

Rural half-timbered architecture: 13th–18th c. (Paris, 27 Nov 19)

INHA, Paris, Nov 27, 2019

Deadline: Apr 30, 2019

NOBLET

Study day “Rural half-timbered architecture in France and northern Europe (13th-18th centuries): revaluating a threatened heritage”

Since the nineteenth century, scholars, architects and archaeologists have been interested in examples of half-timbered architecture and commented on its picturesque character, aesthetic qualities, sometimes speculating on its unique technical aspects. Subsequent studies of this type of construction mainly developed a focus on urban examples as witnessed by a number of synthetic studies. It was not until the 1960s, however, that rural structures were taken into consideration, notably under the impetus of research conducted with different, though complementary, methods and aims, by ethnologists, patrimonial researchers, archaeologists or historians. Despite the growth of these works, half-timbered architecture still remains relegated to the second rank, as demonstrated by the expression “minor architecture” or the adjective “vernacular” which is still too often used to describe it.

The purpose of this one-day conference will be to develop this research by examining the state of the field relating to half-timbered structures built in a rural context: we will examine isolated habitats, farm and agricultural buildings, houses found in hamlets, villages or towns, lodges or outbuildings of stately homes. Contributions, which will exclude large urban areas already covered in other symposia or publications, will concentrate on France and Northern Europe. Through their range of eco-museums and dendrochronology studies, northern countries, with their rich heritage, have accumulated great knowledge about the techniques and chronology of rural timbered construction. By cross-referencing different countries, we will be able not only to approach themes relating to the supply of materials for construction sites and the construction-trade economy, but also to highlight particularities of local know-how, the desire to enhance constructions with carved decorations, as well as possible interactions with timbered houses built in an urban environment. The chosen chronological range, extending from the 13th to the 18th century, will allow us to detect and date the appearance of innovative processes or, conversely, to witness the persistence of certain techniques, in order to lead to a better understanding of the evolution of rural half-timbered architecture over a long period.

The contribution of archeology, both stratigraphic and architectural, will also be one of the threads of the conference, because the use of these methods has offered a much deeper understanding of half-timbered architecture, highlighting for example the complexity of construction, the modular and “convertible” character of this type of building (such as the rationalization of the con-

struction, modifications, movability) or the use of colored pigments on the construction elements.

Finally, this one-day conference will offer the opportunity to promote a heritage that is sometimes undervalued or endangered and whose preservation has become an important issue.

Organizers: C. Alix (Orléans Archaeological Center, associate researcher, CESR) & J. Noblet (INHA)

Scientific Committee: C. Alix, L. Bourgeois (Michel-de-Bouïard Center / CRAHAM, UMR 6273), K. Freckmann (Arbeitskreis für Hausforschung), P. Liévaux (Département du pilotage de la recherche et de la politique scientifique), J. Noblet

Proposals should be sent in the form of a summary (2000 to 4000 characters) written in French or English and accompanied by a short CV by 30 April, 2019 to the following address:

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The length of communications is fixed at 25 minutes.

Reference:

CFP: Rural half-timbered architecture: 13th-18th c. (Paris, 27 Nov 19). In: ArtHist.net, Mar 15, 2019 (accessed Jan 23, 2026), <<https://arthist.net/archive/20394>>.