 9 Gazzetta Ufficiale, *Decreto Legislativo Luogotenenziale 1 marzo 1945, n° 154*, 1945, [www.gazzettaufficiale.it/eli/id/1945/05/02/045U0154/sg], date of access 10 August 2023.
- 10 Gazzetta Ufficiale, *Legge 25 giugno 1949, 1949*, [www.gazzettaufficiale.it/eli/id/1949/07/19/049U0409/sg], date of access 10 August 2023.



reconstruction of war-damaged settlements”.¹¹ Their implementation was determined by two dynamics. Firstly, the municipalities listed by the Minister of Public Works were required to start the PR within three months of the list being notified. The approval of the PR by the Minister of Public Works was almost equivalent to a declaration of public utility and the works provided for therein were declared to be urgent according to Articles 71 et seq. of Law n° 2359 of 25

June 1865. In the case where PRs needed modifications, the approval followed the same procedure prescribed for the approval of the original plan. The PR should address the following issues: road and rail networks; areas intended for services and public spaces; sectors for demolition, reconstruction, repair, and construction of buildings; and areas intended for the construction of new buildings, even outside the perimeter of the built-up sector, as long as they were necessary for

¹¹ Gazzetta Ufficiale, *Legge 27 ottobre 1951, n° 1402, 1951*, [www.gazzettaufficiale.it/eli/id/1951/12/31/051U1402/sg], date of access 10 August 2023.



the sector affected by the reconstruction. Secondly, within four years of the approval of the PR, a decree by the Minister of Public Works had to establish whether the municipality should maintain this tool or draft a General Master Plan in accordance with the 1942 Town Planning Act. These PRs should have lasted for 10 years, being approved as Detailed Plans (*Piani particolareggiati*¹² in Italian). In 1955, Italian municipal-

ities adopted a total of 427 PRs. When they expired, many of them were renewed and remained the only municipal planning tool, even if they only related to limited and central areas.¹³

The implementation of PRs was influenced by the urgency to house the homeless and to preserve the built heritage that survived the demolitions promoted by fascism and WWII bombing.¹⁴ This instrument

¹² Detailed Plans were devoted to detailing General Master Plan's contents and resembled large-scale architectural projects with a specific focus on interventions such as residential and industrial developments and urban renewal. See Alessandro Vignozzi, "Design Control in Italian Planning", *Built Environment*, vol. 20, n° 2, 1994, p. 127–141, here p. 134.

¹³ Federico Oliva, "Le città e i piani", in Giuseppe Campos Venuti, Federico Oliva (eds.), *Cinquant'anni di urbanistica in Italia 1942–1992*, Rome-Bari: Laterza, 1993, p. 40–88, here p. 42.

¹⁴ Osanna Fantozzi Micali, *Piani di ricostruzione e città storiche 1945–1955*, Florence, Alinea, 1998. Fantozzi Micali, p. 11–13.

← **Fig. 2:** Genoa, Reconstruction Plan of the Sampierdarena district, source: Genoa: Ufficio cartografico del Settore pianificazione urbanistica (GUCSPU).

→ **Fig. 3:** Genoa, Piazza Caricamento devastated after bombing, 1943, photographer unknown, source: Archivio Luce .



provided a wide range of measures for single buildings or groups. They ranged from reconstruction or restoration within the pre-existing perimeter to reconstruction within a new perimeter or even new construction. The tool established the reconstruction

or restoration of buildings of special architectural and/or historical interest, but also the demolition of heavily damaged and/or unstable constructions. The PR also identified areas for the construction of new private and public buildings.

The Reconstruction Plan of Genoa City Centre and Sampierdarena (1945–1950)

Genoa was one of the most devastated Italian cities.¹⁵ Between 1940 and 1944, the city suffered two naval bombardments and 85 air raids.¹⁶ A total of 11,183

buildings were destroyed (23% of the city's buildings),¹⁷ of which 8,445 were in the central areas, corresponding to a total of 52,000 dwellings and 250,000 rooms.¹⁸

Genoa's PRs covered 519.4 hectares, representing 2.1% of the entire municipal area and 8% of the

¹⁵ Franchino Basilio, *Gli effetti della barbara aggressione inglese*, 1941, [patrimonio.archivioluca.com/luce-web/detail/IL5000014599/2/effetti-della-barbara-aggressione-inglese-3.html?startPage=180], date of access 10 August 2023; *idem*, *Documentazione del bombardamento aereo di Genova e Milano*, 1942, [patrimonio.archivioluca.com/luce-web/detail/IL5000028902/2/documentazione-del-bombardamento-aereo-genova-e-milano-3.html?startPage=180], date of access 10 August 2023.

¹⁶ Giulio Massobrio, Marco Gioannini, *Bombardate l'Italia. Storia della guerra di distruzione aerea 1940–1945*, Milan: Rizzoli, 2007, p. 190–194.

¹⁷ The most devastating events were the air-naval bombardment of February 1941 and the aerial bombardments of October and November 1942, July and August 1943, and May 1944.

¹⁸ Comune di Genova, *PRG. Decreti, regolamenti, relazioni del Piano Regolatore Generale e dei Regolatori confermati*, Genoa, Comune di Genova, 1959, p. 122–123.

Fig. 4: Genoa, Piazza Caricamento with Torre Caricamento, photo: Wikimedia Commons.

city's built-up area at the beginning of WWII. The two most significantly damaged sectors (Piccapietra and Via Madre di Dio) needed an ad hoc Detailed Plan,¹⁹ while Santa Maria degli Angeli was the area earmarked for new housing units intended for the homeless.

The most prominent PR was dedicated to 365.9 hectares comprising the historical centre and Sampierdarena (Fig. 1, 2). Its drafting started in 1945 and was required by the Ministerial Decree n° 1357 of 28 May 1946, but it was only approved in 1950. The tool lacked a clear and harmonious urban design because it protected only individual buildings rather than the entire built fabric of the historic centre, and relatively few buildings were considered to be of historic interest or as monuments. The lack of protection of the historic buildings was due to the overriding concern to encourage the reconstruction of several particular buildings and the moving back of their facades in order to improve hygiene conditions. These conditions made it possible to increase the volume of the buildings by creating greater distances between them. To the real estate



developers who built immediately, the PR gave the option of raising the building by one storey without any public evaluation. In many cases, the restoration of buildings was carried out by incorporating the few elements preserved from demolition into the new architectural structure. According to the local urban planner Bruno Gabrielli,²⁰ this way of preserving the historical memory often resulted in “hideous monsters” and “insignificant – when not grotesquely inappropriate – pieces of architecture”. As highlighted by Giontoni,²¹ the reconstruction works were not embedded in the existing morphology of the historic centre, especially in two cases.

¹⁹ Mario Labò, “Il concorso di Piccapietra a Genova”, *Urbanistica*, vol. 19, n° 4, 1950, p. 36–41, here p. 37.

²⁰ Bruno Gabrielli, “Il nuovo piano regolatore di Genova”, *Urbanistica*, vol. 37, n° 68–69, 1978, 8–33, here p. 26.

²¹ Bruno Giontoni, *L'urbanistica della ricostruzione. Genova dal dopoguerra agli anni sessanta*, Genoa: Erga, 2017, p. 61.

The first case concerned the reconstruction of Piazza Caricamento (Fig. 3) and San Luca street, which was designed by the Municipal Technical Office, adopted on 4 May, 1955, and approved by a Ministerial Decree in August 1957. The real estate developer, i.e. the General Real Estate Company (*Società Generale Immobiliare*), took advantage of the rule that allowed for the full recovery of existing volumes in the event of demolition and reconstruction. This condition was agreed in exchange for the construction of a public square on the inner front area of the built lot. The intervention carried out in Piazza Caricamento resulted in a building that was anomalous in terms of size and architecture in relation to the environment in which it was inserted. The 'Torre Caricamento' concentrated the volumetric recovery on a total of 45.40 metres (Fig. 4).

The second example was the reconstruction of the lot between Monte di Pietà alley and Piazza Garibaldi. The PR initially indicated an intervention limited to this area, but a modification allowed the widening of the perimeter and the construction of the headquarters of the Genoa and Imperia Savings Bank (*Cassa di Risparmio di Genova e Imperia*). The approved draft of the PR recognized that the buildings were located in an area that was only slightly affected by the war damage. The Modification of the PR was drafted by the municipal authorities²² and approved by the Ministry of Public Works in March 1957. The approval of the Modification²³ highlighted how the volume of the new building would have led to objective improvements in ventilation, lighting and mobility.

Another issue regarding the complex management of the PR was the fact that, between 1951 and 1958, the Ministry of Public Works was called upon to approve 22 modifications. Many of these were after the deadline of 24 January 1955, the date set as the last extension of the PR execution period. These amendments and delays were due to two factors. Firstly, there were many changes of opinion about the PR following the election of the Genoa Municipal Council on 26 June 1951, which led to a change from a left-wing government to a centre coalition led by the Christian Democratic Party. Secondly, Genoa was obliged to draft a General Master Plan²⁴ and the approval of a number of amendments to the PR²⁵ prolonged its validity until January 24, 1960.

The General Master Plan (1945–1959)

While the main reconstruction efforts took place in a small part of the municipality, Genoa also carried out the reconstruction of buildings not severely damaged by the war and located outside the perimeter of the PR. In April 1945, the local branch of the National Liberation Committee began to plan initiatives for the reconstruction of Genoa, setting up a Central Committee for Housing Repairs, which divided the city into sixteen zones. By the end of 1946, 24,000 housing units were already repaired and, by the end of 1948, the number had increased to 68,497.²⁶

In addition to these works, from 1945, Luigi Carlo Daneri chaired a Town Planning Committee to draw up the new General Master Plan but his work lasted only a few months given the modest financial resources and the need to reconstruct the damaged sectors of

²² Comune di Genova, *Variante al piano di ricostruzione del centro relativa alle zone di vico Monte Pietà, piazza Garibaldi, . approvata con Decreto del Ministro dei lavori pubblici n° 4410, 30.12.1954*, Genoa: Ufficio cartografico del Settore pianificazione urbanistica (GUCSPU), folder 120, 1954.

²³ Ministero dei Lavori Pubblici, *Decreto del Ministro Segretario di Stato per i Lavori Pubblici n° 4603 del 4–3–57, Approvazione della variante della Cassa di Risparmio*, Genoa: Comune di Genova, 1957.

²⁴ Ministero dei Lavori Pubblici, "Decreto interministeriale n° 391 in data 11 maggio 1954", *Gazzetta Ufficiale della Repubblica Italiana*, vol. 95, n°120, 1954a, p. 1121.

²⁵ Ministero dei Lavori Pubblici, *Decreto del Ministro Segretario di Stato per i Lavori pubblici n° 4410 del 30–12–54*, Genoa: Comune di Genova, 1954b.

²⁶ Giontoni 2017, *op. cit.*, p. 64.

Date	Institutional documents	Contents
28 May 1946	Ministerial Decree No. 1357	To draft the PR for historic center, and Rivarolo, Sampierdarena, Voltri, and Tegli sectors (519.4 365.9 hectares)
08 August 1946	City Council Resolution No. 1640	To draft the RP on Molo, San Vincenzo and San Teodoro neighborhoods (365.9 365.9 hectares)
14 May 1948	City Council Resolution No. 272	Adoption of the RP
11 December 1948	City Council Resolution No. 1620	Starting the draft of the CP
05 March 1949	City Council Resolution No. 410	Adoption of the RP with modifications
24 January 1950	Ministerial Decree No. 1436	Ministry of Public Works approval of the RP
18 September 1950	City Council Resolution No. 835	City Council approved corrections and amendments prescribed by the Ministry of Public Works
From 28 March 1951 to 11 September 1958	Various	RP suffered 22 modifications in seven years
18 October 1954	Interministerial Decree No. 391	Obligation to approve CP by 1960
14 October 1959	President of the Republic Decree	CP approval by the State

Fig. 5: Genoa, chronicle of Reconstruction Plans, 1946–1959, source: authors.

the city.²⁷ The analyses for the General Master Plan were resumed in 1948, when the municipal administration entrusted its technical office and an external commission – composed of architects Franco Albini and Eugenio Fuselli and Senator Mario Pucci – with the drafting of the PRG and launched an inquiry into the hygiene, sanitary, and social conditions of the historic centre.²⁸ In 1954, the Ministry of Public Works included Genoa among the major Italian cities that would have to approve the PRG by 1960. Approved in 1959, claiming to be inspired by the principles of the Athens Charter, the theories of Walter Gropius, and the Greater London Plan, the PRG raised many concerns

for the following reasons. The focus of the plan was on transport and the road system, without any consideration of the real needs of the city, such as the intention to accommodate 1,641,000 new residents. There was also a lack of green spaces and insufficient provision of land for industry.²⁹

To counter this situation, as well as to stop growing speculation resulting from the *laissez faire* approach of the Reconstruction period, the City Council revised the PRG in 1964. The provision of new accommodation overcame the demands driven by the migratory process: in fact, while 150,000 new people moved to Genoa in the 1950s, 250,000 new housing units

²⁷ Enrico Baiardo, *L'identità nascosta: Genova nella cultura del secondo Novecento*, Genoa, Erga, 1999, p. 266.

²⁸ Luciano Cavalli, *Inchiesta sugli abituri*, Genoa, Ufficio studi sociali del Comune di Genova, 1957, p. 5–11, here p. 6.

²⁹ Gabrielli 1978, *op. cit.*, p. 9–11.

were built, creating an excess supply of new homes.³⁰ Moreover, a commission chaired by Giovanni Astengo found that the full implementation of the 1959 PRG would have provided enough space to house around 7.5 million people, compared with the population of

Conclusion

This research is a first step towards a better understanding of the role played by the planning tools intended for reconstruction in Genoa. The analysis of the chronicle of their making process (Fig. 5) shows striking dynamics after 1945.

The first aspect is the fact that the PR and PRG were not harmoniously interwoven, with many delays and modifications, and were poorly related to the general problems of the city. The PR on the historic centre and Sampierdarena focused mainly on the provision of housing units and was used as a pretext for urban land speculation. For instance, the supposed improvement of hygiene conditions was tied to the opportunity given by the PR to make new buildings one storey taller than the permitted height. In fact, in 1957, the City Council set up the Commission for the drafting of the Plan for the Enhancement, Conservation and Renovation of the Historic Centre (*Piano di Valorizzazione, Conservazione e Risanamento del Centro Storico*), which dealt with the legacy of the PR. The preliminary document was formulated on the basis of the assumption that the PR was a modest plan.³¹ Its implementation has shown that the methods used (i.e. partial or total moving back of the facades, increase in the height of the buildings and modern reconstructions) were insufficiently studied and completely changed the character of the built environment.

The second aspect is that the PR did not provide an 'identical' reconstruction, because of the behaviour of private actors in developing profit-orientated recon-

850,000 as it was in the mid-1960s. The PRG was also criticised for not proposing any ideas for productive activities or services and, above all, for providing no basis for reliable economic and demographic development hypotheses.

structions rather than because of the lengthy approval process (5 years). Irrespective of whether approval had been granted earlier or not, the planning instrument would only have been more effective if there had been strict control from the public administration involved, i.e. the Ministry of Public Works and the City Council. The PR, as in other Italian cities, led to a deterioration in the quality of the built environment compared with the pre-war situation, due to the urgency of its implementation.³² The PRG followed this trend (including a delay of 14 years for approval), but remained unapplied due to a change of opinion of the local administration. Moreover, the PR covered only a small proportion of the entire municipality (2.1%) and was subject to 22 modifications without adequate public control. This contributed to the lack of vision of the city and favoured the interests of private property developers (e.g. *Società Generale Immobiliare*) and banks (e.g. *Cassa di Risparmio di Genova e Imperia*).

Finally, the review of the existing literature reveals a lack of concrete data on the reconstructions actually carried out (e.g. the new volume of the reconstructed buildings compared with the previous volume). Moreover, in the 1940s and 1950s there was little local debate, although the Genoese planner Bruno Gabrielli encouraged it at the beginning of the 1960s. He defined the PR and PRG as "the Plans of Missed Opportunities". They were conceived in a situation of urgent housing needs, but without clear ideas or in-depth preliminary studies. Both plans were disconnected from the real issues suffered by the city and its

³⁰ Luca Salvetti "La 'Commissione Astengo' per la revisione del PRG di Genova del 1959: testimonianze da preservare", *Territorio*, vol. 16, n° 59, 2011, p. 128–131, here p. 128.

³¹ Comune di Genova, *Centro storico di Genova: preliminari allo studio del piano di valorizzazione, conservazione e risanamento*, Genoa, Comune di Genova, 1958, p. 6.

³² Giorgio Piccinato, Centenary paper A brief history of Italian town planning after 1945, *The Town Planning Review*, vol. 8, n° 3, 2010, p. 237–259, here p. 239.

boundaries. For these reasons, the PR and PRG failed to give the historic centre a far-reaching structure and an overall planning scheme as they were embedded in a logic of supposedly unlimited growth and quantitative development prospects.³³

The next step of the research should be the in-depth analysis of all the modifications that the PR underwent, with the detailed characteristics of the reconstructed buildings. While existing research³⁴ focused on uncorrelated aspects of the former industrial triangle cities (i.e. planning for Milan, new residential districts for Turin, and museums for Genoa), this first attempt can be a catalyst for a better comparison between these three cities. In turn, this work can be successively used to make a broader inventory of the operations carried out city-by-city to better understand the effects of the PRs at national level.

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- 33** Bruno Gabrielli, "Il problema politico e culturale dello sviluppo urbanistico di Genova", *Itinerari*, vol. 10, n° 69/72, 1963, p. 239–266, here p. 241–246; *idem*, "L'urbanistica genovese nel primo dopoguerra (1945–1960)", in Giuseppe Marcenaro (ed.), *Genova, il Novecento*, Genoa, Sagep, 1986, p. 484–485, here p. 484.
- 34** Francesca Bonfante, Cristina Pallini, "The role of a historic townscape in city reconstruction: Plans for Milan, Turin and Genoa after World War II", in John Pendlebury, Erdem Erten, Peter J. Larkham, eds., *Alternative visions of post-war reconstruction. Creating the modern townscape*, London-New York, Routledge, 2015, p. 142–160, here p. 143.

Résumé

Bien que Gênes ait été l'une des villes italiennes les plus détruites pendant la Seconde Guerre mondiale, les historiens urbains n'ont guère prêté attention à ses plans de reconstruction (PR). Cela est dû en partie au peu de sources officielles publiées par les autorités concernées. Dans ces conditions, ce travail tente de mettre en évidence les principales dynamiques qui affectent la mise en œuvre et l'impact de ces instruments. Ils ont été appliqués à seulement 2,1 % des limites municipales (519,4 hectares), ce qui correspond à 8 % de la zone urbanisée au lendemain de la Seconde Guerre mondiale. Le plan de reconstruction le plus pertinent a été appliqué au centre historique et au quartier de Sampierdarena (365,9 hectares) et, malgré son potentiel pour devenir un outil approprié pour l'amélioration des conditions de vie dans cette zone, de nombreux facteurs l'ont empêché d'atteindre cet objectif. Le premier élément a été le long processus de 5 ans pour son approbation (1945–1950) et le nombre important de modifications (22) qui ont été faites dans la période 1951–1958, dont beaucoup ont été approuvées au-delà de la fin supposée de sa validité (24 janvier 1955). Le deuxième élément est le non-respect par le plan de la morphologie existante du centre historique. Cet outil ne protégeait pas l'ensemble du tissu bâti, mais seulement quelques bâtiments individuels, et sa logique était basée sur la reconstruction immédiate des habitations endommagées, le recul des façades pour améliorer la ventilation, l'éclairage et la mobilité. Le troisième élément était l'absence de contrôle public sur les travaux. Par exemple, les agents immobiliers désireux de construire immédiatement ont été incités à intervenir par le PR, qui leur a permis de rehausser le bâtiment d'un étage sans aucune évaluation publique. Les pouvoirs publics n'ont exercé qu'un contrôle insuffisant sur la qualité des travaux architecturaux, qui incorporaient des structures architecturales sans rapport les unes avec les autres. Cette situation s'explique également par le fait que la plupart des bâtiments n'étaient pas classés au patrimoine. Ces trois éléments ont facilité la mise en œuvre de projets spéculatifs d'une qualité architecturale et urbanistique médiocre par rapport à la situation d'avant-guerre, comme cela s'est produit dans d'autres villes italiennes.

Le débat sur la mise en œuvre du PR dans les années 1940 et 1950 a également été insuffisant, car il s'est plutôt concentré sur la rédaction de nouveau plan directeur général, approuvé seulement en 1959. Les seules critiques ont été formulées par l'urbaniste génois Bruno Gabrielli au début des années 1960. Les recherches futures devraient se concentrer sur l'analyse approfondie de toutes les modifications subies par le plan, avec des caractéristiques détaillées des bâtiments reconstruits.

Zusammenfassung

Obwohl Genua eine der Städte Italiens war, die während des Zweiten Weltkriegs am stärksten zerstört wurde, haben sich die Stadthistoriker kaum mit den Wiederaufbauplänen (frz.: „PR“) befasst, was auch an den begrenzten offiziellen Quellen liegt, die von den beteiligten Behörden veröffentlicht wurden. Vor diesem Hintergrund versucht diese Arbeit, die wichtigsten Dynamiken zu beleuchten, die die Umsetzung und die Auswirkungen dieser Pläne beeinflussen. Sie wurden nur auf 2,1 % der Gemeindegrenzen (519,4 Hektar) angewandt, was 8 % des nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg urbanisierten Gebiets entspricht. Der wichtigste Wiederaufbauplan galt für das historische Zentrum und das Viertel Sampierdarena (365,9 Hektar), und obwohl er das Potenzial hatte, ein geeignetes Mittel zur Verbesserung der Lebensbedingungen in diesem Gebiet zu werden, verhinderten viele Faktoren, dass er dieses Ziel erreichte. Der erste Faktor war das fünfjährige Genehmigungsverfahren (1945–1950) und die zahlreichen Änderungen (22), die im Zeitraum 1951–1958 vorgenommen wurden, von denen viele erst nach dem vermeintlichen Ende seiner Gültigkeit (24. Januar 1955) genehmigt wurden. Der zweite Faktor war die Nichtbeachtung des Plans bezüglich der bestehenden Morphologie des historischen Stadtkerns. Der Plan schützte nämlich nicht die gesamte Bausubstanz, sondern nur einzelne Gebäude, und seine Logik basierte auf dem sofortigen Wiederaufbau des beschädigten Wohnraumes, dem Rückbau der Fassaden zur Verbesserung der Belüftung, der Beleuchtung und der Mobilität. Der dritte Faktor war das Fehlen einer öffentlichen Kontrolle über die Arbeiten. So wurden beispielsweise Immobilienmakler, die sofort bauen wollten, durch den Wiederaufbauplan dazu ermuntert, Gebäude um ein Stockwerk zu erhöhen, ohne dass eine öffentliche Einschätzung stattfand. Die Qualität der architektonischen Arbeiten wurde von der Öffentlichkeit nur unzureichend kontrolliert, da nicht verwandte architektonische Strukturen einbezogen wurden, was auch damit zusammenhing, dass die meisten Gebäude nicht unter Denkmalschutz standen. Durch diese drei Umstände wurde die Umsetzung von Spekulationsprojekten in schlechter architektonischer und städteplanerischer Qualität im Vergleich zur Vorkriegssituation möglich, wie es auch in anderen italienischen Städten der Fall war.

Unzureichend war auch die Debatte über die Umsetzung des Wiederaufbauplans in den 1940er und 1950er Jahren, die sich stattdessen auf die Ausarbeitung des neuen, erst 1959 genehmigten Gesamtplans konzentrierte. Die einzige Kritik in den frühen 1960er Jahren kam von dem genuesischen Stadtplaner Bruno Gabrielli. Künftige Forschungen sollten sich auf die eingehende Analyse aller Änderungen konzentrieren, die durch den Plan verursacht wurden, und die detaillierten Merkmale der wiederaufgebauten Gebäude aufzeigen.

Silvia Malcovati, Ilaria Maria Zedda

THE RECONSTRUCTIONS OF BERLIN

Searching for a Lost Urban Identity between Architectural Theory and Practice

Introduction

Since the 1950s, Berlin's centre has been a laboratory for urban reconstruction. After the projects designed and built in the Berlin divided by the Wall between the 1960s and 80s and the ones designed after the reunification of the city in 1989, the central areas of the German capital are still today open construction sites and the subject of debates, competitions, and new projects.

The paper deals with reconstructions of these central areas focusing on the interventions which concentrated on the relationship between history and new projects, considering the semantic difference that exists in the German language between *Rekonstruktion* – understood as the faithful reconstruction of something that existed before, either a building or a broader portion of the city – and *Wiederaufbau* – more generically, the new construction of a destroyed building or district.

Our paper focuses on the urban debates and projects that have addressed Berlin's central medieval and baroque districts since 1979. The text is structured in three chronological sections: 1970s-80s, 1990s-2000s and today. East and West are hereby analyzed in the same way, from a spatial and morphological point of view, without deeply delving into socio-political and administrative issues.

By showing case studies that are representative of different strategies for reconstruction, with this paper we ask where the boundary between reconstruction and new design is and whether there are projects in which theoretical reflections on continuity with the past have been successfully translated into contemporary design. By expanding on the recent past of the reconstruction of Berlin's centre, this paper raises issues and questions that are crucial for new projects.

Reconstructions in Berlin in the 1980s

Despite the different political and social systems that distinguished West Berlin from East Berlin, it can be observed that in both halves of the city between 1961 and 1989 projects were built either with open urban forms and large buildings towards the periphery or were inspired by the forms and spaces of the traditional city with its continuous urban fabric of streets, squares, and blocks. From the 1970s, both in East and West Berlin, the latter option was favored in the historical districts of the city which used to be the core of Berlin before the Wall.

In the 1980s, in both halves of Berlin, urban design competitions were announced addressing former central districts with renewed attention to their history. In West Berlin, many of these competitions were organized by the *Internationale Bauausstellung* Berlin (IBA), the international building exhibition that was established in 1979 and remained active until 1987. Parallel, two competitions were held in East Berlin: one targeted the medieval Nikolaiviertel and the other one the Baroque districts Dorotheenstadt and Friedrichstadt.

East Berlin

The 1980s reconstruction of Nikolaiviertel focused on a part of Berlin's medieval centre that had been damaged and demolished during and after World War II (Fig. 1). There, the former street layout was only partially recovered. Portions of that layout were also transformed, for example with a new, narrow street and a small square that overlooks the river Spree.

The projects for the reconstruction of Nikolaiviertel did not rely on the specific features of their place. They rather aimed at achieving an image of a stereotypical,



Fig. 1: The reconstruction of the medieval district Nikolaiviertel. **Top:** Aerial view of the area after World War II, with the remains of the Nikolaiviertel in 1971 (left) and during the reconstruction in 1985 (right). **Bottom:** Overlapping of the plans of the Nikolaiviertel before and after the reconstruction (left); view of the Propststraße in 1932 (middle) and in 1993 (right).

Sources: Landesarchiv Berlin, Foto: Dieter und Vera Breitenborn; Landesarchiv Berlin, Foto: Dieter und Vera Breitenborn (original photo slide in color); © Senatsverwaltung für Stadtentwicklung und Umwelt – Abt. II. Städtebau und Projekte 2014; Landesarchiv Berlin, Foto: k. A.; Landesarchiv Berlin, photo: Edmund Kasperski.

generic, Medieval and Baroque German city.¹ To enhance this impression, the houses closer to the *Nikolaikirche* were built as masonry houses on narrow plots. On the southernmost blocks on Muhlendamm, instead, houses were rebuilt on larger plots, as if they were Baroque. In both cases, a division into plots was simulated even if the intervention was

carried out on large plots of public land. On the contrary, the houses on the broader, busy street *Rathausstraße*, towards the modern *Alexanderplatz*, were designed uniformly using the so-called *Plattenbau*, a typical prefabricated construction technique of the German Democratic Republic (GDR). Furthermore, to create the image of a historical German

¹ Florian Urban, *Berlin/DDR – neo-historisch. Geschichte aus Fertigteilen*, Berlin, Gebr. Mann, 2007, p. 127–130.

city, the architects of the ‘new’ Nikolaiviertel resorted to a vocabulary of formal elements and urban spaces that were not place-specific and simply provided the passer-by with what they expected in a historic city: porticoes, narrow streets, squares and courtyards, buildings with gables, dormers, and bay windows.

Parallel to the Nikolaiviertel, the surroundings of the Friedrichstraße, the central axis running through the baroque expansions of Dorotheenstadt and Friedrichstadt, were also similarly rebuilt. Also there, like in Nikolaiviertel, a reconstruction ‘of the appearance’ was achieved, where buildings designed according to contemporary standards and technologies also featured historicist elements. The fact that these buildings are not original is still suggested by the numerous joints in their façade, which reveal the resort to the modern *Plattenbau* technique.

Neither Nikolaiviertel’s nor Friedrichstraße’s reconstruction aimed at providing buildings ‘as they were, where they were.’² The major goal behind both projects was the re-creation of an urban image and the spatiality of a piece of the city at a certain historical moment. However, in Nikolaiviertel the image to achieve was that of a Gothic and Baroque city, whilst in Friedrichstraße the image was to be that of a lively 19th century neighbourhood. To reinforce this character, the buildings were designed with a mix of housing, commercial activities, theatres, restaurants, and other places for recreation. Even traffic was banned in part of the districts.

Compared to Nikolaiviertel, the 1980s reconstruction of Friedrichstraße relied more on the historical plan of the districts: the new buildings were designed based on the former street layout and with the average eave height of Berlin’s 19th century blocks (of about 22 metres). Both in Nikolaiviertel and in Friedrichstraße architects did not rely on typological studies of the Berlin house, nor of the former

plot division – in other words, the social, economic, and political rationale behind the urban structure that was being rebuilt.

A theoretical debate on urban design never really occurred in the 1980s GDR and the new project stemmed more from a pragmatic approach rather than from a theoretical one.³ The contemporary situation in West Berlin was markedly different.

West Berlin and the IBA

From 1979, in West Berlin, urban reconstruction was pursued by the IBA Berlin 1979–87, a building exhibition organized to provide new social housing and to rebuild and renew former central districts. Urban reconstruction and urban renewal were tasks of two different sectors of the IBA, called *IBA Neubau* (new buildings) – led by Josef Paul Kleihues (1933–2004) – and *IBA Altbau* (old buildings) – led by Hardt-Waltherr Hämer (1922–2012). Given the focus of this paper, we will concentrate on the new buildings designed for the *IBA Neubau*, more specifically on some projects in southern Friedrichstadt.⁴

The urban reconstruction of the *IBA Neubau* was not a philological reconstruction of ‘everything as it was’: only some elements were taken up again from the past, such as the street layout and the height of the buildings, respecting the late 19th century buildings’ average eave height of 22 metres.

The ideas underlying this approach to urban reconstruction stemmed from a critique of recent *tabula rasa* in urban planning – a critique that can be traced to broader, international discourses on the city that spread throughout the 1970s. The IBA provided one of the greatest opportunities for the application of the contents of those 1970s discourses. It was influenced by texts such as *L’Architettura della Città* by Aldo Rossi (1931–1997),⁵ *Collage City* by Colin Rowe (1920–1999) and Fred Koetter (1938–2017),⁶

² Even the few former buildings that were rebuilt here according to their formal features, such as the *Ephraim Palais*, were not rebuilt with historical care and were not even rebuilt in their previous exact location.

³ Urban, 2007, *op. cit.*, p. 219

⁴ For a broad overview, see: Senatsverwaltung für Bau- und Wohnungswesen Berlin und S.T.E.R.N. GmbH (eds.), *Internationale Bauausstellung Berlin 1987. Projektübersicht*, Berlin, 1991.

⁵ Aldo Rossi, *L’Architettura della città*, Padova, Marsilio, 1966. German ed. 1973.

⁶ Colin Rowe, and Fred Koetter, *Collage City*, Cambridge Mass., The MIT Press, 1978.



Fig. 2: IBA Berlin 1979–1987, housing complex on Ritterstraße North. **Top:** Plot plans of the block in (from left to right) 1940, 1953, 1989. **Middle:** Figure-ground plans of the block in (from left to right) 1940, 1953, 1989. **Bottom:** Photos of the IBA project. View of the west facades of the block, where new buildings integrate former ones, with different materials (left); view on one of the inner courtyards (middle) and view of the rebuilt Feilnerhaus, designed by Rob Krier (right).

Sources: Redrawn after: Senatsverwaltung für Stadtentwicklung, Berlin mit Tobias Nöfer, Architekt, Berlin. Redrawn in the Winter semester 2022/23 for the seminar *Der Block als Idee der Stadt* at the RWTH Aachen, Department of Spatial Design, under supervision of Ilaria Maria Zedda; drawing: Lena Förster, Mona Klöcker, Marie Mohr, Antonius Schipp, further edited by Ilaria Maria Zedda; Photo Ilaria Maria Zedda (2021); Photo: Reinhard Görner (original photo slide in color), photo: Ilaria Maria Zedda (2018).

Stadtraum by Rob Krier (b. 1938–2023),⁷ or *Die Stadt in der Stadt* by Oswald Mathias Ungers (1926–2007).⁸

Kleiuhues called the IBA Neubau approach to reconstruction ‘critical’ for basing upon analysis and knowledge of the past, without compromising the modernity of the new design. The IBA architects had to design projects that had to fulfil modern standards, requirements, and expectations – including contemporary regulations for social housing.

Differently from the street layout and the building heights, the former plot division was taken neither as reference nor as constraint for the 1980s reconstruction, because in both halves of Berlin most of the land was public. In East Berlin, the socialist government did not envisage private property. In West Berlin, the reduction of the number of private plots, which was due to the bombings and later expropriations, made broader projects of reconstruction possible.

⁷ Rob Krier, *Stadtraum in Theorie und Praxis*, Stuttgart, Karl Krämer Verlag, 1975.

⁸ Oswald Mathias Ungers, Rem Koolhaas, Pieter Riemann, Hans Kollhoff, Arthur Ovaska, *Die Stadt in der Stadt. Berlin das grüne Stadtarchipel*, Ithaca/Cologne, Studio Press for Architecture, 1977.

At the IBA, architects dealt with this missing plot division in different ways.

The housing complex on Ritterstraße North (Fig. 2), for example, appears as a composition of rows of multi-family houses around courtyards. This large block is the outcome of a masterplan drawn by Rob Krier in 1977 and implemented during the IBA. According to Krier's concept, the new project recovers the perimeter of two former blocks. Compared to the latter, the courtyards of the new, large IBA block are very different: they are fewer in number and much bigger. This project materialises several of the themes that Krier addressed in his writings, where he insisted on the importance of cities with clearly recognizable, interconnected spaces⁹ and of blocks composed of different houses, clearly readable from the outer space.¹⁰

In Krier's project on Ritterstraße North, the difference among the buildings in the block was achieved through the collaboration of different architects under the supervision and the guidelines given by Krier. However, the division into different buildings is feigned, as it did not correspond to a real land division. The feigned division is readable in the building's fronts that overlook the outer streets, but it does not extend to the courtyards, which are mostly undivided spaces common to the houses overlooking them.

This project also features a 'reconstruction within the reconstruction', because in its central plaza the façade of Karl Friedrich Schinkel's *Feilnerhaus* (designed in 1828) was reconstructed. This is a mere façade reconstruction, as the ground floor does not end behind the façade, but it goes beyond it, including the corners.

In the IBA building designed by Aldo Rossi and Gianni Braghieri (b. 1945) at the corner of Kochstraße and Wilhelmstraße, the missing plot division was tackled differently. The building features a uniform design extended to all façades. In it, its architects suggested a division into separate houses on

different plots through design choices such as the rhythm of the stairwells on Kochstraße, or the alternation of brick and glass-clad buildings on Wilhelmstraße.¹¹ In his 1966 book *L'Architettura della città*, Rossi had already addressed the plot division as an important issue in urban design.¹²

After Berlin's reunification, later initiatives of urban reconstruction kept on relying on the theoretical and methodological legacy of the IBA. They further developed the concept and the strategy of 'critical' reconstruction that Kleihues introduced in the 1980s.

Reconstructions in Berlin in the 1990s

In the 1990s, planners and architects that engaged with Berlin's centre faced a newly unified city that included both areas of the former GDR and areas that in West Berlin had been under the responsibility of the IBA. While almost nothing was changed in the latter, in former GDR districts several buildings were demolished and rebuilt from scratch. Most of these buildings were projects from the 1960s and 70s, but there were also others – in the area around Friedrichstraße – that were an outcome of the 1980s historicist GDR reconstruction. These 1990s demolitions show that the history of reconstructions in Berlin's centre is also a history of ideologies that imposed themselves on each other with the passing of time and the change of the political situation.

In April 1991, a few months before Berlin was turned again into the capital of the reunified Germany, Hans Stimmann (b. 1941) was appointed Senate Building Director. In this position, he significantly influenced the building scene in Berlin for six years.

After the reunification, the big issue, still mostly ignored, was how to handle land that was still undivided. Weaknesses related to large projects on undivided properties had already emerged with the IBA, yet investors' interest in the huge plots available after the Wall was high. The

⁹ Rob Krier, Rob Krier, 1975, *op. cit.*

¹⁰ *Architektur Bibel of Leon and Rob Krier*, unpublished, 1976, p. 47.

¹¹ The insights into the IBA Berlin 1979–87 and its blocks presented here are part of the more comprehensive doctoral research conducted by Ilaria Maria Zedda at RWTH Aachen University and the University of Bologna, in cooperation with the Potsdam University of Applied Sciences, which is entitled *Rethinking the Block. The 1970s European Discourses on the City and the IBA Berlin 1979–87* (dissertation defended in September 2023).

¹² Aldo Rossi, 1973, *op. cit.* p. 175–176.

best-known example of the outcomes of such interests is that of Potsdamer Platz and Leipziger Platz. Such huge projects soon made the Berlin administration aware of the need to exercise greater control on urban reconstruction initiatives and to reconsider the issue of the land property and its division. Therefore, architects and politicians worked on the definition of new analytical and operational tools to tackle the problem of reconstruction from a new perspective.

The 'critical reconstruction' of the 1990s.

The iconic instrument of Stimmann's activity is represented by the series of figure-ground plans which stands as a synthetic moment of graphic restitution of the city.¹³ Referring back to principles already embedded in the IBA's intentions, the central theme of the 'critical reconstruction' becomes the spatial memory of a disappeared city. Parallel to this analytical and methodological research, in-depth theoretical research supported the urban interventions carried out in Berlin in the 1990s by Stimmann and his team, focusing on the problem of the form of the city as a question of architecture and on the idea of historical memory as a tool for its definition.¹⁴

The heart of the first critical reconstruction phase of the 1990s was Friedrichstadt North. Here, the decision to work with a precise set of rules, which established the basic parameters for the definition of urban space and architectural units, was crucial.¹⁵ The 1929 city plan provided the planimetric basis for the definition of the street space and special attention was paid to the subdivision of plots and the corresponding houses. Furthermore, while the IBA ended up focusing mostly on social housing, in the 1990s reconstruction a central role was given to a functional mix with shops and gastronomy, offices, and at least 20 percent housing.

For the buildings, common guidelines were defined to guarantee the relationship between the individuality of the single houses and the unity of the block. Elevations should be divided into three parts: a basement with a clear address, a 4-storey intermediate section, a continuous eaves height of 22 m, and two stepped back storeys. Façade materials should be derived from Berlin's building tradition and thereby evoke the enduring character of the building, reconfirming the 'materiality' of the city and its 'stone architecture'.

Three alternative design strategies for the complete or partial reconstruction of a block can be analysed (Fig. 3).¹⁶

Block 205 *Friedrichstadt Passagen* designed by Oswald Mathias Ungers (1926–2007) between Friedrichstraße and Gendarmenmarkt is an example for 'the block as a unitary building', with two courtyards, whose plot extends to an entire block and renounces the original parcel structure, allowing the creation of a large mixed-use complex. The building confronts the topic of the Berlin block, articulating it in two distinct elements: a large, nine-storey central volume and the six lower added buildings, separated by the entrance halls. This ensures both the unitary character of the block as a big building, and its articulation in individual houses.

If Block 205 is representative of the principle of unity (one block one house), Block 109 is based on the idea of 'the block as an assembly box'. According to this principle, the reconstructed part of the block is composed of a big covered central atrium with common staircases, like a framework all designed by Kleihues, and of the interposed individual buildings by other architects.

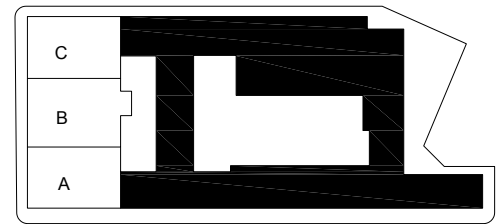
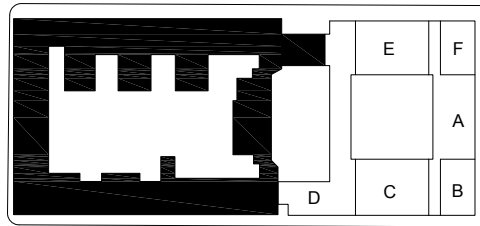
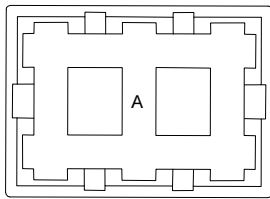
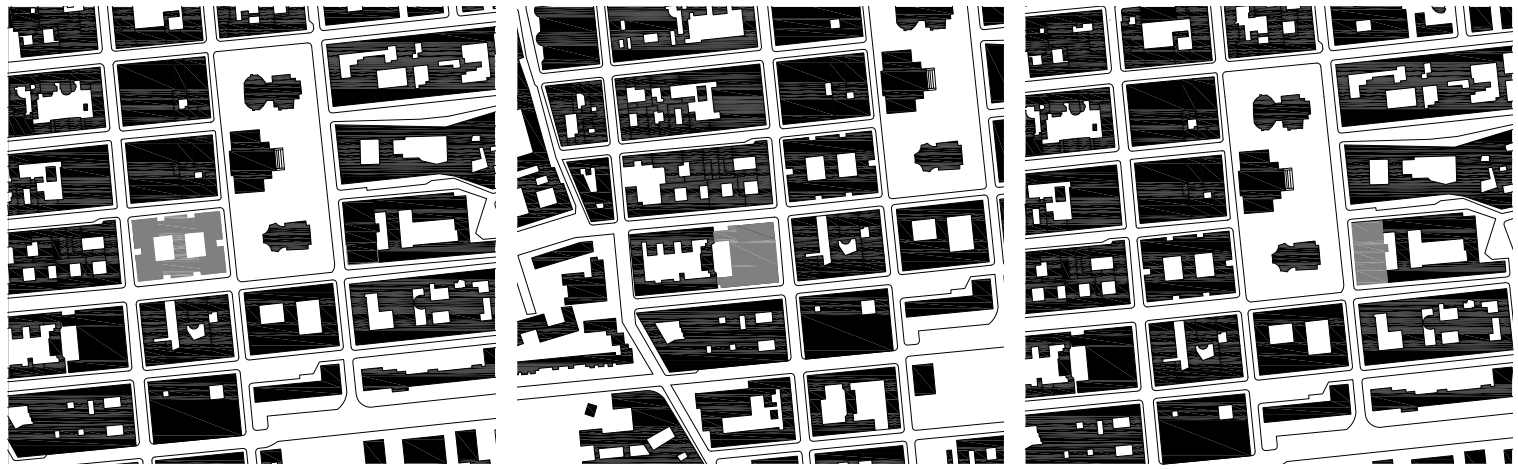
However, the most common principle is that of a 'collage' namely 'the block as a composition of juxtaposed individual houses'. Block 208 *Hofgarten am Gendarmenmarkt* is an exemplary case of this kind of critical reconstruction. The plan by Kleihues, based on the resumption of the historical plot division, proposed a perimeter construction with several

¹³ Hans Stimmann (edns.), *The City in Black. The Physiognomy of Central Berlin in Figure-Ground Plans and Parcel Plans 1940–2010*, Berlin, Nikolai, 2002.

¹⁴ See: Hans Stimmann (edns.), *Babylon, Berlin etc. Das Vokabular der europäischen Stadt*, Birkhäuser, Basel, 1995; Thomas Albrecht, Tobias Nöfer, Rudolf Spindler (eds.), *Stimmanns Stadtlektüren. Texte, Vorträge und Interviews 2012 bis 2022*, Berlin, Wasmuth und Zohlen, 2022.

¹⁵ Hans Stimmann (ed.), *Städtebaulicher Strukturplan. Kritische Rekonstruktion des Bereichs Friederichswerder, Friedrichstadt, Dorotheenstadt*, Städtebau und Architektur Bericht 6, Berlin, 1992.

¹⁶ See: Annegret Burg, Hans Stimmann (eds.), *Berlin Mitte. Die Entstehung einer urbanen Architektur*, Basel/Berlin, Birkhäuser, 1996; Michele Caja, Silvia Malcovati, *Berlino 1990–2010. La ricerca sull'isolato e sul quartiere*, Milano, Libraccio, 2009.



buildings by different architects also integrating pre-existing houses. The principle of variety is, however, contradicted by the presence of a common inner garden and underground parking.

The most famous case of collage is Block 275 in Schützenstraße. Here one architect, Aldo Rossi, designed the master plan and all the individual houses. Rossi's block can be seen as a bitterly ironic thematisation of the absence of individual plots in the contemporary, capitalist city. In this case, the simulation of the division into different houses is more visible, more polemical, and yet also somehow more real than in Rossi's earlier projects for the IBA.

The Planwerk Innenstadt

Between 1996 and 1999 Stimmann continued his work as State Secretary for Planning and from 1999 to 2006, he again held the office of Senate Building Director. During this period, he conceived, among other things, the *Planwerk Innenstadt* (inner city plan), which strongly consolidates his idea of reconstruction, further improving the strategies implemented at the IBA.¹⁷ While in the 1980s and 90s the individuality of the houses was often merely simulated in the façades, in some projects of the 2000s it was achieved through a real division of ownership. Exemplary in this case

¹⁷ Senatsverwaltung (eds.), *Planwerk Innenstadt Berlin. Ergebnis, Prozess, Sektorale Planungen und Werkstätten*, Berlin, Kulturbuch-Verlag, 1999; Hans Stimmann (eds.), *Von der Architektur- zur Stadtdebatte: Die Diskussion um das Planwerk Innenstadt*, Berlin, Braun, 2001; Philipp Meuser, *Vom Planwerk zum Bauwerk. Bauten in der Berliner Innenstadt nach 2000*, Berlin, Braun, 2002.

← **Fig. 3:** The block as a unitary building (Block 205 – Friedrichstadt-Passagen, O.M. Ungers); The block as an assembly box (Block 109 – Kontorhaus, Josef Paul Kleihues); The block as a composition of juxtaposed individual houses (Block 32 - Karree am Gendarmenmarkt, J.P. Kleihues; Block 115 - Dorotheenhöfe + Friedrich-Karree, O.M. Ungers and Assmann Salomon & Scheidt).

Source: Michele Caja, Silvia Malcovati, Berlino 1990-2010. *La ricerca sull'isolato e sul quartiere*. Milano, Libraccio, 2009.

→ **Fig. 4:** Bernd Albers and Silvia Malcovati (with Vogt Landscape and Terfort Stadt und Verkehr), competition design for the Molkenmarkt in Berlin: overlay of the floor plan on the historical plan from 1910.

Source: Bernd Albers Gesellschaft für Architekten GmbH.



is the project for the reconstruction of the Baroque district of Friedrichswerder.¹⁸

Most of this district was razed by bombings in World War II and further demolished during the GDR period. It was only after the Fall of the Wall that a new plan was developed, involving the entire area between the Spittelmarkt and the Werderscher Markt. Following the plan by Dieter Hoffmann-Axthelm (b. 1949) and Bernd Albers (1957–2022), the block realised between Kurstraße, Jägerstraße and Oberwallstraße, is characterised by houses built on individual plots with a fixed width of 6.5 m and a variable depth of up to 20 metres and defined by their vertical façade development, contained within the maximum height of 22 metres. The project tries to re-propose the variety of narrow houses of the medieval urban blocks but ends up creating an overall effect of unevenness.

The core of the city

The reconstruction of the heart of the historic city is still a special case.¹⁹ Berlin's original city centre is in fact still unsolved hovering between GDR urbanism, a car-oriented city and powerful traces of historical memory. Here, despite countless competitions and plans, ideological and political tensions have prevented transformations and still condition ongoing processes.

Two recent projects for these areas show well the complexity of this phenomenon in theory and practice. The first one is the project for the so-called Marx-Engels-Forum, the area between Alexanderplatz and Spree. This area corresponds to a formerly densely built-up district, the

¹⁸ Hans Stimmann, *Stadthäuser. Handbuch und Planungshilfe*, Berlin, Dom Publishers, 2011.

¹⁹ Hans Stimmann, *Berliner Altstadt. Neue Orte und Plätze rund um das Schloss*, Berlin, Dom Publishers, 2009 (2014); Franziska Nentwig, Dominik Bartmann (eds.), *Berlins vergessene Mitte. Stadtkern 1840 – 2010*, Berlin, Verlag Kettler, 2012; Benedikt Goebel (eds.), *Mitte! Modernisierung und Zerstörung des Berliner Stadtkerns von 1850 bis zur Gegenwart*, Berlin, Lukas Verlag, 2018.

beating heart of Berlin in the years before World War II, which was later transformed into a parade ground during the GDR. For this part of Berlin's city centre, in January 2021, a competition was announced for landscape architects to create a park.²⁰

The fact itself that this competition aimed at a new park and not at recovering urban forms and spaces is symptomatic of a certain current renunciation to reconstructing the historical memory of the place or at least restaging its spatial structure. The winning project will now be realized and this important area in front of the reconstructed royal palace will definitely remain a void.

The second project is the one for the Molkenmarkt, the oldest square in Berlin, which was destroyed during World War II and later further transformed by a new urban highway. After numerous studies and consultations, this area became the subject of a two-phase competition, which was announced in August 2021.²¹

We won one of the two first prizes foreseen in that competition. One of the key aspects of our submission was the recovery of the historical urban layout and plot division – at least there, where possible – and of a system of interconnected urban spaces: streets, courtyards, and squares (Fig. 4). Also in this case, however, undivided ownership and political-ideological pressure blocked the process. After a year-long workshop between the two winning offices, the project slowly lost all contact with the historical memory of the place to satisfy the requests of the state housing companies which own large portions of the land. The plots disappeared, and the small courtyards merged.

Conclusion

Since the 1980s, Berlin underwent different interventions of urban reconstruction that stemmed from different historical, political, and economic backgrounds. This is the reason why we chose to write of 'reconstructions' of Berlin, in the plural form. These reconstructions were based on different principles, relied on different strategies, and brought different outcomes. Very few of them were philological,

and most of them envisaged major transformation based on partial reference to the past. Some of them relied on studies on urban morphology and architectural typologies, while others were based merely on the reconstruction of an image. The examples we presented show different aspects of the topic in theory and practice:

- Berlin has been and still is a laboratory for architectural and urban reconstruction;
- There is no single theory, but a multiplicity of approaches with different theoretical foundations;
- The central areas of Berlin are still looking for a new identity between innovation and historical memory;
- The relationship between urban design and land division is a crucial issue;
- Any reconstruction project in the city is a political and social issue;
- Without a synergy between politics, society, architecture and urban culture there is no project possible.

The examples we presented open crucial questions for the future: Is there still a political and social vision behind the urban project? Is there still a theory behind the practice of architects? Does the spatial memory of the past still have a meaning in the project of the future? Is it possible to combine the architectural and spatial questions of reconstruction with current questions about sustainability and climate change?

The answers to these and other questions are crucial for imagining a future for Berlin that is mindful of the history and tradition of the European city and at the same time capable of formulating appropriate and innovative solutions for current problems.

²⁰ www.berlin.de/sen/bauen/wettbewerbe/2021/freiraumgestaltung-rathaus-und-marx-engels-forum/, last accessed on 19 June 2023.

²¹ molkenmarkt.berlin.de/planung/ (last accessed on 19 June 2023).

Résumé

Depuis les années 1950, le centre de Berlin est un laboratoire de la reconstruction urbaine. Après les projets conçus et réalisés dans le Berlin divisé par le Mur entre les années 1960 et 1980 et ceux conçus après la réunification de la ville en 1989, les quartiers centraux de la capitale allemande sont encore aujourd'hui des chantiers ouverts et font l'objet de débats, de concours et de nouveaux projets.

Cet article se concentre sur les débats et les projets urbains qui ont concerné les quartiers médiévaux et baroques du centre de Berlin depuis 1979. Il traite des projets de reconstruction qui se sont concentrés sur la relation entre l'histoire et les nouveaux projets.

Tout d'abord, il aborde les reconstructions urbaines menées tout au long des années 1980 à Berlin-Est dans les années de la République démocratique allemande et à Berlin-Ouest pour le secteur Neubau de l'Internationale Bauausstellung (IBA) Berlin 1979–1987. Deuxièmement, il aborde les reconstructions menées dans les années 1990 dans les quartiers centraux de la ville réunifiée. Troisièmement, il traite des reconstructions ultérieures menées dans le centre de Berlin depuis les années 2000.

Le récent concours pour le Molkenmarkt (2021–2022) pose à nouveau la question de l'avenir du centre-ville entre la reconstruction et les nouveaux paradigmes urbains. Les débats qui ont eu lieu à ce sujet montrent la nécessité actuelle d'une confrontation critique avec les reconstructions antérieures du centre-ville, leurs prémisses théoriques, mais surtout leurs projets construits. Les lectures unilatérales de ces défis urbains et architecturaux, qui considèrent soit les projets indépendamment de la théorie, soit la théorie indépendamment des projets, tendent facilement à se réduire à une critique idéologique, plutôt qu'à une critique opérationnelle utile pour la pratique réelle.

Des initiatives récentes montrent l'émergence de positions radicales qui, soit soutiennent une reconstruction philologique des textures urbaines et des bâtiments, soit se distancient de toute continuité avec le passé. Notre article montre que cette division n'est pas nouvelle. Elle est apparue dès les années 1970, lorsqu'il a été suggéré que les nouvelles constructions dans les zones historiques devraient à nouveau tenir compte du passé de la ville, s'opposant ainsi à une idéologie de la conception qui viserait une structure moderne et fonctionnelle, basée sur une *tabula rasa*.

En montrant des études de cas représentatives des différentes stratégies de reconstruction mises en œuvre depuis la fin des années 1970, cet article pose la question de savoir où se situe la frontière entre la reconstruction et le design urbain et s'il existe des projets dans lesquels les réflexions théoriques sur la continuité avec le passé ont été traduites avec succès dans le design contemporain.

Zusammenfassung

Seit den 1950er Jahren ist das Zentrum Berlins ein Labor für den städtischen Wiederaufbau. Nach den Projekten, die in dem durch die Mauer geteilten Berlin zwischen den 1960er und 1980er Jahren geplant und gebaut wurden, und denjenigen, die nach der Wiedervereinigung der Stadt 1989 entworfen wurden, sind die zentralen Bereiche der deutschen Hauptstadt auch heute noch offene Baustellen und Gegenstand von Debatten, Wettbewerben und neuen Projekten.

Dieser Beitrag konzentriert sich auf die städtebaulichen Debatten und Projekte, die sich seit 1979 mit den zentralen mittelalterlichen und barocken Bezirken Berlins befasst haben. Er befasst sich mit Wiederaufbauprojekten, die sich auf das Verhältnis von Geschichte und neuen Projekten konzentrieren.

Erstens geht es um die städtebaulichen Rekonstruktionen, die bis in die 1980er Jahre in Ost-Berlin in den Jahren der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik und in West-Berlin für den Bereich Neubau der Internationalen Bauausstellung (IBA) Berlin 1979–1987 durchgeführt wurden. Zweitens geht es um die in den 1990er Jahren durchgeführten Rekonstruktionen in den zentralen Bereichen der wiedervereinigten Stadt. Drittens geht es um die späteren Rekonstruktionen im Zentrum Berlins seit den 2000er Jahren.

Insbesondere der jüngste Wettbewerb für den Molkenmarkt (2021–2022) wirft erneut Fragen nach der Zukunft der Innenstadt zwischen Rekonstruktion und neuen städtebaulichen Paradigmen auf. Die Debatten, die darüber entstanden sind, zeigen die aktuelle Notwendigkeit einer kritischen Auseinandersetzung mit früheren Rekonstruktionen in der Innenstadt, ihren theoretischen Prämissen, aber vor allem ihren gebauten Projekten. Einseitige Lesarten dieser städtebaulichen und architektonischen Herausforderungen, die entweder die Projekte losgelöst von der Theorie oder die Theorie losgelöst von den Projekten betrachten, neigen leicht dazu, sich auf eine ideologische Kritik zu beschränken, anstatt eine für die Praxis nützliche operative Kritik zu üben.

Jüngste Initiativen zeigen das Aufkommen radikaler Positionen, die entweder eine philologische Rekonstruktion von Stadtstrukturen und Gebäuden unterstützen oder sich von jeglicher Kontinuität mit der Vergangenheit distanzieren. Unser Beitrag zeigt, dass diese Spaltung alles andere als neu ist. Sie entstand bereits in den 1970er Jahren, als Vorschläge aufkamen, bei Neubauten in historischen Gebieten die Vergangenheit der Stadt wieder zu berücksichtigen und sich einer Designideologie entgegenzustellen, die eine moderne und funktionale Struktur auf der Grundlage einer *Tabula rasa* anstrebt.

Anhand von Fallstudien, die für verschiedene Strategien des Wiederaufbaus seit den späten 1970er Jahren repräsentativ sind, stellen wir in diesem Beitrag die Frage, wo die Grenze zwischen Wiederaufbau und Stadtgestaltung verläuft und ob es Projekte gibt, bei denen theoretische Überlegungen zur Kontinuität mit der Vergangenheit erfolgreich in zeitgenössisches Design umgesetzt wurden.

Éloïse Brégant-Belin

THE RECONSTRUCTION OF FALAISE (1944–1970)

How Promoting the Town's Mediaeval Heritage Revitalised its Image



Fig. 1: The mediaeval castle with the church of Sainte-Trinité (middle distance on the left), the church of Saint-Gervais in the centre, surrounded by the fortifications. The church of Notre-Dame de Guibray and the geometric outline running from the Guibray fairground (in the foreground), source: Matthäus Merian the Older, „Fallaise“ (Falaise), before 1650, AD14.

90

Éloïse Brégant-Belin

Falaise, a town in the south of Calvados, is known today for its famous 11th century castle where William the Conqueror was born. However, the town's mediaeval identity has only recently been promoted. Indeed, until 1944, Falaise was considered to be one of the oldest Norman towns to have conserved all its architectural heritage and had therefore come to embody a stratification of past centuries. However, after suffering 80% destruction in the bombings of summer 1944, the town could no longer hold onto such a claim. Stakeholders in the post-war reconstruction therefore set out to give

Falaise a new identity, as having struggled to keep up with the pace of industrialisation, the town had been in a state of decline since the 19th century.

In this article, we begin by exploring the factors which encouraged the people of Falaise to choose a mediaeval identity for their town, in the wake of the destruction it suffered in the summer of 1944. Then, we consider the implementation of this project and its inherent complexities in some detail. To finish, we appraise the urban improvements and architectural projects which, thanks to the conception of the *Plan d'Aménagement et de Reconstruction* (PRA) – or reconstruction and development plan – helped to create an identity for the town based on its mediaeval past. This identity is still firmly established today.

Choosing an identity for a destroyed town

Falaise, a town with a relatively prosperous past

Falaise expanded considerably from the 9th century onwards when a first urban centre was built within a fort. In the 11th century, this site, which was surrounded by moats and ramparts, became an important mediaeval castle and the town was defined as the residence of the Dukes of Normandy. Falaise continued to grow until the 14th century, extending around three urban clusters that still shape the town today. Two of these, Saint-Gervais and Sainte-Trinité, are within the walled centre itself; and the third, Guibray, lies just to the east. The mediaeval era was a prosperous time which saw the arrival of many cottage industries and businesses, such as the fur and cloth trades. The Guibray fairs, in the summer, propelled Falaise to the status of the “leading place of trade in the west of the

country”¹ and dictated the geometric layout of this part of the town. (Fig. 1)

Between the 14th and 17th centuries, due to various conflicts, the town experienced several periods of unrest. These alternated with times of peace in which it could rebuild its architecture and economic fortunes. From the 18th century until the middle of the 20th century, peace was restored and Falaise underwent some noticeable changes, particularly within its crafts sector, with textile mills, hosiery businesses and tanneries setting up along the Ante and the Marescot rivers, on both sides of the ramparts.

The 19th century heralded the decline of Falaise, however, as it saw its cottage industries disappear one by one due to competition from the region’s industrial factories with their ever-increasing output. As permanent businesses set up in the town itself, the Guibray fair diminished in importance and, with the creation of rail hubs in Caen and Lisieux, some 40 km from Falaise, the town lost its leading status within the region, never to recover it.

By the time the Second World War broke out, Falaise had lost one third of its residents and many of its industries (5,616 residents in 1936 compared with 14,000 in 1793 when the decline began). As the town had been spared from any destruction since the end of the 16th century, it was characterised by an extremely dense urban fabric and displayed evidence of several centuries of construction, identifiable by different materials and architectural styles.

However, this diverse built environment was unsanitary and dilapidated like most Norman towns at that time. This was because industrialisation had not just affected the economic fortunes of towns like Falaise, it had also affected their architecture as, in general, builders were not prepared for this new era. Although Falaise had been powerful and important between the 11th and 17th centuries, it was now a medium-sized town in a permanent state of decline, with a population who, for the most part, were poor.

During the Second World War, Falaise was occupied from June 1940 onwards. However, it was only affected by combat when the Normandy campaign launched on 6 June 1944, the day of the Allied landings on the Norman coast. The town was bombed several times throughout the summer of 1944, until it was liberated on 17 August 1944.

The situation in Falaise after the bombings

The people of Falaise, who had evacuated, returned a few days after the liberation to find their town in ruins, having suffered 85% destruction. The first phase of reconstruction, known as the ‘preparation period’,² was launched. The town council officially resumed meetings on 17 October 1944 to draw up a plan for managing the urgent situation that followed the bombings. Its members soon turned to the question of their town’s identity and its viability. The destruction had exacerbated the demographic decline and the challenges to be overcome to rebuild Falaise, even temporarily, made matters worse. Local councillors were also becoming aware that their town had lost much of its built heritage, which had endured since the Middle Ages, as well as the few industries that would have helped it to remain economically stable.

However, the town council remained hopeful that it could put Falaise back on the regional map and realised that reconstruction presented an opportunity. With this in mind, from 1945 onwards, the council began to define its goals, namely, to revive the local economy through all available means and to re-establish a firm identity for Falaise, to encourage people back to the town.

To this end, council members, with the help of Léon Rême (1910–1968), the Ministry of Reconstruction’s chief planner for Falaise, spent time considering the factors which had given the town its influence in the past. In his supporting report, prior to drawing up the *Plan d’Aménagement et de Reconstruction* (PRA), Rême recommended redefining the town’s industrial activities and reviving its

¹ Jean-Louis Libourel, Pascal Corbierre, *Falaise: Calvados, Service régional de l’Inventaire général: Association de développement culturel en Basse-Normandie* (ed.), coll. *Images du patrimoine* (no 76), 1990, p. 2.

² Eloïse Brégant-Belin, “Falaise, ville de la Reconstruction du Calvados (1944–1970). Conformité et singularité”, dissertation supervised by Marie-Jeanne Dumont, *Ecole Nationale Supérieure d’Architecture de Paris-Belleville*, 2022.

economy by building on what had attracted visitors to Falaise in the past, i.e., its architectural heritage, especially its mediaeval castle.

Safeguarding mediaeval heritage to regain prominence regionally

There are several reasons why stakeholders in the Reconstruction chose the mediaeval period to embody Falaise. Firstly, the majority of buildings that dominated the town and defined its outline dated from the Middle Ages. It was obvious to residents that they should conserve the churches and, more importantly, landmarks such as the castle where William the Conqueror was born and its ramparts. Moreover, the castle had become the town's emblem, having been abandoned in the 17th century then rediscovered two centuries later with the Romantic artists.

For local councillors and Rême, it was essential to draw on and amplify an existing emblem. (Fig. 2)

Additionally, post-war France attached little importance to monuments built after the 16th century. This was broadly the case in Falaise, as its mediaeval buildings were the only ones listed on the register of Historic Monuments. Maurice Berry (1908–1995), who was appointed Chief Architect for Historic Monuments (ACMH) for Falaise between 1945 and 1955, was no exception to this rule and soon demolished structures built later than the mediaeval era. As an outcome, from 1945 onwards, and in line with Rême's economic recovery plan, arrangements were made to conserve the town's mediaeval heritage.

Fig. 2: The mediaeval castle of Falaise – the town's emblem, source: Félix Benoist and Eugène Ciceri, „Falaise (Vue générale), Calvados“, excerpt from *La Normandie illustrée*, 1852–1854, AD14.



Reviving the economy with a mediaeval city

An ambivalence about heritage in the aftermath of the destruction

Nevertheless, after the bombings, priorities were somewhat different. In Falaise, as in other heavily bombed French towns, the most pressing concern was to rehouse residents and help businesses start up again. The existing buildings, even though they dated from the Middle Ages, were in danger. Building contractors cleared and filled the ground without paying attention to the value of buildings. Residents protested about the slow progress of reconstruction works with some petitioning for a clean slate.

This behaviour prompted heritage advocates to intervene and start to raise awareness of the risks this new wave of destruction posed to the town and its monuments. Dr Raoul Doranlo (1875–1958), a librarian, and the historian André Rostand (1878–1965) took it upon themselves to monitor the clearance works, particularly around the ramparts, and alerted Rême. After this, the *Service des Beaux-Arts* (Department for Fine Arts and Architecture) took a more active role in supervising and preparing reconstruction works in Falaise and required all demolition works to be approved by its representative, Maurice Berry.

The idea of reviving the economy through tourism thus emerged and the town council helped to protect historic buildings despite pressure from those who wanted to speed up reconstruction by demolishing urban blocks.

The PRA: a tool for defining priorities and preserving the architectural heritage of Falaise

In July 1946, Rême put forward his first PRA to the town council. There were two main objectives: to transform Falaise into a modern town in line with the requirements of the Ministry of Reconstruction and Urban Planning (MRU) and to revive the town's values to forge its identity.

To apply these principles, Rême used a zoning system (Fig. 3). Overall, this followed the broad outline of the

old layout, with a commercial and residential area in the walled centre, an exclusively residential zone between Guibray and the centre, and a rural zone on the outskirts. However, the principles of modern architecture insisted on the concept of defined urban blocks with well-spaced rows of buildings, which contradicted the dense and haphazard composition of the old town. Rême's PRA was therefore obliged to put old public buildings in jeopardy as their volume and exterior architectural features did not fit the principles of reconstruction-era architecture. This caused heated debate with the Service des Beaux-Arts and even called the listed status of some monuments back into question.

To reproduce the picturesque aspects of Falaise while also providing modern levels of comfort, Rême chose to isolate two zones that were exempt from the strict rules of modern town planning. The old streets were retained in these areas and restoration was prioritised. These zones, the focus of the tourism project, would be enhanced throughout the reconstruction process to show off the town's historical assets.

Strategies to recover the spirit of Falaise

In his supporting report, Rême noted that despite the absence of construction law in Falaise, the architects had shown “a degree of restraint”.³ He therefore decided to use his analysis of the former urban make-up as the basis for devising the zonal regulations the MRU imposed on its architects. Among the rules he set, the requirement to use limestone on exterior walls is particularly noteworthy as this was exceptional in the context of post-war reconstruction policy in Calvados.

Before the bombardments, this building material was widely used in the Falaise region as there were many limestone quarries there. However, at the time of the Reconstruction, the quarries were experiencing shortages and from 1947 onwards, the departmental authorities restricted its use to important public buildings and all

³ Léon Rême, *Plan d'Aménagement et d'Urbanisme de la Ville de Falaise – Rapport justificatif*, Fonds d'archives du Cabinet d'Architecture Pierre Dureau et Léon Rême: 86/399, Archives départementales du Calvados.

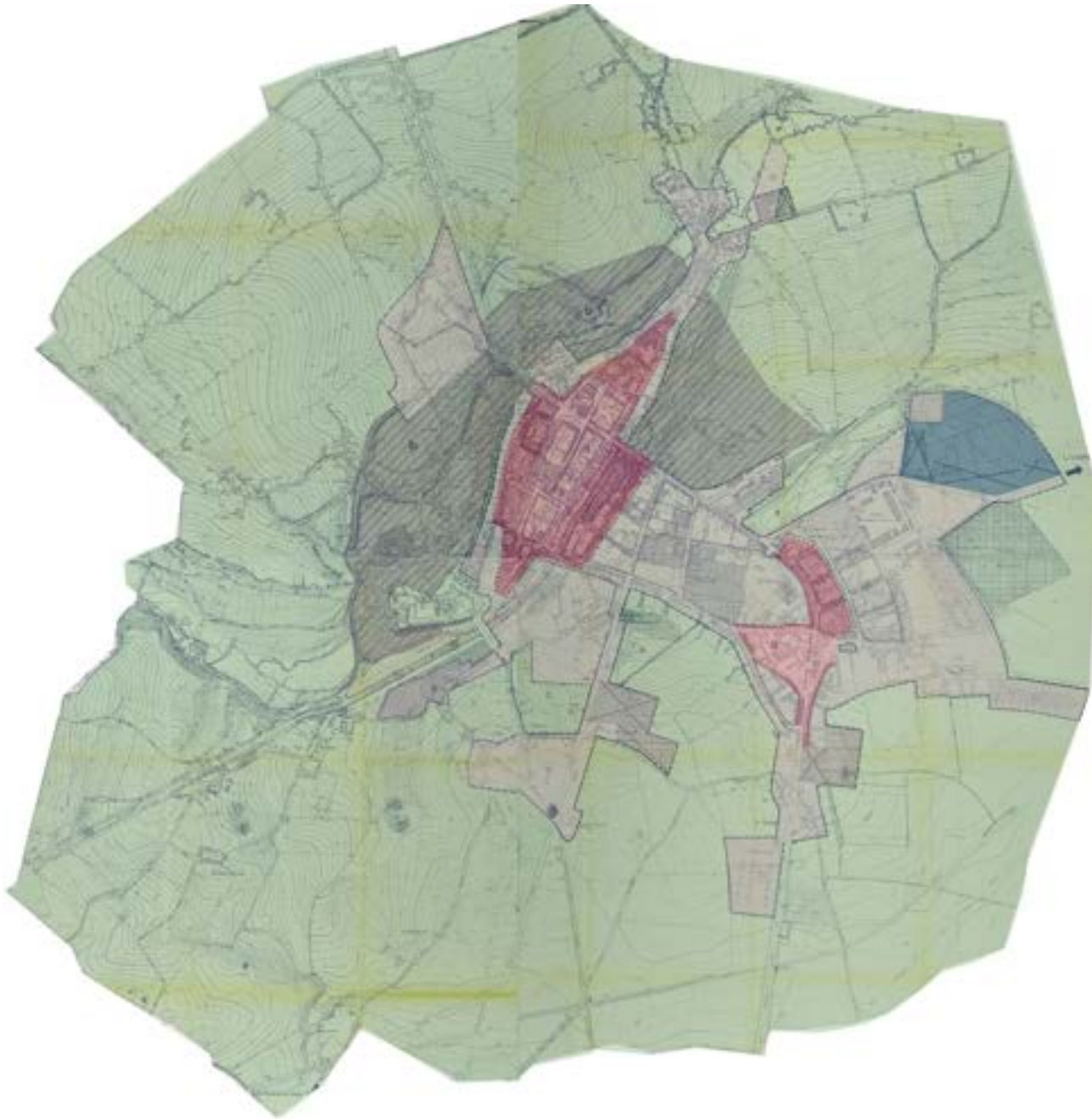


Fig. 3: Zoning system in the Reconstruction and development plan for Falaise. Legend: continuous residential zone (dark pink), commercial and residential zone (pale pink), irregular residential zone (grey), Val d'Ante district (dark green), industrial zone (blue), rural zone (green), source: Eloïse Brégant-Belin "Zonage du Plan de Reconstruction et d'Aménagement de Falaise", January 2023.

structures in Caen's city centre.⁴ Nevertheless, Falaise was granted a dispensation because the departmental authorities believed that the town's picturesque appearance should be conserved. As limestone had already been used in the construction of older buildings, this ensured better continuity between these and the restored buildings. (Fig. 4)

The Reconstruction as a witness to the history of Falaise

Stage designing heritage: restoration and layout

Rême's strategy for incorporating the tourism plan into the PRA followed two lines. To begin, he selected various mediaeval buildings, which it was imperative to restore,

⁴ Patrice Gourbin. *L'architecture et l'urbanisme de la Reconstruction dans le Calvados. Du projet à la réalisation. CAUE du Calvados*. Caen, France, 2011. p. 50.



Fig. 4: Limestone – linking the architectural past to the Reconstruction, photo July 1985, source: AD 14, Fonds Marcel Chevret: Aerial view of Falaise, a town rebuilt.

and enhanced them by creating visual openings in the layout and developing the surrounding urban space. He then designed a continuous through route within the two protected zones defined in his PRA and set up new initiatives there to attract tourists. (Fig. 5)

Arguably, the protected area of Val d'Ante is most representative of the tourism strategy and worthy of closer examination. To devise appropriate programmes, Rême and the town council visited other tourist towns in the region and observed the growing interest among visitors for spa resorts and water sports.

This observation prompted two ideas which would place the river Ante at the centre of the project. One of the town councillors drew inspiration from the artificial lake at Bagnoles-de-l'Orne, a new spa town, and proposed something similar at the entrance to Falaise. The intention was to show off the ramparts and promote the picturesque character of the town.

Rême then proposed building a swimming pool which could be supplied with water from the Ante. The mayor

was won over by this project, which would finally give the town's children an opportunity to learn to swim, and he did everything possible to put this amenity in place. Next, it was decided to add a campsite and sports grounds to the municipal swimming pool site. The complex was developed at the foot of the castle with an uninterrupted view of the fortifications and ramparts. The Ante district was picture postcard perfect and Falaise became a mediaeval centre with every modern comfort.

The Val d'Ante amenities were not just developed for tourists. They were also a way to address the problems of unsanitary conditions and eventually attract a new population.

The projects to create a continuous through route in the two protected zones and a staggered route around the mediaeval buildings were developed independently. This enabled the town council to roll out its tourism and mediaeval heritage promotion plans over several years, which proved to be invaluable as it encountered difficulties with construction and restoration works almost systematically.

