



Summary

SOME REFLECTIONS ON SACRED BUILDINGS' FOUNDATION STONE LAYING CEREMONIES IN THE MIDDLE AGES

Sacred building's foundation stone laying ceremony marked the sacred character of the chosen location and determined it to serve to a religious purpose, which was then confirmed by its consecration. The aim of this paper is to find out whether sacred buildings' foundation stone laying ceremonies in the Middle Ages were accompanied by a prescribed sequence of liturgical acts precisely defined by official liturgical texts in the early Middle Ages, or whether the establishment of such rules was a lengthy gradual process. The evidence of foundation stone laying ceremonies between 10th and 13th centuries shows the tendency to perform them ever more profoundly and solemnly. What was originally a single ritual act performed exclusively by a bishop who consecrated the location of a future building (foundation stone laying not being mentioned as yet) later became an elaborated "secular" ceremony connected with the early phase of the building process which was accompanied by several sequences of paraliturgic symbolic acts. There was a tendency to involve other persons in the ceremony, especially the donator or, in most important cases, the sovereign. The second part of the ceremony, the foundation stone laying rite, later became part of the even more elaborate ritual of the consecration of churches. In this context, the symbolic meaning of the ritual acts was emphasized. In the light of this material we may cautiously assume that foundation stone laying ceremonies developed slowly and gradually during the 10th-11th and were not yet too common in the 12th century, which changed significantly during 14th and 15th centuries.

