



ALMA MATER STUDIORUM
UNIVERSITÀ DI BOLOGNA



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INTERPRETING DESTRUCTION & RECONSTRUCTION in WAR SITUATIONS

INTERPRÉTER la DESTRUCTION et la RECONSTRUCTION
des SITUATIONS de GUERRE

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Organisation

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Scuola
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studi Umanistici

Résumés / Abstracts

ABDULAC, Samir

Architecte, Secrétaire Général ICOMOS France

Destruction et reconstruction du patrimoine culturel bâti dans une Syrie en guerre

Vérités, controverses, silences ou oublis jalonnent le présent et même le passé de la narration des destructions du patrimoine architectural et urbain de Syrie. Il n'est pas toujours facile de trancher et parfois la logique de guerre et la stupidité humaine peuvent être aussi destructrices que la noirceur des sentiments attribués à l'adversaire.

Une attitude scientifique est autant que possible de vérifier sur le terrain quand cela devient possible, de conserver les témoignages écrits et visuels en vue d'analyses prochaines ou lointaines plus complètes. Même le passé mérite d'être interrogé.

Dans ses intentions et/ou ses effets, la reconstruction est non seulement révélatrice d'une volonté politique et symbolique, mais aussi de stratégies économiques et sociales. Ses enjeux sont désormais d'une actualité plus pressante.

Quelques cas illustreront cette présentation comme ceux d'Alep, Damas, Homs, Maaloula et Palmyre dans une période s'étendant de 1925 à aujourd'hui.

ALBRECHT, Benno

Architect, Director of Doctoral School at IUAV (Venezia)

Urbicides

One of the pressing topics in the field of civil commitment, and in the operational field of architecture, is how to deal with the consequences of urbicides, the deliberate violence against cities, their destruction, and the intentional elimination of collective "memory made of stone". Today, war is fought in urban contexts and "urbicide is a form of genocide".

We must reflect on the consequences of urbicides, which even involve countries that are distant from the epicentre of the destruction and concern the accommodation of survivors and refugees, their return to their country of origin, and the possible reconstruction of cities torn by the insanity of man. It is necessary to think of possible strategies for the realisation of refugee camps near the areas affected by urbicides, and of ways to reconstruct the destroyed cities and to necessarily preserve the stone heritage and memory.

AL-HASAN, Nada

UNESCO, Chef de l'Unité des États Arabes (CLT/HER/WHC/ARB)

UNESCO's actions and prospects for post-conflict recovery

The presentation will provide an overview of UNESCO's actions throughout the recent conflicts in the Middle East on three levels: the diplomatic level which deals with advocacy amongst decision makers and parties to the conflicts including within the UNESCO's governing bodies and the UN Security Council; the statutory level, which deals with the modalities of implementation of the UNESCO treaties in the areas of built and movable cultural heritage; and the operational level, detailing the wide range of activities implemented by UNESCO and their direct impact on cultural heritage in the Middle East today, and explaining how UNESCO addresses international cooperation and coordination with numerous cultural heritage actors worldwide.

The presentation will address UNESCO's approach to physical reconstruction or rehabilitation of cultural heritage following conflicts within the larger frame of post-conflict recovery; it will highlight the potential of recovery in restoring stability, peace and social cohesion based on experiences in several countries where UNESCO operated, and will elaborate on the complexity of the reconstruction field, detailing the wide array of parameters and disciplines it involves, and the numerous challenges it raises.

Finally, the presentation will describe UNESCO's ongoing initiatives for post-conflict reconstruction in the Middle East, with focus on Syria and Iraq, and ongoing elaboration of policies, notably in cooperation with the World Bank.

DAMLUJI, Salma Samar

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Yemen: Considering Reconstruction

Structures, states and infrastructures were thus dilapidated and broken down. The region was silent and rendered jaded by its utter physical and moral defeat.

