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The role of architectural reconstruction in a post-war context: the case of Mosul

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Abstract. This work addresses the topic of architectural reconstruction in a post-war context, in this case in Mosul, Iraq. Heavily damaged during the war against ISIS, the city faces the immense task of cleaning, restructuring, and rebuilding. The damaged buildings are diverse, but the ancient monuments require specific care as they carry the memory and the heritage of a traumatized community. Both in the cases of partial or complete destruction, the architectural intervention needs to face both cultural and the preservation dimensions of reconstruction. This approach is based on interventions in strategic neuralgic points for the community life such as the market, a religious structure, and the baths. These symbolic spaces host the social, economic, and religious activities that gather the inhabitants. They are also the stages of the traditions and cultural life of Mosul. The reconstitution of the inhabitants' habits and sense of community is centred around these locations and planned to spread around the urban fabric following the redevelopment of the city. Our three different sites are the Souk, the Great Mosque and the Hammam. These projects address several challenges: the construction of a new building inspired by the existing urban fabric, the partial reconstruction of an ancient monument and the construction of a new building in dialogue with existing Ottoman ruins. The balance between tradition and modernization; memory and oblivion; reconstruction and restoration is the focus of the paper.

1. Introduction

This paper tries to face the issue of urban reconstruction in the post-war context of Mosul. The city located on the northwest side of Iraq was seriously compromised by nearly a decade of war followed by a violent conflict and occupation by the Islamic State. Nowadays, the city faces an immense reconstruction task that must address the emergency needs of the community and the destruction of the main ancient monuments of the Old City, among the cultural heritage urban structure.

Short-term solutions are needed to temporarily answer to the extreme nature of the immediate situation, but the main purpose of the project is the reconstitution of identity. The physical heritage of Mosul has sustained serious damage, so our objective is to preserve what can be saved.

Perhaps more significantly we seek to promote, and support weakened intangible heritage and traditions. Mosul is a resilient city born from intersections of trade routes. Current social difficulties, the unstable political situation and overwhelming urban issues make challenging a sustainable vision for the future. Fortunately, Mosul's unique cosmopolitan population and the richness of its culture carry a message full of hope.

To address the problems in Mosul, we are supposed to intervene in trying to prioritize, dealing with some pressing questions: how the rebuild process is supposed to be reasonably balanced and



proportionate between modernity and tradition in a destroyed city? Which are the most urgent interventions to deal with the number of needs with a sense of priority? What is the sense of reconstruction, and how the mastery of local community mastery might be involved? How can regeneration of a community feeling be stimulated through some strategic re-activated collapsed assets with the empowerment of commerce and social life? How might the process of reconstruction play a role in the re-identification of the local community?

2. The City of Mosul

2.1. *History of the city of Mosul, main periods and influences*

The rich and fertile Mesopotamian lands located between the Tigris and the Euphrates rivers are considered the cradle of mankind and the origin of some of the most ancient civilizations such as Sumerians, Akkadians, Babylonians, and Assyrians. Situated in Iraq, this region witnessed the birth and development of the first human settlements later evolving in cities, long before the era of Christianity. Assyrian traditional narrations attribute to king Ninus the creation of the Assyrian kingdom expanding from India to the Mediterranean Sea, considered the founder of Nineveh.

During the rule of the Sassanid Persian Empire, the Christians established themselves in the city of Nineveh favoured by its agricultural production and the proximity of the Monastery of Yunnan, which has existed since the fourth century and later became the mosque of the Prophet Yunus. During this period, most of the inhabitants of Nineveh were Christians, a persecuted community by the ruling governments. Under the Sasanian rule, the Christians were killed and displaced. For this reason, the gathering of the community on the welcoming and fertile rivers of the Tigris aimed to offer protection and prosperity. The remaining walls reinforced this defensive position. The empty city represented an opportunity to start a new settlement, using the existing ruined structures built under the Assyrian period. The Arabs lived for decades in the city of Al-Hirah, which was located near Baghdad however, the life conditions remained unstable. They were frequently invaded and displaced even after their population grew. To establish more stability and security, the Arabs settled in Hatra, a great city located to the right of the Tharthar River, in the south of Mosul, 85 kilometres away. The city was characterized by being built richly with distinctive roofs and doors. The city had 60 towers connected to its walls, and between each tower were nine small towers. The city was heavily fortified. During this period, the Arab community joined the present Christian population living in Mosul. This cohabitation, organized in neighbourhoods lasted for centuries and enriched the city with cultural diversity.

