

Medieval architectural heritage (EAHN 2010 Guimaraes)

Janet Marquardt

Call for ROUND TABLE PARTICIPANTS

European Architectural History Network, 1st International Meeting

Guimaraes, Portugal

June 17-20, 2010

Medieval Architectural Heritage: What is real?

2010 brings the eleven-hundredth anniversary of the Abbey of Cluny's foundation in 910. This ruined monument of a pan-European medieval institution stands as a model for the exigencies of heritage endeavors. Mostly demolished after the French Revolution, excavated Cluny later became the subject of heated debates about original form and dating. Today, as in the Middle Ages, it supports the economy of the small town in Burgundy through historical tourism. Extrapolating from Cluny's example stimulates us to reevaluate our current understanding of medieval monuments as cultural patrimony. We have seen two centuries of rising awareness to the historical importance, cultural meaning, and tourism potential of medieval structures in Western Europe. They have changed from outdated and neglected ruins past fashionable appreciation to picturesque relics claiming large investments toward their restoration. Many were altered throughout their history: to embody the stylistic messages of past or foreign influences, to reflect the aspirations of patrons or nationalist ideologies, or to adapt as the buildings housed changing functions. Yet some countries have too many historical monuments to maintain and the oldest represent the largest resource drain. How relevant are medieval building sites today and why should modern architects continue to devise ways to restore and maintain them? How do national administrations justify marketing them as "authentic" representatives of culture when so much of what we think we know about their past has been deconstructed as romantic formulae initiated in the nineteenth century? Of what use to understanding medieval structures are traditional categories such as stylistic divisions based on time period, regional location, or anonymous master-builders? Who determines popular views of the past in our society today? Why are we still commemorating anniversaries of medieval complexes when very

little for which they stood remains relevant?

In two sessions at the July 2009 International Medieval Congress, University of Leeds, an international panel of scholars will study specific medieval sites in order to begin to formulate approaches that inspire further critical study. This panel at Guimaraes continues that dialogue and invites proposals toward participation in a discussion of medieval heritage sites, their reception and commemoration, in order to investigate how we continue to shape notions of their past and value for the future.

Please send proposals for 10-minute presentations/discussion positions and 2-page CVs via email by October 30, 2009 to: Prof. Janet Marquardt, Eastern Illinois University, College of Fine Arts and Humanities, Charleston, IL 61920 USA; 1 217 581 3968 (office), 1 217 581 6199 (fax); email: jtmarquardt@eiu.edu. Complete details on the conference can be found at: www.eahn2010.org

Reference:

CFP: Medieval architectural heritage (EAHN 2010 Guimaraes). In: ArtHist.net, May 16, 2009 (accessed Mar 29, 2026), <<https://arthist.net/archive/31653>>.