Session at EAUH “Cities at the Boundaries” (Ostrava, 4–7 Sep 24)

16th conference of European Association for Urban History (EAUH), Ostrava, Sep 4–07, 2024
Deadline: Sep 30, 2023

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Where the land meets the sea. Coastal towns and cities as nodes of mediation in a global era

Panel Organizers:
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Coastal cities are distinctively shaped by both, borders and connectivity, land and sea. They are mediators between these sides. Following the assumption that urbanisation, globalisation and the Anthropocene created new categories and paradigms of borders, the panel seeks to shed light on the question how the sea is perceived, narrated, and mediated in coastal towns and cities since Early Modern Times. Thus, categories of center and periphery, stability and transformation, the global and the planetary, and security and insecurity are called into question. The border theme will therefore be examined in terms of liminal spaces in the sense of a land-sea relationship to negotiate how boundaries of coastal towns and cities are shaped, imagined, and mediated.

Different ways of living, unequal modes of motion and distinct states of law and rule signify land and sea. In coastal towns and cities, these two worlds clash. This session seeks to investigate how these clashes looked like, how they were handled in the urban community, and to what distinct features of the urban communities they led.

Of particular interest are investigations focussing on the built environment. Deliberately setting an extended period, the aim is to identify phases of the transformation of coastal towns and cities in the global era to conclude the driving forces behind the design of a built environment: conditions of the sea, mercantile and neoliberal interests, competition between coastal cities, and cultural imaginations. Questions include: To what extent did the geographical position at sea influence the architectural discourse and language in these towns and cities in contrast to land-based ones? How did typical climate situations and unusual weather events influence these discussions? How sustainable were solutions once found in times of rapid change caused, e.g., by urban-

ization and industrialization? What were particular (landscape) architectural modes of mediation between land and sea? Moreover, how did they contribute to creating an environment of encounter and exchange between the two worlds? Did this atmosphere foster an understanding of the other side?

Another direction of the investigation will focus on the mediation of the self-image these towns and cities cultivated. This topic includes the question of motifs and narratives transmitted and asks for the motivation of the proponents, the audience's perceptions, and shifts and changes. How did the imagination of such places interfere with the built and social reality, and how was the image of coastal towns and cities mediated and visualized?

This session aims to identify overarching themes and motifs in expressing the hybrid identity of coastal towns and cities, and general insights into their formulation, contestation, and reassertion. Therefore, we ask for contributions that reveal connections between these places throughout time and space.

Scholars are invited to submit a 300-word abstract by using the Registration Template (https://eauh2024ostrava.osu.eu/28959/cfp-registration-template/). The file must be named as follows: Main Session, Specialist Session of Round Table number, hyphen, surname. Example: MS1-Kocourek / S10-Kocourek etc.
Please send the document to kempea@uni-greifswald.de, frank.rochow@b-tu.de, eauh2024@osu.cz by September 30, 2023.

Reference:

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