After the Islamic conquest, the city of Mosul transformed from a garrison settlement to a rich and large city. Many important Muslim monuments such as a Friday Mosque are constructed (661-750 A.C.), (another Friday Mosque was later built). Mosul was traditionally a walled city with a citadel (Qal'at) located outside the city centre. It is common in this region to observe the main Friday Mosque (Jami) located in the heart of the city, and the bazaar surrounding the mosque. These features almost correspond perfectly to the structure of Mosul at the time of the Umayyad State. The streets of the city were paved, and fortified walls were built. Moreover, during the reign of Marwan II, known as the master builder, the city had around 50,000 inhabitants, twice more than the coeval Rome. The Ship Bridge, which was the only bridge over the Tigris until the 20th century, the Qaysaria (covered market), and the Umayyad Mosque, from which the Al-Nouri Mosque inherited, were realized during this era.

The Abbasid caliphate was established from 750 to 1258 in an area that extended from Constantine to Multan and from Derben to the South limit of the current Yemen. In the first part of the Abbasid domination, Mosul was reaffirmed as one of the most important hubs of the region and profited from the trades to economically develop. The urban fabric specially expanded in the South following the axis between the gates Bab al Gisir and Bab al Bayd. This street was crossed by the merchants and caravans linking Asia and the Arab world. Because of the numerous crisis that strokes the region, the population declined, and the reigning power lost the trust of the inhabitants. The diminution of the food production pushed a large part of the population toward an extreme poverty.

During the Zengid period, a golden period, many monuments and important buildings, mosques, shrines, schools, ribats and hospitals were constructed. The Bab Sindjar gate became increasingly influential,

shifting the city's main axes. As we previously noticed, the path of the caravans and merchants was important for the development of the city and this shift led to the creation of a new commercial street. After a rapid progression in Syria and the destruction of Bagdad, the centre of the Middle East trades, Mosul was conquered and sacked by the Mongols in the second half of the 13th century. The powerful and rich city did not accept to submit to the newly arrived invaders. The Mosulian population revolted against the Mongol occupation leading to violent repression in 1265 that decimated Mosul's inhabitants and destroyed a large portion of the built fabric and monuments. The powerful and rich city however did not accept to submit to the Mongols and was sacked. After these events, Mosul was ruled by the Ilkhanate and Jalairid Sultanates. The city survived but without retrieving its past power and economy. In 1517, it was conquered by the Ottoman Empire that considered it as a garrison residence. Under the Ottoman empire, the city of Mosul expanded, more outside the city walls, mainly to the southwest and southeast and several infrastructures were modernized. The Ottoman governance contributed to unifying the policies and taxes simplifying the trades. The centre remained as a historic nucleus, architectural testimony of the past of the city. The Ottoman Empire was divided into Vilayet or regions and the Mosulian one was large of 300.000 inhabitants among which an important Christian community was present. The Sarai appears to have moved within the Iraqi city over the centuries. During Ottoman rule, the Middle East city's urban spatial organization required the Sarai to be located on the defensive wall's border, either inside the city's precinct, as in Antalya, or outside, as in cities throughout the Middle East and North Africa. Mosul's Sarai was located within the city walls until the late 1800s, when it was relocated to the far south, outside the city. The first Ottoman Sarai was relocated on the Citadel (Qal'at) Island.

After World War I and the defeat of the Ottoman Empire, Mosul became part of the British empire from 1918 to 1926. The British carried out major infrastructure projects throughout Iraq, such as building roads, bridges, and railways. Mosul became the capital of the province of Nineveh after it joined the newly formed country of Iraq in 1926. The city expanded during the royal period, which lasted until 1958. New districts were built within the old city, in the abandoned northern section, and outside, in the south-western and south-eastern areas. After the 1970s, many works were conducted under the 1975 French Master Plan. The 5th Bridge, connecting the East bank to the new trade axis in the west of the Old City, was considered the only major change the Old City experienced since 2000'. In recent decades, many contemporary buildings made of concrete and steel were built within the Old City, whereas many historical houses have fallen in decay or destruction, mainly because of the inability of the owners to restore them. The contemporary city, which encompassed both the west and east banks, was one of Iraq's most important cities. The town consisted of 251 quarters (mahala) on the two sides of Tigris, with 91 districts on the Western Bank (the old town and neighbourhoods) and 160 neighbourhoods on the East Bank, according to the UN-Habitat profile of Mosul 2016.



