

Publisher: FeDOA Press- Centro di Ateneo per le Biblioteche dell'Università di Napoli Federico II
Registered in Italy

Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:
<http://www.serena.unina.it/index.php/eikonocity/index>

Cerete's Cultural Center. Iconography Contribution for Graphic Reconstruction and Recovery of a Colombian Architecture

Massimo Leserri, Martín López Lora

Universidad Pontificia Bolivariana - Seccional de Montería

To cite this article: Leserri, M.- López Lora M. (2019). *Cerete's Cultural Center. Iconography Contribution for Graphic Reconstruction and Recovery of a Colombian Architecture*: Eikonocity, 2019, anno IV, n. 2, 75-85, DOI: 10.6092/2499-1422/6265

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.6092/2499-1422/6265>

FeDOA Press makes every effort to ensure the accuracy of all the information (the “Content”) contained in the publications on our platform. FeDOA Press, our agents, and our licensors make no representations or warranties whatsoever as to the accuracy, completeness, or suitability for any purpose of the Content. Versions of published FeDOA Press and Routledge Open articles and FeDOA Press and Routledge Open Select articles posted to institutional or subject repositories or any other third-party website are without warranty from FeDOA Press of any kind, either expressed or implied, including, but not limited to, warranties of merchantability, fitness for a particular purpose, or non-infringement. Any opinions and views expressed in this article are the opinions and views of the authors, and are not the views of or endorsed by FeDOA Press. The accuracy of the Content should not be relied upon and should be independently verified with primary sources of information. FeDOA Press shall not be liable for any losses, actions, claims, proceedings, demands, costs, expenses, damages, and other liabilities whatsoever or howsoever caused arising directly or indirectly in connection with, in relation to or arising out of the use of the Content.

This article may be used for research, teaching, and private study purposes. Terms & Conditions of access and use can be found at <http://www.serena.unina.it>
It is essential that you check the license status of any given Open and Open Select article to confirm conditions of access and use.

Cerete's Cultural Center. Iconography Contribution for Graphic Reconstruction and Recovery of a Colombian Architecture

Massimo Leserri, Martín López Lora

Universidad Pontificia Bolivariana - Seccional de Montería

Abstract

This article - linked to the El ojo y la lente research project from Pontifical Bolivarian University - develops a historical exploration of Cerete's Cultural Center in Colombia, by analyzing iconography and using representation instruments to obtain a respective graphic and spatial reconstruction in its distinct operation stages. Its historical components stand out, the relationship with the river market system and the role played by its architecture encompassing the Cultural Heritage of the Colombian Caribbean.

Il Centro Culturale di Cerete. Il contributo dell'iconografia urbana per la ricostruzione grafica e il recupero di un'architettura colombiana

Questo articolo - collegato al progetto di ricerca della Pontificia Università Bolivariana El ojo y la lente - sviluppa un'indagine storica del Centro Culturale Cerete in Colombia, analizzando iconografia e utilizzando strumenti di rappresentazione per ottenere una ricostruzione grafica e spaziale nelle sue distinte fasi operative. Spiccano le sue componenti storiche, il rapporto con il sistema del mercato fluviale e il ruolo svolto dalla sua architettura che comprende il patrimonio culturale dei Caraibi colombiani.

Keywords: Patrimony, iconography, market.

Patrimonio culturale, iconografia urbana, mercato.

Massimo Leserri is Professor at Universidad Pontificia Bolivariana (Montería, Colombia). Assistant Professor at University of Salerno. Author of several international publications on the theme of the Representation of Architectural Heritage.

Martín López Lora is Architect graduated from Universidad Pontificia Bolivariana (Montería, Colombia).

Authors: massimo.leserri@upb.edu.co; martin.lopezl@upb.edu.co

Received September 1, 2019; accepted October 30, 2019

1 | Introduction

The Colombian Caribbean Region differs from other areas of the country in its landscapes so rich in flora and fauna, multiple enjoying topographic variations, and countless natural ecosystems found in its diverse territories. Within this framework inherent to the described lands, by the twentieth century the region lacked an integral communication system among communities, to link in an accessible way the human groups for their relationship and goods exchange that would improve the region's economy. Sea, rivers and marshes – as exit routes for trade and sources of fresh water and food – conditioned the location of the main coast settlements. This way, the large part of populations was located on the coast, or next to rivers, spouts and marshes [Posada 1998]. Most of the markets and commercial scenarios of the Caribbean people were built near the sea and river currents, making easy the efficient distribution of products and connection with existing ports.