Following the Urbicide conference initiated by IUAV in Venice, April 2016, followed by Sketch for Syria, Urbicide II took place in Beirut in April 2017. The agenda was expanded to include Palestine, Iraq and Yemen, by order of annihilation and destruction.

Three representatives from Yemen, an architect from GOPHCY, an archaeologist and head of museums and antiquities GOAAM, and an Historian from Aden University, were invited. They presented their research and documentation in time of war and their assessment and figures of the ravaged landscape across the entire Yemen. The Unesco Yemen office requested to attend, and also made a case for Yemen, so did a Yemen specialist and scholar from SOAS University who had lived in Aden in the years prior to the war. Yemen is otherwise rarely heard. Journalists are not provided access to the country to report and their presence has been denied. MSF for the early years and prior to their hospitals and facilities being bombed, were the only source and contact with the international world.

Reconstruction speaks of a reconciliation system between two lives and periods: the pre, and post damage, of the inhabited and deserted landscape, between loss and recovery. It is a phrase that one learns is deconstructed and composed empirically: as with the building projects we worked on in Yemen, ironically in the years preceding the current war 2007-2014.

One of the main issues we are facing here is the anonymity of the main participants. Names and invented political identities mean little in the face of destroying a country. Nor is the purpose of the continued devastation cycle clear. Whether the coalition responsible for the destruction is intending to take over the reconstruction, and redevelopment to follow, is still unknown and shadowed by the continuous violence and the shattering of the built environment.

Wars need an enemy, and here the enemy become war mongers, assuming the role of supreme hegemony moving might and proxy on the stage, to level cities and flatten buildings. ‘...But there has always been another war against architecture going on -the destruction of the cultural artefacts of an enemy, people or nation as a means of dominating, terrorising, dividing or eradicating it altogether...’ (Bevan, R. *The Destruction of Memory, Architecture at War*, London 2006, Introduction, p.8).

The paper intends to rethink and consider the plausible approach and scope for reconstruction projects, in light of the above. It is to be note that instability, economic corruption and political upheavals in Yemen, like war, had contributed to the current state of destruction and collapse in the infra and urban structures. Both require immediate emergency measures to mitigate the danger and threat in the urban fabric, where possible, to rehabilitate and reconstruct. Hence the process is one that is inclusive of rethinking and reinventing. And each case presents us with a different schema, in redrawing the original settlement, community, town or neighbourhood layers that informs the matrix.

FABBRI, Paolo

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Università degli Studi di Urbino Carlo Bo

Déconstruire pour reconstruire: un cas d’espèce

La méthode sémiotique a vocation descriptive. Mon corpus sera la reconstruction, encore en cours, de la ville de Rimini, détruite au 82% pendant de la deuxième guerre mondiale (1944).

Parmi ses principaux monuments, le Tempio Malatestiano (temple des Malatesta) de L. B. Alberti a été l’objet d’un débat très actuel sur les différentes théories et méthodes de restaurer un édifice ancien (B. Berenson eut le dernier mot!).

Après plus de 70 ans, le Théâtre de d’Opéra, est maintenant en construction, après une discussion prolongée et très vive dans la population riminienne et des nombreux projets. (J’ai fait partie de la Commission des Sages chargée par la mairie d’évaluer les points de vue). Quant à d’autres édifices touristiques, ex. le Kursaal (1870) - touchés mais non détruits par les bombardements, ils ont été déconstruit et d’autres abandonnés jusqu’à aujourd’hui, v. les Colonies marines pour enfants. Le changement de régime politique après la guerre fut suivi par la décision de la mairie, qui visait à transformer le caractère bourgeois et festivalier de ville de vacances en lieux de thérapeutique ouvrière. Les deux isotopies en jeux, et souvent en conflit, ont décidé tour à tour l’énonciation légitimée à déconstruire pour reconstruire.

GRASSI, Maria Teresa

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Le futur de Palmyre

Pendant les deux dernières années, Palmyre a été au centre de l'attention médiatique, avec le brutal meurtre de Khaled al-As'ad et la destruction spectaculaire des principaux monuments.