Figure 1. Evolution of the urban city structure (Credit: Authors)

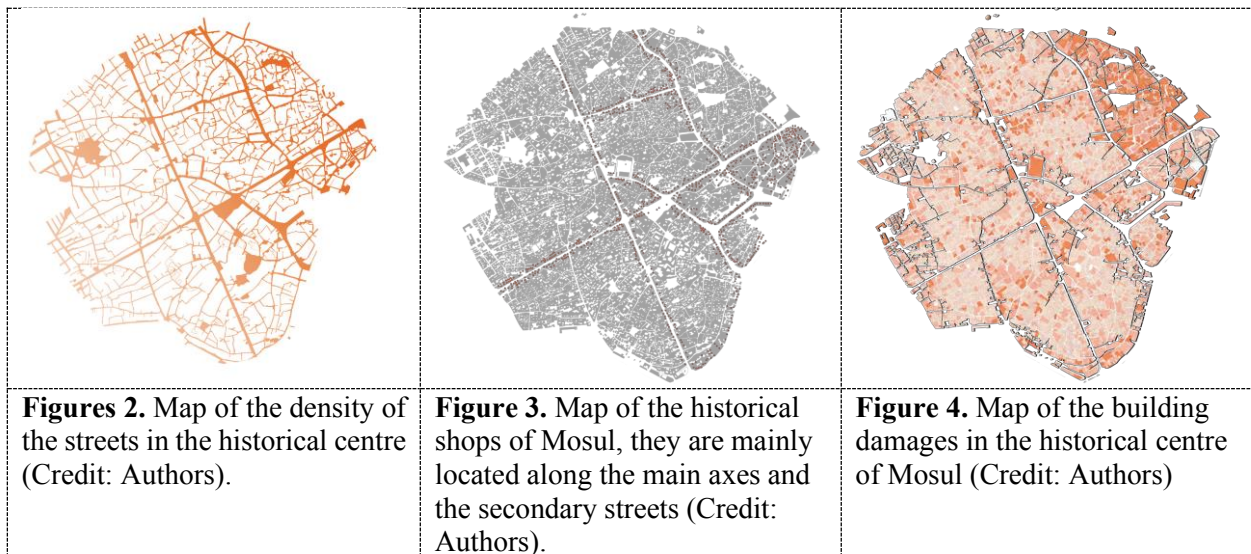
2.2. Physical characteristics of the city

The different neighbourhoods were constituted of a very dense residential fabric that grew organically during the successive expansion waves of the city. The Muslim tradition of a strong division between the public and private life is spatially translated by a separation between the economic, religious, and social functions and the residential blocks. The public life and the commercial streets, located in the main large axis are well delimited from the private life organized around introverted and intimate

courtyards. We are going to study more in detail the different elements of the city focusing on the spatial organization of the urban spaces, the importance of the role of the circulations and courtyard systems, the implantation of the different communities and ethnic groups and their monuments in the urban space. The location of the city, at the intersection of important trade routes and the diversity of its culture, promoted the city as one of the most important of the Middle East. The old city is extremely rich in historical buildings such as mosques, castles, churches, monasteries and schools. The old city, developed in a perimeter included in the ancient walls, was later expanded toward the South and East and on the other side of the river. The old souk area and the Al-Nuri Mosque are two of the most important urban elements. The Muslim community developed a spatial focus on the monuments and buildings playing a role in the practice of its spirituality. Mosul was also characterized for centuries by a large diversity of religions and ethnicities cohabiting, divided by neighbourhoods that enriched the urban fabric. The streets of Mosul have a complex circulation system that connects the neighbourhoods. The streets can be classified into three main categories. First, the main axis links the historical city to its surroundings, one from North to South and the second from East to West. The secondary streets delimitate the building blocks. They are very important for social and commercial life. Most of the shops in the city are located along with their courses. As the high density of the city does not allow a lot of free floor areas, these streets are also important for the community as they represent the main public spaces. Inside the blocks, the tertiary streets are narrower and more intricate. They are not as commercial as the secondary ones but provide more introverted spaces. The most ancient part of the historical city, located in the East, has the highest street density as the result of the spontaneous expansion of the urban fabric toward the West. This development did not follow legal planning and resulted in a very complex arrangement. The main axis, located far from the heart of the blocks and from private life, present most of the commercial activities. The more intimate and private systems inside residential areas are divided from the public life to preserve the intimacy and privacy of the inhabitants. The cul-de-sac organization is a traditional feature of Iraqi cities. Widespread in the housing neighbourhoods, often narrow, they provide an introverted urban space. The historical centre of Mosul has multiple examples of this configuration also called dead ends. The courtyard is another significant feature of Iraqi architecture and part of the traditions and lifestyle. Commonly present in the historical centre of Mosul, it provides an introverted alternative to the traditional spacing between the buildings. The combination of these two elements represents the introverted aspect of the private activities in the organization of the Mosulian community.