In the Cerete municipality, department of Córdoba (Colombia), a town with a reputation for agricultural production in the region, a structure considered as one of the main scenarios of departmental commerce worked for more than sixty years. The commonly called Public market, took the role of collection center, river port and market, located on the banks of Caño Bugre [Bugre Spout] – a micro basin of the mighty Río Sinú River – and created a common thread among the most important river markets found in the area as in the cities of Montería, Santa Cruz de Lorica, Mompox and Cartagena *de Indias*. Despite economic modalities and technology evolution in the regional context, Cerete's old public market was undergoing multiple transformations in relation to its original uses and infrastructure. Today, the important heritage property

is known as the only and most important cultural center for the municipality; and having no grounds to explain its origins in detail, various iconographic analyzes and representation tools were used to achieve a detailed graphic reconstruction of the original architecture and configuration in the twentieth century.

2 | The River Market in the Caribbean

Trade in urban settlements has always been a crucial element for community development and maintenance, therefore, there is constantly a mercantile movement made up of different pieces essential for its operation. Since ancient times, human groups have directly contributed to consolidation of spaces bound for commercialization of countless elements, generally with a charitable objective of a personal or group nature. In the Colombian Caribbean, commercial activity has always been linked to sea and waterways, as they were the most feasible option both for product transportation and mobilization of groups of people. The main natural element standing out was the Magdalena River, the protagonist and largest river current present in the region. Consequently, most of the towns linked their commercial activities to the river, considering the existing hydrography within its territorial delimitations.

River ports perfectly fulfilled their functions by being directly related to rivers and spouts, which then created a reciprocal link of economic aspect and commercial exchange between the most important towns in the Caribbean. For this reason, most establishments where daily sales, sales and product receipt activities were carried out, were established next to the nearest river current to better enable commercial work and allow the communities' economic development of.

In Cordoba department, on the western area of the Colombian Caribbean Coast, there is a natural axis influencing the river system, so it is important to highlight that the renowned Sinú River is loaded with history in the conformation of the department's municipal markets. In most of the Cordoba settlements such as Monteria, Santa Cruz de Lorica and Cerete, the proximity of these social scenarios to the river route was evidenced, inferring the impact of this on local commerce. The river was used as a means of transport in a very wide scope, for instance, the vessels that arriving at the populated centers were in charge of hauling the merchandise for sale and through it, it was much easier to move products. Similarly, these sites were also classified as an articulation between the terrestrial and the aquatic, functioning as transition spaces and at the same time of great movement in the modes of transport, commerce and economy in general.

3 | Cerete's Cultural Center, Graphic Reconstruction of its Past as an Old Market by means of Iconography

Bearing in mind the context about the Colombian Caribbean regarding the river and commercial systems, it is necessary to focus on a region-specific area to more precisely understand the role market sites played in relation to these roads of significant importance at the time. Therefore, delving into the contextualization of Cordoba department and its most important cities, this article points to a property, part of the history of Cerete, which fulfilled all the necessary functions as a river market, was port of arrival and departure of boats and encouraged commercial initiatives for the region's economic development. Despite the municipality's urban and population transformations, the construction built in 1923 was victim of multiple physical and functional changes in its architecture. Today, it is currently known as 'Raúl Gómez Jattin' Cultural Center, a structure hiding notable features in its history essential to understand its consol-



Fig. 1: Cartography of the 18th century, showing the hydrography of the Colombian Caribbean Coast. A Map of the British Empire in America with the French and Spanish Settlements adjacent thereto. Henry Popple London, 1733.



Fig. 2: The building Oldest photograph taken in 1929. Visual memory of Cereté, 20th century (Abad Hoyos 2010).

Fig. 3: Informal sales' Invasion outside the building in 1975. Visual memory of Cereté, 20th century (Abad Hoyos 2010, p. 32).

