



Rising from the ashes Resilience and reconstruction in post-conflict situations

Ypres, 5-6 February 2021

One century ago, hundreds of towns and villages in Belgium were destroyed. The First World War had turned the former front zone into a wasteland. Nevertheless Ypres and its surroundings recovered remarkably quickly, as did the rest of the country. The large majority of refugees returned shortly after the Armistice, while new buildings and farmland erased the bombscapes of 1914-1918. The international conference 'Rising from the ashes' discusses the recovery of the Westhoek as a case study in a series of reconstructions. After all, post-war recovery is of all time. This immediately evokes questions at the intersection of past and present: what are the similarities and differences between historical and actual cases? Which elements are crucial to make reconstruction successful? Is social resilience a prerequisite for town and villages to be rebuilt? How do governments and international organizations influence reconstruction? And what were the distinctive characteristics of the reconstruction of the Westhoek after the First World War?

The venue of 'Rising from the ashes' is the Ypres Town Theatre (Stadsschouwburg, Vandenpeereboomplein, 8900 Ypres). The first day of the conference (Friday 5 February) will study reconstruction as an international phenomenon, while the second day (Saturday 6 February) will be devoted to recent research on the reconstruction of the Westhoek after the First World War. Lectures will be in English on day 1 and in Dutch on day 2. Simultaneous translation will be provided.

All regulations relating to the COVID19-virus will be observed.

You can register on <https://www.inflandersfields.be/en/kenniscentrum-e/form-inschrijving-conferentie-e/>. The registration fee is 25 euro per day (two coffee breaks and sandwich meal included), 20 euro for students and VIFF members, or 45 euro for two days (35 euro students/VIFF). For more information, please contact kenniscentrum@ieper.be.

If you wish to stay in Ypres, you can arrange accommodation through [toerisme leper](http://toerisme.leper.be), toerisme@ieper.be.

'Rising from the ashes' is organized by In Flanders Fields Museum, Interfaculty Centre for Agrarian History (ICAG, KU Leuven) and the History and Art History Department of Utrecht University.



Universiteit Utrecht



Friday 5 February (English ; Dutch simultaneous translation provided)

8h45 - Registration

9h20-10h40 : 'Architecture and resilience' - chair: Gertjan Plets

9h20 -

Dominiek Dendooven: **Struggling with symbols after the Great War – The Reconstruction of Ypres and its Cloth Hall, 1914-1967**

The discussion about the reconstruction of Ypres after the First World War and the Cloth Hall in particular is, as it were, a matrix of the symbolic struggle that characterised several reconstruction projects in the 20th century. Since the fire of 22 November 1914 the Cloth Hall - widely revered as the largest non-religious Gothic building in the world - had become the symbol of the destructive power of the modern war. During, but especially immediately after the war, a symbolic struggle arose which focused on the question to whom the ruins of Ypres belonged. To the British who lost almost a quarter of a million of their countrymen over four years in and around this city, or to the locals of which the last had left the city as early as May 1915 to return at the earliest and sparingly in 1919? In the end, the local people's right of ownership would win it from the British moral claim, and rather than a symbol of the Great War the Cloth Hall became a symbol of the resilience after that war. Widely regarded as a successful example, the Ypres case makes us think about what exactly is the key to a successful reconstruction project.

10h00 –

Sofie De Caigny : **Contemporary challenges for reconstruction heritage. The case of South-West Flanders**

After the First World War the region of West Flanders was heavily damaged. Especially the South-West of the province faced extreme devastations after years of intense war activities. Not only houses, public buildings and infrastructures were severely affected, in some cities and villages, also forests, meadows and roads were destroyed to the extent they almost disappeared. Taking up normal life again was a great challenge. Already during the war vivid international architectural debates developed, on how to rebuild this part of Belgium. Both traditionalist, regionalist and modernist approaches were advocated for by international and Belgian architects and politicians.