2.3. The war against ISIS and the destructions

The ISIS war occurred between Iraq and its allies and the Islamic state. The destructions are impacting the built heritage at every scale and made most of the constructions dangerous and unsuitable for any use. The destroyed monuments are diverse: churches and monasteries, mosques, minarets, libraries, archaeological and medieval sites such as Nineveh ruins etc. The loss of this heritage is defined as a war crime against the people of Iraq, whose heritage is a symbol and medium of identity, history and memory. These destructions are linked to suffering and violence in human lives and weaken society over the long term. The destructions are affecting the city in all its activities as the cultural, religious, residential, educational, and commercial buildings are touched. The touristic activities, large sources of revenues for Mosul are suspended too. Besides the necessary physical reconstruction, the Mosulian community also needs to re-build its identity and its culture, healing with resilience.



3. The process of city-reconstruction

3.1. The process of the reconstruction

The reconstruction of Mosul took a considerable amount of time to start. In 2019, 3 years after the end of the war, the unchanged situation was becoming increasingly concerning. The city centre presents a total of more than 5000 buildings completely razed or severely damaged and an average of 3,000 tons of rubbles per acre spread around the city containing explosives and unexploded ordnance. The reasons for this delay are the extreme complexity of the economic and political relations between the different actors. Since the end of the war, many humanitarian organizations have provided emergency assistance for the rehabilitation of infrastructure and public facilities in Mosul to Iraq and more especially to Mosul. However, the lack of strategic coordination has raised concerns in the local and international communities. More than \$40 million of dollars collected for the reconstruction of the city by the international community have been reported missing by the anti-corruption commission in Iraq. The country reaches the worst scores in Transparency International's annual Corruption Perceptions Index.

3.2. The actors of the reconstruction

Facing the inertia of the process, many inhabitants decided to start the reconstruction of their own homes. Often realized without any legal or professional guidelines, this spontaneous construction misses following any sort of urban organization structure. The techniques, the construction methods and the architecture feature also appear in a quite chaotic pattern that can associate without coherence very bright colour facades, steel constructions and concrete cinder blocks. Far from the traditional Mosulian urban fabric, these buildings have the advantage to provide a rapid shelter to families.

On the other side, the local authorities aim to transform the destroyed historic city into a modern investment hub to create a “new city” with gleaming high rises and high supermarket and restaurant chains. This position is motivated by the will to create an economic revival and to give back to Mosul its past position as a trade centre. However numerous questions are raised by such a project.

The public and the international community fear the final destruction and the erasure of the built heritage of this area. The international organizations and more particularly Unesco tried to work to the conservation and preservation of the authenticity of the old centre of Mosul. The organization first surveyed the area and listed the damages. It also proposed guidelines for the new buildings, respecting the traditional spirit of Iraqi architecture. Unesco organized and funded the reconstruction of significant buildings such as the Al Nouri Great Mosque. These projects guaranteed the respect of the cultural framework of the built heritage.

3.3. The functions of the Mosque, Bazar, Museum, School, Hammam

The mosque or “masdjid” in Arabic, means place of prostration. As a pillar of the urban organization of Middle East cities its importance is both religious and spatial. It is the convergent point between the