Fig. 4: Commercial invasion with the original building in the background. Visual memory of Cereté, 20th century (Abad Hoyos 2010, p. 34).

idation genesis and importance of its walls. Due to lack of information from the building and past operation as a town market, it was decided to carry out an iconography analysis and use it as the main means of historical inquiry. Also, through tools of architectural discipline such as survey and representation instruments, a graphic building reconstruction was achieved in all its functional stages. This methodology made precision easy in representative technical details and provided documentary content, absent in the media.

The architectural infrastructure of Cereté's old market was singled out for holding a basilica spatial vocation typical of churches, in which two side aisles and a large central nave were distinguished. The building volume was symmetrical in its four facades and it was remarkable the marking of its accesses arranged in the central axis of each of the above. A wide corridor of circulation crossed the great main space, demarcated by a set of columns with chapter and had a height exceeding the lateral ships, providing sensations of high spatiality inside. The great height culminated with a fiber cement roof built to two waters.

The two main market accesses were demarcated by a large semicircular arch above the door opening, evidencing changes in material from this element over time. The oldest photograph of the public market façade dates from 1929 and in this, it is possible to observe that the mentioned arch had a featured piece that placed a boundary between interior and exterior. The image quality restrained the design literal interpretation. Nonetheless, with help of oral tradition, an approximate deduction was made considering described references of the component itself. Pathologies were evident in the building, which underwent notable changes due to deterioration. Small problems and inefficient solutions made up the work turning it into a set of patches that strongly reflected inefficiency of interventions being attempted as a measure of "conservation" for the architectural site. Besides, the cleaning culture traders should have had to overcome by saturation in the existing space, therefore, the building's physical wear accelerated.

Now, due to the accelerated population growth the municipality had, the space destined in the building remained small to carry out daily tasks within. Therefore, merchants and buyers were expanding outside the original building until exceeding the limits and affecting the urban environment and nearby population who constantly filed complaints due to strong smells and great bustle produced in their daily functions. The administration that managed the planning of the municipality at that time formalized the move of the complete set of activities and was in charge of transforming the area with a plan of restoration and urban improvement that would be key to correct the chaos the great commercial invasion had left.

During the intervention process in the area where the old market was located, different projects were addressed aiming at recovering the edge of *Caño Bugre*, frayed by the multiple human activities taking place there. The building restoration left empty was also projected, together with the buried square reparation and paving of the access roads. Nonetheless, at that same time there was a committee of cultural events in the municipality, which did not have a place to make its presentations, as the case of the 'Meeting of Women Poets', unique at the time on the Colombian Caribbean coast, as well as the Cultural Festival and the *Leopoldo Berdella de la Esperiella* Literature Prize. This committee formally requested this property to be granted to the administration to serve as Cultural Center [Dueñas 2014].

For the success of the architectural restoration, the creation of the preliminary project took time since, by implying a change in use, it involved carrying out a series of preliminary studies such as search for historical data, study of old photographs and the existing architectural survey. Furthermore, since being a building with unique features, it was necessary to prepare a diagnosis

