

## Urban History and Building Rituals

Call For Papers EAUH 2010 Ghent, Session S40:

Urban History and Building Rituals: the construction of civic identity

It is a commonly held fact that rituals are interesting proxies for various research areas. In this session, we would like to address the broad range of rituals and ceremonies surrounding the construction of public buildings, both religious and non-religious. From the foundation ceremonies of ancient palaces of Assyrian rulers, the consecration of churches during the (counter)reformation, or the (ritual) rebuilding of monuments ravaged by twentieth-century wars: foundation rituals have been able to embed buildings within the urban communities with their own beliefs, fears and hopes.

The various paraphernalia (such as medals, inscriptions, sermons, commemorative plays or volumes of poetry), composed in honor of those ceremonies, mirror the multiple preoccupations and agenda's that were at play for the institutional networks or private founders. By adopting specific rituals, they consciously invest the architecture with a particular meaning in the hope to determine its perception both materially and intellectually. Considering the architecture from the original context of its genesis and purpose offers a unique opportunity for the study of urban history, unveiling the (changing) strategies at work in the location, design and use of a building within a civic community. We would thus like to address questions on the relation between the architecture, the urban history and the founding rituals.

Firstly, we are particularly interested in the use of the material produced for the building-rituals, as alternative though valuable historical resources, which enable us to shed a new light or even trace the history of urban communities and their public buildings. Secondly, we would like to address questions on how the existing urban context, the ritual and the building relate and interact. What do specific building sites commemorate and how is this reflected in building rituals? Are building rituals invented for specific occasions, or are they adopted from existing processions and urban festivities? Do urban contexts function as a background for the ceremonies? How do the immaterial agendas and preoccupations of urban communities or founders relate to the temporal materiality of the ritual and the durable

materiality of the artifacts produced for those rituals? Finally, we especially invite papers which discuss the question how buildings ? invested with a very specific meaning ? influence and interact with boroughs or cities as a whole.

Please send your abstracts to [annefrancoise.morel@ugent.be](mailto:annefrancoise.morel@ugent.be) and upload them on the official conference site by december 30, 2009.

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Reference:

CFP: Urban History and Building Rituals. In: ArtHist.net, Nov 20, 2009 (accessed Sep 16, 2025), <<https://arthist.net/archive/32000>>.