religious, educational, social and commercial network of the city. Historically, the commercial neighbourhood, the souk, is located close to it. The main mosque of the city also plays a specific role in the religious system of Islam. Also called "Friday mosques", the main mosque hosts the Friday collective prayer at noon, the most important of the week, mandatory for men. It also has a social and political scope in the life of the communities, serving for the civic assembly, following the Friday prayer during which the different political leaders meet. The mosque is not a sacred building in itself. Its religious importance is given by the holy objects. There are no requirements in the construction of a mosque except for a clear demarcation of the interior spaces and a frontal element marking the direction of Mecca. The main space is the prayer hall where the Muslims meet on Fridays. It contains elements such as the mihrab, or minbar, important for the rituals. The mihrab is a niche set into the wall facing Mecca. It is often decorated and has a central location in the mosque. The pulpit, called minbar, is the place where the imām does the sermons. It is generally placed near the mihrab in a way that allows the prayers to face Mecca and the minbar at the same time. In mosques, men and women are separated. If the men use the main prayer hall, women must pray in the makhphil, usually separated by stairs or a fence from the main prayer hall, accessible by a different entrance. Some external features can also be identified in most of the mosques such as the minaret and the dome that usually cover the centre of prayer hall. The minaret is a slender element that can be located in one of the corners of the mosque or beside. From that tower, the muezzin gives the call for prayer. The madrasa, combining social, religious and educational purposes, is dedicated to transmitting theology, Islamic laws, history and sciences. Traditionally this building is composed of study rooms, prayer halls and dormitories.

The market, souk or bazaar is one of the most active and crowded areas, first established due to the various merchants travelling through the Middle East, linking Europe, South Africa and Asia. They were proposing products and goods coming from all over the world but also agricultural and craftsmanship local productions. The markets were often divided into areas according to the type of products. The central market of the city was dedicated to international export, while more local markets provided merchandise for the inhabitants. In the early decades, the markets of the region were more informal, and the products were directly displayed on the ground. Ambulant vendors were moving around the most dynamic areas of the city such as the mosques or the gates. This spontaneous development can be observed in the very organic and intricate plan of the traditional souk. Along the centuries, informal markets evolved into permanent structures providing separation between each shop. The morphology of the souk grew to become an urban element where small partitions of the space create an economic network in the city. The labyrinthine streets are usually narrow and congested by displays of vegetables, fish, leatherwork, meat, textiles, spices, books and more. In this atmosphere is it common to meet friends and stop for a coffee or do groceries after the prayers. An example of transformation of those informal markets into permanent structures is the khan. This building, organized around a central courtyard, is composed of a series of shops. Each unit is connected to the courtyard by an entrance and is generally composed of two rooms. One serves as a display area for the products and the other for storage and production. The souk is often spread at the scale of a whole neighbourhood and its boundaries are usually impossible to define clearly. Its presence and its size participate to give the city its economic importance and to provide opportunities for the inhabitants and visitors. Some of the largest capitals even develop multiple markets. As important institutions for the conservation of the tangible and intangible heritage, the museums play a strong role in the preservation of the endangered memories of the Moulins. Due to the voluntary destructions of many historic books, artworks and artefacts by ISIS, the display and valorisation of the preserved objects are more important than ever.

Due to the destabilization of the infrastructures and administrations during the war, many children lost the opportunity to receive an academic education. The whole school system of Mosul stopped completely for years, and the population displacement complicated, even more, the organization of any structured teaching.

The hammam or hot bath is a typical element of Ottoman culture. During the Ottoman period, they were very popular and started to spread around the empire. Some hammam remains can be found in the Middle East and North African countries. The oldest known hammam was found in Bassorah in the South of Iraq. Nowadays, each Iraqi city counts dozens of these structures, and they remain as a traditional element of the local culture. It is important to note that hammams are present in numerous

countries of South Africa, the Middle East and the West of Asia. Therefore, their features sometimes slightly vary. The hammam typology is complex and hosts various activities in addition to the bath. Their architecture changed during history depending on the cultural environment. Inspired by Roman terms, the hammam traditionally proposes cold and hot pools. If the first hammams were only composed of three rooms and baths at different temperatures, they evolved in larger structures. In the second part of the Ottoman period, it was common to find beauty treatments such as massage, exfoliation, hair removal, henna and even dentists. In addition to the changing and service rooms, the typical hammam is composed of three different washing sections: the “kurna”, where cold and hot water taps allow the visitors to wash, the “halver”, a closed area for an individual wash, and the humid steam chamber located in a raised platform above the heating source. Inspired by the Roman baths, the hammam proposes multiple pools with different temperatures comparable to the caldarium, tepidarium and frigidarium. The hammams have separate sections for men and women. They always have been a social place where visitors can meet with friends, conclude business trades and gossip while eating, drinking and bathing. They are also a popular location for wedding celebrations, birth parties, funerals and many important milestones of community life.