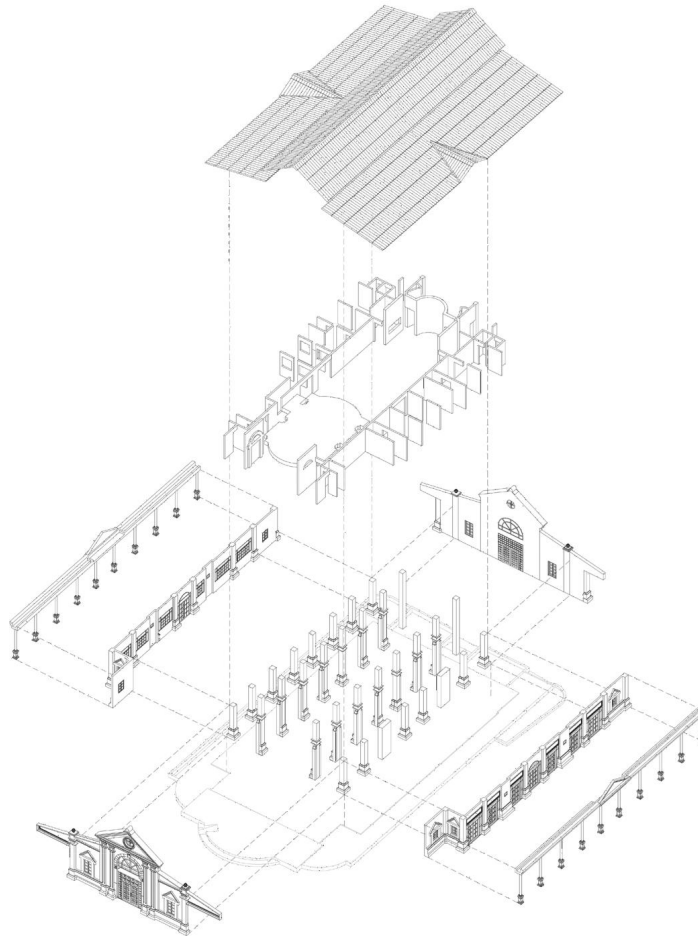
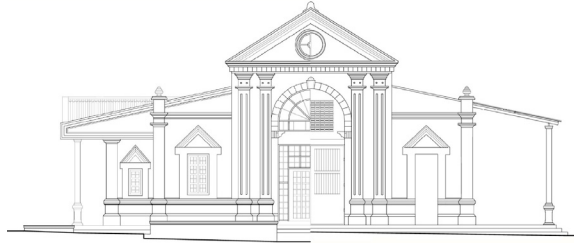


Fig. 5: North façade final appearance, after the 1999 intervention. Colombian Caribbean Heritage Foundation.

Fig. 6: On the left, the hypothesis of Reconstruction of the original facade (1929), on the right, the graphic restitution of the survey of the existing facade (2019). Own elaboration.

Fig. 7: Composited exploded view of the cultural center (2019). Own elaboration.

of the state of the heritage conservation in which definitive mediation guidelines could be identified. Subsequently, an architectural proposal was designed to gather the study results and which primary objective was to put into effect the change of use believed to be inherent in the building. After restoration, the building maintained many of its original architectural components, nonetheless, the new characterization of real estate use implied the creation of new modification possibilities represented in the construction result. Additionally, all these interventions led to greater symbolic growth for the new urban structure that was beginning to gain strength in the knowledge and use of the inhabitants.

On October 14, 1999 the restored building was inaugurated with the participation by then Minister of Culture, Juan Luis Mejía, and a large and select artistic and cultural delegation of national interest, devoting the building restored to the life and work of the distinguished terroir's poet: Raul Gomez Jattin. From this solemn inaugural act to the present, the Restoration Project of the ancient market square became an emblematic symbol of invaluable heritage value, and the Raul Gomez Jattin Cultural Center, one of the most recognized institutions at the national and international level in the promotion and dissemination of art and culture in the Colombian Caribbean [Serpa 2007].

4 | Representation of Transformations

The making of the architectural survey encompassing the deep tangible inquiry of the Raul Gomez Jattin Cultural Center originated a series of notions that lay in beyond the resulting graphics. Therefore, it was decided to isometrically schematize the set of the main compositional pieces making up the current building and they were singled out creating a constructive decoupling that would facilitate its spatial understanding. This highlights its structure encompassing the column axes in the three naves. Similarly, its four facades, lateral elements, interior enclosures, lower base and, roof are included. With this scheme, each of them is graphically individualized and the configurative skeleton that forms the object of study is speeded up in a simplified way, giving greater possibilities to understand the spatial distribution.

To complement the architecture's general interpretation implicit in the cultural center, it was possible to create a three-dimensional model with the intent to detail each of the pieces making it up. Therefore, in the creation process, the anchoring of its elements and principles of spatial arrangement harmonizing it were better understood, resulting in a propediac graphic system that added useful tools of great contribution to the proposed objective on the research.