L'émotion pour ces dramatiques événements a provoqué un débat passionné sur le futur de Palmyre et, en particulier, sur les projets de restauration/reconstruction des monuments détruits, avec un grand retentissement non seulement chez les spécialistes mais encore chez le public.

La question n'est pas seulement archéologique ou technologique, et elle n'a pas été perçue seulement comme simple reconstruction matérielle. Les nombreuses restaurations et reconstructions après les guerres du XX^e siècle (par exemple la Deuxième Guerre Mondiale ou la guerre des Balkans), mais aussi après des événements traumatiques dans les périodes de paix (par exemple à Venise) ont été cités en tant que modèles pour le futur de Palmyre, révélant une grande importance pour la mémoire collective et la reconstitution du tissu social.

HAMMAD, Manar

Architecte, Archéologue

Sémantique des destructions patrimoniales

Le caractère sélectif d'un grand nombre d'actes de destruction observables en Syrie et ailleurs, actes qui atteignent aussi bien des infrastructures économiques (ponts, routes, silos) et productives (zones industrielles, centrales électriques, stations de pompage, boulangeries industrielles) que des monuments historiques (temples et édifices civiques à Palmyre, mosquées et établissements d'enseignement à Alep) interdit de les considérer comme des accidents marginaux et aléatoires de la guerre. Il ne fait aucun doute qu'il y a là une volonté concertée. Ce qui pose la question du sens de ces actes.

Nous ne disposons pas des données politiques et militaires nécessaires à l'analyse des conflits dans leur ensemble. Mais nous avons un objectif à la fois plus modeste et plus ambitieux: plus modeste car l'objet de notre intérêt est restreint au cadre bâti, surtout celui qui est doté d'une valeur patrimoniale; plus ambitieux en ce que nous voulons interpréter les articulations du contenu de tels actes. La destruction présupposant une reconstruction à venir, nous posons l'hypothèse qu'une part non négligeable du sens se révèle dans les projets de restauration et/ou reconstruction de ce qui a été détruit.

Sans projeter sur les événements des réponses toutes prêtes, nous interrogeons les faits, les actions attestées, pour les réinsérer dans des chaînes signifiantes, et pour dégager un sens qui soit plausible. La méthode d'analyse narrative, utilisée en sémiotique, est méthodiquement utilisée.

MAZZUCHELLI, Francesco

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Heritage as hostage: modes of destruction and semiotics of reconstructions

My paper is divided into two parts. In the first part, drawing on the notion of urbicide (as it has been employed especially during Yugoslav wars to designate a peculiar strategy of warfare directed against urban heritage), I shall reframe the issue of destruction from a semiotic perspective, exploring different forms of heritage destruction in war/conflict situations, and the respective “discursive configurations” that are evoked (erasure and de-memorialisation, iconoclasm, self-representation). Some reference will be made to the circulation of images and representations of war destructions in media discourse and shared imageries – a process of interdiscursive translation which entails a semiotic transformation of the act of destruction.

In the second part, I will focus on the operations of post-war reconstruction and restoration (with a specific attention to urban monumental heritage): moving from a typology of various solutions of restoration, I will try to trace the diverse semantics which underlie different strategies of reconstruction, and the relations they establish with the act of destruction.

MONTANARI, Federico

Università di Modena-Reggio Emilia

First World War, The Centenary and Destruction/Reconstruction of Memory. Some controversial examples.

First World War, represents and has notoriously represented a complex of cultural-semiotic objects, which has been a matter of investigation for many scholars at a disciplinary crossroad, opening new fields of research (from Nora, to Koselleck, concerning monuments, to Leed, Fussell, Winter, about history of mentality and memory).