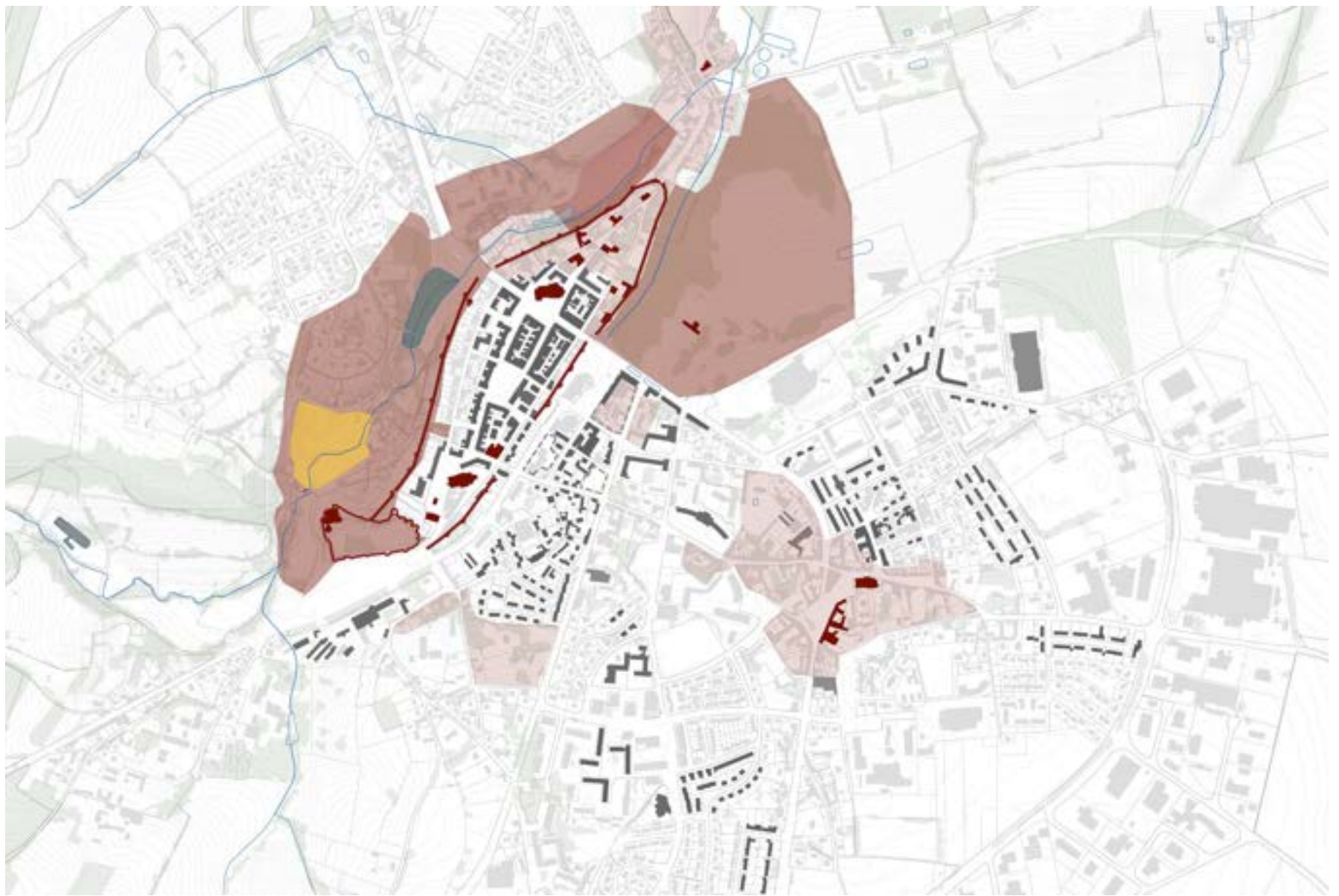


Fig. 5: Location of buildings related to Léon Rême's tourism plan for Falaise (background plan: Falaise in the 21st century). Legend: tourist facilities (yellow), artificial lake (dark blue), the Ante and Marescot rivers (blue), protected areas of Val d'Ante and La Fresnaye (dark pink), protected and restored districts (pale pink), significant old buildings (red)., source: Eloïse Brégant-Belin "Zonage du Plan de Reconstruction et d'Aménagement de Falaise", January 2023.

A complex, long-term project

It should not be forgotten that the overriding objective at all levels during preparations for the Reconstruction (1944–1946) was to rehouse the population.

No sooner had Rême submitted his first PRA than the MRU's objectives evolved. After rehousing people, towns were required to rebuild shops and schools. However, at the same time, the town council in Falaise was determined to launch its economic recovery plan. It

campaigned to rebuild its industries and, when it came to heritage, it obtained express agreement from the *Service des Beaux-Arts* to temporarily restore listed buildings dating from the mediaeval period. To speed up the launch of projects which were not considered priorities by the government, such as the municipal swimming pool, the council agreed to establish an independent budget.

During the final period of the Reconstruction in Falaise (1955–1970),⁵ the MRU required hospitals and civic

⁵ Eloïse Brégant-Belin, "Falaise, ville de la Reconstruction du Calvados (1944–1970). Conformité et singularité", dissertation supervised by Marie-Jeanne Dumont, *Ecole Nationale Supérieure d'Architecture de Paris-Belleville*, 2022.

buildings to be rebuilt. Falaise followed these directives, even though the project to rebuild the hospital encountered significant difficulties and was only completed in the 2000s. In 1970, the schools and housing projects stipulated in the PRA were completed, and the town expanded with the creation of new districts.

However, the works to build tourist facilities and restore monuments were far from completion. The MRU consistently refused to release the funds for many projects, which slowed down progress considerably and even brought some works to a standstill. The *Service des Beaux-Arts* postponed the restoration of some buildings and in most cases, required 'faithful' restoration, whereas the town council's programme required more radical transformation. Plans to conserve mediaeval buildings were also subjected to constant reappraisal from stakeholders in the Reconstruction, as the rules they imposed sometimes blocked works to restore buildings considered a priority.

Tourism projects within the economic recovery plan dragged on until the 1980s. Despite everything, these extended delays allowed time for attitudes to historic monuments to change. And ultimately, the PRA evolved from a plan which focused only on enhancing the mediaeval face of Falaise to one which slowly unveiled the town's historic past in its entirety.

An urban identity built around a mediaeval centre: the visible or not so visible history of Falaise

Today, Falaise still has a persona that revolves around its mediaeval centre. However, surveying the town, it soon becomes clear that each district has its own piece of history. Rême generally prioritised restoration, even in districts where he had hoped to follow modernist principles more closely.

The historical features of the protected districts of Val d'Ante and La Fresnaye were enhanced and other districts that had barely been affected, such as Saint-Gervais and Saint-Laurent, saw few of their buildings demolished. Today, the high quality of their restoration means that we

can admire former factories and private residences from the 17th and 18th centuries.

During the Reconstruction era, the links with heritage rapidly evolved and buildings from periods after the Middle Ages became more important. In Falaise, Jean Merlet (1910–1976) succeeded Berry as Chief Architect for Historic Monuments in 1955. He had numerous buildings from the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries listed.

Moreover, by establishing a more open layout and through significant work on urban planning, buildings dating from after the Middle Ages, such as the Château de La Fresnaye and private residences, stood out more and were more noticeable to visitors.

Conclusion

In Falaise, the Reconstruction was a pivotal time in which residents rediscovered their town and finally became aware of the significance of their heritage. Initially, the matter of the town's identity naturally steered town council members towards conserving mediaeval buildings that represented its roots and, in some way, already influenced its image.

Gradually, thoughts on enhancing these buildings encouraged stakeholders in the Reconstruction to pay attention to buildings from other eras as well. Today, despite the widespread destruction it suffered in 1944, Falaise has the good fortune to reflect all its history in its architecture. However, as its calendar of events and tourism communications show, its persona is still focused primarily on the Middle Ages and the tourist perception is still one of a walled mediaeval town.

Nevertheless, the question of identity appears to be raising its head once again. With emerging recognition of the Reconstruction era, honouring heritage from that time would seem to be an obvious and simple way forward. Also, in this way, Falaise could assume the identity of a rebuilt mediaeval town.

Résumé

Falaise, commune située au sud du Calvados, est aujourd'hui connue pour abriter le célèbre château du XI^e siècle où est né Guillaume le Conquérant. L'identité exclusivement médiévale de la ville n'a pourtant été mise en avant que récemment. En effet, ayant subi un déclin lié à son retard face à l'industrialisation depuis le XIX^e siècle, puis ravagée par les bombardements en 1944, Falaise a vu son image renouvelée au moment de la Reconstruction.

Au vu notamment de la nature des destructions subies par la ville et des convictions de certains acteurs de la Reconstruction, c'est le passé médiéval de la ville qui est rapidement retenu comme fondement de sa nouvelle identité. Léon Rême, urbaniste en chef de la Reconstruction de Falaise, désigne alors sur le Projet de Reconstruction et d'Aménagement (PRA) une zone protégée en prévision d'aménagements urbains mettant en valeur le patrimoine médiéval.

Le colloque a été l'occasion de revenir sur les aménagements urbains établis pour la Reconstruction de Falaise et mettant à l'honneur les vestiges médiévaux encore en place. Nous verrons comment le renouvellement identitaire de Falaise a également pu lui permettre de relancer son économie locale, en la tournant alors vers le tourisme. Malgré tout, il sera important de souligner que la construction de la nouvelle image falaisienne se fait sur un temps particulièrement long. Dans la mesure où cette opération n'est pas prioritaire aux yeux du Ministère de la Reconstruction et de l'Urbanisme, la conservation et la mise en valeur du patrimoine architectural provoquent de nombreux débats. Ces conflits mettent parfois en péril l'existence de certains édifices et ce, du début de la Reconstruction en 1944 jusqu'à la fin de la campagne de restauration en 1980.

L'identité de Falaise a donc été requestionnée suite à la destruction partielle de la ville. Il est surprenant de voir à quel point les aménagements du PRA ont su transformer l'imaginaire urbain des Falaisiens et des touristes: d'une ville caractérisée par la sédimentation architecturale des siècles passés, Falaise est devenue dès le début de la Reconstruction une ville aux curiosités médiévales. Pourtant il semble aujourd'hui que la question de son identité se pose à nouveau: avec sa reconnaissance émergente, le patrimoine architectural de la Reconstruction de Falaise pourrait aujourd'hui être valorisé, de la même manière que l'a été la cité médiévale après les destructions de 1944.

Zusammenfassung

Die Stadt Falaise, im Süden des französischen Departements Calvados, ist heute vor allem als Standort der berühmten Burg aus dem 11. Jahrhundert bekannt, in der Wilhelm der Eroberer geboren wurde. Die ausschließlich mittelalterliche Identität der Stadt wird jedoch erst in jüngster Zeit stärker betont. Nachdem Falaise im 19. Jahrhundert aufgrund ihres Rückstands bei der Industrialisierung einen Niedergang erlitten hatte und die Stadt dann 1944 durch Bombenangriffe verwüstet worden war, wurde ihr Image durch den Wiederaufbau erneuert.

Angesichts der Art der Zerstörungen, die die Stadt erlitten hatte, und der Überzeugungen mehrerer Akteure des Wiederaufbaus wurde die mittelalterliche Vergangenheit der Stadt schnell als Grundlage für ihre neue Identität gewählt. Léon Rême, der leitende Stadtplaner für den Wiederaufbau von Falaise, wies daraufhin im Wiederaufbau- und Stadtentwicklungsprojekt (frz.: PRA) eine Schutzzone aus, in der Stadtentwicklungen geplant wurden, die das mittelalterliche Bauerbe hervorheben sollten.

Das Kolloquium bot die Gelegenheit, auf die für den Wiederaufbau von Falaise festgelegten Stadtplanungen zurückzukommen, die die noch erhaltenen mittelalterlichen Überreste in den Vordergrund stellten. Wir werden sehen, wie die Erneuerung der Identität von Falaise auch die lokale Wirtschaft wiederbeleben konnte, indem sie sich auf den Tourismus verlagerte. Es ist allerdings wichtig zu betonen, dass die Schaffung des neuen Images von Falaise über einen extrem langen Zeitraum erfolgte. Da diese Aktion für das Ministerium für Wiederaufbau und Städtebau nicht vorrangig war, führen der Erhalt und die Aufwertung des architektonischen Erbes zu zahlreichen Debatten. Diese Konflikte gefährdeten manchmal die Existenz bestimmter Gebäude, und zwar vom Beginn des Wiederaufbaus im Jahr 1944 bis zum Ende der Restaurierungskampagne im Jahr 1980.

Die Identität von Falaise wurde also nach der teilweisen Zerstörung der Stadt neu hinterfragt. Es ist erstaunlich, wie sehr die Gestaltungsmaßnahmen des Wiederaufbau- und Entwicklungsprojekts die Wahrnehmung der Stadt in der Auffassung sowohl der Bewohner als auch der Touristen zu verändern vermochten: Von einer Stadt, die durch die architektonische Sedimentierung der vergangenen Jahrhunderte gekennzeichnet war, wurde Falaise seit Beginn des Wiederaufbaus zu einer Stadt mit mittelalterlichen Besonderheiten. Dennoch scheint sich heute die Frage nach ihrer Identität erneut zu stellen: Mit seiner aufkommenden Anerkennung könnte das architektonische Kulturerbe des Wiederaufbaus in Falaise heute aufgewertet werden, ähnlich wie die mittelalterliche Stadt nach den Zerstörungen von 1944 aufgewertet wurde.

Moussa Belkacem

REBUILDING ELSEWHERE

The Villages of the Rhineland Sacrificed on the Altar of Lignite

From demolition to reconstruction

In Germany, lignite mining, which used to take place underground, has been open-cast since the 20th century. From the outset, the excavations required agricultural land, forests and farms to be demolished. At the end of the 1920s, the country began to clear entire hamlets and villages, a practice which continues today. Three mining regions have been affected. In the central basins, where mines are primarily located to the south of Leipzig, 110 localities have been demolished,¹ in Lusatia in the east of the country, 137 localities have been demolished,² and in the Rhineland, to the west of Cologne, 70 localities have been demolished.³ There have been more demolitions in the first two areas due to the geology of the lignite seams there, which are thin, close to the surface and very extensive. These factors led to rapid and widespread land consumption, contrary to in the Rhineland where the seams are thick and deep. As an outcome, the total surface area mined in the west of the country is 27,000 ha, in the centre it is 50,000 ha, and in the east, it is 77,000 ha.⁴ The significantly quicker consumption of land in the last two basins explains why the earliest demolition operations took place there and why so many more villages were destroyed. In the Rhineland, villages were not cleared until the end of the Second World War. As the other two basins have gradually been depleted, the Rhenish mining area has become the top German lignite supplier and is the only region where clearances continue

today. At least nine localities are in the process of being demolished or evacuated (approximately 5000 residents). It should also be pointed out that with these mines, which inevitably consume space to operate, the stagnation in lignite consumption we have been observing for 30 years also corresponds to a steady continuation of clearance operations.

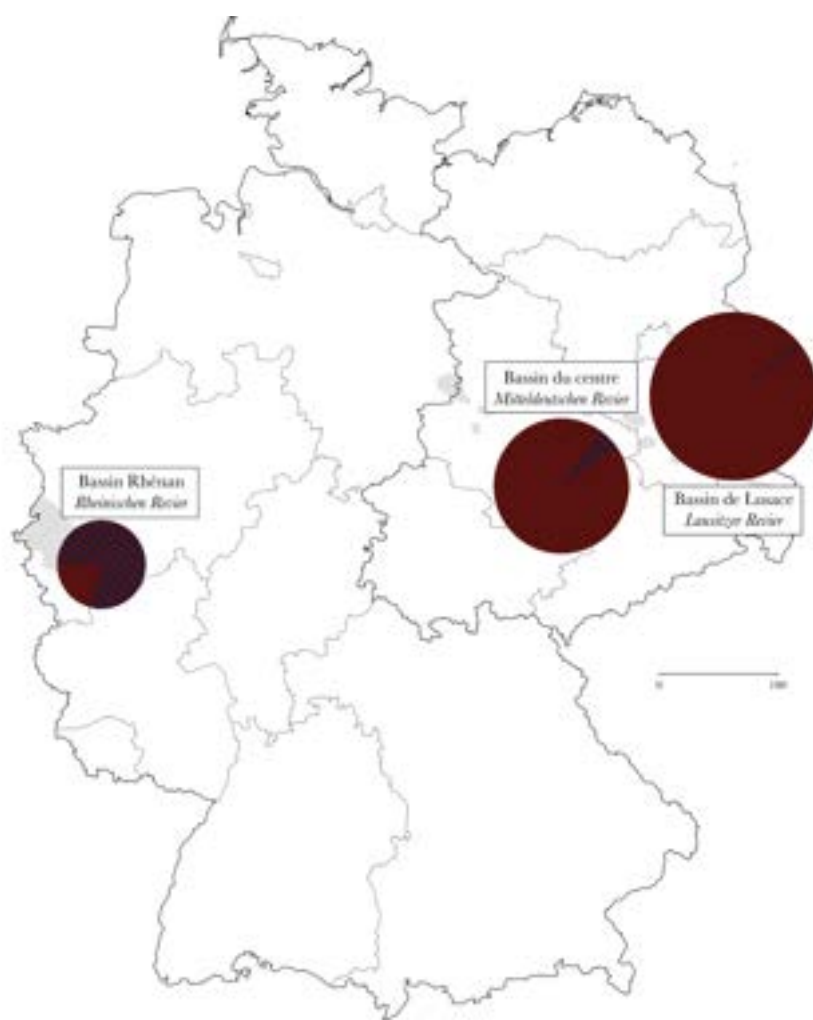
When the first intentional clearances went ahead, it was envisaged that villages would be rebuilt elsewhere. However, after the Second World War, and with the division of Germany, two policies took shape. In the Federal Republic of Germany and more specifically in the Rhineland, reconstruction was still the almost unconditional rule. But in the German Democratic Republic, so in Lusatia and in the centre, villages were no longer rebuilt and more often than not, residents whose property had been expropriated were rehoused in apartments on the outskirts of cities, without any particular concern for maintaining the integrity of communities. Rehousing policies only became standardised after 1989. At this point, the east of the country saw clusters of people relocate under the same reconstruction arrangements that had been current in the west since 1945 (taking the examples of Grossgrimma and Schwerzau in the centre, and Haidemühl and Horno in the east). But the majority of clearances had already taken place and in the end, just six out of 110 villages in the centre and two out of 137 in Lusatia were rebuilt. The Rhenish mining area is therefore

¹ Andreas Berkner, Kulturstiftung Hohenmölsen (ed.), *Bergbau und Umsiedlungen im Mitteldeutschen Braunkohlenrevier*, Beucha Markkleeberg, Sax-Verlag, 2022.

² Archiv verschwundener Orte Forst/Horno (ed), *Dokumentation bergbaubedingter Umsiedlung*, Forst, 2010.

³ According to a census conducted by Dirk Jansen of BUND NRW in 2021, this figure is similar to our own assessment and corresponds to the figure put forward by RWE.

⁴ Michel Deshaies, *Les territoires miniers: exploitation et reconquête*, Paris, Ellipses, 2007.



← Fig. 1: Proportions of villages destroyed (in red) and rebuilt elsewhere (in blue) in Germany's three major lignite basins, source: author.

→ Fig. 2: Map of the Rhine mining basin, showing the three main phases of mining and relocation of villages, source: author.

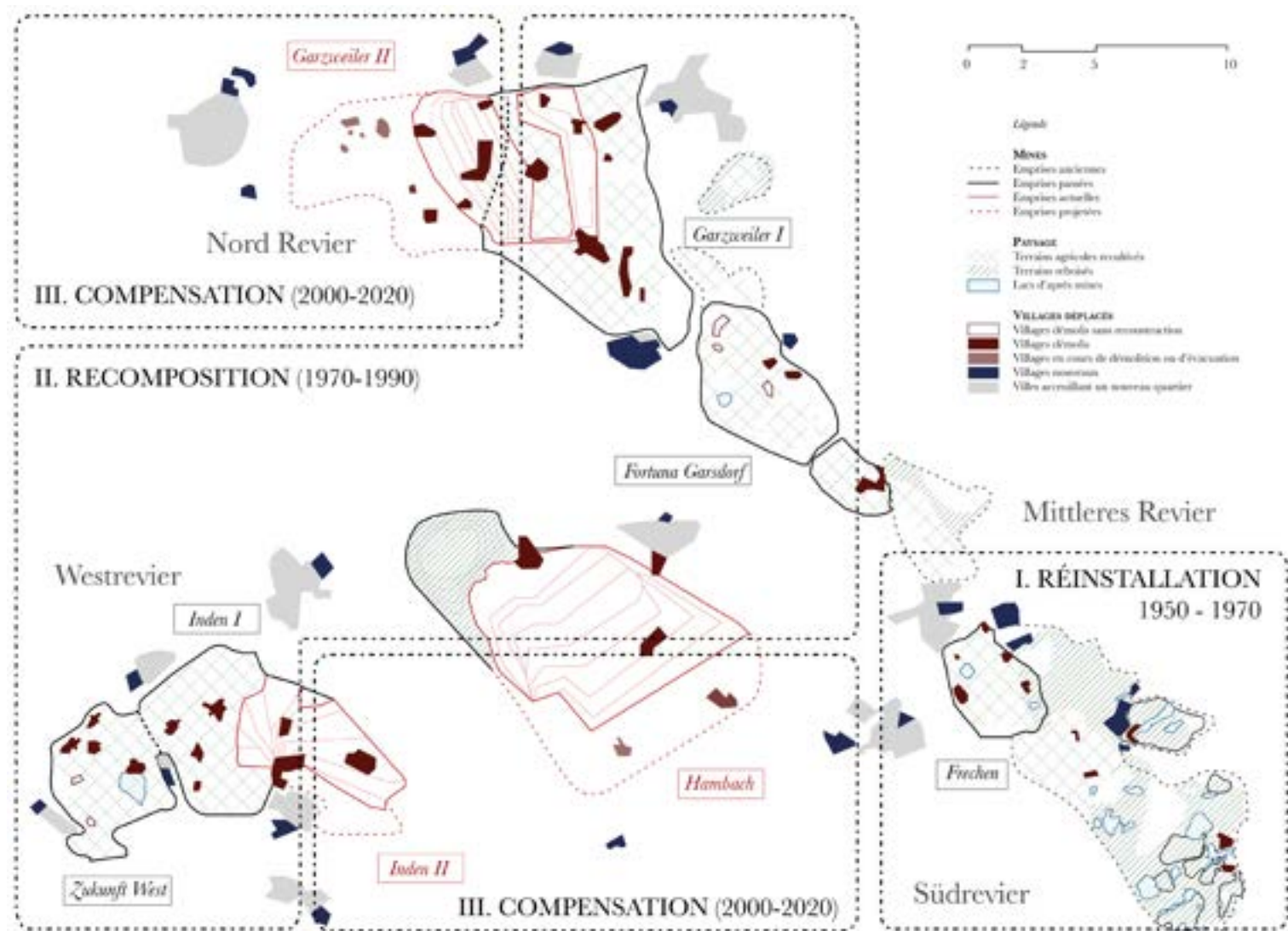
From relocation to compensation

Building a mine effectively involves two reconstruction projects: one to demolish villages ahead of works and one to restore the cleared, waste, lunar landscape when operations cease. These two projects are systematically separated because of the distance between them in time, yet they remain connected by operational arrangements for the mine (technical, political, strategic, etc.). The architectural and urban history of reconstructed Rhenish villages is reflected in the successive changes that can be seen in the mining landscape. These changes themselves stem from the ways mines are operated. As mining techniques evolve, landscapes and village reconstruction projects evolve too. The formal characteristics of the latter are broadly determined by the compensation arrangements in place. Three time periods can be defined (Fig. 2): relocation (1945–1970), reconstruction (1970–2000), and compensation (2000–2020).

Relocation (1945–1970)

To the south-west of Cologne lies a wooded landscape scattered with dozens of small lakes. It is a local recreation and walking area. Known as the Südevier (southern district) and extending between Brühl and Frechen, mining operations and village clearances began here from the 1950s onwards. At the time, the mines there were generally limited in size and on a comparable scale to the villages they absorbed. When a mine engulfed a community, it was this same community that operated it. This close relationship between the sacrificed village and the mine characterised the first clearances. Until the end of the 1960s, the mines employed tens of thousands of people and many residents in affected villages worked there. There was little resistance, as relocation appeared to be necessary for mining activities to survive and addi-

the exception. From 1945 onwards, almost all the villages demolished benefited from a collective relocation programme which involved reconstruction (Fig. 1). The region is densely populated and the potential for profit offered by the thickness of the lignite seams triggered the immediate demolition of ancient and sizeable villages. The first, Bottenbroich, had 1000 residents and the second, Berrenrath, had double that number. The size of these villages supported the argument for reconstruction. This principle of compensation would apply uninterrupted for 75 years and still applies today. More than 40 instances of relocation can be observed (more than one every two years) and affected 42,000 residents. This continuous process of demolition and reconstruction since the Second World War is unique in the world. But although we can observe continuity in the principle of reconstructing villages, it appears that the approaches to these reconstruction projects have changed radically as mining techniques have evolved.



tionally, the gradual decline of agriculture in the region in favour of mining transformed lifestyles. With decreasing numbers of farmers, the option of exchanging an old farmhouse for a house near the mine and/or the town sometimes seemed like an upgrade. In the early days, mines were close to coal processing facilities (workshops, factories, and power stations). The new village completed this extractivist trio. The old village would be demolished to make way for the excavation site while the new village was built next to it, almost seamlessly, so operations could continue. Traditional villages were replaced by workers' villages (Fig. 3) – examples include the villages of Benzlath (400 residents, relocated in 1954), Berrenrath (2000 residents, relocated in 1959), and Habelrath (1600 residents, relocated in 1964). The new villages followed the same codes as the workers' colonies which, from

the beginning of the century onwards, were tagged onto established villages to house labourers who came to work in the mines. Sometimes, these *Siedlung* (colonies) were even a point of rotation, continuity, or relay between old and new villages, as in Berrenrath. Thus, the mining company would commission a real-estate company to build new houses and a limited number of housing types would be offered to residents, who then acquired them ready to move in (Fig. 3). References to the old village would be minimal if not non-existent. The identity as a village seemed to be abandoned in favour of an accepted and assertive industrial identity, as evidenced by the modest nature of memorial monuments (often a stone and/or a simple plaque in the middle of the square) and the traditional forest cemeteries which gave the new village its roots. In such cases, the issues therefore appear

to have been limited to the relocation of former agricultural communities which had been in the throes of transforming to industrial communities for some time already.

In the Rhineland, mining operations remained stable until the early 1970s, with output of around 90 million tonnes per year. However, with the oil crisis of 1973, production increased significantly, rising to 120 million tonnes per year from 1974 onwards. Additionally, administrative boundaries were redefined due to reforms introduced to rationalise planning policy by grouping settlements together. Consequently, the choice of location for new villages introduced new challenges of attachment and reconstruction.

Reconstruction (1970–1990)

With the increase in output, the first large mines appeared. In the Mittleres Revier district, which extends from the north of Frechen to Bedburg, and on the site of the former Zukunft-West mine, they left behind a specific landscape. Once mining operations were over and the open pit had been backfilled, the energy production facilities that had been attached to the mines were left standing, alone, in the middle of large agricultural plots established on land reclaimed for farming. The initial spoil was formed into slag heaps, while any open areas created by coal extraction were turned into lakes of a proportionate size to the mines that had been there. At the time, innovations in mining technology resulted in two developments. Firstly, there was a significant decrease in the number of local labourers employed and at the same time, the scale of mines increased requiring numerous villages to be demolished. The Zukunft and Fortuna-Garsdorf mines each covered an area of more than 2000 ha. At a time when environmental and heritage concerns were emerging and, more specifically, when questions of history and local identity were arising following reforms to regional boundaries, these developments made relocation a less acceptable option. Villages which had to be moved were therefore built on the outskirts of cities, in line with the policy on redefined



Fig. 3: House in the new village of Grefrath relocated in 1965, field photo March 2022, source: author.

regions, but with a strong desire to preserve their original character, integrity and autonomy to reflect these new expectations.⁵ The location may have been suburban, but the architectural expression was firmly traditional, if not vernacular (Fig. 4). The outcome was new villages, often designed by architect/mayoral partners as part of an, at times, paternalistic shift towards protecting regional identities. Examples would include the villages of Elfgem and Belmen (1000 residents, relocated in 1988), Garzweiler and Priestherath (2500 and 400 residents, relocated in 1989) and Lich-Steinstrass (1500 residents, relocated in 1991).⁶ Garzweiler is undoubtedly, the most emblematic and representative example of reconstruction policies post-1970. Residents chose the relocation site following

⁵ Franck Dickmann, *Umsiedlungsatlas des rheinischen Braunkohlenreviers*, Rheinland, Köln, 1996.

⁶ Gabriele Nickel, "Das alte Dorf – Der neue Vorort, Jülich-Steinstrass", Diplomarbeit im Fachbereich Design, Fachhochschule Aachen, Aachen, 1982.



↑ Fig. 4: House in the new village of Inden/Altdorf relocated in 1997, field photo March 2022, source: author.

↓ Fig. 5: House in the new village of Morschenich being moved, field photo March 2022, source: author.



a consultation in 1980. The new village was rebuilt on the outskirts of Juchen and enjoyed autonomy from a planning perspective, having a church, square, school and shops despite its proximity to the town. Part of it even harked back to the old village – with a terrace of houses forming a linear front and demarcating the marketplace.⁷ The paradox of a new suburban location attempting to compromise with a desire to preserve its village roots can also be seen in the links to the past. Cemeteries were designed like town cemeteries while memory of the old

prevailed in architectural features from the former villages (church doors, bells, lintels, etc.) which were reclaimed and directly reused in new buildings. Despite these efforts to recreate, support was limited with participation levels among the population of around 60%.

Indeed, acceptance disintegrated over the course of 1990 to 2000. Communities were no longer on board and demanded more consultation. Political and organised resistance emerged and in 1995 and 1996, several municipal councils and the parliamentary group Bündnis 90/Die Grünen lodged a constitutional appeal against approval of the Garzweiler II lignite plan. There were many facets to this turning point. Nationally, the decision to shut down nuclear power production (2000) implied a continuation of coal production. As an outcome, at local level, mines needed to be developed on a far greater scale than had been seen formerly and even more and even larger villages needed to be relocated. Meanwhile, internationally, there had been an outbreak of major scandals concerning communities displaced by energy projects, such as the Three Gorges Dam in China.

Compensation (2000–2020)

The Nordrevier district is the setting for this new mining landscape of excess, where the mines extend farther than the eye can see. At Garzweiler II, Hambach and Inden, the slag heaps resemble mountains (Sophienhöhe is the largest artificial hill in the world), the excavators are 200m long, the spoil: coal extraction ratio is 6:1 (compared with 2:1 in the 1950s),⁸ the pits reach a depth of 400m, and the future is uncertain. The proposed residual lake at Hambach would make it the second largest lake in Germany and an ecological catastrophe. This district is also a site of confrontation with environmental activists having set up camp in Lützerath and the Forest of Hambach, security vehicles, walls, ditches, observation posts and, more recently, police

⁷ Michel Deshaies, *Les territoires miniers: exploitation et reconquête*, Paris, Ellipses, 2007.

⁸ This ratio corresponds to the volume of cover moved (in cubic metres) in relation to the quantity of coal extracted (in tonnes). Its increase over time reflects the difficulties in accessing the matter, technological developments, the growing impact of mining on the soil and the landscape, and the depletion of some mines. Note that the decline in this ratio has not been accompanied by a decrease in total volumes extracted and that consequently, it reflects the ever-larger sacrifice accorded to the mining industry.

patrolled mines. Finally, it is a site of entertainment, with its observatories from where visitors can admire the sheer scale of the excavations.

The magnitude of the site, and the conflict and drama around it have fuelled new demands for consultation and paved the way for new forms of compensation. The rules have been made more flexible and architectural projects, which in their previous format appeared paternalistic, now put more focus on discussion. Relocation is no longer enough, the loss, trauma and sacrifice must also be compensated. If they must leave, residents want more quality and land in return. Once their plot has been chosen and allocated in the new village, they therefore have the option of building their own house with an architect of their choice. With compensation for their former house at market value and a loan, most build their own luxury homes. Examples include the villages of Borschemich (650 residents relocated in 2006), Immerath (1100 residents relocated in 2017) and Manheim (1600 residents currently in the process of relocation). These new districts take the form of housing estates (fig.5) where the only references to the former village and its autonomous past are the place names and often, a monumental church. The new cemeteries, which are difficult to tell apart, reflect the deeply standardised side of the reconstruction project. Yet, to compensate for the loss of identity, monuments to the former village have become highly figurative (memorial seats, sculptural reproductions of the old church, etc.). As for the rest, a policy of full deregulation can be seen increasingly in the chaos of shapes and materials and the complete lack of uniformity. In both the improvised chalets of ZADs (Zones to Defend) and these suburban houses, unfettered mining operations and the depletion of the land shines through.

From sacrifice to restoration

In all these reconstruction projects, traditional farms have been replaced by workers houses, then townhouses and now suburban homes and sometimes villas. Changes in the type of home have stemmed from the social and

economic upheaval villages were experiencing before they were relocated. It is always particularly challenging when businesses relocate elsewhere, which they do very quickly when confronted with a loss of outlets in villages earmarked for clearance. However, a major systematic challenge, both from a technical and administrative perspective, concerns the rehousing of farmers. The loss of available land and the clear differentiation and separation between zones allocated to farming and residential zones⁹ make it impossible to move farmworkers to new villages. Additionally, mining operations reshape the agricultural landscape. By sweeping away so-called obstacles completely (be these trees, Roman or mediaeval remains, low walls, rocks, variations in soil), industrial monocultures requiring less labour are the outcome. Often, uprooted farmers change activity or region. But some, although rare, have been relocated on reclaimed former mining sites. This link between both types of reconstruction, namely relocation and restoration of the landscape post-mining operations, has not been exploited enough. Indeed, new villages are never reconstructed on restored land. There are some rare exceptions from the 1950s, but as we have shown earlier, these villages maintained and have kept a close connection with the mining landscape and its remains.

Why is the reconstruction of sacrificed villages not considered in tandem with restoration of the cleared land, knowing that the practicalities of both are so closely linked? The fact that often, there is a significant distance in time between both projects does not appear to be a satisfactory argument. As mining operations have been ongoing and non-stop for 80 years, plans to reconstruct a village could tie in with plans to re-nature a different mining site. What is more, if both reconstruction projects were linked, it would be possible to re-establish a long-term approach to planning, which seems to be missing here. This undoubtedly comes into play when a *Braunkohlenplan* (lignite plan) is defined. This compulsory document, which has been a prerequisite for opening a new mine since 25 April 1950, sets out the operational framework. It includes details of the time and space requirements, the environ-

⁹ Principle governed by the ruling on use of buildings, *Baunutzungsverordnung* (BauNVO).

mental impact (natural and hydrological balance, emissions, etc.) and the impact on human settlements, i.e. towns to be relocated, roads and plans to restore land for farming in the future. It is drawn up by the *Braunkohlenausschuss* (lignite committee), which comprises political representatives, government officials, municipal representatives, and representatives from various strategic interest groups: business associations, industrial and artisanal guilds, agricultural associations, employers' organisations, trade unions, churches, environmental groups, etc. However, no in-house architects, planners or landscape architects sit on this committee.

The absence of any professions involved in planning and design at the point when operating conditions for the mine are being defined is a major problem, as these conditions influence policy on rebuilding villages and restoring the landscape. As the framework document only considers spatial matters concerning the mine from a technical or legal perspective, there is no possibility to think about complex changes to the landscape in the long term. Architects are involved in the process too late, and their remit remains very limited. With no opportunity to take an overview. Although the question of reconstructing elsewhere seems to be considered, the same cannot be said for demolition. This is what makes these projects unusual. Demolition and clearance are also the focus of projects. Reconstruction anticipates demolition. The old village still exists when the new village comes into being. In practice, clearing the landscape, demolishing villages, reconstructing them and restoring the land are various facets of one project – mining. Yet mining is only considered from the perspective of extraction techniques and legal arrangements for compensation – not the issues arising from the ways it transforms the landscape.

Conclusion – learnings

There are many lessons to draw from the relocation of Rhenish villages. The heuristic aspect of clearance and relocation operations has been demonstrated for a long

time. We have seen for example, how after reunification, implementing methods from the west in the new Länder noticeably improved relocation arrangements. The principles of “group resettlement” (*gemeinsame Umsiedlung*), the “lignite plan” (*Braunkohlenplan*) and consultation were thus taken up.

Later, it was sometimes possible to improve these imported principles. From this perspective, the example of Grossgrimma, whose population was moved during the 1990s, is conclusive: the relocation was the pretext for an economic recovery programme on a much larger scale than the southern territory of Saxony-Anhalt,¹⁰ primarily to the benefit of SMEs in the region.¹¹ The relocation went ahead without debt for residents thanks to the mining operator itself offering flat-rate compensation. This was an important development as, in contrast and for the most part, relocated residents in the Rhineland ended up in debt as the value of their former assets rarely covered the value of the new one. Moreover, whereas in the Rhineland, debates crystallised increasingly around financial and real estate matters and a technocratic management approach inherited from decades of relocation; in the east, the novelty of group resettlement arrangements, adopted much later, inspired more experimental and social approaches. To summarise, when it came to relocating villages, the new Länder benefited from the long-standing experience of the Rhineland. Now, perhaps it is time for the latter to take inspiration from some of the experimental practices adopted in the east since 1989.

Essentially, the lack of national and transnational studies on issues arising from the relocation of communities, limits what we can learn. While lignite mining may be approaching its end in Western Europe, the same cannot be said for group resettlement processes. The rich and varied experience of Germany in this sphere must be used as a theoretical and practical basis for managing future forced relocations of communities, stemming, for example from climate change and rising sea levels.

¹⁰ Funded up to 95 million DEM by the operator MIBRAG; 7.7 million by the State, and significant private funds.

¹¹ See the interview with Richard Reschl (LBBW Immobilien Kommunalentwicklung GmbH) in Andreas Berkner, Kulturstiftung Hohemölsen, p. 424–426.

Résumé

Les études sur le concept de reconstruction se concentrent sur les reconstructions post-démolition. Qu'en est-il des situations où la reconstruction est projetée avant même la destruction ? Lorsque les caractères intentionnel et planifié de la démolition laissent le temps de l'anticipation et de la concertation de la reconstruction ?

En Allemagne, l'extraction du lignite à ciel ouvert nécessite depuis un siècle les démolitions de centaines de villages. Trois bassins miniers sont concernés: le bassin rhénan, le bassin du centre et celui de Lusace. Comparativement aux deux autres, le bassin rhénan a provoqué moins de démolitions, mais il est le seul à avoir presque systématiquement procédé à la relocalisation anticipée des villages sacrifiés. Ainsi, on compte dans la région plus de quarante opérations de déménagements groupés de communautés villageoises, expropriées pour laisser place aux mines. En résulte une situation unique de démolitions et de reconstructions continues depuis 1945. Si l'on observe une continuité dans le principe de la reconstruction des villages détruits, il apparaît que les modalités de ces reconstructions varient radicalement avec l'évolution des techniques minières. Ainsi, le paysage donne aujourd'hui à lire ces évolutions des modalités d'extraction sur plus d'un siècle, tandis que celle-ci se reflète dans l'architecture des reconstructions de villages sacrifiés.

Trois périodes se dessinent articulées autour de deux grands tournants énergétiques: le choc pétrolier de 1973 et la sortie du nucléaire de l'Allemagne en 2000. Dans l'immédiat après guerre, en plein essor industriel, les villages sacrifiés sont reconstruits comme des colonies ouvrières. Après 1973, l'agrandissement des mines coïncide avec l'augmentation des préoccupations patrimoniales et environnementales, les villages sont alors reconstruits en périphérie de grandes villes, mais avec un souci de préservation du caractère régional. Depuis les années 2000 et encore aujourd'hui, les mines hors d'échelle sont le terrain de conflits médiatisés et les villages sacrifiés sont reconstruits sous forme de lotissement périurbains amnésiques. En éclairant le lien historique entre techniques minières, paysage post-minier et villages reconstruits, ce texte vise une reconsidération critique des enjeux réels de la mine, c'est-à-dire, sortir d'une logique actuelle de compensation pour interroger plus en profondeur ses enjeux de transformation du paysage sur le temps long.

Zusammenfassung

Studien zu Konzepten des Wiederaufbaus konzentrieren sich üblicherweise auf den Wiederaufbau nach einer Zerstörung. Was ist mit Situationen, in denen der Wiederaufbau bereits vor der Zerstörung geplant wurde? Wenn der absichtliche und geplante Charakter des Abrisses Zeit für die Antizipation und Abstimmung des Wiederaufbaus lässt?

In Deutschland hat der Braunkohletagebau seit einem Jahrhundert den Abriss von Hunderten von Dörfern erforderlich gemacht. Drei Bergbaureviere sind betroffen: das Rheinische Revier, das Mitteldeutsche Revier und das Lausitzer Revier. Im Vergleich zu den beiden anderen hat das Rheinische Revier weniger Abrisse verursacht, aber es ist das einzige Revier, in dem die geopferten Dörfer fast systematisch vorzeitig umgesiedelt wurden. So gab es in der Region mehr als vierzig Umsiedlungsaktionen von Dorfgemeinschaften, die enteignet wurden, um Platz für die Kohleminen zu schaffen. Das Ergebnis ist eine einzigartige Situation, in der seit 1945 kontinuierlich abgerissen und wiederaufgebaut wurde. Zwar ist eine Kontinuität im Prinzip des Wiederaufbaus der zerstörten Dörfer zu beobachten, doch scheint es, dass sich die Modalitäten dieser Wiederaufbauten mit der Entwicklung der Bergbautechniken radikal ändern. So kann man heute in der Landschaft die Entwicklung der Abbaumodalitäten über mehr als ein Jahrhundert hinweg ablesen, während sich diese in der Architektur des Wiederaufbaus der geopferten Dörfer widerspiegelt.

Es zeichnen sich drei Zeiträume ab, die um zwei große Energie-wendepunkte herum gegliedert sind: den Ölschock von 1973 und den Ausstieg Deutschlands aus der Kernenergie im Jahr 2000. In der unmittelbaren Nachkriegszeit, in der die Industrie boomte, wurden die geopferten Dörfer als Arbeiterkolonien wiederaufgebaut. Nach 1973 fiel die Vergrößerung der Bergwerke mit der Zunahme der Sorge um das Kulturerbe und die Umwelt zusammen. Die Dörfer wurden daraufhin am Rande der großen Städte wiederaufgebaut, jedoch mit dem Ziel, den regionalen Charakter zu bewahren. Seit den 2000er Jahren und auch heute noch sind die überdimensionierten Tagebaue Schauplatz medienwirksamer Konflikte und die geopferten Dörfer werden in Form von geschichtsvergessenen Stadtrandsiedlungen wiederaufgebaut. Indem er die historische Verbindung zwischen Bergbautechniken, Bergbaufolgelandschaft und wiederaufgebauten Dörfern beleuchtet, zielt dieser Text auf eine kritische Neubetrachtung der tatsächlichen Herausforderungen des Bergbaus ab, d.h. weg von einer aktuellen Kompensationslogik und hin zu einer tieferen Auseinandersetzung mit den Herausforderungen der Landschaftsveränderung über einen längeren Zeitraum hinweg.

Patrice Gourbin

RECONSTRUCTION IN FRANCE AFTER THE SECOND WORLD WAR

A Melting Pot for Architectural and Urban Creativity in the 20th century

In 1983, two ministers were in attendance at the first symposium on reconstructed cities, in Brest.¹ Eugène Claudius-Petit (1907–1989), the former Minister for Reconstruction, made an admission of failure. The government had listened too much to private property owners and had been unable to implement an effective policy to modernise buildings. His successor Michel Rocard (1930–2016), Minister for Planning and Land Development, recognised some failures. However, he also emphasised the potential for transformation in the cities concerned and recommended making better use of physical and human resources. These two opposing views are representative of the 20 years that separate them. One position favoured a perfect system which was never achieved, while the other focused on the reality of the environment in which ordinary citizens were living.

The active phase of the post-war Reconstruction era ran from 1945 to around 1955, meaning that there were approximately 10 years of experimentation when it came to construction techniques, urban planning and aesthetics. The desire to use the Reconstruction as an opportunity to modernise France, especially from the viewpoint of housing and urban structures, had unanimous support. But not everyone shared the same opinions about the extent of transformation and how it should be implemented. Initially, priority was given to moderate and reasonable modernity, to make sure that there was consistency with

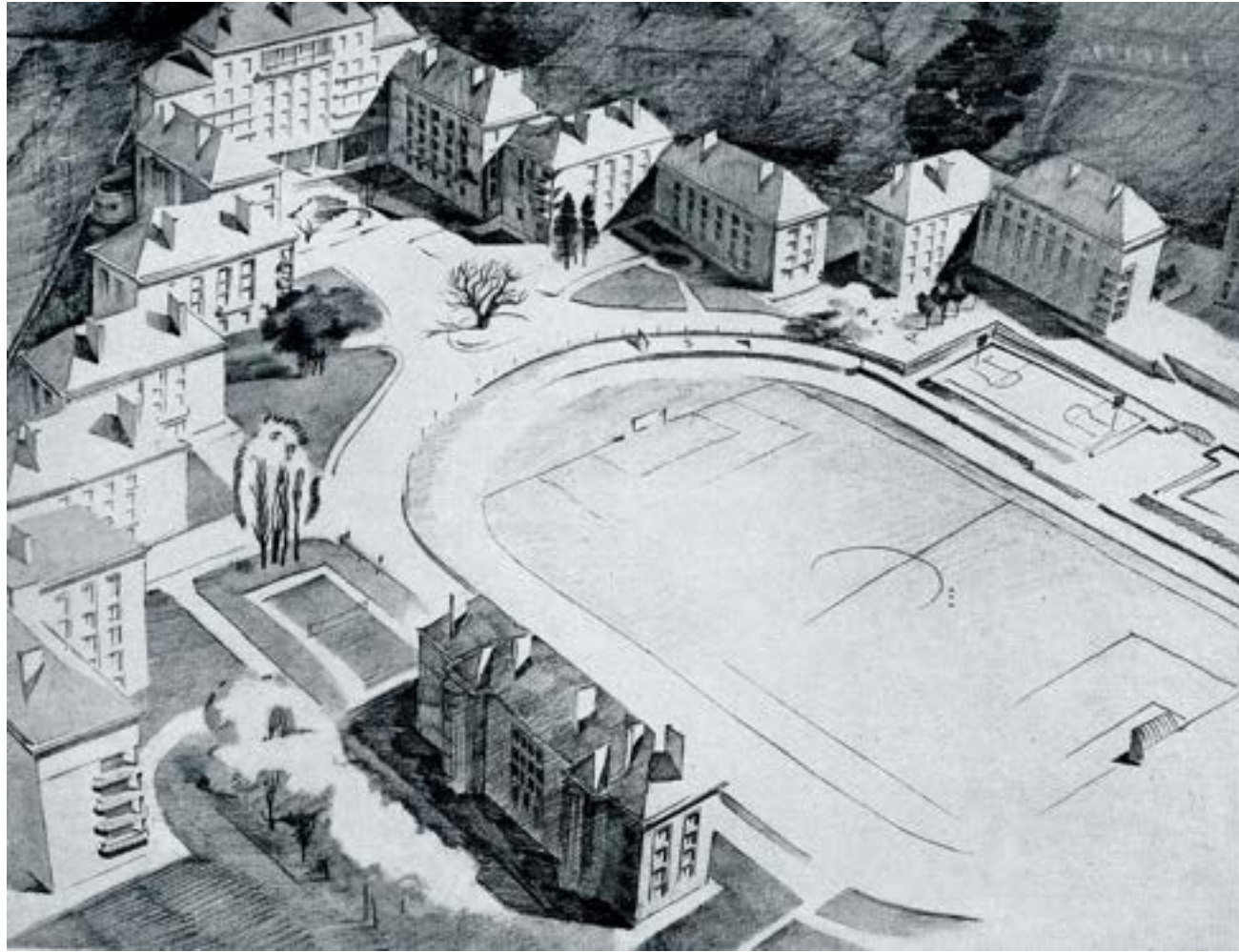
existing buildings. At the end of 1948, Eugène Claudius-Petit's arrival at the Ministry of Reconstruction heralded a change of direction, with a much more definite break from this approach. The succession of the two phases characterising the Reconstruction, which we discuss in this article, is not an unknown. In 1991, Pierre Randet had already noted an initial, somewhat traditional stratum in the continuity of construction works in Vichy, followed by a second, much more modernist stratum under the impetus of Eugène Claudius-Petit.² Here, our objective is to examine these two trends more specifically, from the perspective of their rationales and their regulatory basis. Above all, however, we will highlight the innovative urban planning and architectural practices that emerged at the time of the Reconstruction. Because reconstruction was not restricted to recycling the regionalism of the 1930s or the modernity of the Charter of Athens. Indeed, this time was a melting pot for inventiveness and a significant moment for architectural and urban creativity in the 20th century.

Tightly controlled modernity

Once France had been liberated, after four years of destruction, waiting and projects only more or less complete, the end of German domination meant that the country could consider embarking on a reconstruction programme. The Ministry of Reconstruction and Urban

¹ Coll., *Regards sur la Reconstruction*, [proceedings from the first international symposium on reconstructed cities, Brest 1983], typewritten, 1984, 269 p.

² Pierre Randet, "1941–1951: panorama de la Reconstruction française", in Jean-Daniel Pariset, *Reconstructions et modernisation. La France après les ruines, 1918. 1945.*, Paris, Archives nationales, 1991, p. 98.



→ Fig. 1: Faidherbe ISAI in Amiens. Source: "Immeubles d'état à Amiens, le groupe Faidherbe", *L'architecture française*, 1947, n° 73–74.

← Fig. 2: Falaise (Calvados). First urban blocks under reconstruction. Source: *Techniques et architecture*, 1952, n° 9–10.

affectation immédiate (ISAI; housing estates 'without immediate allocation') which were built by the government without any negotiation with people who had lost their homes. Envisaged as a showcase for the coming reconstruction programme, these estates were designed by highly prominent architects who already worked for the government (chief architects for the Reconstruction or civil buildings

Planning (MRU), under the aegis of Raoul Dautry (1880–1951), was formed in November 1944 from pre-existing government bodies. This new ministry was not tasked with recreating what had been demolished and there was full consensus about the values – if not the practical details – of the Charter of Athens, namely, air, sunlight, greenery and ease of circulation.³ Nevertheless, Raoul Dautry viewed the Reconstruction as an improvement process rather than a revolution. The legal and regulatory wheels introduced under his leadership focused on transforming cities and adapting them to current technical, functional and aesthetic norms. The first projects completed under the Reconstruction were the *immeubles sans*

architects) and built by operational architects who had lower status in the Ministry's rankings.

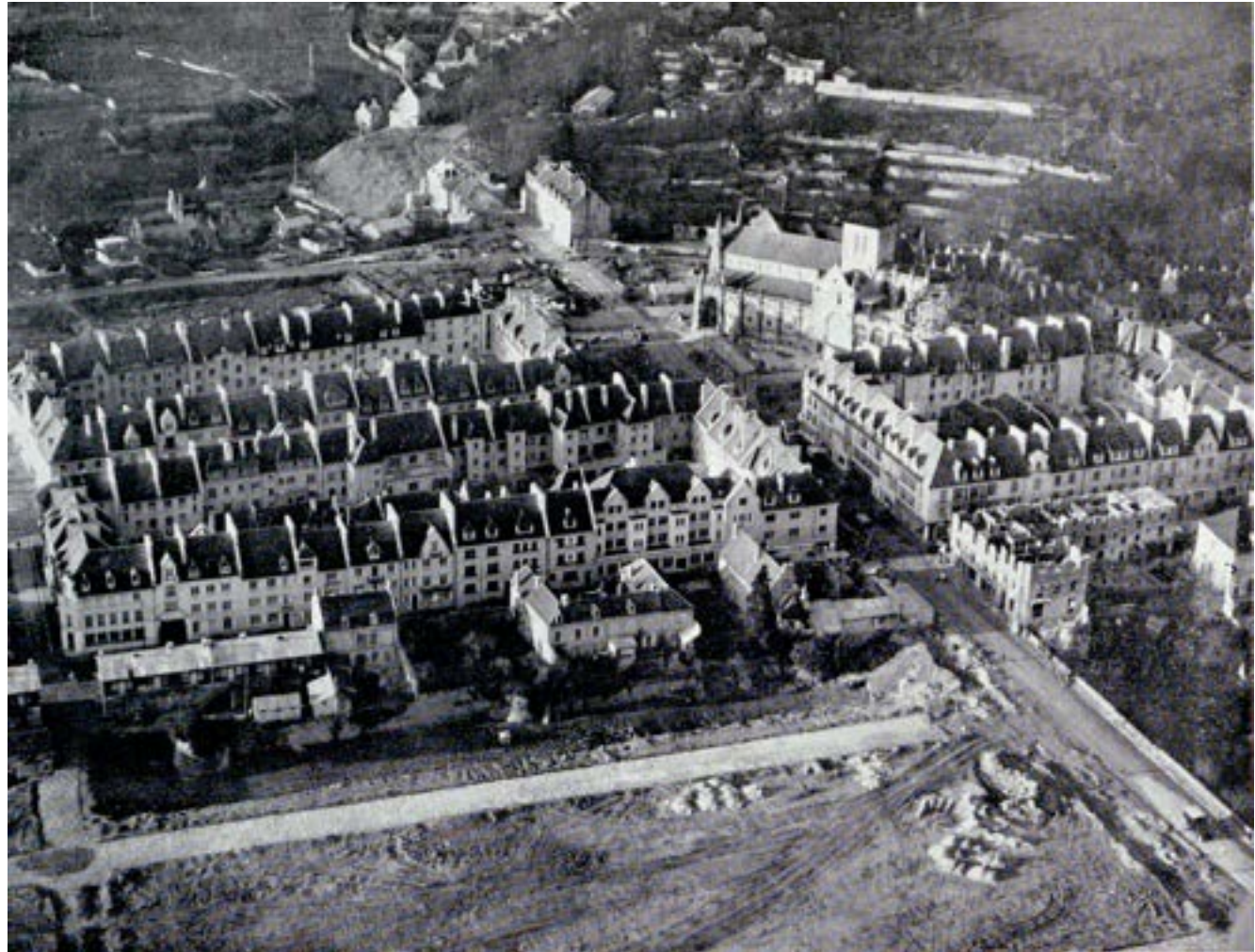
Almost everywhere, ISAI developments reflected the classical, regionalist, or more moderate 1930s modernity movements. In Amiens, the Faidherbe ISAI was subtly modern with its corner windows and protruding balconies.⁴ To supplement the forms of the past, traditional materials were used to re-establish the historical continuity which the violence of the war had broken. The ISAI in Amiens was clad on the outside with a thick stone covering, whereas the development at the *Anciens Abattoirs* in Rouen was clad with bricks like other buildings in the district. However, the amenities and deliberately open

³ Martine Morel, "Reconstruire, dirent-ils. Discours et enjeux de l'urbanisme", *Les cahiers de l'IHTP*, n° 5, June 1987, [thematic edition Discours et enjeux de la reconstruction des villes françaises après 1945], p. 41.

⁴ "Immeubles d'état à Amiens, le groupe Faidherbe", *L'architecture française*, 1947, n° 73–74, p. 28–31.

layout of these government-built estates also showed genuine innovation. In Amiens, for example, the buildings were arranged in V shapes around the edges of an urban block, thus freeing up an area for green spaces and a central sports ground in the middle (Fig. 1).

The Ministry may have promised to grant a place at the table to all architectural trends, but this in no way meant that these trends enjoyed equivalent importance. The avant-garde movement was marginalised, with its proponents being allocated just three minor towns. André Lurçat (1894–1970) was appointed in



Maubeuge where he put forward a rather classic plan. In Sotteville-lès-Rouen, Marcel Lods (1891–1978) adopted a radical urbanist approach. Featuring a large, fully pedestrianised urban park on which were placed extensive, longitudinal, nine-storey-high apartment blocks, his plan reflected both the spirit and the letter of the Charter of Athens.⁵ Le Corbusier (1887–1965) meanwhile, was tasked with devising an urban scheme for the town of Saint-Dié but was swiftly ousted. A housing block in Marseille can be added to these small pickings. This project was commissioned by Raoul Dautry under the

ISAI scheme and its funding was particularly hard won.⁶ Elsewhere, regionalism and classicism dominated. The most significant towns, by merit of their population size, location or role, such as Amiens, Beauvais, Rouen, Marseille, Tours and Dunkirk were entrusted to moderate architects who were convinced by modernism but able to maintain a link with the past through the forms and urban layout they adopted.⁷

Apart from the ISAI, standard reconstruction projects were funded on an individual basis or by small co-ownerships. These projects generally took the form of a densely

⁵ Gabi Dolff-Bonekämper “La reconstruction de Sotteville-lès-Rouen dans son contexte international”, in Corinne Bouillot (ed.), *La reconstruction en Normandie et en Basse-Saxe après la seconde guerre mondiale. Histoire, mémoires et patrimoines de deux régions européennes*, Rouen, PURH, 2013, p. 101–112.

⁶ Gérard Monnier, *Le Corbusier. Les unités d'habitation en France*, Paris, Belin/Herscher, 2002, p. 46.

⁷ The chief architects were Pierre Dufau (1908–1985) for Amiens; Louis-Hippolyte Boileau (1878–1948) and then Paul Sirvin (1891–1977) for Beauvais; Jean Démaret (1897–1967) for Rouen; André Lecomte (1894–1966) for Marseille; Pierre Patout (1879–1965) for Tours; and Jean Niermans (1897–1989) for Dunkerque.

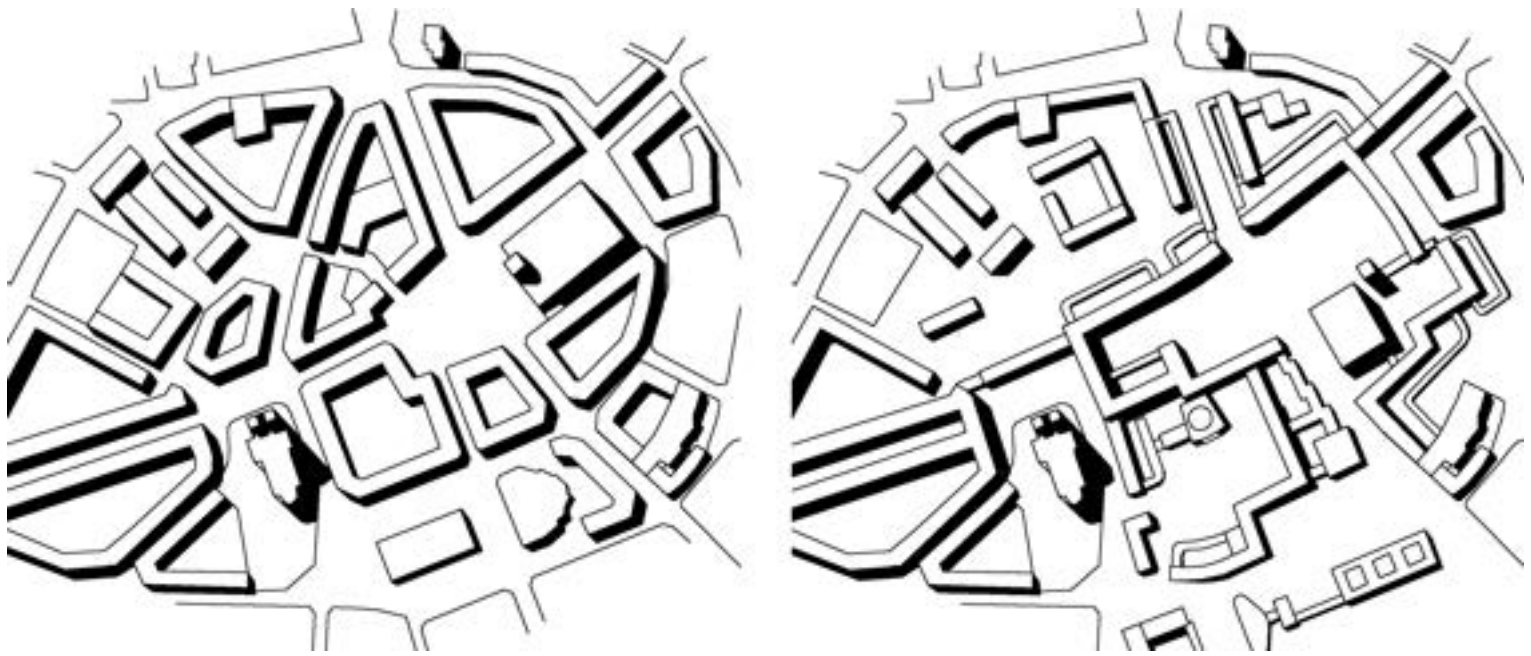


Fig. 3: Abbeville. Jacques Gréber's reconstruction plan (left) and after Clément Tambuté's modifications (right). Author's drawings based on *Techniques et architectures*, n° 5–6, May 1951.

built urban block lined with adjoining multi-storey buildings, often differing in appearance (Fig. 2). This configuration contradicted the two main aspirations of government stakeholders, as from an aesthetic viewpoint there was a lack of coherence, and from a planning perspective, there was no open space within the urban block.⁸ For advocates of avant-garde modernity, the verdict was unanimously negative. This approach resulted in a reproduction of the “slum neighbourhoods of the past”.⁹ The ISAI developments, which were judged according to their formal appearance, did not receive much more appreciation.

A change of direction under Claudius-Petit

Eugène Claudius-Petit, a former member of the French Resistance, Companion of the Liberation, and elected representative for the Loire, was appointed Minister for Reconstruction and Urban Planning in September 1948. His vision went beyond simply repairing damage. As far as he was concerned, the Reconstruction was just the beginning; the real issue at stake was the housing crisis and the fitness for purpose of towns.¹⁰ It was therefore essential to develop much more radical building and

planning solutions than those currently in place. When he took up the post in 1948, the administrative structures were already established, the project managers had been selected and works on the first urban blocks were either in progress or under consideration. Planning schemes had been completed in most cities and were awaiting official approval.

On 6 November 1950, Eugène Claudius-Petit visited Abbeville where Jacques Gréber (1882–1962) had completed the plans.¹¹ The assessment was condemnatory: the roadways were too wide, the layout “of sorts” in urban blocks was too enclosed, the roofs were too sloping, and it would be difficult to fund the “concrete embellishments and pediments” ordered by the chief architect Paul Tournon (1881–1964). On the instigation of the Minister, Tournon was thanked for his input while a new planner Clément Tambuté (1905–1992), was appointed to overhaul the plans completely. The new proposal was approved by a town council whose members were resigned to, rather than convinced of the promises of modernity (Fig. 3). Nonetheless, local authorities were not completely powerless to take action.

⁸ *Techniques et architecture*, 1952, n° 9–10.

⁹ Pierre Dalloz, “Reconstruire”, in *Techniques et architecture*, 1952, n° 9–10, p. 35.

¹⁰ Benoît Pouvreau, *Un politique en architecture: Eugène Claudius-Petit, 1907–1989*, Paris, Le Moniteur, 2004.

¹¹ Léo Noyer-Duplaix, “La seconde reconstruction d’Abbeville. Une histoire urbaine”, *Quadrilobe*, 2019 n° 6, p. 165.

In Vire (Calvados), the town council had approved plans submitted by Marcel Clot (1914–2000) in 1946.¹² Between January and May 1951, members of the council were summoned to the Ministry of Reconstruction three times, and on the last of these occasions to the office of the Minister himself. The intention was to make them accept a significantly revised plan, as had been the case in Abbeville. This plan included the creation of an area with no buildings around the junction between the two transit roads in the town centre. Faced with a categorical refusal from the local authorities, Eugène Claudius-Petit recognised that it was impossible to insist on the new plan.¹³ However, as in Abbeville, the chief architect Marcel Chappey (1896–1983), who had not been able to persuade the local authorities of his point of view, was relieved of his duties and replaced by a new chief architect, Claude Herpe (1921–2022).

Abbeville was the exception and Vire the rule. Few local authorities were prepared to assume the risk of delaying reconstruction in the name of hypothetical improvements. Rather than revising the entire plan, the Ministry, more often than not, adopted an alternative strategy. Project management was based on a pyramidal structure, with a chief architect who coordinated the overall project for a town, at the top, and lead architects who co-ordinated projects for individual urban blocks at the level below. Therefore, it was simply a case of assigning the same lead architect to several adjoining blocks. These quite extensive groups of housing developments effectively formed urban districts for which the lead architect could devise overall solutions and challenge the pre-existing system. In Beauvais, Jacques-Henri Labourdette (1915–2003) was allocated one dozen urban blocks around the church of Saint-Étienne, which did not follow the traditional architecture previously built in the rest of the town.

The chief architect could maintain his role, provided that he followed the Ministry's reformist line. In Lisieux, Robert Camelot (1903–1992) turned to the press to explain to residents why it was necessary to revise the urban layout by inserting "free spaces, to let in light and promote good health".¹⁴ In 1954, Paul Herbé (1903–1963), the Ministry's technical adviser, was able to take pleasure in the fact that the new principles had prevailed in half of Lisieux, Caen, Abbeville and Calais, and in significant parts of Marseille, Beauvais, Royan, Le Tréport, Sisteron, Angoulême and Douai. This change of direction required a robust approach to 'people management', whereby new talent was encouraged and assigned major projects while anyone who had not grasped the importance of the message was sidelined.¹⁵ Funding also served as a leverage point.

The ISAI scheme, having been judged too cumbersome and insufficiently innovative, was abandoned and replaced with another scheme which saw syndicates and cooperatives representing people who had lost their homes take responsibility for project management.¹⁶ The new funding scheme was known as *immeuble rationnel préfinancé* or IRP ('pre-funded rational building'). IRP credits, which were additional to the general war damage budget, gave the reconstruction programme a major boost. They were therefore very attractive although their allocation was subject to the government's stipulations on construction costs, buildings layout and technical design. IRP developments were often built on several urban blocks and were sometimes included in a larger grouping with buildings funded through the ordinary budget. In Caen for example, the Quatrans scheme, overseen by the architect Henry Delacroix (1907–1974), was formed by linking five sites (Fig. 4).¹⁷ This scheme included plans for 480 homes, 100 shops, a department store and three hotels. Of the ten

¹² Patrice Gourbin, "L'urbanisme et la reconstruction de Vire" in *Permis de (re)construire, Vire 1944–1955*, Bayeux, OREP, 2012, p. 44–59.

¹³ Deliberation of the Conseil Municipal, 27 June 1951.

¹⁴ Robert Camelot, "Pour éviter le retour aux errements du passé. Il faut, dans la reconstruction des villes détruites, envisager des espaces libres, sources d'air, de lumière, de santé", *Paris-Normandie*, 8–9 January 1949.

¹⁵ Pierre Dalloz, "Les trois hommes qui ont reconstruit la France". *Les nouvelles littéraires*, 18 November 1954.

¹⁶ Benoît Pouvreau, *Un politique en architecture: Eugène Claudius-Petit, 1907–1989*, Paris, *Le Moniteur*, 2004, p. 118.

housing blocks, the largest (three longitudinal blocks, and one tower block) were built with IRP funding and provided approximately 360 homes. In the same city, seven IRP groups were commissioned in 1950 and the largest three (Place centrale, Marine and Jacobins) provided approximately 550 homes.

Architecture and urban planning: disruption and continuity

Under Raoul Dautry's stewardship, architecture and planning formed two distinct stages which were assigned to two successive professionals – the planner and then the chief architect. However, this separation acted as a brake on the most original proposals. For Le Corbusier and Saint-Dié, the siting of buildings and their purposes were closely linked to the architecture. Similarly, in Sotteville-lès-Rouen, Marcel Lods's *Zone Verte* was an overall building and urban planning project. The new direction adopted under Claudius-Petit sought to bring these two disciplines back together by placing them under the authority of a single professional. In Abbeville, Clément Tambuté fulfilled the roles of chief architect and town planner. Residential blocks, concentrated along a few intersecting thoroughfares, framed vast open and accessible spaces on which buildings were sited in more irregular layouts. Some

spaces were enclosed visually by bridge structures, for example around the square of the Collegiate Church of Saint-Vulfran – which was thus enhanced as a centrepiece.

In Caen (Quatrans) and Beauvais around the church of Saint-Étienne, the lead architects successfully created small public gardens. At both these developments, passageways under the buildings, porticos, and covered galleries created an area where pedestrians could circulate freely, to encourage walking, even if this openness soon clashed with the rationale of neighbouring urban blocks where buildings were placed in alignment, forming a barrier along the roadways. The land was fully accessible and private space was generally restricted to the footprint of buildings, removing all the closed-in areas. This layout reflected an overriding aspiration at that time to create an open and collectively run town.

The land available for building was not completely clear due to restrictions such as roads, rivers and historic monuments. Architects responsible for planning therefore invented a form of 'free urban planning' to take up the terms Le Corbusier applied to planning and buildings. Structures ignored physical features by straddling streets and waterways, and porticos facilitated free passage over two or three levels. It was not even necessary to plan according to an orthogonal system. Buildings spread like creepers over undeveloped land in places like Beauvais, where they also surrounded the listed church (Fig. 5). Different aspects of the scheme were often disjointed. Shops and housing followed their own rationales and no longer formed part of an identical block. Commercial units on ground floors provided continuity at street level. In contrast, housing units were deliberately varied in volume to allow light and air to infiltrate.



Fig. 4: Caen. Quatrans quarter, architect: Henry Delacroix, photo: Henri Salesse, médiathèque Terra.



← Fig. 5: Beauvais. The IRP development around the church of Saint-Étienne, architect: Henri Labourdette, photo: author.

↓ Fig. 6: Boulogne-sur-Mer. Tower blocks on quai Gambetta, architect: Pierre Vivien, photo: Henri Salesse, médiathèque Terra.



High-rise development, along the lines Le Corbusier had envisaged for Saint-Dié, rarely became a reality, although some were built, including quite early ones such as the towers on the place de l'hôtel de ville in Le Havre (10 floors), under the ISAI funding scheme. In around 1948, in Boulogne-sur-Mer, Pierre Vivien (1907–1999), began to make plans for four buildings with nine floors; possibly the outcome of an idea originally expressed in 1945 (Fig. 6).¹⁷¹⁸ A row of tower blocks was built in Caen with IRP funding, immortalising the new way forward for the Reconstruction. In the same city, the Quatrans district included one tower block with 11 floors, flouting the rules of the urban development plan completely. In all these cases, unlike the *unité d'habitation* in Marseille which looked out over 4000m² of completely open parkland, high-rise constructions were erected on densely built land in order to widen roads and public spaces rather than to free up land for a garden.

When it came to technical matters, in theory, IRP credits were conditional on the adoption of innovative technical processes thought to facilitate rapid, low-cost construction. By using the same building components on major construction projects, economies of scale were possible. However, such technical innovation was not necessarily

insisted upon. Ignoring diktats from Auguste Perret (1874–1954) on the legibility of construction techniques, many lead architects chose to differentiate the structure from its external cover. Hence the choice of stone cladding in Rouen, brick in Lisieux and render in Vire. By separating outer expression from the internal structure, it was also possible to retain traditional techniques, such as quarry stone walls, and to give them an appearance of modernity by using a render that looked like it had been precast. There was a movement in the opposite direction too however, as modern architects added traditional materials to their toolboxes, having overlooked them for many years. In Marseille, the work of Fernand Pouillon

¹⁷ Patrice Gourbin, “Les Monuments historiques et la reconstruction: l'exemple du quartier des Quatrans à Caen”, *Histoire de l'art*, 2000, n° 47, p. 111–122.

¹⁸ Frédéric Debussche, “Le logement dans la reconstruction de Boulogne-sur-Mer”, in Michel-Pierre Chélini Philippe Roger (eds.), *Reconstruire le Nord-Pas-de-Calais après la Seconde Guerre mondiale (1944–1958)*, Lille, Presses universitaires du Septentrion, 2017, p. 210–213.

(1912–1986) demonstrated that when it came to cost, construction and appearance, ‘pre-cut stone’ was a highly pertinent choice. The low-cost price of stone, helped by state subsidies to enable quarries to modernise, made the use of massive precut stone possible. In Le Havre, it was used widely in addition to concrete. Along the entire length of the rue de Paris, for example, the wall surfaces are stone and only the frames, string courses and cornices are concrete. An architect may therefore have been pursuing an objective of cohesion with the first phase of the Reconstruction, but in practical terms, this could translate to maintaining dual pitched roofs or occasionally including the same material, freestone or brick.

A mixed assessment

The final assessment of the post-war Reconstruction is therefore more complex than could have been imagined. Some towns show evidence of a surprising clash between two successive philosophies on architecture and urban planning. However, in most cases, this was balanced by the desire to create a functional and coherent urban mix both from an aesthetic and a spatial viewpoint. Innovation existed from the beginning within the ISAI pre-funded scheme, whereas some IRP schemes conformed to the configuration of standard reconstruction with rows of buildings with high sloping roofs. Despite his aspiration to impose the radicalism of Charter of Athens principles everywhere, Claudius-Petit was obliged to compromise with local councils, the reality on the ground, the legacy of the early years of the Reconstruction, the physical characteristics of sites, and districts which had evaded bombardment. The challenges we have understanding post-war reconstruction architecture today, therefore stem less from the clash between two successive government doctrines, which can be summarised as two ‘styles’, than from how those doctrines were interpreted, their conceptual and programmatic similarities and their ambiguities. There are more common points than apparent differences, even if it is not always easy to pinpoint these. An additional aspect was standard recon-

struction programmes, negotiated directly with people who had lost their homes. Modernist in their own way, these stand halfway between the subtle innovation of the ISAI schemes in the first phase, and the flamboyant modernity of the IRP programme. These three strands, shaped by regulations, funding and different stakeholders, did not exist in vacuums and it is this ability to combine conceptions and designs which characterises the Reconstruction era in France.

When the urban planner Marcel Smets (1947-) was tasked with drawing conclusions from the Brest symposium in 1983, he called for local studies to establish a “theory of reconstruction” to facilitate understanding of the phenomenon over time. The objective was to develop a basis for an operational model which could be used to respond to current and future disasters.¹⁹ Considered from this perspective, pursuing some theoretical dogma would rapidly lead to a deadlock. On the contrary, a more productive avenue would be to seek to understand the extent to which the Reconstruction produced towns with and for those parties who implemented the initiative. If we are to draw one lesson for now and the future, this is the direction of research we should follow.

¹⁹ Marcel Smets, “Esquisse d’une théorie de la Reconstruction”, *Urbanisme*, n° 196, July 1983, p. 54.

Résumé

La production architecturale et urbaine de la reconstruction française se divise en deux phases qui se succèdent chronologiquement. La première est de type «traditionnel» avec une organisation et des formes inspirées de l'architecture ancienne. Cette orientation, voulue par le premier ministre de la Reconstruction, Raoul Dautry, visait une modernisation raisonnable et modérée des villes et du bâti. A partir de l'arrivée d'Eugène Claudius-Petit à la tête du ministère, l'État réorienta son action en faveur d'une modernité beaucoup plus radicale. La nouvelle doctrine préconisait une configuration urbaine en rupture avec le passé, inspirée des principes de la Charte d'Athènes. Les systèmes constructifs innovants étaient également encouragés, d'où découlait une esthétique renouvelée. Notre proposition a pour premier objectif de mettre en évidence ce double visage de la Reconstruction, témoignage de l'évolution de l'action du ministère de la Reconstruction.

Le second point de la démonstration porte sur les modalités d'application de ce tournant volontariste. Le projet du ministère s'est heurté à la diversité des situations locales avec lesquelles il a été contraint de composer: personnalité des architectes et des élus, avancement des projets, capacités de financement des sinistrés, etc. Le résultat est une modernité hybride, ancrée dans les réalités locales et très éloignée de la vision universaliste de la Charte d'Athènes qui inspirait le ministre. Si certains ensembles font rupture avec les réalisations antérieures, les responsables locaux ont généralement conduit le processus avec la volonté d'éviter les confrontations trop brutales au moyen de dispositifs de transition. L'étude est aussi l'occasion de nuancer l'image d'un milieu local rétif aux innovations et à la modernité en soulignant les motivations sociales, financières et politiques des différents acteurs. Enfin la nécessité de faire compromis était dans la logique même de la loi de reconstruction du 28 octobre 1946, qui promettait à chaque sinistré une restitution équivalente au bien détruit.

En conclusion c'est selon nous cette capacité des villes reconstruites à faire le lien avec le passé, le site, le terroir et le champ social qui constitue le principal intérêt de la reconstruction française après la Seconde guerre mondiale, et peut-être la leçon qu'il faudrait en retenir pour le futur.

Zusammenfassung

Die architektonische und städtische Bauproduktion des Wiederaufbaus in Frankreich lässt sich in zwei chronologisch aufeinander folgende Phasen einteilen. Die erste ist „traditioneller“ Art mit einer Organisation und Bauformen, die sich an der älteren Architektur orientieren. Diese Ausrichtung, die von Raoul Dautry, dem ersten Wiederaufbau-Minister, vorangetrieben wurde, zielte auf eine umsichtige und moderate Modernisierung der Städte und der Bausubstanz ab. Nach der Übernahme des Ministeriums durch Eugène Claudius-Petit richtete der Staat seine Maßnahmen zugunsten einer radikaleren Modernität neu aus. Die neue Doktrin forderte eine Stadtgestaltung, die mit der Vergangenheit brach und sich an den Grundsätzen der Charta von Athen orientierte. Innovative Bausysteme wurden ebenfalls gefördert, was zu einer neuen Ästhetik führte. Unser Beitrag zielt zunächst darauf ab, dieses zweiseitige Erscheinungsbild des Wiederaufbaus sichtbar zu machen, das von der Weiterentwicklung der Vorgehensweise des Ministeriums für Wiederaufbau zeugt.