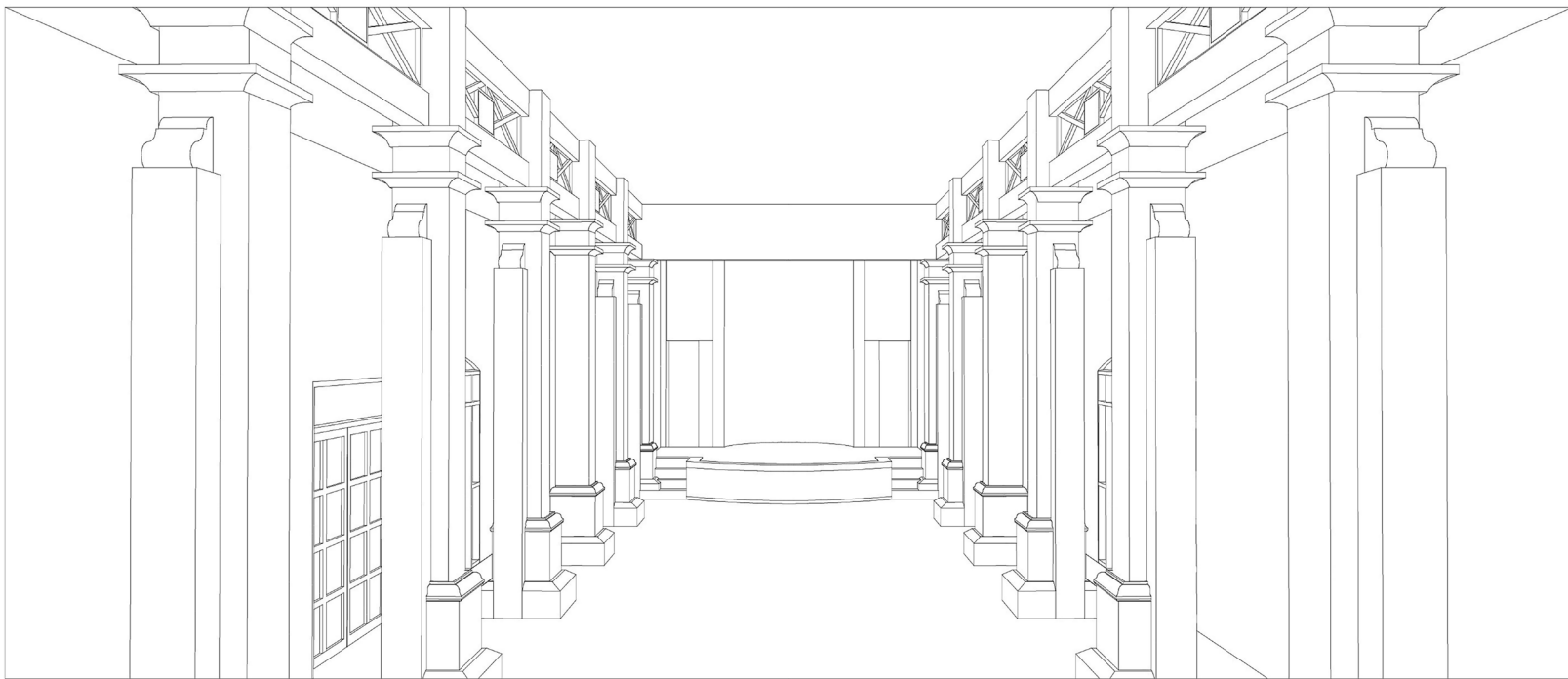
Within the infographic solutions resulting from three-dimensional modeling, two visual perspectives taken from the interior of the building are presented, directed towards the southern end of the building. These show the architectural aspects that prevailed in two totally different eras (1930 & 2019) and, face the two spatial realities through which construction passed through time.

The image above is a reconstruction of the interior look of the old public market. It shows the original design comprised of its most featured elements. Visible components are the wooden structure used in the roof, fiber cement tiles, columns with baskets and chapiters, hives for sale and their separating limits such as the lateral steel grills and front fences made with wooden boards. In the background, access is found through the south façade and on it, there are the fretwork in concrete and sand block replacing original lattices. The image below represents the enclosure interiority in its functions as Cultural Center. If the changes are analyzed, it can be inferred that the building maintained its essence in relation to its structure and decorative orna-



Fig. 8: 3D modeling of the cultural center that follows the process of graphic restitution of the information collected. Own elaboration.