After the war, reconstruction activities started rapidly and, in terms of size and agents involved, became one of the most important building campaigns in Belgian history. The central public administration took an overarching responsibility, many architects from all over the country saw it as their duty to contribute to the reconstruction, and various social organisations were deeply involved. In a country where the building culture is mostly driven by private initiative since the 19th Century, this remarkable momentum leaves tangible, material traces until today. The southwestern part of the province West-Flanders is

characterized by a landscape that differs fundamentally from the rest of the country. Its homogeneity is appreciated by architects and urbanists as an oasis in the fragmented and diffuse landscape that features most parts of the rest of Flanders. The heritage value of the reconstruction landscape and buildings does not lie in the outstanding architectural quality of the individual buildings but in the coherence of the landscape, urban plans for the villages and material consistency of the individual buildings.

Current day, the architecture and urbanistic heritage from the reconstruction period faces numerous difficulties and challenges. New standards of hygiene, privacy, sustainability and housing comfort are driving forces for change in the built environment. This presentation addresses future perspectives for the reconstruction heritage. What architectural approaches can be adopted to maintain the unique character of this region without preventing its future sustainable development? How can private owners be stimulated to take responsibility in this challenging question and what could be the role of public bodies? The reconstruction was only possible thanks to an engagement from central and local public administration, and with organisations from civil society that took on a decisive role. The presentation explores possible roles these organisations and the government could take on today in order to ensure the reconstruction heritage to be ready for the next 100 years.

10h40 – Coffee Break

11h10-12h30 : 'State, Civil Society and Resilience' - chair: Gertjan Plets

11h10 -

Dries Claeys: **Power to the people? The state, social resilience and national solidarity during post-WWI recovery in Belgium**

This paper elaborates on the insight that social resilience is power-induced. It does this by taking post-WWI recovery in Belgium as a case study. At the end of the First World War Belgium was a shattered country. German occupation had deepened socio-economic and community divides, while the war itself led to millions of refugees and tens of thousands houses and buildings being destroyed. The national economy was dismantled and public finance derailed. Nevertheless, Belgium quickly recovered from its wounds. Unlike France, it had no *zone rouge* with 'lost' villages. This success story has often been attributed to the resilience of the *sinistrés*, those who had lost their houses and belongings. But how can we explain their resilience? This is where the notion of national solidarity comes in. National solidarity allowed the Belgian state to coordinate reconstruction via financial compensations, while at the same time involving its citizens in the rebuilding of the country. It was exactly this mechanism – the intertwining of individual and national reconstructions – that characterized post-WWI recovery in Belgium.

11h50 -

Lucy Arendt: **In the Aftermath of Disasters, How Do Communities Decide How to Rebuild?**

One consequence of both war and disastrous natural hazard events is that people in devastated communities must decide whether and how to rebuild their physical infrastructure. “We must build back the same,” some will say. “No, we must build back better!” will be the refrain of others. Whose voices should matter the most? What is the correct way forward? After a disastrous event, particularly when the community is operating in crisis mode, many members in the community will call for, even demand, that everything be returned to the way it was before the event so that everyone may resume a so-called normal life. While these voices may be particularly loud in communities with significant inventories of important heritage buildings and sites, they may also demand to be heard in communities without such historically important elements. Other members of the community will see the disastrous event as an opportunity to change the physical infrastructure in ways they believe will better serve the community. Even before the event, ideas for how to improve the community’s physical infrastructure will have existed in people’s minds and perhaps in private and public plans. Relocation and reconstruction of certain “problem” buildings and roads, using modern techniques and sensibilities, will arguably make life better than it was.

Making smart decisions about a community’s physical infrastructure is critically important as the systems and facilities that house and transport people and goods and provide services do not exist in isolation. Decisions made about a community’s public buildings, roads, bridges, and transportation services affect where people choose to live, work, and play – and vice versa. A community’s physical infrastructure enables or impedes its social, economic, and cultural development and health. This presentation will address the importance and meaning of how community members think about rebuilding their physical infrastructure in the aftermath of disastrous natural hazard events by examining the experiences of several communities. The presentation will outline some advantages and disadvantages of building back the same versus building back better along with some of the factors that facilitate or restrict how communities rebuild their physical infrastructure. The information presented will reflect the experiences of communities around the globe recovering from earthquakes, tornadoes, flooding, hurricanes, and tsunamis. The parallels to communities recovering from war will be apparent. Recommendations for communities facing the difficult decisions of whether and how to rebuild will be extrapolated from the research shared during the presentation.