Der zweite Punkt der Darstellung bezieht sich auf die Modalitäten der Umsetzung dieser gewollten Kehrtwendung. Das Vorhaben des Ministeriums war mit den unterschiedlichsten örtlichen Gegebenheiten konfrontiert, mit denen es sich auseinandersetzen musste: Den Persönlichkeiten der Architekten und Kommunalpolitiker, dem unterschiedlichen Fortschritt der Projekte, der Finanzkraft der betroffenen Personen usw. Das Ergebnis ist eine hybride Moderne, die in den lokalen Realitäten verwurzelt und weit entfernt von der universalistischen Vision der Charta von Athen ist, die den Minister inspirierte. Auch wenn einige Ensembles einen Bruch mit der vorherigen Bauweise darstellen, haben die Entscheidungsträger auf örtlicher Ebene die Gestaltungsprozesse im Allgemeinen mit dem Bestreben geleitet, allzu brutale Konfrontationen durch vermittelnde Bauten zu vermeiden.

Die Studie bietet auch die Gelegenheit, das Bild eines lokalen Milieus, das sich generell gegen Innovationen und Modernität sträuben würde, zu nuancieren, indem sie die sozialen, finanziellen und politischen Motivationen der verschiedenen Akteure hervorhebt. Außerdem lag die Notwendigkeit, Kompromisse zu schließen, in der Logik des Wiederaufbaugesetzes vom 28. Oktober 1946, das jedem Kriegsgeschädigten eine Wiederherstellung in Höhe des zerstörten Eigentums versprach.

Zusammenfassend ist es unserer Meinung nach die Fähigkeit der wiederaufgebauten Städte, eine Verbindung mit der Vergangenheit, dem jeweiligen Standort, dem Umfeld und dem sozialen Kontext herzustellen, die das Hauptinteresse des Wiederaufbaus in Frankreich nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg ausmacht und vielleicht auch die Lehre, die wir daraus für die Zukunft ziehen sollten.

RECONSTRUCTION AND PHILANTHROPY

The Carnegie Endowment for International Peace and Reconstruction of the Village of Fargniers in the Department of Aisne (1922–1928)

The 9th of July, 1922 saw a hive of activity in Fargniers. A major ceremony had been organised to celebrate the first stone laid as part of a programme to rebuild the village – a project funded by the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace (CEIP). A few months earlier, this US philanthropic institution had agreed to take care of reconstructing public buildings in the village, which had been devastated during the Great War. The US ambassador, Myron T. Herrick (1854–1929) and the president of the CEIP's European office, Paul-Henri d'Estournelles de Constant (1852–1924), were welcomed warmly by local residents, who turned out in numbers to celebrate the rebirth of their village, which was decked with French and American flags to mark the occasion.

This event raises a series of questions. Why would a US institution of this size involve itself in the reconstruction of a French village? Of all the destroyed villages, why was Fargniers chosen? How was this project organised and who were the actors? What were their objectives?

In this article, we examine the motivations behind American philanthropy and the ways it was implemented in the context of the first reconstruction era, by taking another look at how this transnational project came about and was executed. By deliberately taking a historical rather than an architectural

perspective, we can consider the impact philanthropic intervention had within this reconstruction project. The sources we have consulted come primarily from the archives of the CEIP European Center, which are held at Columbia University in New York, and a collection owned by the architect Paul Bigot (1870–1942), which is held at the Archives of Contemporary Architecture in Paris.¹

Reconstructing a French village: the objectives

By the end of World War I, Europe had been bled dry. The death toll was unprecedented and the material damage extensive. In the ten departments of northern and eastern France, where the combat had taken place, 620 villages had been destroyed completely and almost 1300 had suffered more than 50% destruction. The law of 17 April 1919 on the reparation of war damage, known as the *Charte des Sinistrés*, set out the legal framework for allocating compensation. France was relying on reparations from Germany to fund its reconstruction costs, which were estimated at 102 billion francs.²

However, given the extent of the task, any external aid was welcome, and philanthropy also played a significant role in the Reconstruction. Philanthropy was particularly significant in Reims which had experienced

¹ Carnegie Endowment for International Peace (CEIP), European Center Records (ECR), Rare Book and Manuscript Library (RBML), Columbia University Libraries (CUL), Box 23 (Folders 5–6), Boxes 24 to 26. *Fonds Paul Bigot, Cité de l'architecture et du patrimoine, Centre d'archives d'architecture contemporaine (CAAC)*, 268 AA, projet BIG-I-1922–4.

² Ministère des régions libérées, *Montant des dommages subis et des sommes dépensées et à dépenser pour leur réparation*, July 1922, RBML, CUL, Frank A. Vanderlip Papers, Series F, Box F2.

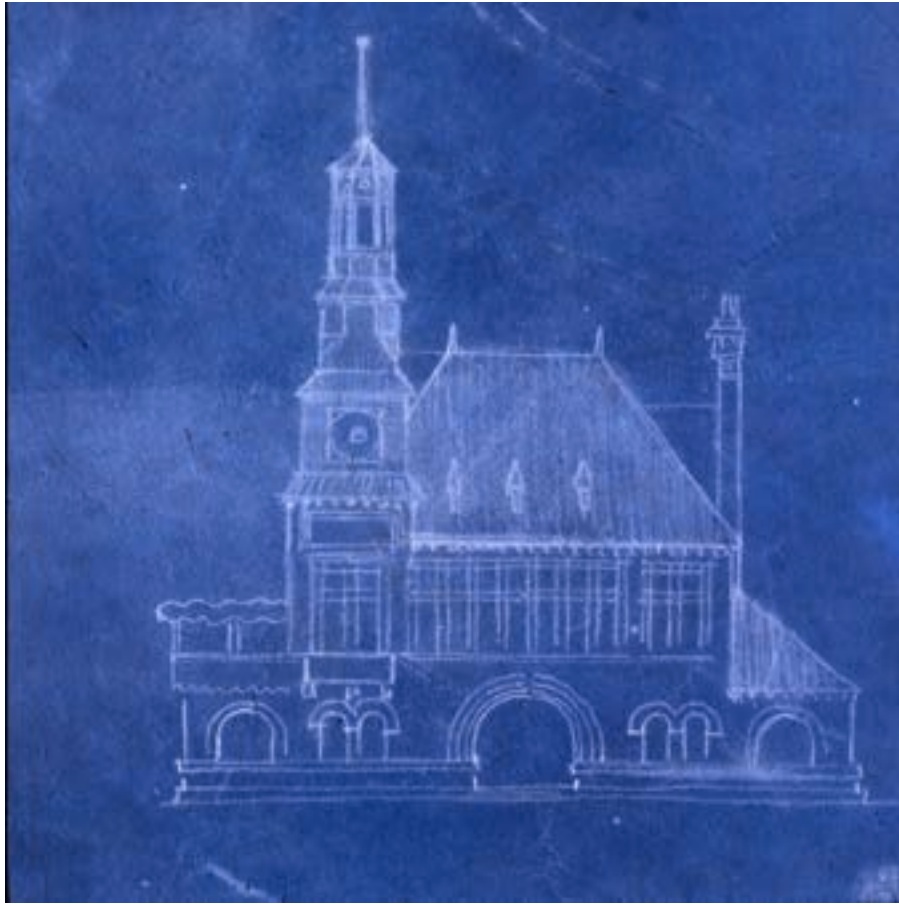


Fig. 1: Aerial view of Fargniers after the First World War, in *Dotation Carnegie pour la paix internationale, Pose de la première pierre des édifices communaux de Fargniers reconstruits avec le concours de la Dotation Carnegie* (9 July 1922), Paris, *Centre Européen de la Dotation Carnegie*, 1922, p. 1.

widespread destruction. Images of its cathedral engulfed by flames, which were widely distributed for propaganda purposes during the war, forged its image as a ‘martyr town’ and attracted international sympathy, especially from the USA.³ As an outcome,

a group of American benefactors decided to fund construction of the American Memorial Hospital, while John D Rockefeller, Jr (1874–1960) paid for restoration works to the cathedral’s roof. Addition-

³ On this subject see Thomas Gaehtgens, *La cathédrale incendiée. Reims, septembre 1914*, Paris, Gallimard, 2018.



← Fig. 2: Henri-Paul Nénot and Paul Bigot, elevation of the main façade of Fargniers town hall, c. May 1922, source: Académie d'architecture, Cité de l'architecture et du patrimoine, Archives d'architecture contemporaines, fonds Paul Bigot, projet BIG-I-1922-4, cote 268 AA 22/4, document PB-DES-082-01-01.

→ Fig. 3: Henri-Paul Nénot and Paul Bigot, overall plan for reconstruction of the central square in Fargniers, 'Place Carnegie', 1 May 1922, source: Académie d'architecture, Cité de l'architecture et du patrimoine, Archives d'architecture contemporaines, fonds Paul Bigot, projet BIG-I-1922-4, cote 268 AA 93, document PB-DES-082-02-03.

ally, the CEIP funded reconstruction of the municipal library in full.

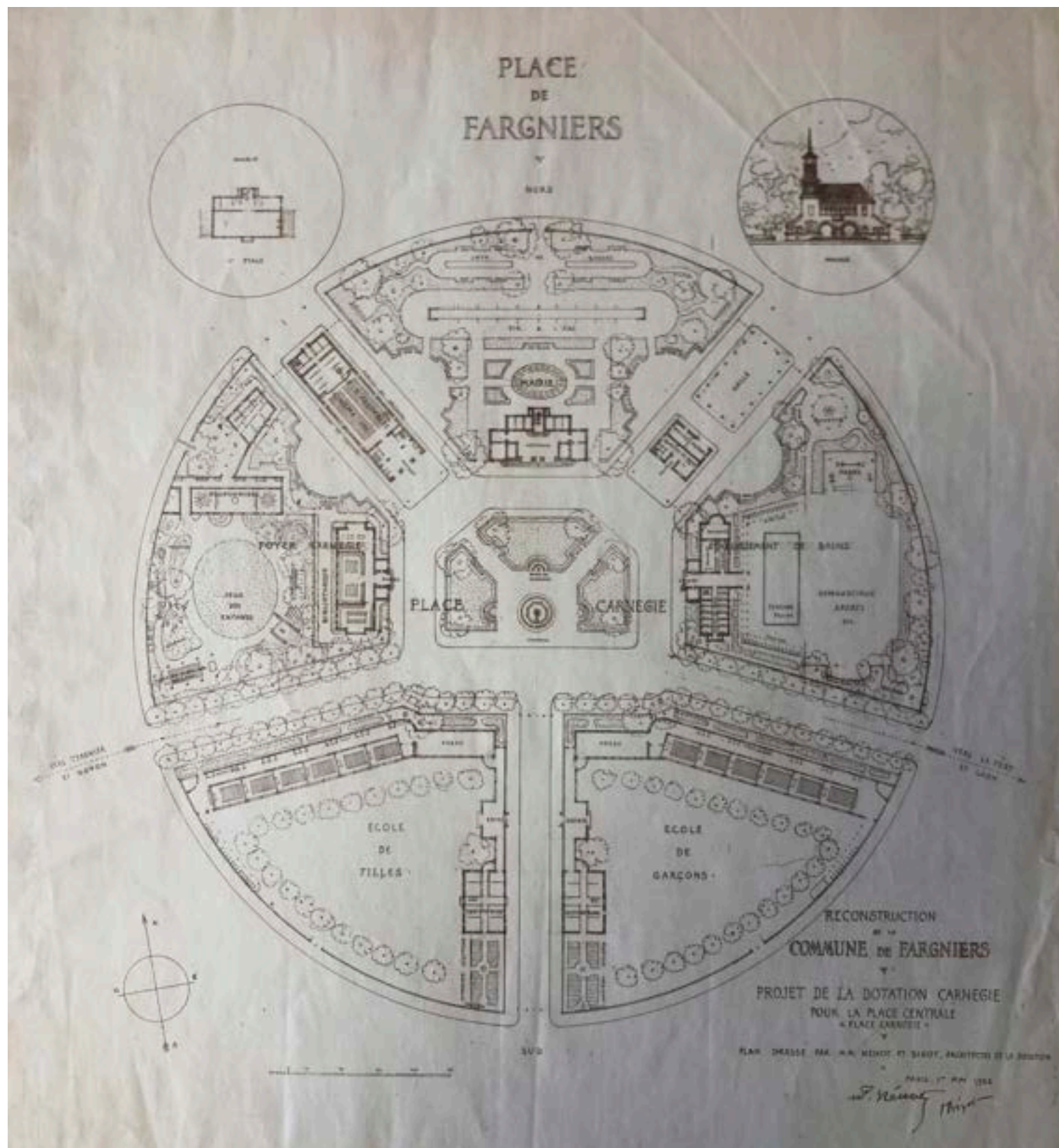
The CEIP was founded in 1910 by the steel magnate Andrew Carnegie (1835–1919) to promote international cooperation and preserve peace. Nicolas Murray Butler (1862–1947), the president of Columbia University, took an active interest in these issues and played a key role in the CEIP's creation. For many years, he managed the Division of Intercourse and Education and went on to become president between 1925 and 1945. He was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1931 for his work. The CEIP established its European Center on his initiative in 1911. Its headquarters were in Paris.

In the aftermath of the war, the CEIP became involved with the reconstruction programme. As well as donating 200,000 dollars to fund reconstruction of the library in Reims, it also donated 100,000 dollars each to Leuven in Belgium and Belgrade in Serbia to rebuild their libraries.⁴ These donations were made to honour the memory of Andrew Carnegie who had died in 1919 and who was particularly committed to creating and funding libraries. In June 1921, the first stone was laid in Belgrade with Butler in attendance. Similar ceremonies followed in Reims and Leuven in July of that same year. Enthused by the warm welcome from local communities and the extensive media coverage these donations received, Butler immediately decided to embark on a new reconstruction project in Europe.

Butler believed that a new donation would be an excellent way to promote the CEIP and its ethos to working-class people – an audience he had struggled to connect with until this point. These are the terms he spoke in when he informed d'Estournelles of his plans:

[...] in my judgement no funds that we had ever appropriated had produced greater practical results or made a more profound public impression [...]. Whereas our scholarly and scientific publications reach the select few, the elite, these buildings touch the imagination and impress the consciousness of the many. [...] Having in

⁴ On this subject see Nadine Akhund-Lange, "The work of the Carnegie Endowment in Europe after World War one: the libraries of Belgrade, Leuven and Reims (1919–1928). A comparative approach," *Military Historical Review*, n° 2, 2015, p. 114131. For comparison, \$200,000 in 1921 is equivalent to approximately \$3,415,550 in 2023.



view the success of these undertakings, I laid before the Committee, informally, my recommendation for assistance in the reconstruction of a typical French commune destroyed or devastated by the war.⁵

Butler explained to the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees that the cost of such a project would be minimal compared with the benefits it would bring them: “The relatively small amounts expended by the

⁵ Letter from Butler to d’Estournelles, October 11, 1921, RBML, CUL, CEIP, ECR, Box 23, Folder 5.

Endowment in reconstruction work in Europe had done more to establish the Endowment's prestige and invite confidence in its methods and larger purposes than all else that had been done since its incorporation".⁶

More generally, he hoped that the CEIP could make a useful contribution by providing destroyed villages with a rapid and cost-effective model for reconstruction that complied with the latest recommendations on health and hygiene. His idea was to create a square planted with trees and featuring a fountain. Around this would stand two-storey buildings "of that simple, classic design, without ornamentation, which is so appropriate for public buildings, and which depends for its effect upon its lines and its proportions". He added that "I have a feeling that if the Carnegie Endowment were to do this for a select commune and if that fact were made well known to the people of France, many other communal authorities might, so far as their means would permit, imitate this installation".⁷ Moreover, he believed that this model could make a major contribution to public life in France and raise living standards.⁸

Butler therefore had no difficulties convincing trustees to allocate him the necessary budget, to be taken from campaign funds which had not been spent during the war years. Now, it was a question of choosing a village.

The quest for the ideal village

Butler approached d'Estournelles asking him to contact the French authorities to find a village which met the following specific criteria: small in size; had been destroyed during the war; had been decorated or honoured for its courage during combat; was

accessible by railway so that it could be visited easily by anyone looking for inspiration.⁹

The deputy for Aisne, the French department which had suffered the most devastation, suggested Fargniers. The choice was approved on 23 November 1921 by the Ministry for Liberated Regions, but the task was not straightforward. The ministry had to resist pressure from other village communities, which having learned that an American group was looking to rebuild a village, wanted to be considered.¹⁰ It also rejected the somewhat controversial proposal of the village of Quierzy-sur-Oise, which was put forward as the probable birthplace of Charlemagne. Advocates of this village argued that: "For the Americans (on the instigation of a renowned academic like president Butler) to embark on rebuilding the birthplace of a leader who was a prominent figure throughout the Middle Ages, a figure whom we fight over with the Germans, would have a significant impact, as an act of prestige that would stoke their righteous sense of pride".¹¹ This proposal smacked of a desire for revenge, which went against the ethos promoted by the CEIP.

Fargniers, however, met all the criteria. By the end of the war, the village had been 95% destroyed (Fig. 1) and had been awarded the Croix de Guerre for the courage its residents had shown. Its modest size – 3000 residents before the conflict – made it viable for a full reconstruction and its location on the Paris-Brussels railway line made it easily accessible by train. Moreover, its mayor, Léon l'Héronnelle (1871–1933), was considered to be a highly capable and dynamic man who was open to modernisation. Since 1918, he had been developing a reconstruction plan based on a centralised square surrounded by municipal buildings but, in 1921, despite his best efforts, he still did not

⁶ Report presented by Butler to the members of the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees of the CEIP, 20 January, 1922, *Ibid.*

⁷ Letter from Butler to d'Estournelles, 11 October, 1921, *Ibid.*

⁸ Report presented by Butler to the members of the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees of the CEIP, January 20, 1922, *Ibid.*

⁹ Letter from Butler to d'Estournelles, 11 October, 1921, *Ibid.*

¹⁰ RBML, CUL, CEIP, ECR, Box 23, Folder 5, "Accambray" file. Léon Accambray (1868–1934) was deputy and general counsellor of the municipality where Fargniers it is located, and Mayor of the neighbouring municipality of Chauny.

¹¹ Letter from Bigot to d'Estournelles, 31 October, 1921, RBML, CUL, CEIP, ECR, Box 23, Folder 5.

have the funding needed to make this plan a reality. His deputy described him as someone “of great integrity and an excellent republican”.¹²

Butler agreed with the choice wholeheartedly and presented the village to the trustees with an enthusiasm bordering on the unbecoming: “It is a perfect model of a ruined town. Nothing of it remains except the ground. [...] It is not possible to find a commune more completely and more systematically devastated than Fargniers.” He also added that the mayor “is an exceptionally capable man, who would faithfully and judiciously carry out any arrangements that were made for reconstruction”¹³, showing that he was confident of being able to maintain control of the project.

American control of the project

An examination of how the project was executed shows that the CEIP closely controlled each stage to make sure that everything met its objectives perfectly.

This began with announcing the donation of funds. On 15 February 1922, Butler confirmed to d’Estournelles that the sum of 150,000 dollars, or 1,750,000 francs, had been made available to rebuild Fargniers.¹⁴ Some days later, he issued his instructions on how to proceed so that the announcement had as much impact as possible. The attention given to this stage and the points he wanted to emphasise tell us much about the issues at stake within the project:

In your publicity, please emphasize as much as you can the fact that it is the policy of the Carnegie Endowment and especially the Division of Intercourse and Education to build future international relations upon goodwill, upon complete international understanding and sympathy and

*upon those acts of kindness and helpfulness which one people so greatly appreciates at the hands of another. The Place Carnegie at Fargniers ought not only to be permanent evidence of the constructive policy of the Carnegie Endowment but also an eloquent witness of American sympathy with the sufferings and losses of France in the war. It should also serve as a model for the reconstruction of other stricken communes and villages, not only in France but elsewhere.*¹⁵

These instructions show that the project was rooted firmly in the internationalist movement which the CEIP and many other US philanthropic organisations were part of. As particularly involved protagonists of international cooperation, these organisations therefore took the opposite view to the isolationist policy which the USA adopted after the war, as reflected in its refusal to join the League of Nations in January 1920. Beyond a somewhat self-interested act of generosity, private philanthropy can be interpreted as the USA building bridges with the international community and looking for a way to play a role in this community despite everything.¹⁶

The CEIP’s influence on the project also extended to the style of buildings to be reconstructed in Fargniers. At the point funding was made official, a general plan of the village and the elevations of the main buildings had already been prepared. These had been drawn up by the reconstruction architects responsible for this district, brothers, Pierre (1878–1927) and Louis Guidetti (1881–/), under the aegis of the authorities for the liberated regions and in collaboration with the Mayor of Fargniers. However, the CEIP European Center insisted on submitting these plans to a committee of “experienced men of recognised taste

¹² Letter from Accambray to d’Estournelles, September 1, 1921, *Ibid.*

¹³ Report presented by Butler to the members of the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees of the CEIP, 20 January, 1922, *Ibid.*

¹⁴ For comparison, this is equivalent to \$2,560,000 in 2023.

¹⁵ Letter from Butler to d’Estournelles, 24 February, 1922, RBML, CUL, CEIP, ECR, Box 23, Folder 5.

¹⁶ On this subject, see Katharina Rietzler, “Experts for peace: structures and motivations of philanthropic internationalism in the interwar years”, in Daniel Laqua (ed.), *Internationalism reconfigured: transnational ideas and movements between the world wars*, London, Tauris, 2011, p. 45–65 and Ludovic Tournès, *Les États-Unis et la Société des Nations (1914–1946): le système international face à l’émergence d’une superpuissance*, Berne, Peter Lang, 2016.



Fig. 4: Aerial view of Fargniers in 1931, source: IGN, photothèque nationale, image taken on 26 June 1931.

A new architect, Paul Bigot, who was a consultant architect at the European Center and a personal friend of d'Estournelles, was thus appointed to work with the Guidetti brothers on simplifying their plans. This request put him in the delicate position of having to insist that his colleagues made substantial changes, which he resented doing, so the committee made the following decision:

After careful consideration, we have concluded that to impose our viewpoint on the Ministry for the Liberated Regions, the authorities in Fargniers and the entire body of architects, we must have the authority of an architect who is held in the highest regard both within his profession and general opinion. We have decided on Monsieur H-P Nénot, architect of the Sorbonne, member of the Institute, who has agreed to join our special committee in Fargniers and to give us recommendations and, if necessary,

*instructions which everyone will accept.*¹⁹

After Henri-Paul Nénot (1853–1934) had modified the buildings accordingly (Fig. 2), their drawings, and the plan for the whole town (Fig. 3), were approved by the French authorities in December 1922. The plans, signed by Bigot and de Nénot, were executed by the Guidetti brothers, but the CEIP still kept close control of how the works progressed. Bigot supervised construction works under the responsi-

and independence and who are as authoritative and respected as possible”¹⁷ which they themselves had specially formed. This committee deemed the local architects’ proposals to be “much too grandiose or, to be more precise, lacking in simplicity. We are all of the opinion that a large modern village, built in the spirit which inspired your initiative, must, first and foremost, meet modern needs and give an impression of progress rather than misplaced artistic conceit.”¹⁸

¹⁷ Letter from d'Estournelles to Butler, 2 May, 1922, RBML, CUL, CEIP, ECR, Box 23, Folder 5. This committee (the same one that supervised reconstruction of the library in Reims) comprised: d'Estournelles de Constant, Justin Godart (vice president of the CEIP European Center), Paul Bigot (architect), Paul Landowski (sculptor), Pol Neveux (libraries general inspector), André Honnorat (former minister of state education, president of the Cité Universitaire de Paris), Charles Roche (Mayor of Reims).

¹⁸ Letter from d'Estournelles to Butler, 10 February, 1922, RBML, CUL, CEIP, ECR, Box 23, Folder 5.

bility of d'Estournelles. He was instructed to be in constant communication with the Guidettis “to make sure nothing is done without informing you first”.²⁰ He was also expected to convey Butler’s demands to his colleagues: “please make sure you communicate all the suggestions coming to us from New York to Monsieur Guidetti to make sure that they are taken account of as much as possible”,²¹ was the instruction. D’Estournelles kept Butler meticulously informed of progress with the works by writing to him frequently and Butler himself visited Fargniers in July 1923, one year after works began, to inspect progress.²²

The impact of philanthropy on reconstruction projects

Although the Americans were rather prescriptive about the style of buildings and execution of the works, the overall plan chosen by the mayor, with its concentric layout, was respected: “Our town will be reborn more beautiful and more prosperous than it was before. The old narrow and winding streets, so awkward to navigate and dangerous, will be no more. The new streets will be wider and more direct, making it easier for vehicles and pedestrians to move around”,²³ he announced with delight. To mark this new direction, the centre of the village was relocated a few hundred metres to the east (Fig. 4). Whereas the old settlement was organised around the church, the new town spread out around the Place Carnegie, where a statue of the philanthropist was placed. It contained all the features of the then, much in vogue,

garden cities with a central square surrounded by the following public buildings: a town hall, schools (one for boys and one for girls); the ‘Foyer Carnegie’ featuring a library which Butler was keen to include “as this is what Mr Carnegie is especially keen on”,²⁴ an infant school and play area for children; a public baths and wash house; a ‘municipal hall’ with room for a small theatre-cinema; and a building that housed a post office, a police station and a fire station. The outline of the town hall’s belfry rose above this new secular, social and civic centre in place of the church bell tower, (Fig. 5) reconstruction of which was considered to be “outside the statutes of the Carnegie Endowment”.²⁵

The church was not the only reconstruction project that the CEIP did not wish to fund, albeit for different reasons. One of the core tenets of the philanthropy practised by major American foundations in the early 20th century was to not do everything on behalf of a beneficiary, but instead to offer support and encouragement with projects.²⁶ In this spirit, construction of the infant school and the baths was left for the municipal authorities to take care of.

The case of these baths gives us an opportunity to reconsider the philanthropic project as a means of promoting American models.²⁶ It was Butler who insisted that such a building should be included in the project: “We understand very well that the use of public baths is not as universal a practice in France as it is here [in the USA] or in England. Nevertheless, we believe that building an amenity of this type now will not only be useful in itself but will

¹⁹ Letter from d’Estournelles to Butler, 29 March, 1922, *Ibid.*

²⁰ Letter from Peylade (secretary of the European office of the CEIP) to Bigot, 30 May, 1922, *Ibid.*

²¹ Letter from Peylade to Bigot, 14 June, 1922, *Ibid.*

²² Anonymous, “the president Butler and Mrs Andrew Carnegie in Fargniers (Aisne),” *Conciliation Internationale*, quarterly bulletin n° 2, 1923, p. 45–53.

²³ Léon L’Héroudel, “Discours prononcé à l’occasion de la cérémonie de pose de la première pierre de Fargniers” in *Dotation Carnegie pour la Paix Internationale, Pose de la première pierre des édifices communaux de Fargniers reconstruits avec le concours de la Dotation Carnegie (9 juillet 1922)*, Paris, Centre Européen de la Dotation Carnegie, 1922, p. 10.

²⁴ Letter from Butler to d’Estournelles (translation), 15 February, 1922, RBML, CUL, CEIP, ECR, Box 23, Folder 5.

²⁵ Letter from Babcock to abbé Maurice Bonna, 20 June, 1928, RBML, CUL, CEIP, ECR, Box 23, Folder 6.

²⁶ The concept which Andrew Carnegie himself insisted upon in “The Gospel of Wealth,” *North American Review*, June 1889, considered to be the theoretical basis of the philanthropy practised by major American foundations in the early 20th century.

also provide a model for other villages”²⁷ Keen to satisfy the requirements of the Americans as best he could, L’Hérondelle asked for plans for a public baths to be sent to him “so we can build these to the most modern and comfortable specification”;²⁸ which is an example of the USA promoting an idea of progress. The Americans themselves were only too aware of this, as can be seen in their desire for both the layout and management of the library to be based on the American model. This is why, thanks to the intervention of the CEIP, the local librarian received training at the American Library School in Paris. These examples reflect a form of American universalism, that is, the belief that what is good for the USA is necessarily good for the rest of the world, and that in the name of progress, these models should be promulgated.²⁹ Whether it is imposed by benefactors or supported by beneficiaries, the American model is promoted through philanthropy, which serves as a channel for disseminating models and a vector for Americanisation. Rather than simply providing material help, the reconstruction was seen as a global project intended to change habits and lifestyles considered to be archaic. The results were mixed, however. Indeed, in Fargniers, due to a lack of funding, the public baths were never built.

Construction works progressed extremely rapidly. Just two years passed between the laying of the first stone in 1922 and inauguration of the first buildings (the girls’ school and the post office) in 1924. It took several more years to complete the town hall, the Foyer Carnegie, the municipal hall and the other two schools. In the summer of 1926, to respond

to the sharp increase in the costs of materials and labour in the mid-1920s, the CEIP agreed to make an exceptional donation of 200,000 francs to complete the landscaping and road network. In 1928, the works were completed and Fargniers received one final grant to create a small children’s library.

Despite the remarkable speed, the Americans pressed their French partners constantly and did not appear to realise that the pace of works was highly admirable in the post-war context. Hence, in January 1923, six months after works began, Butler enjoined d’Estournelles to complete the works as quickly as possible, ideally by the summer, as many Americans planning to travel to France had expressed a wish to visit Fargniers. He insisted: “Is there nothing that you and the Committee can do to influence the authorities to take a personal interest in bringing the matter forward more actively?”³⁰

The role of agents such as d’Estournelles, who was effectively an interpreter for both parties, therefore proved to be essential in the context of transnational philanthropic projects. On the one hand, he pressurised the French to respond to the wishes of the Americans and was quick to tell Bigot: “Remember that our American friends are as impatient as they are generous, which is understandable”.³¹ On the other, he stalled the Americans and got them to understand that progress was already highly satisfactory given local conditions. He told Butler: “We consider ourselves fortunate, compared to others. Our building contractors are excellent and are successfully working with L’Hérondelle to find labour and materials at a time when there is a shortage everywhere [...] We are starting things all the time in Fargniers. How many of

²⁷ Letter from Butler to d’Estournelles (traduction), 15 February, 1922, RBML, CUL, CEIP, ECR, Box 23, Folder 5.

²⁸ Letter from Peylade to Haskell, 16 March, 1922, *Ibid.*

²⁹ On the subject of the imposition of American methods and models, see also Églantine Pasquier, “Un mécène américain pour l’université de Paris: John D. Rockefeller, Jr. et la Maison internationale de la Cité universitaire”, conference proceedings *Patrimoine, philanthropie et mécénat, XIXe-XXIe siècle. Dons et legs en faveur de l’enseignement, de la recherche et des institutions de conservation*, Paris, CTHS (to be published).

³⁰ Letter from Butler to d’Estournelles, 16 January, 1923, RBML, CUL, CEIP, ECR, Box 23, Folder 5.

³¹ Letter from d’Estournelles to Bigot, 17 May, 1922, *Ibid.*



Fig. 5: Aerial view of Place Carnegie in Fagniers, c. 1960, source: Archives Nationales, fonds Les applications photographiques d'industrie et d'édition (LAPIE).

our neighbouring villages would like to be able to say the same?"³²

These words imply that the reconstruction works had been prioritised due to philanthropic intervention, probably to the detriment of neighbouring villages, and by circumventing the usual procedures to satisfy the Americans. To speed up the works, the CEIP therefore asked contractors to bid through restricted tender not open tender, even though for works worth more than one million francs, it was usually forbidden to negotiate directly. The government and the *préfecture* for the Aisne agreed to this nevertheless.³³ The archives also hold records of direct discussions between d'Estournelles, the *préfecture* and various

government departments to bring forward repairs to the road to Fagniers, so that vehicles supplying the construction site could travel there easily. The Minister for the liberated regions granted an additional budget of 500,000 francs for this purpose.³⁴ In general, members of the committee were not afraid to make use of their personal connections to help the project along: "To make sure the committee takes advantage of every means it has available to meet the wishes of our American friends, and our own wishes, as swiftly as possible, it is understood that Messieurs d'Estournelles and Nénot will agree on the wording of a letter to be sent to Monsieur the Interior Minister, who fortunately is a close colleague of Monsieur d'Estour-

³² Letter from d'Estournelles to Butler, 8 September, 1923, *Ibid.*

³³ RBML, CUL, CEIP, ECR, Box 23, Folder 5, "Entrepreneurs de reconstruction et coopératives".

³⁴ Letter from Peylade to Bigot, 20 June, 1923, RBML, CUL, CEIP, ECR, Box 23, Folder 5.

nelles and a personal friend of Monsieur Nénot”.³⁵ Butler was therefore told: “Everyone understands the inestimable value of your American initiative and the duty to make the utmost effort in response”. In the press, the Mayor of Fargniers expressed these words of praise: “[...] We were very fortunate, the Carnegie Endowment adopted us. [...] And, since then if anyone tries to put a spoke in the wheels, they intervene. No-one dares resist. They give in”.³⁶ In the case of Fargniers, philanthropic intervention therefore provided genuine leverage with the authorities, who were keen to show that they could do justice to the aid they had been given.

The reconstruction of Fargniers has never been studied in detail and it would be worthwhile to explore the various avenues opened here in more depth. A consultation of additional French sources would help answer other key questions, such as how French stakeholders in the project perceived the American interventionist approach, how residents in the village took over the reconstructed buildings and, indeed, how successful a model Fargniers provided.

Although this last point remains to be considered, since 1998, the village has enjoyed another form of recognition. The Americans insisted on a simple and pragmatic approach to reconstruction, but at the same time, meticulous care was given to the design and construction of the buildings. As an outcome, for cultural, historical and aesthetic reasons, these assets are recognised as being characteristic of the first reconstruction period and are listed in the register of Historic Monuments.

³⁵ Minutes of the meeting held by the committee for the reconstruction of the place de Fargniers, 14 October 1922, CAAC, fonds Paul Bigot, 268 AA 10/6.

³⁶ Letter from d'Estournelles to Butler, 2 May, 1922, RBML, CUL, CEIP, European Center Records, Box 23, Folder 5; Words recorded by André Gybal, “Une visite à Fargniers, ville modèle des régions libérées”, *Le Quotidien*, 1 October 1923, p. 2–3.

Résumé

À partir de l'exemple de la reconstruction de Fargniers (Aisne), village de trois mille habitants détruit à plus de 95% pendant la Première Guerre mondiale, cet article revient sur les motivations de la philanthropie américaine dans le contexte de la première reconstruction en France et sur les modalités de déroulement de ce projet transnational.

Encouragée par le grand écho médiatique dont ont fait l'objet les chantiers de reconstruction des bibliothèques de Reims, de Louvain et de Belgrade qu'elle a financés, la Dotation Carnegie pour la Paix Internationale souhaite, en 1922, entreprendre un nouveau projet de reconstruction en Europe.

Rapidement, l'idée de sélectionner un village français pour le reconstruire selon les méthodes les plus économiques et les plus efficaces tout en suivant les dernières recommandations hygiénistes afin qu'il puisse servir de modèle aux villages détruits à l'échelle européenne voit le jour. Pour les dirigeants de la Dotation, un tel projet, au-delà de son intérêt pratique pour les pays dévastés, permettrait d'assurer pour un coût relativement faible une excellente publicité à leur institution et ainsi de contribuer à la promotion de son idéologie en Europe auprès d'un public plus large et plus populaire.

Les responsables du projet demandent aux autorités françaises de les aider à sélectionner un village se trouvant dans un état de destruction complet, ayant été décoré ou s'étant distingué pour son courage pendant la guerre et facilement accessible par les transports afin de faciliter sa visite par les architectes, maires ou personnalités qui souhaiteraient l'utiliser comme modèle. Leur choix se porte sur Fargniers.

La conception des plans, intégrant les recommandations des Américains, est confiée à deux architectes renommés, Paul Bigot et Henri-Paul Nénot, architectes de la Sorbonne. Ils sont exécutés par deux architectes de la reconstruction, Pierre et Louis Guidetti. L'ensemble des bâtiments municipaux reconstruits, disposés selon un plan radioconcentrique autour de la place Carnegie est inscrit au titre des Monuments historiques depuis 1998.

L'étude du déroulement de ce projet à la maîtrise d'ouvrage américaine et à la maîtrise d'œuvre française ainsi que de son impact dans le cadre plus vaste de la reconstruction prend appui sur des sources d'archives inédites conservées principalement à l'université de Columbia (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, European Center Records) et au Centre d'archives d'architecture contemporaine de Paris (fonds Paul Bigot).

Zusammenfassung

Anhand des Beispiels des Wiederaufbaus von Fargniers (Aisne), einem Dorf mit dreitausend Einwohnern, das im Ersten Weltkrieg zu mehr als 95% zerstört wurde, geht dieser Artikel auf die Beweggründe der amerikanischen Philanthropie im Kontext des ersten Wiederaufbaus in Frankreich und auf die Modalitäten der Abwicklung dieses transnationalen Projekts ein.

Ermutigt durch das große Medienecho auf die von ihr finanzierten Wiederaufbauprojekte der Bibliotheken in Reims, Löwen und Belgrad, wollte die Carnegie Dotation for International Peace 1922 ein neues Wiederaufbauprojekt in Europa in Angriff nehmen. Schnell entstand die Idee, ein französisches Dorf auszuwählen, um es mit den kostengünstigsten und effizientesten Methoden wieder aufzubauen und dabei die neuesten hygienischen Empfehlungen zu befolgen, damit es als Modell für zerstörte Dörfer in ganz Europa dienen konnte. Für die Leiter der Stiftung würde ein solches Projekt, abgesehen von seinem praktischen Nutzen für die verwüsteten Länder, mit relativ geringen Kosten eine hervorragende Werbung für ihre Institution ermöglichen und so dazu beitragen, ihre Ideologie in Europa bei einem breiteren und populärerem Publikum zu fördern.

Die Projektverantwortlichen baten die französischen Behörden um Hilfe bei der Auswahl eines Dorfes, das sich in einem Zustand völliger Zerstörung befand, das während des Krieges ausgezeichnet worden war oder sich durch seinen Mut ausgezeichnet hatte und das mit Verkehrsmitteln leicht zu erreichen war, damit es von Architekten, Bürgermeistern oder Persönlichkeiten, die es als Modell verwenden wollten, leichter besucht werden konnte. Die Wahl fiel auf Fargniers.

Mit der Gestaltung der Pläne, in die die Empfehlungen der Amerikaner einfließen, wurden zwei renommierte Architekten beauftragt, Paul Bigot und Henri-Paul Nénot, Architekten der Sorbonne. Ausgeführt wurden sie von zwei Architekten des Wiederaufbaus, Pierre und Louis Guidetti. Die Gesamtheit der wiederaufgebauten städtischen Gebäude, die nach einem strahlenförmigen Plan um die Place Carnegie herum angeordnet sind, ist seit 1998 als historisches Denkmal eingetragen.

Die Untersuchung des Verlaufs dieses Projekts mit amerikanischer Bauherrschaft und französischer Bauleitung sowie seiner Auswirkungen im größeren Rahmen des Wiederaufbaus stützt sich auf unveröffentlichte Archivquellen, die hauptsächlich an der Columbia University (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, European Center Records) und im Centre d'archives d'architecture contemporaine in Paris (Fonds Paul Bigot) aufbewahrt werden.

BRAZZAVILLE

Patterns and Trends in the Post-war Reconstruction after 1997

Introduction

Brazzaville was founded on 3 October 1880 by Pierre Savorgnan de Brazza, after whom it is named. It was originally a village called Mfoa, made up of a few rural houses. Well before colonisation, the area was a major hub for commercial exchanges thanks to its strategic location. The city lies where the Congo River forms a large lake (Stanley Pool) and ends its navigable course. At the end of the 19th century, the entire local population, which was dispersed in numerous villages along the river, was estimated to be between 10,000 and 20,000 inhabitants. Authority was fragmented between the various 'kings', each of whom reigned over a domain consisting of a village or hamlets, surrounded by their land (Schéma Directeur d'Urbanisme-SDU-2016).

In 1904, Brazzaville became the capital of French Congo and French Equatorial Africa (AEF). In 1940, soon after World War II began and following the occupation of France by Nazi Germany, it became the capital of Free France, enabling Brazzaville to host the famous 'Brazzaville Conference' held in February 1944 at the initiative of General de Gaulle (SDU-1984). It was during this conference that the new French policy was defined, as a prelude to the emancipation of the former French colonies in Sub-Saharan Africa.

From a small outpost in 1880, the town has grown exponentially over the years. In 1891, there were a few small houses built with meagre local materials and only one made of bricks. Around 1896, numerous official buildings were erected: the whitewashed dwelling of the Treasurer-Paymaster, the Interior Delegate's home built in bricks, and another primitive model, covered with straw,

belonging to the Administrator. Opposite the latter was a long plank shack raised on stilts (R. Mfoulou, 1974), which served as the doctor's residence. This small world is what constituted Brazzaville, as described by Captain Baratier, in the service of Mr. Marchand.

It was following the peace treaty signed with King Makoko Iloo that De Brazza was able to take possession of the small post of Mfoa, now Brazzaville, and leave it under the guard of the Senegalese sergeant Malamine. De Brazza's choice to settle by the river was motivated not only by the pleasant atmosphere produced by the riverbank, but also by his vision to make this post a hub for river navigation, connecting to the Atlantic coast via caravans and, later, by rail. The first city hall was built in 1912 and was replaced in 1962–1963 by the current city hall. Its first coherent urban plan dates back to 1929 under Governor General Antonetti.

After Congo gained independence in 1960, Brazzaville had a population of 120,000 (Mfoulou, 1974). It grew rapidly and passed the half-million mark in the 1970s. The population increased from 585,812 inhabitants in 1984 to 805,410 in 1996 (General Population and Housing Census RGPH), then to 1,373,382 in 2007 and 1,833,488 in 2018 (RGPH-2018). It constitutes approximately 37% of the national population. People aged between 15 and 45 account for roughly 45% of Brazzaville's population. Brazzaville has a population density of 14,822 inhabitants per km², making it one of Africa's most densely populated cities. One consequence of this concentration is the inconsistent occupation of space in certain areas without land subdivision: dwellings are erected on unsuitable sites for construction (sandy or flood-prone areas, hillsides).



Fig. 1: Brazzaville, City Hall, photo: author, 2022.

In terms of construction, the city was built on the French model, which consisted of building social housing for workers such as civil servants and soldiers. These include the housing at Camp 15 Août, the housing in the OCH neighbourhood of the Mougali district (arrondissement 4), and many others. Alongside these social housing projects, numerous public buildings were constructed: the city hall of Brazzaville, the Nabemba Tower, etc. At the time, some of these buildings were the work of the Chinese, modelled on the Great Hall of the People in Beijing.

Efforts to modernise and build the city of Brazzaville continued until 1996. From 1997 to 2000, the city experienced a dark period known as the destruction period, during which a significant part of its urban fabric was destroyed. In 2002, the city entered a new phase of reconstruction.

The main aim of this article is to examine the different changes between the period of construction of the city, followed by the destruction period, and now the current

phase of reconstruction. What are the models and trends in the reconstruction of Brazzaville after the 1997 war? What colonial legacy can still be seen after the reconstruction phase? Our objective is to analyse the patterns and trends in the reconstruction of Brazzaville after the civil war of 1997.

Methodology

The methodology used here combines several processes: a review of the literature on the urban fabric of the city of Brazzaville, from its creation to the present day. It provided an opportunity to consult works on the history of Brazzaville written for the city's centenary, among others. Field surveys involved interviewing six members of the Brazzaville history commission. Photography was used to capture different models observed in public buildings, linking the public building to the nationality of the construction or reconstruction company when applicable. All this work was conducted between September and December 2022.



← Fig. 2: Brazzaville, Nabemba Tower, photo: Agence d'information d'Afrique central [ADIAC], 2022.

↙ Fig. 3: Brazzaville, former parliament building / Palais des Congrès, photo: ADIAC, 2022.

Results and Analysis

The results of this work will be presented in two stages. The first will provide a brief overview of the influence of French construction after independence until the civil war of 1997, and the second part will focus on the post-war reconstruction period. This choice is justified by the fact that 1997 marked a discontinuity in the city's construction efforts. This prompts us to conduct a retrospective and prospective analysis.

City Hall of Brazzaville

Like cities in other French colonies, Brazzaville was shaped by French influence. Old buildings such as the Centre de formation et de recherche en art dramatique (Cfrad), the City Hall, the Nabemba Tower and many others, are illustrations of this influence.

The first city hall was built in 1912 and was replaced by the current city hall on 24 February 1962. Its function was primarily to issue civil status certificates (Fig. 1). The architecture of this building, over 60 years old, is still intact. The few refurbishments that were carried out only concerned paintwork and electrical installations. Today, it is one of the iconic buildings that symbolise French presence.

The City Hall of Brazzaville is an administrative building designed by French architect Jean-Yves Normand. This work is an example of tropical-adapted climatic architecture. It is a four-storey building based on a cleverly calculated asymmetry between volumes, shadows, and colours. The guiding principle of its architecture



is its sober overall line, with straight lines that intersect to form a right angle.

The two overlapping facades, staggered in a quincunx pattern, each present two rows of seven columns, symbolising the seven arts. A wide, two-tone staircase of ivory and ebony flagstones leads to a vast hall on the ground floor and to another in the basement (R, Ziavoula, 2006).

Nabemba Tower

With its 32 floors, the Nabemba Tower is the tallest building in the Republic of Congo. It is an imposing 106-metre-high building. The beauty of the capital can be contemplated from this tower, which is surrounded on both sides by glass. The complex was built in 1986 by Jean-Marie Legrand. This building was built by the French. This work is evidence of the remarkable French engineering and architecture.

It remains the tallest building in the city and the country (Fig. 2). The building, which can be seen from any part of Brazzaville, has become a landmark in the capital. A visit to this building is a must when staying in the capital. It is an office skyscraper housing several head offices and nearly a dozen ministerial departments.

Timid arrival of Chinese construction

As part of the construction of the post-independence city of Brazzaville, the Congolese government also called on Chinese companies to build the Palais des Congrès (Fig. 3). This building, built in 1979, is home to the two chambers of Parliament (Senate and National Assembly). This was one of the first Chinese buildings in the city, diversifying the architectural quality of the capital.

The building was inaugurated on 22 July 1984 by the President of the Republic, Denis Sassou Nguesso. It is a public administrative institution, under the supervision of the National Assembly. It is located in the Mounjali district. The building is divided into two blocks. The seven-storey building houses the administrative departments, while the two-storey central building houses the parlia-

mentary activity proper. This building includes a congress hall and a banquet hall located to the left of the main hall, while a committee room and a room for international conferences, which also host press conferences, are located to the right of the main hall. The complex features modern architecture that, seen from the air, draws a map of Congo.

Destruction period

In 1997, Congo experienced a civil war, with the fighting primarily concentrated in Brazzaville, the capital city. This conflict had a detrimental impact on the colonial architecture of the region, resulting in the widespread destruction of public buildings. The scars of these atrocities are still evident on some structures. While some buildings have undergone rehabilitation efforts and maintained their original appearance, others have been completely altered due to the preferences or requirements of the new occupants.

Reconstruction of the city of Brazzaville after the 1997 war

During our field visits, we identified three construction models, or 'types of construction'. These are mainly the Chinese, Turkish, and Brazilian models.

During the period leading up to the war, the Chinese presence in Brazzaville was relatively subdued; however, it has since gained momentum as part of the city's post-war reconstruction efforts. In support of this reconstruction, the government initiated an *accelerated municipalisation* policy aimed at bolstering the country's infrastructure. Brazzaville experienced three consecutive years dedicated to reconstruction (2008, 2009, and 2010), with the goal of improving urban roads and constructing buildings to house public services. Various financing models were explored, including self-financing from the state budget and loans from technical and financial partners. While French companies had traditionally dominated the construction sector, the post-war era witnessed the emergence of new partners, notably China.

Regarding public buildings in Brazzaville, observations conducted on-site, involving a sample of 15 buildings, each exceeding 10 floors, which are either completed or under construction, indicate that 14 of them are being built or

are under construction by Chinese companies. The only exception is the building designated as the headquarters for the Ministry of Interior, which is under construction by a Brazilian company.

Table 1: distribution of public buildings according to the nationality of the construction company, source: field observations, December 2022.

Nb	Building name	Status	Construction company
	ARC building	completed	Chinese
	Former CEFRAD building	under construction	Chinese
	Immeuble du Cadastre	completed	Chinese
	BSCA building (Banque Sino-Congolaise pour l'Afrique)	completed	Chinese
	BGFI building	completed	Chinese
	Ecobank building	completed	Chinese
	Immeuble du Port	under construction	Chinese
	ORCA building	completed	Chinese
	Twin Towers (centre)	completed	Chinese
	Twin Towers (Mpila)	completed	Chinese
	Ministry of the Interior headquarters building	under construction	Brazilian
	Immeuble des institutions (near BSCA headquarters)	under construction	Chinese
	Ministry of Finance headquarters building	under construction	Chinese
	INS headquarters building	under construction	Chinese
	Société Nationale des Pétroles du Congo (SNPC) headquarters building	completed	Chinese

Apart from these buildings, some of the infrastructures that are the pride of Brazzaville were designed and built by Chinese companies. These include the new parliament, the social housing in Mpila, and the La Concorde sports complex.

The Congolese parliament has a new headquarters (Fig. 4). A brand-new building now stands in the heart of Brazzaville, housing both the Senate and the National Assembly. Inaugurated on 3 May 2022, the new headquarters boasts a total surface area exceeding 9,000 m². This R+3 building is subdivided into three zones, clearly delineating areas for the National Assembly, the Senate, and common spaces for both chambers. The section dedicated to the National Assembly includes a 500-seat

hemicycle and offices capable of accommodating approximately 360 people. Similarly, the Upper House comprises a 300-seat hemicycle and offices for roughly 290 individuals. Construction was undertaken by the Chinese company Jiangsu Provincial Construction Group Corporation Limited (ADIAC, 2002).

Brazzaville's new Brazza Mall shopping centre and the Mpila social housing project, situated between arrondissements 5 Ouenzé and 6 Talangai, are both being constructed by Chinese companies. One prominent Chinese-built structure in Brazzaville is the Concorde stadium, a sports complex developed during preparations for the fiftieth anniversary of the African Games in Brazzaville in 2015.

Alongside this Chinese architecture, Turkey is making a timid breakthrough. As part of the city's reconstruction, the Congolese government also called on Turkish companies. While cooperation between Congo and Turkey is still in its early stages, it holds significant promise, particularly with the upcoming project to build the governmental city. The Brazzaville international conference centre was built by Turkish companies.

The Brazilian construction model is evident in Brazzaville, particularly with the ongoing construction of the Ministry of the Interior building [*Hôtel du Ministère de l'Intérieur*] (Fig. 5). Brazilian companies are primarily engaged in urban roadway construction, as demonstrated by Avenue de la Paix, the main thoroughfare of Brazzaville.

City development trends

The major concern of Brazzaville residents is to find land to build on, in order to avoid rental charges. The construction of social housing in Brazzaville is recent, and high prices mean that not all segments of the population have access to it. The population is increasingly moving towards the outskirts of the city in search of available land. In the absence of a real land development policy prior to use, individuals turn to landowners to obtain land. Frequently, these lands are designated for public infrastructure projects such as schools, hospitals, markets, and stadiums or they are protected areas due to soil structure and biodiversity concerns. The missions of the ministry in charge of land are set out in decree no. 2010–22 of 19 February 2010. Essentially, this involves acquiring, developing, and disposing of land needed to carry out projects of general interest. Unfortunately, this ministry has been overwhelmed by the practices of landowners.

The dispersion of habitats reflects the stretching of urban space. What's more, some habitats are built in a haphazard fashion. The autonomy given to populations to build without any planning rules no longer meets the requirements of proper urban development. Economic factors have played a significant role in altering the rural



↑ Fig. 4: Brazzaville, new parliament building, photo: ADIAC, 2022.

↓ Fig. 5: Brazzaville, Ministry of the Interior (*Hôtel du Ministère de l'Intérieur*), construction site, photo: author, 2023.



landscape of the city. In fact, to meet their needs, some families sell plots to private individuals. The expansion of the city has turned land into a real economic stake that landowners cannot resist. Constructions are characterised by individual houses that expand the city both to the north and south, without prior planning. The main characteristic of Brazzaville is its extensive urban development, which results in the uncontrolled consumption of space. This high consumption of space is also due to the construction

method, which favours horizontal extension for most of the city, particularly to the east, north, and south.

The choice of infrastructure location is a political decision in the Congo. Other criteria (soil structure, population access) are not considered. Infrastructure such as the Denis SASSOU N'Guesso University, the Concorde sports complex, the international conference centre, and social housing are all located in the northern part of Brazzaville. The reasons for building these infrastructures in this part of the city are political rather than scientific. According to the report by experts from the Brazzaville History Committee, the soil structure in this part of the city is sandy and prone to erosion, making it unsuitable for construction.

Inapplicability of planning documents

The city is developing in an inconsistent manner due to the non-application of the Schéma Directeur d'Urbanisme and Plan Directeur d'Urbanisme [urban development master plans] before the war (1984) and after the war (2016).

The French city centre, with its emblematic monuments such as the city hall, the Nabemba Tower, the Casino supermarket (formerly Score) and the VOG cinema, retains its original architecture. Today, Chinese buildings are scattered throughout the city, implanted in isolated locations according to the availability of building space.

Summary of interviews with members of the Brazzaville history committee

The Brazzaville History Committee (Comité de l'histoire de Brazzaville) is a body dedicated to researching and documenting the historical facts of the city of Brazzaville. It was established in the lead-up to the city's centenary celebrations in 2014. The committee is composed of Congolese historians, geographers, and philosophers, selected for their seniority and expertise. Its objective is to collect relics as well as to valorise important objects and sites that help to better understand the capital. As part of this work, we interviewed six members using a guide

consisting of four questions. The table below summarises their responses to each question.

Conclusion

The aim of this paper was to examine how the destruction that affected the city of Brazzaville in 1997 gave impetus to creative approaches (architectural, urban, and artistic) that subsequently gave the city a new identity. This reconstruction period, which is still underway, is the work of Chinese companies in the vast majority of construction projects, through bilateral and multilateral cooperation. This cooperation is fruitful, based on friendship and a win-win partnership. Despite the vicissitudes and changes that have occurred, this cooperation continues to strengthen to the point of becoming a model of South-South cooperation. As part of the reconstruction of Brazzaville, the city has undergone both renovation and new construction. Overall, the majority of road and building construction companies in Brazzaville are Chinese. The current reconstruction model is a Chinese model. The introduction of Turkish, Brazilian and French models is still lagging quite a bit. What emerges is that these infrastructures are built as loans. In this sense, the borrowing country can only use its own companies.

Table 2: Interview with members of the Brazzaville History Committee.

Questions	Summary of the responses
Q1. How do you assess the evolution of Brazzaville from post-independence to post-war 1997?	<p>Before the war, Brazzaville was one of the cleanest cities in Africa. You could not build just anywhere; you had to have a building permit to do so.</p> <p>The government, with the support of French companies, implemented the guidelines of the Urban Development Master Plan of the 1980s. After the war, the city developed anarchically, without respect for urban planning rules, with the emergence of slums everywhere and the occupation of areas prohibited for construction in 1980.</p>
Q2. In terms of construction, how would you compare the post-independence and post-war periods?	<p>Before the war, French companies had a monopoly on the majority of major works in Brazzaville. The old public buildings are the work of the French coloniser, such as the city hall dating back to 1962.</p> <p>After the war, the country opened the way to other investors, especially the Chinese, for its reconstruction.</p>
Q3. Why choose the Chinese?	<p>The choice of the Chinese is not confined to the Congo, but to virtually all former French colonies. This is because, in terms of construction, English colonies were better built than French ones. The Chinese have good relations with African countries, and construction costs are lower. What China has done for the urban fabric of Brazzaville, France has not been able to do.</p>
Q4. When it comes to developing the city of Brazzaville, what role will China and France play?	<p>When we see the situation and the physical transformation of the city of Brazzaville today, it is fair to say that we have to put our trust in China when it comes to construction.</p> <p>France is a privileged partner of the Congo, especially in the economic sphere (port of Pointe-Noire, support for agricultural production, urban sanitation).</p> <p>For the reconstruction of Brazzaville, all these partners are essential; it is just a question of channelling their actions properly.</p>

Résumé

La présente communication analyse les différents modèles et les tendances de la reconstruction de la ville de Brazzaville après la période postconflit. Brazzaville doit son existence à l'explorateur Franco-Italien Pierre Savorgnan De Brazza. En 1904, elle devient la capitale du Congo-Français et de l'Afrique équatoriale Française (AEF). Dès le début de la deuxième guerre mondiale en 1940, elle accède suite à l'occupation de la France par l'Allemagne Nazie, au statut de capitale de la France libre, ce qui permit à la ville d'abriter la célèbre « conférence de Brazzaville » tenue en février 1944. C'est au cours de cette conférence que fut définie la nouvelle politique française, prélude à l'émancipation des anciennes colonies françaises d'Afrique noire. De la petite station qu'elle représentait en 1880, elle a su au fil des années, marquer une courbe exponentielle en faveur de son développement. En 1891, on y trouve quelques maisonnettes construites à l'aide de matériaux locaux dérisoires. Vers 1896, quelques bâtiments officiels voient le jour. Après l'indépendance du Congo en 1960, la ville a commencé à se doter en infrastructure: des monuments emblématiques comme la basilique Sainte Anne, de certains édifices abritant les ministères sont construits.

La méthodologie utilisée ici, a combiné plusieurs procédés: la revue de la littérature sur l'armature urbaine de la ville de Brazzaville de sa création à nos jours, l'enquête de terrain auprès des six personnes ressources (commission de l'histoire de Brazzaville) à travers un guide d'entretien et la prise. La prise de vue sur les différents modèles observés sur les édifices publics. Il ressort que, les efforts de construction entrepris, ont été stoppés par les différentes guerres dont celle du 5 juin 1997 occasionnant la destruction d'une bonne partie du centre-ville historique. Depuis lors, la ville se reconstruit petit à petit. Si, on note la protection de l'architecture de certains bâtiments historiques, d'autres par contre ont été cassés et reconstruits. Si, l'héritage colonial laissé par le colon français a été détruit par les guerres successives 1993 et 1997, la période de reconstruction qui s'en est suivie a vu l'apparition de plusieurs sociétés étrangères: Chinoises, Turques, Brésiliennes etc. Cette reconstruction s'est faite en l'absence d'un schéma directeur d'urbanisme avec une tendance au développement anarchique et orienté vers le nord. Un modèle de reconstruction incohérent car, les édifices sont implantés selon la disponibilité de l'espace.

Zusammenfassung

Der vorliegende Beitrag analysiert die verschiedenen Modelle und Tendenzen des Wiederaufbaus der Stadt Brazzaville in der Zeit nach dem Bürgerkrieg von 1997. Brazzaville verdankt seine Existenz dem französisch-italienischen Entdecker Pierre Savorgnan De Brazza. Im Jahr 1904 wurde die Stadt zur Hauptstadt von Französisch-Kongo und Französisch-Äquatorialafrika (AEF). Nach dem Ausbruch des Zweiten Weltkriegs im Jahr 1940 und der Besetzung Frankreichs durch Nazi-Deutschland wurde die Stadt zur Hauptstadt des Freien Frankreichs, was ihr ermöglichte, die berühmte „Konferenz von Brazzaville“ im Februar 1944 zu beherbergen. Auf dieser Konferenz wurde die neue französische Politik festgelegt, die den Auftakt zur Emanzipation der ehemaligen französischen Kolonien in Schwarzafrika bildete. Von einem kleinen Ort im Jahr 1880 entwickelte sich die Stadt im Laufe der Jahre exponentiell weiter. Im Jahr 1891 gab es einige kleine Häuschen, die aus einfachen lokalen Materialien gebaut wurden. Um 1896 wurden einige offizielle Gebäude errichtet. Nach der Unabhängigkeit des Kongo im Jahr 1960 begann die Stadt, ihre Infrastruktur auszubauen: symbolträchtige Bauwerke wie die Basilika Sainte Anne und einige Gebäude, in denen Ministerien untergebracht waren, wurden errichtet.

Die hier angewandte Methodik kombiniert mehrere Verfahren: die Durchsicht der Literatur über die städtische Struktur der Stadt Brazzaville von ihrer Gründung bis heute, die Feldforschung durch Befragung von sechs Personen (Mitglieder der Kommission für die Geschichte von Brazzaville) anhand eines Interviewleitfadens, und die Dokumentation der verschiedenen Leitbilder, die bei öffentlichen Gebäuden beachtet wurden. Es zeigte sich, dass die Baubemühungen durch verschiedene Kriege gestoppt wurden, darunter der Krieg vom 5. Juni 1997, bei dem ein Großteil des historischen Stadtzentrums zerstört wurde. Seitdem wird die Stadt nach und nach wiederaufgebaut. Während einige historische Gebäude unter Denkmalschutz stehen, wurden andere abgerissen und wiederaufgebaut. Das von den französischen Kolonialherren hinterlassene Erbe wurde durch die aufeinanderfolgenden Kriege 1993 und 1997 zerstört, und in der anschließenden Phase des Wiederaufbaus tauchten mehrere ausländische Unternehmen auf: chinesische, türkische, brasilianische etc. Dieser Wiederaufbau erfolgte ohne ein städtebauliches Leitbild mit einer Tendenz zu einer anarchischen, Richtung Norden ausgerichteten Entwicklung. Ein inkohärentes Wiederaufbaumodell, da die Gebäude nur nach der Verfügbarkeit von Grundstücken errichtet wurden.

Fabien Bellat

RECONSTRUCTION UNDER THE SOVIET INFLUENCE

A Mutilated Memory

In the 20th century, Eastern Europe suffered a succession of major conflicts, the shockwaves of which are still sometimes evident today. As an outcome, the current Russian invasion of Ukraine is manipulating the memory of earlier combats. Architectural features are not exempt from such symbolic manipulation. Indeed, after the Second World War, in the Soviet Union and Eastern Bloc, the reconstruction of destroyed towns also entailed a cultural transfer, imposed primarily through authoritarian Stalinist urban planning and architectural models.

These rebuilt structures can give the misleading impression of a totalitarian approach wielding absolute control over architectural choices. However, each country affected chose different strategies, and local builders adapted to the experts from Moscow. The latter deliberately adopted a grandiloquent style to reflect the imperialist aims of Stalinist power. However, their relationship with previous styles, their ability to design appropriate urban layouts and their response to shortages in materials, through standardisation, means that their work cannot be reduced to ideological subjugation alone. In fact, these reconstruction projects fundamentally redefined the identity of the capital cities of Ukraine, Belarus, Latvia, and Poland. All the same, these countries have had a conflicted relationship with this built heritage since gaining independence after the fall of the USSR. The tense environment can even slide into tacit attempts to obstruct the work of researchers.

How were these reconstruction projects run? Today, how are they perceived in the light of new national circumstances? Is their historical value recognised or denied? Why do past wounds continue to influence whether they

are accepted or challenged, or not? This commentary focuses on three capital cities: Warsaw, Minsk, and Kyiv. From manipulation to malaise to mutilation of the memory, these cities encapsulate the ambivalent shadows of the Soviet regime perfectly.

Manipulation of the memory: Warsaw

Poland has long been fought over by rival powers. In the autumn of 1939, the Third Reich and the USSR shared the country, with the Nazis occupying Warsaw. Insurrections in this city enraged Hitler who ordered it to be razed to the ground. As the Red Army was on the outskirts of the city, by the Vistula, Stalin's refusal to support the insurgents was a further wound to already poor Russian-Polish relations. The Yalta Conference granted the USSR its zone of influence in Central Europe – territories already under its iron rule – but stipulated that free elections should be held. The Soviets therefore marginalised every sphere of influence, placing communists in key positions. In Poland, accomplices of Stalin acted with caution – which explains why Party devotee Boleslaw Bierut (1892–1956) supported the local desire to restore Warsaw's monuments and adopted an impartial stance between Polish modernists and zealots of the Stalinist model. Unlike in oppressive Soviet circles, the Poles facilitated debate between the restorers Jan Zachwatowicz (1900–1983) and Piotr Bieganski (1905–1986), champions of a national modernism such as Bohdan Pniewski (1897–1965) and Marek Leykam (1908–1983), and those who embraced the Soviet approach to ideologized syncretism, such as Jozef Sigalin (1909–1983). Thanks to this almost peaceful coexistence, the old centre was restored authentically

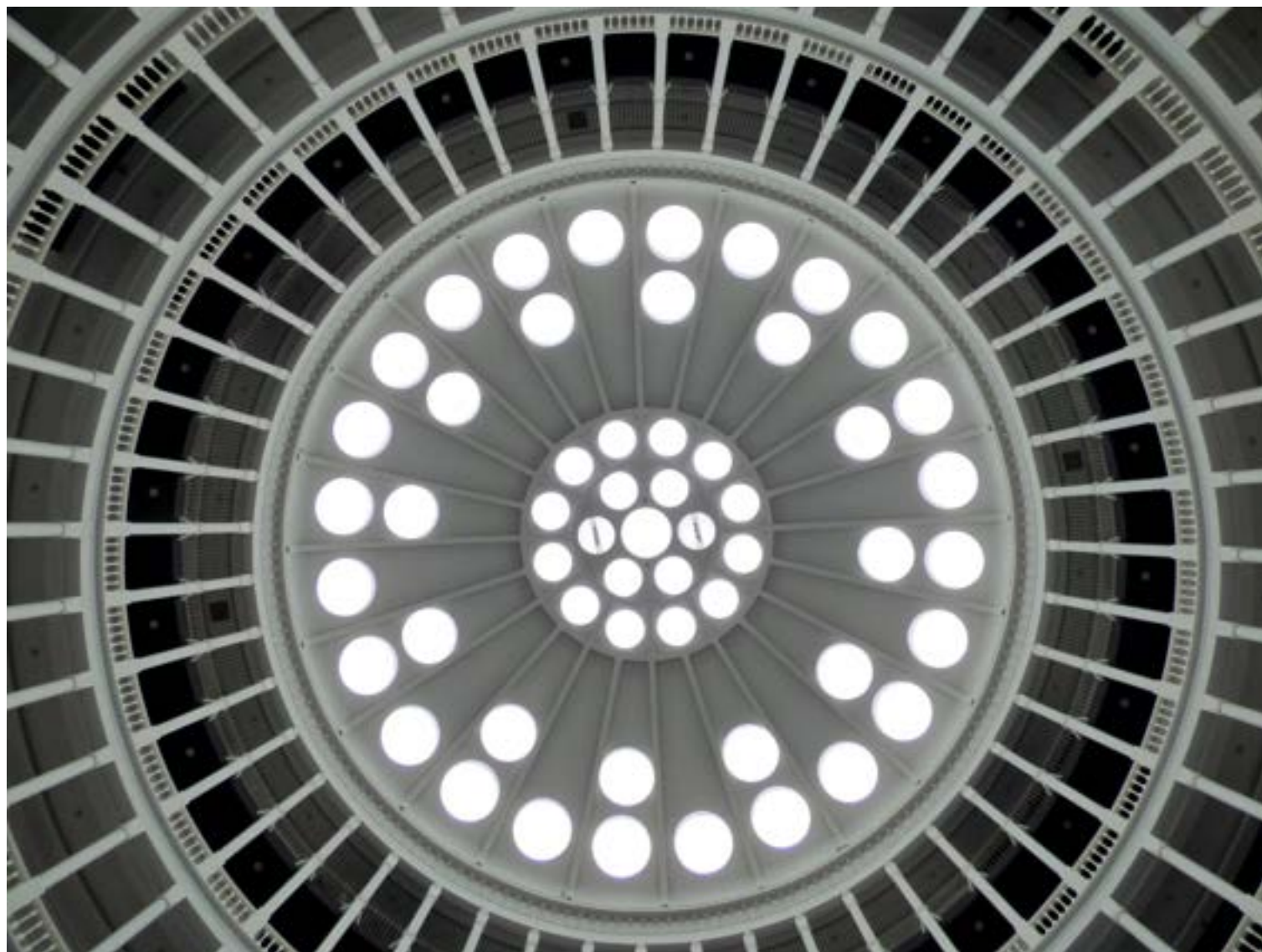


Fig 1: Marek Leykam, Dome in the Offices of the Prime Minister, Warsaw, 1952, photo: author.

and a degree of modernism prevailed, while the contests for some commissions – such as for the Opera, won by Pniewski and combining an adaptation of the historic legacy with national modernism and Stalinist details – saw intervention from supporters of Moscow.

The adoption of Bierut's reconstruction plan in 1949 strengthened Moscow's grip on the Polish capital. The journal *Stolica*, which focused on Warsaw's rebirth, published articles boasting about the rapid reconstruction of Soviet cities. To gain the support of the Russians, Bieganski Stalinised his proposal to restore Ujazdów Castle – reducing it to ruins used by the Red Army. Leykam

played a double game. For the prime minister's offices, he created a stone exterior worthy of the Quattrocento in Florence, which hid a highly modern rotunda and concrete dome. (Fig. 1) Eleonora Secrecka (1902–1997) drew inspiration from place Vendôme in Paris for Aleja Wyzwolenia. Nonetheless, the pressure intensified, with demands for conversion to Stalinist models, which the young diplomat Karol Zarski (1927–2003) applied to a project for an avenue punctuated with skyscrapers, forming a monumental gateway to the city. (Fig. 2) The characteristics of this model closely resembled those followed in Stalingrad, Minsk, and Kyiv.

Although Bierut addressed each trend, the Gordian Knot of conflicting approaches was severed at the end of the Stalinist era, with forced acceptance of the Russian team – led by Lev Rudnev (1885–1956) who designed the colossal Lomonosov Moscow State University – and the skyscraper of Warsaw’s Palace of Culture and Science, which deliberately dominates the restored historic centre. For this monument signifying the origin of true Communist power, Sigalin acted as umpire between Stalinist diktat and a Polish milieu opposed to such blatant subjugation. His intervention on this building was limited however, with the Russians only accepting his sensible suggestion of dividing the works into phases. The case of the Royal Castle demonstrates the fault lines of the reconstruction of Warsaw most effectively. In 1954, the contest to restore it served as a pretext to erase what was a highly embarrassing monument for the communist regime. Zachwatowicz and Bieganski boycotted this contest, drawing attention to its strange agenda – but Sigalin and Pniewski proposed a remodelled version of the castle. (Fig. 3) The winning proposal from Jan Boguslawski (1910–1982) was quietly shelved, as the Party wanted to be done with a project considered too patriotic for a regime that wanted to instil a communist orthodoxy reflecting Moscow’s line. Nonetheless, Boguslawski was recalled in 1970 and his project was completed – the already shaky Communist powers understanding that a new approach was required to bring the population together around a uniting concept.

Poland could draw legitimate pride from this three-pronged reconstruction project, accomplished despite significant obstacles. Moreover, the regime used it in its propaganda. The reward for this endeavour is that in 1980, UNESCO recognised Warsaw’s rebuilt historic centre as a World Heritage Site. However, the consequences of this were mixed. UNESCO recognition helped perpetuate a “gilded legend”, putting a false emphasis on a supposedly identical reconstruction. This manipulation of memory was an abuse, which legitimised the communist regime, by appropriating the national memory to make the prestige

of this support the establishment of the Marxist system. As Paul Ricoeur says: “It is, more precisely, the selective function of the narrative that opens to manipulation the opportunity and the means of a clever strategy, consisting, from the outset, in a strategy of forgetting as much as in a strategy of remembering”.¹ If in Warsaw, remembrance prevailed, the directed idea of restoration “as is” does not stand up to analysis of the sources. Only the façades have been restored; the urban fabric has been transformed and new buildings designed to resemble the buildings around them, creating a coherence which is, in fact, artificial.

The Stalinist legacy in the Polish capital continues to be a stumbling block. Since the fall of the Soviet regime, many people want to demolish the Palace of Culture and Science. The current Prime Minister still supports this goal, to erase a symbol of Russian domination. For now, the skyscraper appears to be protected by the costs such a demolition project would involve. Moreover, attempts have multiplied to minimise its impact on the cityscape. In 1992, Andrzej Skopinski proposed surrounding it with a collection of post-modern buildings which would have neutralised its disagreeable and imposing isolation. A new business district behind helped to soften the Palace’s visual impact. In 2008, a competition jury chose a proposal from Swiss architect Christian Kerez for a museum – which would occupy the esplanade in front of the monument, masking its façade and separating the building from its environment. The radical sacrifice of a public space unleashed such fierce debate that the mayor abandoned this option. In 2015, American architect Thomas Phifer won over opinion with plans for a building set to one side of the Palace, preserving the esplanade, which would be transformed into a redeveloped square. Works on this are still to begin.

This built heritage therefore remains a controversial topic. Difficult relations between pro-European district authorities and the hyper-nationalist Polish government now have a damaging effect on historical research. At the Museum of the Second World War in Gdansk,

¹ Translated from Paul Ricoeur, *La mémoire, l'histoire, l'oubli*, Seuil, Paris, 2000, p. 103.

the museographic choices of the international research team – including the UK’s Norman Davies, Israel’s Elie Barnavi, *Poland’s Krzysztof Pomian*, and *Henry Rousso from France* – have been swept aside by the government, which has transformed the museum into an anachronistic temple to a Polonocentric vision.² My own book on the reconstruction of Warsaw (municipal commission) has unfortunately encountered a similar rejection, due to intervention from the ultranationalists who allocate funding. Almost as in Russia, in Poland, exploration of the past is an arena where academics confront powerful reactionary factions. Manipulation of the memory now promotes an authorised view of history, stifling any line of enquiry outside the national orthodoxy right away.

Malaise with the memory: Minsk

In the former Soviet republic of Belarus (Poland’s neighbour) the reaction has been peculiar. Before the revolution, Minsk was an ordinary provincial town, with a few Baroque churches – built by the Jesuits before Poland was partitioned and absorbed by the Russian Empire. The USSR developed Belarus further, as the western gate to the communist world. Two constructivist buildings designed by Iosif Langbard (1882–1951) remain from the modernisation programme between the two world wars: The Government House (1929) and the Opera. When the Third Reich attacked the USSR in 1941, Minsk was undergoing a full redevelopment and already had good facilities. Its reconstruction reflects a very different climate. As Stalin had been annoyed by the 1943 contest for the Stalingrad general city planning scheme, he supervised creative choices more closely via the State Committee for architectural affairs. This committee allocated destroyed settlements to architects who were chosen to rebuild them to glorify a USSR that would soon triumph over that other totalitarian regime. Competitions became much rarer, and builders engaged to raise Soviet cities from the ruins had to find their way between the Charybdis of Stalinist imperial grandiloquence and the Scylla of

practical planning essentials. Minsk received a brigade of well-regarded architects: Alexey Shchusev (1873–1949) and Vladimir Semenov (1874–1960) worked with Nikolai Kolli (1894–1966) and Arkady Mordvinov (1896–1964). The first was known, pre-1917, for designing churches in a neo-Russian style and had created the emblematic Mausoleum to Lenin in 1929; the second was a pioneer of Russian garden cities and author of the 1935 plan for Moscow; the third had worked with Le Corbusier (1897–1965) on the Tsentrosoyuz Building. The fourth had just redesigned Gorky Street in Moscow. All had been obliged to adapt to the palinodes of the regime. Kolli, for example, had had to forget his support for modernism. Mordvinov renounced his constructivist training to flatter the ill-tempered dictator, who rewarded him by making him president of the Committee mentioned above. Their decisions guided the reconstruction of Minsk, where other representatives from Moscow intervened on projects for key buildings. Mikhail Parusnikov (1893–1968) proposed majestic monuments – including the Palladian KGB headquarters (Fig. 4). The retrospective appearance of everything gives the impression of an archaic architectural vision. And yet, some buildings prove to be more ambiguous. For the central department store, Lev Melegi (1904–1948) used reinforced concrete with moulds similar to those used by Hennebique at the beginning of the century. Behind these facilities, secondary public buildings and residences were built to standardised plans, reflecting uniformity and efficiency.