Fig. 9: Comparative perspectives between the interior of the old building (1923) and the current one (2019). Own elaboration.



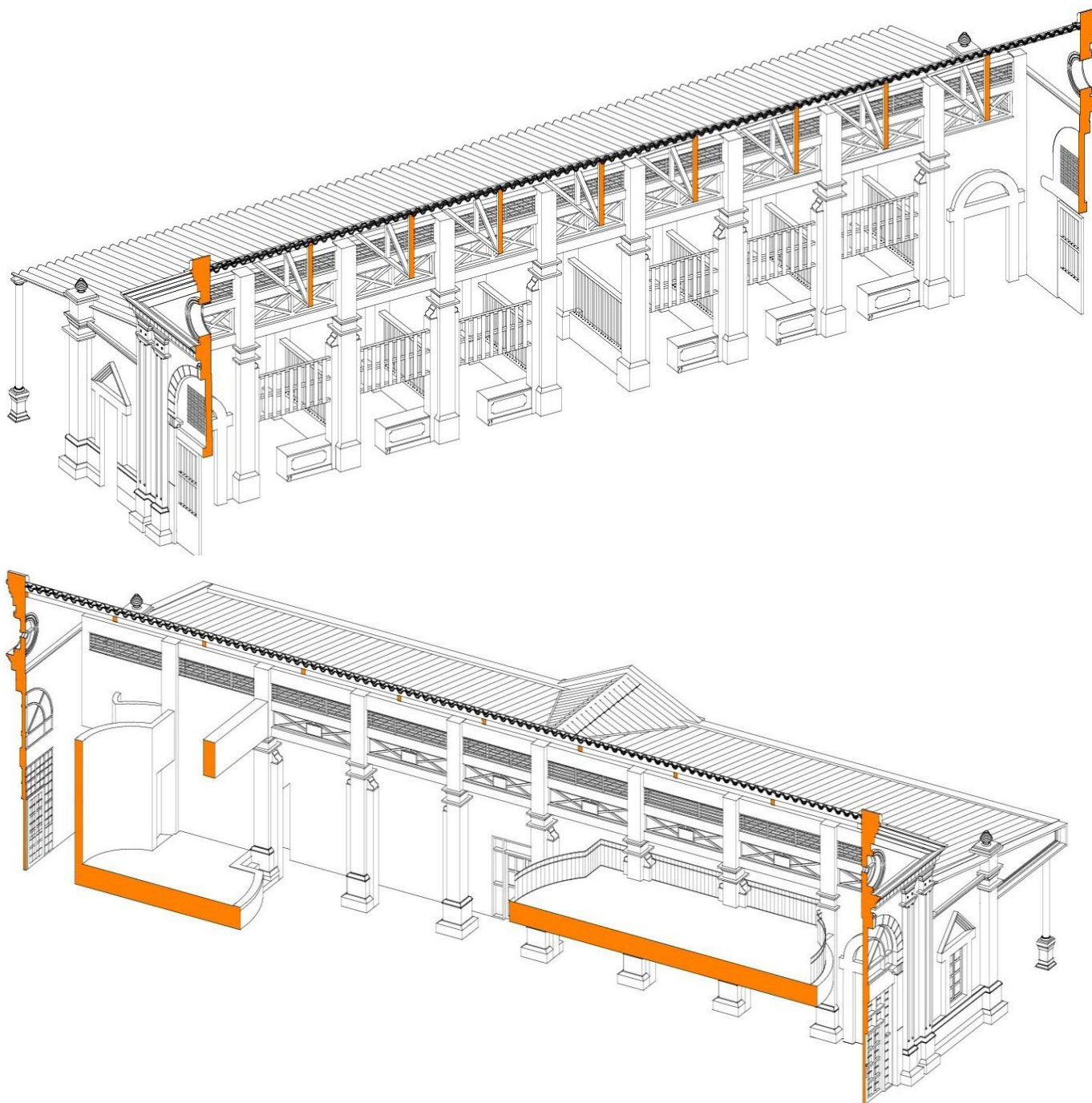


Fig. 10-11: Isometric opening confronting the interior of the old building (1923) and the current one (2019). Own elaboration.

ments, nonetheless, they are evidenced. For instance, in the baskets' design of the main columns and in the upper wooden frames that at first were of greater magnitude in the wood thickness but that today are lighter. In the background, the central scenario created for the cultural presentations is highlighted and in the same way the lateral accesses that connect with the secondary compartments are observed.