4. The critical approach adopted

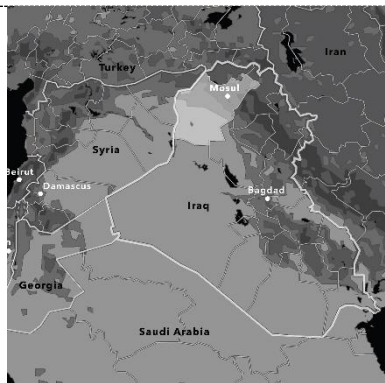
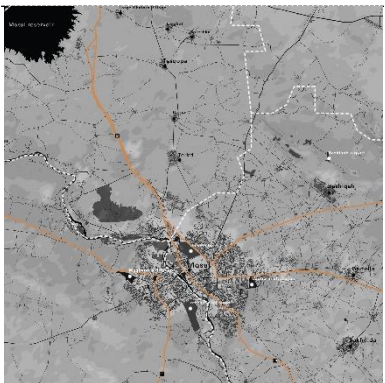

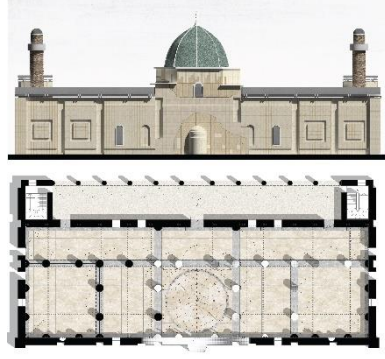
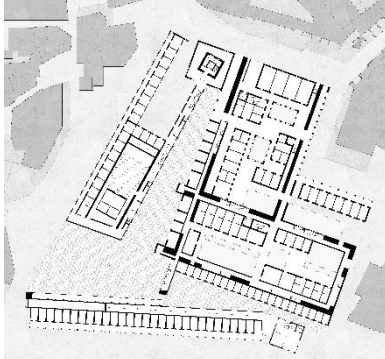
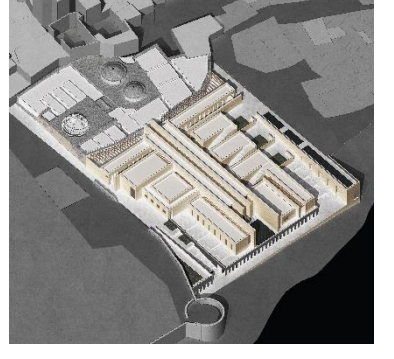
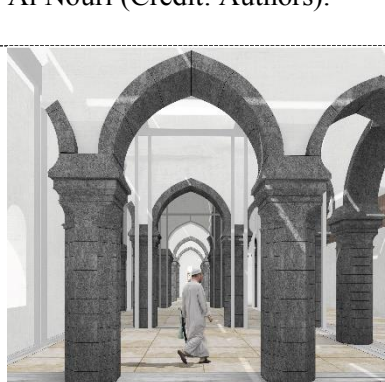
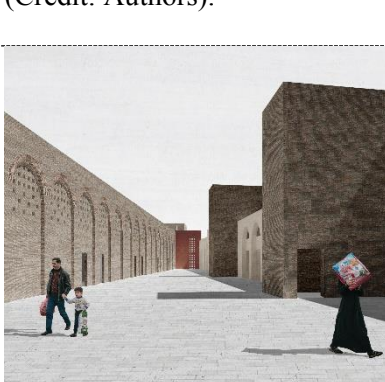
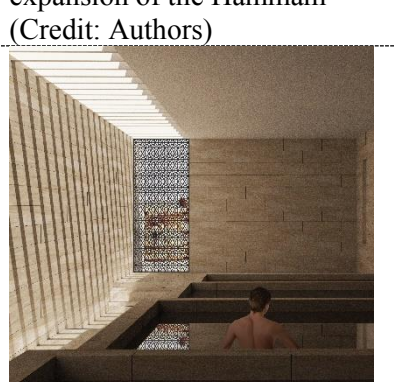
4.1. Constitution of the modern theory of the reconstruction