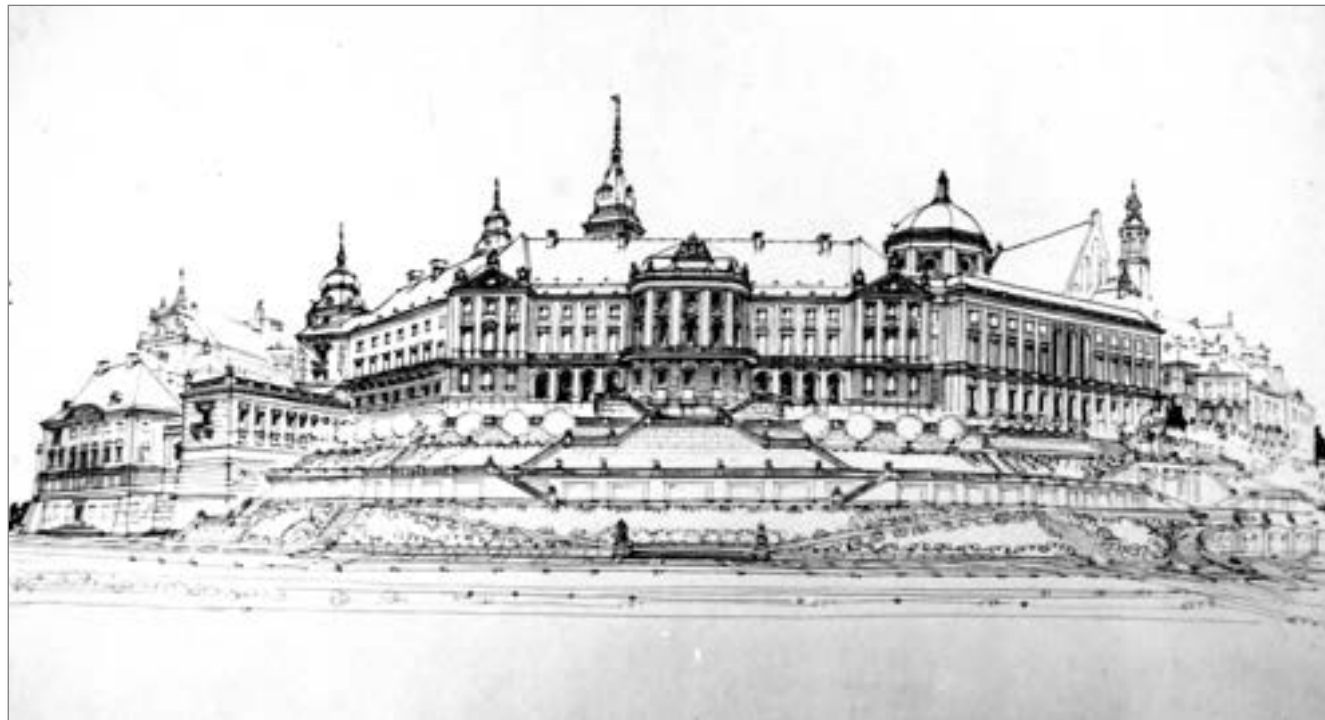
The Minsk cityscape is a product of this reconstruction programme. As the country has been led by a former Kolkhoz director, turned dictator, since 1994, one might expect the Soviet memory to be perceived in a more positive light, as the authorities in Minsk have continued so many practices from the former USSR. And yet none of the Stalin-era buildings are celebrated. The authorities ignore this built heritage, which they are reluctant to even mention. The only buildings cited are the few restored churches and the supposed

² [www.huffingtonpost.fr/international/article/le-musee-de-la-seconde-guerre-mondiale-a-gdansk-une-zone-de-front_93760.html, ABRUFDATUM].

→ Fig 2: Karol Zarski, project of new avenue, Warsaw, 1954., source: Private Collection.

↘ Fig 3: Jozef Sigalin, project of restoration-redesign of the Royal Castle, Warsaw, 1954, source: Warsaw Municipal Archives.

“old centre” – a district of traditional houses rebuilt in around 1980. At local authority level, the subject meets with stony silence. At ministerial level, the narratives on these heritage assets are nothing more than countermeasures to make foreigners believe that there really is a memorial policy in Belarus – false rumours which do not stand up to the facts. Officially, nobody in Minsk wants to tackle the subject. The city is spoken of highly, but the tough Stalinist era is left unmentioned. The only thing preventing this heritage from disappearing is the lack of resources in a stricken economy. On its way out since the popular uprising of 2020 – which was crushed mercilessly with the aid of Russia – the Belarusian regime continues to impede or even block any researcher wanting to study the Soviet reconstruction, to the point of issuing threats.³



Mutilated memory: Kyiv

Unlike in Minsk, the reconstruction of Kyiv was the subject of a seemingly fair contest. The invited entrants were a spread of well-known designers based in Moscow

³ Thomas Bohn, *Minsk – Musterstadt des Sozialismus*, Böhlau, Cologne, 2008; Fabien Bellat, *Minsk, architectures 1917–1956* (in Russian), Kuskovo Pole, Moscow, 2020.



Fig 4: Mikhaïl Parusnikov, KGB Headquarters, Minsk, 1947, photo: author.

and Ukrainian builders who appeared to be on an upward trajectory.

The first group included Karo Halabyan (1897–1959) and Alexandr Vlassov (1900–1962). The second group included Volodymir Zabolotnyi and Oleksiy Tatsyy (1903–1967). Halabyan had just won the contest for the plan intended to turn Stalingrad into a symbol of the victorious USSR. For Kyiv, he designed a Venetian-style bell tower that assimilated Ukrainian Baroque, as part of an approach to urban planning with a demonstrably theatrical baroque quality. To establish a new urban coherence, Vlassov proposed connecting main squares via a three-way triumphal arch in an equally baroque-style, to enthrone a statue of Stalin on horseback in the centre of the esplanade – cleverly combining urban planning skill with sycophancy towards the despot. The Russians’ proposals cited the Ukraine’s baroque heritage, alongside other European and Russian references, in line with the

syncretistic mentality of the Stalinist era, via a universalism whereby in Marxist theory, history ended with the USSR. Their Ukrainian colleagues had a similar response. Zabolotnyi redesigned the Maidan with buildings in a clear neo-baroque Ukrainian style. As the key expert for the site, he avoided the grandiloquence of his colleagues from Moscow, preferring a more modest approach. Tatsyy wanted to resolve spatial problems in the centre by creating squares interconnected by grand arches. He contemplated recent Moscow

influenced projects, treading a line between modern memories and historicist references, and took inspiration from the neo-classical arch opposite the Winter Palace in St Petersburg, the cradle of the October Revolution.

In January 1945, the outcome of the contest was highly political.⁴ Khrushchev, former First Secretary of the Communist Party of Ukraine, and a close aide to Stalin since his role in the victory of Stalingrad, orchestrated a judgement of Solomon with tactical skill. The majority of the Russian projects were disqualified, and the commission was awarded to an unfeasible Ukrainian project featuring external escalators to connect the Maidan to the Dnipro. This subdued verdict sparked a second round, which would decide Kyiv’s urban future. New Russian entrants were called, purportedly to respect fairness between Soviet peoples. The only people invited to rework their proposals were Zabolotnyi and Tatsyy, along with Vlassov on the Russian side. At this point, events took a

⁴ Tetyana Killeso, “Majdan, la place emblématique de Kiev”, *Revue des études slaves*, n° 4, 2014, p. 4.

turn typical of Stalinist oppression. Zabolotnyi's Ukrainian neo-baroque style adapted the polychrome – red, blue and white – heritage of early modern era architecture in the Ukraine, before conquest under Catherine the Great, to Soviet decorum. His proposal was lynched by the press, who reviled the architect as a proponent of “bourgeois Ukrainian nationalism” who wanted to rebuild the Ukrainian capital according to barely disguised anti-Soviet principles.⁵ During a time of Stalinist purges, such serious accusations could have resulted in deportation or execution. As the collaboration of Ukrainian nationalists with their Nazi occupiers during the war had resulted in a purge, the architect was seen as an internal enemy. Wisely, Zabolotnyi abandoned the contest. Tatsyy held onto his dynamic spatial intuitions, sneaking them through by adding some magisterial buildings.

In truth, the Ukrainian side had already lost control of the process. Moscow intended to appoint Vlassov who summarised the contest in an article written to speed up the decision-making.⁶ As a close associate of Khrushchev, with whom he shared a taste for American skyscrapers, he knew how to obtain the Kremlin's blessing. From the summer of 1946 onwards, he therefore managed the reconstruction of Kyiv, marginalising the unfortunate Tatsyy.⁷ Directing everything from Moscow, Vlassov appointed two Ukrainian assistants, Anatoly Dobrovolsky (1910–1988) and Oleksandr Malinovsky (1915–1976). Vlassov decided on an urban design that would be both majestic and efficient. Like Tatsyy, he redesigned the city by creating interlinked squares, using skyscrapers to make the overall cityscape more dynamic. He thus applied a concept initiated in Moscow before the war as part of a project for the Palace of the Soviets, and which would soon see the Soviet capital boasting a ring of grandiose skyscrapers. However, Vlassov became chief architect of Moscow in 1949. He did not abandon his post in Kiev: his Ukrainian assistants continued to execute his decisions,

with Dobrovolsky and Malinovsky requiring his approval for any significant changes to the plans. This astonishing accumulation of mandates between two capital cities reveals a subtle imperialism, under which a subjugated Ukraine had to obey an imperious Russia.

Aesthetic choices also carried weight in this ambivalent relationship. Vlassov restricted use of the neo-Ukrainian style. Paradoxically, the architects had to apply the Stalinist principle of the nationalities policy, without fostering Ukrainian aspirations. This is where the reconstruction hit a raw and potentially fatal nerve. Proposals from Boris Prymak (1909–1996) to give the VDNKh exhibition park in Kiev an obvious neo-Ukrainian appearance were dismissed and Boris Jejerine (1912–2006) created neo-classical buildings based on more acceptable Russian models.

Although the Stalinist reconstruction had a significant impact on Kyiv's urban appearance, when the country gained its independence in 1991 it restored several churches, which had either been destroyed by the USSR or ravaged during the Nazi occupation. The return of church towers helped to reassert the national identity, breaking with the Soviet past. Ukrainian memorials added to the Maidan counterbalanced the predominance of the Stalinist decor. Apart from these gestures, for many years, different heritage features generally coexisted, as frequent economic and political disruption kept this issue on the backburner. However, the recurrent clashes between Ukraine and Russia remained at the centre of debates. The Ukrainian revolution of February 2014 drove away the power wielded by Putin but unleashed a radical response from Russia, namely annexation of the Ukrainian Crimea and support for pro-Russian separatists in the Donbass. The latent conflict since then came to a new head in February 2022 when the Kremlin launched a “special military operation”, purportedly, to liberate Kiev from “neo-Nazis oppressing Russian speakers”. Such

⁵ V.I. Timofeenko (dir.), *Histoire de l'architecture ukrainienne*, Texnika, Kiev, 2003, see chapter “Architecture 1920–1990”, p. 400–449.

⁶ Aleksandr Vlassov, “Le projet de reconstruction du Krechtchatyk: quelques résultats de concours”, *Architektura i Stroyel'tvo*, n° 1, janvier 1946.

⁷ But he rebuilt his Ukraine pavilion at the VDNKh in Moscow. See my article “La peur du sabotage en URSS, et la destruction des pavillons moscovites du VDNKh”, in Caroline Le Mao (dir.), *Peurs Urbaines (XVIe-XXIe siècles)*, Maison des Sciences de l'Homme d'Aquitaine, Bordeaux, 2022.



Fig 5: Aleksandr Vlassov, project for the Kiev reconstruction competition, 1944, source: Private Collection.

manoeuvres are intended to eliminate democracy and forcibly bring Ukraine back into the Russian fold. This is influencing conceptions of heritage. Because the Putinist jingoistic obsession with rewriting the past – to the extent of denying the existence of Ukraine – has in turn pushed Kyiv towards an equally drastic denial of its Soviet heritage. This repudiation of memory began in 2015 with the de-communisation law – covering the destruction of statues of Lenin (the Ukrainian Leninopad) and extending to burning crests and scraping away frescoes.⁸ Since 2022, this trend has intensified, targeting statues recognising the supposed Soviet friendship among peoples, or the country's Russian past, in the form of representations of Catherine the Great. These actions have unfortunately heralded the elimination of Soviet monuments more broadly. In Kharkiv, the mayor emphasises the city's art nouveau heritage, but claims that the former Party headquarters – a major site of the Stalinist reconstruction – should be razed, as apparently it is beyond restoration. Ukrainian experts contradict this claim and

have highlighted how solid the building is despite its roofs having been destroyed by fire. Could sites in Kherson or Mariupol be stigmatised in the same way? Although less affected by the bombardments, an intensification in the conflict does not preclude new attacks on the capital. What will happen if buildings on the Maidan are affected by bombing? Will Ukraine want to restore them? Or will heightened passions create a kind of amnesia around this heritage, suppressing an execrated memory? While the war continues to rage, no one can tell.

Provisional epilogue

After the Second World War, each of these capital cities adapted to the challenges of reconstruction in different ways. However, all of them had to confront the ominous shadow of Stalinist power behind the architectural choices.

While some governments – including those in Poland and Belarus – continue to control questions of memory concerning their Soviet legacies, others are wavering between rejecting or discussing these same legacies, hence

⁸ Niels Ackermann, Sébastien Gobert, *Looking for Lenin*, Fuel publishers, Londres, 2017.

Ukraine's reaction. The latter understands the outcomes of revisionist policies only too well. Several Ukrainian colleagues would like to see their heritage "decolonised". In fact, the way in which the country's own builders were subjugated by the Moscow authorities during the Stalinist reconstruction era has left a bitter memory. So, there is hardly an incentive to value heritage perceived as a symbol of foreign domination. As a reaction against Putin's recent invasion, political statues still existing from the Stalin and Brezhnev eras are disappearing one by one. Destroying them provides another way to confront the Russian enemy – by destroying its symbolic heritage. In this, both countries have moreover embarked on a memorial war, with each re-examining the past according to separate criteria.

In Latvia, where the Stalinist reconstruction of Riga was more modest but paired with a hushed-up purge of local creative circles, there is also a tacit silence.⁹ Here again, the demolition of memorials is accelerating a rupture with this past. Buildings still remain but are experiencing another form of rejection. Often double-edged, these reactions are evidence of a collective unease with a difficult past, which undoubtedly created majestic urban surroundings, but destroyed communities. These scars are still there, prompting a desire to hide heritage assets produced by these reconstruction plans. In these places, the history of the 20th century is a minefield, which divides communities violently. Confrontations around remembrance take on a rare intensity. These divisions will no doubt calm down when the political challenges have been resolved or subdued in the future, with new generations for whom these toxic shadows of the past will no longer have a justification.

Despite some very different contexts, there is one constant. In these countries, cities that were reconstructed in the past still need to reconstruct their meaning.

⁹ Eric Le Bourhis, "Les représentations de la vieille ville de Riga: une histoire urbaine affranchie du cadre national ?", in A. Filler (dir), *La ville dans l'espace post-soviétique. (Géo)politique critique d'une transformation urbaine*, Petra, Paris, 2017, p. 67–82.

Résumé

En Union soviétique et dans le bloc de l'Est, la reconstruction des villes détruites après la Seconde Guerre mondiale s'est toujours faite selon les critères obligatoires des modèles staliniens.

La reconstruction de Minsk et de Kiev a poursuivi la marginalisation des bâtisseurs locaux (comme Iosif Langbard et Volodymir Zabolotni), qui étaient désormais soumis aux architectes de Moscou. A Varsovie, la situation politique obligea à une négociation entre trois tendances opposées: les partisans d'une reconstruction à l'identique (comme Piotr Bieganski), les défenseurs d'une modernité nationale (comme Marek Leykam) et les fervents du modèle stalinien (comme Edmund Goldzamt). Ce nœud gordien a finalement été tranché avec l'acceptation forcée de l'équipe de conception russe dirigée par Lev Rudnev, qui a notamment construit le gratte-ciel dominant du Palais de la culture. La reconstruction a considérablement redéfini l'identité de chacune de ces capitales.

Depuis leur indépendance, les pays ont entretenu une relation conflictuelle avec l'héritage de l'URSS stalinienne. A plusieurs reprises, ils ont même tenté de l'effacer. Les récentes initiatives de reconstruction des villes ukrainiennes détruites ne tiennent pas compte de l'héritage soviétique.

L'étude de ces villes se déroule dans des contextes tendus. La Biélorussie menace les chercheurs qui souhaitent étudier les monuments soviétiques. En réaction à l'attaque russe, l'Ukraine promeut une «décolonisation» de la mémoire. La Pologne privilégie une mémoire sélective. Cela témoigne d'une inquiétude collective face à un passé difficile qui a certes créé des environnements urbains majestueux, mais qui a aussi blessé les sociétés.

Zusammenfassung

In der Sowjetunion und im Ostblock erfolgte der Wiederaufbau der zerstörten Städte nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg durchweg nach den verpflichtenden Maßgaben der stalinistischen Leitbilder. Der Wiederaufbau von Minsk und Kiew setzte die Marginalisierung lokaler Baumeister (wie Iosif Langbard und Volodymir Zabolotni) fort, die nun den Architekten aus Moskau unterworfen waren. In Warschau zwang die politische Lage zu einer Aushandlung zwischen drei gegensätzlichen Tendenzen: den Befürwortern eines originalgetreuen Wiederaufbaus (wie Piotr Bieganski), den Verfechtern einer nationalen Modernität (wie Marek Leykam) und den Eiferern des stalinistischen Modells (wie Edmund Goldzamt). Dieser gordische Knoten wurde schließlich mit der erzwungenen Akzeptanz des russischen Entwurfsteams unter Leitung von Lev Rudnev durchschlagen, das unter anderem den dominanten Wolkenkratzer des Kulturpalastes errichtete. Der Wiederaufbau hat die Identität jeder dieser Hauptstädte wesentlich neu definiert. Seit ihrer Unabhängigkeit haben die Länder eine konfliktreiche Beziehung zum Erbe der stalinistischen UdSSR. Verschiedentlich wurde sogar versucht, es auszulöschen. Die jüngsten Initiativen zum Wiederaufbau der zerstörten ukrainischen Städte lassen das sowjetische Erbe unberücksichtigt.

Die Erforschung dieser Städte vollzieht sich in spannungsreichen Kontexten. Belarus bedroht Forscher, die sowjetische Baudenkmale untersuchen wollen. Als Reaktion auf den russischen Angriff fördert die Ukraine eine „Dekolonisierung“ des Gedächtnisses. Polen bevorzugt eine selektive Erinnerung. Dies zeugt von kollektiver Unruhe angesichts einer schwierigen Vergangenheit, die zwar majestätische urbane Umgebungen geschaffen, aber auch die Gesellschaften verwundet hat.

Ahlem Ben Abdessalem, Mariem Brik, Nawel Bani

THE MAISON MINIMA

Achieving a Balance between Modernist Functionalism and Local Expertise in the Design of Living Spaces

Introduction

In Europe and Africa, in response to a wave of social needs, the period after the Second World War saw an upheaval in architectural development which places the history of 20th century architecture and urban planning firmly within the Modern Movement. The design concept may have been normalised, but every strategic decision in every design process was influenced by distinct macro-environmental factors; and the economic, political, sociocultural, legal and environmental changes specific to each country led to noticeably different built environments.

In 1945, Le Corbusier (1887–1965) responded to a state commission from the French Ministry of Reconstruction to rehouse residents from districts of Marseille which had been destroyed. He built the *cit  radieuse*, a vertical housing development which stood out for its technical achievement and as a social experiment, but above all, because of its innovative approach to urban planning. In the same year, the Egyptian architect Hassan Fathy (1900–1989) was tasked with building the village of New Gourna near Luxor. After studying the rural community, its traditions and living conditions, Fathy developed a human approach to urbanisation inspired by local traditions.

Reconstruction works in Tunisia during the same period also show evidence of a dedicated architectural and urban project. After the Second World War, the French protectorate had implemented a major construction and

“A city should be built to give its inhabitants security and happiness”
Aristotle

reconstruction programme across the country in those areas which had suffered bombings and where people were in need of an acceptable standard of housing. The project focused primarily on Tunisia’s four port cities – Tunis, Bizerte, Sousse and Sfax – where population increases had led to the creation of shantytowns. In the absence of any specialist planning authority, these cities had become macrocephalic and consequently, there was an urgent need for an architectural and planning programme to address the disastrous situation. The objective was to rebuild the country rapidly while modernising it at the same time. Because of limited funds available, a widespread shortage of building materials and qualified labour, and sparse local resources, the situation was challenging. It was necessary to rehouse Tunisian and European people who had lost their homes and to maintain favourable living conditions for them while also endeavouring to find a practical, rational solution to the problems and realities of the post-war period.

To achieve this objective, between 1943 and 1947, a dedicated architecture and planning department was established: *les Services d’Architecture et d’Urbanisme*. The French architect Bernard Zehrfuss (1911–1996) ran the department, working with a team of around twenty young architects who were trained in modern town planning, including Jacques Marmey (1906–1988), Jason Kyriacopoulos (1909–2002), and Paul Herb  (1903–1963). Sharing the goal of creating convenient living spaces and harmonising cities of the future, all

these architects firmly believed in applying the rules of the Athens Charter.

To respond to the immediate need to rehouse people, Zehrfuss and Kyriacopoulos designed a blueprint for a *maison minima* [minimalist house]. Its design represented a typical and rationalised version of a traditional house and courtyard which could be built on a mass production basis by apprentices trained at professional education centres for the built environment. The *maison minima* prioritised certain morphological, structural and environmental characteristics suited to the post-war context, such as efficiently and cleanliness. These protagonist designers had endeavoured to take a fresh look at traditional architecture. The question here was not “What can we do that is new?”, but rather, “What can we do with what we’ve got?”.

In this article, we shall attempt to answer several questions. Which issues and restrictions influenced the architectural design process for housing in the post-war reconstruction era? To what extent did these issues and restrictions influence new architectural projects? And, above all, to what extent could this process be adapted to current constraints on humanitarian architecture and emergency housing? To explore and develop these questions, we take another look at the issues that had the greatest influence on decisions made during the development and reconstruction period. We will also demonstrate the highly remarkable potential in the *maison minima*, which perhaps, even today, could indicate a way forward and provide opportunity for experimentation.

Methods and analysis

Historical, social and economic contexts

“Having been thoroughly tested by the war, Tunisia, through its own efforts and with generous support from France, is rebuilding its ruins with a strong desire to improve its economic potential and strengthen its

social fabric, and with hope that the demands of modern technology and planning can be adapted to the best of its artistic traditions.”¹

Keeping in mind the Athens Charter and the country’s constraints, the reconstruction team intended to apply the most up-to-date urban planning rules to post-war rehousing programmes, based on the two constraints of emergency urban planning: economy and speed. In an intelligent way, the rules covered local resources and the social fabric, as well as protection of the country’s archaeological, historical and artistic heritage, and conservation and improvement of its architectural heritage. They also took account of Tunisia’s climate and customs. The priority was to reconcile pragmatic modernism with traditional craftsmanship by following a design process based on aesthetic, functional and technical parameters.

The main objective, therefore, was to offer people affected a dwelling plus extensions, as required by the Athens Charter. These dwellings needed to be sanitary and located within a well-placed, sunny and ventilated urban development, in order to safeguard residents’ health. A structured, rapid and secure network of roads and paths and a network of collective amenities to facilitate everyday living were also needed.

“Here, the social issues are closely linked to the economic and technical issues, as we cannot expect people to make a genuine and consistent contribution if we do not, in return, guarantee them housing, places where they can access food, assistance and healthcare, culture, and social and sports facilities. By providing such amenities and making life more pleasant, people can develop their health, their energy, and their abilities, and make an ongoing contribution”,² Zehrfuss once stated.

Various factors had a close influence on decisions made during the architectural design phase. Some of these were contextual, such as the political, economic and sociocultural situation (wartime damage, social and economic transformation and population growth).

¹ Jean Mons, “Les problèmes de reconstruction en Tunisie”, *L’Architecture d’Aujourd’hui*, n° 20, 1948, p. 2.

² Bernard Zehrfuss, *Annales de l’Institut Technique du Bâtiment et des Travaux Publics: la construction en Tunisie*, 1950.

Others were interactional, such as the plan of action, which was determined, primarily, by endogenous factors – namely the local culture and lifestyle – and exogenous factors, which manifested in cross-cultural exchange and the principles of the Modern Movement. A second challenge concerned the personalities of the stakeholders involved, as by merit of their education and experiences, individuals had formed differing ideologies and views.

Given the critical situation, the reconstruction architects conducted systemic planning studies by making exploratory trips to all the different regions in Tunisia. This was so they could draw lessons from the country's ancient and Islamic architecture. As Eugène Claudius Petit (1907–1989) observed, “I saw them scouring the country in all temperatures so that they could understand it, feel it, and rediscover the reasons that had governed the construction of those Roman towns and the towns which succeeded them. They would observe the local people in their urban and rural lives, analyse the highly varied architecture in different regions and ask themselves, constantly, about the natural or human laws and construction methods that commanded these buildings”.³ They admired and respected this skill for building various civic, public, military and hydraulic monuments. Religious architecture was also extolled as it has always been representative of a community's building endeavours.

According to Herbé, these architects were *imbued with the spirit and finesse of Islamic architecture and the intelligence of its plans. As well as joy, they drew permanent lessons in harmony and how to work with the climate and landscape to achieve genuine grandeur and comfort without ostentation or tour de force; and they adapted current trends to this. By applying a functional approach to their plans and a pragmatic mindset to their choice of building system, they strived for simplicity, honesty and humanity in the expression*

*of their art, thus creating a modern style of architecture, well suited to the traditions and landscapes of Tunisia.*⁴

In regions where climatic conditions, the nature of the soil, and rainfall vary according to geographic location, city dwellers, farmers, fishers and nomads all live in different ways. But despite everything, these dwellings have a shared character even though they are built using different methods, depending on the presence, or otherwise, of specific materials and building systems (such as olive wood on the coast, brick in Tozeur, palms in the south, or dwellings cut into caves in Matmata). This is due to several factors. Religion, for example, requires that places reserved for women are very secluded and difficult for outsiders to access. Traditional houses are typically inward-looking structures, often organised around a patio or courtyard with an offset entrance and rooms which are longer than they are wide and have either a flat or an arched roof.

The architects therefore observed, analysed and reinterpreted the traditional features of the rural house and courtyard – the apposite building system, the simple and streamlined dimensions, the regular and rational layout, and the consideration for climate and human factors – to design a generic prototype for a Tunisian minimalist house, which could be adapted into one of two variants depending on whether it was for urban or rural housing.

The maison minima – an emergency solution

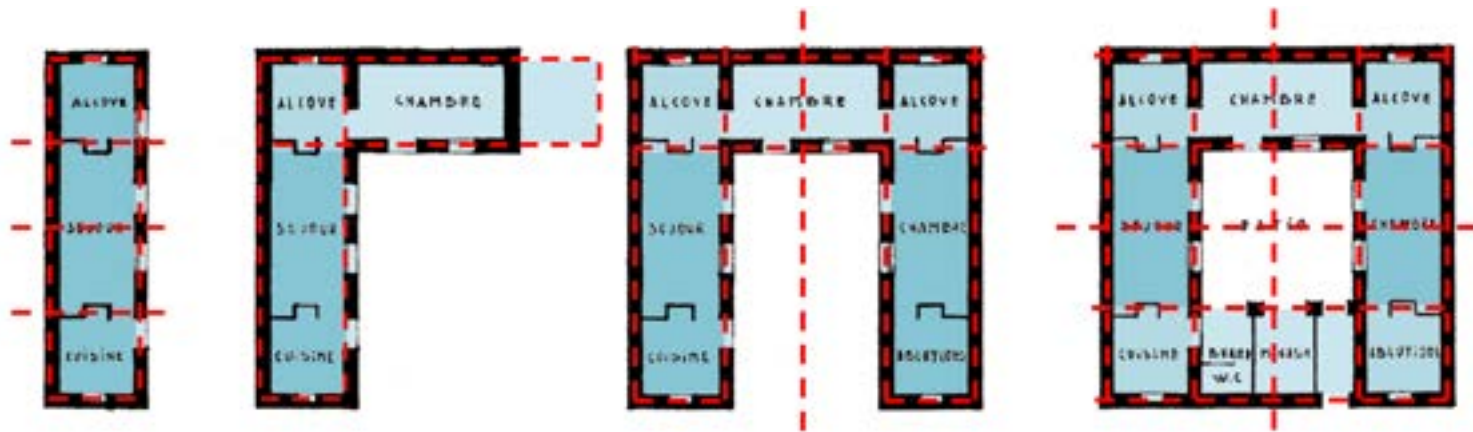
Architects Zehrfuss and Kyriacopoulos designed their model for a ‘minimalist’ house in 1944. It would serve as a blueprint for all housing developments and was adapted to the specificities and needs of Tunisian Muslim society in the 1940s and 1950s.

The model chosen was the *maison minima* – a sanitary and economical dwelling which would sit “within an urban development with links to a structured network of roads and paths and a network of collective amenities”.⁵

³ Eugène Claudius Petit, “La tache sacrée de la reconstruction”, *L'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui*, n° 20, 1948, p. 3.

⁴ Paul Herbé, “Bilan”, *L'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui*, n° 20, 1948, p. 121.

⁵ Narjes Ben Abdelghani and Leïla Ammar, “Maison à cour et logements de recasement pour les populations musulmanes en Tunisie pendant la reconstruction, 1943–1955”, *Al-Sabil: Revue d'Histoire, d'Archéologie et d'Architecture Maghrébines*, n° 5, Year 2018. URL: [www.al-sabil.tn/?p=4271], (viewed on 12/12/2022).



↑ Fig. 1: Strategy on the architectural composition of the *maison minima*. | Source: *L'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui*, N°20, October 1948, p. 70; online: expositions-virtuelles.citedelarchitecture.fr/EXPO-ZEHRFUSS/01-PARTIE.html.

← Fig. 2: Strategy on the itinerary for the *maison minima*: progressive and sequential transition. | Source: *L'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui*, N°20, October 1948, p. 71.

↗ Fig. 3 a/b: Building systems in traditional L'architecture: (1) example of a tunnel vault, (2) example of a flat ceiling | Source: Marc Breitman, *Rationalisme et tradition: Tunisie 1943-1947*, Mardaga Paris, 1995 p. 68-69.



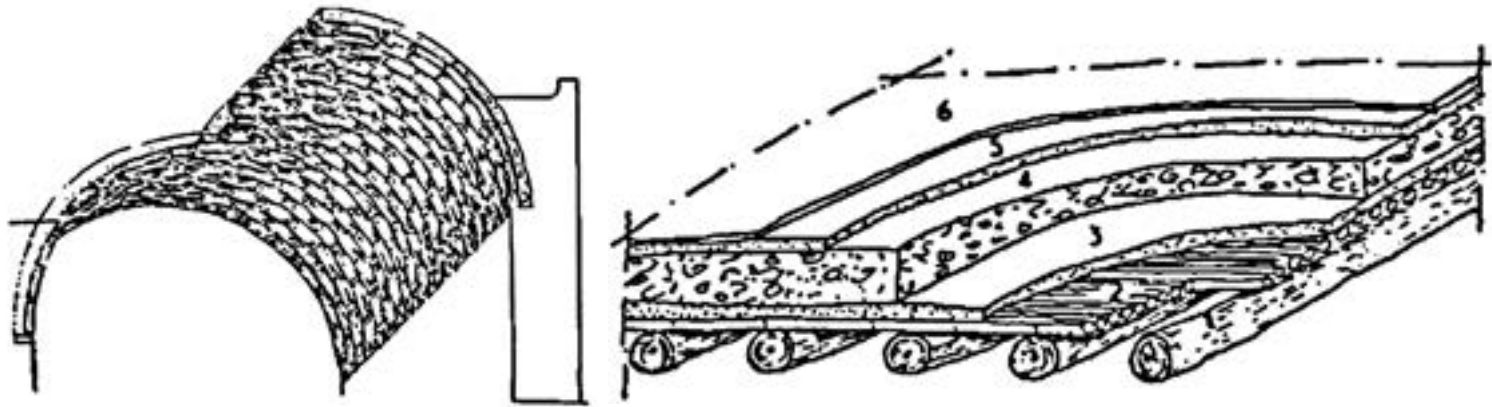
The guiding principle behind this model was that it was modular. By making successive additions to the 'base module', which comprised a unit of X metres, a complete house could be built, taking the form of a central, square courtyard, with rooms for living and utilities on its four sides. Building a *maison minima* was therefore a case of duplicating a base module of block walls and an arched roof. By replicating the base module, it was possible to determine the size of dwellings, which were generally designed to be single storey with one to four rooms. (Fig. 1)

The character of this modular unit was most certainly inspired by the North African courtyard house, closed off from the outside world: "a stone cube with rooms opening onto an internal courtyard".⁶ This inward-looking structure makes a decisive transition between the outside (the public space of the street) and the inside (the private space of the home).

The orientation and ventilation of the accommodation was meticulously designed. Priority was also given to hygiene, with laundry and toilet facilities set apart from other rooms and occupying just one side of the house.

The need to build economically was met by reducing the road network and condensing groups of dwellings so that pipelines could be paired. Every house was designed on the basis of "minimal habitable space for maximal use".

⁶ Narjes Ben Abdelghani and Leïla Ammar, "Maison à cour et logements de recasement pour les populations musulmanes en Tunisie pendant la reconstruction, 1943-1955", *Al-Sabil: Revue d'Histoire, d'Archéologie et d'Architecture Maghrébines*, n° 5, Year 2018. UR: [www.al-sabil.tn/?p=4271, last access 12.12.2022].



The inward-looking nature of the design is also expressed in the way that access points to transitional spaces are offset from each other. This creates continuous and sequential passageways which provide more privacy. Successive rooms are interconnected so inhabitants can move from one to another internally, which is more practical in inclement weather. The focus on centrality is also evident in the inclusion of a courtyard, which serves several functions. From an organisational perspective, all spaces are built around and converge at the courtyard. Additionally, this is the space where family and social life finds its meaning. The courtyard also has a climatic function as it helps maintain an even temperature, provides ventilation and facilitates the infiltration of natural light. Moreover, from the perspective of the inhabitants, the courtyard is spiritually symbolic as it maintains a connection with the heavens. (Fig. 2)

This approach is characterised by its use of local or regional materials and an artisanal construction system. At the time of the Reconstruction, this addressed problems stemming from the shortage of modern materials. The rooms in the *maison minima* are long and narrow and generally have arched ceilings – constructed with neither frame nor formwork – although a flat ceiling is common in some regions. The arched model became the emblem of architecture in the Reconstruction era. Despite its old-fashioned aspects this model is essential to producing these buildings and as it only uses local materials, it is also highly environmentally friendly. (Fig. 3)

The model chosen provided a blueprint for groups of dwellings that could be built according to a structuralist approach by duplicating a single module. The approach ensures that housing developments have a rational coherence based on rules such as contiguity and alignment. Settlements are organised into grids or networks, in a symmetrical and repetitive layout, by linking one dwelling to another. They can tolerate expansion and change without this affecting their character. As well as providing individual houses, because they are grouped together, they eventually create towns or villages, helping to foster a collective community identity while also providing space for a private identity. (Fig. 4)

A comparison of the two variants shows that the rural dwelling differs from the urban dwelling. The former often comprises two units built directly next to each other on plots. It has a courtyard garden at the entrance, a main courtyard, bedrooms, a kitchen, a WC, washing basins and sometimes a stable. The urban dwelling takes the form of four adjoining units. It has a courtyard, a communal room at the entrance, two bedrooms, a covered shelter, a kitchen, WC, a washroom and a service yard.

Each variant represents a spatial syntax which was informed by the findings of a study of inhabitants' social, ethical and anthropological practices. The urban house differs due to the way its spaces are organised to facilitate the practices of a Muslim household in the city, and its location in a residential district with a network

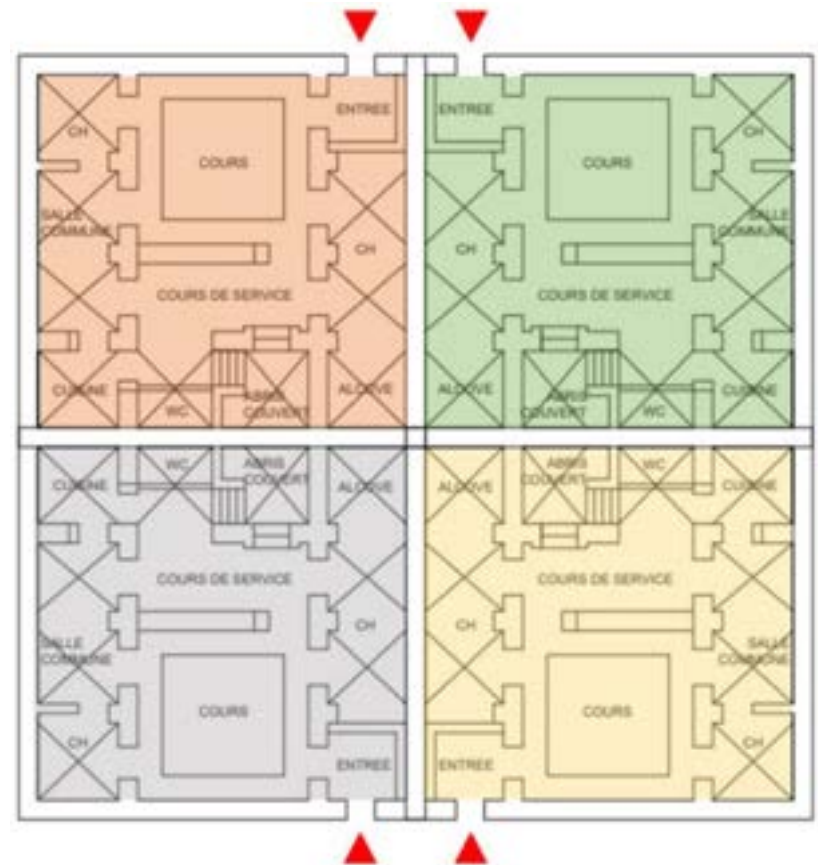


↑→ Fig. 4a/b: Structuralist rationale for groups of dwellings (rural module and urban module).

of roads, paths and community amenities. What makes this model type distinctive is that the courtyard or patio is separated into two parts, one adjoining the bedrooms and the other adjoining the utility rooms.

152 From the maison minima to emergency housing

The *maison minima* concept was applied to new residential districts in Sousse, Bizerte and Tebourba, which were rapidly developed by each of the project's architects. The main idea communicated through this standard model is modernity expressed via traditional processes which necessarily results in a range of so-called 'traditional' forms. In this case, the return to tradition was a constraint on the process rather than part of the intentions of the post-war architects, who favoured a modernist rather than a traditionalist approach. It was their intention to create something modern with the traditional, not to create something traditional with the modern. They therefore drew on tangible and intangible heritage and



reinvented what they took from this by incorporating it within a rationalist line of thinking. Thus, we can talk about evolving the material or innovating within what exists. This should be thought of as a transposition – of a perception, morphology, feature or process.

The range of morphological characteristics in traditional Tunisian architecture offer promising potential because of the various dualities they reflect – inward looking or outward looking, covered or uncovered, horizontal or vertical. At the same time, the square appears to play a prominent role in the way space is organised in dwellings with a courtyard. By merit of their aesthetic appearance, these morphological characteristics, in their revised form, guarantee a distinct identity and a design process based on order, repetition and modularity.

An evaluation of the *maison minima* highlights three key characteristics. By adopting a pragmatic approach, the industrialist mindset produced a standard model conducive to rapid and economical mass production.

This stimulated a fresh way of thinking about urban planning. The 'ideal' housing development, with a network of connecting paths and roads and collective amenities, was created. The *maison minima* model took account of the various contextual, environmental, climatic and financial constraints, which brings us back to the principles of ecological approaches that promote sustainable development and energy saving. Moreover, its design process placed users at the centre of conceptual thinking about living spaces. By becoming stakeholders in this process, users played their part in making sure that the *maison minima* would meet the needs of society.

Taking the characteristics of the *maison minima*, discussed above, we have identified a series of parameters relevant to the challenges involved in humanitarian architecture. This led us to consider whether the design process applied to the *maison minima* could possibly be transposed to emergency housing more broadly. Regardless of the geographical, environmental, social or political context, and because of the standardised nature of its output, the industrial approach dehumanises the production process for emergency housing. The ecological, social and human characteristics incorporated into producing the *maison minima* could, in this case, help to rebalance the design process for emergency housing so that it follows a more philanthropic strategy.

However, the reality is that emergency housing, whether temporary, transitional or permanent, has, to different degrees, undeniable consequences both socially and environmentally. Problems such as overpopulation, deforestation and loss of community have emerged as a result of rehousing solutions, which raises the question of whether standardised approaches should be replaced with more environmentally sensitive and responsible ones. Emergency projects should not be limited by time. Standard emergency housing, designed originally to be temporary and easily duplicated, must move away from its sole focus on current economic circumstances towards a more sustainable and responsive approach.

The question of emergency accommodation should therefore be treated as a complex process requiring a collaborative and participatory approach; in other words, strategy needs to be shaped by the emotional, cognitive, intellectual and technical input of stakeholders (designers and users) from the pre-design stage through to construction and end use. The outcome does not therefore signify an end to the creative process but instead, can be a stimulus for new ideas.

Conclusion

Urban planning tends to overlook current climatic and environmental changes. If we can understand the reasons for this, we can begin to implement strategies with a genuine capacity for innovation. In these times of economic and energy crisis, we could even learn some ecological lessons. The *maison minima* would still seem to offer a solution to the challenges of environmentally responsible and humanitarian architecture, and the current endeavours of architectural and planning designers are certainly focused in this direction.

Architecture in the reconstruction era introduced a process that had an essentially functional aim. It established new ways of organising space even though the influence of local architectural heritage often pervaded. Tunisia's architectural heritage provided inspiration and could be adapted to the trends and needs of the moment in the specific circumstances of the post-war period because it aspired to a balance between architectural expression and practical use, and between contemporaneity and authenticity, underpinned by a constant quest for functionality.

To examine the varied typology of the *maison minima* in depth and see how its characteristics have been reused to arrive at this outcome, we analysed and interpreted it as an experimental project and typical model for this type of structure. Indeed, the *maison minima* is the embodiment of a construction approach in the post-war era which demonstrates an ideal amalgamation of the constraints of international modernism and the intrinsic

features of traditional architecture, such as a low-cost and rapid building system. It shows that the characteristics of such a typology were changed and reinvented by taking a thoughtful, conceptual approach.

The intent of this article is to show that this type of structure reflects considerable freedom of thought. Thanks to current digital and technological advances, it could pave the way for lines of discussion that move beyond the confines of a specific style or artistic movement.

Résumé

Définie comme «l'image de la cité», l'architecture est souvent la combinaison d'un nombre de contextes: l'économique, le politique, le géographique et le social. L'architecture de la Reconstruction en Tunisie témoigne d'une œuvre architecturale et urbaine dans une période d'effervescence circonstancielle des années 40.

Conséquent à la seconde guerre mondiale, et pour reloger les sinistrés tunisiens et européens, la Tunisie en tant que pays dévasté, nécessitait une opération d'urgence sur le plan urbain et architectural. Pour ce faire, une équipe d'architectes a été formée, sous la direction de Bernard Zehrfuss. Leur mission était de reconstruire le pays en le modernisant. Telle était la volonté du gouvernement de la France Libre.

Par référence à la charte d'Athènes et en tenant en considération les contraintes du pays, ces architectes ont cherché à concilier le modernisme pragmatique avec le traditionnel artisanal selon un processus de conception basé sur des paramètres esthétiques, fonctionnels et techniques. Ils ont observé, analysé et réinterprété les typologies traditionnelles de la maison à patio pour en déduire un plan type, celui de la maison minima tunisienne, bifurquée en deux variantes selon sa destination urbaine ou rurale. Chaque typologie représente une syntaxe spatiale architecturée selon une étude ample et concise des pratiques sociales, éthiques et anthropologiques des habitants.

La maison minima était un logis salubre et économique ; deux conditions inévitables dans le contexte d'après-guerre. Ce plan type servira de modèle pour la construction des groupements d'habitations établis, selon une morphologie structuraliste générée par la multiplication d'un même module de dimensions minimales. Edifiée selon des procédés de construction artisanaux avec des matériaux locaux, la maison minima peut être pensée comme un habitat écologique qui respecte la santé et le bien-être des habitants, préserve l'environnement et améliore la performance énergétique.

L'intérêt de ce travail n'est pas de jeter un regard ni historique ni épistémologique, mais il se veut surtout une réflexion prospective sur l'architecture humanitaire et particulièrement sur l'habitat d'urgence. Comment retranscrire ces prototypes d'habitat avec les innovations technologiques et numériques afin de répondre aux besoins vitaux de logement suite à des catastrophes naturelles, technologiques ou humaines sera l'aboutissement de cette recherche.

Zusammenfassung

Definiert als „das Bild der Stadt“, ist Architektur oft eine Kombination aus einer Reihe von Kontexten: dem wirtschaftlichen, dem politischen, dem geografischen und dem sozialen. Die Architektur des Wiederaufbaus in Tunesien zeugt von einem beachtlichen architektonischen und städtebaulichen Werk in einer Zeit der umstandsbedingten Aufbruchstimmung in den 1940er Jahren.

In der Folge des Zweiten Weltkriegs und zur Unterbringung der tunesischen und europäischen Kriegsgeschädigten benötigte Tunesien als verwüstetes Land eine Art Notoperation auf städtischer und architektonischer Ebene. Zu diesem Zweck wurde ein Team von Architekten unter der Leitung von Bernard Zehrfuss gebildet. Ihre Aufgabe war es, das Land durch Modernisierung wieder aufzubauen. Dies war der Wille der Regierung des Freien Frankreichs.

Unter Bezugnahme auf die Charta von Athen und unter Berücksichtigung der Zwänge des Landes versuchten diese Architekten, pragmatischen Modernismus mit traditioneller Handwerkskunst in Einklang zu bringen, und zwar nach einem Entwurfsprozess, der auf ästhetischen, funktionalen und technischen Parametern basierte. Sie beobachteten, analysierten und interpretierten die traditionellen Typologien des Patio-Hauses neu, um daraus einen typischen Grundriss abzuleiten, den des tunesischen „Minima“-Hauses, das je nach seiner städtischen oder ländlichen Bestimmung in zwei Varianten entwickelt wurde. Jede Typologie stellt eine räumliche Syntax dar, die nach einer umfassenden und prägnanten Studie der sozialen, ethischen und anthropologischen Praktiken der Bewohner architektonisch gestaltet wurde.

Das „Minima“-Haus war eine gesunde und kostengünstige Unterkunft; zwei Bedingungen, die in der Nachkriegszeit unumgänglich waren. Dieser Musterplan diente als Vorlage für den Bau geplanter Wohnsiedlungen nach einer strukturalistischen Morphologie, die durch die Vervielfältigung eines einzigen Moduls mit minimalen Abmessungen erzeugt wurde.

Das nach handwerklichen Bauverfahren mit lokalen Materialien errichtete „Minima“-Haus kann als ökologischer Lebensraum verstanden werden, der die Gesundheit und das Wohlbefinden der Bewohner respektiert, die Umwelt schützt und die Energieeffizienz verbessert.

Das Interesse dieser Arbeit liegt weder in einem historischen noch in einem epistemologischen Blick, sondern sie soll vor allem eine zukunftsweisende Reflexion über humanitäre Architektur und insbesondere über Notunterkünfte sein. Wie diese Wohnprototypen mit technologischen und digitalen Innovationen umgeschrieben werden können, um den lebensnotwendigen Bedarf an Wohnraum nach Natur-, Technologie- oder menschlichen Katastrophen zu decken, wird das Ergebnis dieser Forschung sein.

RISING FROM THE ASHES

The Renewal of Lisbon's Downtown in the Aftermath of the 1755 Earthquake

Introduction

The devastating earthquake of 1 November 1755, which destroyed Lisbon's downtown (Baixa), necessitated urban alterations that then shaped the life of the city until the mid 19th century. This was the result of an extensive debate before the reconstruction, which pitted two schools of thought against each other: on the one hand, to preserve the memory of the city, by reconstructing it as it was before the earthquake; on the other, the need to modernise the city in such a way as to prevent future catastrophes.

Today, the city faces similar dilemmas. Urban restoration, which is critical for the survival of all historic centres, is rapidly threatening to destroy portions of its architectural legacy, namely the original wood structure of the buildings and the interior decorations which bore evidence of the lives of Lisbon's inhabitants from the 18th to the 19th centuries. In this paper, we will present a case study of a five-building block in Rossio square, currently undergoing structural alterations, a paradigmatic example of the unstoppable process of renovation that has been going on since 1755 in the heart of the city.

Rebuilding the city following the earthquake

Portugal's seismic risk has always been considerable due to its proximity to important earthquake faults, especially the one connecting Europe and Africa, to the southwest of Sagres (Algarve), plus the faults of the riverbed of the

Tagus, beside which Lisbon is situated. It is estimated that the earthquake of 1 November 1755 had a magnitude of between 8.5 and 9 on the Richter scale and that the shocks spread from Scotland to southern France, even reaching the shores of Brazil and the Antilles.¹

After the earthquake, the city's downtown underwent profound changes under the close supervision of Prime Minister Sebastião José Carvalho e Melo (the Marquis of Pombal). His participation in the process branded a new architectural style known as *pombalino* (Pombaline), in direct reference to its 'founder'.

Smaller-scale repeats of the earthquake occurred until late 1756, delaying the rehabilitation efforts. During this period, several projects were submitted for the Marquis' approval, ranging from recreating the city design to relocating it to higher ground. The winning project – Plan Number 5 –, designed by the Hungarian Carlos Mardel and Eugénio dos Santos, decided that all pre-existing buildings would be demolished but that the north-south axis linking Rossio and Comércio squares would be maintained, thus connecting the heart of Baixa to the Tagus River.² (Fig. 1) The concepts of the Enlightenment, economy and public usefulness stamped a new rational order in Lisbon's urbanism, sweeping aside the Baroque architectural features.³

Rossio is one of the city's most important archaeological and symbolic areas. In the 16th century, the Inquisition Palace and the Royal Hospital of All Saints, Lisbon's largest

¹ Rute Coelho, "Lisboa é a segunda cidade europeia com maior risco sísmico" in *Diário de Notícias*, Sociedade, 12 October 2017 [www.dn.pt/sociedade/lisboa-e-a-segunda-cidade-europeia-com-o-maior-risco-sismico-8835810.html] (accessed 29 August 2023); José-Augusto França, *Lisboa Pombalina e o Iluminismo*, Lisboa: Bertrand Editora, 1987, p. 61.

² J. Brazão Farinha, *Construção da Baixa Pombalina* (col. Cadernos do Metropolitano, n.º 6), Lisboa, Metropolitano de Lisboa, 1997, p. 23.

³ José-Augusto França, *Lisboa Pombalina e a Estética do Iluminismo. Colóquio Lisboa Iluminista e o seu tempo*, Lisboa, Universidade Autónoma, 1994, p. 18.



Fig. 1: Baixa de Lisboa, rebuilding plan after the 1755 earthquake. Authors: Carlos Mardel and Eugénio dos Santos, 1756 (public domain). Published in Augusto Vieira da Silva, *Plantas topográficas de Lisboa*, Lisboa: Câmara Municipal de Lisboa, 1950, p. 65.

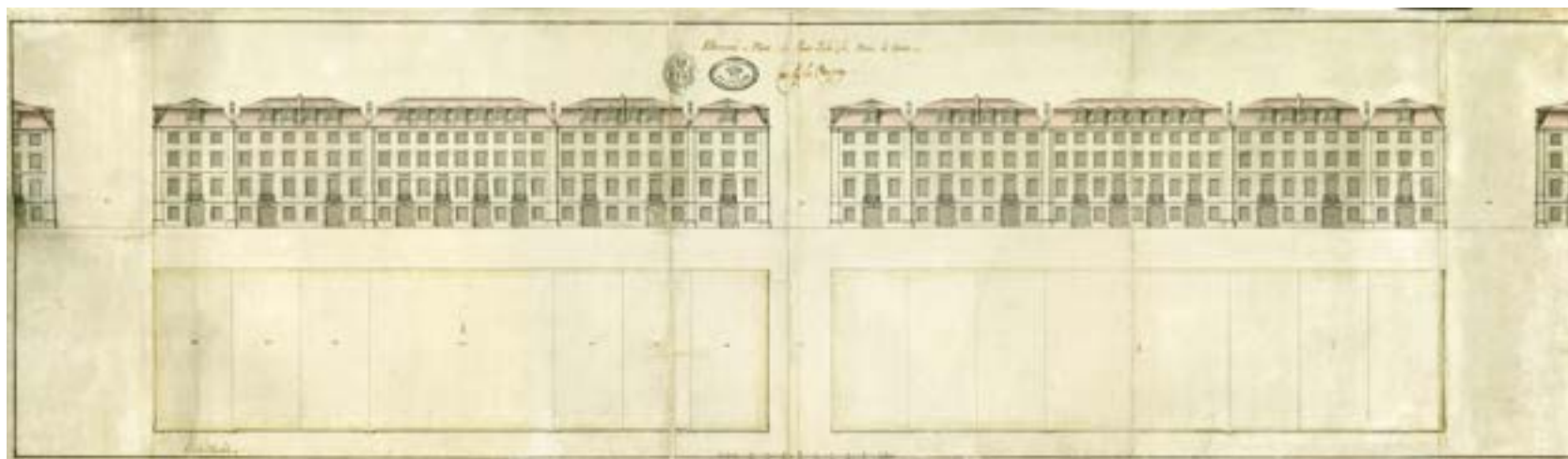
healthcare structure, also stood here. The gigantic scale of the Hospital meant it filled Rossio's eastern aisle, where now stands the block addressed in this paper. The original drawing for this new block, from 1758, can still be seen in the *Cartulário Pombalino* (Fig. 2).⁴ This book, compiled between 1758 and 1846, is composed of 70 drawings, each one serving as the model for the façade of one block.⁵ Through them, we can see some of the Pombaline style (exterior) characteristics: plain facades, the lack of decorative components, narrow balconies with iron railings and windows that are fairly similar,

varying only slightly from floor to floor in the design of their limestone frames. The mansard roofs of Rossio, of Germanic influence, were brought in by Mardel, although they are not prevalent in Baixa.

To make the reconstruction process more efficient, a succession of mass-production manufacturing systems had to be established, with prescribed dimensions and measurements for stone, wood or iron parts, and tiles. The best example of a standard element was the Pombaline cage (*gaiola pombalina*), a timber structure with a lime and sand mortar infill, used to give structural strength to Baixa's

⁴ Manuel Teixeira, "Os planos pombalinos para Lisboa. A expressão erudita do modo popular de construção da cidade portuguesa" in *A Cidade Pombalina: História Urbanismo e Arquitectura. Os 250 anos do Plano da Baixa*. Actas das Jornadas, Lisboa, Câmara Municipal de Lisboa, 2008, p. 34.

⁵ Inês Viegas (coord.), *Cartulário Pombalino*, Lisboa, Arquivo Municipal, 1999.



buildings (Fig. 3). This anti-seismic form of construction comes from Portuguese shipbuilding experience. The ships' good performance was due to their three-dimensional wooden structure made up of deformable parts resistant to traction and compression. A similar process is at work with the Pombaline cage, which acts as a wooden skeleton, embedded in the walls, with a vast number of vertical, horizontal, and diagonal beams, duly joined to form a solid and stable system.⁶

Originally, each building was designed as a revenue generator, comprising commercial spaces on the ground floor and community housing on the upper floors.⁷ All of the foundations were made of pine wood piles driven into the alluvial soil beneath the water table.

The interior of the buildings was equally humble: there was no courtyard, the entrance was dimly lighted and small, the stairways were narrow, and the basements and ground level were the only vaulted spaces since all the other floors had a Pombaline cage structure. The

internal divisions, many of which had no windows, were continuous and intercommunicating.⁸ Moreover, there were no sanitary facilities, and the kitchens were only heated by a fireplace, providing warmth and light.⁹

The reconstruction of Lisbon was slow and was not completed until the mid-19th century.¹⁰ Over time, the Pombaline architecture was adapted to new purposes, with additional extra floors, the removal of pillars to create wider spaces, or the introduction of piping (water or gas), destroying the wooden cage and disregarding the buildings' seismic resistance.¹¹

During the late 19th and early 20th centuries, there was an increased demand for ground-floor space, and large department stores, warehouses, companies and banking institutions were established in these buildings.¹² This tendency forced Lisbon city council to be cautious when permitting new projects that could have an immediate impact on the buildings and their surroundings.¹³ Downtown began to collapse in the 1960s, with citizens abandoning the

6 "A gaiola como génese da construção anti-sísmica" in *Informações de Interesse Geral, Laboratório Nacional de Engenharia Civil (LNEC), Departamento de Estruturas, Núcleo de Engenharia Sísmica e Dinâmica de Estruturas*, 2005, www-ext.lnec.pt/LNEC/DE/NESDE/divulgacao/gaiol_const_sism.html (accessed 24 August 2023).

7 José-Augusto França, *Lisboa Pombalina e o Iluminismo*, Lisboa: Bertrand Editora, 1987, p. 173–174.

8 Vítor dos Santos, *O Sistema Construtivo Pombalino em Lisboa em Edifícios Urbanos Agrupados de Habitação Colectiva: Estudo de um Legado Humanista da Segunda Metade do Século XVIII*, PhD thesis, Lisboa, Universidade Técnica de Lisboa, 1994, p. II.1.2.5.

9 Margarida Acciaioli, *Casas com Escritos. Uma História da Habitação em Lisboa*, Lisboa, Bizâncio, 2015, p. 64.

10 Vanda Anastácio, "Viver em Lisboa no tempo do Marquês de Pombal: uma breve panorâmica", in Teresa Leonor Vale (coord.), *A Cidade Pombalina: História Urbanismo e Arquitectura. Os 250 anos do Plano da Baixa*, Lisboa, Câmara Municipal de Lisboa, 2008, p. 21.

11 Luís Ramos and Paulo Lourenço, "Análise das técnicas de construção pombalina e apreciação do estado de conservação estrutural do quarteirão do Martinho da Arcada" in *Revista Engenharia Civil*, 7 Departamento de Engenharia Civil, Universidade do Minho, (2000), p. 35–46.

12 Ana Tostões, "Precusores do urbanismo e da arquitectura modernos" in Ana Tostões e Walter Rossa (coord.), *Lisboa 1758. O Plano da Baixa hoje*, Catálogo da Exposição, Lisboa, Câmara Municipal de Lisboa, 2008, p. 185.

13 José Aguiar, *Cor e cidade histórica. Estudos cromáticos e conservação do património*, Porto, FAUP, 2001, p. 109–110.

← **Fig. 2:** Drawing of the east side of Rossio (signed by Prime Minister Sebastião José de Carvalho e Melo, as Count of Oeiras), AML-AH, PT/AMLSB/CMSB/UROB-PU/01/020, Cartulário Pombalino, around 1760, fl. 20.

→ **Fig. 3:** Example of the wooden structure known as gaiola pombalina (Pombaline cage), photo: author, 2021.

→ **Fig. 4:** Inside view of the east block of Rossio, photo: author, 2021.



area and, as a result, its buildings falling into ruins, a scenario that continued until the early decades of the 21st century.¹⁴

Since 24 December 2012, the Baixa district has been classified as an “Architectural Ensemble of Public Interest”.¹⁵ Due to its building’s similar characteristics, any restoration project within this district must comply with similar parameters. In addition, Baixa has a Safeguarding Detail Plan, defined in 2010 by the Lisbon city council, which states the rules on all the standards to be respected in the interventions to be carried out in this area.¹⁶

The decoration of Pombaline architecture

Despite the austerity of the military engineers who restored the Baixa, it did have certain aesthetic aspects. In the 1930s, Lisbon city council struggled to preserve Baixa’s uniformity by keeping the facades’ original measurements, materials and exterior colours, thus ordering all the facades to be painted ochre yellow.¹⁷

By then it was already known that, at the end of the 18th century, the French physician Joseph Carrère had visited Lisbon and left a record of his observations in

¹⁴ Manuel Salgado “Do plano de reconstrução de 1758 à revitalização do século XXI” in Ana Tostões e Walter Rossa (coord.), *Lisboa 1758. O Plano da Baixa hoje*, Catálogo da Exposição, Lisboa, Câmara Municipal de Lisboa, 2008, p. 239.

¹⁵ Detailed Plan for the Safeguarding of *Baixa Pombalina*, in *Diário da República*, 2nd series, No 55, 18 March 2011, p. 13105–13169 [www.cm-lisboa.pt/fileadmin/VIVER/Urbanismo/urbanismo/planeamento/pe/salvaguada/dr.pdf] (accessed 12 December 2022).

¹⁶ The plan was published in *Diário da República*, 2nd series, n° 55 of 18 March 2011 under Notice n° 7126/2011. Câmara Municipal de Lisboa, Plano de Pormenor de Salvaguarda da Baixa Pombalina, 2010, in www.lisboa.pt/fileadmin/cidade_temas/urbanismo/planos_pormenor/baixa_pombalina/regulamento/pp_baixa_pombalina_regulamento.pdf (accessed 29 August 2023).

¹⁷ José Aguiar, *Cor e cidade histórica. Estudos cromáticos e conservação do património*, Porto, FAUP, 2001, p. 323.



Fig. 5: View of east block of Rossio, photo: author, 2023.

which he had highlighted Comércio square and its yellow-painted houses.¹⁸ The controversy over the original colour of Baixa's facades continued until 1994 when an 18th century mural painting was discovered in Brazil depicting a fully yellow Comércio square. The discovery solved this problem, although questions remained regarding the interior decoration of Baixa's buildings.¹⁹

Because no designs or planning prescriptions specifying the requirements for building interiors were found, we have no idea what they might have looked like. Since each building was meant to generate revenue, it would have been impossible to apply strict construction rules that would slow down the construction process.²⁰ Instead, to

accommodate the needs for comfort and domestic living, flexibility triumphed, and some freedom was allowed in the layout of non-load-bearing walls since no formal licensing was required.²¹

However, the interiors were not devoid of ornamental features, as has been discovered in the course of various architectural restoration works. Mural paintings, tiles and stuccos are an inseparable part of Baixa, although still little known and often left out of modern intervention projects. During the early phases of Baixa's reconstruction, the only decorative component present was the tiles, also designated as 'Pombaline', with a central decorative design (typically a floral or a geometric motif) on each piece.²²

Around the turn of the 19th century, the Lisbon bourgeoisie settled in Baixa, and their residences became new spaces for exhibiting social distinction, which may explain a higher investment in new ornamental programs.²³ Many of the mural paintings remaining in Baixa can be dated to this period based on their style, colours and techniques of manufacture, as well as their location: non-structural walls constructed of board, resulting from various alterations to the room partitioning.²⁴

The eastern aisle at Rossio Square: a case study

The block formed of five buildings and located on Rossio's eastern aisle was purchased in 2018 for 62 million euros by an investment fund (Mabel Capital), represented in Portugal by JCKL – Real State Investments.²⁵ The architectural office Contacto Atlântico was in charge of the

¹⁸ Joseph Carrère, *Panorama de Lisboa em 1796*, in Castelo Branco Chaves (trad. and notes), Lisboa, Biblioteca Nacional, 1989, p. 27–29.

¹⁹ Rafael Moreira, "O painel de São Luís do Maranhão", in *Monumentos, Revista Semestral de Edifícios e Monumentos*, 1, 1994, p. 25–34.

²⁰ Walter Rossa, "No 1.º Plano", in Ana Tostões e Walter Rossa (coord.), *Lisboa 1758. O Plano da Baixa hoje*, Catálogo da Exposição, Lisboa, Câmara Municipal de Lisboa, 2008, p. 63.

²¹ Vítor dos Santos, *O Sistema Construtivo Pombalino em Lisboa em Edifícios Urbanos Agrupados de Habitação Colectiva: Estudo de um Legado Humanista da Segunda Metade do Século XVIII*, PhD thesis, Lisboa, Universidade Técnica de Lisboa, 1994, p. II.1.2.59.

²² José-Augusto França, *Lisboa Pombalina e o Iluminismo*, Lisboa: Bertrand Editora, 1987, p. 176–178.

²³ Helder Carita and Homem Cardoso, *Oriente e Ocidente nos Interiores em Portugal*, s.l., Livraria Civilização Editora, 1983, p. 203.

²⁴ Patrícia Monteiro, "A Pintura Mural de finais do século XVIII e inícios do XIX na Baixa Pombalina" in *ARTIS-On*, (n.º 9, 2019), p. 43–55. ISSN. 2183–7082 in artison.letras.ulisboa.pt/index.php/ao/article/view/238/205.

²⁵ Ana Baptista, "Quarteirão da Pastelaria 'Suiça' vendido por 62 milhões" in *Expresso, Economia*, 10 March 2018 [expresso.pt/economia/2018-03-10-Quarteirao-da-Pastelaria-Suica-vendido-por-62-milhoes] (accessed in 29 August 2023).

block's renewal, promising to return it "to its original configuration as seen in the *Cartulário Pombalino*".²⁶ Instead of choosing the most common option for Baixa's architecture – to transform the old buildings into new hotels or hostels –, the goal, still in progress, is the installation of commercial spaces on the lower levels and offices on the higher floors.

In 2018, the majority of this block was deserted. Its advanced state of degeneration was an eyesore to both inhabitants and local authorities in this affluent area of the city, not to mention a security risk for local citizens (Fig. 4). The Lisbon subway has run under this block since 1955, undermining the integrity of the structure. During several visits, it was possible to feel oscillations over short periods, especially on the upper floors of the building occupied by *Suiça*, a historic café located here since the 1940s. Although technical studies of the five buildings had not yet been completed at this early stage, the movements felt were attributed to the constant passing of subway trains.

As part of the preparatory intervention works, a report was requested by the architectural firm in charge of the rehabilitation: ERA – Archaeology, Conservation and Heritage Management.²⁷ A multidisciplinary team of conservators, archaeologists, architects and art historians came together to provide all the data on the existing elements of historical or artistic relevance in these five buildings, such as mural paintings, stucco, tiles, ironwork and original stonework. As determined by the Safeguard Detail Plan, once the structural condition of the buildings has been assessed, all elements of historical or artistic value

must be preserved and, when possible, incorporated into the new project.²⁸ The final report concluded that there was still a significant number of the original decorations inside these five buildings. Similar components found in other Baixa structures provide solid evidence that the same ornamental programme was duplicated in all the architectural sets.

Although documentary evidence is scant, some stages of the alterations were identified as having been made in the centuries following construction, especially for the ground floor. Between 1886 and 1899, Lisbon municipality received multiple requests to carry out renovations in various stores, mostly concerning masonry painting or new limestone frames.²⁹

Also, between the late 1920s and early 1930s, a textile fabric warehouse took up most of floors 1 and 2 of one of the buildings, leading to the replacement of the Pombaline wood structure with iron beams.³⁰ This historic warehouse will be incorporated into the current rehabilitation project as well-preserved evidence of iron usage in Baixa's construction works.

The Rossio block had other interesting activities, like the Casa da Sorte, a space dedicated to lotteries, located in Rossio since 1940,³¹ the Coimbra-Madrid boarding house, built in 1942,³² or the historic Hotel Francfort, which was run in part of this block from 1902 until 1974.³³ To retain part of the memory of the former hotel, the rehabilitation project intends to maintain the iron lift, one of the first of its sort in Lisbon.

Although the block was known for these various activities, its interior was in fact in disrepair. During a

²⁶ Ana Tavares, "JCKL avança com recuperação do quarteirão do Rossio" in *Vida Imobiliária*, 13 November 2020 [vidaimobiliaria.com/noticias/reabilitacao-urbana/jckl-avanca-com-recuperacao-quarteirao-rossio/] (accessed in 20 February 2023).

²⁷ ERA Archaeology S.A. is a Lisbon-based firm that provides services in the field of historical-archaeological heritage based on the ongoing training of its personnel and collaborators. Throughout her professional career, the author has been invited to collaborate in a number of this company's projects.

²⁸ Patrícia Monteiro, Relatório de História da Arte acerca do património integrado existente no quarteirão da praça D. Pedro IV (n.º 101 – 122) e Praça da Figueira (n.º 1 – 3c), em Lisboa, ERA-Arqueologia, S.A., 2018, p. 23. (unpublished). Cf. Câmara Municipal de Lisboa, Plano de Pormenor de Salvaguarda da Baixa Pombalina, 2010, p. 31 in www.lisboa.pt/fileadmin/cidade_temas/urbanismo/planos_pormenor/baixa_pombalina/regulamento/pp_baixa_pombalina_regulamento.pdf (accessed 29 August 2023).

²⁹ Arquivo Municipal de Lisboa (AML), Obra 14679, vol. 1, 1866 e 1899.

³⁰ AML, Obra 14679, vol. 1, Processo 760/1.ª REP/PG/1913, tomo 1, p. 2.

³¹ AML, Obra 14679, vol. 2, Processo 18586, 5 March 1940, fls. 10 e 11.

³² AML, Obra 14679, vol. 13, Processo 1576/Edi/03, fl. 122.

³³ AML, Obra 14679, vol. 4, Processo B 35932, 1902.

thorough survey undertaken for ERA's report, it was possible to assess all the remaining integrated heritage. Mural paintings could be seen on all of the building's floors, except the ground floor, which, as it was explained, was the most altered over the years. Due to architectural deterioration, the bulk of the paintings were in poor condition and frequently covered with acrylic paints or wallpapers.

The tiles were the most notable of all the original decorations that can still be seen *in situ*. Because they were designed expressly for this location, the Pombaline tiles are still very visible in all five buildings, although it was noted that they had been moved from their original locations and relocated above the tile wainscot covering the lower part of the elevations, defining bands of decoration of different sizes or, in other cases, extending over the entire length of the walls.³⁴

All the stuccos inventoried were already from the 19th and 20th centuries. Unlike mural paintings or tiles, stuccos will be the only decorative element to be replicated and included in the block's restoration project.

From the information made public by the architectural office Contacto Atlântico, the project for the Rossio block promises to restore the dignity of this district by returning it to its former layout (Fig. 4). This goal instantly presents several difficulties and ethical issues, because all of the original designs of the downtown area still exist. It took nearly a century to rebuild Rossio, which required alterations to the original plans.

In other words, we don't know how closely the block's original design depicted in the *Cartulário Pombalino* was adhered to, particularly for the ground floor, where multiple changes were made and little care given to retaining the prescribed windows or door dimensions.

For these reasons, there is a considerable risk that the restoration of this block would result in a misleading image, because, even if the design was executed exactly as shown in historic drawings, there would always be an element of doubt for which there is no documentary evidence.

A prior project for this area offered a cutting-edge solution with a metallic structure and glass, but was ultimately rejected by both the superintendence of the Directorate-General for Culture, part of the central government, and Lisbon city hall, leading to the decision to follow a more conservative route. The initial project was abandoned because it went against Article 21 of Baixa's Safeguarding Detail Plan, which stipulates that "façade alterations are only authorised if they are intended to improve the structural performance of the building, and/or restore metrics, rhythms, materials, and original characteristics of the buildings".³⁵ The concept of the 'original' being sought here is an intriguing one, especially because, virtually from the start, Baixa underwent modifications with regard to the original drawings.

The project provides no information about whether mural paintings or tiles are to be preserved, so it is to be expected that, in the first case, they are to be painted over and, in the second, removed from the site. Indeed, we may see a reduction of colour to the bare minimum, or none at all, leading to an abstraction of the architecture and the loss of its aesthetic values.³⁶

Conclusion

The Rossio block is an illustration of the current scenario in Baixa, which is made worse by property pressure and hundreds of concurrent construction projects without an acceptable reaction from the overseeing authorities.

Despite the commitment of Baixa's Safeguarding Detail Plan to the 'original', which public and private organiza-

³⁴ Patrícia Monteiro, Relatório de História da Arte acerca do património integrado existente no quarteirão da praça D. Pedro IV (n.º 101 – 122) e Praça da Figueira (n.º 1 – 3c), em Lisboa, ERA-Arqueologia, S. A., 2018, p. 23. (unpublished).

³⁵ Câmara Municipal de Lisboa, Plano de Pormenor de Salvaguarda da Baixa Pombalina, 2010, p. 16 in www.lisboa.pt/fileadmin/cidade_temas/urbanismo/planos_pormenor/baixa_pombalina/regulamento/pp_baixa_pombalina_regulamento.pdf (accessed 29 August 2023).

³⁶ João Pernão, "The otherness of white. Elements for a better understanding and use of the colour white in architecture" in *Colour and Light in Architecture. First International Conference 2010_Proceedings*, Verona, Knezezi, 2010, p. 155–159.

tions have followed to the letter, we should ask ourselves what 'original' means. It is ironic that in Baixa's architectural interventions, conducted from the late 20th century to the present time, the decision to pursue a conservative approach provides a rationale for erasing historical markers of past eras. Just because we have the original blueprints for these buildings, does this imply that we should base future interventions purely on them, eliminating everything that occurred since? Because downtown is still in the midst of a continuous regeneration process that will determine its future, this is an open topic that requires regular discussion among all stakeholders: local officials, conservation specialists, property owners, and, of course, Lisbon's inhabitants. It is necessary to assess the significance of these kinds of developments in Baixa's future and determine whether they are (or are not) beneficial to the preservation of their identity. Furthermore, the subject of civil architecture decorations must be included in this framework, as they are frequently overlooked in rehabilitation projects like the one on the Rossio block. Only through a multidisciplinary approach will it be feasible to conduct a thorough assessment, analysis and (if possible) preservation of this heritage as a whole.

Résumé

Cet article présente quelques éléments clés pour la compréhension du style dit «pombalin» dans le contexte de l'urbanisme de Lisbonne, tout en mettant l'accent sur les valeurs décoratives qui composent l'architecture du quartier de la Baixa et contribuent à ce style distinctif.

Afin d'illustrer plus précisément les points mentionnés, nous réaliserons une étude de cas concernant un ensemble de cinq bâtiments situé sur le Rossio, au cœur de la Baixa. L'ensemble a été acquis en 2018 par un fonds d'investissement étranger et est actuellement en cours de conversion en espace commercial.

En raison de sa vulnérabilité sismique, la Baixa est protégée par un ensemble de réglementations couvrant la zone et ses bâtiments, dont la plus pertinente est le «Plan détaillé de sauvegarde du centre-ville» (2010). Cette réglementation stipule, entre autres, que toute activité dans ce quartier doit être précédée d'une évaluation approfondie des structures qui seraient affectées.

Pour satisfaire cette exigence, le cabinet d'architectes chargé du projet de réhabilitation a demandé un rapport sur le patrimoine présent dans cet îlot, ainsi que sur son état de conservation, avant le début des travaux. Cela a conduit à une collaboration avec la société ERA (archéologie, conservation et gestion du patrimoine), qui a donné lieu à un rapport révélant la présence d'un grand nombre d'azulejos, de stucs et de peintures murales dans l'ensemble de la structure, un chapitre moins connu de l'architecture vernaculaire de la Baixa. Malgré ces découvertes, on ne sait pas si le projet choisira ou non de conserver tout ou partie de ces valeurs ornementales.

Notre étude de cas consistera en une vaste intervention de réhabilitation, dont l'impact reste pour l'heure incertain, dans la mesure où, après une longue interruption, les travaux de développement se poursuivent toujours en 2023.

De ce fait, nos conclusions seront nécessairement limitées. Bien que nous ayons été directement impliqués dans la phase de collecte des données, qui a servi de base à l'élaboration du projet final, la collaboration entre les entreprises a pris fin après la conclusion du rapport. Les demandes d'éclaircissement récemment adressées au cabinet d'architectes pour cet article sont restées sans réponse. Les seules informations dont nous disposons quant aux objectifs du projet sont affichées sur les palissades qui protègent le chantier du public qui traverse chaque jour la Baixa: l'histoire du Rossio, le passé et le futur de cet îlot, certains plans et élévations.

L'objectif principal du projet est également souligné: il s'agit d'établir un nouveau paradigme pour le Rossio, en préservant la vision originale du XVIII^e siècle et en redonnant dignité à ce quartier central de la ville.

Compte tenu de l'ampleur du sujet, cet article propose d'examiner l'avenir de la Baixa face aux vagues de réhabilitation en cours, qui, même lorsqu'elles visent à préserver son identité, lui portent souvent préjudice.