Following the graphic comparisons, an isometric section was drawn in a longitudinal direction that confronted past and present attributes, revealing the interior and partially exterior changes through which the building crossed (Fig. 10). The orange color represents the divided part and accentuates it with respect to the other linked elements in the composition. This figure was also considered as a graphical tool of great productivity to relate changes and conclude analytically the cessations that may be immersed in the aesthetics, design or spatial distribution of the building.

5 | Conclusion

Each place has its moments in history, contributing to the forming of a whole and enabling the generation of a concept regarding meaning of something. In this specific case, the municipality of Cerete is loaded with historical moments, which despite not being highlighted as in other cases; are a great contribution to the idiosyncrasy of the Colombian Caribbean region, its traditions and roots.

The evolution of the environment in which we live becomes remarkable and evident, therefore, it is necessary to try to understand the relevance of our spaces, their origins and modalities that they have had over time. The result of this article is evidence that with the analysis of the existing iconography, a clear picture can result of the conformation of society and progress of architecture in our world.

Representation, and particularly, architectural survey, are decisive if, associated with forms of iconographic analysis, they develop knowledge regarding existing realities and recovery of lost data. Considering lack of documentation in Colombia, the research architect recomposes the architectural facts that passage of time has been changing, through revelation of physically present truths and reconstruction of those missing ones. There is no doubt that the architecture analysis through reading of the same constructions gives us the opportunity to reveal transformations from the past.

The presentation of the tiny fragment of the Colombian Architectural Heritage embodied in the graphic conclusions of this article, give meaning to the sense of belonging that must always exist in relation to our ancestors, the endearing respect for them and the value that lives implicitly in its essence. Thanks to the genesis study of our buildings, the connotation on the regional heritage is increased and it contributes to the clarification of the personal perceptions that people have on the urban landscape in which they live.

Bibliography

- ABAD HOYOS, G. (2010). *Memoria Visual de Cereté, siglo XX* [Visual Memory of Cereté, 20th century], Bogota, Editorial Gente Nueva, pp. 30-34.
- BELL LEMUS, C. (2017). *El Caribe Colombiano, guía de arquitectura y paisaje* [The Colombian Caribbean, architecture and landscape guide], Barranquilla – Seville, Andalusian Board, Ministry of Development and Housing, Universidad del Atlántico, p. 12.
- DUEÑAS HERNÁNDEZ, Á. (2014). *Aproximación a la historia urbana de Cereté entre 1930 y 2012 a través del registro fotográfico* [Approach to the urban history of Cereté between 1930 and 2012 through the photographic registry], Monteria, Universidad de Córdoba, p. 71.
- POPPLER, H. (1733). *A Map of the British Empire in America with the French and Spanish Settlements adjacentthereto*. Londres, s.n., 1733.
- POSADA CARBÓ, L. (1998). *El Caribe Colombiano. Una historia regional (1870-1950)* [The Colombian Caribbean. A regional history (1870-1950)], Bogotá, Banco de la República/El Ancora Editores, p. 39.
- SERPA ESPINOSA, R. (2007). *Centro Cultural Raúl Gómez Jattin: Un espacio para el fomento del arte y la cultura* [Raúl Gómez Jattin Cultural Center: A space for the promotion of art and culture], Montería, El Meridiano Cultural, 16 de septiembre, p. 4.

Archival and Documentary Sources

Archive of the Rafael Milanes García Municipal Public Library (2018), Cereté
Archive of the Library of the Bank of the Republic (2018), Monteria
Martín Lopez is an Architect from the Pontifical Bolivarian University (Colombia), graduated with the thesis project called “Raúl Gómez Jattin Cultural Center: Foundation of its architecture through instruments of representation and the analysis of its historical and functional components”