Before the 19th century, the intervention on behalf of a pre-existing building was set in continuity with it, both as an answer to functional demands and as an architectural expression. Even the most important refurbishment plans were meant to create something, and not to reproduce what was before. After the 19th century, the interventions on a pre-existing building were oriented on the transmission to the future. The values of the past were considered as important, and their conservation appeared necessary for their transmission to future generations. Three main figures dominated the debates, giving three extremely divergent perspectives on the mission of the re-construction and preservation. They established the bases and framed the contemporary reflection. At first, John Ruskin developed the theory of the conservative approach. He maintained that architecture provided memories to a nation. For him, nations could live without architecture and worship, but could not remember without architecture. In order to gain from the knowledge of the past and protect one’s own memories, the modern man should recognize the architecture of the past as modern man’s inheritance and preserve it as a living memory of the past. In his works “Seven Lamps of Architecture”, 1849, and “The Stones of Venice”, 1853, he introduced this approach towards the restoration practice. On the other hand, Eugène Viollet-le-Duc began developing his theories of restoration and preservation based on a stylistic approach. In 1854 he published his ten-volumes “Dictionnaire raisonné de l’architecture française du XIe au XVIe siècle”, developing his ideas. For him, the architect should restore the building, not to its original state but the design state, returning to the original vision of the designer. This action would clarify the original message and concept of the architect. Then, Camillo Boito developed the philological approach as an intervention method that preserved the authenticity of the architecture. His theory established seven fundamental principles to guarantee the preservation of the documental value of a historic building. Unlike Ruskin, he accepted the practice of the restoration however, called it a necessary evil. He gave a central role to the historical value and promoted that all findings made during the restoration process should remain visible and clearly identifiable. After the Second World War, this discussion became particularly relevant as many of the European cities suffered from partial or complete destructions. The reconstruction effort became one of the most important social challenges in which the whole population became involved. The architects, town planners and authorities had to face the emergency of the situation but also the dilemmas and the expectations of the inhabitants. Two main perspectives were then developed. The first one saw this reconstruction as an opportunity to modernize the transportation networks and to create modern services and housing in a modernist aesthetic. It was also motivated by the desire to face the future and the progress, in opposition to the dark moments of the war. In the cities of Saint-Dié or La Rochelle, in France, these ambitions were investigated by Le Corbusier, whose approach poorly considered the pre-existing urban fabric. On the other hand, some architects chose to reinterpret existing elements of the destroyed city, such as urban axis, as a base for their work. It was the case for Warsaw in Poland, Maubeuge and Le Havre in France. This position was usually tempered

by the economic situation and by the recalcitrant inhabitants and local powers, afraid to see their well-known environment being completely erased. But the most diffused approach was to find a balance between respecting the original shape of the blocks and enlarging the circulations axis. For example, this method was applied in Florence, Dresden, Rotterdam and Frankfurt. The opposed approach consisted in the exact redrawing of the destroyed urban elements. It was realized in St. Malo, France and Munster, Germany. This position deals with the trauma of the war by returning to a past state of the city. However, often modern techniques such as reinforced concrete were used, giving priority to the aesthetic. These restorations were considered necessary to preserve the architectural heritage. Many debates occurred during this period as none of these strategies could aim to be the perfect solution but each of them proposed a different way to cope with the physical damages and social fracture. They all faced different critics and approbations from the general public and scholars. In the Middle East, this debate became extremely relevant in the last decades as many violent conflicts ca

4.2. Urban approach

The process of the reconstruction is multiple and takes form in a multitude of initiatives through numerous actors. Each of them follows its own perspective and strategy. However, even if the identification of the right solution to reach the objectives can create conflicts and tensions, it is possible to define common goals between the actors. The revival of the city through the economic and cultural life of the community in order to rebuild its importance at a local and national scale is the main aim of the revival effort. As we previously studied, the inhabitants started to re-enter the city and individually reconstruct their homes. The problem that remains central is the reconstitution of the common services, institutions and structures. They are the spine of the community activities and in a traumatized region like Mosul, it is fundamental to also rebuild the social links. For these reasons, our strategy is based on the reactivation of vital poles of the Mosulian traditional life. We decided to focus on some of the most important centres of urban activities. Three proposals for the reconstruction of some of the most symbolic buildings of the old city of Mosul have been done. Firstly, the reconstruction of the Great Mosque Al-Nouri, important as a religious and social pole, gathering the Muslim community and functioning as one of the most popular landmarks seemed extremely necessary. More than a house of worship, the mosque has a critical and authoritative role in the cultural and political life of Muslims, with immediate social implications. This work is part of team collaboration for the participation in the Unesco competition for the reconstruction of the Al-Nouri Mosque complex and its famous minaret after their destruction by ISIS in 2014. Because of the importance of the architectural features of the Al-Nouri Mosque, respecting the guidelines of the Unesco, the proposal consists of an inspired reconstruction, preserving the remaining ruins and fragments. We however decided to mark subtly but clearly the distinction between the original elements and the new intervention. Secondly, we will present a proposal for the Aleataarin Souk destroyed during the numerous violent events of the war. We will especially focus on the South-West khan that could be the epicentre of the slow reconstitution of the surrounding streets. For these projects we decided to adopt a re-interpretative approach, adapting the traditional form of the souk made of small units organized around narrow alleys and courtyards. The proposal also takes inspiration from the intricate original fabric and in the pre-existing axis. The large scale of the project also allows us to create new landmarks such as an observation tower, a community