Zusammenfassung

Im Beitrag werden einige Schlüsselemente für das Verständnis des so genannten „pombalischen Stils“ (nach dem Markgraf von Pombal benannt, einem portugiesischen Staatsmann des 18. Jahrhunderts, der den Wiederaufbau Lissabons nach dem Erdbeben 1755 organisierte) im Kontext des Lissabonner Städtebaus vorgestellt, wobei der Schwerpunkt auch auf den dekorativen Werten liegt, die die Architektur des Viertels Baixa ausmachen und zu diesem besonderen Stil beitragen.

Zur besseren Veranschaulichung der genannten Punkte werden wir uns mit einer Fallstudie befassen, die aus einem Block mit fünf Gebäuden am Rossio, dem zentralen Platz der Baixa, besteht. Der Block wurde 2018 von einem ausländischen Investmentfonds erworben und wird derzeit in eine Gewerbefläche umgewandelt.

Da Baixa erdbebengefährdet ist, sind das Gebiet und seine Gebäude durch eine Reihe von Rechtsvorschriften geschützt, von denen die wichtigste der Detailplan zur Sicherung des Stadtzentrums (2010) ist. Diese Verordnung besagt unter anderem, dass jeder Aktivität in diesem Bezirk eine umfassende Bewertung der betroffenen Strukturen vorausgehen muss.

Um dieser Anforderung gerecht zu werden, verlangte das mit dem Sanierungsprojekt beauftragte Architekturbüro vor Beginn der Arbeiten einen Bericht über das in diesem Block integrierte Kulturerbe sowie über dessen Erhaltungszustand. Dies führte zu einer Zusammenarbeit mit dem Unternehmen ERA – Archaeology, Conservation, and Heritage Management (Archäologie, Konservierung und Verwaltung des Kulturerbes), die in einem Abschlussbericht mündete, der eine große Anzahl von Fliesen, Stuck und Wandmalereien in der gesamten Struktur aufzeigte, ein weniger bekanntes Kapitel im Rahmen der ortstypischen Architektur der Baixa. Trotz dieser Feststellungen ist unklar, ob dieser ornamentale Baudekor in das Projekt einbezogen wird oder nicht.

Dies wird unsere Fallstudie sein: eine groß angelegte Rehabilitationsmaßnahme, deren Ergebnisse noch nicht eingeschätzt werden können, da die Erschließungsarbeiten nach einer langen Pause auch im Jahr 2023 noch nicht abgeschlossen sind.

Angesichts dessen sind unsere Schlussfolgerungen notwendigerweise eingeschränkt. Obwohl wir direkt an der Phase der Datenerhebung beteiligt waren, die die Grundlage für das zu entwickelnde Endprojekt bildete, endete nach dem Fazit des Berichts die Zusammenarbeit zwischen den Unternehmen. Jüngste Klärungsanfragen an das Architekturbüro für diese Arbeit sind unbeantwortet geblieben. Die einzigen Informationen, die über die Ziele des Projekts bekannt sind, sind an den Zäunen angebracht, die das Projekt von der Öffentlichkeit abschirmen, die täglich durch die Baixa geht: die Geschichte des Rossio, was dieser Gebäudeblock einmal war und wie er in Zukunft aussehen soll, einige Pläne und Ansichten.

Das Hauptziel des Projekts wird ebenfalls hervorgehoben: ein neues Paradigma für den Rossio zu schaffen, um die ursprüngliche Vision aus dem 18. Jahrhundert zu erhalten und diesem zentralen Platz der Stadt seine Würde zurückzugeben.

Da es sich hierbei um ein weit gefasstes Thema handelt, wird in diesem Beitrag vorgeschlagen, die Zukunft der Baixa angesichts der laufenden Sanierungswellen zu untersuchen, die, auch wenn sie darauf abzielen, Identität zu bewahren, diese oft versehentlich opfern.

Chiara Roma, Luca Maricchiolo

MORPHOLOGICAL PERSISTENCE IN ZADAR HISTORICAL CENTRE RECONSTRUCTION

Introduction

Founded in 9th century B.C., Zadar was conquered by the Romans in 2nd century and rebuilt as a typical Roman city, which cardo-decumanic structure shaped the forming process in the following centuries. The medieval city developed on the sediment of the Roman *insulae*, welcoming the emergence of pre-Romanesque and Romanesque religious architecture up to the 12th century. Conquered by Venice in the 13th century, several Renaissance and Baroque buildings were set in the medieval fabric upon the Roman grid, and the fortress at the entrance to the peninsula was built. Zadar finally passed to the Austro-Hungarian Empire in 18th century without undergoing major transformations till the Italian domination begun at the beginning of the 20th century.¹ In 1939, the Zadar Regulation Plan ruled the expansion of the city outside the peninsula, and it envisaged the restructuration of the historical centre, involving the reshaping of public spaces in front of main buildings. This plan was not been implemented due to the outbreak of war, so the historical centre remained intact till World War II.² During war, after Italian armistice in 1943, Zadar was bombed by the Allied Army to prevent it from passing to the Germans. The city was hit seventy-two times between November 1943 and October 1944, leading to eighty percent of the peninsula heritage being destroyed or seriously damaged, and the population decreasing from 30,000 to 6,000 inhabitants.³

Hence, the reconstruction of the historic centre of Zadar became a main issue in the post-war period, once Zadar had passed to the SFR of Yugoslavia in 1947. It was also the opportunity to foster the debate on post-war reconstruction in Europe, whose practices were not yet characterised by a coherent theoretical framework.

Zadar's reconstruction has risen in relation to different instances: the socialist ideal, aiming at building a new society through urban planning; the adoption of modern architecture principles, without any yielding to stylistic historicism; the preservation of the historical structure and of the built heritage of the city.⁴ Dealing with these issues, it has been a breeding ground for the development of an original methodology in urban restoration. (Fig. 1)

Zadar's reconstruction process

The reconstruction of the historical centre had been faced even before the end of the war, as the first studies for an urban plan already begun in 1944.⁵ In 1947, when the city passed from Italy to the SFR of Yugoslavia, a first plan drawn up by the architects Milovan Kovačević, Božidar Rašica and Zdenko Stržić was approved.⁶ The master plan, adopting modernist principles consistent to socialist ideals, foresees the restoration of main historical monuments, whose surroundings should be freed from rubble or pre-existing structures to enhance the plastic value. Intact *insulae* were also recognised, leading to the

¹ Marko Rukavina and Mladen Obad Šćitaroci, "Urban Integration of Archaeological Heritage in Zadar", *Annales*, 27 (2), 2017, p. 227–464.

² Dražen Arbutina, "Regulacijski plan Zadra iz 1939 godine", *Prostor*, 9 (1, 21), dec. 2002, p. 15–30.

³ Damir Magaš, "Prostorni razvoj Zadra 1945–1991", in Tado Oršolić (ed.), *Zadar i okolica od Drugog svjetskog rata do Domovinskog rata*, conference proceedings, Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts, University of Zadar, Zadar, 2009, p. 1–55.

⁴ Dražen Arbutina, "Zadar's unfinished modernisation", in Maroje Mrduljaš, Vladimir Kulić (ed.), *Unfinished modernisations, between utopia and pragmatism*, UHA/CCA, Zagreb, 2012, p. 445–455.

⁵ Dragan Boltar, "Zadar – izgradnja centra", *Arhitektura*, 15 (3–4), 1961, p. 40–48.

⁶ Ivana Lazanja, "The reconstruction of the Croatian coastal city of Zadar", in Luca Verpoest and Nicholas Bullock (ed.), *Living with History, 1914–1964: Rebuilding Europe after the First and Second World Wars and the Role of Heritage Preservation*, Leuven University Press, Leuven, 2021, p. 279–287.



Fig. 1: Zadar after World War II bombing, 1944, source: Narodni muzej, Zadar.

conservation of some preserved fabric. New buildings were freely arranged in the greenery, namely on the south coast, so as to stand, as historical monuments, in a continuous and fluid space. The reference to CIAM principles draws on some radical ideas, as the reduction of historical identity to a series of emblematic elements standing on a neutral ground, echoing Le Corbusier's paratactical representation of Paris as a series of main monuments and cruciform towers standing over an erased urban fabric.⁷ The radical inspiration of the plan leads to its prompt suspension in 1948. Nevertheless, the plan provides the legal basis for carrying out the removal

of rubble, which ends up aggravating the damage, as entire *insulae* were destroyed during this operation.⁸

At the beginning of the fifties, the Yugoslav Academy of Sciences and Arts, on the occasion of the restoration of the Romanesque Saint Mary's convent, promoted the need for an organic plan of the historic centre. Hence, three architects of the academy – Josip Seissel, Drago Galić and Andrija Mohorovičić – developed the guidelines which became the basis for a design competition.⁹

Launched in 1953 by the Municipality, the Yugoslav national competition for the regulatory basis of the city

⁷ Chiara Roma, *Le Corbusier e le suggestioni dei ruderi*, Quodlibet, Macerata, 2020, p. 55.

⁸ Petar Modrijan, "Portreti: Ivo Petricioli, Čuvar zadarskog blaga", *Zadar, Biseri Jadrana: Edicija za kulturu putovanja*, Zagreb, 2004, p. 144–147.

⁹ Lazanja, 2021, p. 279–287, p. 283.



Fig. 2: Bruno Milić, Master plan for the reconstruction of Zadar's historic centre, 1955, source: Narodni muzej, Zadar.

of Zadar sets the objective of drafting an organic plan for the reconstruction and the development of the historic core of Zadar, fostering a unitary intervention with the aim of “renovating the existing part of the city so that the whole represents a complex architectural and urban organization”.¹⁰ The tender articulates different objectives in order of priority, regarding the development of the city as a cultural, educational, administrative, touristic, industrial, handcrafts and trade centre.¹¹

Furthermore, the competition declared the ambition of stimulating a cultural debate on urban planning, wishing to make Zadar a model in Europe for post-war reconstruction. The announcement raises some cultural issues, problematizing questions to which proposals are called to offer a hypothesis. It requests to preserve the remaining urban fabric, keep the ancient urban structure, make existing buildings the cores of new urban sequences in accordance with the general scale of the city, and convert the centre into a pedestrian zone.

The Academy of Arts points out the value of urban memory in present time. It expects participants to integrate historical elements in contemporary design and preserve the stratifications of the city without falling into historicism nor limiting design innovation, fostering, by that, a methodological approach inherent in restoration practice.

On the one hand, the emphasis is placed on the recognition of the cultural value of the city, with the aim of redeveloping it valorising what was saved from war. The solid analytical basis provided to participants reflects this orientation:¹² the city is divided into fifty-seven blocks, for each of which are defined the guidelines for interventions.¹³ The announcement provides a detailed survey of the historic fabric of the peninsula, going from maps at 1:25,000 to plans at 1:500, and including the elevations of the street fronts. Furthermore, the documentation is provided with a detailed inventory of the heritage and with a diagnostic of the existing building status.

¹⁰ People's Committee of the City Municipality of Zadar (ed.), *Natječaj za Regulacionu osnovu grada Zadr*, Zadar, 1953.

¹¹ Ines Merćep, “Natjecaj za regulacijsku osnovu Zadra iz 1953. Pedeset godina poslije”, *Prostor*, 13 (1,29), may 2005, p. 67–78.

¹² People's Committee of the City Municipality of Zadar (ed.), *Natječaj za Regulacionu osnovu grada Zadr*, Zadar, 1953.

¹³ Antonija Mlikota, *Četrnaest arhitektonskih i urbanističkih vizija povijesne jezgre Zadra nastalih 1953 godine*, in *Ars Adriatica*, 5, 2015, p. 163–192, p. 164.

On the other hand, the hierarchy of the sought design features is revealed by the evaluation criteria:¹⁴ the prefiguration of a balanced urban complex, characterized by the harmonious relationship between built and unbuilt space; the design of modest dimensions public spaces, adapted to the medieval architectural heritage, to Mediterranean climate and lifestyle; the new morphology, to better integrate the historic street network; the waterfront proposal, which height and shape should not obscure main landmarks of the city's identity.

Fourteen entries were submitted to the competition, twelve of which met the criteria. Three ex-aequo winners were elected: Berislav Kalođera with the proposal n° 16124; Bruno Milić and Miroslav Kollenz with the proposal n° 39393; Vlado Ivanović, Radovan Mišević, Branko Petrović and Branko Vasiljević (Urban Planning Institute of Croatia) with the proposal n° 50105.

Alternative approaches

The competition considerably specifies frame design towards a prevalent conservation of the historic layout and the integration of the existing in an organic vision of the whole. Nonetheless, a variety of approaches emerges from the comparative reading of the presented proposals, while commission's judgments mostly appreciate proposals that are more respectful of the existing. The research of Antonija Mlikota¹⁵ based on the primary sources of the competition, is a precious reference to acknowledge the presented projects, whose comparative analysis allows to draw some critical reflections. These point out four main design hypotheses.

(i) The hypothesis of the reconstruction *ab nihilo*, founded on the reduction of historical identity to the preservation of a series of extraordinary buildings; around, a

new system of urban relation should be re-established. It seems to be in harmony with the modern educational tendencies, affirmed, for instance, in the plans for the reconstruction of Saint-Dié des Vosges by Le Corbusier or Le Havre by Auguste Perret. According to this stance, design is a tool for the construction of identity – although structured by a series of punctiform emergencies – rather than for the enhancement of the existing one. The churches, the ramparts and the archaeological site of Zadar become the focal points of a self-standing design, unconcerned with the urban forming process, providing for a massive dose of demolition of the ordinary fabric. The envisaged new morphologies refer to an opposite, whilst equivalent, radical approach to reconstruction, replacing ancient fabric by modern isolated buildings,¹⁶ closed blocks fabric,¹⁷ or new patterns emphasising around main monuments;¹⁸ their implant, according to the jury, would establish a fake historical nucleus, denying the history and the culture of Zadar.¹⁹

(ii) The hypothesis of the interpretative reconstruction, which maintains the historical plot while reshaping typo-morphologies. Moving from a comprehension of the identity of the fabric, some proposals respect ordinary fabric scale and typologies to develop innovative solutions, harmonious with the context. Therefore, some proposals receive averagely good appreciations, since they are considered globally consistent with the request of the tender. They respect layouts and morphologies, adapting new architectures to preserved historical monuments, responding to the expectation of a non-invasive completion of the urban fabric. At the same time, some derogations to the continuity of the existing city are proposed: the introduction of morphological variations, as buildings jutting out onto the coast profile or new

¹⁴ Merćep, 2005, p. 67–78, p. 72.

¹⁵ Antonija Mlikota, *Obnova i izgradnja povijesne jezgre Zadra nakon razaranja u Drugom svjetskom ratu*, PhD thesis, Faculty of Philosophy, University of Zagreb, Zagreb, 2013; Mlikota, 2015.

¹⁶ Design proposal n° 35281.

¹⁷ Design proposal n° 77711.

¹⁸ Design proposal n° 77771.

¹⁹ Mlikota, 2015, *op. cit.*, p. 163–192, p. 165.

commercial axes;²⁰ the redefinition of the proportions²¹ or hierarchies²² of squares; the new relationship between monumental buildings and the ordinary fabric, freeing up spaces previously defined by building fronts.²³ These have been criticised for the non-compliance with historical sequences; particularly interesting is the refusal of new concentrations of activities inconsistent with the matrix path and hierarchy, to avoid the upsetting of urban dynamics and pedestrian flows.

(iii) The hypothesis of philological reconstruction, which echoes some methodological principles of restoration theory. According to the jury evaluations, the three winning projects propose a similar approach. They keep the Roman street pattern to install new architectural typologies in respect of the urban alignments and shapes. The proposals given by Kalođera and Milić are carried with a scientific approach which anchors design to the analysis of the formative process of the historical fabric, foreseen low rise typologies consistent to historic city space. They propose a Mediterranean-type spatiality made of a strong articulation between masses and voids, public and semi-public plazas, such as courtyards, arcades, passages. New buildings for forum areas and the waterfront comply with the fabric scale and do not hide historical landmarks.

Milić's proposal was praised for the accordance of building heights to medieval row houses, and for designing forum areas under reserve of archaeological excavations. Kalođera proposes greater typo-morphological freedom, by a composition of modern buildings into the street pattern, respecting alignments without reconstituting the entire perimeter of the block, to keep more open spaces and greater ventilation. This stronger modern imprint has

been appreciated for articulating the monotone ancient street pattern with modern composition.

The proposal from the Urban Planning Institute of Croatia also takes up the Roman network, respecting the scale and the layout of the streets. However, it adopts a too decisive approach to urban morphology: the serial repetition of the open block typology and the provision of some large, monumental squares move away from the idea of an ancient Mediterranean city.

(iv) Finally, a single proposal adopts a stronger philological approach,²⁴ closer to restoration practice: it stands for pure conservation of the existing building, foreseeing the liberation of the demolished areas and their transformation in parks, seeming to be neutral colour filling of *lacunae*. Its negative evaluation is due to the lack of new housing.

The modern historic centre of Zadar

As a result of the competition, Bruno Milić was commissioned in 1955 to draw up a regulatory plan considering the other two awarded works. The plan integrating some analyses and strategies from other works and from the jury. The methodological leap lies in the rejection of two antithetical models – modern breakthrough as well as historicism – towards a project based on the method. Among the main planning trends in post-war Europe, Milić's synthesis goes through a *via media* of urban design, used to be run by some Italian,²⁵ Portuguese²⁶ or Spanish²⁷ practices, but, at the time, less common in Central Europe. Zadar *aurea mediocritas* primarily defines itself in relation to the compatibility with the historical and landscape context, even, perhaps, by renouncing to

²⁰ Design proposal n° 74174.

²¹ Design proposal n° 123121.

²² Design proposal n. Z-00001.

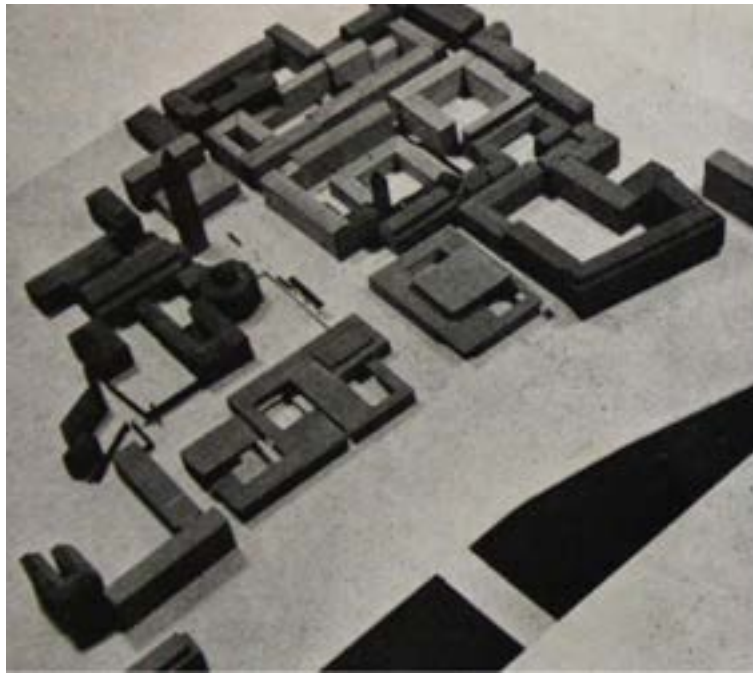
²³ Design proposal n° 201153.

²⁴ Design proposal n° 99066.

²⁵ For instance: Ludovico Quaroni and Mario Ridolfi, *Quartiere Tiburtino*, Roma, 1949–1954; Adalberto Libera, *Unità di abitazione orizzontale*, Roma, 1950–1954; Giancarlo De Carlo, *Collegi universitari*, Urbino, 1962–1983; Vittorio Gragotti, *Quartiere residenziale a Cannaregio*, Venice, 1981–1985.

²⁶ Alvaro Siza, *Quinta da Malagueira*, Evora, 1973.

²⁷ Josep Martorell, Oriol Bohigas, David Mackay and Albert Puigdomènech, *Vila Olímpica del Poblenou*, Barcelona, 1992.



an innovative impulse that would slip into self-referentiality.

The plan reads and interprets the city in a contemporary key, keeping distinctive urban spaces, street pattern and squares, dimensions, proportions, and volumetric relationships. Architectures are shaped with respect to historical monuments, as to preserve views and to valorise pre-existing buildings. The overlay of masses and voids articulates inner courtyards and vibrant ground-floors, while external fronts shape urban sequences, combining modern dwelling typologies with Mediterranean spatiality. (Fig. 2)

Milić's plan was presented in 1955, but it was never officially approved by the City of Zadar; in fact, it was finally rejected in 1958. A new competition, launched in 1959 by the invitation of major Croatian architects, ended without any result.²⁸ Hence, the guidelines for reconstruction were finally developed by the jury,²⁹ and an *ad hoc* commission managed design and construction, combining three strategies: the restoration of damaged buildings, the stylistic reconstruction for iconic monuments, the contemporary graft in accordance with the existing.

In the absence of any official regulatory plan, Milić's one was still an essential reference: the guidelines comply

with its principles, which have often been implemented by architectural design: residential building 53/15, designed in 1954 by Alfred Albini, and the Krsevan block, by Neven Šegvić in 1954, takes up the meander configuration of Milić's plan; similarly, the residential building for tankers by Božidar Rašica, winner of the west coast development competition in 1955.³⁰

The 1959 guidelines developed a specific model for the reconstruction of the Kalelarga matrix path, introducing galleries on ground floor – not foreseen in Milić's plan – and some passages towards the courtyards: these variations, however, emphasise the imbrication of urban spaces typical of the Mediterranean. The model assigned the different plots: blocks A, B and D, which define Kalelarga urban fronts, are designed by Bruno Milić and Ivo Bartolić; blocks C, along Kalelarga, H and I, which define the void of the Forum, are assigned to Božidar Rašica; the block E, the Archeological Museum in front of the Church of San Donatus, is designed by Mladen Kauzlarić. Blocks F and G, envisaged on the site of the Forum to close the square towards the sea, were not to be built.³¹ (Fig. 3, 4)

The architectures have a synthetic, minimalist language, taking up modern stylistic features in dialectical relation

²⁸ Mlikota, 2015, *op. cit.*, p. 163–192, p. 186.

²⁹ Mlikota, 2013, *op. cit.*, p. 134.

³⁰ Natječaju za arhitektonsko i urbanističko rješenje zapadne obale povijesne jezgre Zadra, 1955.

³¹ Andela Galić, *Stambena Arhitektura Zadra 1950-ih i 1960-ih*, Master thesis, Faculty of Philosophy, University of Zagreb, 2017, p. 25.

← Fig. 3: Model for the reconstruction of Kalelarga and the Forum area, 1959, source: Narodni muzej, Zadar.

→ Fig. 4: Architectural infills. Left: Kalelarga, defined by blocks D and C on the left, by blocks E and B on the right side. Right: the Forum area with the Archaeological museum (block E), source: Narodni muzej, Zadar.

with historical buildings. Thus, the achieved reconstruction complies with the aim suggested by the Academy statement and Milić's plan: it keeps contemporary interventions exceptional and recognisable, while enhancing the preservable heritage and fostering the legibility of urban stratification.

Conclusion: on reconstruction epistemology.

Zadar's reconstruction process adheres in a pertinent and potentially fruitful way to the methodological approach of restoration, particularly in the philological approach having been theorised by Cesare Brandi and the Venice Charter. Restoration is, according to Brandi, *"any intervention intended to restore efficiency to a product of human activity"*.³² Its conceptualisation will differ depending on the nature of the product of human activity, and particularly on the recognition of it as work of art. It follows that *"restoration is the methodological moment of recognition of the work of art, in its physical substance and in its dual aesthetic and historical polarity, in view of its transmission to the future"*.³³

The process initiated by the Yugoslav Academy of Sciences and Art is founded on the acknowledgement of the artistic value of Zadar's built heritage, in its both aesthetic and historical meanings. The competition announcement and the evaluation criteria are particularly concerned by the recognition of the cultural value of the surviving heritage, as well as by the way to restore efficiency and transmit it to the future. Furthermore,



the Academy's approach cares about basic issues of restoration, as: (i) is the conservation of the matter of the work of art, in its both structure and appearance,³⁴ applying to existing buildings and viewpoints preservation; (ii) the reconstitution of the potential unity of the work of art, to be researched in the wish to complete the fabric as a whole without making a false,³⁵ (iii) the respect of work of art duration and the timing of restoration in present time.³⁶

Some further principles should be drawn from the Venice Charter,³⁷ which defines the methodological

³² Cesare Brandi, *Teoria del restauro*, Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, Roma, 1963, p. 3.

³³ Brandi, 1963, p. 6.

³⁴ Brandi, 1963, p. 10.

³⁵ Brandi, 1963, p. 17.

³⁶ Brandi, 1963, p. 27.

³⁷ *International Charter for the conservation and restoration of monuments and sites*, II International Congress of Architects and Technicians of Historic Monuments, Venice, 1964.

milestones of restoration operations: (i) the philological certainty of the history of the work aimed at its comprehensibility; (ii) the respect for the stratification of all historical epochs (against the prerogative of a real or presumed state of origin); (iii) the recognisability of the restoration work, while respecting the legibility of the whole; (iv) the exceptional nature of the completion or integration intervention, within a primary purpose of the restoration which is the conservation and transmission to subsequent generations; (v) the reversibility of the intervention.

Restoration principles do not belong to the urban design discipline, emerging in architecture and art restoration practices. City is not a unitary work of art, it is like a work of art composed of parts, each one with its time and duration. Thus, the historicity of urban landscape is made of the relation between every historical present of the forming process of its parts and the current present that recognises it.

The importance accorded to the *duration* of forming process and to the *stratification of the whole* makes reconstruction process both historical and aesthetic instances of post-war heritage: the first, through the methodological approach based on scientific and documentary knowledge as a requisite for design; the second, in the aim of philological valorisation of every present time, including contemporary fillings.

As a result, every layer is still visible and recognisable in Zadar's historical landscape. The outcome is appreciable in today's urban quality and touristic attractiveness, talking about the success of a post-war reconstruction which offers an original point of view on the European scene. Original, as it stands out from the practice of assuming destruction as a cathartic event for the emergence of a new story, which also boasts a thriving tradition in modern Europe, from Catania³⁸ to Lisbon,³⁹ instead, it deals with the medieval practice of spontaneous

settlement on previous eras ruins,⁴⁰ continuing the stratification of landscape within a consistent plot. In this way, it enriches the epistemology of urban design, including the scientific methodology of restoration to produce a design method attentive to the past without abjuring the historical present that generated it.

³⁸ Giuseppe Lanza duca di Camastra, *Plan for the reconstruction of Catania after the earthquake of 1693*, Catania, 1694.

³⁹ Manuel de Maia, *Plan for the reconstruction of Lisbon after the earthquake of 1755*, Lisbon, 1758.

⁴⁰ For instance, Split medieval forming process over Diocletian Palace ruins.

Résumé

Exclave italienne en Dalmatie, Zadar a été bombardée par l'armée alliée pendant la Seconde Guerre mondiale pendant près d'un an, de novembre 1943 à octobre 1944, ce qui a entraîné la destruction d'une grande partie de l'ancienne ville vénitienne. Une fois intégrée à la République fédérale socialiste de Yougoslavie en 1947, la ville a géré la reconstruction du centre historique. Un concours de design, inspiré par l'Académie yougoslave des sciences et des arts, a été lancé en 1953, dans le but de développer un plan organique pour l'ensemble du tissu historique. Ce fut l'occasion de discuter des différentes approches et de définir une stratégie de reconstruction s'éloignant à la fois de la reconstruction à l'identique et de la rupture moderne.

Cet article vise à remettre en question les doctrines de reconstruction et de restauration à l'échelle urbaine, remises en cause par la reconstruction du centre historique de Zadar. Il propose un examen critique de ce processus en comparant certaines propositions du concours. Ainsi, il se concentre sur le plan directeur final, développé sous la coordination de l'architecte Bruno Milic, afin de mettre en évidence ses caractéristiques spécifiques et de l'interroger à travers les principes de restauration, tels qu'exprimés par Cesare Brandi et la Charte de Venise.

L'examen critique est basé sur les sources documentaires des propositions présentées ainsi que sur des questions de littérature pertinentes pour le débat de l'époque. Elle s'appuie également sur une approche comparative avec d'autres expériences emblématiques de reconstruction d'après-guerre en Europe, afin de révéler les caractéristiques particulières du centre historique moderne de Zadar.

Dans le panorama des approches de reconstruction d'après-guerre, le processus de reconstruction de Zadar réalise une rare interprétation philologique de la restauration à l'échelle urbaine, en intégrant les lacunes et en stratifiant le paysage historique urbain sans cacher l'histoire ni renoncer à son propre temps présent.

Zusammenfassung

Als italienische Exklave in Dalmatien wurde Zadar während des Zweiten Weltkriegs fast ein Jahr lang, von November 1943 bis Oktober 1944, von der alliierten Armee bombardiert, was zur Zerstörung eines großen Teils der alten venezianischen Stadt führte. Nach der Eingliederung in die Sozialistische Föderative Republik Jugoslawien im Jahr 1947 kümmerte sich die Stadt um den Wiederaufbau des historischen Zentrums. Auf Anregung der jugoslawischen Akademie der Wissenschaften und Künste wurde 1953 ein Wettbewerb ausgeschrieben, um einen organischen Plan für die gesamte historische Struktur zu entwickeln. Dies bot die Gelegenheit, verschiedene Ansätze zu erörtern und eine Strategie für den Wiederaufbau zu definieren, die sich sowohl vom identischen Wiederaufbau als auch vom modernen Ausbruch entfernte.

Dieser Beitrag zielt darauf ab, die Doktrinen des Wiederaufbaus und der Restaurierung im städtischen Maßstab zu hinterfragen, die durch den Wiederaufbau des historischen Zentrums von Zadar in Frage gestellt werden. Er schlägt eine kritische Überprüfung dieses Prozesses vor, indem er einige Vorschläge des Wettbewerbs vergleicht. Sie konzentriert sich auf den endgültigen Masterplan, der unter der Koordination des Architekten Bruno Milic entwickelt wurde, um seine Besonderheiten hervorzuheben und ihn durch die Restaurierungsprinzipien zu hinterfragen, wie sie von Cesare Brandi und der Charta von Venedig ausgedrückt wurden.

Die kritische Betrachtung stützt sich auf die dokumentarischen Quellen zu den vorgelegten Vorschlägen sowie auf die für die damalige Debatte relevanten Literaturstellen. Sie stützt sich auch auf einen vergleichenden Ansatz mit anderen emblematischen Erfahrungen des Nachkriegs-Wiederaufbaus in Europa, um die besonderen Merkmale des modernen historischen Zentrums von Zadar aufzuzeigen.

Im Panorama der Wiederaufbauprozesse der Nachkriegszeit erreicht der Wiederaufbauprozess von Zadar eine seltene philologische Interpretation der Restaurierung auf städtischer Ebene, indem er Lücken schließt und die städtische historische Landschaft schichtet, ohne die Geschichte zu verstecken oder sich der eigenen Gegenwart zu verweigern.

Christophe Bourel Le Guilloux, Gilles Ragot

THE RECONSTRUCTION IN NOUVELLE-AQUITAINE (1940–1965)

Study and Heritage Recognition Process

A survey conducted in 2016 by the Conservations Régionales des Monuments Historiques – CRMH (regional historic monument registries) shows that studies on the Second Reconstruction era have been very fragmented. Of course, some regional directorates of cultural affairs (DRAC Direction régionale des Affaires culturelles), such as in Lorraine, have issued ad hoc protections and heritage labels, and keep registries of buildings, districts and martyred villages. But studies by regional divisions of the Inventaire Général du Patrimoine Culturel (General Inventory of Cultural Heritage) have been highly disparate.¹

In Normandy, as part of a joint, long-term research programme on vestiges of the Second World War, the DRAC, the University of Caen, the CNRS, INRAP and the local and regional authorities conducted a joint study.² In Nouvelle-Aquitaine, the DRAC's heritage department has access to a study on the Atlantic Wall,³ which in 2002, led to protected status for some batteries on the Île de Ré, the presqu'île d'Arvers and in the communes of Mathes and La Tremblade. However, apart from Royan,

designated as an Area for the Protection of Architectural, Urban and Landscape Heritage,⁴ and a few buildings listed as Historic Monuments – formerly designated as Heritage of the 20th century and Remarkable Contemporary Architecture⁵ – no specific action has been taken in districts rebuilt during the Reconstruction.

In the department of the Dordogne, the martyred commune of Rouffignac was awarded Heritage of the 20th century status. And in the Limousin, the martyred village and the new village of Oradour-sur-Glane receive considerable attention. However, Égletons in the Corrèze, which received a heritage designation for its urban ensemble built between 1925 and 1965 by Robert Denis and René Blanchot⁶ also deserves a mention.

After three former regions were merged in January 2016, the Regional Directorate of Cultural Affairs (DRAC) for Nouvelle-Aquitaine decided to go into this topic in more depth and after a call for tenders,⁷ commissioned a study on the Second Reconstruction from a multidisciplinary team of historians, architects, and geographers.

¹ Isabelle Duhau, *La reconstruction dans les études de l'Inventaire général du patrimoine culturel*, in Éléonore Buffler, Patrice Gourbin et Christel Palant-Frapier (Dir.), *Protéger, valoriser, intervenir sur l'architecture et l'urbanisme de la seconde reconstruction en France actualité et avenir d'un patrimoine méconnu. Rencontres de Saint-Dié-des-Vosges, 22, 23 et 24 mai 2018*, Gand, Snoeck, 2020, p. 16–25.

² The project is led by Cyrille Billard (DRAC-SRA), Jean-Luc Leleu (CNRS/Maison de la Recherche en Sciences Humaines de Caen) and Marie-Laure Loizeau (DRAC-CRMH). Work on the survey carried out by Stéphane Lamache and Benoît Labbey (Université de Caen – Centre de Recherche en Histoire Quantitative). See sgm.hypotheses.org/147 et Coll., "Vestiges de la Seconde Guerre mondiale en Basse-Normandie Projet collectif de recherche", in *Bulletin scientifique régional*, SRA, p. 161–163.

³ Eric Lemerle (Dir.), *Inventaire du Mur de l'Atlantique en Charente-Maritime*, T. I & II, 1998 et 1999, étude inédite, Archives de la Conservation régionale des monuments historiques – site de Poitiers.

⁴ Founding decree dating from 30 May 1996, AVAP label (area for the enhancement of architecture and heritage) currently in the process of replacement under the *Site Patrimonial Remarquable* designation [remarkable heritage sites].

⁵ For details of all label categories see www.culture.gouv.fr/Thematiques/Architecture/Label-Architecture-contemporaine-remarquable, consulted 8 May 2023.

⁶ Dominique Dusol, "Égletons", in *101 architectures contemporaines remarquables en Nouvelle-Aquitaine*, Le Festin hors-série, 2019, p. 28–29.

⁷ Call for tender launched in the second half of 2017. 5 groups responded.



Fig. 1: Paul Dremilly, Protestant temple (1951) of Saint-Georges de Didonne (Charente-Maritime), photo: Gilles Ragot.

The purpose of this project was to acquire knowledge, and to identify and draw up a list of towns affected by reconstruction works. The study has revealed a corpus of almost forgotten or overlooked lead architects. The same goes for businesses and expertise in construction techniques from this period, which saw the emergence of mass production with responses varying between neo-traditional and modernism.

Beyond this research, the study should help to raise awareness of the topic among residents and elected representatives in areas sometimes just outside the perimeters of protected ancient centres. Their buildings come outside the remit of the Architectes des Bâtiments de

France and can be altered completely by redevelopment programmes without any assessment of their architectural, urban or heritage value taking place.

After this study, the DRAC's heritage departments (Conservation Régionale des Monuments Historiques in close conjunction with the Architectural Adviser to the Ministry of Culture) should be able to establish consistent Historic Monument protections and appropriate Remarkable Contemporary Architecture (ACR) designations.⁸

Additionally, to make a wider audience aware, there are plans for promotional actions such

as publications and exhibitions. This extensive study also aligns with other research commissioned by the Conservation Régionale des Monuments Historiques, such as the study on the Ursault family, a dynasty of Poitiers-based architects who were very active during this period.⁹ A student from the École Pratique des Hautes-Études (Paris), is also conducting research on the corpus of châteaux – protected or without historic monument status – which were rebuilt after the war and are currently the focus of discussions on conservation.¹⁰ Lastly, the involvement of students on the Masters programme in heritage and museums (Archimuse) at Université de Bordeaux-Montaigne III should be mentioned. Over the course of one

⁸ Label created by the Ministry of Culture in 2016 for architectural and urban sites built less than 100 years ago. It does not apply to buildings with Historic Monument protection. It replaces the Heritage of the 20th century label, established in 1999.

⁹ Awarded to Daniel Clauzier at the end of 2022.

¹⁰ Fanny Crozier .



← Fig. 2: André Campagne, Place de la Croix Blanche in Chabanais (Charente), slide from Henri Salesse on behalf of the M.R.U, 01/06/1954, source: Base Terra.

↑ Fig. 3: André Ursault, telecommunications amplification centre in Poitiers in Vienne (1945–1949), 59–61 boulevard du Grand-Cerf, photo: Christophe Bourel Le Guilloux.

→ Fig. 4: Robert Lafaye, Reconstruction and Development Plan (P.R.A) for Rouffignac in the Dordogne (1946), source: Archives nationales.

year, these students put on an exhibition, organised conferences and tours and created an educational booklet.¹¹ Coordinators of architectural heritage sites and designated cities and areas of art and history have taken inspiration from these activities in their respective regions.

This study of Nouvelle-Aquitaine has helped to address the lack of scientific research dedicated to a region which, in 1945, was ranked fifth out of the thirteen administrative regions affected by the destruction of World War II.

It was conducted over almost five years by a multidisciplinary team led by Émilie d’Orgeix, art historian, Philippe Bancilhon, heritage architect, Bernadette Canard-Giroud, planner and cartographer, and Gilles Ragot, art historian.

With just 72,327 buildings totally or partially destroyed in the entire region, this corpus may seem relatively small, considering that some departments reported a larger count on their own – or indeed almost double that number in the Somme –. Nevertheless, it

is still substantial, especially as documentary sources are dispersed across twelve departmental archives and almost 50 municipal archives at the sites that were most affected. (Fig. 1)

Other than in towns which have already been identified, such as Royan, Angoulême, Poitiers and Oradour-sur-Glane, no study has previously identified all the communes that suffered damage in France’s largest administrative region, which is of a comparable size to Austria. The fact that damaged sites and archival sources are so dispersed presented a major challenge. By consulting publications written by local historians about Second World War battles and inventories held in archives, when these exist, 883 communes affected by war damage to extremely variable degrees were identified. By filtering information – significance and volume of damage, comprehensiveness of documentation –, this initial list was reduced to 51 communes representing more than 91% of the

¹¹ Coll., *Reconstruction(s) – vivre en Nouvelle-Aquitaine après la guerre*, Bordeaux, Archimuse, 2021.

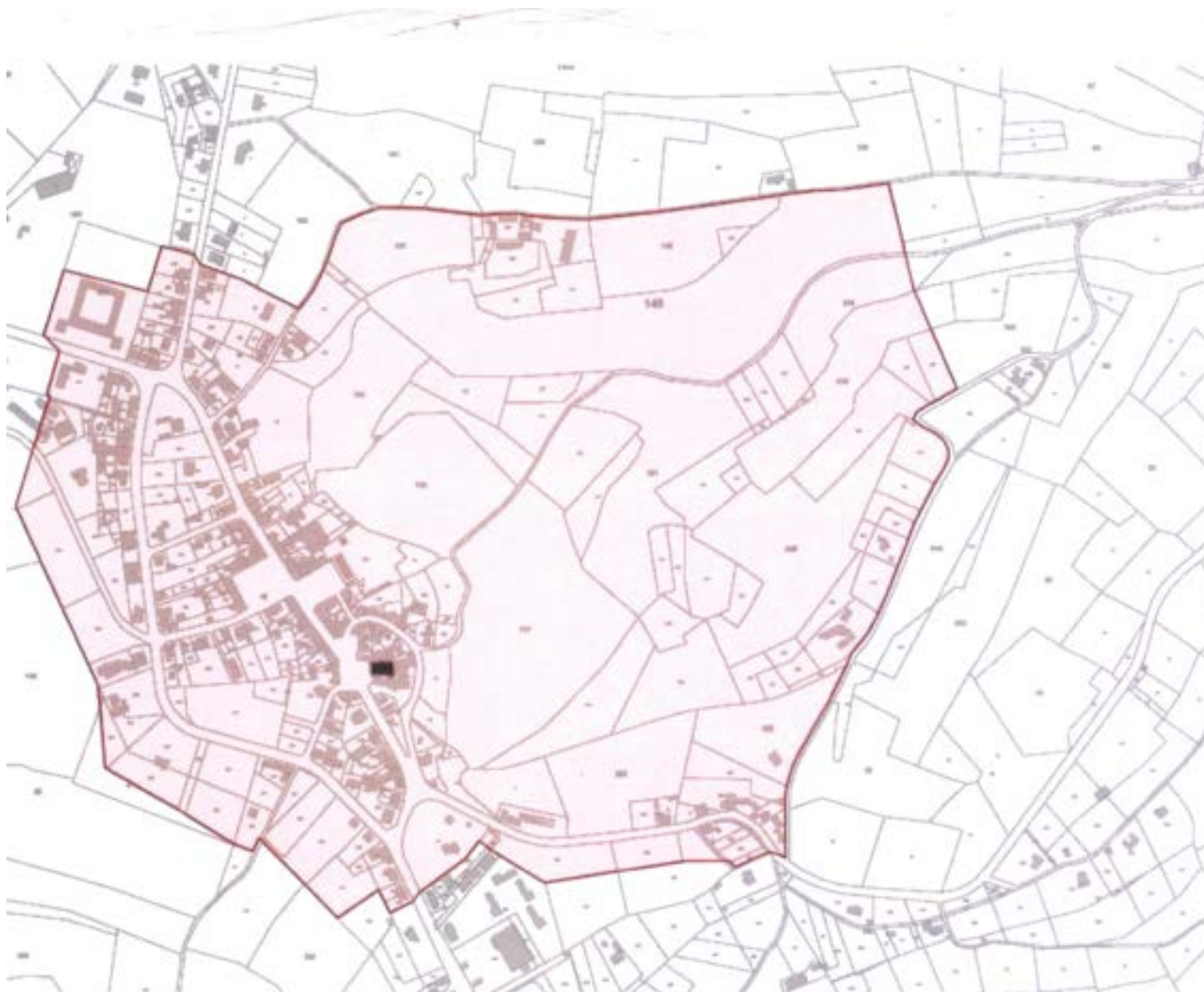


Fig. 5: Mouleydier (Dordogne), current boundaries of the area around the historic monument, source: Christophe Bourel Le Guilloux.

Royan and Oradour-sur-Glane, and the almost complete lack of coverage in journals at the time of the Reconstruction. It has been possible to draw up an initial biography of all the architects involved in each reconstruction project, primarily drawing on accreditation files from the Ministry for the Reconstruction and Urban Planning (MRU) held by the National Archives. There are more than 500 in Nouvelle-Aquitaine and specific study of them will require a prosopographic analysis.

Beyond this catalogue of reconstructed sites, a set of more than 40,000 digital files of reproduced documents from the main sources consulted has been sent to the DRAC. They come from the national, departmental, and municipal archives, and from private collections and include old and recent photographs – sourced primarily from the TERRA database –, and postcards.¹²

Under this study, 48 buildings or urban ensembles have been selected and recommended to the DRAC for protection under Historic Monument status or a heritage

¹² This catalogue of photographs can be consulted online. It primarily includes slides produced by photographers commissioned by the Ministry for the Reconstruction and Urban Planning, during the Reconstruction period. However, the collection does not focus uniquely on Reconstruction sites.

label.¹³ While full details of this list are not included here, the geographic distribution of these structures is as follows: Six are in the department of Charente, eight in Charente-Maritime, six in Dordogne, thirteen in Gironde, three in les Landes, two in Pyrénées-Atlantiques, three in Deux Sèvres and seven in Vienne. No major structures have been identified in the Corrèze, Creuse and Lot-et-Garonne departments, which were fortunately less affected by war damage. However, it is possible that the Heritage of the 20th century label awarded to Égletons (Corrèze) in 2009 – for its heritage assets covered in the improvement, enhancement and extension plan commissioned by its mayor Charles Spinasse in 1932 – will be reviewed or extended, as some of these assets were destroyed, rebuilt and enhanced after 1945. In Haute-Vienne, where the destruction mainly concerns the village of Oradour-sur-Glane, martyred in June 1944, the protections covering the rebuilt village, which is already recognised under the ACR label could be reviewed and extended. The typological breakdown of the 48 buildings or sites is as follows: private architecture (fourteen), public architecture (eight), religious architecture (five), educational architecture (four), industrial architecture (two), commercial architecture (one) and agricultural architecture (one). These structures represent the variety of architectural approaches adopted across the region – from highly inventive modernity incorporating purism influences from the 1920s and the spirit of the Brazilian modern school, to regionalist styles. Some also reflect the persistence of classical style, or at least the concepts of composition broadly shared by architects trained at the ENSBA or at regional schools, particularly in Bordeaux.

Although it was not covered by war damage arrangements, the spectacular and monumental memorial to the French Resistance in Chasseneuil-sur-Bonnieure in the Charente (1945–1951), designed by Angoulême architect Fernand Poncelet, has also been recommended for

protection or a heritage label.¹⁴ For the town of Royan, which boasts modern built heritage assets of a quality and on a scale unsurpassed in Nouvelle-Aquitaine, and indeed nationally, there are plans to hold consultation meetings with the local council's heritage department to decide on a specific and consistent long-term registry. This will replace the current 'case-by-case' policy, which has acquired protection and heritage labels for some ten structures.

The selection also includes 12 urban ensembles considered to be worthy of appreciation as an urban and architectural whole and not as the simple sum of a few buildings typical of the Reconstruction. These sites are in Angoulême and Chabonais (Charente), Saintes (Charente-Maritime), Mouleydier and Rouffignac-Saint-Cernin-de-Reilhac (Dordogne), Bordeaux (Gironde), Biarritz (Pyrénées-Atlantiques), and Poitiers and Port-de-Pile (Vienne). Allocating labels to these sites raises specific problems, which are discussed in the conclusion. In 13 of the 51 communes studied, the survey also highlighted the tourism potential several sites could offer around the theme of reconstruction. (Fig. 2 and Fig. 5)

A CERFA-type registration form¹⁵ has been completed for each site, a prerequisite for applying for a heritage label. These documents are particularly comprehensive, but although an ACR label may be a useful solution for single buildings, the designation is proving unsuitable, if not ineffective for urban ensembles whether these are entire villages such as Mouleydier or Rouffignac-Saint-Cernin-de-Reilhac, districts, as in Poitiers, Bordeaux, or Chabonais, or even single streets in an environmental compensation zone like Port-de-Piles. Above all, it provides no guarantee that urban layouts or fittings will be respected, even less so if the site does not already have some protection by merit of being in the immediate area around a listed or registered monument. (Fig. 3)

¹³ Article 78 of law no.2016–925 of 7 July 2016 on freedom of creativity, architecture, and heritage.

¹⁴ Sculptures by Georges Guiraud, Raoul Eugène Lamoudieu and Emile-Antoine Peyronnet.

¹⁵ Application form 15853*01.

The corpus compiled must now be studied in the context of protections under Historic Monument or ACR designations, and within the frameworks of planning documents that include remarkable heritage sites and article L 151–19 of the Urban Planning code. This article makes provision for identifying and locating aspects of the landscape, districts, urban blocks, developed or undeveloped real estate, public spaces, monuments, sites, and areas in need of protection, conservation and enhancement. Their redevelopment is driven by cultural, historical and architectural concerns and provisions need to be stipulated to ensure that they are preserved, conserved or restored.

An appraisal of the situation is essential, to devise a strategy that can be implemented for each building identified, taking account of the urban space it occupies and current protections in place.

Initially, the adopted methodology will involve setting up working groups to refine levels of protection and heritage designations in close consultation with Architectes des Bâtiments de France responsible for protected spaces.

In parallel, elected members of local authorities can be interviewed to establish progress with planning documents and to find out about projects initiated for heritage labels, protections, and registrations in local town plans (PLU). Under this approach, the DRAC's departments must clearly take the lead on education and information, by working with research leads and organising information and awareness meetings.

For listings and registrations under Historic Monument status, the corpus of current historic monuments across the country provides a reference for selecting buildings considered to be emblematic, regionally or nationally. The criteria are historical, artistic, architectural, and technical. Buildings or urban spaces identified to become ACRs will have to meet various criteria set by the Ministry of Culture:

- The singularity of the work.
- The innovative or experimental nature of architectural, urban, landscape or technical design.

- The reputation of the work.
- The exemplary contribution the work can make to public policy.
- The manifest value of the work by merit of it being part of a recognised architectural movement or school of thought.
- Part of a group or a work for which the author has national or local recognition.

Under the label, the owner has an obligation to inform the competent authorities of any intention to carry out works, prior to undertaking such works. All the same, it is important for the remit of Architectes des Bâtiments de France (ABF) to cover ACRs outside protected spaces. The involvement of property owners in protection and heritage designation processes is also essential.

Two examples illustrate the dynamics and challenges in managing this. In Saintes, the remarkable heritage site managed through protected area status has been active since 1990 and was amended on 17 February 2022. The protection covers 65 ha, corresponding to the approximate perimeter of the city's ancient castrum. The buildings identified for ACR designation are outside of this perimeter but in the surrounding area of several historic monuments. It would therefore be straightforward for the ABF's services to prepare a case for them.

In Rouffignac-Saint-Cernin-de-Reilhac (Dordogne), only the church of Saint-Germain in the centre of the commune is a registered Historic Monument. Various sets of buildings have been identified within the context of the Reconstruction – such as the town hall and the police station – and can therefore aspire to a heritage label or protections. Under the ACR label, planning and building permissions only apply within the perimeter of the protected monument. It would be preferable if buildings could receive more heritage protection than just an entry in a planning document. A remarkable heritage site designation could be considered. However, the process for this is long, taking approximately three years

to determine the perimeter and three to four years to draw up the rules. (Fig. 4)

This extensive survey of urban and architectural features, studied with a view to acquiring protections or heritage status, provides an essential basis for informing collective discussion about recent heritage. It can stimulate a productive dialogue between the Ministry of Culture's heritage departments, elected representatives and citizens involved in developing planning documentation. It can also help to place these often-misunderstood heritage assets back into the context of their surroundings.

Résumé

En 2017, la Direction régionale des Affaires culturelles de Nouvelle-Aquitaine commande une étude sur la Seconde Reconstruction à une équipe pluridisciplinaire composée d'historiens, d'architecte et de géographe.

Pendant quatre ans, le territoire régional a été étudié permettant de combler l'absence de travaux scientifiques consacrés à une région qui se situe en 1945 au cinquième rang des treize régions administratives actuelles touchées par les destructions de la Seconde Guerre mondiale. Si les dommages de guerre ne sont pas comparables à ceux de régions massivement dévastées, elle compte cependant 883 communes touchées et 72 000 édifices détruits (à plus de 75 %) à l'issue du conflit.

L'ambition de cette étude est patrimoniale. Les recherches menées dans de nombreux centres d'archives, doublées de missions de terrain et de relevés photographiques ont permis d'identifier, de lister et de documenter un ensemble de sites et d'architectures, toujours existant et dans un bon état de conservation, qui avait jusqu'alors échappé au crible des inventaires. Enfin, elle propose une liste de cinquante sites ou édifices susceptibles d'implémenter les rares ensembles urbains ou de constructions réalisés sous l'égide des architectes agréés par le M.R.U.

Cette liste est étudiée dans le cadre de protection au titre des Monuments historiques ou de labellisés Architecture Contemporaine Remarquable (A.C.R.). Le corpus doit permettre d'alimenter les documents urbains en étroite relation avec les services patrimoniaux des collectivités et les Architectes des bâtiments de France.

Ce travail inédit et exemplaire sur l'urbanisme et l'architecture de la Reconstruction à l'échelle d'une grande région pourrait être transposable à d'autres.

Zusammenfassung

Im Jahr 2017 gab die Regionaldirektion für kulturelle Angelegenheiten von Nouvelle-Aquitaine bei einem multidisziplinären Team aus Historikern, Architekten und Geografen eine Studie über den Wiederaufbau nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg in Auftrag.

Vier Jahre lang wurde das Gebiet der Region untersucht, wodurch der Mangel an wissenschaftlichen Arbeiten über eine Region behoben werden konnte, die 1945 an fünfter Stelle der dreizehn heutigen Verwaltungsregionen stand, die von den Zerstörungen des Zweiten Weltkriegs betroffen waren. Auch wenn die Kriegsschäden nicht mit denen massiv verwüsteter Regionen vergleichbar waren, zählte sie dennoch 883 betroffene Gemeinden und 72.000 Gebäude, die am Ende des Konflikts zerstört waren (zu mehr als 75 %).

Der Anspruch dieser Studie ist denkmalpflegerisch. Durch Recherchen in zahlreichen Archiven, Feldforschung und fotografische Erhebungen konnte eine Reihe von Stätten und Architekturen identifiziert, aufgelistet und dokumentiert werden, die noch immer existieren und sich in einem guten Erhaltungszustand befinden, aber bislang nicht in Inventaren erfasst worden waren. Schließlich wird eine Liste von fünfzig Orten oder Gebäuden vorgeschlagen, mit deren Hilfe auch die seltenen städtischen Ensembles oder Bauwerke einbezogen werden könnten, die unter der Leitung der vom Ministère de la Reconstruction et de l'Urbanisme (M.R.U.) zugelassenen Architekten errichtet wurden. Diese Liste wird im Rahmen des Denkmalschutzes oder der Auszeichnung als Bemerkenswerte zeitgenössische Architektur (Architecture Contemporaine Remarquable, A.C.R.) untersucht. Der Korpus soll in enger Zusammenarbeit mit den Denkmalschutzabteilungen der Gebietskörperschaften und den Architectes des bâtiments de France in die städtebaulichen Dokumente einfließen. Diese neuartige und beispielhafte Arbeit über den Städtebau und die Architektur des Wiederaufbaus auf der Ebene einer großen Region könnte auf andere Regionen übertragbar sein.

Rita Khalaf

FROM 'HISTORIC CITY' TO 'SURVIVOR CITY'

Mosul Old City Patrimonialization Process

In times of war, historic centres are especially vulnerable to destruction because of what they represent historically, culturally and socially. In the wake of such traumas, this vulnerability prompts specific attention, with the focus placed primarily on typical historical palimpsests that bear witness to past events. Since the end of the 20th century the old city of Mosul, at the nucleus of the modern city, has provided a good illustration of this fragility, due to successive conflicts, an unstable political and security context and a lack of interest from public stakeholders. An ignorance of architectural and urban heritage also manifested itself when the Islamic State (IS, Daesh) arrived in the region and combat put the old city at further risk of destruction. However, some stakeholders are now taking an interest in this architectural heritage and see it as a shared asset that should be preserved.

In this article, we analyse how the image of Mosul Old City has changed and its status has evolved in the context of post-liberation reconstruction.¹ How has it moved away from its image as a neglected 'historic city', to become an internationally renowned 'survivor city'? What steps are being taken to enhance its status and revive its heritage and which stakeholders have brought this about?

In this context, 'historic city' refers to a city's ancient centre, which is perceived and officially recognised as a national heritage asset by society and its representatives by merit of its urban composition, outstanding architectural features and cultural significance. In times

of peace, this description covers the remains of one or more past eras within a city. The term 'survivor city' is an homage to all or part of a city's resistance to total or partial destruction. Buildings which have resisted, despite frequent attacks and an ongoing state of ruin, stand as witnesses to difficult times but are also an integral part of the city's history.

The heritage revival process has been examined in various contexts in France, such as in the reconstruction of the centre of the city of Le Havre, where it was seen as a tool for transforming one reality into another, and as a driving force for revitalising the city. However, this question has not been examined in the case of Mosul, where the literature focuses on the history of the historic centre, its urban and architectural characteristics, its destruction during the war, the impact of IS, and current reconstruction initiatives.

The perspective we discuss here draws on PhD research² on the reconstruction of the city of Mosul. This research involved several site visits, field investigations, tours of works in progress and interviews with project participants (architects, engineers, archaeologists, public stakeholders, organisations staff) and residents from the city. In parallel, it involved archival research into how the city was organised and its architectural and urban development – a sensitive subject in the case of Mosul due to the destruction and looting of many public buildings.

¹ The post-liberation period began on 10 July 2017 with the Iraqi Prime Minister's announcement that the city of Mosul had been liberated from occupation by Daesh.

² "Mossoul post-conflit: l'héritage architectural et social au risque de la reconstruction" [Mosul post-war: architectural and social heritage at risk of reconstruction], PhD thesis currently in progress under the supervision of Gilles-Antoine Langlois at the EVCAU laboratory (Environnements Numériques, Cultures Architecturales et Urbaines), at Université Paris Cité and the École Nationale Supérieure d'Architecture, Paris Val-de-Seine (ENSAPVS).

Findings from the field survey, observations of reconstruction works and from study of the overall context make it possible, firstly, to evaluate the process of patrimonialization and promotion in Mosul Old City, and then to examine stakeholder involvement and its role in this process, so we can consider the ways heritage can become a driving force for recovery post-conflict.

In 2013, Mosul was the second largest city in Iraq, after the capital Baghdad, in terms of its population, with 2.7 million residents. This figure has fallen continuously since the arrival of IS in 2014 with one third of the original population having moved away.³ The city is the capital of the district of Nineveh, in the north-west of the country, near its borders with Syria and Turkey on one side and Iraqi Kurdistan on the other. With its plains and hills, it forms a transit point between the desert in the west and the mountains of Iraqi Kurdistan in the north. The river Tigris divides the settlement into two parts, with the ruins of the ancient city of Nineveh, capital of the Assyrian Empire in the 7th century BC, located on the east bank, and the old city of Mosul on the west bank. (Fig. 1)

Mosul Old City: background to the damaged centre

Founded opposite the Assyrian capital on the mound of *Al-qli'at*, the old city of Mosul developed into a strategic surveillance point on commercial routes and formed part of Nineveh's defence system in times of war. Its expansion was facilitated by the presence of water and fertile land, essential for agriculture and cattle rearing. The site saw successive invasions until the Arab conquest in the 7th century BC. Mosul then became an Arab city, reaching its apogee under the reign of the Zangid dynasty in the 12th century BC. A traveller from that time described it as "a vast, ancient, fortified city bedecked with flowers and treasures; its towers are spread along the bank and its buildings also extend beyond the ramparts..."⁴ The city's

power and influence during this period can still be seen today in architecture remaining from the era and which forms the historic centre's oldest layer. Buildings from this period include the ruins of Bashtabiya Castle, the last trace of the city's ramparts. By merit of its geographic location, the city also became an important commercial crossroads, linking China and the Mediterranean, and a regional administrative centre under the Ottoman Empire.

Known in everyday language as *Al-'udjat* (winding streets) in reference to its compact, dense and labyrinthine urban fabric, Mosul is remarkable for its network of narrow and meandering blind alleys – a characteristic example of the model of spontaneous growth seen in cities in the Middle East. Its primarily stone architecture is notable for its use of *djas* (plaster) and *frsh al-musli* (Mosul marble), a grey-coloured marble found on walls, arcades, gateways and windows. (Fig. 2)

With its domestic buildings featuring a *hush* (courtyard) and *srdab* (basement), and an urban layout representative of traditional Arab cities, Mosul developed a distinctive landscape. Moreover, the city acquired a monumental character because of its concentration of religious buildings founded by Jews, Christians and Muslims, some dating back to early centuries, such as the church of *Mar-Ash'ia*, a former monastery from the 7th – 8th century, and the *Al-Nouri* Mosque which was built in 1170–1171 and named as the city's main mosque. Mosul has often been described as "Iraq in miniature", because of its multi-ethnic, multifaith society where Arabs, Turkmen and Kurds, Muslims, Christians, Jews, Yazidis and various other communities live side-by-side. The Mosul dialect, a distinctive form of Arabic, is representative of this strong identity and numerous influences over the centuries.

Despite some adaptations in the historic centre to meet 20th century needs, including two major roads (north to south and east to west), widening streets to facilitate vehicle access, and modifications to some dwellings,

³ Roussel, Cyril, "Nettoyage ethnique, déplacements de population et repeuplement dans le gouvernorat de Ninive (Mossoul, Nord-Irak)" *Outre-Terre*, n° 44, Mars 2015, p. 250–262.

⁴ Squire, Raglan, Fat-Hullah, Jarjis (tran.), 'الموصل، ام الربيعين: تقرير اولي في هندسة مدينة الموصل' (Mosul, Mother of two Springs: A Preliminary Report on the Development of the city of Mosul), Mosul, Al-Hadaf Press, 1955.

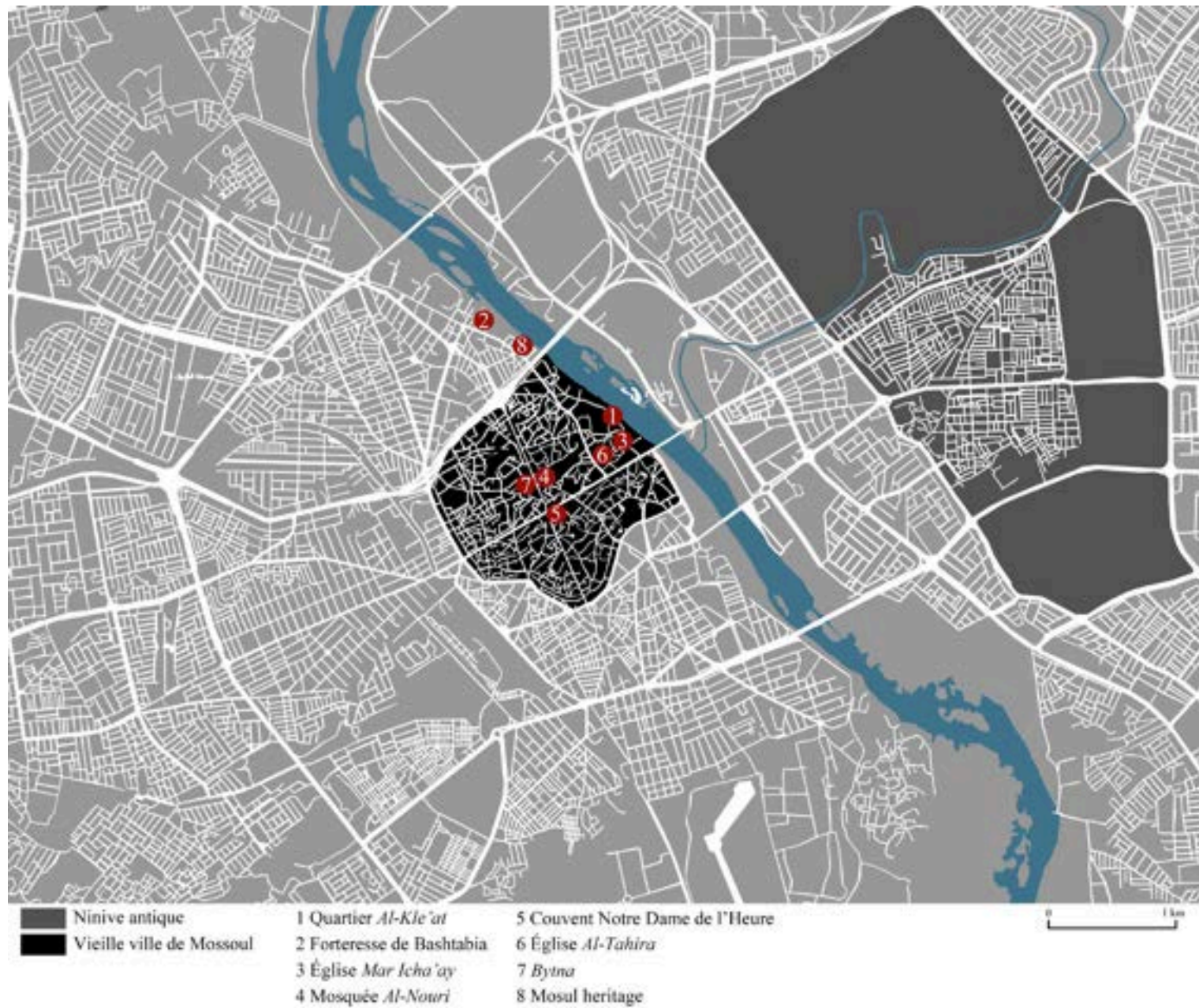


Fig. 1: Map of Mosul Old City and surrounding area, source: author.

the old city has barely been affected by modernisation. The new city grew primarily around the ancient centre, creating a new urban fabric and new ways of living. In 1955, a survey report on the city of Mosul conducted by Raglan Squire and Partners, suggested that “The main planning problem was how to open up the central area

to provide conditions of amenity with as little demolition of property as possible.”⁵ Mosul Old City has therefore retained its status as a major Arab city, alongside Baghdad, Aleppo and Cairo,⁶ due to its antiquity, urban fabric and architecture, which is representative of the specific skills needed to respond to societal needs of the period, such

⁵ Squire, Raglan, “Master plan for Mosul,” *The municipal journal*, London, Aug. 1956.

⁶ Raymond, André, *Grandes villes arabes à l'époque ottomane*, Paris, Sindbad, 1985.



as the pursuit of privacy, adaptability to the climate, and architectural aesthetics. The old city's distinctive characteristics were not given adequate consideration before the 1973 Master Plan in which SCET International and *Dar al-Imara* spoke of the urgent need to introduce conservation and restoration measures swiftly, in order to safeguard monuments in the old city.⁷ In an additional report, the central zone was analysed to identify its potential, draw up an inventory of its noteworthy buildings and consider ways it could be developed. Various other publications drew attention to the historic centre, although on-site observations tended to concur with the description of an old and out-dated place suffering from a lack of general maintenance. In contrast, religious buildings benefited from preservation campaigns, albeit following a doctrine of *Tajdid* (renewal) whereby “the old, as such, is not necessarily favoured and ‘restoration’ often meant

building something new after demolishing the original building.”⁸ An attachment to the memory of a place took precedence over conserving something in its material form. This phenomenon, combined with the absence of any public policy on heritage protection, contributed to the deterioration of the old city, both physically and with regard to its reputation.

Destruction, response and redevelopment: the process

The successive conflicts Iraq was engaged in – the Iran-Iraq War (1980–1988) and the first Gulf War (1990–1991) – and Western sanctions (1990–2003) fostered an attitude of negligence towards the country's heritage assets. The situation was not improved after the 2003 US invasion, which caused general instability, having brought the country into chaos, and jeopardised coexistence between the

⁷ SCET International, *Dar al-Imara, Mosul Master Plan: Complementary analysis, central and conservation areas*, Paris, Republic of Iraq, ministry of municipalities, directorate general of planning and engineering, 1974, *Maison méditerranéenne des sciences de l'homme*: 4–21217 (5).

⁸ Merigoux, Jean-Marie, *Les chrétiens de Mossoul et leurs églises pendant la période ottomane de 1516 à 1815*, Ninive-Mossoul, 1983, Bibliothèque de Saulchoir: 284 B 63.

← Fig. 2: Mosul Old City from the east bank, 2000, photo: Serge Sentelli.

→ Fig. 3: Aerial view of Mosul Old City after the bombardments, 2018, photo: Unesco/Iconem.

population and its historic buildings. The condition of Mosul's old city continued to deteriorate with the arrival of the Islamic State. This organisation imposed an extremist regime based on a hard-line interpretation of Islam which involved eliminating traces of history and establishing new laws and a new structure for society, education and everyday

life. The city's historic sites were also targeted by IS which carried out a series of attacks on monuments belonging to Christian and Yazidi religious minorities. It then turned its focus to the burial places of prophets, destroying archaeological sites and works in Mosul Museum. Various tools were used to destroy these heritage assets, from hand-held hammers to pneumatic drills, electric grinders, mechanical excavators and explosives.

The destruction intensified and extended during the liberation of the city in 2017 when the old city became a battleground between Daesh and the Iraqi army supported by the international coalition,⁹ Kurdish forces and Shiite militia. As the last point of refuge for Daesh, the historic centre thus became collateral within the conflict and airstrikes left it a devastated area. UNESCO estimated the scale of destruction at 80% (Fig. 3). Further damage was also caused post-conflict, with early operations to clear



the rubble ordered by the ex-governor who approved the restoration of *Al-qli'at*, the old city's most ancient quarter and eastern façade over the Tigris.¹⁰

The conception of the old city as “heritage taken hostage” and exposed to the risk of destruction,¹¹ inspired initial steps to raise its status as a historic city that had survived. The media coverage given to Daesh's actions, the horrific scenes of the ruins post-liberation and the loss of the *Al-qli'at* quarter generated shock and sparked national and international responses to protect historic assets at risk. Various initiatives in different forms were launched through *Cultural Heritage Initiatives* (CHI) and the *American Schools of Oriental Research* (ASOR) in 2014. This latter body had been working on both monitoring at-risk sites during the occupation and raising international awareness. It also proposed restoration projects after the conflict. In parallel, UNESCO launched *Unite4Heritage*, an

⁹ The international coalition was led by the USA with the involvement of France, Türkiye and other Arab countries.

¹⁰ Al-Menasa, *الجرافات “تمحو آثار داعش” في الموصل القديمة* (Bulldozers “erase all traces of IS” in old Mosul), 18/12/2018, viewed on 28/04/2023, [www.al-menasa.net].

¹¹ Detry, Nicolas, “Le «patrimoine martyr»: résurrection des monuments historiques en Europe après 1945”, *Les Cahiers de la recherche architecturale et urbaine*, n° 30/31, Dec. 2014, p. 67–89.

early initiative in protest against cultural cleansing and in favour of heritage promotion.

The impact on the memorial landscape, the extent of the damage to monuments, and international initiatives to restore heritage have motivated the residents of Mosul to take a fresh look at their historic assets, fostering a unique sense of loyalty. This previously neglected heritage has been brought into the limelight and become the symbol of a possible victory over Daesh and an expression of the city's identity. *Al-'udjat* rose in esteem after it was added to a UNESCO tentative list in 2018, as a relic from the Zangid period and as an example of a complete settlement of traditional urban buildings, primarily covering the Ottoman period. This movement also fosters harmonious coexistence between residents.¹²

The historic centre has become an open field, welcoming private research initiatives. Saher Kharoufa, an architect from Mosul, drew up an inventory of 115 doors and their ornamental motifs in several districts. She published her work in a book, *Mosul Doors, Anatomical Study of the Formal Characteristics of Doors in Mosul Old City*.¹³ She pointed out that it has never been so easy to walk around, observe and take photographs in the old city.¹⁴ Many architects and photographers seized the opportunity to visit a place temporarily devoid of its residents, to document the remaining dwellings and monuments, or their traces. The ruins became an aesthetic to be captured and a “martyred legacy”, standing as a witness to both the torment and the memory to be passed on.¹⁵ The sudden, spontaneous response, in Iraq and around the world, has paved the way for the second stage in promoting the heritage status of Mosul's historic centre.

Other initiatives have been launched that are more concrete and far-reaching on spatial and temporal scales, such as UNESCO's *Revive the Spirit of Mosul* initiative,



Fig. 4: Typical Mosul house under reconstruction, 2022, photo: author.

set up to help rebuild the city and restore its heritage in partnership with local stakeholders (including politicians, experts, architects and residents). This initiative forms the first part of a wider project to rebuild the old city and is focused on the restoration of three of Mosul's landmark

¹² UNESCO, *Old city of Mosul*, 17/08/2018, viewed on 28/04/2023, [whc.unesco.org/fr/listesindicatives].

¹³ Al-Kharoufa, Sahar, *أبواب موصلية: دراسة تشريحية للخصائص الشكلية لأبواب المدينة القديمة في إيم الموصل* (Mosul Doors, Anatomical Study of the Formal Characteristics of Doors in Mosul Old City), Mossoul, Dar nun lltiba'h w al-nshr, 2019.

¹⁴ Interview on 03/05/2021 at Ankawa-Ebril, Irak.

¹⁵ Detry, Nicolas, “Le” patrimoine martyr “: Résurrection des monuments historiques en Europe après 1945”, *Les Cahiers de la recherche architecturale et urbaine*, n° 30/31, Dec. 2014, p. 6789.

monuments, the *Al-Nouri* Mosque, *Al-Saa'a* convent and *Al-Tahera* Syriac church, and the reconstruction of 124 historic houses and a primary school (Fig. 4). These projects are funded by the United Arab Emirates, the European Union and Japan. Various other projects have been implemented alongside this initiative, with support, primarily from overseas stakeholders and private organisations such as the International Alliance for the Protection of Heritage in Conflict Areas (ALIPH), which is funding the reconstruction of historic religious buildings under its *Mosul Mosaic* initiative.

At the local level, plans for reconstruction, and their resources, seem limited. However, organisations such as *djam'it f'l al-khirat* (Association of Charitable Deeds) are funding and supervising the reconstruction of several mosques in the old city. This organisation was set up by architects from Mosul working on a not-for-profit basis. Today, Mosul's historic centre has become a work in progress, a site interspersed with projects led by diverse stakeholders whose practices follow doctrines and approaches, some of which are more contentious than others. The concentration of projects in *Al-'udjat* and cooperation between national and international stakeholders when it comes to the reconstruction effort, discussion and funding, has thus triggered a third stage in the process. This involves enhancing the value of heritage assets under reconstruction.

Heritage: the driving force for reconstruction?

Stakeholder involvement and cooperation in the reconstruction has become one of the main vectors for promoting the old city's heritage. It has been accentuated by the absence of an overall reconstruction plan and by the government's limited role, which appears closer to that of a 'fellow traveller' than a decision-maker.¹⁶ Cooperation between the government, local leaders,

overseas stakeholders and residents is therefore essential. The reconstruction of *Al-Nouri* Mosque is a concrete example. UNESCO supervises this project with the support of public institutions and the local population. Archaeologists from the Iraqi State Board of Antiquities and Heritage have worked on planning and documentation, alongside UNESCO engineers and architects. They are working together to protect, conserve and restore the site.

The role of residents is also important to this project, so local consultations were arranged to decide which school of thought on restoration should be followed. This has influenced the decision to rebuild the mosque's leaning minaret identically but to modify the reconstruction project originally selected in an international competition. After the winning project had been announced, architects, historians and residents expressed strong discontent with the proposal chosen as it appeared to disregard the mosque's ancient style and the features of traditional architecture in Mosul. The debate on heritage can therefore be grounded in a sense of resistance and collective emotion; a type of 'cause' defended by society.¹⁷ However, in some cases, action of this kind from residents can result in projects which are less mindful of historic buildings. Local communities affected by the war want to rebuild their living spaces quickly and to remove all traces of a difficult period. They therefore turn to whatever low-cost resources are available rather than waiting for hard-to-obtain compensation. The old city has therefore been transformed into a place for trialling contradictory ideas, stemming from different doctrines – a phenomenon which is clear to see on an architectural walkabout.

The historic centre, whether destroyed, rebuilt or under reconstruction, has become an instrument of Mosulite identity and a tool for interpreting the city's history.¹⁸ It has become a driving force for reconciliation between residents and an agent of peace in search of a

¹⁶ Khalaf, Rita, Nguyen, Phuoc Van Anh, "Rénovation et reconstruction au prisme de l'initiative habitante. Les cas de Thu Thiem et de Mossoul", *Transversale. Histoire Architecture Paysage Urbain*, n° 6, Dec. 2022, p. 56–67.

¹⁷ Heinich, Nathalie, *La fabrique du patrimoine: de la cathédrale à la petite cuillère*, Paris, Maison des sciences de l'homme. Ethnologie de la France, 2009.

¹⁸ Béghain, Patrice, *Patrimoine, politique et société*, Paris, Presses de Sciences po, 2012.

shared memory. The old city has therefore witnessed a period of reconciliation between different communities. The reconstruction of religious monuments belonging to Christians also illustrates this desire to re-establish the mosaic-like composition of the city's culture and society.

