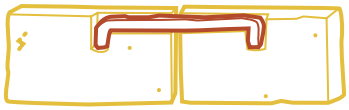
Metal in Architecture

Building, Decorating, Fitting Out, and Repairing from Protohistory to the 18th Century

Corpus International Symposium — Angers

7, 8 and 9 June 2028



First call for papers

The **CORPUS group – Studying Metal and *Instrumentum***, brings together specialists in the study of metal and, more broadly, materials defined as “small finds” from archaeological contexts, and was established in 2010, to foster exchange, discussion, and the dissemination of research in this field. Collectively, its members adopt a diachronic approach, spanning the Bronze Age to the present day, and reflect the diversity of stakeholders in archaeology: developer-funded archaeology (from both the public and private sectors), local authorities, the Ministry of Culture, the CNRS, and universities, bringing together the professional and academic sectors as well as students. Every two years, the group organises a conference devoted to a specific theme, including a half-day session dedicated to the latest research on small finds.



Objectives of the symposium

The conference aims to explore the role of metal in the **construction**, **fitting out**, **embellishment** and **repair** of buildings before the industrial era. It will focus on two distinct but complementary themes: first, **the functions of metal in these contexts**, and second, **the economic processes in which they were involved**, particularly through the study of production sites. The conference also aims to present a variety of case studies from a diachronic perspective, examining, in particular, architectural and technical heritage across different periods.

Because the study of metal in architecture is a cross-disciplinary field, the conference takes a multidisciplinary approach, focusing primarily on the use of metal (iron, copper alloys, and lead) in traditional architecture, in combination with other building materials (stone, timber, and earth), across **Europe** and the **Mediterranean basin**. The chronological scope extends from Protohistory to the end of the 18th century.

Papers may address any type of architecture, whether private, public, urban, or rural; monumental or more modest structures; civil, military, religious, or funerary architecture; as well as hydraulic engineering works. Wherever possible, presentations should highlight the interdisciplinary nature of this field of study.

Conference Themes

The Role(s) of Metal: Which Objects for Which Uses?

The conference will focus specifically on **the diversity of contexts** in which metal artefacts are discovered. Metal objects associated with construction and recovered during archaeological excavations are often found in secondary contexts, having originated in buildings that have been partially or completely destroyed. They are generally fragmentary, heavily corroded — particularly when made of iron — and sometimes unremarkable in aesthetic terms. These characteristics, combined with the lack of a direct link between an object and its original setting, make their study difficult; **therefore, it can be challenging to place them within an architectural context or associate them with a specific phase of construction or renovation** (structural work, finishing, completion, or repair). The study of these assemblages often requires a broader approach that draws on other disciplines, **notably the archaeology of buildings**.

In buildings, metal elements may survive in situ alongside other materials (masonry, timber, and architectural terracotta), or may be identifiable only through imprints or traces left in structures. Analysing this material therefore requires input from specialists in other fields, including **historians** for the textual sources, **engineers**, **architects**, and **craftspeople** with traditional skills.

Such an **interdisciplinary approach** is essential to improving our understanding of the uses, construction techniques, and functions of metals in historical architecture because metal objects served a v**ariety of technical purposes** during both the **structural and finishing** phases of construction. In structural work — including masonry, timber framing, roofing and associated decorative elements — metal could be used for reinforcement, as a load-bearing element, or as a means of joining, fixing, or sealing. During finishing work, metal could serve to secure surface coverings on walls, ceilings, and floors or be connected to water supply, drainage and heating systems. Door and window frames and metalwork will also be considered where they provide information about the structure of a building, as will elements associated with glazing.

Metal elements may also be used in **building fixtures** (domes, lighting fittings, acoustic fittings, etc.), as **decorative features** on roofs (tiles, parapets, etc.), or to adorn spaces and their entrances (fittings, hinges, veneers, etc.). Statues and their associated fittings (mountings and decorative elements), however, raise different questions and will not be covered by the conference.

These different uses provide scope for examining **typologies**, **classifications**, and **representations**. Proposals may also seek to characterise the functions associated with **different types of metal in relation to the architectural forms, construction techniques and chronological contexts under consideration**. Particular attention will be paid to relationships with other materials, as well as to the potential structural roles of metal objects. **Practices involving the placement of objects associated with architecture**, such as keys, door and window fittings, or tools, may also be considered in order to explore the technical and symbolic dimensions of these fixtures.



The Economics of Metalworking: What Products for Which Building Sites?

The conference will also examine the use of metal in construction from an **economic** perspective. This theme provides an opportunity to investigate temporary or permanent production areas/workshops associated with metalworking or the installation of metal elements, particularly those established near buildings under construction or reconstruction. Such areas may be studied through **archaeological evidence** or **textual sources**, and may address questions regarding the craftsmanship involved in working different metals and on manufacturing methods, including shaping techniques and the quality of the metals used.

More broadly, the study of these areas, or the metals associated with buildings, may make it possible to examine the **organisation and supply chain** of construction or repair sites as a whole, as well as **the role played by different metals** and the proportions and quantities in which they were used. Case studies in building archaeology that examine the quantities of metal used are particularly relevant to this theme.

The **origin** and **quality** of metals may also be investigated by **analysing their properties and composition**, whether as part of a study of a building or of a production workshop. Such analyses can help us understand the **supply networks** serving building sites, including their locations and distribution, possible variations according to material or construction phase, and the standardisation of certain products; or, conversely, their variability or adaptation to a particular building, and the implications of these patterns for the chaîne opératoire. The conference is also interested in investigations studying the proportion of **recycled** or **reused** metal used within these supply chains, taking into account the contexts and motivations for such practices (including cost and material availability), as well as any constraints (such as quality and suitability for reuse).



« Corpus actuality »

Studies of individual objects or collections of small finds may be presented, regardless of period, from the Pays de la Loire region and beyond. This session offers an opportunity to present ongoing projects, academic research, or exceptional artefacts !

Format of Proposals



Oral presentations and posters at the conference must be delivered in **French** or **English**.

Oral presentations and posters

- Oral presentations will last **15 minutes**.
- Each poster presentation will be allocated **5 minutes**.

Discussion sessions will be held to address questions raised during the conference.

Important

In both cases, proposals must be accompanied by the signatures of all authors and include each author's **surname**, **first name**, **affiliation(s)** and **email address**.

Proposals, in French or English, should be submitted using the form and sent to angers.corpus2028@outlook.fr before 30 June 2027

Conference proceedings

The proceedings are due to be published by 2030, with the articles expected to be submitted by **May 2029**.

Organising Committee

Fanny Larre - membre Corpus, HADÈS, UMR 5607, Ausonius

Reynald Lucas - Pôle archéologie de la Conservation départementale de Maine-et-Loire

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7, 8 and 9 June 2028
Form for proposal (oral presantation or poster)

To be sent by **30 June 2027** to : **angers.corpus2028@outlook.fr**

Surname :

First name :

Affiliation(s) :

E-mail :

Phone number :

Title of the proposal :

Co-author(s) and affiliation(s) :

Format of proposal : ☐ **Oral presentation** ☐ **Poster**

☐ **Oral presentation or poster**

The scientific committee may propose changes to the format of the presentation based on the proposals received.

Summary (maximum 5 lines) accompanied by an image illustrating the proposal (.pdf ou .jpeg) :