		
<p>Figures 5. Location of the city of Mosul in Iraqi national borders (Credit: Authors).</p>	<p>Figure 6. Mosul and its surrounding, until the Mosul Reservoir (Credit: Authors).</p>	<p>Figure 7. Location of the three interventions discussed in the paper (Credit: Authors)</p>
		
<p>Figures 8. Plan and façade of the reconstruction of the Mosque of Al Nouri (Credit: Authors).</p>	<p>Figure 9. Ground floor plan of the reconstruction of the Souq (Credit: Authors).</p>	<p>Figure 10. Parallel view from the River Tigris of the expansion of the Hammam (Credit: Authors)</p>
		
<p>Figures 11. Inside view of the reconstructed Mosque (Credit: Authors).</p>	<p>Figure 12. View of the new open spaces provided by the reconstruction of the Souq (Credit: Authors).</p>	<p>Figure 13. Inside view of the new portion of Hammam building (Credit: Authors)</p>

centre and an amphitheatre. Merging the economic life with social and educational elements. The third site is the Al Salihyya hammam, an abandoned Ottoman monument that was extremely damaged during the war. The hammam is an important institution of the Iraqi's traditional social life. We decided to conserve the ruins as a testimony of the rich history of the region. The cohabitation with the ruins allowed us to preserve and display a forgotten monument. We inserted a circulation system allowing a new perception of the spaces and proposed a new extension that includes a hammam, gardens, a coffee and a library. The distinction between the two parts is intentionally clear but the design creates cohesion.

These three interventions are designed to create an urban synergy and to work as a spine for the regeneration of the urban fabric. Our proposals focus on the activities of the traditional public life of the region, providing spaces to rebuild the community and the identity. The resilience and the revival of cohesion in the Mosulian community is the aim of our urban scale strategy.

5. Conclusion

The war that took place in Iraq was traumatizing and fractured the cohabitation between the religions and ethnicities. It destroyed the material and immaterial heritage of a whole nation and compromised the liberties and the rights of many. The human and physical losses are immense, and the reconstruction task is extremely complex. We examined how the rich history of the city produced an intricate and diverse urban fabric, underlining how the cohabiting ethnicities and religions created a great variety in the monuments and traditions. The study of the region and the urban fabric also gave elements to understand the system of the Mosulian community and the importance of traditional neuralgic points such as the mosque, souk and hammam. The debate that took place in Europe after the Second World War and the conflicts between modernization and identical reconstruction introduced different approaches to the reconstruction process. It has been demonstrated that in many cases the architects had to construct a balanced and subtle compromise between these positions. In the case of Mosul, these subjects are currently relevant topics in the discussion between the different actors. The inhabitants started a self-reconstruction that sometimes fails to respect the traditional architecture of the region. The coalition of the merchants of the souk and some individual initiatives seem to indicate that the Mosulian community tries to work in the direction of the preservation, inside the guidelines of Unesco. On the other hand, the local authorities seem determined to modernize the city and to transform most of its symbolic places into giant shopping malls. This strategy would allegedly help to reactivate the economy and to promote the city to a regional and national scale. What we finally chose was to develop a strategy based on the reconstruction of vital points that gather some of the most important activities of the city, defining them as a spine for future regeneration of the urban fabric. Our proposals for the mosque, the souk and the hammam, the museum, the school are although based on different approaches they represent some important opportunities to repair physical damages. The redevelopment is also an opportunity to reconcile neuralgic issues and to promote social, educational, political, economic, cultural and religious activities as a source of richness and peace.

6. Reference

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