

Call for Papers: Walking with Saints: protection, devotion and civic identity. The role of the landscape

Place: Ronse, Belgium.

Dates: 24-26 May 2018.

Deadline for submission of paper proposals: 10 December 2017.

Since the adoption of the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage in 2003, the issue of cultural practices has increasingly gained the attention of heritage professionals, academics, decision makers and practitioners alike. However, despite the growing interest in the social dimensions of cultural heritage and the recognition of the importance of the intangible aspects of heritage, many issues still need further reflection. A crucial aspect is the interaction and relationship between intangible cultural heritage and its spatial contexts. This is part of a broader “spatial turn” in historiography and research.

“Walking with saints: protection, devotion and civic identity. The role of the landscape” focusses on the origin and evolution of procession rites which have a strong link with the landscape. This conference, therefore, aims at studying the religious landscape not as the mere spatial background for spiritual activities, but as an active agent in the shaping, transmission and transformation of the spiritual activity of human beings throughout time.

Though the starting point is an activity that is typical for Europe, we are interested in broadening the perspective to non-Christian and non-Western traditions that have an important connection with the landscape in which they are performed.

Papers are invited that deal with the following themes of the conference:

- Sacralisation of the landscape: alteration, destruction and resistance
- Immaterial heritage: religion and landscape
- Perennial aspect of immaterial heritage
- Immaterial heritage and community building: identity, assimilation, integration
- Healing saints in their territorial context
- The influence of processions on the landscape and on the drawing of parochial and city boundaries
- Processions, pilgrimages and the senses
- Healing saints, magic and assimilation

This 3-day conference will be hosted by the city of Ronse and is co-organised by KADOC (KULeuven). The conference is part of an assessment of the local Fiertel procession as a possible candidate for recognition as UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage.

Keynote speakers:

- Mrs Cécile Duvelle, former director Intangible Cultural Heritage at UNESCO
- Prof. Andrew Spicer, Professor of Early Modern History, Oxford Brookes University (UK)

More information: <https://www.walkingwithsaints2018.com/>