Reviving the old city's heritage assets has therefore opened a way to develop cultural activities. Two private, cultural and social centres, *Bytna* (our home) and *Mosul Heritage*, were designed to bring people together around the idea of heritage. These centres promote local heritage through activities and events celebrating the history, society, dialect, poetry and music of the people of Mosul. They each have exhibition space to showcase ancient objects and traditional costumes. They also organise educational visits to the old city and festivals around Mosul to make young people more aware of their city's past. Since 2019, these spaces and the enhanced status of local heritage have boosted tourism. Young people from the city set up *Visit Mosul* as a guide for tourists and to promote historic buildings and traditional crafts, music and cuisine. The inclusion of the old city on the UNESCO tentative list, the scenes of the ruined buildings and the reconstruction works in progress have earned Mosul international attention and sparked curiosity. These factors have helped improve the city's economic fortunes, especially in the souks of the old city. The souks were once part of the economic centre, which partly relocated to the other bank of the river after the war.

The risk of losing Mosul Old City, the reaction this provoked, and the action taken to restore and redevelop it have helped set in motion a patrimonialization process promotion and given the city a new image – as a heroine who fought against Daesh and as a survivor who, miraculously, resisted war and destruction. Heritage has become a social, cultural, economic and territorial issue for the future. Residents use it to showcase and express pride in their 'mosulite' culture and see it as a symbol of hope for a better future; one that more closely resembles the ancient city's golden past.

This nostalgic view does, however, create a form of selectiveness that favours the ancient and monumental heritage assets in need of protection and overlooks the city's modern and contemporary everyday heritage. Yet, the latter is representative of an important period in the country's development, between the 1950s and 1980s, and serves as testimony to the achievements of Iraq's first architects. The fate of these assets now lies in the hands of residents who, most of the time, transform them, 'camouflage' them or replace them with new buildings. In the absence of public directives, residents have become protagonists in the transformation of the area. In some cases, they carry out quick, inexpensive and simple repairs without regard for planning laws. Consequently, the distinctive features of buildings are removed, creating a visual incoherence in the urban landscape.

Résumé

La vieille ville de Mossoul, noyau de la ville actuelle, subit depuis la fin du XX^e siècle une situation de vulnérabilité en raison d'une succession de conflits, d'un contexte politique et sécuritaire instable et de l'absence d'intérêt des acteurs publics. L'ignorance de l'héritage architectural et urbain s'est manifestée à nouveau suite au passage de l'État Islamique dans la région et au risque de disparition de celui-ci pendant les combats. Cependant, de nombreux acteurs considèrent cet héritage bâti comme un objet d'intérêt et un patrimoine commun à préserver. L'enquête sur le terrain à Mossoul, l'observation du chantier de la reconstruction et l'étude du contexte général, permettent d'analyser le changement de l'image de la vieille ville de Mossoul et l'évolution de son statut dans la reconstruction post libération. Comment est-elle passée de l'image d'une «ville historique» négligée à une ville « survivante » de renommée mondiale ? Dans ce cadre, l'article vise dans un premier lieu à évaluer le processus de patrimonialisation de la vieille ville de Mossoul, pour ensuite examiner la dynamique des acteurs (nationaux et internationaux) et leur rôle dans ce processus et ainsi s'interroger sur la façon dont le patrimoine peut devenir un moteur de relèvement post conflit. En effet, la patrimonialisation de la vieille ville de Mossoul devient un outil identitaire permettant de renforcer la coexistence entre les habitants et un véritable levier pour le développement des activités culturelles, économiques et territoriales.

Zusammenfassung

Die Altstadt von Mossul, der Kern der heutigen Stadt, ist seit Ende des 20. Jahrhunderts aufgrund einer Reihe von Konflikten, eines instabilen politischen und sicherheitspolitischen Umfelds und des mangelnden Interesses der öffentlichen Akteure einer verletzlichen Situation ausgesetzt. Die Ignoranz gegenüber dem architektonischen und städtischen Erbe wurde erneut deutlich, nachdem der Islamische Staat in die Region eingedrungen war und die Gefahr bestand, dass das Erbe während der Kämpfe verloren ging. Viele Akteure betrachten das bauliche Erbe jedoch als Gegenstand des Interesses und als gemeinsames Gut, das es zu bewahren gilt. Die Feldforschung in Mossul, die Beobachtung der Wiederaufbau-Baustellen und die Untersuchung des allgemeinen Kontextes ermöglichen es, den Wandel des Images der Altstadt von Mossul und die Entwicklung ihres Status im Wiederaufbau nach der Befreiung zu analysieren. Wie hat sie sich vom Image einer vernachlässigten „historischen Stadt“ zu einer „überlebenden“ Stadt mit Weltruf entwickelt? In diesem Rahmen zielt der Artikel zunächst darauf ab, den Prozess der denkmalpflegerischen In-Wert-Setzung der Altstadt von Mossul zu bewerten, um dann die Dynamik der (nationalen und internationalen) Akteure und ihre Rolle in diesem Prozess zu untersuchen und so die Frage zu stellen, wie das Kulturerbe zu einem Motor für den Wiederaufbau nach dem Konflikt werden kann. Denn die denkmalpflegerische In-Wert-Setzung der Altstadt von Mossul wird zu einem Identitätsinstrument, mit dem der Zusammenhalt der Bewohner gestärkt werden kann, und zu einem echten Hebel für die Entwicklung kultureller, wirtschaftlicher und territorialer Aktivitäten.

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VACANCES S^TJACQUES 1954

DOMINIQUE.

HISTOIRE ET DÉBUT POULL BIHAN

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Archives

Véronique Langlois

THE CINÉMATHÈQUE DE BRETAGNE

Audiovisual Archive, a Research Resource

A regional film library pioneering the preservation of amateur cinema

Brittany's dynamic film and audiovisual production was conducive to the emergence of a regional film library which was founded in 1986. The *Cinémathèque de Bretagne* is one of the oldest regional structures in the network. It has become one of the largest regional collections and a pioneer in the collection of amateur images. This work has contributed to the recognition of amateur film as an archive and an element of collective memory in the same way as other types of archives. Amateur (or 'unpublished') film is defined as including "moving images evoking any aspect of life in our societies, past and present, produced in all formats and media and not originally intended for distribution in professional audiovisual circuits".¹ We will come to understand that the specific nature and contours of amateur film nevertheless reach beyond this definition, in the polysemy of the word 'amateur' and in the plurality of postures and productions.² (Fig. 1) The bringing together of this heritage preserves audiovisual memory and provides a more comprehensive approach to local history, making it important material for studying society in all its diversity.

Collections reflecting amateur and professional practices

The films entrusted to the association were shot both in Brittany and by Breton men and women around the world. The proportion of professional films is equal to that of amateur films, with the *Cinémathèque de Bretagne* fulfilling its role as a centre for the conservation of contemporary professional audiovisual and cinematographic creation.

The collections include family films (silent or with sound), news reports, documentaries, memory collections, experimental films, fiction, animation, raw footage, etc. covering a wide range of topics, shot in the context of tourism and travel, by families, professionals, scientists or institutions. They show everyday life, social organisation, professions, practices, wars and natural disasters, nature and town planning, over the decades in a society in perpetual motion.

The collections also include emblematic footage from families like the Curie family,³ or from activist filmmakers like René Vautier and Guy Chapouillié, or the explorer Anita Conti⁴ as well as footage from French Polar Expeditions.⁵

Numerous films depict urban development and architectural changes in Brittany and elsewhere. They play their role as witnesses and are useful tools for analysis and investigation as they show the marks of their time and

194

Véronique Langlois

¹ www.inedits-europe.org.

² Gilles Ollivier, "Histoire des images, histoire des sociétés: l'exemple du cinéma amateur" in *1895*, n° 17, 1994, p. 155–132: www.persee.fr/doc/1895_0769-0959_1994_num_17_1_1092.

³ www.cinematheque-bretagne.bzh/base-documentaire-426-0-0-1.html?ref=b180674f38ce86a676a1ce54c51bcaba&search=curie&et=www.cinematheque-bretagne.bzh/base-documentaire-426-0-0-0.html?search=langevin&director=Y&type=fulltext.

⁴ www.cinematheque-bretagne.bzh/base-documentaire-426-0-0-0.html?ref=e7249f69f88beab7daf7c59b18ffb8c&filter%5B%5D=PEPedagogique.

⁵ www.cinematheque-bretagne.bzh/base-documentaire-426-0-0-1.html?ref=274ed594d361cca3d9b22fea6d9b346a&search=exp%C3%A9ditions%20polaires%20fran%C3%A7aises&.



Fig. 1: Cinémathèque de Bretagne (Brest Film Library), source: Cinémathèque de Bretagne.

studied not only in terms of the filmmaker's intentions but also in the social and historical context in which it was created.

At the heart of amateur cinema is the family film. It provides a link between individual and collective memory and shows how micro-history can help to enhance our overall knowledge of history and social events. The objective is to share private archives in order to keep track of both unique and common

its events. These images enable us to reconstruct what has disappeared from sight (as in Brest, Saint-Malo or Lorient, towns destroyed during the Second World War), as part of scientific research or artistic projects. Films shot before the Second World War are, for example, the living traces of destroyed towns and cities, providing additional information which is key to understanding their reconstruction. The collections are also a compendium of architectural and collective utopias,⁶ providing a basis for the study of a particular period and of architectural and social experiments. (Fig. 2)

Amateur cinema, a research resource

Amateur cinema is a fascinating resource. It carries the marks of its time and bears witness to a period in history. It is a unique source of knowledge; a visual heritage to be

events, to increase the value of amateur images through their use in remembrance and research, and to move away from an approach based on identification with the family film experience in order to analyse its content. Philippe Descola and Georges Didi-Huberman point out that "images serve, among other things, to stimulate and organise memory, to propagate information and to express emotions", "they are the backbone of reality".⁷

Amateur cinema pushes beyond the boundaries of the family film. It represents a creative and experimental space for amateur film clubs, a testament to the vitality of this activity. In this dynamic, amateur cinema does not seek to resemble professional cinema, it is something quite different, a form that has sometimes brought professional cinema into question. Marcel L'Herbier called "amateur cinema the necessary counterpart to professional cinema".⁸

⁶ Like for example « Construction du village vacances *Renouveau* de Beg Meil: www.cinematheque-bretagne.bzh/base-documentaire-construction-du-village-vacances-renouveau-a-beg-meil-426-27935-0-1.html?ref=88e7e17e803934eaf00dc76185e2ec8b.

⁷ Conference "À quoi servent les images", 11th of January 2023 at the Quay Branly: www.quaibrantly.fr/fr/expositions-evenements/au-musee/universite-populaire/details-de-levenement/e-a-quoi-servent-les-images-39644.

⁸ Valérie Vignaux, Benoît Turquety (eds.), *L'amateur en cinéma, un autre paradigme*, AFRHC, Paris, 2016.



Fig. 2: *Brest détruite, Ce Brest dont il ne restait rien*, by Jean Le Goulach, 1944 to 1964 (Brest in ruins, the Brest of which nothing remains), source: Cinémathèque de Bretagne.

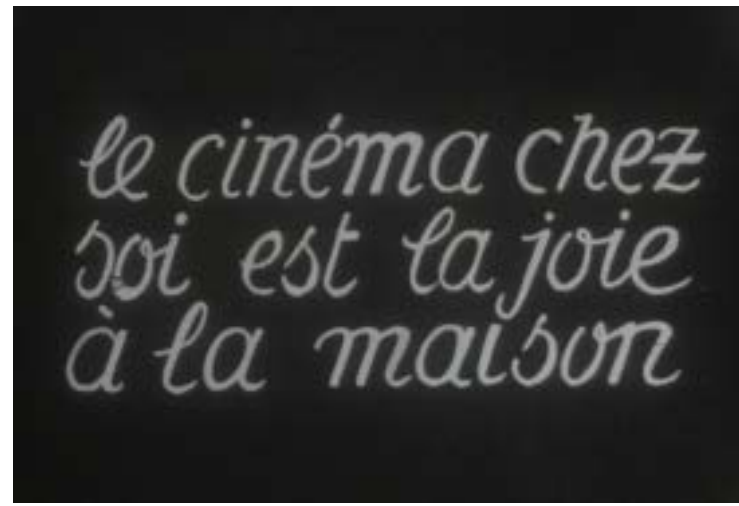


Fig. 3: "Le cinéma chez soi est la joie à la maison", *On tourne !* by Emile Gaudu, 1945 ("Cinema at home brings joy to the house", We're rolling!), source: Cinémathèque de Bretagne.

It allows us to understand the filmmaker's period in time while participating in the evolution of the cinematographic process. More than just a way of recording the world, it is a very vibrant means of both capture and creation. The figure of the amateur filmmaker is complex and multi-faceted, in this free space between norms and experimentation, between industry and leisure, as explored by Gilles Ollivier.⁹ (Fig. 3)

Its emergence should also be seen in the context of the effervescence of associative life, which goes hand in hand with its social and collective history. According to Roger Odin,¹⁰ the organisation of amateur cinema, its structuring into clubs and the positioning of the filmmaker have prevailed over the emergence of discourses linked to new technologies and new practices today.

The utopian dimension of amateur cinema and its effect on cultural and political movements should not be overlooked. It was a seedbed for educating the public, touted not only as a means of teaching and bringing people together, but also as a way of developing culture, artistic sensitivity and different types of cinema (whether educational, medical,

ethnographic, scientific or corporate)¹¹. Political and religious organisations have also, each in their own way, recognised the power and interest of amateur cinema and become producers of it.

The *Cinémathèque de Bretagne* brings into every stage of film processing a consideration of the way in which these sources can be used for scientific, historical or social analysis. This takes them beyond the playful and personal dimension of amateur film and lessens the stigma of the amateur film label from which they still suffer.

Research, a source of knowledge

The audiovisual archive, a polysemic material for knowledge, is becoming a rare source used as a historical document by researchers.¹²

Likewise, the audiovisual archive and the way it is interpreted becomes enriched under the attentive gaze of researchers and because of their contributions. Thanks to their work, descriptions and contextualisation are enriched and this helps to clarify knowledge, making it possible to fill in gaps. This in turn contributes to the

⁹ Gilles, Ollivier, "Portrait de l'amateur en franc-tireur 1 et 2", in *Atala* n° 19, 2016: www.lycee-chateaubriand.fr/revue-atala/2017/01/02/atala-n-19-passage-a-lamateur-enjeux-politiques-esthetiques-dun-cinema-2016/.

¹⁰ Roger Odin, "La question de l'amateur dans trois espaces de réalisation et de diffusion", in *Communications, le cinéma en amateur*, n° 68, Seuil, Paris, 1999, p. 47.

¹¹ Gilles, Ollivier, "Portrait de l'amateur en franc-tireur 1", in *Atala* n° 19, 2016: www.lycee-chateaubriand.fr/revue-atala/2017/01/02/atala-n-19-passage-a-lamateur-enjeux-politiques-esthetiques-dun-cinema-2016/.

¹² Gilles, Ollivier, "Histoire des images, histoire des sociétés: l'exemple du cinéma amateur" in *1895*, n° 17, 1994, p. 155–132: www.persee.fr/doc/1895_0769-0959_1994_num_17_1_1092. As studied by Susan Aasman: OLLIVIER Gilles, Les films amateurs, de nouvelles sources pour l'historien, in *Atala* n° 3, Mouvements en conserve, fabriques d'histoire(s). Le film amateur, de l'usage, 2000, p. 33–48: www.lycee-chateaubriand.fr/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/Atala3_Ollivier.pdf.

Fig. 4: Bombing of Dresden, American Archives 4, National Archives and Record Administration production (at College Park), 1942 to 1945, source: Cinémathèque de Bretagne.



data verification protocol and helps to secure the information. Setting out a framework for analysing and editing films, envisaging possible uses for the archive, targeting the beneficiaries of the content and supporting researchers all contribute to transforming the archive into a corpus and to reinforcing its interest. These are all elements that confirm the importance of our collaboration and the complementary nature of our approaches.

A methodology dedicated to collection, preservation and conservation

To achieve this goal, the association has developed its own tools and methodology, at the crossroads of the archival approach and its specific cinematographic focus. It has invented and adapted know-how and techniques, used specific equipment and designed and applied professional standards.

Collecting is carried out actively and accompanied by fieldwork and the monitoring and studying of themes, which are identified or missing from the collections, during documentary residencies and via the regional repository.¹³ The collection also includes equipment¹⁴ used by amateur and professional filmmakers, revealing a practice that complements the analysis of filmed images, cinematographic knowledge and, more generally, the history of filming techniques.

The films are prepared, repaired and digitised in very high definition using a state-of-the-art scanner. The original elements are then packaged and preserved.¹⁵ Digitisation is thus envisaged with a view to both safeguarding and making images available to as many people as possible. The processing of a collection is to be considered in its entirety as a filing operation, requiring a technical and intellectual approach.

Documentary processing in the service of knowledge

The aim of documentation is to provide a better understanding of our collections so that they can be made available to all. The goal is to produce accessible metadata, to gather as much information as possible and to make it available for research. The description is detailed, standardised and coupled with contextualisation work, thus turning it into a reliable source and guaranteeing its accessibility and the intelligibility of the data and information.

13 The Cinémathèque de Bretagne's mission since 2006 entrusted to it by the Brittany region.

14 To date, the collection comprises of 2 000 cameras covering the period from the 1920s to the 2000s.

15 Each digitalised film is saved in different file formats for preservation and distribution, stored in an LTO library.



Fig. 5: Baraques au Bouguen, by Jean Lazennec, 1961 (Barracks at Bouguen in Brest), source: Cinémathèque de Bretagne.

To this end, the Diaz database¹⁶ was created by the *Cinémathèque de Bretagne* in the early 2000s.¹⁷ It is used at every stage of the film and video processing chain and enables the management and promotion of collections (films, equipment, paper archives, photographs, books)¹⁸.

Enhancing the value of collections

Films only have value if they can be seen. To share this rich heritage, several initiatives are proposed: a cultural programme built around annual themes and accompanied by mediation work around the films; the sale of images

and programmes for films, exhibitions, artists' projects, programmes or university projects; the website¹⁹ is a showcase for the structure's activities and collections.

The dynamics of professional networks

The *Cinémathèque de Bretagne* is committed to developing networks that encourage research, reflection and the sharing of practices. It participates in professional networks such as the *Diazinterregio* association, *Les Inédits*,²⁰ the *Archives françaises du film*,²¹ the *Centre national de la cinématographie et de l'image animée*²² and the *Cinémathèque du documentaire*,²³ the *Association des archivistes Français*²⁴ and the International Federation of Film Archives.²⁵ It regularly collaborates with the *Maison des Sciences de l'Homme en Bretagne* and the *Centre de recherches bretonnes et celtiques* (Breton and Celtic Research Centre), working on subjects such as the multi-disciplinary investigations at Plozévet and the conservation and documentation of collections in regional languages; with the *Historade* research project²⁶ or with the *Institut Mines Telecom Atlantique* on artificial intelligence for film description and the design of a new generation viewer. The *Cinémathèque de Bretagne* takes part in conferences and symposiums in France and abroad.²⁷ All these collaborations contribute to the *Cinémathèque de Bretagne's* scientific, cultural and educational project.

¹⁶ Diaz is a Relational Database Management System (RDMS) in PHP-MySQL, and complies with the ISO 15836 (Dublin Core) standard.

¹⁷ Joined by other structures, it is now used by eighteen film libraries and audiovisual archive centres brought together in an association, *Diazinterregio*.

¹⁸ The *Cinémathèque de Bretagne* also has a documentation centre containing more than 2 000 books, magazines and academic work on amateur cinema, techniques and the history of film.

¹⁹ More than 9000 films and their descriptions are available online, linked to the Diaz database.

²⁰ www.inedits-europe.org.

²¹ lise.cnc.fr/Home.aspx?Menu=MNU_ACCUEIL.

²² www.cnc.fr.

²³ cinematheque-documentaire.org.

²⁴ www.archivistes.org.

²⁵ www.fiafnet.org.

²⁶ historade.fr.

²⁷ For example the *Rendez-vous de l'Histoire de Blois*: rdv-histoire.com/programme/1945-1980-sports-de-mer-sous-loeil-du-cinema-amateur?show_session=2168 ou rdv-histoire.com/programme/la-bretagne-vue-par-des-gens-dhier-entre-evolutions-et-transformations-dun-territoire?show_session=2138/. Les rencontres du Lichtspiel: lichtspiel.ch/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/9-5mm-Symposium-Program.pdf.

Résumé

La Cinémathèque de Bretagne (www.cinematheque-bretagne.bzh) est fondée en 1986 dans une double démarche d'Éducation populaire et de collectage du patrimoine audiovisuel et cinématographique d'une région. Elle est implantée à Brest (siège), Rennes (à la Maison des Sciences de l'Homme en Bretagne) et Nantes (aux Archives départementales de Loire-Atlantique). Son implantation est un levier pour l'exercice de ses missions d'intérêt général couvrant l'ensemble du territoire breton et bien au-delà. À travers ses missions de collecte, de conservation, de documentation et de valorisation du patrimoine audiovisuel et cinématographique, l'ensemble de la chaîne de traitement du film est pris en charge pour atteindre ces objectifs patrimoniaux (plus de 50 000 éléments conservés, des films amateurs et professionnels réalisés par plus de 1 900 cinéastes, de 1910 à nos jours ainsi que 2 000 appareils). Les collections sont le reflet d'un ensemble de pratiques de réalisation mais également des témoins de l'histoire et de l'évolution des territoires, devenant des outils pour faciliter la compréhension de l'image et de la société. À ce titre et dans ce but, l'association collecte le cinéma amateur et professionnel. L'implication de la Cinémathèque de Bretagne dans le réseau des cinémathèques régionales et son action pour l'accès à cette ressource et sa diffusion contribuent à la reconnaissance de l'image amateur en tant qu'archive et élément de la mémoire collective. La Cinémathèque de Bretagne défend et promeut l'archive audiovisuelle comme source précieuse à la compréhension du monde et plus particulièrement sur des thèmes comme l'architecture et l'urbanisme. Ainsi, dans la dynamique de ses missions, la Cinémathèque de Bretagne porte une attention particulière à l'intérêt de la matière filmique comme ressource pour la recherche. L'image d'archive, au croisement de la mémoire individuelle et collective, est ainsi un terrain de connaissance, un espace de questionnement et d'analyse contribuant à tout projet de recherche tout autant qu'elle se nourrit des connaissances et des interrogations de la recherche. Les relations et collaborations avec ces publics sont donc essentielles.

Zusammenfassung

Die Cinémathèque de Bretagne (www.cinematheque-bretagne.bzh) wurde 1986 mit dem Ziel gegründet, sowohl Volksbildung zu betreiben als auch das audiovisuelle und filmische Erbe einer Region zu sammeln. Sie hat ihren Sitz in Brest (Hauptsitz), Rennes (in der Maison des Sciences de l'Homme en Bretagne) und Nantes (in den Archives départementales de Loire-Atlantique). Die verschiedenen Standorte der Cinémathèque sind ein Hilfsmittel für die Ausübung ihrer gemeinnützigen Aufgaben, die sich auf die gesamte Bretagne und weit darüber hinaus erstrecken.

Durch die Sammlung, Erhaltung, Dokumentation und Aufwertung des audiovisuellen und filmischen Erbes wird die gesamte Kette der Filmverarbeitung genutzt, um die patrimoniales Ziele zu erreichen (mehr als 50.000 erhaltene Elemente, Amateur- und Berufsfilme von mehr als 1.900 Filmemachern von 1910 bis heute sowie 2.000 Geräte). Die Sammlungen spiegeln eine Reihe von Filmpraktiken wider, sind aber auch Zeugen der Geschichte und der Entwicklung von Regionen und werden zu Werkzeugen, die das Verständnis von Bildern und Gesellschaft erleichtern. In dieser Eigenschaft und zu diesem Zweck sammelt der Verein Amateur- und Profi-Filme.

Die Einbindung der Cinémathèque de Bretagne in das Netzwerk der regionalen Kinematheken und ihr Einsatz für den Zugang zu dieser Ressource und deren Verbreitung tragen zur Anerkennung des Amateurfilms als Archiv und Teil des kollektiven Gedächtnisses bei. Die Cinémathèque de Bretagne verteidigt und fördert das audiovisuelle Archiv als wertvolle Quelle für das Verständnis der Welt und insbesondere für Themen wie Architektur und Städtebau. Daher legt die Cinémathèque de Bretagne im Rahmen ihrer Aufgaben besonderes Augenmerk auf die Bedeutung des Filmmaterials als Ressource für die Forschung. Das Archivbild, das am Schnittpunkt des individuellen und kollektiven Gedächtnisses steht, ist somit ein Wissensgebiet, ein Raum für Fragen und Analysen, der zu jedem Forschungsprojekt beiträgt, ebenso wie es sich von den Kenntnissen und Fragen der Forschung nährt. Die Beziehungen und die Zusammenarbeit mit dieser Öffentlichkeit sind daher von entscheidender Bedeutung.



Workshops and Exhibitions

Helena Zemánková

BRNO

An Industrial City under Reconstruction

Basics and results of an international students' workshop at the faculty of architecture, VUT Brno in 31 October to 4 November 2022 presented at the Maison de l'International (Plateau des Capucins) in Brest from 21 January to 5 February 2023.

At the beginning of the 19th century, the establishment of large factories in Brno radically transformed the city's

medieval image. This process, which began in the last quarter of the 18th century, gained momentum under

the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, taking advantage of its relative proximity to Vienna (Fig. 1, 2). As a result, Brno became the Empire's leading centre for textile production – earning itself the nickname of Manchester Moravia – and second only to Vienna for mechanical engineering. This advantageous situation continued in the young Czechoslovakia between the wars.

But during the Second World War, most of Brno's industrial establishments were seriously damaged by bombing. The factories had originally been located at the city gates, along the Svatka, Svitava and Biet rivers, which kept the machines moving and enabled the wool to be soaked for dyeing (Fig. 3). As the town grew, they were gradually absorbed into the urban fabric (Cejl, Špitálka, Křenová Dornych, Hybešova and Václavská streets).



↗ **Fig. 1:** Representation of the Schoellerové brothers' factory producing woollen goods in Brno, Cejl, at the end of the 19th century, source: Archiv města Brna.

← **Fig. 2:** Representation of the drapery weaving mill owned by the Popperivé brothers, associated with Aron and Jacob Low Beer in Brno, on Václavská and Hybešova streets, in the mid 19th century, source: Archiv města Brna.



Fig. 3: Location map of Brno, 1871. Reproduction by Michaela Ryšková et Petra Mertová.



↑ Fig. 4: Brno, Villa Löw-Beer, photo: Miroslav Zabadil.

↖ Fig. 5: Brno, Villa Tugendhat, photo: David Židlický.

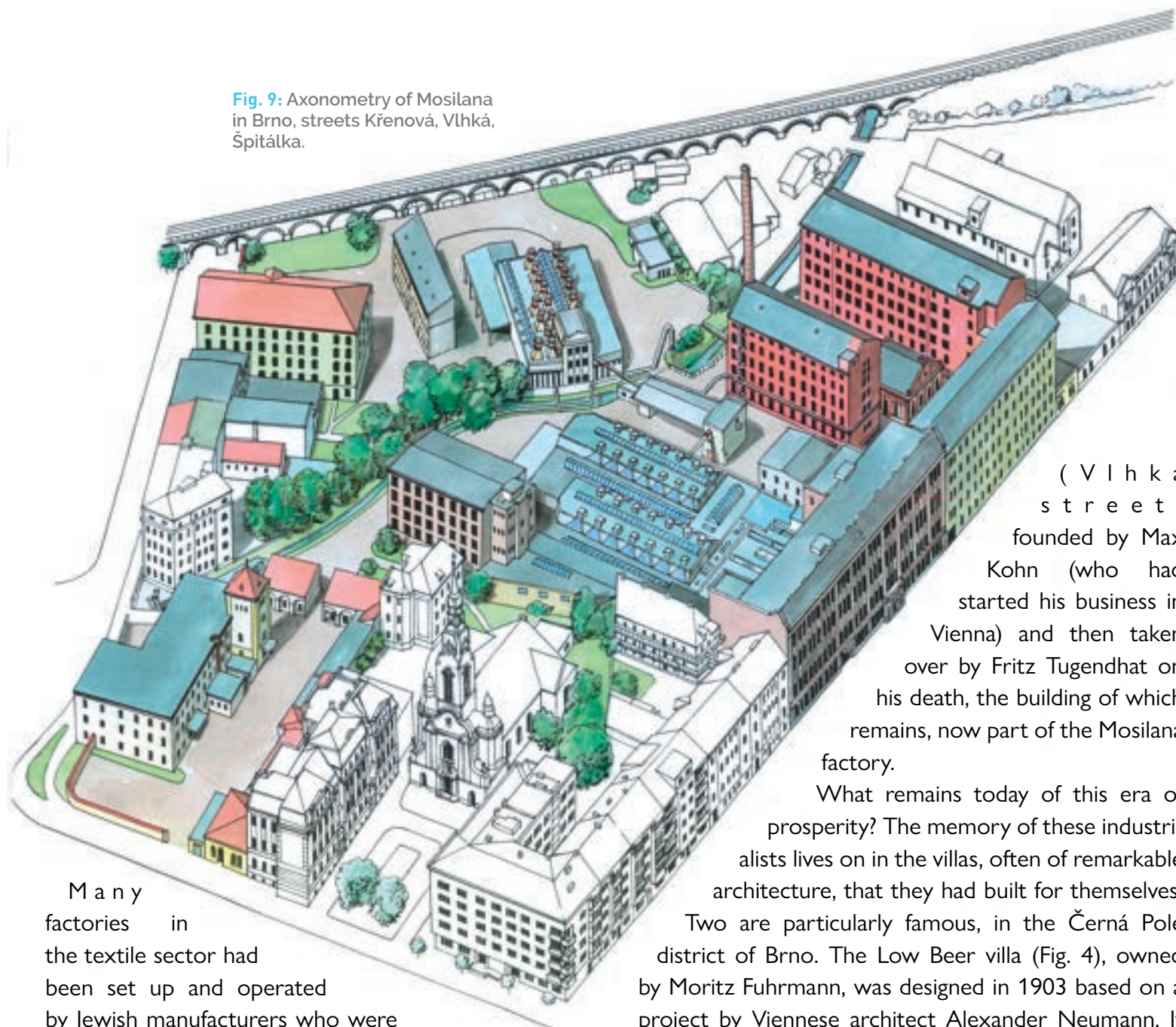
← Fig. 6: Brno, Villa Stiassni, photo: Petr Svoboda.

↙ Fig. 7: Brno, E. E. Essler spinning mill in Obrány, photo: Helena Zémanková.

↓ Fig. 8: Brno Fritsand company textile factory in Husovice, photo: Helena Zémanková.



Fig. 9: Axonometry of Mosilana in Brno, streets Křenová, Vlhká, Špitálka.



Many factories in the textile sector had been set up and operated by Jewish manufacturers who were persecuted or forced into exile during the period of Nazi occupation. Their assets were confiscated. This was the case with the spinning mill that Aron and Jacob Low Beer had founded in Brněnec (well known for Oskar Schindler's work there); the spinning mill that the Low Beer brothers had founded in Brno in 1877 (Václavská and Hybešova streets); the factory in Obřany (owned by Eduard Essler); the highly innovative men's clothing factory founded in Brno by Josef and Nathan Stiassni (Přízová street); and the woollen factory

(Vlhká street) founded by Max Kohn (who had started his business in Vienna) and then taken over by Fritz Tugendhat on his death, the building of which remains, now part of the Mosilana factory.

What remains today of this era of prosperity? The memory of these industrialists lives on in the villas, often of remarkable architecture, that they had built for themselves.

Two are particularly famous, in the Černá Pole district of Brno. The Low Beer villa (Fig. 4), owned by Moritz Fuhrmann, was designed in 1903 based on a project by Viennese architect Alexander Neumann. It now houses the Brno Region Museum, which features a permanent exhibition on the industrialisation of the city. On the same site, the Tugendhat villa, designed in 1930 by Ludwig Mies van der Rohe for the young couple Greta Low Beer and Fritz Tugendhat, is a major landmark of modern architecture, listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 2001. To the west of the city, the villa of industrialist Alfred Stiassni, designed in 1929 by Arnošt Wiesner in a three-hectare garden, was occupied by the Gestapo during the war before

being converted into the Methodical Centre for Modern Architecture (Fig. 5).

A large part of Brno's industrial heritage disappeared during the two world wars, while other buildings that bore witness to this activity fell victim to urban renewal operations when the time came for deindustrialisation. However, the heritage that has survived remains considerable and representative (Fig. 6). The new owners, who acquired the factories during privatisations in the 1990s, rarely understood the potential of this heritage, often contenting themselves with making temporary use of these long-abandoned buildings (Fig. 7). Other buildings, still waiting to be put to use, continue to fall into disrepair (Fig. 8), especially as the interest shown in them, far from being concerned with heritage preservation and the perpetuation of memory, is more often than not based solely on the land potential represented by these wastelands.

Through their ideas and projects, the students were able to open up new prospects for the reuse of industrial heritage in Brno, on the site of the former Mosilana factory.

“Mosilana, reviving an industrial site” Exhibition at the Maison de l'International, Brest (20 January – 05 February 2023). The European workshop, organised in November 2022 as part of the *Res Urbanae* programme, brought together 12 students in Urban Planning, Architecture and Landscaping from the Institute of Geoarchitecture in Brest (UBO), the Faculty of Architecture at the Technical University of Dresden (TUD), the Faculty of Architecture at the Brno University of Technology (VUT) and the Faculty of Architecture at the Slovak University of Technology in Bratislava.

The study focused on Mosilana (Fig. 9), a brownfield site located in Brno, the second largest city in the Czech Republic. This 4-hectare site, made up of several industrial buildings constructed between 1871 and 1929, was originally dedicated to the textile industry and was home to several stages of production: spinning, weaving, dyeing, and so on. Since production ceased in the early

1980s, the site has undergone a number of owners, all of whom have left it largely unchanged. Mosilana, one of the largest preserved industrial complexes in Brno, is therefore an important legacy.

After carrying out a collective analysis of the site (Fig. 10, 11), the four student teams devised projects for revitalising the site, which is currently under consideration by the City of Brno and its owner, Financial Consortium. The issues of heritage conservation and preservation, as well as the redevelopment of buildings and spaces, were at the heart of the project. What cultural, historical and memorial values does this site embody? How can we develop a revitalisation project that responds to contemporary changes in the town and its residents, while preserving this material and memorial heritage? How can we consolidate the town's long history and affirm its reasons and meaning?

Urban weaving (Team 1)

This project aims to reconnect with the site's past by reviving its textile identity (Fig. 12). To recreate this atmosphere, it was decided to revive the original historical functions by adapting them to contemporary needs and uses. In the characteristic buildings on the site, such as the boiler rooms and the brick-clad production sheds, the aim would be to combine a textile museum – which recalls the history of the site and of what ensured the prosperity of the city of Brno – with artists' residences and studios, as well as housing and offices, in response to the strong demand that is currently being felt. Preserved from cars parked on the outskirts, the site would be reserved for pedestrians. Particular attention would be paid to the treatment of the vegetation and the stream that crosses the site from north to south, whose landscape qualities should be enhanced. The arcades located under the railway line that runs along the edge of the site would be occupied by bars and restaurants, which would then benefit from a vast esplanade in front of their windows to develop a new atmosphere.

Mosilana square (Team 2)

This project aims to make Mosilana the heart of a green promenade linking the Svitava river, to the south of the city centre, with the sports district to the north-east (Fig. 13, 14). At the same time, the promenade would create links between the public facilities and the new urban projects planned for Brno, such as the new high-speed train station and the housing developments that are being massively developed on former industrial wasteland. The aim is to preserve the historic structure of Mosilana, its architectural heritage and its special atmosphere. The site, structured around the green promenade, a central public plaza and a covered area, would give the impression of a 'city within a city', protected from external nuisances and crowds. The programming imagined for the various buildings, which would include functions linked to production and crafts, would resonate as a tribute to the history of Mosilana.

New life in Mosilana (Team 3)

The watercourse that runs through the site provides the framework for this project (Fig. 15). The main route, which runs alongside it, will enable pedestrians and cyclists to link the town centre and the surrounding neighbourhoods. Secondary routes branching off from this major axis would irrigate the site with a series of pedestrian walkways. They would lead to small public or semi-public squares that would link the various elements of the programme. The size of these spaces would reflect the intended uses and multiply the desired ambiances: intimate, protected spaces at the foot of the housing units, more generous and lively spaces for buildings housing shops or offices. Through this interplay of scales, the project would respond as much to a desire to raise the profile of the site on a city-wide scale as to preserve its unique character on a neighbourhood scale.

WORKSHOP BRNO 2022

Mosilana Factory

This European workshop, organized in November 2022 in the framework of RES Urbanae, brings together 12 students in urban planning, architecture and landscaping from Dresden, Bratislava, Brno and Brno. During this workshop, the students worked on Mosilana, an industrial brownfield located in Brno, the second largest city in the Czech Republic.

Mosilana is located in the heart of Brno's historic 19th century industrial area, just outside the city center. This 4 hectare site, consisting of several factory buildings built between 1871 and 1929, was originally dedicated to the textile industry and hosted several production stages: spinning, weaving, dyeing... This production stopped in the early 1980s. Since then, this plot has had several private owners who have left the site practically intact. This makes Mosilana one of the largest industrial complexes still preserved in Brno and an important legacy. Today, the current owner, Financial Consortium, wants

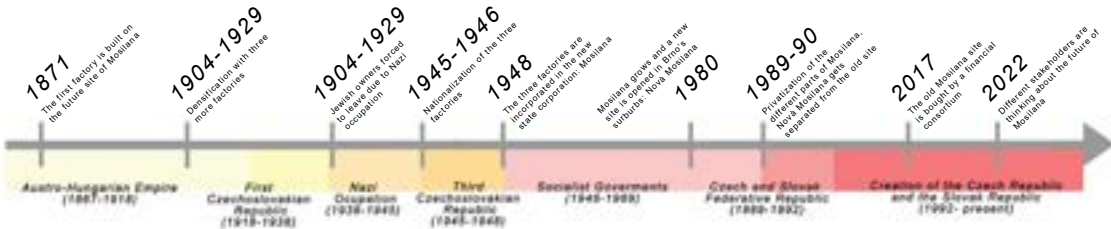
to design a project in consultation with the city to revive the site and preserve its heritage while giving it new urban functions. The students had the opportunity to work on issues related to industrial brownfields, their place in the fabric of our modern cities, how to adapt/integrate them into neighborhoods, how to mitigate the industrial and mineral aspect through the implementation of natural elements and generally how to apprehend a site of this scale.



Mosilana and Brno's boundary in 1885 and today

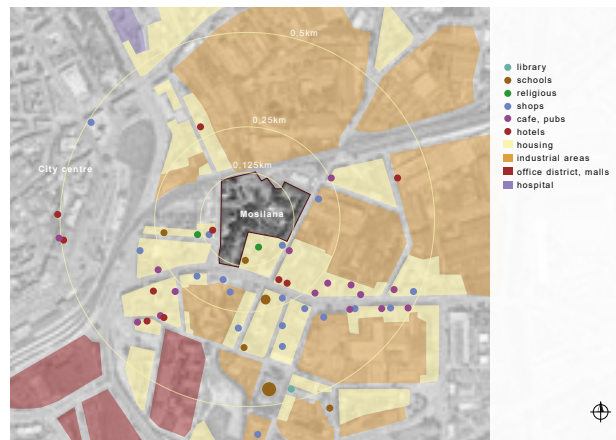


connections, transportation, entrances to the site



timeline

functions in the neighborhood



greenspaces, free spaces, shaded areas, important views



<p>Team Brno Arch. MSc. Baptiste Gautier Alice Lepeltier Simon Le Galle</p>	<p>Team Brno Ing. arch. Helena Zemánková, CSc. Radk Daniš Hana Galušková Nikita Akinidov</p>	<p>Team Dresden Dipl.-Ing. Architekt Florian Hässler Songjian Lin Sophie Luise Lott</p>	<p>Team International doc. Ing. Doménika Pivarčiová Eva Králová, CSc. Agnieszka Kuc Matej Ondrišák</p>
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Fig. 10: Analysis of the former Mosilana factory site. Baptiste Gautier, Alice Lepeltier and Simon Le Galle (UBO), Nikita Akinidov, Hana Galušková, Radek Daniš (VUT), Florian Hässler, Songjian Lin and Sophie Luise Lott (TUD), Doménika Pivarčiová, Matej Ondrišák and Agnieszka Kuc (IN).

analysis 2/2

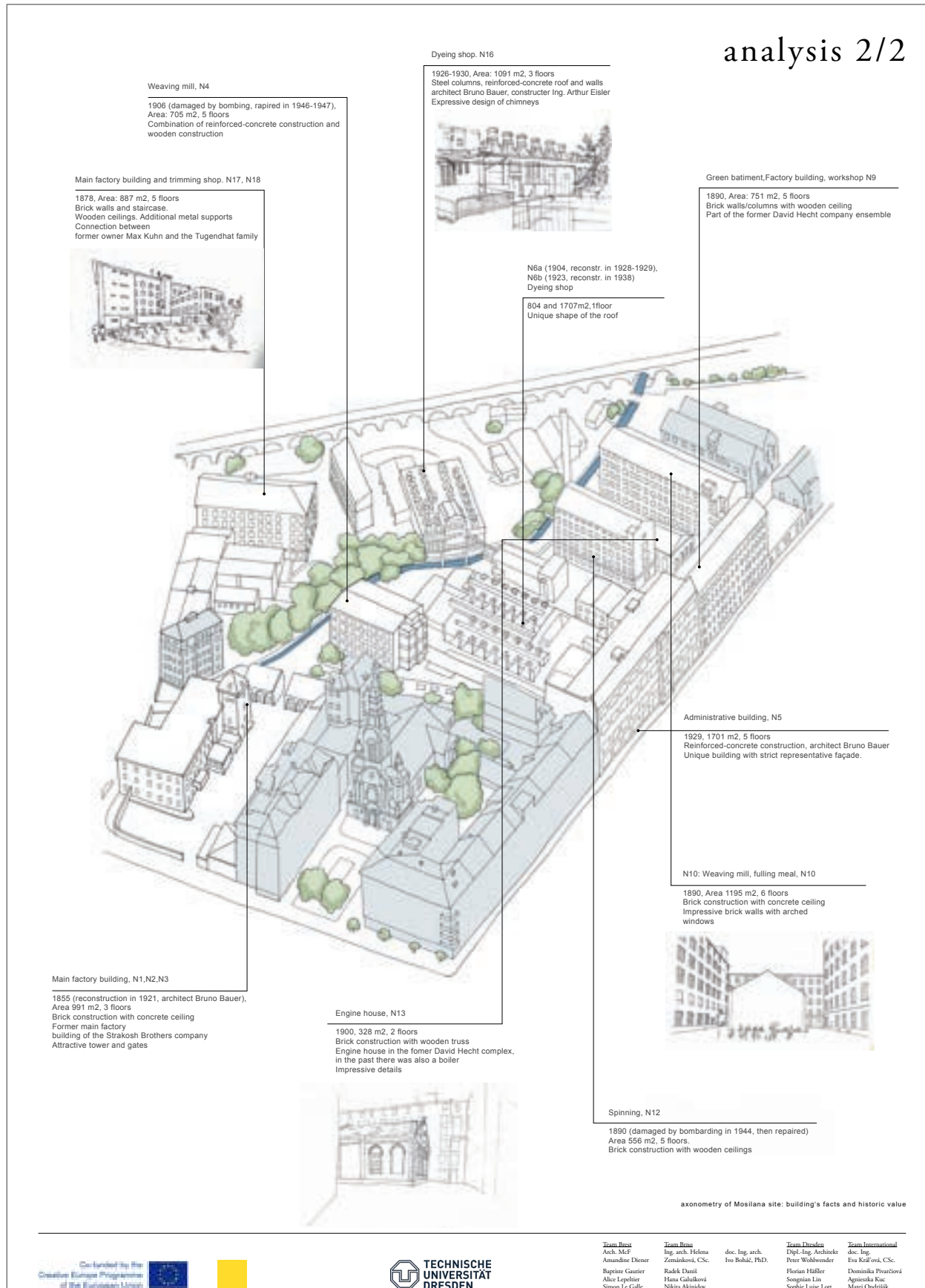
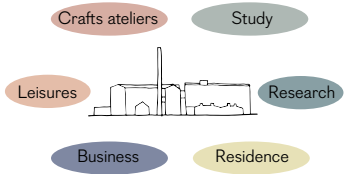
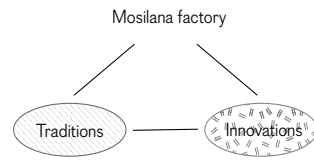
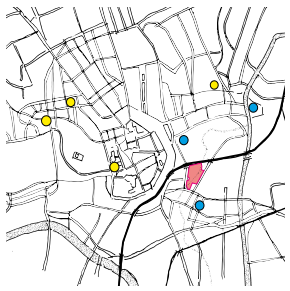


Fig. 11: Analysis of the former Mosilana factory site. Baptiste Gautier, Alice Lepeltier and Simon Le Galle (UBO), Nikita Akinidov, Hana Galušková, Radek Daniš (VUT), Florian Hässler, Songjian Lin and Sophie Luise Lott (TUD), Dominika Pivarčiová, Matej Ondříšek and Agnieszka Kuc (IN).

URBAN WEAVING TEAM 1



PROGRAM



Places with research and production of textiles in Brno



Exist transport system



Demolition plan



Greenery and transit



New crafts ateliers



The green promenade



Courtyard with cafe pavilion



Cafe under the railway bridge



Fig. 12: Plan of the Urban weaving project. Baptiste Gautier (UBO), Nikita Akinidov (VUT), Hana Galuškovi (VUT), Florian Hässler (TUD).

MOSILANA SQUARE
TEAM 2



Fig. 13: Plans for the Mosilana square project. Alice Lepeltier (UBO), Radek Daniš (VUT), Sophie Luise Lott (TUD), Agnieszka Kuc (IN).

MOSILANA SQUARE
TEAM 2



212

Helena Zemánková

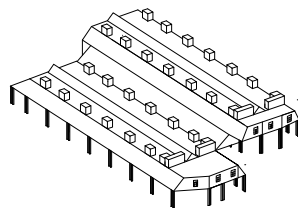
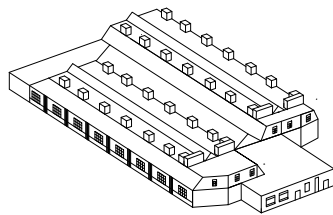
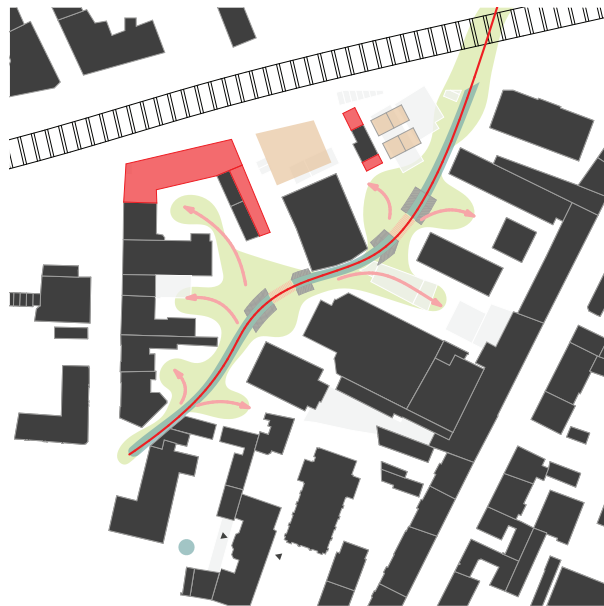


Fig. 14: Plans for the Mosilana square project. Alice Lepeltier (UBO), Radek Daniš (VUT), Sophie Luise Lott (TUD), Agnieszka Kuc (IN).

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NEW LIFE IN MOSILANA TEAM 3



- | | | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------|------|---------|-------------|------------|
| Mixed use: Shop/
Office/Residence | Hotel | Lawn | Sport | Residence | River |
| Low rent space | Library for the
School | Tree | Culture | Market hall | Main trace |



Fig. 15: Plans for the project entitled New life in Mosilana. Simon Le Galle (UBO), Songjian Lin (TUD), Dominika Pivarčiová (IN), Matej Ondrišák (IN).

Kerstin Zschke

BREST–DRESDEN, REINVENTING THE CITY

History, Destruction and Reconstruction after 1945

Exhibition held at the Maison des Projets (Plateau des Capucins) in Brest from 21 January to 5 February 2023 and, under a different title, at the Zentrum für Baukultur Sachsen, Dresden from 15 December 2023 to 10 February 2024

Background to the student research projects¹

As part of the *Res Urbanae* project, architecture students in the advanced degree programme at Dresden University of Technology worked at the Chair of Architectural History in the winter semesters 2021/22 and 2022/23 on two aspects in the history of Brest and Dresden: the history of architecture and urban planning from around 1500 and the reconstruction after 1945. The aim of this comparative study, which was approached from different thematic angles, was to present the similarities and differences between these two cities in terms of urban design, but also to highlight their specific features. Since such a work can never be complete, certain aspects were excluded due to their scope (housing) or complexity (places of remembrance).

The following topics were explored by using texts, photographs and cartographies:

1. The topography of the city and its mastery
2. Fortifications and classical urban morphology
3. Plans for the reconstruction after 1944/45
4. The military in the city
5. The head of the city – representative buildings
6. The heart of the city – churches
7. The belly of the city – market halls
8. The generator of expertise in the city – universities.

As an initial step, the individual topics were comprehensively researched using literature and archive research. For Brest, the digitised photo and plan collections of the city archives were a very important and comprehensive source of material, while the printed sources were not nearly as comprehensive as hoped or were not accessible from Dresden. The French language also presented the students with major challenges. For Dresden, the amount and availability of sources are much better due to the extensive research on history, architecture and urban planning at the Dresden University of Technology and the large holdings of the Saxon State and University Library (SLUB) on the history and reconstruction of Dresden.

In a second step, the sometimes very extensive topics were mapped on city plans of Brest and Dresden at the same scale. This makes it easy to recognise structural similarities and differences between the two cities, despite the considerable differences in size. The cartographic tables can be found within the inside folds of the book.

In a third step, the extensively researched topics were reduced to the most important aspects and buildings so that each could be presented on an exhibition panel; the reductions mainly concerned military and university buildings, representative buildings of the city or the state, and in Dresden the churches.

¹ The content of this text is based on work and comprises information gathered by the TU Dresden students and staff participating in this design project. References to sources consulted are not provided here.

→ Fig. 1: Brest, the river Penfeld in the city centre, photo: Kerstin Zschke, 2021.

↓ Fig. 2: Dresden, the floodplains of the Elbe in the city centre, panoramic photo, Wikimedia Commons.



Results of the student research projects Brest and Dresden – topography and history

Both cities are located on a river, Brest on the Penfeld and Dresden on the Elbe, and both are separated by the river into two city centres that are not of equal value. Brest developed on both sides of the steep banks of the Penfeld on a plateau that rises up to 103 metres above sea level in the Saint Marc district. Dresden, which lies in the Elbe valley and on the neighbouring hills, has a difference in altitude of over 250 metres. However, the difference in altitude is less noticeable here than in Brest, as the valley is very wide. Both cities face topographical challenges for which solutions have been conceived particularly since the 19th century to overcome the river and the differences in altitude. (Fig. 1, 2)

In the classical era, both cities gained economic, urban and architectural importance as naval base or royal

capital, which influenced the reconstruction of their respective urban structures and shaped their image despite the almost complete destruction of their city centres in 1944 and 1945.

Reconstruction plans after 1944/45

The plans for reconstruction after the Second World War were based on the ideas, lessons and experiences of the previous decades; they were also determined by political and social circumstances and requirements. Although both France and the GDR were governed centrally, reconstruction was organised differently.

In France, reconstruction was organised hierarchically in accordance with state guidelines, with the aim of building in a 'modern' way, but without prescribing a specific 'style'. In Brest, reconstruction was based upon the plans of Jean-Baptiste Mathon with traditional principles consisting



of two axes, analogous to the Roman *cardo maximus* and *decumanus maximus*, and rectangular building blocks with inner courtyards. (Fig. 3)

216

Kerstin Zschke

The GDR's German Academy of Architecture, which was strongly influenced by politics, orientated itself on the planning methods of the USSR, but also closely followed architectural developments in Western Europe, particularly in France. In the GDR, a distinction is made between

three phases of reconstruction: 1945–1949 – Initial reconstruction plans without any guidelines, 1950–1954 – building in the style of the “National Traditions” and from 1955 – reconstruction under the guidelines of standardisation, typification and industrialisation, which took place in Dresden under the direction of various architect-city planners. (Fig. 4)

Functional elements of the city

Reconstructing the buildings of the city administration – the head of the city, and its executive bodies – its hands, meant reconstructing a functioning city body. For this reason, the reconstruction of representative buildings is usually of particular importance in reconstruction plans, as they offer the opportunity to erect symbolic landmarks. In the case of Brest, it was additionally decided to clad the representative public buildings in local granite. In Dresden, the representative public buildings, which had been partially





← Fig. 3: Brest, aerial view of the rebuilt city centre, the transverse axis Banque de France-place Wilson-cité administrative, photo: Crier-le Bras, 1955.

↙ Fig. 4: Dresden, Prager Straße, photo: Wikimedia Commons, 1975.

↑ Fig. 5: Brest, Town Hall and Place de la Liberté, photo: Wikimedia Commons, 2017.

↓ Fig. 6: Dresden, Town Hall, photo: Wikimedia Commons, 2015.



destroyed, were rebuilt in a simplified form with a traditional cladding of local sandstone. (Fig. 5, 6)

Churches form the heart of the city; therefore, the reconstruction of destroyed churches reflects their significance in the current geopolitical and temporal context. In the predominantly Protestant city of Dresden, 23 churches were affected by the war: Only five were rebuilt, one of them true

to the original; four others were repurposed. Of the churches that were severely or completely damaged, eleven were demolished between 1945 and 1963, often for political reasons. In Brest, two of the four churches were destroyed, another was severely damaged; they were all rebuilt, one of them being moved slightly away from its original location. During the reconstruction phase, church services were held in temporary barrack churches, two of which were located in the centres of the two large barrack settlements.

Markets and market halls – the belly of the city – have always played an important role in the development of a city as important centres for the exchange of goods. However the significance of these places, in the particular context of Brest and Dresden and in the daily lives of their inhabitants, differ greatly. In contrast to Dresden, market halls were of more importance for Brest, where the concept of the “socialist housing complex” always included the construction of a central shopping centre. (Fig. 7,8)

Due to the large number of military buildings and facilities, it is clearly recognisable that both cities are



↑ Fig. 7: Brest, Halles Saint-Louis, photo: Kerstin Zschke, 2021.

↓ Fig. 8: Dresden-Dobritz, shopping center and school buildings, photo: K. Franze, 1970.

strongly influenced by the military, Brest by the navy, Dresden by the army and to a lesser extent by the air force. On the other hand, there is evidence that the military gradually moved its facilities from the city centre to the

outskirts over time and was successively replaced by the universities as a major employer after 1945. (Fig. 9, 10)

The (re)construction continues

The completion of the reconstruction of cities after the bombings of the Second World War marks the end of an extensive process, but not the end of a broader momentum of reconstruction. In France, the reconstruction of cities after the Second World War was considered complete in

1958 when the “Ministère de la Reconstruction et de l’Urbanisme” was renamed the “Ministère de la Construction”. In the GDR, there were several discussions about setting a date to mark the completion of reconstruction. However, the progress on the construction sites reflected a different reality.

Reconstruction in Brest was completed in 1961 with the construction of the town hall on the Place de la Liberté.





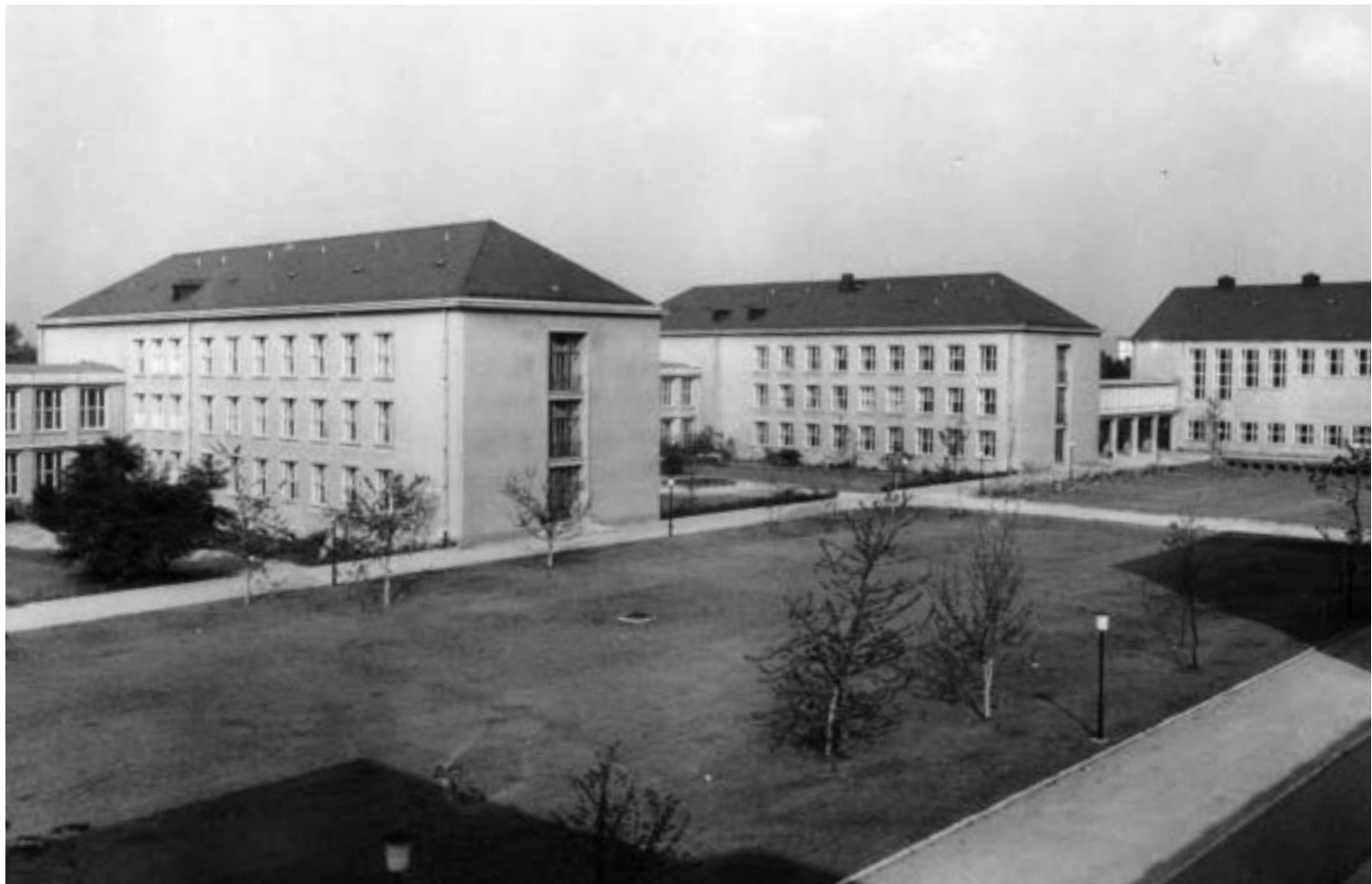
However, the city continued to be expanded, modernised and redesigned afterwards. In this context, questions of sustainable development now play an important role in the considerations made, as shown by the proposals of the students of the Institute of Geoarchitecture at the UBO for the remodelling of the interiors of urban blocks.

In Dresden, the reconstruction of the Semper Opera House was not completed until 1985. In 1990, at the time of the reunification of the two German states, the city centre still partly consisted of wasteland that had been temporarily converted into green spaces. Reconstruction continued in the following years, accompanied by a debate on the revision and redesign of various city neighbourhoods or their demolition and new construction. Even today, this process of (re)construction is not yet complete.

The following students took part in this design course taught by the Chair of Architectural History and Theory at TU Dresden: Severin Becker, Marleen Brockob, Anna Dietrich, Jonas Förster, Mirjam Geißler, Steven

↖ **Fig. 9:** Brest, Collège scientifique universitaire, inner courtyard with glazed pedestrian bridge, photo about 1960, source: Brest, Archives Municipales.

↓ **Fig. 10:** Dresden, Mathematical Institutes of the University, photo about 1960, source: Universitätsarchiv TU Dresden.



Amandine Diener, Patrick Dieudonné

BREST–DRESDEN, REINVENTING THE CITY

Inner City Blocks, Problems and Potentials

Exhibition held at the Maison des Projets (Plateau des Capucins) in Brest from 21 January to 5 February 2023 and, under a different title, at the Zentrum für Baukultur Sachsen, Dresden from 15 December 2023 to 10 February 2024

Work by students at the Brest Institute of Geoarchitecture (Université de Bretagne Occidentale): context of the study¹

The Urban Planning and Development students at the Institut de Géoarchitecture de Brest (Université de Bretagne occidentale) are following a course of study that takes a cross-disciplinary approach to the human and social sciences, urban typo-morphology, law applied to urban planning, ecology and project management. During a Master 1 professional workshop, they worked on the theme of the living environment in the rebuilt city centre of Brest, with a particular focus on the reconfiguration of inner city blocks.

This reflection was fuelled by a study trip to Dresden, carried out within the preliminary framework of the *Res Urbanae* project and thanks to the support of several partners (Ville de Brest, Région Bretagne, Maison de l'Allemagne, Office Franco-Allemand pour la Jeunesse). Following an analysis of the overall reconstruction plan carried out in Dresden, the aim was to look at the transformation processes still at work in a number of selected blocks, with a view to providing food for thought in relation to heritage issues, as well as uses.

More broadly, this work is part of the contemporary development initiatives supported by the city of Brest. After adopting the “Cœur de métropole Brest 2040: ville paysage en transition” plan-guide, designed by Studio

Paola Viganò, the city recently won a call for expressions of interest entitled “Sustainable city demonstrators”, launched by the Banque des Territoires and the French government, with a view to developing a regeneration project for the rebuilt centre (Fig. 1).

Understanding the heart of Dresden's city blocks

In Dresden, the Neustadt district (19th century) was used as a case study. These blocks, which escaped the bombardments and have recently been redeveloped, have a fairly constant configuration: tall buildings frame a central space that often takes the form of a series of courtyards – some private, others public and accessible – which meet the needs of the residents (washing up, bicycle parking, etc.) in a pleasant, friendly, green setting. Strollers can enter some of the inner blocks to enjoy cafés and small shops. In Kunstthofpassage, the facades are designed as works of art; one of them, for example, is animated by the wind or rain (Fig. 2).

In recent years, the architecture of Dresden's apartment blocks – whether built in the 19th century or in the 1970s – has undergone a number of improvements to adapt to the needs of residents, such as the addition of structures on the facade to accommodate loggias or balconies. These extensions provide residents with additional square metres of living space, often with

¹ The content of this text is based on work and comprises information gathered by the UBO Brest students and staff participating in this design project. References to sources consulted are not provided here.



Fig. 1: Aerial view of the Siam district in Brest, photo Dron'istair – Bma – Bma, published in *Côté Brest*, 11. 07. 2023.

pleasant views over the green inner courtyards (Fig. 3). For other projects, the choice was made to densify the core areas by building new flat blocks, in response to growing demand in Dresden.

Regenerating the rebuilt centre of Brest

In Brest, the buildings in the rebuilt centre generally take up the same footprint as those destroyed. They are semi-detached and usually four storeys high, framing a central undeveloped space that has been used over the years for parking or storage (Fig. 4). The mediocre quality of these spaces is due in particular to their mineral and monotonous character, the often derelict interior facades

and, for the most part, the high level of soil sealing (Fig. 5). While some core areas have been made accessible for the development of sports facilities or shops, the majority remain inaccessible from the street. These private spaces, managed by the condominiums, have the potential to improve the quality of life for residents, but are currently unused.

As Studio Paola Viganò emphasised in the guide plan, work on the core areas of the rebuilt city centre would revive the image of the heart of the metropolis and bring about a transformation that would respond to the contemporary challenges facing the city and its residents.



Fig. 2: Photograph of an inner-city development in Dresden, where the facades have been worked on with artists to make them playful. Here, elements emit sounds when it rains, photo: Arnaud Quentin.



Fig. 3: Photograph of an inner-city block in Dresden, where the dwellings, built in the 1960s, were later fitted with garden balconies, photo: Arnaud Quentin.

Development proposals: from the core areas to the Brest metropolitan project

Students from the Institut de Géoarchitecture have put forward proposals for the redevelopment of three blocks in the rebuilt city centre of Brest. Based on in-depth analyses of these sites, they were also inspired by the visits to Dresden, despite the differences in context. To restore the attractiveness of the rebuilt centre of Brest and improve the quality of life for its residents, four development options were explored (Fig. 6–9):

- “Greening” the heart of urban blocks to contribute to the well-being of residents and reduce the risk of heat islands in the urban environment;

- Work on the buildings by offering new spaces to extend the dwellings (balconies, loggias) and making them accessible where possible (lifts);
- rethinking the uses and occupancy of the core areas, in particular by reducing the number of car parks in favour of facilities adapted to current needs and practices (bicycle rooms, pushchairs, dustbins);
- encourage a dynamic of living together, in particular by working on the porosity between public and private spaces.

These proposals are broadly in line with the *Siamorphose* project currently under study – the metamorphosis of the Rue de Siam, the main thoroughfare in the rebuilt

city centre – supported by Brest Métropole and managed by the local public company Brest Métropole Aménagement, which aims to kick-start the renewal of the rebuilt city centre. Of the 96 blocks within the project area – which has around 8,700 inhabitants living in 6,666 homes – two will be selected between now and 2024 and will be the subject of a programme. If they are approved and financed by the Banque des territoires, their transformation is scheduled for completion in 2032. This regeneration project, which aims to improve the quality of life while preserving the heritage of the Reconstruction era, is renewing practices and scales of intervention. More than just a decoration, the greening and redevelopment of the inner blocks should serve as a support for new community practices in the urban environment.



↑ Fig. 4: Photograph of a central block in Brest that has been densely built up. The composite and heterogeneous whole is devoid of any aesthetic or landscape quality, photo: Arnaud Quentin.

↙ Fig. 5: Photograph of a very stony, mono-functional core block in Brest (obsolete parking bays, photo: Arnaud Quentin.

↘ Fig. 6: Proposed redevelopment of the heart of a block (rue Colbert, Brest) by introducing a tower and adding cells in the heart of the block, designed as a public space. Produced by students in the “Cœurs d’îlots” workshop, Institut de Géoarchitecture, 2021–2022.





↑ Fig. 7: Proposed redevelopment of a central block (rue Jean Moulin, Brest) into a landscaped vegetable garden reserved for the residents of neighbouring buildings. Produced by students in the “Cœurs d’îlots” workshop, Institut de Géoarchitecture, 2021–2022.

↗ Fig. 8: Proposed link between the two blocks (rue Jean Moulin, Brest) via a suspended restaurant offering a view of the right bank and the Plateau des Capucins. Produced by students in the “Cœurs d’îlots” workshop, Institut de Géoarchitecture, 2021–2022.

↓ Fig. 9: Proposed redevelopment of the heart of the square (Square Loir-et-Cher, Brest) using a suspended pedestrian footbridge between the existing trees on the site. Produced by students in the “Cœurs d’îlots” workshop, Institut de Géoarchitecture, 2021–2022.



Claudia Marx

BREST–DRESDEN, REINVENTING THE CITY

Brest, Pontaniou Reimagined

Exhibition held at the Maison des Projets (Plateau des Capucins) in Brest from 21 January to 5 February 2023 and, under a different title, at the Zentrum für Baukultur in Dresden from 15 December 2023 to 10 February 2024

In the winter semester 2021/2022, architecture students and staff at the Chair of Architectural Conservation and Design at TU Dresden (Professor Dr Claudia Marx) participated with a design project in the preliminary stage of the EU-funded project *Res Urbanae*.¹ Topic and focus of this five-month architectural design course, in which students at different stages of their architecture studies took part, was the revitalisation and sensitive adaptive reuse of historic buildings in two locations within the city of Brest: the Carré des Arts and the area around the former Prison de Pontaniou. Some of the results of the students' work surrounding the Prison de Pontaniou were shown under the title "Pontaniou Réimaginé" as part of two public exhibitions, which were hosted in Brest and Dresden respectively.

As Chair of Architectural Conservation and Design, my staff and I are engaged in theoretical, historical and design-led teaching and research. The teaching of the sensitive architectural development of the built heritage forms an important part of this and constitutes one aspect of the architecture education in Dresden. Increasingly, the repair and reuse of existing buildings and the material and cultural resources they embody are considered more widely as a societal necessity. My Chair seeks to contribute to this understanding through the teaching of architectural conservation and repair of the protected built heritage as well as through student design

projects focusing on valuable but neglected buildings within historic contexts, including envisaging suitable new uses for unused buildings. Architectural conservation not only helps to maintain material resources and embodied energy but also, more fundamentally, serves to preserve our built heritage for future generations. This outlook and approach informed the work of the students enrolled in the one-semester design course dealing with the historic architecture of Brest.

As part of the course, a study trip was undertaken to Brest in the autumn of 2021, when the students were able to experience the city first-hand, learn about its historical development and conduct site analyses – an essential first step in this architectural design project. During the visit, Brest revealed itself as a city shaped by its topographical conditions and in particular the Penfeld River (Fig. 1). Lined by high banks and plateaus, the Penfeld had a formative impact on the development of the port city. While the river and its banks have historically and to this day served as an arsenal and naval base with only limited access for civilians, the adjoining plateaus east and west of the river have produced two distinct parts of the city. Centre ville, located east of the Penfeld, has been shaped by its post-World War Two reconstruction. On the opposite side of the river there is the district of Recouvrance, historically a working-class quarter with a Breton and naval cultural heritage. There a number of former arsenal

¹ The content of this text is based on work and comprises information gathered by the TU Dresden students and staff participating in this design project. References to sources consulted are not provided here.



↑ Fig. 1: Plan of Brest, drawn by Paul Stampa as part of the student design project during winter semester 2021/2022, source: Paul Stampa.

→ Fig. 2: Architectural model (scale 1:1000) made by the TU Dresden students named in this text, winter semester 2021/2022. The Ateliers des Capucins are shown in red wine stained wood on a plateau west of the Penfeld, photo: Leonie Jahn.

buildings and structures from before the Second World War survive, such as the Ateliers du Plateau des Capucins, which were damaged during the war and have in more recent years been converted into a public space, with a cable-car connection across the Penfeld (Fig. 2).

The topographical differences that characterise the inner city of Brest are particularly noticeable in the Pontaniou area of Recouvrance – the location of the student design project focusing on the Prison de Pontaniou and its surroundings. Functioning as a naval prison and later as a civilian prison since the early 19th century, the Prison de Pontaniou was closed more than three decades ago. Since then the building has been without a use and is in neglected condition (Fig. 3). It is situated on a plateau approximately 10 metres above a lower courtyard area called La Madeleine. Both the smaller courtyard spaces around the prison and La Madeleine are surrounded by high stone walls and are inaccessible to the general public. Another historic arsenal building, the Bâtiment aux Lions, erected at the beginning of the 19th century, forms the eastern boundary of La Madeleine towards the docks and Penfeld River (Fig. 3, 4). Originally built as a storage building, and to control access to the arsenal, it has been protected as a historic monument since 2011, but is currently without a permanent use. The remains of old houses along rue Saint-Malo opposite the northern boundary wall of La Madeleine, which were saved from demolition by the association Vivre La Rue, complete this significant historic site in Brest (Fig. 5).

The objective of our design project focusing on this historic ensemble was for the students to develop architectural concepts for the reactivation and further use of the former prison building, the Bâtiment aux Lions and the adjoining courtyard spaces. Aim was to revive and thus preserve this built heritage for the future through well-considered proposals for architectural interventions and its sensitive adaptation for new uses, as well as to open up this important historic site to the residents of Recouvrance and the public generally. Site analyses carried out by the students revealed a lack of attractive and

accessible outdoor spaces and urban meeting places in the neighbouring areas. While the Ateliers des Capucins, located on a plateau to the northeast of the site under consideration, provide extensive indoor space for cultural and social activities for the inhabitants of Brest, there was a perceived lack of good quality outdoor and community spaces for the immediate benefit of the Pontaniou neighbourhood.

Based on their site observations and analyses, the students were encouraged to develop contextual design concepts aimed at preserving the specific identity and spatial qualities of this ensemble of buildings and courtyard spaces, while at the same time making them accessible and envisaging new uses for them that would serve the local community. Inspired by existing neighbourhood initiatives such as the projects and cultural events organised by the society Vivre La Rue, a number of students proposed to provide additional space for such activities within the





← Fig. 3: View of the Prison de Pontaniou (background) in 2021. The building in the foreground is the Bâtiment aux Lions, photo: Hans-Georg Lippert.

↘ Fig. 4: Architectural model (scale 1:250) made by the TU Dresden students named in this text, 2021/2022. The model shows the topography of the site under investigation, with the Bâtiment aux Lions in the foreground and the courtyard of La Madeleine behind it, photo: Chair of Architectural Conservation and Design.

↙ Fig. 5: Rue Saint-Malo with boundary wall of La Madeleine to the right, 2021, photo: Daniel Vollert.



historic buildings and courtyards surrounding the Prison de Pontaniou, thus supporting local civic engagement. It was also felt important to make connections to the wider community of Recouvrance and Brest, for instance by providing public access to La Madeleine and envisaging public uses for this open space at the heart of Pontaniou.

The making of physical architectural models was part of the design process and helped to understand the specific topography and character of the site and urban space under investigation (Fig. 6). In addition to creating points of access through the historic boundary walls surrounding La Madeleine and the Prison de Pontaniou, the

project aimed to connect the prison plateau with the lower-level courtyard of La Madeleine through architectural additions. Students' proposals for linking the two ranged from the creation of external sets of stairs to the design of further buildings with additional space for community use. It was important that the students' designs for new buildings were developed from the existing context (Fig. 7, 8, 9). Moreover, when translating their proposals for new uses into concepts for architectural interventions within the Prison de Pontaniou and the Bâtiment aux Lions, the students were encouraged to work sensitively

and with attention to the specific character and fabric of these historic buildings (Fig. 10, 11).

The following students took part in this design course taught by the Chair of Architectural Conservation and Design at TU Dresden: Lucas Dreßler, Svenja Eck, Florentine Hadamzick, Philipp Hänicke, Larissa Häschel, Lydia Johannemann, Tina Kresse, Isabelle Limpack, Cedric Oehler, Jule Richter, Paul Anton Stampa, Laura Ulbrich, Daniel Vollert and Tom Wiesner. The architecture staff involved were: Professor Dr Claudia Marx, Dr Franziska Herborn and Tom Macht.





↑ Fig. 6: Model by Paul Stampa (scale 1:250) showing his proposals for a new colonnade and external staircase to La Madeleine, 2022, photo: Leonie Jahn.

→ Fig. 7: Site plan by Laura Ulbrich showing her proposal for a new community centre northwest of the Prison de Pontaniou, which also serves to connect the prison courtyards with La Madeleine, source: Laura Ulbrich.