12h30-13h30 – lunch break

13h30-17h30 : Afternoon session: 'Cultural resilience' - chair: Piet Chielens

13h30 –

Gertjan Plets: **Theorising post-conflict heritage reconstruction: rebuilding monuments or resilient societies?**

After conflict, there is often a “rush to reconstruct” cultural heritage. In a 2013 paper, Alvaro Higuera, former Cultural Heritage Officer for the United Nations’ (UN) mission in Kosovo, reflected on the problems and implications of the UN heritage reconstruction programs in the former Yugoslavia. He felt that many of these programs, such as the rebuilding of the mosque of Banja Luka (Bosnia), were fraught with contention and did not achieve any social healing. Many reconstruction projects even further reinscribed ethnic differences. Especially the political agendas of the different nation states, multilateral organisations, corporations and NGOs selectively funding many reconstruction programs undermined the efficiency of most heritage aid efforts. In the end, both UN policy makers, archaeologists and architects conducting the reconstruction “...realized that the politics of the issues at hand were well beyond our league. This was heritage heavily dependent on politics...” (Higuera 2013, 100). It is precisely the failure to recognise and understand the politicisation of heritage reconstruction that renders cultural healing impossible.

Clearly, rebuilding a heritage site is as symbolical as the destruction that predicates it. In this paper, drawing on an analysis of secondary literature about both contemporary and historic examples of heritage reconstruction, I will explore the social and political dimensions of heritage reconstruction and their long-term effects. By comparatively analysing how cultural heritage is reconstructed in a post-conflict setting, this paper studies the influence on reconstruction activities of the type of warfare, profile of the site and strength of civil society. Ultimately it is the ambition to theorise post-conflict heritage reconstruction more profoundly, and determine under which circumstances heritage rehabilitation can engender sustainable societal recovery. This is especially salient for contemporary conflicts in the Middle East, Myanmar and Yemen, where a changed type of warfare is making heritage an important weapon in crafting new state structures

14h10-

Nour Munawar: **Competing Heritage - Curating the Future Heritage of Post-Conflict Syria**

Since the beginning of the armed conflicts and public uprisings that accompanied and followed the ‘Arab Spring’ that started in 2010 in Tunisia and continues till this day in Sudan and Algeria, cultural heritage sites have been hit-hard, damaged and often destroyed by different perpetrators. The ruination of cultural heritage in Syria has drawn attention to the many studies and organizations that are concerned with the preservation and safeguarding of the country’s endangered antiquities. Such asymmetric destruction has provoked observers, politicians, and international and national non-government organizations to debate about the impacts of damaging Syria’s “irreplaceable” patrimony and how to safeguard its past from the ongoing destructive actions.

All of these statements and international responses have triggered a significant debate: do not all cultural heritage sites and monuments, whether they be Greek, Roman, or Islamic, contribute to the construction of Syria’s identity and memory? If so, why are we currently

witnessing an increasing European interest in protecting and reconstructing what radical actors have already destroyed? In particular, this interest has tended to focus on Roman period remains in Syria, such as the replica project of Palmyra's Arch of Triumph.

I take a different approach, arguing that heritage is in a constant process of transformation and change over time. When seen in this way, the destruction and loss of heritage sites is not endangering Syria's heritage—it may, in fact, be seen as creating the future heritage of post-war Syria.

This paper investigates the transformation of the terminology of heritage in Syria prior to and during the ongoing conflict, and how the internationally renowned term “heritage” emerged to promote the destruction of Syria's cultural patrimony. This article explores how cultural heritage and collective memories have been utilized by Syria's Ba'ath party from the second half of the twentieth century up to the present. This paper explores the semantics and impacts of the continuous destruction and the ongoing reconstruction plans on the cultural heritage of Syria. To conclude, I argue that the recent intentionally destructive actions have started a process of “*heritagizing*” the present, which will eventually itself become part of the Syrian collective memory. This process has the capacity to make a strong contribution to the rebuilding of national identity in the aftermath of the war.

