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SCHOOL OF  
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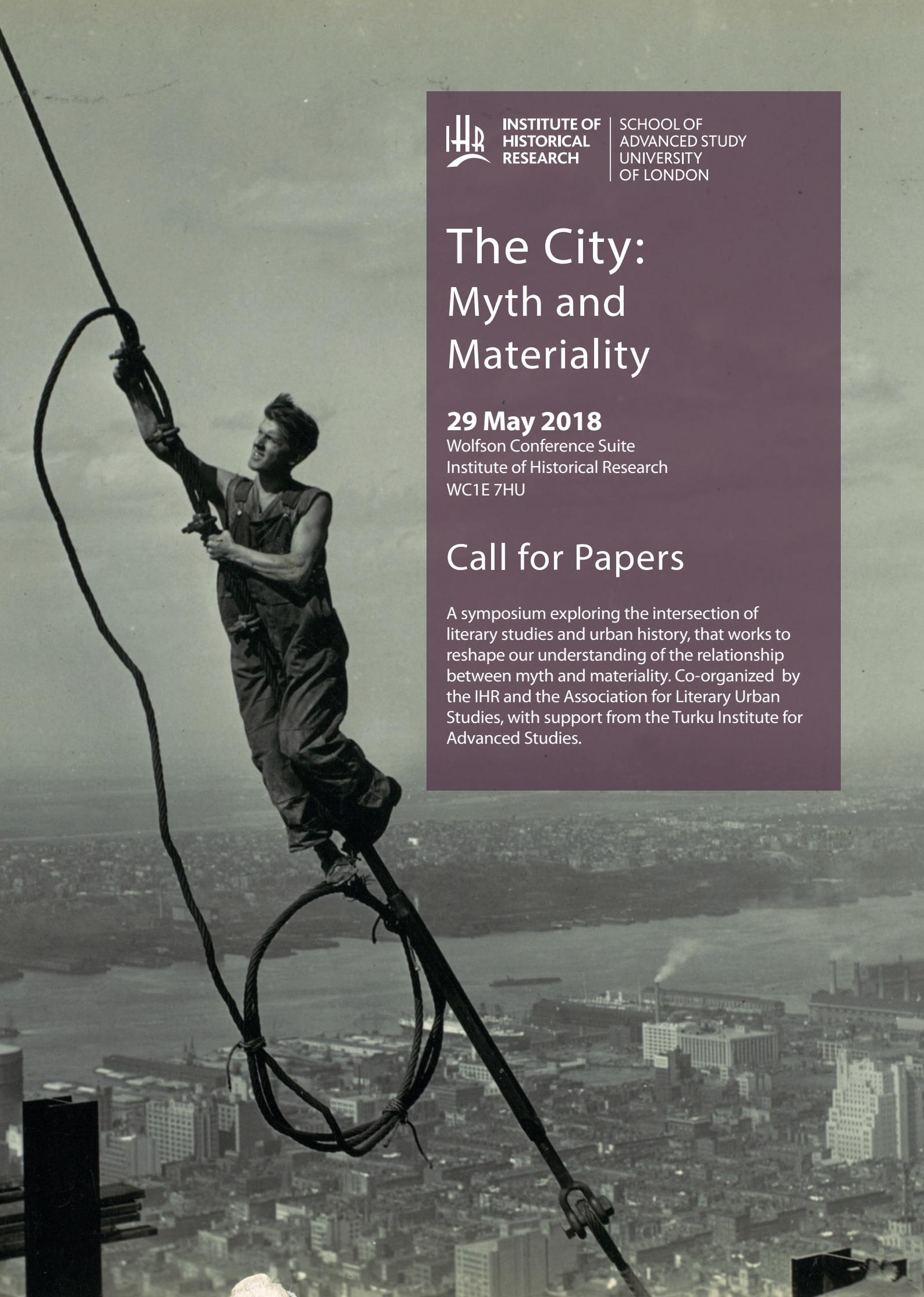
# The City: Myth and Materiality

**29 May 2018**

Wolfson Conference Suite  
Institute of Historical Research  
WC1E 7HU

## Call for Papers

A symposium exploring the intersection of literary studies and urban history, that works to reshape our understanding of the relationship between myth and materiality. Co-organized by the IHR and the Association for Literary Urban Studies, with support from the Turku Institute for Advanced Studies.



# CALL FOR PAPERS

## The City: Myth and Materiality

29 May 2018, Wolfson Suite, Senate House, London WC1E 7HU, UK (10.00 a.m. - 5.00 p.m.)

A one-day symposium organized by the Association for Literary Urban Studies (ALUS) in collaboration with the Institute of Historical Research (IHR), University of London, with the support of the Turku Institute for Advanced Studies (TIAS).

Cities have always been driven by the dynamics between myths and materialities, oscillations between founding myths (from Rome to St Petersburg), to the material conditions of city sites (hills and swamps; river, estuary and seashore), and patterns of technological innovation, consumption, and distribution. City zones where myth and materiality meet include those to which ideas of the sacred and the profane are central, from cathedral precincts to slums and red-light districts. Unpacking the dynamics of urban materialities and their mediation in literary and other texts goes through a range of approaches, including the examination of urban experience, technology, or the topographic layout of streets in literary texts. Its aspects range from the physical production of books and the fetishization of art and other objects in city contexts, to studies of literary texts and historical moments from the perspective of book production, reading cultures, and consumption patterns.

ALUS and the IHR invite proposals for papers dealing with the intersection of literary studies and urban history, examining any historical period or geographical area, that work to reshape our understanding of the relationship between myth and materiality. Papers can be focused on theories and methodologies, or be case studies.

How do city myths and city materialities interact? And in what different ways do perspectives from literary studies, urban history, and other disciplines including human and cultural geography, design history and urban planning, cast light on these intersections?

**Suggested topics** that might be addressed include:

- Cities, their literature, and the history of technology including that of the media
- Studies of literary production in urban contexts
- Mediations and representations of specific city spaces, both imagined and actual
- Examination of the relation between actual city topographies to cities' myths of themselves
- Approaches focused on 'environment' in literary urban studies and urban history
- The materialities of city myths, including memorials and toponyms
- Urban mythos: a given city's self-fashioning through an idea of its unique personality
- Critical readings of city myth
- City objects
- Literary and historical urban archaeologies (both literal and figurative)

We invite **proposals for papers (20 minutes in length)**. Proposals should include an abstract (200 words maximum) and a short (half page) CV (preferably in .doc or .docx format), and should be sent to **Jason Finch (jfinch@abo.fi)** by 20 March 2018. Potential presenters will be informed during the second half of March 2018 whether or not their abstract has been accepted.

### Bursaries

A limited number of bursaries are available for Masters Students, PhD researchers and ECRs to help with conference fees and travel expenses. For more information and details on how to apply, please visit: [www.history.ac.uk/events/event/15674](http://www.history.ac.uk/events/event/15674)

**PLEASE NOTE: Booking for this symposium will open in April 2018.**

*Organizing committee: Jason Finch (ALUS, Åbo Akademi University), Lieven Ameel (ALUS, TIAS), Peter Jones (IHR, University of London)*