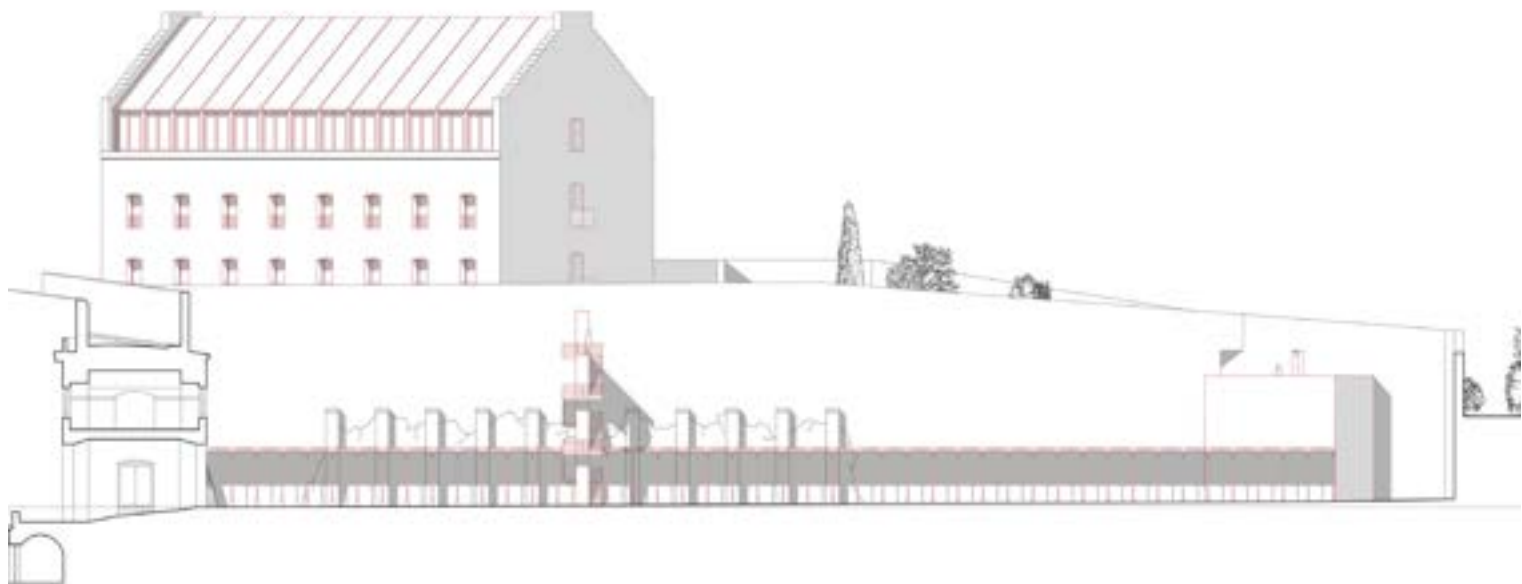


↑ Fig. 8: Design titled "Refuge Social" by Laura Ulbrich, showing her proposed community centre as viewed from the Prison de Pontaniou. The exterior of her new building is faced with granite to blend in with the surrounding context, 2022, source: Laura Ulbrich.

↗ Fig. 9: Design by Daniel Vollert showing his proposal for a new community building at the west end of La Madeleine. View of the ground floor looking towards the courtyard of La Madeleine and the Bâtiment aux Lions, with stairs leading up to the prison plateau. The Diocletian window design is derived from the historic arsenal buildings, 2022, source: Daniel Vollert.

↓ Fig. 10: Section and elevation drawing by Paul Stampa showing his proposed interventions and architectural additions to La Madeleine and the Prison de Pontaniou in red, 2022, source: Paul Stampa.

→ Fig. 11: Rendering by Paul Stampa showing his design proposal for the adaptation and enlargement of the windows of the Prison de Pontaniou, 2022, source: Paul Stampa.



Helena Zemánková

BREST–DRESDEN, REINVENTING THE CITY

A new Future for Pontaniou

Exhibition held at the Maison des Projets (Plateau des Capucins) in Brest from 21 January to 5 February 2023 and, under a different title, at the Zentrum für Baukultur Sachsen, from 15 December 2023 to 10 February 2024

Work by students at the VUT Brno: background to the study¹

In Brno, a city that inherited the flourishing industrial activity of the 19th century, students at the Faculty of Architecture are very aware of the issue of heritage and the questions raised by its transformation. The trips they made to Brest in 2021–2022 enabled them to develop a project workshop on the site of the former Pontaniou prison (Fig. 1). A historical analysis revealed the evolution of the suite before considering a new programme for the building and its surroundings.

Originally, under the Ancien Régime, this ancient building – known as the “Madeleine building” – housed an asylum founded in 1667 and run by nuns before a fire destroyed it in 1782. Five years later, as part of the extension of the ironworks system around Pontaniou, a foundry was set up in the gardens of the Madeleine convent. However, at the beginning of the 19th century, under the impetus of engineer Jean-Nicolas Trouille, it was decided to centralise the artillery directorate’s establishments and to free up the Madeleine building, which would henceforth house the Navy prison. The latter, designed as a modern prison, was the result of a transformation that took place at the same time as the Pontaniou lifting, known as the Bâtiment aux lions, was completed in 1810. Converted into a civil prison after the Second World War, it gradually became completely

unsuited to the conditions of detention and was definitively closed in 1990.

The building, which had fallen into disuse, remained on the fringes of the urban renewal project for the Plateau des Capucins, which was being established at the time. Although the area was undergoing profound change, no project had yet materialised to give new life to this now emblematic building. Although it is not protected as a Historic Monument, it is nevertheless the oldest industrial heritage building in Brest from the Ancien Régime that can still be seen.

There were no concrete plans (apart from studies by architecture or town planning students) to refurbish this building, despite its strategic location overlooking the Penfeld, close to the Rue Saint-Malo and the Ateliers des Capucins. It was no doubt the opening of the latter in 2018 that sparked renewed interest in the former prison. Brest métropole voted to declassify the prison from the public domain, the Brest-Pontaniou association sought to alert public opinion to the exceptional interest of the building in a town with few historic monuments, and soon the François Ier group was planning a luxury hotel complex, which was finally abandoned.

Motivated by the debates surrounding this disused site, which is nonetheless symbolic in the history of the city of Brest, the students have come up with a number of conversion scenarios. Inspired by the neighbouring rue Saint

¹ The content of this text is based on work and comprises information gathered by the VUT Brno students and staff participating in this design project. References to sources consulted are not provided here.

Malo, which has been taken over by artists, they plan to turn the former prison into a cultural centre, housing the École Européenne Supérieure d'Art de Brest (EESAB), which is cramped within the walls of the Carré des Arts on the left bank. The former prison would then be converted into creative workshops, a library and an exhibition gallery opening onto the Madeleine garden (Fig. 1, 2). While some envisage keeping this space open-air, others see it partially covered to create a relaxation area with a café and observation terrace (Fig. 3). Still others envisaged a public garden with an amphitheatre and a covered gallery (Fig. 4), encouraging people to walk between the public space and the perimeter of the new art school.

This – fictitious – work is part of a wider contemporary development initiative supported by Brest Metropole. In fact, at the beginning of 2023, Brest Metropole launched a call for projects to bring the former prison out of its long slumber.

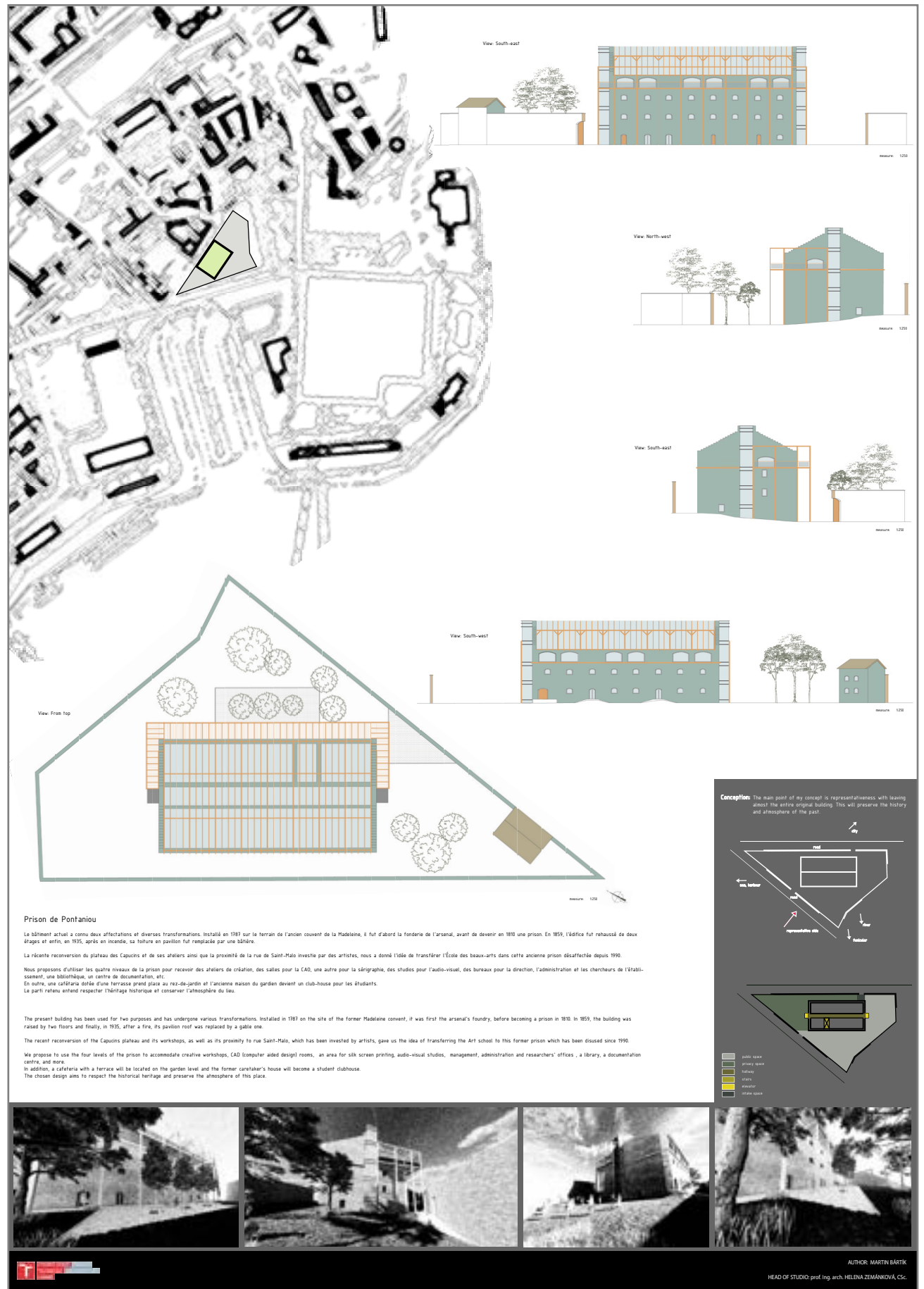
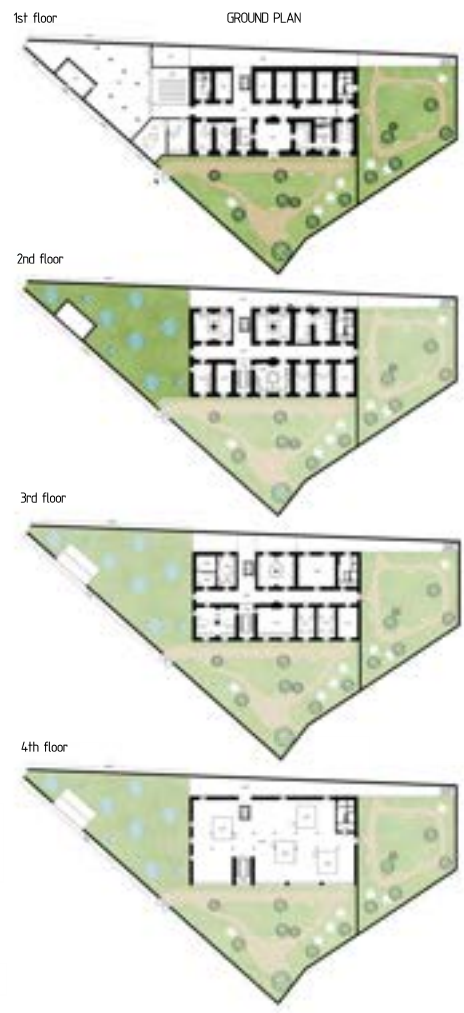


Fig. 1: Board by Martin Bártik.

The winner, announced at the end of the year, will be responsible for a memorial, cultural and tourist project, which should form an important part of the urban renewal of the right bank, with the creation of a large park overlooking the Penfeld.



EN

The prison no longer serves its original role.
The School of Fine Arts (EESAB) will be relocated here.
The building will not only be completely renovated but also extended.

The existing building is the main building and contains:
1st floor - a café, an entrance hall, a study department, facilities for employees, warehouses and toilets
2nd floor - a computer room, a digital workshop, a press, a multimedia workshop, a sound studio and a video workshop
3rd floor - a material workshop, a screen-printing workshop, a linotype workshop, a woodworking workshop, clay workshop, photo studio and red chamber
4th floor - an open space for art + cells for design workshops

Furthermore, two new outbuildings will be connected to the existing building.
One will only be at 1st floor level and will contain a gallery, auditorium, and an administrative office area. The second extension will copy the existing building.
It will be accessible from every floor of the building.

FR

L'école des Beaux-Arts (EESAB) sera relocalisée dans la prison désaffectée.
Le bâtiment sera non seulement entièrement rénové, mais aussi agrandi.

Le bâtiment existant demeurera la partie principale ; il abritera :
Au 1er niveau : un café, un hall d'entrée, un département d'étude, des installations pour les employés, des entrepôts et des sanitaires
Au 2e niveau : une salle informatique, un atelier numérique, une presse, un atelier multimédia, un studio son et un atelier vidéo
Au 3e niveau : un atelier matériaux, un atelier sérigraphie, un atelier linotype, un atelier de travail du bois, un atelier d'argile, un studio photo et une chambre noire
Au 4e niveau : un espace ouvert pour l'art et des cellules pour les ateliers de design

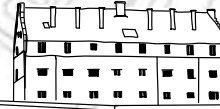
En outre, deux nouvelles dépendances seront reliées au bâtiment existant.
L'une sera uniquement au niveau du 1er niveau et contiendra une galerie, un auditorium et une zone de bureaux administratifs. La seconde extension copiera le bâtiment existant.
Elle sera accessible depuis tous les étages du bâtiment



Fig. 2: Board by Adela Ivasjukova.

BREST

Prison de Pontaniou



Built in 1667, the former naval prison in Brest, France, has been dilapidated since the end of the 20th century. The aim of this architectural proposal is to restore and renovate the building and to bring it back into use for, now, educational purposes. The prison grounds consist of a separate four-storey building surrounded by a courtyard. According to the new sketches, the building would serve the local art school, which would use the large space to allow for more airy studios and workshops. Due to the smaller cells that were located there, some floors are also dedicated to regular classrooms and facilities for teachers. The advantage of this renovation is that the supporting structures have more or less been left as originally planned. The largest intervention is the roofing of the courtyard to create a relaxing and representative space for students, teachers and other visitors to the school, which includes a café, exhibition space and a lecture hall. The roofing of the courtyard will also create an observation deck on the second floor for relaxation. The campus is located in a quieter part of the city centre by the water, which is suitable for relaxation.

Construite à partir de 1787, l'ancienne prison navale de Brest, en France, est délabrée depuis la fin du XXe siècle. L'objectif de cette proposition architecturale est de restaurer et de rénover le bâtiment et de le remettre en service, cette fois à des fins éducatives. Haut de quatre étages et indépendant, il est disposé dans une cour ceinte de murs. Selon les nouvelles esquisses, le bâtiment servirait désormais à l'école d'art locale, qui utiliserait le grand espace pour permettre l'aménagement de studios et d'ateliers plus spacieux.

En raison des cellules plus petites qui s'y trouvaient à l'origine, certains étages seraient également consacrés à des salles de classe ordinaires et à des installations d'enseignement. Cette rénovation conserverait l'essentiel des actuelles structures porteuses. La plus grande intervention consisterait à couvrir la cour afin de créer un espace de détente et de représentation pour les étudiants, les enseignants et les autres visiteurs de l'école ; un café, un espace d'exposition et une salle de conférence y prendraient place. Les travaux sur la toiture de la cour permettront également de créer une terrasse d'observation au deuxième étage à des fins de détente. Le campus est situé dans une partie calme du centre-ville, au bord de l'eau, ce qui est propice à la détente.



VÝROBKĚ ÚČENÍ PŘEHLEDA
TECHNICKÉ ARCHITEKTURY
V ŽIVÉ

AUTHOR: Jakub Lamich
HEAD OF STUDIO: PROF. ING. ARCH. HELENA ZEMÁNKOVÁ, CSC.

Fig. 3: Board by Jakub Lamich.



PONTANIOU
PRISON IN
BREST PRISON DE
PONTANIOU À
BREST

"Une école d'art n'a pas à être parfaite. En revanche, il faut qu'elle ait sa manière bien à elle de ne pas l'être."
Yves Michaud

"An art school does not have to be perfect. On the other hand, it must have its own distinctive way of not being perfect."
Yves Michaud

Le bâtiment original, inutilisé, en lente décadence et rébarbati, est une ancienne prison qui est visible depuis divers angles et hauteurs. Bien qu'il puisse sembler inspirant pour de nombreuses personnes, d'autres pourraient considérer qu'il ne mérite pas d'être conservé. Désormais, il va devenir un espace de recherche pour les étudiants en art, locaux ou étrangers, qui pourront se chercher, créer et évoluer.

J'ai conçu le bâtiment de manière à ce qu'il soit manifeste, de loin, qu'il s'agit d'un lieu où se déroulent des travaux extraordinaires réalisés par des personnes inspirées aux idées incroyables.

Pour transformer le bâtiment lui-même en une œuvre d'art, j'ai ajouté de nombreuses découpes et couleurs afin qu'il soit habillé de vêtements plus artistiques.

Et le bâtiment apparaît tel un cirque, un lieu joyeux et inspirant. J'ai essayé de faire entrer le plus de lumière possible dans le bâtiment et à cet effet, j'y en ai mis très peu. Pour donner vie au bâtiment et à l'ensemble de la zone en utilisant des touches de couleur et de verdure, j'ai conçu des bandes de toiture verte et placé des boîtes de fleurs autour du périmètre.

Cette proposition est excentrique, peut-être un peu exagérée, rapplacée avec tout ce qui est possible, mais elle n'est ni irréalisable ni impossible.

The original unused, slowly decaying, ugly building, is a former prison which is visible from many angles and heights. Although it might seem inspiring for many people, others might consider it good only for demolition. Now it will become a new home for art students, whether local or foreign, who will be free to create, search for themselves and evolve.

I designed it so that it is clear from a distance that this is a place where extraordinary work by inspired people with incredible ideas takes place. And the building appears just such a circus, a joyful and inspiring place. To transform the building itself into a work of art, I added many cuts and colours so that it is dressed into the building, as at the moment. I tried to let as much light as possible into the whole area to life using patches of colour and greenery. I designed strips of green roofing and placed boxes of flowers around the perimeter.

This proposal is quirky, perhaps somewhat exaggerated, patched with everything possible, but it is neither unfeasible nor impossible.

AMPHITHÉÂTRE

PARC

GALERIE

VUE SUD /
SOUTH VIEW

AMPHITHÉÂTRE / AMPHITHEATER

GALERIE / GALLERY

PARC / PARK

PRISON DE PONTANIOU À BREST

auteur/author: HANA NĚMCOVÁ
superviseur/supervisor: prof. Ing. arch. HELENA ZEMÁNKOVÁ, CS.

Sonia de Puineuf, Hans-Georg Lippert

BREST-DRESDEN/DRESDEN–BREST: URBAN IMAGINATION UNDER (RE)CONSTRUCTION

Exhibition at the Ateliers des Capucins, Brest (22 June – 17 September 2023), the Verkehrsmuseum, Dresden (19 December 2023 – 25 February 2024) and the VUT Brno (2 April - 29 April 2024)

Introduction

The travelling exhibition Brest-Dresden: Urban Imagination under (Re)Construction is a central element of the *Res Urbanae* project. Its basic approach is based on an insight that has emerged from our many years of collaboration in large research networks: within a comprehensive research framework (here: the history of Europe, the associated development of urban planning and architecture and the handling of disasters and destruction) it is always worthwhile to relate objects that at first glance appear to have little in common to one another. It often turns out that beyond the obvious differences in specific individual cases or in the preconditions, very similar tendencies and mechanisms are at work as well as very similar ideas that are being discussed. However, this requires the willingness to zoom out of the immediate context in order to gain an overview and – as the German saying goes – to see not only many trees, but the forest as a whole. With a bit of luck, the resulting and sometimes surprising gain in knowledge allows the possibility of transferring the newly obtained perspective to other objects and perhaps even drawing generally valid conclusions.

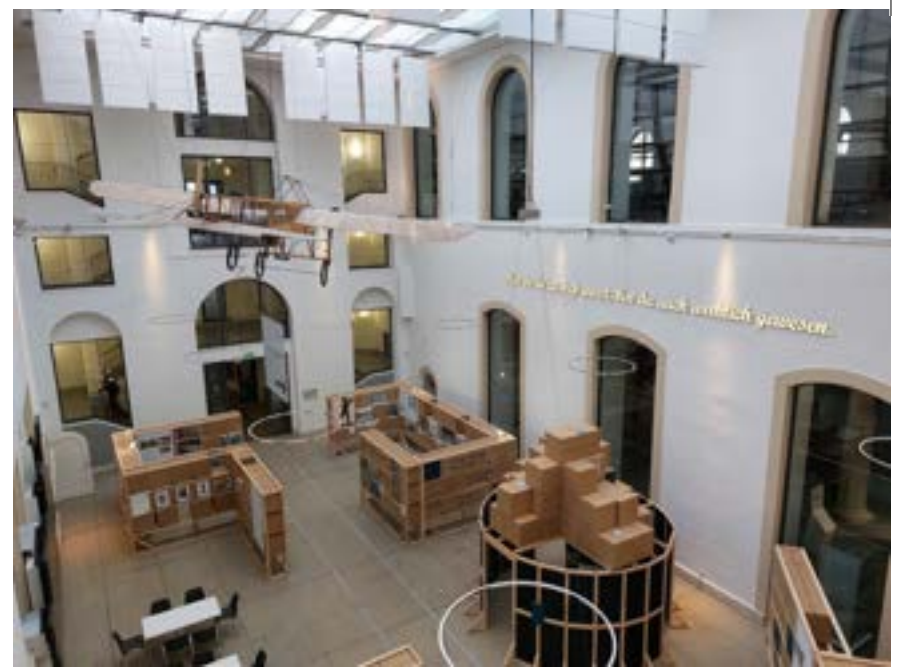
With this background, the exhibition sets out to explore the way in which urban imagination is constructed and reconstructed. It does so through a comparison of the histories of two cities – Brest (in France) and Dresden (in Germany). The former is a medium-sized city, the latter boasts half a million inhabitants.

Although Brest, a military arsenal facing the ocean, and Dresden, the baroque jewel of Saxony, may initially have seemed complete opposites, their destinies brought them closer together as they both suffered almost total destruction during the Second World War bombings.

From that moment on, these two cities faced similar reconstruction challenges. They had different pasts and antagonistic geo-political positions during the Cold War: Dresden fell behind the iron curtain and became part of a political and economic system dominated by the Soviet Union, while Brest, located at one of the western tips of the European continent, became a main base for the French nuclear submarines. These factors led to different ways of thinking and contrasting timeframes for reconstruction.

The exhibition is conceived as a journey through three centuries during which the development of these two cities will be compared with the aim of finding places where the differences meet and the similarities diverge. Each city conveys its own distinct self-image, defined by the constructions, destructions and reconstructions that have marked its territory. The completed projects as well as those that have remained on the drawing board will be put into perspective here. The notion of utopia will be touched upon because it is the generator of ideas and actions.

Thanks to their differences, Brest and Dresden, two cities with strong identities, allow us to reflect on the diversity of today's European cities which are confronted



↖ Fig. 1: Ateliers des Capucins, Brest, July 2023, photo: Hans-Georg Lippert.

↑ Fig. 2: Verkehrsmuseum, Dresden, February 2024, photo: Hans-Georg Lippert.

← Fig. 3: Ateliers des Capucins, Brest, 23.06.2023, Performance Street Art by Wen2 (Gwendal Huet), photo: Hans-Georg Lippert.

From embellishment to urban planning

Travellers' descriptions are always an interesting source to delve into when one seeks to uncover the historical image of a city. In the 18th century, it was noblemen, scholars, artists and writers who toured Europe, travelling from one country to another. They described the places they discovered and in particular the exceptional features and monuments that forged the identity of each city they visited.

This capital, royal and electoral residence of Dresden, the priceless jewel of Germany, shows in the greatest perfection all that only Paris, apart from itself, shows of sumptuousness in buildings, of preciousness in decorations, of richness in treasures, of extraordinariness in rarities, and of admirability in all things. This precious diamond is surrounded, like so many magnificent jewels, by the most beautiful and pleasing works of nature and art, illustrating to the world the phrase

with the same political, cultural and ecological challenges, but find multiple solutions, depending on their historical and present-day particularities.

We hope that each visitor will find in these reflections an echo of his or her own city and the solutions it can provide to the problems that mark out our common European history.



← Fig. 4: Bernardo Bellotto, known as Canaletto or Canaletto the Younger, Dresden, view of the right bank of the Elbe below the Augustus Bridge, 1747, oil on canvas, Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister Dresden.

↓ Fig. 5: Louis-Nicolas Van Blarenberghe, View of the Port of Brest, 1774, oil on canvas, Musée des Beaux-Arts de Brest.

that Dresden is the only place where earthly gods can find their place.¹

The spectacle offered by the navy in the port of Brest clearly shows the greatness of the French monarchy: the canal is filled with ships of all kinds; a large number of workers are constantly at work in the workshops along the port. [...] Everything that nature can offer that is most advantageous for the navy is to be found in the port of Brest: its canal is formed by a wide and deep mouth where the largest vessels are always afloat.²

First imaginings

In the 18th century, the city of Dresden was praised by foreign visitors who discovered a multicultural territory occupied by Slavic and Germanic peoples. Dresden earned itself the nickname of “Florence on the Elbe” because of its geographical position which was considered favourable for building, and its political significance that encouraged the emergence of a focal point for the arts and culture.

Dresden was chosen by the Saxon lords in 1547 to be their place of residence. The city flourished under



Augustus the Strong, the legendary elector of Saxony who was crowned king of Poland. The city owes many buildings that define its elegant appearance to him: the redesigned Augustus Bridge – a stone bridge that allows for a comfortable crossing of the river and helped to redevelop the Neustadt district; the cathedral with its proud spire and the gigantic dome of the Frauenkirche – a magnificent church built by the Protestant community; the Japanese Palace, designed to house the royal porcelain

1 “Diese Königliche und Chur-Fürstliche Sächsische Residenz und Haupt-Stadt Dreßden zeigt, als das unschätzbarste Kleinod Deutschlands, in ihrem Begriff alles dasjenige in der grösten Vollkommenheit, was nur sonst das grosse Paris prächtiges an Gebäuden, kostbares an Auszierungen, reiches an Schätzen, ungemeines an Seltenheiten, und bewundernswürdiges in allen Dingen sehen lässet. Es umgeben diesen kostbaren Stein die schönsten Vergnügungs-Wercke der Natur und Kunst, als deren herrlichste Juvelen, und stellen aller Welt den Satz unter die Augen, dass nur Dreßden alleine derjenige Ort sey, wo irdische Götter ihren Platz finden können.” Carl Christian Schramm, *Neues Europäisches Historisches Reise-Lexikon*, Leipzig, 1744, p. 350.

2 “Le spectacle qu’offre la marine dans le port de Brest fait bien sortir la grandeur de la monarchie française: le canal est rempli de vaisseaux de toute espèce; un peuple nombreux d’ouvriers travaille sans cesse dans les ateliers qui bordent le port. [...] Tout ce que la nature peut offrir de plus avantageux pour la marine se trouve dans le port de Brest: son canal est formé par une embouchure large et profonde où les plus grands vaisseaux sont toujours à flot.” Etienne Mignot de Montigny, 1752, quoted by Yves Le Gallo, “Images d’une ville: la morte et la vive.”, in Yves Gallo et al., *Brest alias Brest. Trois siècles d’urbanisme*, Liège, Mardaga, 1995, p. 13.

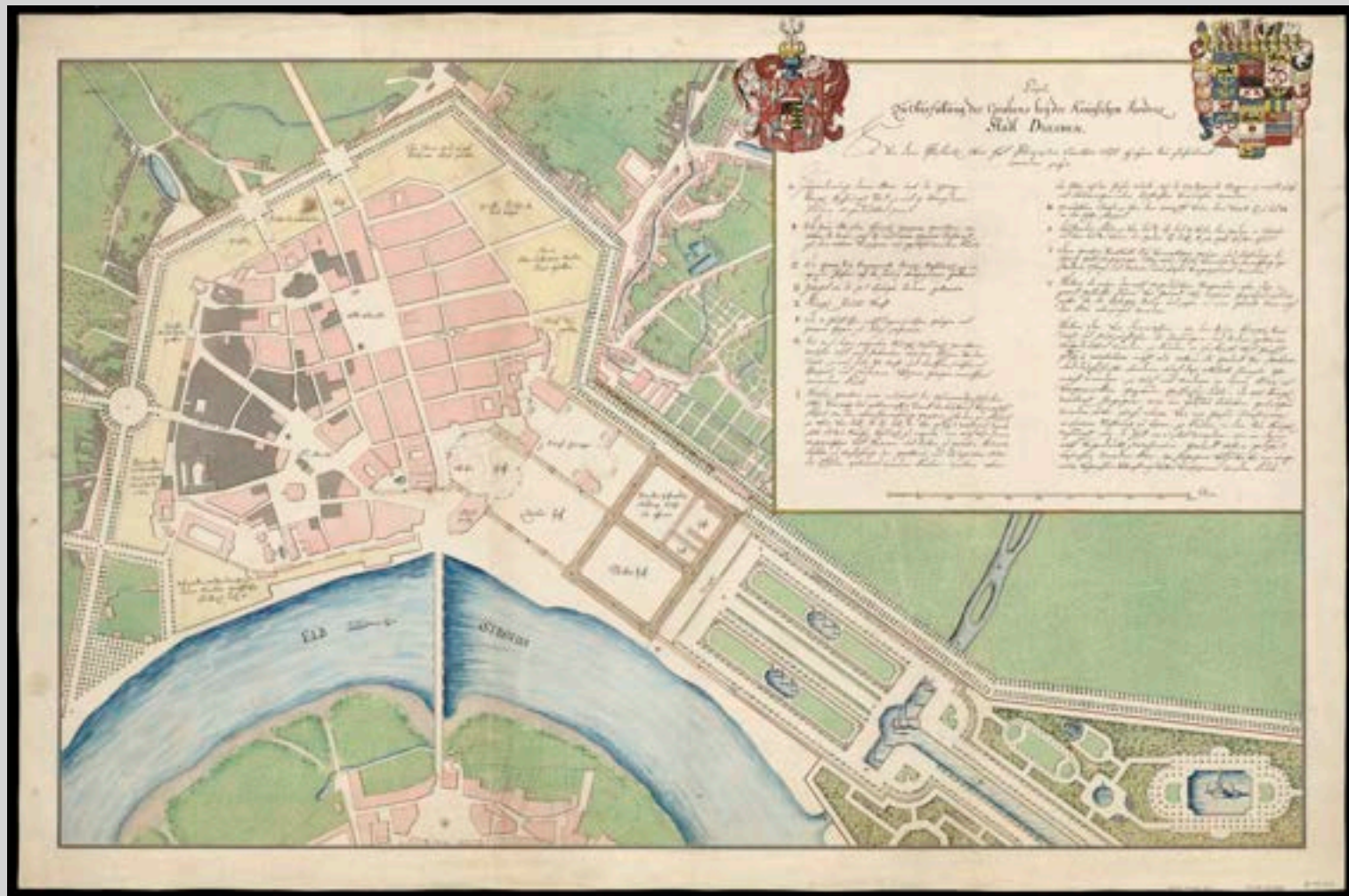


Fig. 6: François de Cuvilliés the Elder, Project for the demolition of the fortifications of Dresden, 1761, SLUB Dresden Deutsche Fotothek.

240

Sonia de Puineuf, Hans-Georg Lippert

King Frederick II of Prussia's bombardment of Dresden during the Seven Years' War was the worst destruction the city suffered before the bombings of 1945. Following the destruction of its suburbs in November 1758 and August 1759, the walled city itself came under attack for the first time from 19th to 22nd July 1760. After this attack, the south-eastern part of the fortress – roughly one third of its buildings – lay completely in ruins.

To avoid further damage, King Augustus III ordered the rapid demolition of the fortress, despite strong resistance from the military: the walls were dismantled and the moat filled in. Initial plans, drawn up by the architect Julius Heinrich Schwarze (1706–1775) ran into difficulties due to property rights, as the numerous private plots of land on the Counterscarp (the outer side of the fortress) prevented the creation of a symbolic promenade with squares opening out onto streets to create perspective. It was probably the princely elector couple Friedrich Christian (1720–1763) and Maria Antonia (1724–1780) who, whilst taking refuge in Munich from January 1760 to January 1762, established contact with François de Cuvilliés (1695–1768), the Bavarian court architect.

The plan he designed was the most majestic in 18th century Dresden. Its main feature was the construction of a 45-metre-wide avenue across the fortress moat, intercepted by circular and square spaces marking the entrances to the walled city. Another important element of the project was the construction of a huge palace (residential castle) on the fortress grounds northwest of the Zwinger. Its elongated forecourt and grandiose garden facing towards the Ostragehege, would have created a vast complex, making the historic town appear as little more than an ancient appendage.

In the end, Cuvilliés's project was quickly abandoned. When Dresden was destroyed in the early 19th century, more modest plans were adopted which took the significance of the property much more into account.

Stefan Hertzog

collections; or the Zwinger – a garden located on former glacis and lined with orangeries, which rivals descriptions of the mythical Hesperides garden and is the setting for all kinds of festivities. The king’s protective power was celebrated here by the omnipresent image of Hercules (“Hercules Saxonicus”),³ who can be seen at the main entrance gate (Kronentor) and the pavillons.

In addition to these monuments, there were those which, over the course of time and at the cost of some unavoidable destruction, helped to shape the well-known Dresden skyline with domes and towers. Painters did not fail to take an interest in this city, which was so refined and so welcoming to the arts (the collections of paintings, sculptures, precious objects and curiosities assembled by the Princes of Saxony were extremely rich and renowned). 18th century Dresden was immortalised by Bernardo Bellotto, nephew of the famous Canaletto, who came specially from Venice to paint it. The grandiose plans of the architects Pöppelmann and Cuvilliés, although abandoned while still on the drawing board, reveal Dresden’s ambitions for its architectural and urban development, which were fuelled by a Baroque style imagination.

Count Brühl, an influential figure in the principality, transformed the fortified banks of the Elbe into shady terraces which were not opened to the public until the beginning of the 19th century when they became a ‘must’ to stroll along for all visitors to the city.

Foreigners who ventured as far as Brest, the city ‘at the end of the world’, were fascinated primarily by its bustling port which rests in an exceptional maritime setting. Paintings depicting the intense activity of the shipyards housed in the Penfeld, the river separating the bourgeois town centre of Brest from Recouvrance, a working-class



Fig. 7: Bernardo Bellotto, known as Canaletto or Canaletto the Younger, View of the destroyed Kreuzkirche, copperplate engraving, 1765, SLUB Dresden Deutsche Fotothek.

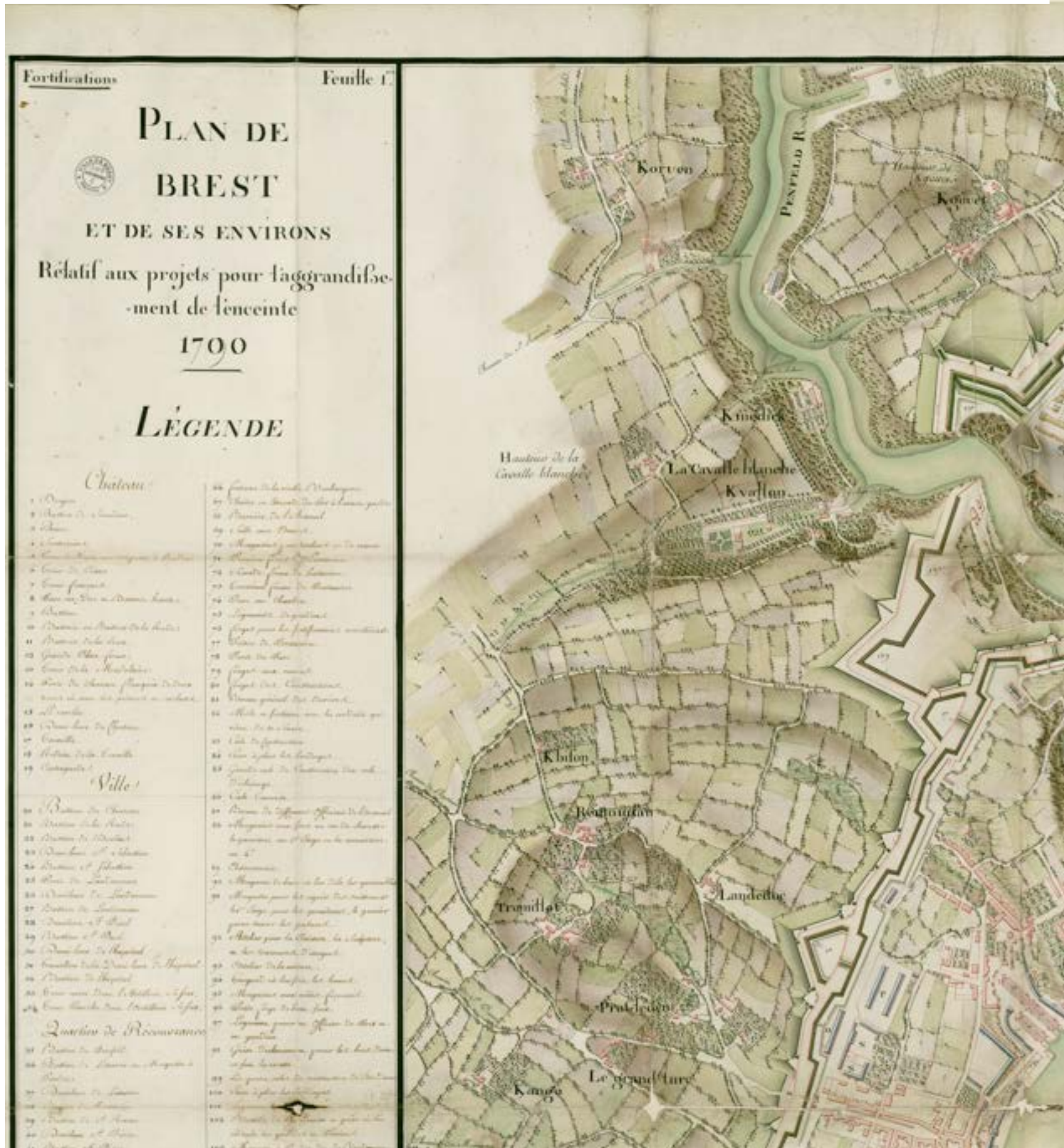
district, also bear testimony to this. The imagination of Brest draws its inspiration from the sea. The silhouettes of the masts of the boats in their perpetual to-and-fro movement stand out on the horizon. Brest saw the departures of many great navigators: Bougainville and La Pérouse both ventured forth from Brest to explore the world.

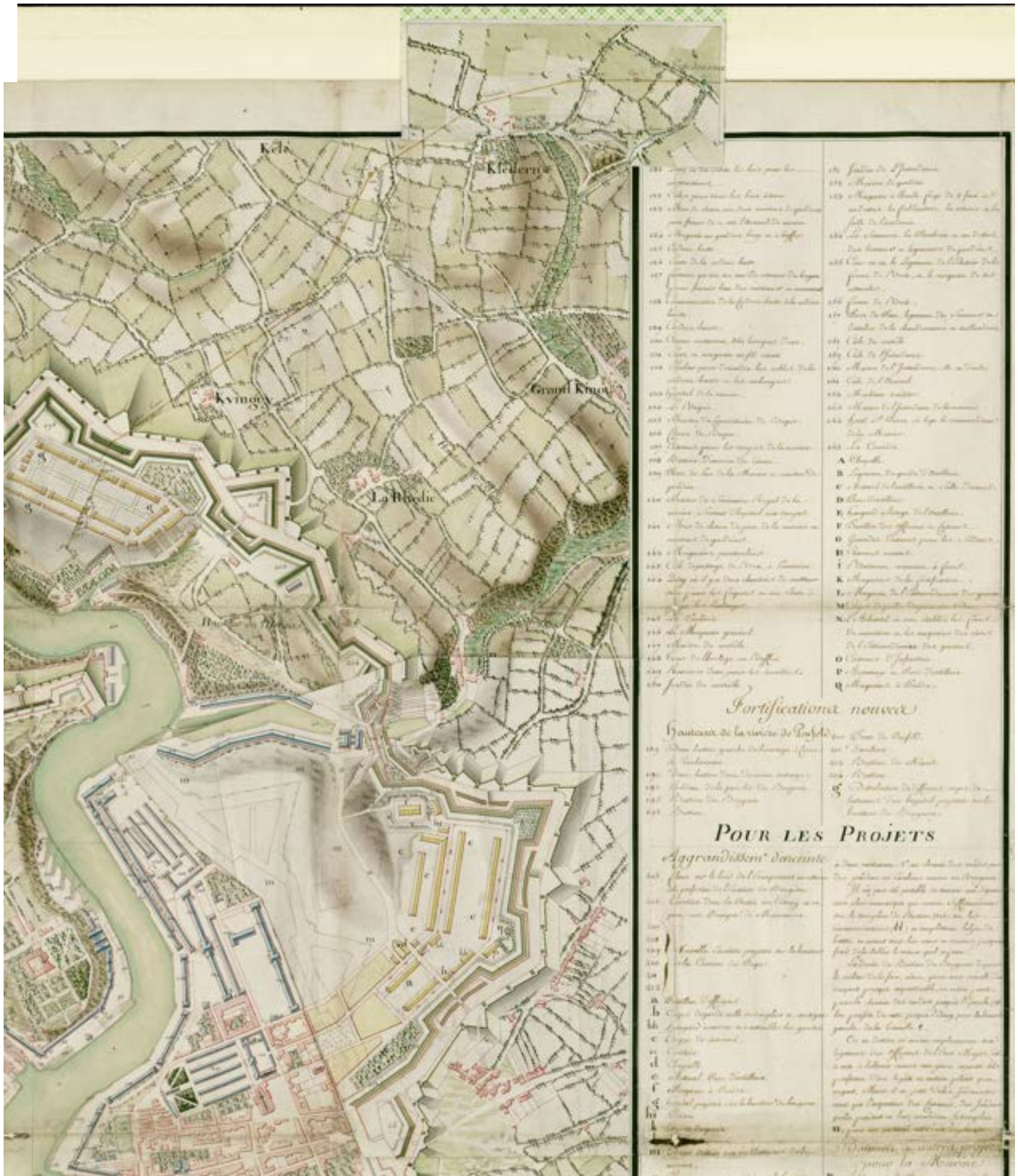
The city, which the engineer and architect Vauban surrounded with ramparts, certainly did not possess the glorious appearance of Dresden. According to Vauban, who was appointed commander of the square of Brest, the urban composition lacked harmony and the buildings were all built crookedly!⁴ It must be said that the site’s rugged topography did not make the architects’ task any easier. The picturesque rue de Siam, which owes its name to the oriental ambassadors who landed in Brest in 1687, lent the city its charm with its irregular layout on a slope that led all the way down to the arsenal.

3 “Hercules Saxonicus presents himself as the image of a supporter of the world, carrying the celestial globe on his shoulders, in reference to our heroic king’s status as governor of the empire.” (“Des Hercules Saxonicus zeigt sich als Bild eines Weltunterstützers, wie er die Himmelskugel auf seinen Schultern trägt, in Abzielung auf die Reichstatthalterschaft unseres heldenmütigen Königs.” Michael von Loën 1723/24, quoted by Achatz von Müller, “Herkules am Scheideweg. Die barocke Imagination Dresdens”, *Dresdner Hefte*, n° 92, 4/2007, p. 6.)

4 “It would still be necessary for there to be an architect in this city who would take care of the distribution of the streets and the manner of placing the chimneys, the beams and the cross-beams, because they [the Brestois] put everything askew, and this is what needs to be regulated.” (Sébastien Le Prestre de Vauban, 1694).

Fig. 8: Plan of Brest according to Vauban's project, late 17th century, Archives municipales de Brest.





However, the streets were, for the most part, laid out in straight lines because Brest developed beyond its historic castle as a military town. It was a town desired and constructed to serve the interests of those in power: a strategic port.⁵ At the end of the 18th century, a project to build a royal square was considered. It was proposed with gusto (but never carried out) by Jallier de Savault in a bid to *embellish* the city: a term used at the time to refer to urban developments that were as functional as they were symbolic.

A few beautiful monuments, such as the arsenal buildings built by Choquet de Lindu, grabbed the attention of travellers stopping over in Brest, but few seemed able to compete with the majestic harbour which mesmerised everyone’s gaze. The people of Brest could observe it from the Cours Dajot, a planted promenade which was laid out at the end of the century above the port. A statue of the King, which was never installed, was also meant to show him contemplating the ocean.

This drawing presents an urban embellishment project imagined by the architect Claude Jean-Baptiste Jallier de Savault (1739–1806) at the end of the Enlightenment period. The spectacular project he proposed to carry out included installing the royal statue, donated by the ‘Etats de Bretagne’ (The Estates of Brittany) in 1784, at the tip of the castle’s peninsula.

One glance at the title of this plan is all it takes to grasp the symbolic and practical problems that its development would cause. First of all, its purpose was to honour the king as liberator of the seas, crowned with glory at the end of the American War of Independence: the statue would therefore “hold dominion over the port, the roadstead and the Goulet”. In the spirit of the time, this type of monument was seen as a true incarnation of the monarch and it is easy to understand why placing his statue at the heart of the kingdom’s largest arsenal would indeed help to glorify his image as the heroic supreme commander of the Navy.

There were also the practical challenges of making this royal square coexist with the “establishments planned by the Navy”. Warehouses, which were to be built below and in front of the castle would intermingle with this monumental project in a skillful interweaving between public and military spaces.

However, the risks incurred by this rather original form of cohabitation finally prompted the Naval administration’s decision to abandon the project, which was strongly disapproved of by the population, even before the Revolution broke out.

Yvon Mullier-Plouzenec

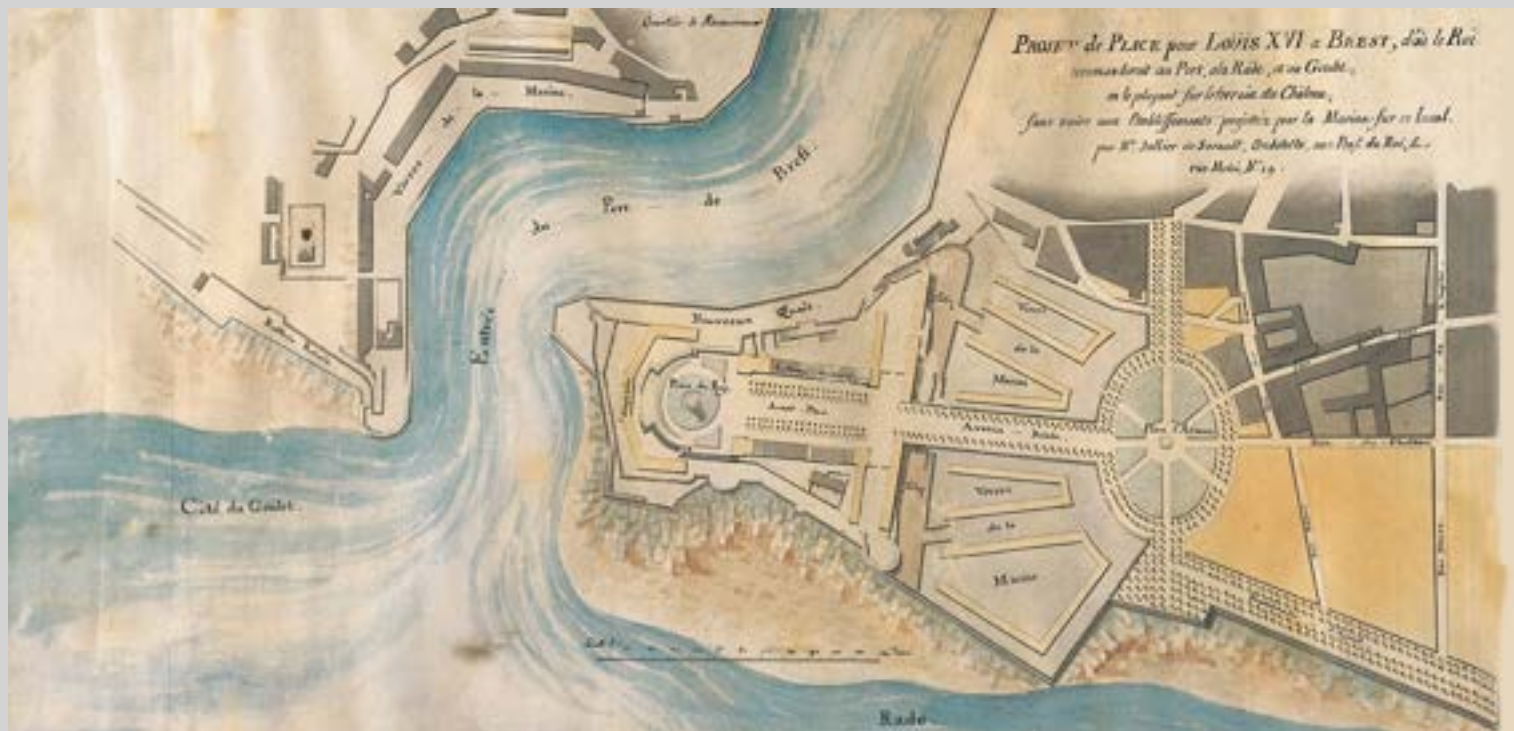


Fig. 9: Claude Jean-Baptiste Jallier de Savault, Unrealized project for the Place Louis XVI, Brest, plan, ca. 1785, Musée des Beaux-Arts de Brest.

The birth of urban planning

The 19th century, an era marked by major scientific and technological progress, saw an acceleration in the development of cities. Industrialisation led to a rural exodus: the cities attracted more and more people. This exodus was facilitated by the developing railways which had a strong impact on urban design.

In Dresden, the constructive energy of the nobility was replaced by that of entrepreneurs – manufacturers of tobacco, chicory, sugar, chocolate, precision mechanics, cameras, cosmetics, etc. They imposed their new vision of the city: the efficient city.⁵⁶ A flourishing economy is dependent on a large workforce and multiple exchanges. Mobility became a recurring theme in urban planning discussions, as it would continue to shape the city by increasing its built-up areas. In order to curb chaotic growth, the need for concerted urban planning imposed itself on municipal decision-makers. The discipline of *urban planning* was born in the 19th century.

Although Dresden already had a remarkable bridge, more had to be built to meet the challenges of modernity. The colossal scale of the work, which required the use of innovative technical means to combat the elements of nature, became a new subject of representation and gradually generated the image of a city under permanent construction.

The aesthetics of these bold achievements were resolutely forward-looking. The suspension bridge linking the districts of Blasewitz and Loschwitz was given the somewhat impressive name of “Blue Miracle”, due to the colour of its exposed steel structure. Not far from it, the Schwebebahn – one of the first suspension monorails in the world – was built in 1901. The area that developed on the surrounding hills (now easily accessible) was the home of sanatoriums where tuberculosis – the disease of the century exacerbated by urban slums – was treated.

5 Philippe Henwood, “L’Arsenal en Penfeld, des origines au Second Empire”, in Yves Gallo et al., *Brest alias Brest. Trois siècles d’urbanisme*, Liège, Mardaga, 1995, p. 56–69.

6 Heike Delitz, “Schönheit, Durchlässigkeit, Urbanität. De Stadtvision des Dresdner Bürgertums”, *Dresdner Hefte*, no. 92, 4/2007, p. 24.



↑ Fig. 10: Walter Hahn, Dresden-Striesen. View of the district with Waldersee-Platz (today Stresemannplatz). Oblique aerial view from the east, photo 1924, SLUB Dresden Deutsche Fotothek.

↓ Fig. 11: Gussy Hippold-Ahnert, Bathhouse at the Loschwitz Bridge (called The Blue Miracle), 1935, Hygiene-Museum Dresden.

↓ Fig. 12: Hans Scharoun, Design submitted for the Deutsches Hygienemuseum competition, with the Zwinger in the background, Dresden 1920, Baukunstarchiv der Akademie der Künste Berlin, Hans-Scharoun-Archiv.





Fig. 13: Joseph-Victor Tritschler, Unrealized project of the bridge in Brest (Penfeld), 1843, Archives municipales de Brest.

As the historical cradle of Brest, the Penfeld River is intimately linked to the city's destiny. The merchant and military ports developed along its banks. However, for a long time the only means of crossing between the two banks was by ferry and its crossings were as irregular as they were dangerous.

It was only in 1861, under the Second Empire, that the Imperial Bridge was finally inaugurated after nearly 30 years of procrastination and controversy between local and national authorities. Several spontaneous proposals had preceded it, including that of Joseph-Victor Tritschler (1815–1879).

In 1843, this entrepreneur and town councillor, who was not without artistic talent, proposed a project for a suspension bridge with a large arch. The bridge would have had a movable deck and would have opened in the middle to allow the naval vessels with the highest masts to pass. Its monumental arch would have risen 55 metres above the highest tides and its 400 steps would have allowed pedestrians to continue crossing despite the passage of ships.

Although retained by the municipal council of the city of Brest in 1852, Tritschler's spectacular project was finally discarded in favour of the swing bridge presented by Nicolas Cadiat and Alphonse Oudry, respectively architect and engineer.

Christine Berthou-Ballot

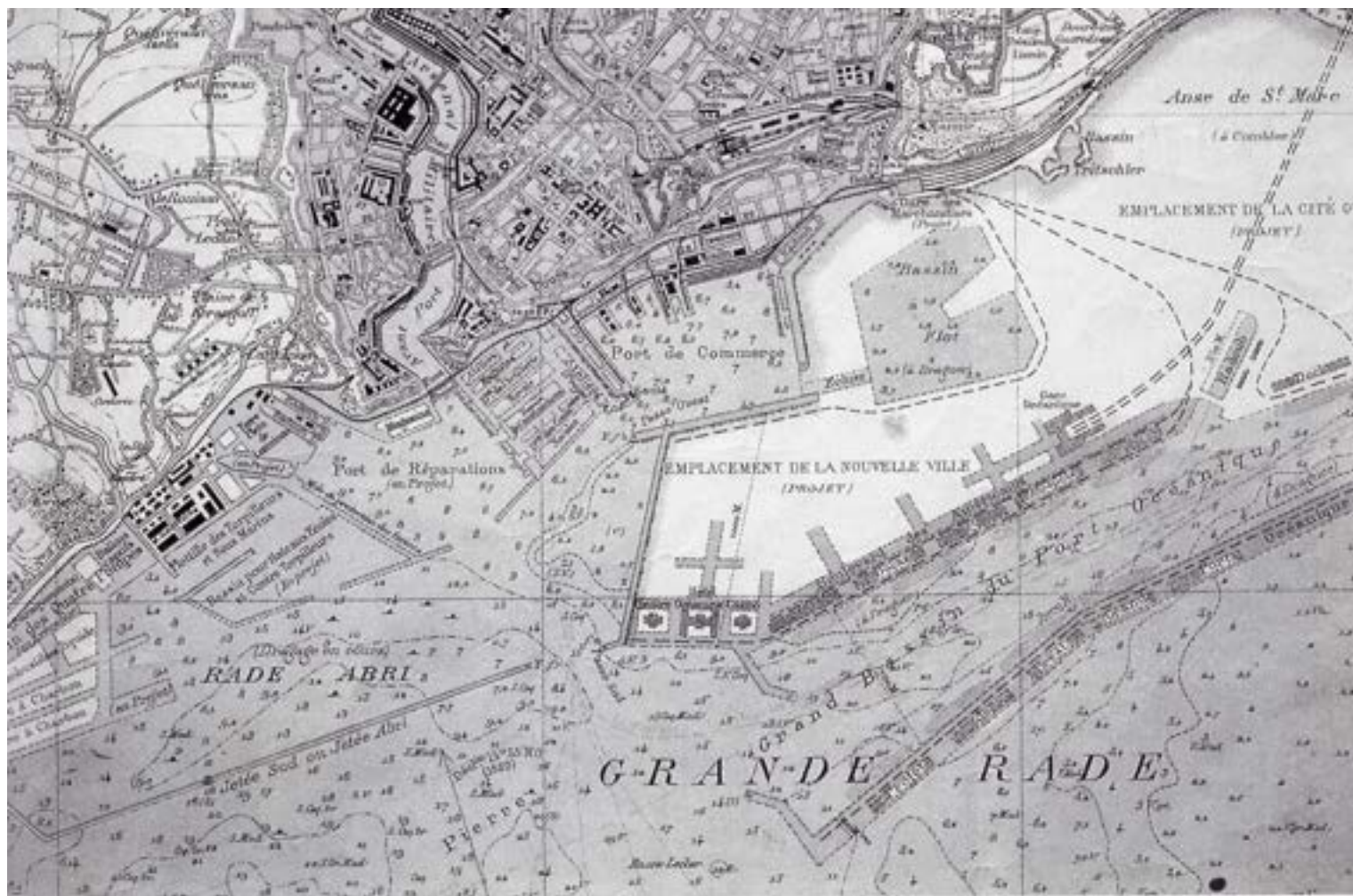


Fig. 14: Brest, oceanic port, plan marketed in 1919, private coll.

These health establishments made Dresden famous again as a city whose approach to hygiene was soon to be celebrated internationally thanks to the flourishing chemical industry.⁷

In Brest, the advent of the industrial age led to major changes to the military port, which sought to expand at the expense of trade and fishing. The unprecedented landscaping, the construction of huge naval workshops and the Navy's modern equipment were to cause its gradual withdrawal from the town. In 1865, the Penfeld became a port which was definitively out of bounds for civilians.

Until 1861 Brest was all but cut in two: access to Recouvrance was restricted because there was no bridge linking the two banks of the Penfeld. Daring new projects sought to reconcile military activity in the port and the

civilian need for passage from one bank to the other and this led to the construction of a swing bridge.

For a century, the people of Brest, well aware of the geographical advantages of their city, dreamt of a transatlantic port⁸ that would counterbalance the maritime influence of the Navy. The project to become the “largest port in the world”, which would have required significant work, remained nothing more than an utopian scheme in the face of competition from other French cities. Nevertheless, it completed the mosaic of Brest's oceanic imagination.

Meanwhile, back on land, conditions in the town centre of Brest were beginning to become cramped. The influx of rural labour necessitated the expansion of the city beyond its fortifications, which were increasingly subjected to the population's growth. The district of Saint Martin (first known as Annexion) resulted out of the municipality's

⁷ “Dresden: Stadt der Hygiene”, in *Das Deutsche Hygiene-Museum Dresden 1911 – 1990*, Dresden, Michel Sandstein Verlag, p. 15.

⁸ Daniel Le Couédic, “La rémanence du rêve”, in Yves Gallo et al., 1995, *op. cit.*, p. 140–144.

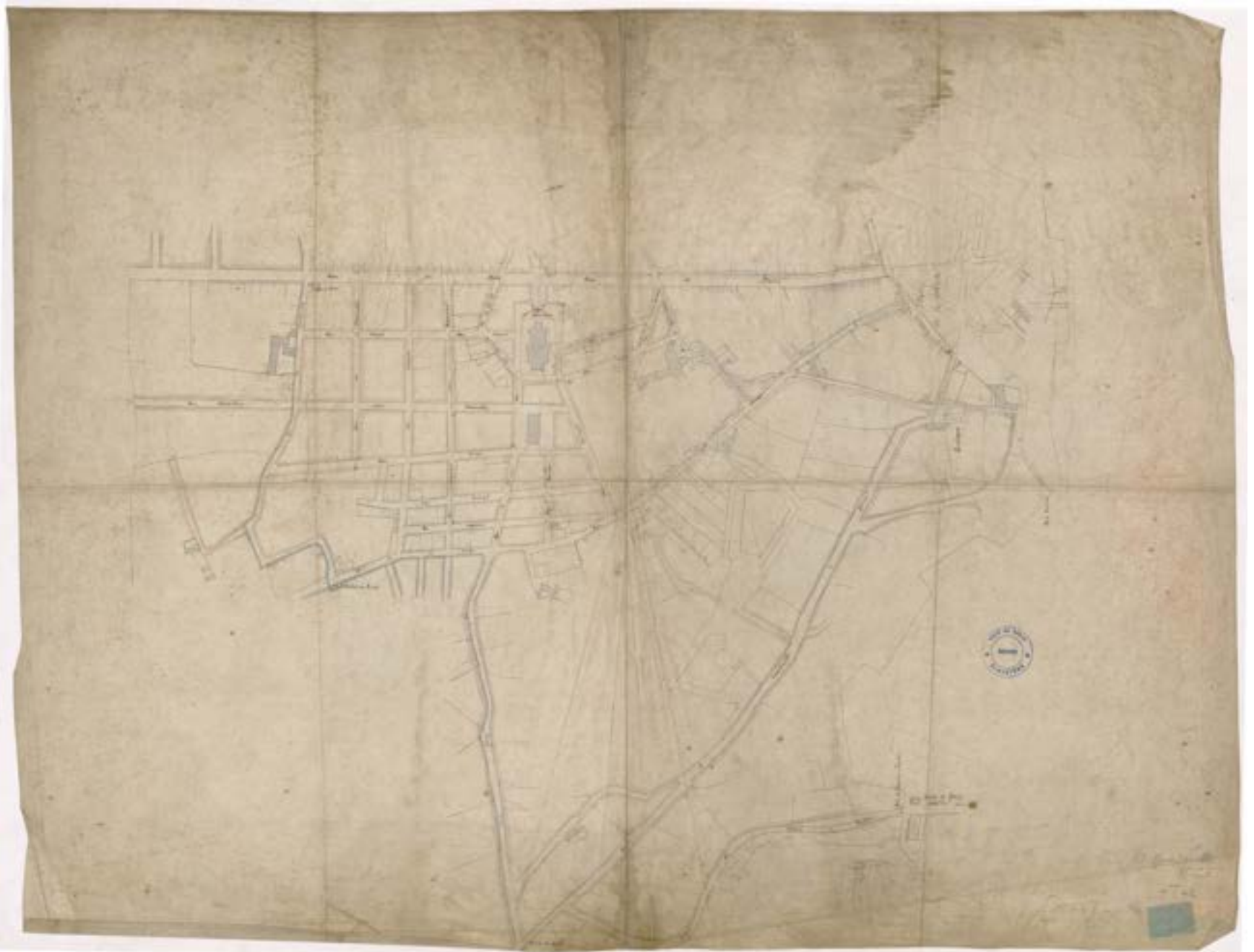
desire to create an extension with all the necessary living facilities (not only a church, but also a school, a market hall and a washhouse). Brest began its fragmentary and sprawling growth onto the surrounding agricultural land where factories and houses were built. Moreover, there was the question of connection with the town of Quimper (the seat of the prefecture) and therefore the need for a

crossing over the river Elorn which some kilometres east of the town flows into the harbour of Brest.

Modernity at work

The beginning of the 20th century was characterised by the optimistic momentum of the Belle Epoque until the arrival of the Great War shattered it. The following two decades, experienced differently in Germany (a defeated country) and in France (a country celebrating victory), were crucial for stimulating thoughts on the subject of the modern city that were carried out collectively by architects and town planners throughout Europe.

Fig. 15: Brest, Map of the Saint-Martin district: Annexation plan (1877), from Moulin à poudre to Valy-Glas, rue Kerfautras, rue de Paris and Place de la Liberté (Freedom square), 1877, Archives municipales de Brest.



→ Fig. 16: Brest, construction of the Albert-Loupe Bridge, from the brochure *Le pont Albert Louppe*, Finistère published by the Société anonyme des entreprises Limousin in 1930, private coll.

↘ Fig. 17: Frontispiece to the book *Brest* by Pierre Mac Orlan, 1926, Paris, ed. Emile-Paul frères, private coll.

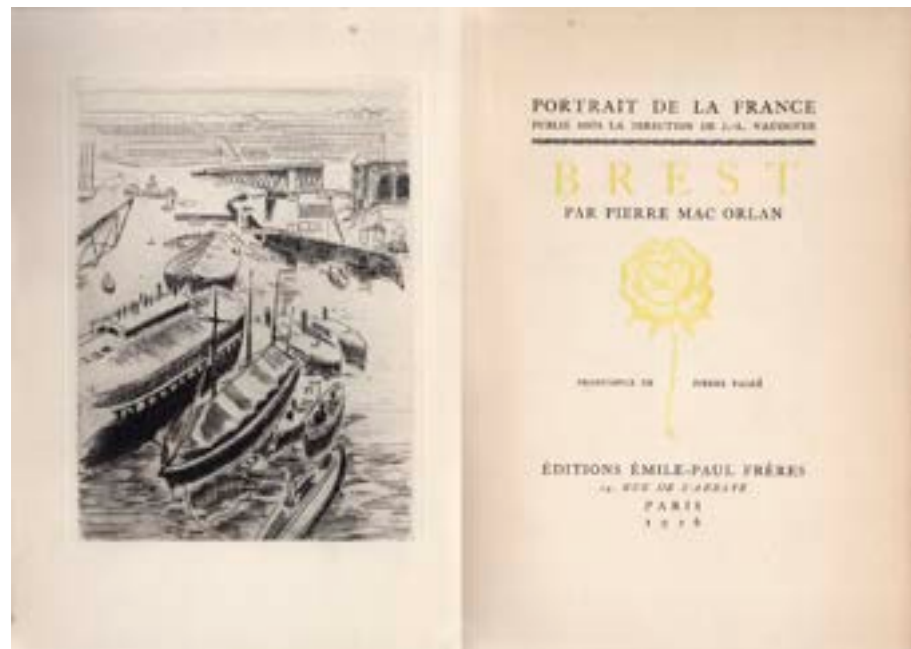
The hygienic movement born in the 19th century was very well received in modern architectural circles. In Dresden, even more so than in other German cities, the demand for light in the home, fresh air and greenery in the streets, stadiums and swimming pools was emphasised.⁹ These requirements were integrated into the urban planning of new districts, but it was more difficult to meet them in the heavily built-up areas of the city, where, in addition, the thorny issues of traffic management and the blending of old and new arose.

In the 1920s, a functional suburban area took shape with a unified appearance, greenery, straight axes and aligned, smooth, unadorned facades, sometimes containing large areas of glass.¹⁰ Dresden, with its continuous artistic activity, attracted renowned and inventive architects. Some of them, like Peter Birkenholz, dared to try out new formulas, but these remained at the experimental prototype stage.

Before the advent of the Third Reich (1933), Dresden emerged as a modern city¹¹ that took advantage of its historical attractiveness and economic competitiveness to reinvent itself.¹²

In Brest, the doorway through which jazz arrived in Europe, architectural modernity arrived in small steps, sometimes in quite an aggressive way like the tram, an uninvited addition to the narrow rue de Siam.

During the interwar period, a few beautiful isolated buildings were inserted into the dense urban fabric, often



influenced by the Art Deco aesthetic: the railway station, the vast hospital or three apartment buildings built by Aimé Freyssinet. His brother Eugène, the engineer who invented prestressed concrete, made his mark by building a bridge over the Elorn River that would finally link Brest

⁹ Hans-Peter Lühr, "Auf der Suche nach Ganzheitlichkeit. Dresden und die Utopie der Lebensreform", *Dresdner Hefte*, n° 92, 4/2007, p. 32–48. See also Paul Sigel, "Plattformen der frühen Moderne. Dresdner Ausstellungen zu Stadt-, Gestaltungs- und Sozialreform um 1900", in Susanne König, Gilbert Lupfer & Maria Obenaus (eds.), *Drehscheibe Dresden. Lokale Kunstszene und globale Moderne*, Dresden, Verband Deutsche Kunsthistoriker, 2018, p. 107–110.

¹⁰ This is especially true for the Großsiedlung Trachau and the Weiße Stadt in Gruna.

¹¹ Claudia Quiring, Hans-Georg Lippert (eds.), *Dresdner Moderne 1919–1933. Neue Ideen für Stadt, Architektur und Menschen*, Dresden, Sandstein Verlag, 2019.

¹² It should be pointed out here that most of the monumental plans for Dresden during the Nazi era remained more or less on paper. The municipality resisted the extensive remodelling of the city not least thanks to its staff who fostered the continuity of a moderately modern way of building: the City Planning Commissioner, Paul Wolf, who came to Dresden in 1925, remained in his position until 1945.



Fig. 18: Georges Milineau, Plan to develop, embellish and extend the town of Brest, 1920, Archives municipales de Brest.

to the area south of the Breton peninsula by a suitable land route. A technical feat of modern aesthetics that seemed to sound the death knell for the historical picturesque!

To the eyes of passing civilians, Brest appears as a paradoxical city in the image of its own great tides: a city

with a thousand possibilities but “drowsy or fallen into a temporary sleep”,¹³ a city torn between the memory of its glorious naval past materialised by inaccessible military grounds and the future imperatives that were already being felt in all areas.

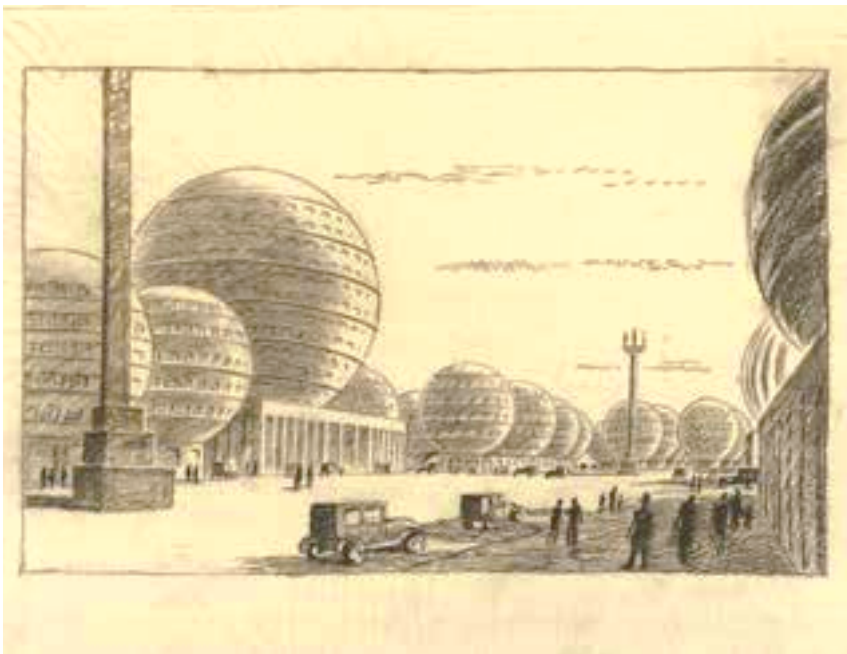
¹³ Pierre Mac Orlan, *Brest*, Paris, ed. Emile-Paul Frères, 1926, p. 77.



← Fig. 19: Walter Hahn, Dresden, southern extension district with district court, view to the north-east, photo 1932, SLUB Dresden Deutsche Fotothek.

↙ Fig. 20: Hans Richter, Dresden, project for a building at Pirnaischer Platz, view from the east, 1930, Landesamt für Denkmalpflege Sachsen.

↓ Fig. 21: Peter Birkenholz, Sphere House City, drawing, 1927, Architekturmuseum der TU München.



In this city suffering from insalubrity, efforts were underway to improve the quality of life for workers. The construction of social housing (Habitations à Bon Marché) got off to a timid start, giving rise to a new working-class neighbourhood.

For the municipal architect Georges Milineau, the blending in of these new extensions with the old town was a real headache. His 1920 plan called for the destruction of the city walls in order to create a new city centre and green areas that would allow the city to breathe. He had no illusions about the feasibility of this project because destroying Vauban's solid work represented a very high cost for the municipality. Ironically, the war would accelerate this compromised urban planning operation.

The shock of history: images of destruction

1939 – 1945. Dresden and Brest: two cities in two countries facing each other. Two cities that suffered the same sad fate as they were both annihilated by bombings.¹⁴

Do we need to dwell on this dark period of history whose tragedy may be measured objectively by counting the number of bombs that fell on Brest and the number of lifeless bodies found in the rubble of Dresden? Numbers which will never be truly precise. They were counted in thousands in each of the martyred cities where tears mingled with the rain. Once the noise of the planes stopped, people discovered, in absolute silence, a city in ruins. The destruction was almost total, the disarray

¹⁴ The city of Brest was bombed several times in the period from 1940 until August 1944. The population was ordered to leave, which reduced the human losses and injuries. In contrast, Dresden escaped destruction until the unexpected bombing of 13 February 1945, which caused the death of the majority of its inhabitants.



Fig. 22: Wilhelm Rudolph, Dresden, Zöllner Straße, undated (after 1945), Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden.



Fig. 23: Brest in ruins, the day after the siege, 1944, private coll.

complete. How could anyone appropriate this vast territory where all symbolic landmarks have disappeared? All that remained of the Frauenkirche, which was the pride of Dresden, was a fragment of one of its walls.

There is no shortage of images of desolation. Photographers, be they amateur or professional, film-makers, but also painters and engravers have immortalized this apocalypse. Writers and poets expressed the inexpressible by invoking their memories of happy pre-war times, like Jacques Prévert who was a regular visitor to Brest. These works speak for themselves to those who want to see and hear them. A destruction so astounding that it became the subject of much creation.

At the gates of Utopia

The end of the war marked a new stage in European history: a demarcation line that came to be known as the “Iron Curtain” divided the continent into two ideological camps. But in both the West and the East, the urgent need was to start rebuilding the ravaged cities to show resilience and mark a new beginning. Various solutions were considered and implemented, depending on the

historical imagination of each city and the economic and ideological imperatives of the country concerned.

After the Apocalypse

In Dresden, the population was hostile to the idea of razing the ruins of the Frauenkirche, which stood in the middle of the bombed-out city. Under the leadership of Mayor Walter Weidauer,¹⁵ first efforts were made by Red Army soldiers and later on by specialised stone masons and restorers to rebuild the Zwinger (a major tourist attraction) to its original state, but the largest part of the historic city centre remained a vast area of lawn and rubble for the next four decades.

A competition for ideas was launched in 1946 to imagine the new city (Das neue Dresden), in which the projects of renowned architects rubbed shoulders with those of amateurs who dreamed of their future city. This was an early kind of ideological gesturing that would lead the inhabitants of the country and foreign observers to believe that a concerted effort was being made to rebuild. In the historic city, the 1950s were mainly characterised by urban planning in the style of socialist neoclassicism or “national traditions”¹⁶¹⁷ (the official doctrine of the

¹⁵ Walter Weidauer, member of the Communist Party and the first head of the new socialist municipality (1946–1958).

¹⁶ Reference here to Fabien Bellat’s article on Stalinist architecture?, in this book, p. 137–146.

¹⁷ See models of the furnishings of these flats Typ WBS 70 in the Stadtmuseum Dresden. Description in the catalogue *Stadtmuseum Dresden. Kulture. Geschichte. Erleben*, Dresden, Sächsische Landesstelle für Museumswesen & Verlag Janos Stekovics, 2010, p. 296.

Stalinist period): the Old Market Square (Altmarkt) was lined with imposing ‘workers’ palaces’ and a wide avenue designed for the parades favoured by the new regime, a compulsory urban planning element for all large GDR cities.

In the meantime, the population that had survived the bombing was housed in the undestroyed districts that lay outside the city centre, to which new housing estates made up of blocks of buildings with standardised flats were added in the 1970s.¹⁷ These prefabricated buildings were surrounded by vast common green spaces where the life of the new collectivist society was organised.

For a decade, Brest saw itself transformed into a gigantic construction site. The military port, which had not lost its strategic importance, had to be quickly put back into service. The city had to be cleared of ruins, the old bridges had to be repaired or rebuilt, and new houses. needed constructing.

The population that had to leave the city during the war returned in large numbers to help with the recons-



↑ Fig. 24: Horst Naumann, Poster for the exhibition “Das neue Dresden” (“The New Dresden”), 1946, Stadtmuseum Dresden.

↗ Fig. 25: Walter Möbius, Dresden, Altmarkt square. View from the former Möbius fashion shop of the construction site and the residential and commercial buildings (1953–1956; arch. H. Schneider and K. Röthig), the Kreuzkirche (Church of the Holy Cross) and the town hall tower, 1953–1956, SLUB Dresden Deutsche Fotothek.