14h50-15h20 - coffee break

15h20 -

Mela Zuljevic: *Realigning the Bridge: Post-war reconstruction in the context of development in Mostar, B&H*

The symbol of Mostar, the Old Bridge, was built during the Ottoman empire in the 16th century and destroyed during the war in Bosnia & Herzegovina in 1993. In this talk, I look at the site of the bridge and the Old City of Mostar, to reflect on its reconstruction through international cooperation and the follow-up inscription to the UNESCO World Heritage list. With the help of UNESCO and the World Bank, the post-war reconstruction of the Old City was framed as a pilot project of peacebuilding by the international community to be exercised in Mostar as a model for rebuilding the entire country. In this process, the social relations shifted, as the reconstruction of pre-war social networks and ties was deferred in prioritising the market economy and tourism development trajectory. Further, the representation of the bridge as the international peace project remained solely on a symbolic level, as Mostar is still a divided city, while heritage is continually instrumentalised by different political agents to maintain this division.

By looking at the site in its current state, I will reflect on the reconstruction project by examining the dynamics between (1) the development trajectory set in place in cooperation of local elites and international organisation and, (2) how their vision was accepted, appropriated or problematized in the everyday life of the workers and residents in the Old

City. In doing so, I will focus on the notion of resilience as emerging in this dynamics, as people appropriate the reconstruction discourse to shape their livelihoods through different examples of agentive identities - from heritage institutions and experts to workers in tourism and residents of the Old City. How does the agency of resilience relate to the neoliberalising impetus of the post-war reconstruction, and how is it shaped by the survival habitus in the tourist economy? How are different legacies of the pre-war and war-time city used in this resilience? Finally, how does the agency to control the narrative of the past bring forward other ways of resisting, navigating and imagining development trajectories?

16h-17h30 -

Debate with

Anita Blom, architectural historian working at the Cultural Heritage Agency (RCE) in the Netherlands as a senior specialist in reconstruction and post-war urban planning.

Wilhelm von Boddien, German businessman and general manager of the reconstruction of the Berlin Palace.

Brendan Cassar, Head of Culture, UNESCO Iraq, "Revive the Spirit of Mosul" project.

Chiara De Cesari, anthropologist, Associate Professor at the University of Amsterdam, with a research interest in cultural heritage during and after conflict.

Leo Van Broeck, architect, professor of architectural and urban design at KU Leuven and until recently Flemish Government Architect.

Moderated by Piet Chielens

8h00 - Last Post at the Menin Gate

Saturday 6 February (Dutch)

8h45 - Registration

9h20-12h30 : Morning session : 'The Reconstruction of the Westhoek - local cases' - chair: Gertjan Plets

9h20-

Simon Augustyn: **Diksmuide risen from the ashes**

During the First World War, dozens of villages and towns in Western Flanders were razed to the ground. One of the hardest hit cities is Diksmuide. At the sight of the enormous havoc the press writes in the beginning of 1919 that Diksmuide cannot be rebuilt in its original place. The war has not spared a square metre of the city. Plans to rebuild the city next to

the ruins appear to be premature, as more and more returnees move to the outskirts of the city centre. The housing shortage is high, but the government is hardly prepared. Facilities leave much to be desired of. People help themselves. They move into empty German bunkers or build a rudimentary house together with what is available.

The city council faces a colossal task. Like many destroyed towns and cities, Diksmuide cannot bear the burden of reconstruction alone. The city's finances are inadequate and Diksmuide allows itself to be 'adopted' by the Belgian state, which is responsible for restoring the public domain. Architect Jozef Viérin was appointed to draw up a town plan. Apart from minor adjustments, such as widening roads for future traffic, the plan is grafted onto the pre-war street pattern. The choice for Viérin still determines the current appearance of Diksmuide. He resolutely opts for a historicising reconstruction in the neo-Flemish Renaissance style, characterised by the use of stepped gables, round arches, impressive roofs and the typical regional yellow brick.

As the population increases, Diksmuide revives. As early as February 1919 the weekly market was organised again. In July 1920 the first fair and festivals take place again. Society life resumes. Competitions, cycling races and horse races are once again organised. From September 1920 the schools start again. Carnival returns at the beginning of 1923. In October of the same year even the first official football match of Diksmuide takes place.