As everybody knows “The Great War” is one of the most accounted and narrated issues, not only concerning collective memories and their representations but in many different forms of texts and discourses (from literature to film to tv or, until today internet, the web 2.0 and social media). If this assumption sounds today perhaps obvious, it describes a fundamental and paradoxical phenomenon: First war’ memory and representation works like a mirror of cultural tradition (let us think to the largely-celebrated Centenary) precisely because of its distance and at the same time closeness from us.

But what about destruction/reconstruction procedures and texts? The scope of this paper is trying to show, through some different examples, the ways in which the memory of the First World War has been mediated and re-mediated. Precisely because we can affirm that the First World War has been also the “First Media war”, the activity of destruction and reconstruction of its memory (destruction and reconstruction of monuments, etc.) passes right away through media representation: in forms of controversies or re-affirmation of different narratives.

NEGLIA, Giulia Annalinda

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Interpreting reconstruction. The cultural meaning of the Ancient City of Aleppo's urban landscape

When we are dealing with a World Heritage Site damaged by a war, such as the Ancient City of Aleppo, which was listed for its Outstanding Universal Value given by the *integrity* and *authenticity* of its urban fabric, we are asked to think at the reconstruction as at the re-interpretation of the cultural meaning of its urban landscape.

But what happens when the one who reconstruct is unable to decipher the cultural codes that were at the basis of the buildings layout? What happens to the urban landscape after a period of crisis, and a cultural change given by the departure of the local urban population? What happens to the concept of house when it becomes outdated? What happens to an old city core when we shift from the “spontaneous consciousness” to an “informal” reconstruction?

Considering the process of transformation of the urban landscape as a consistent development in time, this paper focuses on the need of decoding the syntax of the urban landscape, which is the text where we can read the history and the cultural characteristics of a place, with the aim of providing methodological tools for the houses reconstruction.

SOUFAN, Anas

Architect, ICOMOS Advisor

A Normative Overview on Reconstruction of the Syrian Heritage

The normative and etymological approach of the postwar reconstruction in Syria should be carried out on an international level bearing in mind the recognized Outstanding Universal Value of many monuments, districts and sites in question. The legal repositioning of the reconstructed properties shapes a primary interrogation focusing on how these properties could stay / be eligible for the world heritage listing.

A number of significant concepts, such as reversibility and minimum intervention, are at the heart of a growing library of guidelines, declarations, Codes of Ethics and Charters. The Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention and the Nara Document are relevant examples.

The present paper attempts to clarify what are the main deficiencies of the aforementioned texts relating to the Syrian case? What are the consequences of the absence of such international legal framework? What are the principles to resolve this issue?

TONGHINI, Cristina (Università Ca' Foscari di Venezia) &
MORANDI BONACOSSO, D. (Università di Udine)

The many facets of heritage destruction and the dangers of reconstruction

In any time and place heritage easily becomes a war victim. The most recent heritage destruction that took place in the Middle East have had unprecedented impact on the international community as a consequence of the effective propaganda campaign pursued by Isis, and eventually led to firm reactions, such as UN resolutions.

By examining the case of Iraq more closely, and moving from recent history, this paper aims to show how the transformation of site destruction in a propaganda tool by Isis goes together with massive looting programmes in which the responsibility of other parties is often underestimated. This paper will also illustrate how the destruction of Iraqi heritage began well before the rise of Isis, and how the numerous appeals launched by archaeologists operating in Iraq were virtually ignored by the international community until the looting of the Baghdad Museum in 2003.

This paper will therefore end with a series of considerations on the many reconstruction programmes that are being formulated, between good practice and potential dangers.

VIOLI, Patrizia

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Conservation, cancellation, reconstruction: some reflexions based on sites of traumatic memory

My presentation will focus on a very particular set of case studies, that I define as trauma sites, places of mass suffering conserved in order to transmit the memory of the events that took place there. Although these places are not archaeological heritages in a strict sense, nor do they have the same status as ancient sites, however they do present some common problems with more classical heritage site in relation to their conservation, restoration and reconstruction. I will illustrate the afore mentioned issues with the analysis of some concrete cases.