→ Fig. 26: Walter Möbius, Dresden, Ruins of the Frauenkirche with grazing sheep, 1957, SLUB Dresden Deutsche Fotothek.





Fig. 27: Oswald Enterlein, Dresden, project for a House of Culture on Altmarkt Square, 1954, Stadtmuseum Dresden.

Dissatisfied with the slow advancement of reconstruction plans for the city centre and “as a fanatical Dresdener”, the graphic artist and painter Oswald Enterlein (1884–1963) created his own plans for the city centre around 1954, in particular for Altmarkt Square. This was the year in which Khrushchev announced the move towards industrialized construction, but Enterlein’s designs did not take this into account. Thanks to his avid newspaper reading, Enterlein was well informed of the chief architect’s plans. Herbert Schneider, in the spirit of the Soviet Union’s “16 principles for urban planning” intended to construct an immense building in the city centre: a classical socialist style tower.

Following these guidelines, Enterlein designed a representative building for the south side of Altmarkt Square. This richly decorated five-tiered tower, reaching an impressive height of 135 metres, was to be accessible via a wide staircase. The base of the main body of the building was a kind of enlarged replica of the Dresden Zwinger. The elevation of the building had several recesses with terraces decorated with sculptures. The skyscraper was crowned spectacularly by a spiral staircase with an imposing opal glass globe and a lantern. The building was to contain flats, a café and a restaurant as well as a hotel and was to use Meissen red granite and Elbe sandstone for its structural elements. It was to be flanked by other richly decorated buildings, including “civil servants’ towers” on the north side of the square.

Enterlein presented his plans to Dresden city council and in 1958 he also sent them to Hermann Henselmann, chief architect of the Greater Berlin municipality at the time. But all his efforts were in vain.

Claudia Quiring

→ Fig. 28: Brest, Quéliverzan Towers under construction, 1954, Archives municipales de Brest.

↘ Fig. 29: Brest, Kerédern prefabs, around 1950, Archives municipales de Brest, Cinémathèque de Bretagne.

truction. The housing problem was solved thanks to the prefabs, many of which were delivered in kit form by the allied countries (notably the USA). They offered modern comforts (running water, electricity) at a low rental cost that defied all competition. The inevitable cramped living conditions encouraged a communal existence where neighbourhood solidarity brought added value to daily life.¹⁸

A temporary city developed around the historic city and in its interstices without street names but using a numbering system for dwellings. Although conceived as a temporary solution, it became the living environment for a whole generation. The inhabitants of the prefabs often found it difficult to leave and settle in the “concrete flowers”¹⁹ (towers and blocks of flats) that grew up around the rebuilt city. The last prefabs were not destroyed until 1976, well after the official end date of the Reconstruction in France. They are now part of a fading memory: that of a second destroyed city.

A happy city

In the immediate post-war period, the Vauban ramparts of Brest, which had withstood the bombardments, were razed to the ground to allow for the construction of a new, almost ideal city. The reconstruction plan entrusted to the architect Jean-Baptiste Mathon by the Ministry of Reconstruction and Urban Planning (MRU) took up Vauban’s principles and Milineau’s pre-war suggestions for a new city centre and green spaces around the historic city.

However, the latter was now completely buried under rubble: the ground level of the town had risen by up to 25 metres. The new civil city built upon this reworked earth, dominated by its imposing town hall, found itself effectively



cut off from the arsenal and the activities of the Navy, which took place in the new ravine of the Penfeld. This dealt a serious blow to Brest’s historical identity. Mathon also straightened out the bends of the oldest streets (notably rue de Siam) to create an urban composition worthy of “Versailles by the sea”, which found its original inspiration in Vauban’s urban planning project.

The facades of the white city that took shape on the site of the ruins had nothing in common with the architecture of Brest in the past. Economic imperatives called for a solution that had already been tried out in the past in emergency urban construction sites: structural and stylistic standardisation.²⁰

¹⁸ Françoise Rouxel, Patrick Dieudonné, “La ville provisoire”, in Yves Gallo et al, *Brest alias Brest. Trois siècles d’urbanisme*, Liège, Mardaga, 1995, p. 178–189.

¹⁹ Brigitte Chevet, *Baraques blues*, documentary film, prod. Aber Images, 2003.

²⁰ On this subject, read Patricia Monteiro’s article on the reconstruction of Lisbon after the earthquake in 1755, in the present book, p. 156–164.



256 Fig. 30: Jean-Baptiste Mathon, Reconstruction and development plan for Brest, 1948, Archives municipales de Brest.

In record time Brest was reborn, but for those who had known the city for many years, it was unrecognisable. The people of Brest did not embrace this standardised plan and its smooth architecture, which soon suffered some rather unflattering comparisons, all be it wrongly, with towns under totalitarian regimes. This moderately modern city, which was designed for the happiness of all, left its inhabitants with a strange feeling of loss, tainted with nostalgia.²¹ The municipality tried to combat this malaise for several decades,

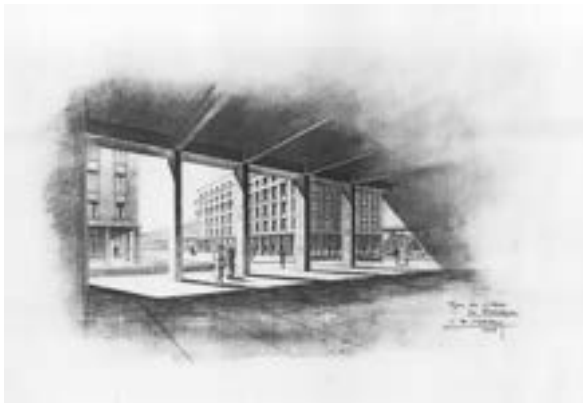
in particular by resorting to major artistic commissions intended to transform the city's denigrated image.²²

After the first stage of the reconstruction of Dresden, which was marked by the historicist approach of Stalinism, the question arose in the 1960s of continuing the work under more modern auspices.

Prague Street (Prager Strasse), a busy thoroughfare that linked the historic centre with the main railway

²¹ "A thinly veiled melancholy gnaws at the city; it is not pure sentiment", wrote Patrick Dieudonné in 1995. Patrick Dieudonné, "Brest reconstruite, un patrimoine?", in Yves Gallo et al, *Brest alias Brest. Trois siècles d'urbanisme*, Liège, Mardaga, 1995, p. 156.

²² Daniel Le Couédic, Carmen Popescu, *Art public et projet urbain: Brest 1970 – 2000*, Rennes, Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2007.



← Fig. 31: Jean-Baptiste Mathon, Rue de Siam, les Portiques, Brest, watercolour drawing, 1948, original lost, photo private coll.



← Fig. 32: Fountain-sculptures Les Lacs by Marta Pan in Brest, rue de Siam, 1989, Archives municipales de Brest.



↙ Fig. 33: Prager Straße (Prague Street) seen from the Newa Hotel, 1970, anonymous photographer, Stadtarchiv Dresden.

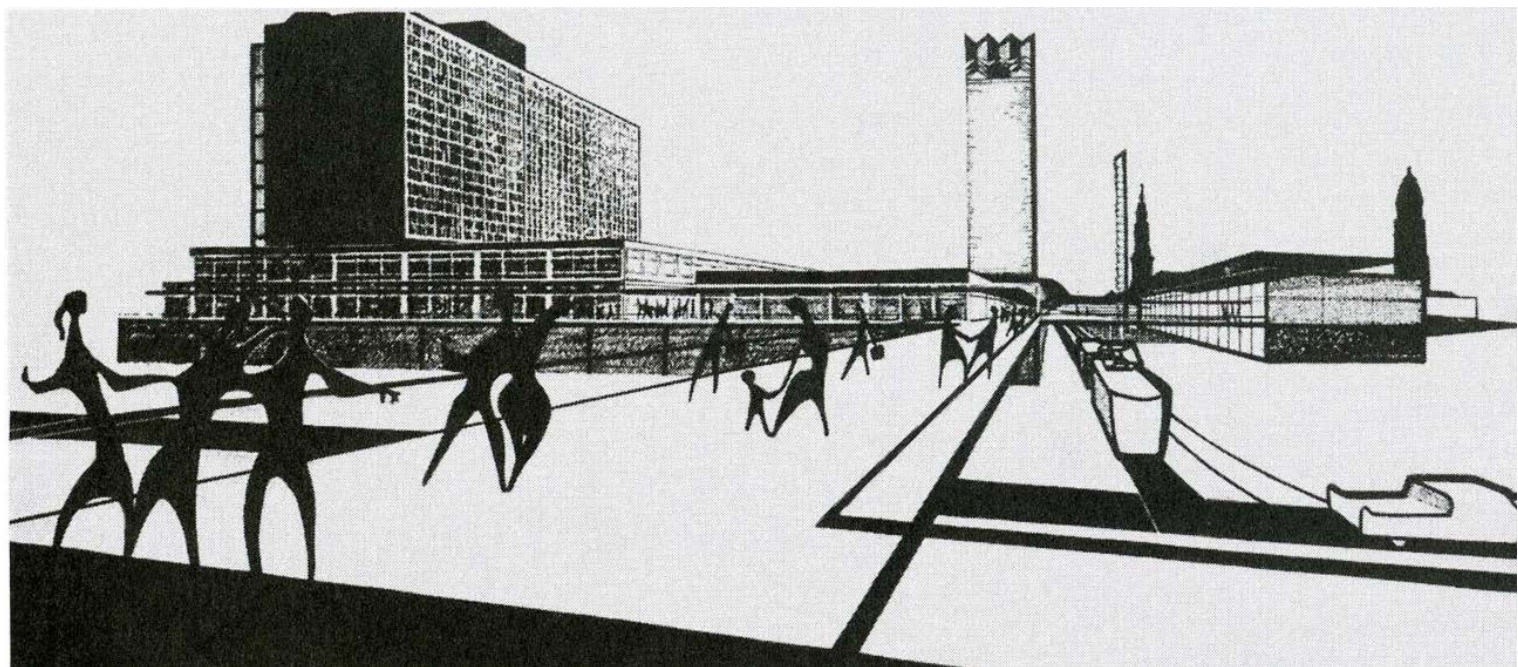


↓ Fig. 34: Dieter Bankert, Design for the competition for Prager Straße (Prague Street) in Dresden, 1962, in Deutsche Architektur, 3–1963.



↗ Fig. 35: Ulrich Häßler, Palace of Culture, Dresden (arch. Leopold Wiel, Klaus Wever, Wolfgang Hänsch, 1966–69), 1985, Bundesarchiv Koblenz.

↗ Fig. 36: Richard Peter sen., Dresden, Fountain of the Cups (artist Leoni Wirth), ca. 1975, SLUB Dresden Deutsche Fotothek.



station,²³ was to be revived in a new form. Unexpectedly and curiously, eyes turned to the reconstructed cities of the West, such as Rotterdam or Coventry, to invent a fragment of the “model socialist city” that Dresden was to become.²⁴

Prager Strasse became one of the many showcase streets of the GDR, where a happy life was staged thanks to high quality architecture and good urban planning, here inspired by Le Corbusier’s Athens Charter. The care taken with the aesthetics of the facades and the layout of the public space aimed to convey the image of a progressive country where life was good.²⁵ On the other side of the Elbe, the Hauptstrasse, situated at the entrance to the Augustus Bridge, was treated in a similar way to create a new representative north-south axis and to put a socialist stamp on the territory of this Baroque city.

The Palace of Culture on the other side of the Altmarkt, in the axis of Prager Strasse, is the clearest evidence of the modernist turning point that took place in the 1960s. As both a focal point of official culture and a meeting place of political importance, the building’s light allure stands in stark contrast to the monumental workers’ palaces of the previous decade.

Challenges

In the 1980s, the idea of reconstructing the heart of the historic city of Dresden (the Neumarkt) emerged. International seminars and competitions were organised, which made people dream of the possibility of an ‘identical’ reconstruction, i.e. an architecture reminiscent of the city’s illustrious historical period: Baroque (18th century) and eclectic (19th century).²⁶ This is a solution that was adopted immediately after the war in some European



Fig. 37: Reconstruction works at the Frauenkirche, Dresden, photo: Thomas Will, 2008.

cities (Warsaw, Gdansk and Saint-Malo for example). In Dresden, these utopian projections clashed with the reality of political guidelines, construction constraints and economic considerations.²⁷

However, after the fall of the Berlin Wall, the political and economic situation changed and the population of Dresden came together to make this dream come true. The demolition of the imposing concrete extension to the police headquarters made way for the breathtaking reconstruction of the Frauenkirche, the foundation stone of which was laid in 1994. Discussions then focused on the surrounding areas of this emblematic building of Dresden’s glory days, which revived an glorified imagination, adapted to current economic interests (cultural tourism).

Meanwhile, Brest was still searching for new urban planning ideas, entangled in its malaise, aiming to revitalise

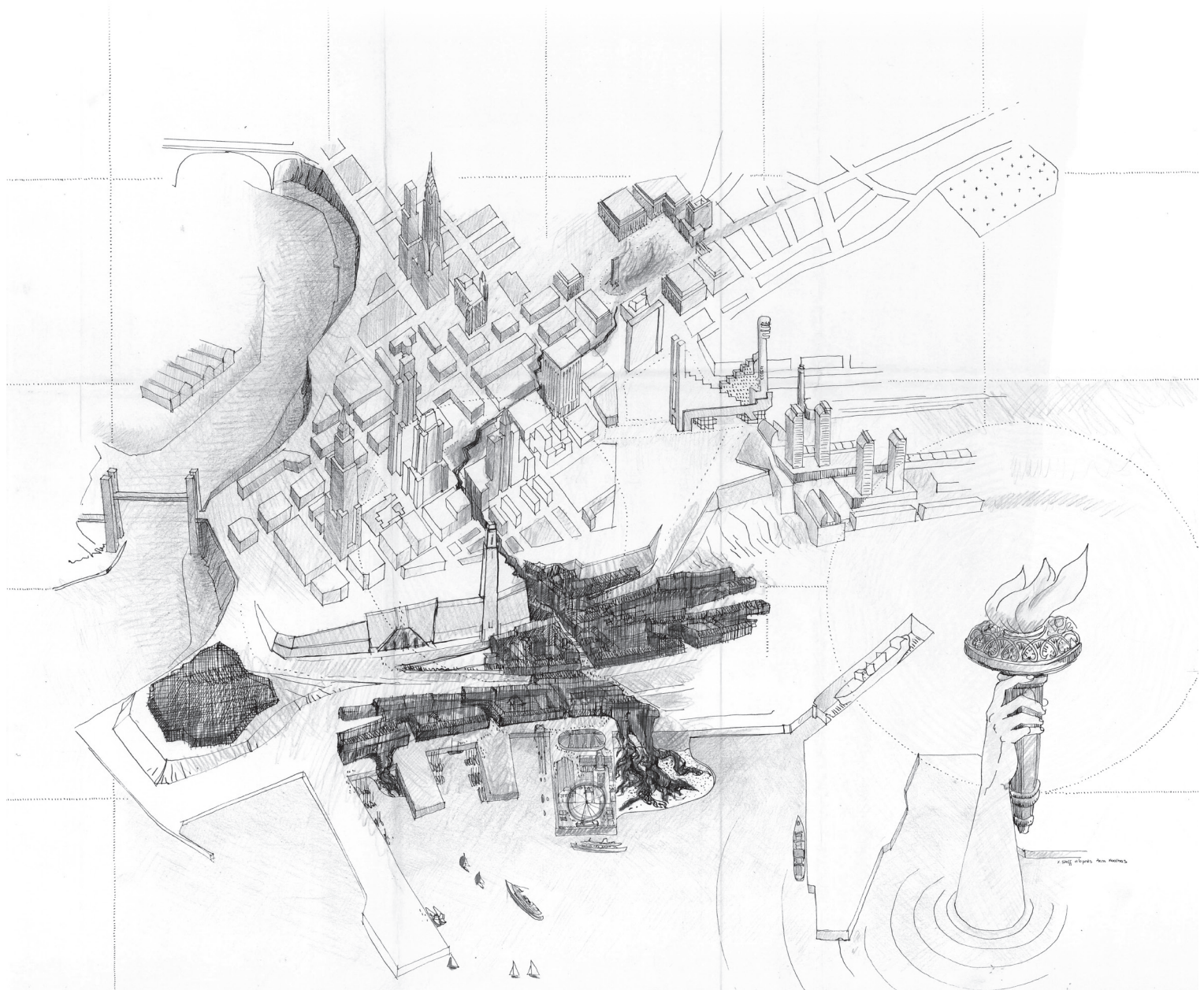
23 Dresden originally had four terminus stations, which were linked together shortly before 1900. Thus, the Bohemian station situated to the south of the city centre became the central station.

24 Wolfgang Kil, “Aufbruch ins Leichte und Lichte. Die Vision des Sozialismus für Dresden”, *Dresdner Hefte*, Heft 92, 4/2007, p. 69–76.

25 The implementation of the Robotron district between the town hall and the Großer Garten was conceived as a manifestation of the most advanced industry in the GDR.

26 Christine Emmrich, “Wer heilt, hat recht! Dresden auf dem Weg zu seiner Mitte”, in *Dresden. Der Wiederaufbau des Neumarkts. Herz und Seele der Stadt*, Dresden, Michael Imhof Verlag, 2019, p. 18–22.

27 Ingolf Roßberg, “Die Frauenkirche und die Dresdner Innenstadtplanung”, in *Dresdner Geschichtsverein (Hrsg.), Die Dresdner Frauenkirche – Geschichte – Zerstörung – Rekonstruktion. Dresdner Hefte*, n° 32 (4/1992).



its city centre, which was considered monotonous or by some even mediocre.²⁸

Poor pedestrian connections between the neighbourhoods near the rue de Siam, growing traffic congestion and parking problems and an insufficient supply of services and cultural activities were all problems identified by the municipality, which launched a competition in 1980 for ideas on redevelopment projects for the city centre. In the resulting exhibition, some very sensible and well-considered drawings were exhibited alongside others which were more extravagant in nature and wanted to shake up the identity of Brest.

²⁸ “Des espaces publics de qualité en complément de la vie des quartiers”, *Brest Espoir*, *Bulletin municipal*, November-December 1982, no page. We thank Pierre Maille, the former Mayor of Brest, for allowing us to read these documents.

Fig. 38: Yves Steff & Maxime Giraud-Mangin, “New York’s sister”, project for the competition of ideas, Brest, 1980, original lost, photo: private coll.

The Place de la Liberté, the city’s symbolic nerve centre, was the focus of attention: a competition for its redevelopment was organised in 1992 and won by Bernard Huet. During the work, some remains of the historic city walls were excavated.

A long process of reshaping perceptions concerning the topography of the city began: the operation “Un cœur pour ma ville” (A Heart for my City) was launched in 1979 and was followed many years later by that of “Cœur



↑ Fig. 39: Rue de Saint-Malo in Brest taken over by the association 'Vivre la rue', photo: Vive la rue, Nina.

↗ Fig. 40: Kunsthofpassage, Neustadt, Dresden, 1999, Arch. Heike Böttcher.

↑ Fig. 41: Brest, Kérigonan neighbourhood, photo: Frédéric Le Mouillour, 2013.



de metropole” (The Heart of the Borough). The challenge was to restore a positive image of the city of Brest not only to its visitors, but above all to its inhabitants, who were called upon to participate in the urban planning process.

Deconstructing Utopia: city environments

Cities are built and rebuilt in complex processes. Decisions made by local authorities are not sufficient to give a city a soul. The eloquent designs of an architect-urban planner, who believes that with these he can solve all the problems with a purely rational approach, have also been shown to have their limits.

It is the inhabitants of the cities who appropriate the depreciated territories and sometimes give important impulses to create a new way of imagining them.

In Brest, the very old rue Saint-Malo, nestled below the disused Pontaniou prison in the Recouvrance quarter, escaped the developers’ bulldozers thanks to organised squatting. The citizens’ association “Vivre la rue” (“Let the street live”) took over this alleyway, which was in a state of ruin, to initiate festive cultural events in it. Gradually, Saint-Malo Street became not just a meeting place for inhabitants but also a tourist attraction.

In Dresden, in the exhilarating atmosphere of the fall of the totalitarian regime, a “Multicoloured Republic”



Fig. 43: Agence ABC (Stéphane Füzesséry & Paul Landauer), Brest, Grand Balcon project drawing, 2022, Brest Métropole.

(“Bunte Republik”) was born in the dilapidated Neustadt district. As a place for artistic experiments, parties and parades, but also for violent fights, the district attracted the attention of political decision-makers.

These alternative places where street art has its place have allowed us to take a fresh look at neglected urban territories and realise their hidden potential. Once rebuilt, they can indeed bring an unexpected additional value to the city.

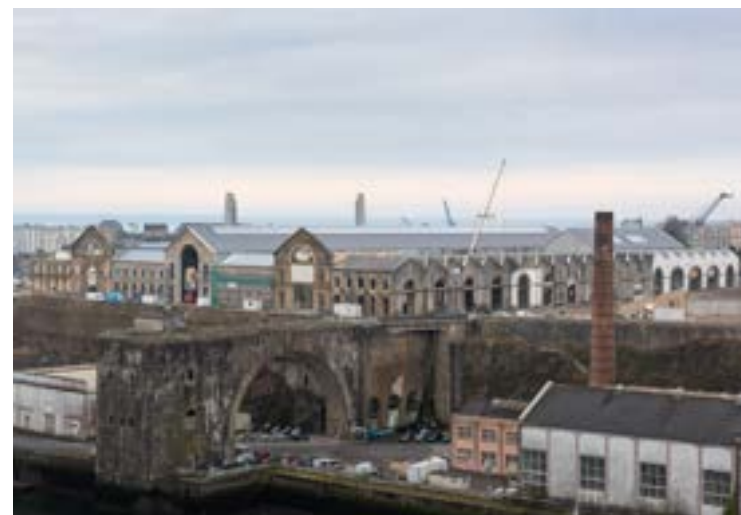
Neustadt’s regeneration drive has resulted in quality developments that respect the historical character of the district, while adding a fresh and colourful touch of fantasy. The old, faded backyards have been partially renovated and filled with cafés and designer shops.

Bringing colour into the city is also a way of asserting one’s presence, of rebelling against the dictates of the standardised city. The inhabitants of the Kérigonan district in Brest spontaneously began to paint the facades of their modest houses in cheerful colours that broke up the uniformity of the ‘white city’. Thanks to this initiative, the municipality began to think more about the possible colour schemes of buildings.²⁹

An endless reconstruction?

In 1992, the people of Brest had the moving experience of regaining access to the Penfeld military port when it was temporarily opened during the maritime festivals, which were to become a regular event. The oceanic image of Brest was revamped in an innovative way that set out to facilitate access to the sea for popular leisure purposes.³⁰

↓ **Fig. 42:** Brest, Le Plateau des Capucins under construction, photo: Jean-François Mollière.



²⁹ *Guide de coloration des Maisons “Castors” de Keranroux – Brest*, Brest métropole, 2017.

³⁰ Daniel Gilles, *L’Album souvenir de la fête Brest 92*, Douarnenez, Chasse-Marée, 1992.



← Fig. 44: Dresden, Sternplatz, socialist-era residential buildings with subsequently added balconies, photo: Wikimedia Commons.

↙ Fig. 45: Renovated Kraftwerk Mitte, Dresden, photo: Oliver Killig.

↑ Fig. 46: Reconstructed city block within the Neumarkt area, photo: Jörg Blobelt, 2021.

→ Fig. 47, 48: Wen2, murals with images of Brest.



The gradual withdrawal of the French Navy allowed the municipality to acquire land and remarkable buildings

in the heart of the city and make them accessible to a larger number of the public. This aroused enthusiasm and gave rise to new projects. The Ateliers des Capucins, an ensemble of huge disused shipbuilding halls, became the largest covered public space in Europe, widely acclaimed by the inhabitants of Brest.³¹ Other buildings in their vicinity, whether belonging to the Navy or not, are still awaiting their future use (Bâtiment aux Lions, a listed historic monument, the Pontaniou Prison) or their destruction to create promenade areas with views over the sea and the city.

A city-landscape³² is taking shape which aims to link the river bed to the so-called ‘reconstructed’ city. The latter, now half a century old, is also receiving increased attention with a view to recognizing its heritage.³³

In Dresden, the reconstruction of the Frauenkirche opened up further possibilities for a broader intervention on the scale of the historic city. Canaletto’s famous paintings (18th century) serve as a basis for dreaming of a rebirth of “Florence on the Elbe”. Today, work is being completed on the Neumarkt, which has been restored to

³¹ Closed in 2004, the Ateliers des Capucins were transformed by the Bruno Fortier architectes urbanistes agency and opened to the public in 2016. For a short history of the Ateliers des Capucins, see Jean-François Pousse, “Time and Metamorphosis / Le temps et la métamorphose”, in *Les Ateliers des Capucins*, Paris, Flammarion, 2019, p. 14 – 33.

³² Studio Paola Viganò, *Brest 2040, ville-paysage en transition. Plan-Guide “Cœur de métropole”*, 2020.

³³ In December 2017, the city of Brest was awarded the label “City of Art and History” by the Ministry of Culture.



its former appearance, although some buildings have been given a modern touch.^{34,35}

Alongside this operation as a tourist showcase for the city, decisions are being made about the rehabilitation of 1970s housing and on the densification of districts with public spaces seen as overly generous. The need to continue the development of the city while taking into account the imperatives of modern life (mobility of the population) is not without its difficulties and sacrifices: the construction of the Waldschlösschen bridge has caused Dresden to lose its classification as a UNESCO World Heritage site, achieved only a few years.³⁶

Industrial heritage is at the heart of the debate on the cultural reconversion of such places in order to avoid over-easy destruction that can damage the memory of the city and thus its identity. Some wastelands remain scattered throughout the city, such as the Robotron industrial complex or the disused Leipziger Bahnhof



station, which are the subjects of future development projects.

Between radical choices and compromises, the reconstruction continues because the city and the way it imagines itself are in perpetual evolution. Brest, Dresden or any other reconstructed city can only reinvent themselves over time in response to the new lifestyles of their inhabitants and, today more than ever, to the challenges of a rapidly changing world.

Artists' views

Who better than artists to help construct, deconstruct and reconstruct the urban imagination? Between oblivion and remembrance, Brest and Dresden call on us to seize upon their buried and resurrected past to create images that make us dream, reflect and perhaps act.

³⁴ Torsten Kulke (ed.), *Wie bauen wir Stadt? Die Rekonstruktion des Dresdner Neumarkts und der Streit um Tradition und Moderne im Städtebau*, Dresden, Michael Imhof Verlag, 2015.

³⁵ Denis Bocquet, "Dresde et l'Unesco: questions sur les catégories de classement et la gouvernance des sites classés au patrimoine mondial", in Michel Clément (ed.), *Paysages urbains historiques*, Paris, Icomos, 2010, p. 73–78.



← Fig. 49: Gwenaëlle Magadur, *La ligne Bleue* ("The Blue Line"), ephemeral installation in Brest, 2000.

↓ Fig. 50: Gwenaëlle Magadur & Sylvain Le Stum, "The changing city", 2007, photomontage.

→ Fig. 51: Birgit Schuh, *Schokofluss* ("Chocolate River"), Dresden, 2011.

Wen2, Images of Brest

Wen2 is the signature and pseudonym of Brest-born artist Gwendal Huet. An important member of the Street Art scene, Wen2 paints fragments of Brest playing with his imagination of the buried city. Under the pavements and buildings of rebuilt Brest lies the debris of the city destroyed by the bombs.

Wen2 makes these urban pieces fly in the middle of an empty space, with the subterranean parts made visible.

He does not attempt to reconstruct them in their exact form, but rather to create a dreamlike, even fantastical atmosphere. Thanks to Wen2's imagination, ordinary underground infrastructures take on strange appearances: under the Vauban Hotel, the water pipes look like cannons.

Wen2's images also find their way onto the city's walls. His unique style is well developed and easily recognisable. He plays mischievously with the theme of urban memory. Thus, on the gable of a building in the Quatre Moulins





(Four windmills) district, he resurrects the windmills that gave the area its name. However, he does not turn his back on the present-day city or its modern facilities, as demonstrated by one of his paintings which shows a tram crossing Recouvrance bridge.

Through these images, a dizzying temporal spiral emerges that contradicts the linear history of the city and suggests an incessant back and forth movement between dream and reality, which (re)constructs the collective images that remain.

Gwenaëlle Magadur, *The Blue Line*, Brest, 2000

This ephemeral installation was created by Brest artist Gwenaëlle Magadur with the support of Brest city council, Finistère county council and Brittany's regional council. The Blue Line marked 'the great belt' of the city walls of Brest, designed by Vauban in the 17th century. These walls were demolished after the Second World War in the rush to rebuild and allow the city to expand. For several decades, this "Brest of which nothing remains" (to quote Jacques Prévert) had been all but forgotten by its inhabitants. Gwenaëlle Magadur, seeking to uncover traces of this urban past shrouded in silence, made a proposition

to the council. The idea was to mark the placement of the old ramparts with an ephemeral blue line. Compared to other artistic commissions, this one was different in that it was, above all, personal research and a private initiative.

The Blue Line came into being in the year 2000, prompting questions from locals, who were initially ill-informed about the meaning of this atypical road marking. Designed

with a "skin like" texture, the line, which eroded bit by bit due to the footfall of passers-by, gradually faded away (albeit more slowly than expected). Nevertheless, it raised a general awareness of the potential of Brest's historical imagination. This appreciation of Brest's past was rekindled by the maritime festivals which gave the public access to the banks of the Penfeld, a military territory. It was following this experience that the artist came up with the idea of the Blue Line, the ephemeral work that is now also part of the imagination of Brest – a palimpsest city.

A few years later, Gwenaëlle Magadur worked on a joint project with the architect Sylvain Le Stum on remembering Recouvrance and the banks of the Penfeld. This artistic residency gave rise to the work 'La ville en mutation' (The changing city), which was made up of photomontages (installation proposals) in which destroyed plots of land from this working-class district and the sunken facades of old city buildings buried under the rubble of rebuilt Brest reappear.



← Fig. 52: Jahna Dahms, "Parkplatz (Car park). Trace of time", reconstructed car park marking lines applied by hand with white lime, ephemeral intervention during the reconstruction works of the Neumarkt area, Dresden, 2002, photo: Jahna Dahms.

→ Fig. 53a/b: Mnemosyne. Water Art Path of the Dresdner Sezession 89, installation "Aqualux" (artist Kirsten Kaiser), Dresden 1993, photo: Hans-Georg Lippert, 2023.

Bronze Age settlement and uncovered settlement and building layers from almost all subsequent centuries. With the support of the State Office for Archaeology of Saxony, it was possible to develop an astonishing correspondence between the wall crowns of different centuries and the structure of the Bronze Age burial ground with the marking lines of the car park as an

Jahna Dahms, *Car park: The hidden beauty of historical layers*

The project arose from an examination of the archaeological hypothesis that an ancient settlement with a Bronze Age cult site could have been located in the heart of Dresden before the city was actually founded. This gave rise to the idea that the site of the Dresden Frauenkirche was not only the historical, but possibly also the spiritual starting point of the settlement.

In order to better understand the site, a thorough survey was carried out. This revealed an unusual distance between the marker lines on a car park. Archaeological excavations in 2001/2002 confirmed the existence of the

artistic correspondence hypothesis.

In collaboration with the State Office for Archaeology of Saxony and the investor Arturo Prisco, the marking lines of the car park were reconstructed on the excavation area. The large-format, planimetric drawing not only superimposed the excavation's ground structure, but also the differences in height of the wall tops of up to 8 metres. From a bird's eye view, the fascinating congruence of different historical layers in the excavation plan became visible. It conveys the genius loci of the site and reveals the beauty of historical continuity.



**Birgit Schuh, *Schokofluss (Chocolate River)*,
Dresden, 2011**

“Schokofluss” (Chocolate River) was created as part of an artistic project launched in 2010 by the artists Anke Binnewerg and Birgit Schuh. It was installed in Plauenschen Grund, the valley of the Weißeritz river, lined with stone cliffs, which opens out into the Elbe valley basin near the former fishing and rafting village of Plauen, southwest of Dresden. In the 18th century, this valley was the setting for magnificent courtly celebrations and later became a place which inspired many romantic painters. However, during the construction of the Dresden-Chemnitz railway line, completed in 1869, the valley floor was transformed into an industrial area and its interesting artistic and social history was all but forgotten.

Since 2008, artists have sought to revive this forgotten past, retelling it in order to keep the collective memory of it alive. The “Schokofluss” installation consisted of square concrete blocks, painted a glossy brown colour and placed in a drainage ditch that ran diagonally across the footpath leading to the valley. This installation was a poetic reminder of the once flourishing chocolate industry in Dresden-Plauen in the 19th century and gave the place a surprising aura. However, as part of a busy pedestrian and cycle path, it could not and was never intended to be of a permanent nature. The varnish on the stones eventually wore off and in 2016 the blocks were completely removed during building work. The artist’s



wry comments, still visible on a plaque at the site, read: “Birgit Schuh’s chocolate river had been flowing into the gutter near the farm’s mill since 2011 and was losing its shape. In 2016, it dried up completely.”

**Mnemosyne. Water Art Path of the Dresdner
Sezession 89, Dresden, 1993–2000**

The WasserKunstWeg (Water Art Path) Mnemosyne was created thanks to an initiative launched by women artists from the “Dresdner Sezession 89”. In the early 1990s they sought, through artistic expression, to revive memories of the many small urban waterways in Dresden, which had disappeared or become hidden from sight as a result of urban developments. From the year 2000 onwards, the most important waterway in this scheme was the Kaitzbach, an almost twelve-kilometre-long river that runs through the south of Dresden on the left bank of the Elbe. It flows from its source in a valley protected from the city by a range of hills, reaches Dresden city centre at the Great Garden, crosses the former fortress glacis and finally flows into the Elbe just east of the Brühl terrace. About half of the stream’s course now lies hidden underground and is no longer visible in the city.

The artists used this situation as the starting point for their work. They named their project after a Goddess from ancient Greek mythology: the titanic Mnemosyne, daughter of Uranos and Gaia (of heaven and earth), Zeus’s lover and mother of the nine muses. In the Greek

pantheon, Mnemosyne is the Goddess of memory and remembrance, but she also represents water, femininity and art.

Artists highlighted the course of the Kaitzbach from its source to its mouth thanks to various artistic installations which together form a narrative. This technique was also employed in places where the stream runs underground, making it visible once again and recalling its presence in the urban space. Some of the artistic creations are very discreet and difficult to find for those who do not know where to look. One such creation is “Haltepunkte” by BKH Gutmann which may be found in front of Dresden’s town hall. However, Kirsten Kaiser’s “Aqualux”, which marks the mouth of the Kaitzbach in the former gondola harbour of the electorate on the Elbe, now a park, stands out more clearly in the urban landscape. It consists of a long series of curved acrylic panes that represent a virtual waterway. When night falls, these panes light up blue from within, creating a very poetic effect.

Stéphane Couturier, *Georg Treu Square in Dresden, silver photograph from the series Urban Archaeology, 1997*

In 1997, the photographer Stéphane Couturier was invited by the French Institute in Dresden to carry out an artistic residency. The result of this was a series of images that immortalise, in a very particular way, the reconstruction work undertaken in the historic city centre.

This artist constructs his pictures using a precise technique that consists in flattening out the photographed scene. He achieves this effect by the combined use of an oblong grid and an absence of focus. Thus, all the elements in the photograph have the same importance. This archaeologist-like meticulousness leads to a deliberate visual blurring of the different planes in the image. This technique can be seen at work in this photograph of Georg Treu Square, where a kind of *mise en abîme* appears: a reflection in the tarpaulin reveals a historic building under reconstruction. The foreground is occupied by crane posts and the sad ruins of a classical

palace; the background shows the Albertinum building (former arsenal, now a museum of 19th and 20th century art), whose roof is deliberately cropped at the top in order to open up the skyline. All this means that at first glance the result looks more like a photomontage than a real photograph.

Stéphane Couturier likes to play with the ambiguity of so-called photographic objectivity. He designs these high-definition images so that they can be printed out in very large formats, thus creating a real, life-sized environment for the bewildered viewer. The artist questions our capacity to critically distance ourselves from the image of the city in eternal (re)construction, which he presents to us at one fleeting moment in its history.



Fig. 54: Stéphane Couturier, Georg Treu Square in Dresden, silver photograph from the series Urban Archaeology, 1997.



Art and the City

Sonia de Puineuf, Gwenaëlle Magadur, Gwendal Huet (Wen2), Stéphane Couturier

ART AND THE CITY. CONSTRUCTIONS, DECONSTRUCTIONS

Panel discussion with artists

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Transcription by Jana Laue & Sonia de Puineuf

SONIA DE PUINEUF (SDP): Cette table ronde est consacrée au sujet *L'art et la ville – constructions, déconstructions*, et je suis heureuse d'accueillir Gwenaëlle Magadur, Gwendal Huet (dont le pseudonyme artistique est Wen2) et Stéphane Couturier.

Ces trois artistes, pourquoi sont-ils réunis ici? Evidemment parce qu'ils s'intéressent à la thématique urbaine – sinon cela n'aurait pas de sens dans le cadre de notre projet. Mais, chacun d'entre eux a une approche différente, et ce qui est bien sûr intéressant. Stéphane Couturier est plutôt photographe ; Wen2 a une pratique très variée, j'y reviendrais ; Gwenaëlle Magadur d'ailleurs également puisque de son travail d'artiste-peintre vous connaissez certainement d'abord cette réalisation qui s'appelle *La Ligne Bleue*. Ceux et celles d'entre vous qui ont plus que vingt ans, vous vous rappelez peut-être de cette réalisation qui a pris corps dans les rues de la ville de Brest. Gwenaëlle a décidé à travers cette ligne bleue de marquer le tracé des remparts, des fortifications de la ville de Brest d'autrefois. (see Fig. 49 in chapter Exhibition)

Quant à Gwendal, il a un univers particulier, il se caractérise lui-même comme "graphiste, artiste-peintre, visionnaire d'un monde futuriste underground". Sa technique consiste plus à faire de la peinture et faire de la lithographie aussi, des dessins, du street art surtout, pour commencer et donc de ce street art aussi d'imaginer cette ville disparue, enfuie dont il reste peu de traces et qu'on peut justement imaginer aussi dans cette image qui combine l'existant et le souterrain. Un souterrain peut-être parfois plus imaginé que réel et qui évoque justement cette mémoire de la ville enfouie. Donc ce sont des images extrêmement séduisantes qui nous amènent facilement à rêver d'une autre ville, d'une autre réalité et évidemment vous avez l'occasion aussi de voir ses fresques à Brest. (see Fig. 47, 48 in chapter Exhibition)

Et puis quand j'en viens à Stéphane Couturier qui est photographe, il s'intéresse quasi essentiellement à la photographie d'architecture et de la ville que vous allez découvrir dans ces quelques images et par rapport à ce qu'il va vous dire aussi. Et cette photographie, qui n'est pas un photomontage, mais une vraie photographie argentique prise sur le vif en 1997 lors d'une résidence lorsqu'il était invité à venir à Dresde par l'Institut français. Dresde est une ville qui nous est très chère dans notre projet *Res Urbanae* puisqu'au départ, il s'agissait de réunir dans une réflexion commune la ville de Brest (en France) et la ville de Dresde (en Allemagne). On est donc très heureux de discuter ce soir avec cet artiste français qui a fait l'expérience d'aller à Dresde au moment où sa reconstruction très tardive battait son plein et de faire des images absolument saisissantes comme celle-ci. (see Fig. 54 in chapter Exhibition)

Donc voici cette présentation vraiment très succincte et rapide du travail de nos trois artistes, et maintenant je vais lancer le débat. D'abord, quand on parle des villes reconstruites ou même des villes en reconstruction, on se heurte forcément à la question de la mémoire, donc je voudrais que vous nous parliez un peu de comment cette problématique de la mémoire est présente dans votre travail. Je vais donner d'abord la parole à Gwenaëlle.

GWENAËLLE MAGADUR (GM): Bonsoir, merci de m'avoir invitée ce soir. Pour moi, effectivement, la mémoire c'est très important dans mon travail, mais c'est plus, pour moi, une question de racines que de mémoire. En fait, ce projet-là (*La Ligne Bleue*) était en suspens je pense depuis mon enfance car à un moment donné j'ai interrogé mon père (qui n'est pas brestois): "mais qu'est-ce que l'histoire de cette ville ?" J'avais environ 8 ans et mon père m'as dit "non, non, ne cherche pas, il n'en reste rien." Bon, c'est resté comme une boule de Noël sur le sapin dans mon oreille pendant quelques années. Je suis partie de cette ville parce que c'était une ville qui, quand j'avais 17 ans, n'était pas à priori très intéressante pour moi. Donc je suis partie au plus vite et quand je suis rentrée, quelques années plus tard, je me suis dit qu'e fait je ne la connaissais pas cette ville. Et je me suis souvenue de cette phrase que mon père m'avait dit et je me suis dit: "mais, ce n'est pas possible de naître de rien". Et là, je me suis dit " il faut que je cherche, il faut que je trouve des pistes" et donc j'ai fait ce travail de recherche avec mes outils qui étaient le dessin, parce que moi, je viens du dessin classique sur une feuille de papier et de la peinture, et donc je suis partie à la recherche de ces racines par le dessin et c'est en juxtaposant des dessins en noir et blanc, c'était très épuré un peu comme une calligraphie chinoise et je les ai mis côte à côte et là je me suis dit, "mais, c'est bizarre, normalement il devrait y avoir une unité dans cette série" et en fait, j'avais vraiment l'impression d'une fragmentation et j'ai remarqué qu'il me manque un fil conducteur à tout cela. Donc, c'est en travaillant en parallèle avec un service de la communauté urbaine à cette époque que j'ai découvert sur un mur une carte actuelle de la ville avec une silhouette très pointue en gris et je me suis retournée vers mon voisin à côté et je lui ai dit "mais, c'est quoi ce truc-là?". "Ce sont les remparts". Et là, je me suis dit "mais quoi ?" Parce que moi, je suis brestoise, je n'avais jamais entendu parler de cela et à l'époque personne n'en parlait. Personne. Les remparts avaient été détruits après la guerre et tout le monde avait tourné le dos à cette histoire. Et là, je me suis dit "c'est cela, en fait, mon fil conducteur" et là c'est en découvrant l'existence de cette structure que je me suis dit "mais c'est cela qui a construit la ville en fait, c'est cela qui a protégé la ville, c'est cela qui a réuni les deux rives", parce qu'après j'ai quand même fait quelques recherches historiques. Donc c'est ainsi que pour la première fois, en 1680, quelqu'un a fait un geste sur une carte avec sa main, en entourant les deux rives, et ce geste j'en rêve. Et c'est en faisant ce geste que les remparts sont arrivés et que la ville protégée a pu se développer et donc pour moi, c'était cela l'histoire de Brest. Voilà.

SDP: Merci Gwenaëlle. Gwendal, qu'est-ce que toi tu pourrais nous dire sur le sujet de la mémoire, comment penses-tu que ce thème intervient dans ton travail ?

GWENDAL HUET (WEN2): Moi, j'ai un rapport à l'urbain depuis toujours: Gamin, j'ai fait du skate-board, après j'ai fait du graffiti, donc pour moi, la ville est un terrain de jeu et j'en viens. Et puis, je dessine depuis toujours, après la mémoire c'est venu plus sur le tard, en fait. C'est quand je commence à créer mon petit monde dans lévitation et du coup je me suis intéressé à toutes ces images, ces photos de la ville détruite. Moi, c'est des lieux que j'affectionnais aussi, des friches industrielles, ce genre d'endroits quand je pratiquais le graffiti. Et toute cette ville détruite est pour moi une source d'inspiration énorme. Donc là, je travaille sur des bâtiments actuels assez emblématiques. Oui, je crée en dessous un petit peu des vestiges. Mais je suis plus dans une esthétique, j'essaie de faire des belles images avec tout cet univers un peu onirique que je me suis inventé hors du temps avec ces bâtiments qui s'envolent et tout, je n'ai pas une démarche aussi archiviste que Gwenaëlle. Mon travail en plus, je suis passé par l'art appliqué, on nous apprend à dessiner, dessiner, dessiner et de ne pas intellectualiser tout cette pratique.

SDP: Stéphane, en ce qui concerne cette question de la mémoire, est-ce que dans votre travail, c'est aussi quelque chose qui vous influence ?

STÉPHANE COUTURIER (SC): La mémoire, oui. De toute manière, c'est un des éléments spécifiques de la photographie que de parler de la mémoire: on fige quelque chose avec la photographie et il y a un côté très particulier notamment cette idée par un moment de saisir quelque chose sans avoir le sens de ce que va donner l'histoire. Par exemple, quand on prend les tours du World Trade Center, si on a fait des photos comme touriste quelques mois avant la destruction, on n'imagine pas la puissance que la photographie peut avoir quand après les attentats on revoit ces clichés. Donc c'est comme un visage, comme quelqu'un qui a disparu, la photographie a une spécificité vraiment particulière avec la mémoire. Donc lorsque je photographie des villes, on ne sait absolument pas dans dix ans, dans vingt ans, dans cinquante ans, si les photographies auront une autre vie, c'est un peu un tremplin où il faut se donner un protocole. Il faut, par exemple sur Berlin, ce qui aide à parcourir les anciens tracés du mur, mais après, la vie de la photographie, elle ne nous appartient plus. Donc, c'est une mémoire, effectivement on va mémoriser un lieu, on va le figer, mais au-delà de cela, on ne sait pas ce que l'histoire en fera.

SDP: Cela, c'est vraiment intéressant, vous avez des exemples très précis où vous vous êtes retrouvé devant quelqu'un qui aurait pris votre photographie et qui l'aurait perçue différemment par rapport à l'intention première ou à travers l'histoire ? Est-ce que vous avez un exemple précis d'une photographie que vous auriez faite et qui a d'un coup pris un autre sens, une autre vie ?

SC: Oui, par exemple la photographie que vous avez montrée des usines de Renault c'est une photographie qui a été faite en 1993 au moment où les usines étaient à l'arrêt puisque ce site allait être abandonné, mais on ne savait pas du tout s'il y allait y avoir un écomusée, si on allait garder une partie des usines. Il y avait énormément de projets architecturaux ou d'urbanisme. Qu'est-ce qu'on en faisait de cette île ? Donc, là, par exemple, c'est quelque chose de l'histoire puisque c'est un site qui n'existe plus.

274

SDP: Oui, c'est complètement vrai. Et alors, ce qui est frappant aussi dans ces images, c'est que quand vous photographiez la ville, vous avez un parti pris – celui du fragment, c'est-à-dire, c'est une ville dont on ne voit pas l'ensemble, c'est un bout d'architecture, c'est un fragment.

SC: Oui, alors, il faut aussi savoir que ce sont des tirages d'assez grand format, même de très grand format qui permettent justement jouer avec le fragment. C'est une série que j'avais intitulée *Archéologie urbaine* au sens où l'idée c'est que le spectateur puisse fouiller chaque partie de l'image comme un archéologue. Et si vous regardez bien, tout en bas de l'image, il y a un vélo qui est au fond de l'allée vers la gauche. Et donc, si vous voulez, l'idée, c'est d'avoir un vocabulaire photographique de frontalité où on crée un feuillage à la fois temporel, mais aussi de plans, c'est-à-dire que le premier plan, le deuxième plan, et les différents plans sont aplatis d'une certaine manière pour avoir cette ambiguïté de lecture, on ne sait plus qu'est-ce qui est le premier plan, qu'est-ce qu'il y a à l'arrière-plan. Enfin, on peut le reconstruire, mais il y a une forme d'ambiguïté et ce vocabulaire photographique va me poursuivre comme cela tout au long de mes années de photographie. Cette idée de feuillage et de sédimentation de plans et d'évènements qui vont se superposer sur l'image.

SDP: Merci, Stéphane. Gwendal, au contraire, dans tes images il y a beaucoup plus de travail d'espace, de perspectives ; on devine très bien ce qui est haut, ce qui est bas, mais en même temps il y a cette question du fragment dans ton travail aussi, très importante.

WEN2: Par rapport à la lévitation, oui. Mon travail, c'est vraiment cela, c'est l'architecture aussi, il n'y a jamais l'humain qui est présent, il est présent via ces constructions et c'est ce que j'aime faire aussi ; dessiner vraiment la ville en squelette, ce qu'il en reste. Enfin, c'est éclaté. J'ai des références aussi, j'ai été influencé par un manga qui s'appelle "Akira". Ce sont des images qui influencent aussi mon travail. Il y a une source brestoise en fait.

SDP: Gwenaëlle, toi, pour le fragment ?

GM: Le fragment, j'en ai un peu parlé avec les dessins, mais en fait, ce que je veux dire c'est un petit peu différent parce que *La Ligne Bleue* c'est une installation. Je n'étais pas du tout préparée à cette intervention, je dessinais sur un papier ou sur la toile et en fait là, il y a un basculement. C'est le principe de l'installation: c'est un projet pour la marche donc c'est un projet pour le corps en fait. La ville, je l'appréhende par le corps et là je m'en suis rendue compte. Ce n'était pas conscient quand je l'ai fait. C'est par le déplacement qu'on retrouve une mémoire, un territoire, on retrouve un espace dont on prend conscience par le déplacement, par le corps. Et tu disais que c'est un peu intellectuel, mais en fait, je pense que c'est au contraire, très physique. Pour moi, une ville, elle est construite pour le corps, par des corps, par des déplacements de corps. La ville, pour moi, c'est un dessin qui a été écrit et dessiné pendant des centaines et des milliers d'années par des déplacements des gens. Par le déplacement utile des gens. Donc c'est comme un réseau, c'est ce qu'on voit sur les photos et c'est ce qu'on voit sur des dessins aussi. Donc, c'est quelque chose qui est fait pour la marche, donc c'est plus une recherche d'unité que de fragmentation, mais c'est un constat de fragmentation au départ.

Gwendal, ton travail a à voir avec le corps aussi, puisque tu dis que tu faisais du skate, c'est un travail qui est né de ton contact avec la ville aussi... quand tu parles de l'imaginaire de la ville, tu t'es déplacé et le street art, c'est aussi très physique.

WEN2: Oui, Brest, je l'ai arpenté partout. Je suis brestois, je suis né à Brest. Quand je pratiquais du skate, c'est vrai, c'est un terrain de jeu. Donc on allait partout chercher des spots pour trouver où faire des figures, où s'amuser. Et par rapport à la mémoire aussi, j'ai des grands-parents, je reviens un peu là-dessus, qui m'ont raconté la ville. J'étais curieux de connaître un peu le vécu, le passé et puis, comme je disais, on allait dans des friches et on va aussi dans des lieux abandonnés qui ont du vécu, qui ont une âme.

SDP: Oui, justement. C'est comment que tu choisis l'endroit où tu vas ?

WEN2: Dans ce que je dessine aujourd'hui ?

SDP: Oui, par exemple.

WEN2: Voilà, c'est des bistrotts, c'est là où les Brestois vont, et ce sont aussi des baraques abandonnées qui ont du vécu, une matière aussi, la mousse, des volets cassés...

SDP: Stéphane, comment vous, vous choisissez exactement votre sujet photographique ? Est-ce que vous passez des heures à vous balader dans la ville pour choisir ensuite exactement une prise de vue ou c'est assez spontané ? Comment ça se passe pour vous ?

SC: Cela dépend un petit peu. Dans le cas de Dresde, de Berlin, c'était un travail sur la ville entière, donc on passe beaucoup de temps, il y a un travail de repérage très important qui va durer plusieurs semaines, parce qu'il faut aussi voir qu'à l'époque quand j'ai fait les photographies sur Berlin et Dresde, on était dans une autre technique – l'argentique. Avec le numérique tout a changé ; aujourd'hui on fait des photographies complètement différemment, mais à l'époque, pour la photographie d'architecture, on utilisait une chambre photographique sur un trépied, donc tout un système de châssis pour les films etc. Donc on faisait très peu de photographies en une journée et on était obligé finalement d'abord de trouver un sujet, mais aussi de trouver le point de vue, parce que cela, c'est très important en photographie: on est tributaire du point de vue. En tant de dessinateur, on peut imaginer un point de vue fictif. À l'époque avec l'argentique, on était complètement tributaire de l'enregistrement photographique, donc le point de vue et la lumière sont des points essentiels dans la fabrication d'images. Si on regarde la photographie de Dresde, là, qui est au premier plan, le point de vue, voilà, il fallait l'avoir. Si je n'avais pas ce point de vue, je ne pouvais pas faire de la photographie. Et si je n'avais pas la bonne lumière, je ne pouvais pas la faire non plus... donc il y a un long travail de repérage et après un travail d'accès, de trouver le point de vue... c'est tout le problème de la photographie qui est aujourd'hui d'une certaine manière résolue avec les drones. Mais moi, je préfère plutôt rester sur l'idée d'un point de vue piéton ou d'un point de vue depuis un bâtiment sur un autre, d'avoir donc cette relation de proximité avec le sujet. Dans cette composition, parce que l'idée c'est d'être dans ce fragment dont on en parlait tout à l'heure, c'est de faire en sorte que finalement le ciel est remplacé par ce toit qui est derrière de l'un des musées de Dresde. Et donc, la composition et le fragment vont faire en sorte que l'œil, au lieu d'aller vers l'infini du ciel, va se concentrer sur les différents aspects du sujet. Et finalement, pour moi, le véritable sujet de mes photographies, c'est aussi le parcours de l'œil à l'intérieur du cadre photographique. On a l'architecture, on a la ville, mais aussi un sujet pictural et photographique – finalement l'idée de se retrouver au carrefour de différentes disciplines, c'est un peu l'esprit de ce que je peux proposer, c'est d'être au carrefour de différents niveaux de lecture.

276

SDP: Vous avez évoqué cette question justement d'accès ; il faut avoir l'accès pour faire la bonne image, mais finalement du moment où on travaille dans la ville, alors, je pense c'est le cas de Gwenaëlle, d'ailleurs aussi un petit peu de toi, Gwendal, quand tu fais les fresques, se pose aussi la question d'accès au sens "est-ce que j'ai la permission de le faire"... et cela c'est la question de la commande publique pour les artistes qui interviennent directement dans l'espace urbain. Donc c'est peut-être maintenant plus une question à Gwenaëlle ; comment un artiste imagine des choses, est-ce que cela peut aboutir ou pas ? Comment on peut changer l'imaginaire ou pas d'une ville grâce à l'autorité publique ?

GM: Il faut demander gentiment. Parce qu'on est dans le domaine public, je m'en suis rendue compte avec cette installation, je n'y avais jamais vraiment pensé auparavant. Le domaine public appartient vraiment à tout le monde, vraiment ! Les gens, c'est leur rue, leur boulevard, c'est leur quartier, c'est à eux ! Donc il y a déjà cela, cet aspect de la propriété publique. Et après, il faut évidemment demander l'autorisation, c'était sept kilomètres de peinture donc il fallait quand même que je demande l'autorisation et quand je l'ai fait, je ne savais pas comment une ville fonctionnait, je n'étais pas du tout préparée à cela. J'ai passé quand même beaucoup de temps – presque deux ans – à rebondir d'un fonctionnaire à un autre parce que

je ne savais pas à qui m'adresser en fait, parce que je ne l'avais pas appris. Et c'est le maire, Pierre Maile à l'époque, qui a décidé. Cela m'a appris aussi comment fonctionnait une ville. C'est une bonne école.

SDP: Gwendal, comment tu accèdes physiquement aux lieux, est-ce que tu grimpes aussi sur des échafaudages ?

WEN2: Moi, je travaille plutôt avec la nacelle, c'est moins physique. Quand j'interviens sur des murs, on est soumis aussi à l'architecte des bâtiments de France et toutes ces déclarations de travaux préalables, tout cela. Après, il y a le jeu aussi, je reviens au graffiti où souvent, il y a des peintures en haut des murs, donc c'est plus là un côté "compétition entre les gars", celui qui fera le plus haut, mais là, c'est du vandalisme, ce n'est pas pareil, on sort du débat. Je parle de ce que je connais.

SDP: Oui, oui, bien sûr. Ces œuvres que vous avez faites dans l'espace public, je m'adresse plus à Gwenaëlle et à Gwendal: Est-ce qu'elles ont modifié l'imaginaire d'une ville ? Par exemple cette *Ligne Bleue* qui n'est plus là, est-ce qu'elle est encore là dans l'imaginaire des gens ?

GM: A priori, oui, parce que cela fait donc presque 23 ans qu'elle a été tracée et récemment j'ai interviewé des gens dans la rue et une dame m'a dit "oui, elle est là, la ligne, je l'ai vue hier, je l'ai vue avant-hier". Et puis, il y avait plusieurs témoignages des gens qui ont dit qu'elle était étroite alors qu'elle faisait 50 cm... Et là, on rejoint l'imaginaire.

SDP: Quand elle a dit que la ligne est là, elle n'était plus là, la ligne.

GM: Non, non, elle n'était plus là. Et puis, c'est vrai que quand j'ai fait cette proposition à la ville en 2000, c'est une particularité, la ville n'a pas du tout communiqué dessus. En fait, je me suis débrouillée toute seule avec la presse. Ce qui était rigolo, c'est que, en fait, on a tracé la ligne avant que la presse en parle. Donc il y a eu un travail sur l'imaginaire intéressant: les gens ne savaient pas ce que c'était donc ils ont inventé. Ils ont dit "mais c'est une piste de rollers qu'on vient de faire" "ah mais non, on m'a dit que c'était l'aventure antidérapant pour les personnes âgées", "non, non, c'est une zone de stationnement"...

WEN2: Ça les a interpellés...

GM: Oui, tout à fait. Et après, la presse est venue et après il y a eu l'explication. Et cela c'était donc vraiment intéressant de voir comment les gens ont imaginé des solutions, parce qu'il fallait répondre à la question. Après, il y avait beaucoup de presse nationale, longtemps. Je sais qu'il y a des écoles qui ont travaillé très rapidement dessus. J'ai fait beaucoup de propositions à la ville pour essayer de faire quelque chose de cela, parce que je pense qu'il y avait un vrai potentiel sur ce tracé touristique, éducatif, patrimonial etc. Et donc il y eu énormément d'articles et, comme je dis, encore maintenant, les gens pensent qu'elle est encore là...

WEN2: Cela a marqué les esprits, oui. Sincèrement, moi, je m'en souviens de cette ligne bleue, cela a vraiment marqué les esprits. Et puis, elle n'a pas disparu du jour au lendemain, elle a quand même existé pendant des années et des années. Très bon travail.

GM: Merci beaucoup.

SDP: Alors, justement, à toi aussi, Gwendal, qui intervies dans l'espace public, cet imaginaire, tu penses que tu le façones, cet imaginaire de la ville de Brest ? Peut-être que les gens ailleurs qu'à Brest imaginent Brest tel que tu le présentes dans tes images ?

WEN2: Je ne sais pas. Franchement, c'était très brestoïse à la base.

SDP: Mais là, tu travailles un peu à Paris aussi...

WEN2: J'ai fait une série dans le même état d'esprit sur les phares du Finistère. On est plus sur des phares...

SDP: Là, on est à Paris avec cette image.

WEN2: On est à Paris, on est dans le treizième arrondissement, c'est inspiré du phare d'île Vierge et en fait, toute cette série que j'ai faite sur les phares a vraiment eu du succès et m'a permis aussi de sortir de Brest et de développer mon œuvre, même à l'international. Je commence à peindre, je pars à Denver, je pars à Djerba, et puis j'ai des propositions en Mexique. Je commence à voyager grâce à ma peinture et grâce à ces phares, ce monde dans lévitation, tout cet onirisme... Je greffe toujours des petites cités qui s'accrochent à ces phares, c'est des sortes de communautés, de fabriquer avec du bric-à-brac, et puis il y a toujours de l'urbain, il y a des conteneurs, il y a de l'industriel, il y a toujours des choses en fait présentes qui viennent de se greffer autour de ces phares.

SDP: C'est assez hybride.

WEN2: C'est assez hybride, voilà.

SDP: En plus cette fresque ici, elle se trouve sur un pignon d'immeuble dans le Chinatown à Paris ?

WEN2: Oui c'est ça.

SDP: Donc c'est vraiment très hybride ! Mais je crois que cette notion d'hybridation, Stéphane, intervient aussi un peu dans votre travail.

SC: Avec l'arrivée du numérique, effectivement. L'outil numérique en photographie a permis de réaliser des collages, tels que moi, je les ai presque faits avant, en argentique, sans superposition. Mais là, du coup, il y a cette idée d'associer la frontalité de la trame urbaine avec une perméabilité des formes. Moi, je suis plus dans une combinatoire. C'est-à-dire que je vais travailler sur la dualité. Par exemple, moi, je vais travailler sur la ville de Chandigarh construite en Inde par Le Corbusier et où il est aussi intervenu en tant qu'artiste, faisant des fresques monumentales, des tapisseries monumentales, des céramiques etc. Et donc j'ai par exemple fait ces hybridations en associant finalement la dualité de Le Corbusier en tant qu'architecte et en tant qu'artiste. Donc là, on a une sorte de nouvelle combinaison qui déstructure l'image, mais qui

recompose une image plus hybride, plus fluide, moins statique. Et c'est cette idée d'une image virtuelle. Maintenant qu'on est dans le numérique, on n'a plus la véracité de la photographie ; la photographie ne prouve plus rien, donc en tant que photographe aujourd'hui, l'idée c'est de donner à voir un sentiment de quelque chose, par exemple comme une persistance rétinienne: vous voyez quelque chose, quelques secondes après vous voyez autre chose, et l'idée c'est peut-être de les faire coïncider.

SDP: J'ai une autre image de vous: un triptyque. C'est à Moscou, je crois ?

SC: Cela c'était avant le numérique. Cela c'était déjà un travail de polyptyque. C'est antérieur aux hybridations. Mais là, effectivement, on est déjà dans cette idée de jouer avec l'architecture pour reconstruire un autre ensemble, une autre proposition, mais, en gardant les racines documentaires. C'est-à-dire que les images ne sont pas du tout retravaillées, mais elles sont superposées l'une sur l'autre pour reconstruire autre chose.

SDP: Gwenaëlle, je pense à cette résidence que tu as faite à Brest avec Sylvain Le Stum: c'est une installation qui n'a jamais existé, qui est purement restée au stade de projet. (see Fig. 50 in chapter Exhibition)

GM: C'est vrai qu'on pourrait imaginer qu'elle a été réalisée et que c'est une photo de l'installation, oui. Alors, c'est le principe du projet. Il n'y avait pas Photoshop quand j'ai commencé à travailler sur *La Ligne Bleue*, donc je travaillais avec des calques et des crayons. Cela, c'est du Photoshop, c'est plus tard. C'est en 2012. On a retrouvé des carnets du plan-relief des façades des immeubles qui étaient là, au bord de la Penfeld. C'était le quartier des Sept-Saints, c'était le premier quartier de la ville qui était concentré dans le château. Autrefois les gens avaient accès à la Penfeld, donc on arrivait au quartier des Sept-Saints et c'était Brest, c'est pour cela qu'on dit le "Brest-même".

SDP: Là, on arrive à retrouver cette ville détruite qui se trouve dans cette épaisseur du mur en quelque sorte, parce que là on est vraiment au-dessus de la ville détruite, finalement...

GM: C'est Pierre Péron qui avait fait cette image de Brest où on voyait les différentes couches comme une feuille et qui a fait rêver plein de gens. Je sais que à chaque fois qu'il y a des travaux, des démolitions, des trous dans la ville, les gens se penchent, parce qu'ils pensent "mais peut-être là, on va retrouver une maison, une fenêtre, un volet". C'est ce qui est le cas en bas de la rue de la Porte: on descend dans un immeuble au rez-de-chaussée, on rentre par le premier étage aujourd'hui et on peut descendre dans la cave et on voit les fenêtres de la maison qui existait là autrefois. Effectivement, c'est de la géologie ici à Brest, c'est sûr. On revient au collage, oui.

SDP: C'est d'ailleurs cette image très exactement donc de la Penfeld, c'est un lieu qu'on souhaite aujourd'hui à nouveau accessible. Enfin, on est beaucoup dans les projets. À Brest on parle beaucoup de cette partie de la ville qui appartient en partie à la Marine: on veut la rendre aux gens, donc cela, c'était une belle appropriation, peut-être qui quelque part a déclenché aussi... Crois-tu que cela a pu un petit peu déclencher l'idée de ce serait quand même bien qu'on puisse se promener là ?

GM: Je ne sais pas ce que Gwendal en pense...

WEN2: Oui, mais les militaires aiment bien garder leur territoire et ne sont pas prêts à le lâcher...

GM: Il y a beaucoup de Brestois qui travaillent dans l'arsenal et même il y a des élus qui travaillent dans l'arsenal depuis longtemps, depuis des générations. Mais ce qui a changé (enfin, pour moi ce qui a changé la vision de ma ville), c'est quand en 1992 les Fêtes maritimes de Brest ouvrent les portes et on rentre dans la Penfeld... Cela m'a fait un choc énorme parce que je suis passée par le château, par le petit sentier là et là, je suis arrivée en bas du Pont de Recouvrance et là, je me suis dit "mais ce n'est pas possible". C'est comme si on vous avait présenté un objet sur trois côtés en vous disant que de toute façon, le quatrième il n'existe pas... oui, quand j'étais gamine, quand je traversais le pont, je ne regardais même pas en bas, parce que je me suis dit "de toute façon, c'est interdit, on n'y ira jamais". Donc, en fait, c'est comme une quatrième face, on sait à peu près que cela existe, mais on ne la verra jamais, on ne s'en occupe pas. Là, quand je suis entrée dans la Penfeld et que j'ai vu ce pont par ce côté-là, je me suis dit "mais, c'est incroyable", et là, on avait la quatrième dimension, la troisième dimension, le relief en fait, c'est cela que je voulais dire. Quand on tourne autour d'un objet, quand on fait des planches par exemple ou quand on fait des photos où on a les quatre côtés et donc on arrive à reconstituer un objet quand on a les quatre, mais c'est la troisième dimension, ce n'est pas la quatrième. En 1992, c'était pour moi un choc.

SDP: Finalement, on peut aussi avoir l'impression que les artistes, ils ont de la chance, parce qu'ils peuvent imaginer tout ce qu'ils veulent et le faire même exister, sous forme d'image, circuler, se faire connaître... peut-être plus que des architectes qui doivent durement batailler. Est-ce que l'art est plus libre que l'architecture?

WEN2: C'est le rôle de l'art d'imaginer et de créer, bousculer...

GM: Mais je pense que les architectes le font aussi, toute création, à tout niveau, à toute discipline, même un enfant en maternelle, il le fait. On se met dans un état où on invente quelque chose...

SDP: Mais vous pouvez quand même construire des villes virtuelles, non? Qui existent comme cela, qui flottent... Vous pouvez faire voler les villes, vous les artistes? Vous avez cette espace de liberté, vous êtes libres...

WEN2: Oui, on prend la liberté.

SDP: Vous prenez la liberté. Stéphane, dans votre travail, la question de liberté d'un artiste, qu'est-ce que vous en pensez, vous êtes libres de faire tout, vous avez des contraintes qui vous tombent dessus quand vous travaillez?

SC: Non, je n'ai pas de contraintes, je crois qu'il faut se donner un langage artistique et après on essaie de le montrer, parce que finalement, le plus important c'est de montrer son travail. Ce qui est important c'est l'échange, le dialogue avec les gens qui vont voir les choses et cette liberté c'est surtout la possibilité de montrer le travail, ce n'est pas une question de liberté, c'est une question d'arriver à trouver les lieux, les institutions, les galeries, les centres d'art qui vont pouvoir montrer le travail, parce que la liberté de faire, oui on l'a, mais encore faut-il trouver des partenaires...

GM: On a des contraintes et on essaie de s'en échapper, mais c'est cela, la liberté.

Summary:

The artists gathered here are interested in the city, with very different approaches: Stéphane Couturier [SC], a photographer, has produced images of the late reconstruction of Dresden; Gwenaëlle Magadur [GM], a visual artist, made a name for herself in Brest with La Ligne bleue, marking the route of its vanished rampart across the city; and Wen2 [WEN2], a “futuristic graphic artist from an underground world”, imagines underground evocations of the vanished city in her street art. The round table was moderated by Sonia de Puineuf [SDP]. A full translation would have given a very imperfect account of what was said, so the following extracts attempt to capture the dynamics of the debate as closely as possible.

[SDP] Reconstructed cities raise the question of memory from the outset. How is it present in your respective works?

[GM] The work on La Ligne bleue was first and foremost a question of roots, since my father had tried to dissuade me from any research into the history of Brest: “There’s nothing left of it”. I started with very simple black and white drawings, a bit like Chinese calligraphy, which I juxtaposed. There was a thread missing, which I identified when I saw the outline of the rampart. And that’s when I said to myself “this is what built the city, what protected the city, what brought the two banks together”. For me, that was the history of Brest.

[WEN2] I’ve always had a relationship with the urban environment: skateboarding and graffiti. I went to a school of applied arts, where we were taught to draw, draw, draw and not to intellectualise the whole thing. The memory came later: I have grandparents who told me about the city. So this destroyed city is a huge source of inspiration for me, to create my little levitating world.

[SC] Talking about memory is one of the specific elements of photography, because it freezes something. When I photograph cities, there’s absolutely no way of knowing whether the photographs will have another life in ten, twenty or fifty years’ time. So it’s a memory, but we don’t know what history will make of it.

[SDP] What’s striking about these images is that when you photograph the city, you have a bias, that of the fragment: you can’t see the whole.

[SC] The very large format allows you to play with the fragment. The title of the series, Urban Archaeology, comes from the idea that the viewer can excavate each part of the image like an archaeologist. It’s also the idea of the sedimentation of planes and events that are superimposed on the image: the first, second and subsequent planes are flattened, producing ambiguity in the reading.

[SDP] In Wen2’s images, on the other hand, it’s easy to see what’s above and what’s below, but at the same time there’s this question of fragment.

[WEN2] In relation to levitation, yes. In my work, the human element is never present, except through the constructions, and that’s what I like to do too: really draw the city as a skeleton, what’s left of it. I was also influenced by a manga called Akira.

[GM] I’ve talked a bit about the fragment with the drawings, but what I want to say is a bit different because La Ligne Bleue is an installation: it’s a project for walking, and therefore for the body. It’s through moving that you rediscover a memory, a territory, a space that you become aware of through your body. It’s very physical. For me, the city is a drawing produced over hundreds and thousands of years by the useful movements of people. It’s more a search for unity than fragmentation, but it’s an observation of fragmentation to begin with.

[SDP] How do you choose where you go?

[WEN2] Bistros, where the people of Brest go, but also abandoned shacks that have a life of their own, a material too, moss, broken shutters...

[SC] In the case of Dresden and Berlin, we were working on the whole city, so we had to scout around for several weeks. A draughtsman can imagine a fictitious point of view. At the time, with film, we were completely dependent on the technique, so the point of view and the light are essential points in the making of images. Even today, I prefer to stay with the idea of a pedestrian point of view, or from one building to another, and have a close relationship with the subject. In the end, the real subject of my photographs is the path taken by the eye inside the frame. What I can propose is to be at the crossroads of different levels of reading.

[SDP] You mentioned the question of access: “do I have permission to do...”. This is the question of public commissions to intervene directly in urban space. How can an artist change the imagination of a city through public authority?

[GM] The public domain belongs to everyone, really! People’s streets and neighbourhoods belong to them! And to get seven kilometres of paint you have to ask nicely: I discovered how a city worked. We drew the Blue Line before the press got wind of it. People didn’t know what it was, so they invented it: a roller skating track, non-slip paint for the elderly, a parking zone... It’s been almost 23 years and even now, people still think it’s there.

[SC] With the advent of digital technology, we can work on a combinatorial approach. For example, I worked in India on the city of Chandigarh, built by Le Corbusier but where he also intervened by creating monumental frescoes and so on. My hybrids combine Le Corbusier’s duality as architect and artist. In the digital age, photography no longer proves anything, so as a photographer today, the idea is to give a feeling of something.

[SDP] This is also the case with Gwenaëlle’s work with Sylvain Le Stum, an installation that never existed, that remained purely at the project stage.

[GM] In fact, it’s Photoshop, based on the notebooks of the relief plan of the old Sept-Saints district, on the banks of the Penfeld. This was the city’s first district, the first ‘Brest itself’. Pierre Péron had painted a picture of Brest showing different layers like a sheet of paper, which made a lot of people dream. In fact, it’s geology in Brest, and we’re back to collage.

[SDP] In the end, you get the impression that artists are lucky enough to be able to imagine whatever they want and even make it happen, perhaps more than architects who have to fight so hard. You can make cities fly, you have this sense of freedom...

[WEN2] Yes, you take the freedom.

[SC] What’s important is the exchange, the dialogue with the people who see our work. Above all, freedom means being able to find the right places to show it.

[GM] We have constraints and we try to escape them, but that’s what freedom is all about.

Ivana Radovanovic

“CONVERGING VISIONS”, 2023

Sound work of art resulting from the artist residency in Brest & Dresden

Ivana Radovanovic is a young music composer of Serbian origin who lives and works in Austria. She was selected from among one hundred candidates to do a double artistic residency in Brest and Dresden. The aim was to create a work that crossed the imaginations of the two cities. During her stays, Ivana recorded the sounds of the two cities and integrated them into an original sound composition.

“Audio recordings of specific elements unique to each city served as an essential component of this Sound Composition. The music was created by manipulating and distorting selected portions of the recorded audio files, as well as incorporating other sounds from everyday life in these cities. The primary question that I explored is: how do these two cities sound during and after reconstruction? What are the distinguishing characteristics of each city’s soundscape, and what similarities and differences can be discerned?”

The artist residency took place in three phases: the artist stayed three weeks in Brest and three weeks in

Dresden collecting the sound material, and then she finalised her work in Austria.

While staying in Brest, the artist had the pleasure of meeting local artists, architects, and historians in order to immerse herself in the city’s culture as much as possible. Exploring significant landmarks and attending various events provided her with a wealth of inspiration for creating Brest’s unique sound portrait. She discovered the main street of the town (rue de Siam), harbour, Recouvrance bridge, Penfeld, Marina du Moulin Blanc, the church Saint-Louis, and important cultural places like Ateliers des Capucins, Passerelle, Cinemathèque, Mac Orlan, Vauban, and La Pam where she attended various performances and vernissages.

The city of Brest was described by the artist with words such as new, vibrant, full of young people and as a stoic military city. She compares it to the punk music style.

Dresden, a baroque city boasting a beautiful old town, left a completely different impression on the artist. She describes it as a classical and romantic city. During the first few days of her visit, she immersed herself in the local culture by visiting museums and admiring works of art, from Old Masters to the most famous modern pieces. However, it was the virtual reality exhibition “Hybrid Spaces” at the Robotron Kantine that left a lasting impression on her.

282

Ivana Radovanovic



Fig 1: Brest, during the material collecting phase, photo: author.



Fig.2: Dresden + Brest, track produced, photo: author.

The artist discovered places within the old town and within new parts of the city such as the Residenzschloss, Frauenkirche, Kathedrale Sanctissimae Trinitatis, Kulturpalast, Robotron Kantine, Zwinger, Oktogon, Fürstenzug, Albertinum, Brühlsche Terrasse, Semperoper, Festung Experience, Museum of Military History, Hellerau, Verkehrsmuseum, Hygiene Museum, Großer Garten, Neustadt and many of the city's bridges. On the 13th of February, the artist had the opportunity to witness and collect audio materials from the program organised in remembrance of the bombing of Dresden. The recordings made in Dresden differed greatly from those made in Brest.

During the last phase, the artist processed the materials, integrated musical instruments, and composed music for the travelling exhibition which opened on the 22th of June 2023 in Brest.

The visitors of the exhibition could discover the sound portraits of Brest and Dresden by pressing the corresponding buttons. The starting point for the Brest composition is a soundscape from the Ateliers des Capucins. The composition also includes the original sounds of Spitfire planes, as well as metal sounds, the sound of the Recouvrance Bridge, and workers building ships. These metal sounds come together to form a strict and rhythmic composition. The portrait of Dresden begins with the sounds of the Frauenkirche bells accompanied by the mayor's speech on the day of commemoration of the bombing of Dresden (February 13th). These compositions complement each other harmoniously in the combined portrait of the two cities.

Link to the work of art: res-urbanae.eu/artist-residency/

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Res Urbanae

A Look at Cities under Reconstruction

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