At the beginning of the twenties houses emerge everywhere. By 1925 the building frenzy decreases. The inauguration of the town hall seems to decide the rebuilding of the town. Several iconic public buildings are finished in the same year or are in the scaffolding. More than three months later the adoption of Diksmuide by the Belgian state stops. Although there is still tons of work to be done, mountains have already been moved. The front tourist who made his way through the rubble in 1919 would find a resurrected city more than six years later.

10h –

Chris Vandewalle: **The Reconstruction of Reninge**

Because of their location in the Belgian front zone, the current four residential centres of Lo-Reninge each have their own reconstruction history. Noordschote has been completely razed to the ground. In Reninge there are still 54 houses standing, while in Lo a quarter of the houses are in ruins. Pollinkhove was spared, except for the municipal school.

In Reninge mayor Amandus Sticker (1843-1924) is politically responsible for the reconstruction and the determination of the damage within his municipality. As early as 1917, he began compiling files that chart the French army's damage to agriculture. This led to heated discussions with the French army command.

As a result of the legislation in force, the 'reconstruction work' was given a different interpretation from 1919 onwards. Besides establishing the level of war damage,

consideration must now be given to the material reconstruction of the municipality, the (temporary) housing, the redevelopment of agriculture, the start-up of education and road access to the municipality. Local structures and networks take shape, enabling the reconstruction of the municipality to start in a relatively short period of time. Architects are appointed by the government for the public buildings. Charles Pil and Henri Carbon realise the reconstruction of the public domain.

The redevelopment of agriculture is carried out by the State Service for Agricultural Restoration, as well as by the local agricultural union. The local Savings and Loan Guild of the Farmers' Union and the credit company 'Reninge Herleeft' play a considerable and stimulating role in the private reconstruction. By means of advance payments, citizens and farmers were able to start their construction work more quickly.

Reninge's reconstruction project is receiving a great deal of attention from leading excellencies and journalists. Written correspondence follows and visits take place on a regular basis. King Albert I passes by in September 1919, Minister Renkin comes to promote his plans in January 1920, Minister Ruzette follows the construction of farmsteads, Minister Vandevyvere was a personal friend of the local priest and stimulates the construction of a new church. The reconstruction is consecrated in 1924 with the visit of the ecclesiastical authorities and in particular the visit of papal nuncio Micara.

10h40-11h10 - coffee break

11h10 -

Koen Baert: **The reconstruction of Kemmel: conservation and renewal**

In the front village of Kemmel hardly a stone remained standing. Planners immediately set to work to rearrange the space. A few patterns were retained, but there was also room for renewal.

This paper particularly focuses on the development of the public space and the public buildings, while at the same time looking into some contemporary challenges.

11h50 -

Karen Derycke: **Huib Hoste and Modernism**

In the former front region there are hardly any buildings from before the First World War. After the devastating impact of the war, it was the reconstruction that gave West Flanders its present appearance. Even more than the First World War relics, the reconstruction architecture is iconic. Not so much a few architectural gems, but above all the striking homogeneity is characteristic. Architect Huib Hoste occupies a unique position within the reconstruction. While the local inhabitants preferred to look to the past to erase the traces of war, Hoste realized some unique modernist buildings.

12h30 - lunch break

13h30-14h50 : 'Material Recovery' – chair: Yves Segers

13h30 -

Hilde Verboven: **'Colonists of the Westhoek'**

'Colonists of the Westhoek' brings the story of rural reconstruction in the former front region after 1918. When people returned after four years of refuge, they found their villages and homes in ruins – and some of them did not find their homes at all. In large parts of the Westhoek of Flanders, everything was destroyed; not one landmark had remained. Farmlands were littered with ammunition, barbed wire, military infrastructure and thousands of kilometres of trenches. Drainage systems and roads were severely damaged. Many unidentified bodies still had to be buried. How does one begin to reconstruct in a completely scattered landscape? Who takes initiative? Inhabitants? The government? Civil society organizations? And how long did it take to recover Flanders fields?

By the end of 1921, 90,000 to 125,000 ha of destroyed land was cleaned and levelled. It was one of the first large-scale accomplishments of the (physical) reconstruction of the Westhoek. At the time, most houses were still (or not yet) under construction. The main driving forces here were the owners and tenants, although with financial support from the Belgian government. Also worth mentioning: the recovery of the rural landscape in the Westhoek did take the pre-war situation as a starting point. In other words: reconstruction did not really result in structural changes for the Belgian countryside.

14h10 -

Pol Vanneste: ***"Tooverwerk"*. The reconstruction of farms in western Belgium**

Soil quality, changes in food consumption, mechanization of agricultural production and developments in construction have all been influential in the outlook and development of farmstead architecture. In the west of Belgium the process of adaptation and change of farms was accelerated by the destruction of World War I. After WW I, a once thriving agricultural region had to be re-cultivated. However, the destruction created the unprecedented opportunity to build new farms according to the latest insights in agricultural science and architectural theory.

The countryside of the former Western Front in Belgium is still marked by the many farms built here in the years 1920. Today, this regional heritage is threatened by large-scale agriculture and spatial developments. Considering this acute threat, the Flanders Heritage Agency has conducted a research into the architecture of the rebuilt farmsteads. The research yielded new insights into the architecture of the reconstructed farms, which in turn allowed to select a number of these to be safeguarded as a listed monument.

The farms are characterized by brick architecture which refers to traditional pre-WW I farming buildings, albeit with use of steel and concrete for load-bearing parts inside. The spatial organization of the stables is according to modern insights from agricultural science, with better hygiene for livestock and more efficient circulation. Preserved installations bear witness to the mechanization of tasks which before WW I were carried out with manual labour.

The legal protection of these farms aims not only to preserve their exterior appearance, but also strives to conserve elements that illustrate work and life on the farms in the 1920s. The challenge is then to reconcile the preservation of heritage value with contemporary demands in farming and housing. Successful rehabilitation of historic farms shows that heritage conservation and new developments can go hand in hand.

14h50-15h20 - coffee break

15h20-16h40 : 'social recovery' (Chair: Yves Segers)

15h20 -

Hannelore Franck: **The story of Goliath, symbol of the return of socio-cultural life in Ypres.**

The oldest giant of Ypres is Goliath. This imposing figure, with Turkish turban, tunic and scimitar, dates from the beginning of the seventeenth century. Possibly he is even older. He does not depict a specific legend, but symbolises Ypres itself. Goliath did not survive the First World War: he stayed behind in the Cloth Hall and burned down together with the monument. After the war, Goliath too would rise from the ashes: in 1922 a first provisional version of the monument was put together by the people themselves. It was not until 1934 that the official, new Goliath was ready. His first performance was the parade organised on the occasion of the inauguration of the belfry.

When, after the end of the war, part of the population returned, they not only had to rebuild their city, but also to revive social and cultural life. Due to the total destruction of the region, this was not easy. Little by little, life became 'normal' again. The weekly markets reappeared, children had to go to school, club life scribbled straight away and the new municipal museum opened its doors. The first battlefield tourists arrived in Ypres, the parish priests regularly celebrated mass and music societies played music again. But above all the inhabitants of Ypres tried to make their home a home again.

In this presentation I use the story of Goliath to tell how this recovery took place. For the return of the Ypres giant illustrates the return of socio-cultural life as a whole in various ways. It shows how the population took the initiative and the government often only followed later. But above all, the story of Goliath illustrates how the Ypres people longed for the return of the Ypres they knew before the war. Even though a complete return proved impossible, the Ypres locals managed to make Ypres their home again.

16h00 -

Pieter Trogh: **Ruins repopulated, Ypres 1919-1920: the great return of the natives?**

The First World War had a far-reaching, disruptive impact on large (national or international) and smaller communities (local or regional). Millions of people were forced or encouraged by the war to migrate, either as civilians or soldiers. Many died, and those who survived awaited a difficult return home after the war. This was even more true for people who came from regions where entire towns, villages and lands had been razed to the ground. Against this background Ypres was a special case. Thousands of refugees had moved to the city at the beginning of the conflict, but by October 1914 it was in the front line of the war that so many had hoped to escape. After eight months of shelling - resulting in hundreds of casualties - the situation in Ypres became untenable for civilians during the Second Battle of Ypres (22 April 1915 to 24 May 1915); those who had not yet fled were compulsorily evacuated. The Ypres people ended up in exile in many places, especially abroad. Ypres remained an exclusively military zone until after the Armistice. The city was completely destroyed and had to be rebuilt. This contribution discusses the dynamics of the repopulation of Ypres in the first post-war years. Who comes to Ypres during those first years to start the reconstruction? How is the relocation going, how does the first post-war demographic composition emerge, and how are the authentic pre-war Ypres natives represented? This contribution starts from an extensive identification of Ypres before, during and after the war, in order to arrive at a comparative analysis of the pre-war and post-war situation.

16h45 - Visit to the exhibition 'Feniks. Reconstructing Flanders Fields' (In Flanders Fields Museum)

Biographies

Lucy A. Arendt, Ph.D. is a Professor of Management in the Donald J. Schneider School of Business and Economics at St. Norbert College in De Pere, Wisconsin in the United States. Her Ph.D. is in Management Science from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee; she teaches strategy, leadership, and organizational behavior to both undergraduate and graduate students. Her current scholarship focuses on how organizational and community leaders perceive and address risks associated with disasters and how organizations and communities engage in long-term recovery and resilience building.

Simon Augustyn, researcher for the Feniks 2020 project, works as a research assistant at the Memorial Museum Passchendaele 1917 and as a heritage officer for the City of Diksmuide.

Koen Baert (°1974) holds a master's degree in history and is the author of several publications on the history of Flanders' Westhoek. He works as head of department for the municipality of Heuvelland and together with his colleagues he curated the Feniks exhibition 'At the Bar in Café Pax' in Kemmel.

Anita Blom is an architectural historian and works for the State Cultural Heritage Office (RCE) in the Netherlands as a senior specialist in reconstruction and post-war urban planning. She is involved in gathering knowledge about and the promotion of support for post-war heritage, and stimulates the redevelopment of post-war areas on the basis of current transformation tasks.

Wilhelm von Boddien is a businessman from Hamburg. In 1992 he founded the Förderverein Berliner Schloss, of which he was also chairman until 2004. The association lobbied intensively for the reconstruction of the Berlin Palace, which was damaged during the Second World War and demolished in 1950. In 2002 the reconstruction was approved by the German Bundestag and construction started in 2013. The inauguration of the rebuilt palace as Humboldt Forum is planned for this year. In 2014 Wilhelm von Boddien was awarded the Bundesverdienstkreuz 1. Class.

Brendan Cassar, Head of Culture, UNESCO Iraq Office, "Revive the Spirit of Mosul" project

Dries Claeys obtained his doctoral degree at the Interfaculty Centre for Agrarian History (ICAG, KU Leuven) with a dissertation on the reconstruction of the Belgian countryside after the First World War (2019). He is also the co-curator of the temporary exhibition *Feniks: Reconstructing Flanders Fields* at In Flanders Fields Museum. He was recently appointed landscape researcher at Flanders Heritage Agency.

Sofie De Caigny is director of the Flanders Architecture Institute since January 2018 and Lecturer at the University of Antwerp in Architecture Critique at the Faculty of Design Sciences. She holds a Ph.D. (2007, University of Leuven) in architectural history and a Master degree in Cultural Management (2001, Universitat de Barcelona). She coordinated of the heritage department of the Flanders Architecture Institute since 2006. In this position, she manages projects on the conservation, digitization, dissemination and publication of digital architectural records. She was in charge of the integration of the architectural archival collection of the Province of Antwerp into the Flanders Architecture Institute. Sofie De Caigny has actively collaborated on enriching the intellectual scope and depth of the Flanders Architecture Institute. The results of this can be seen in two editions of the Flanders Architectural Review (2016 and 2018) and the exhibition Maatwerk that De Caigny curated for the German Architecture Museum, Frankfurt. Since 2014, she is Secretary General of ICAM – International Confederation of Architectural Museums. Sofie De Caigny is commissioner of the entry for the Belgian Pavilion at the 17th Venice Architecture Biennial in 2020.

Chiara De Cesari is an anthropologist and Associate Professor in European Studies and Cultural Studies at the University of Amsterdam. Her wide-ranging research explores how forms of memory, heritage, art, and cultural politics are shifting under conditions of contemporary globalisation and state transformation. In 2019 her book “Heritage and the Cultural Struggle for Palestine” was published by Stanford University Press. In this book she explores how cultural heritage is employed during and after conflict.

Dominiek Dendooven (Bruges, 1971) has been on the staff of In Flanders Fields Museum since 1998, initially as education officer and later as researcher and curator. He obtained a PhD in history (University of Kent / University of Antwerp) with a study on the non-European presence at the front during the First World War. Since 1999 he has published regularly on the reconstruction of Ypres and Western Flanders after the First World War.

Historian **Karen Derycke** is one of the driving forces behind the knowledge centre and the project 'Passchendaele Archives' of the Memorial Museum Passchendaele 1917. She has been appointed part-time researcher for the intermunicipal project 'Feniks 2020' on the reconstruction of Flanders' Westhoek. Among other things, she is project manager for the temporary exhibition 'Huib Hoste and modernism' in Zonnebeke.

Hannelore Franck obtained her PhD in history at KU Leuven in 2018. In August 2019, she was appointed researcher at the Yper Museum. She curated the exhibition HerSTELLINGEN, about the return of socio-cultural life in Ypres after WWI.

Nour A. Munawar is a Dutch/Palestinian-Syrian archaeologist and heritage expert. Currently, he is finishing his PhD project at the University of Amsterdam (UvA), Netherlands. Munawar's PhD research investigates (post-)conflict reconstructions of cultural heritage affected by armed conflicts in Syria and Iraq. Before spending his research fellowship at UCL Qatar in Doha, Munawar pursued his education at Aleppo (Syria), Leiden (Netherlands), and Warsaw (Poland), Amsterdam (Netherlands) Universities. Munawar is a UNESCO expert on Safeguarding Syrian Cultural Heritage and Member of several international organizations, such as ICOMOS.

Gertjan Plets is an assistant professor in cultural heritage politics at Utrecht University. As an anthropologist he has worked in Altai Republic (Russia), Georgia and Belgium and explored the use of the past in creating cultural identities. He is particularly interested in how cultural heritage sites are rehabilitated after conflict and used to develop a new nation and legitimize new political structures.

Pieter Trogh is historian and researcher at the In Flanders Fields Museum, Ypres. Since 2011 he is one of the coordinators of the Names List. He curated several exhibitions and wrote about numerous aspects of the war.

Leo Van Broeck is architect, professor of architectural and urban design at KU Leuven and until recently Flemish government architect.

Chris Vandewalle (Veurne, 1976) has been archivist of the City of Diksmuide since 1998. As great-grandson of mayor Amandus Sticker, he is working on a historical-biographical project about the latter's role as mayor of Reninge between 1897 and 1924.

Pol Vanneste is a historian and heritage researcher at the Flemish Heritage Agency. His main focus is on the architectural heritage of villages and rural areas. Among other things, he conducted research into reconstruction churches and reconstruction farms in the Westhoek area of Flanders.

Hilde Verboven is researcher at the Flemish Heritage Agency. Cultural-historical landscapes are her domain of study. During the past few years, she focused on the heritage of the First World War and warscapes in particular. In her hometown Leuven, she set up a volunteer project "War Diary Leuven" (2014), a facebookpage and website with witnesses of ten historical figures on the terror the local population was subjected to during the first months of the First World War.

Mela Zuljevic is a PhD student at the Faculty of Architecture & Arts, University of Hasselt, within the "Critical Heritage Studies and the Future of Europe" (CHEurope) MSCA-ITN project. Her research is interested in the uses of the past in design within the context of spatial development. She previously studied at the University of Sarajevo, with a BA in Product Design and MA in Visual Communications. With Abart collective, she developed multiple art-based and research projects focused on public space and memory in the city of Mostar in relation to its postwar division and reconstruction.

