UrbNet Highlights 2018

Vision

Centre for Urban Network Evolutions (UrbNet) explores the archaeology and history of urban societies and their networks from the Ancient Mediterranean to medieval Northern Europe and the Indian Ocean World. We are an interdisciplinary research initiative, which integrates contextual cultural studies rooted in the humanities with with new methods from the natural sciences. Approaching urbanism as a network dynamic, we aim to develop a high-definition archaeology to determine how urban networks catalysed societal and environmental expansions and crises in the past.

Statistics

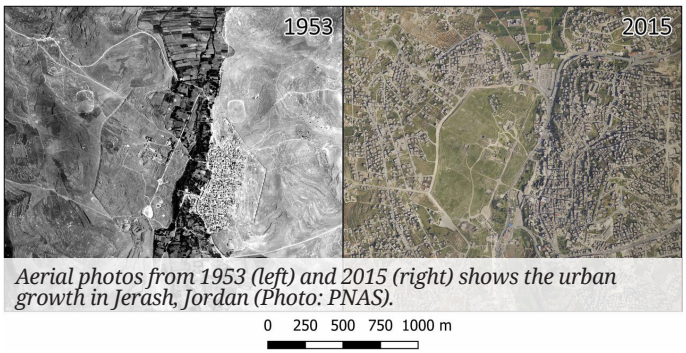
PhD courses organised: 5
Conferences/workshops organised: 22
Lectures/seminars organised: 54
Invited talks: 183
Press and media appearances: 108
Publications: 174

The House of the Lyre in Ribe

In 2018, the Northern Emporium excavation in Ribe revealed a new and unexpected chapter on early urban history in Scandinavia. It has been widely assumed that Ribe's market place remained a seasonally occupied site for several generations after its emergence c. 700 CE. However, a great surprise awaited the excavation team from UrbNet and the Museums of Southwest Jutland when they reached remains of a series of buildings in much earlier layers. In the floor layers of the most fully preserved building, several remarkable finds were made. Among these were a fragment of a lyre, a six-stringed musical instrument, which has sparked the nickname the *House of the Lyre*, playing on the well-known "House of the Lyre Player" in Pompeii. Ribe's *House of the Lyre* offers an exceptional view into a special place and its people.



Fragment of the lyre found during the Northern Emporium excavation in Ribe, Denmark (Photo: Søren M. Sindbæk).



Aerial photos from 1953 (left) and 2015 (right) shows the urban growth in Jerash, Jordan (Photo: PNAS).

Mapping Jerash

Within the framework of the Danish-German Jerash Northwest Quarter Project, groundbreaking new research on the mapping of ancient cities was published in 2018. The article, which appeared in the high-impact multidisciplinary scientific journal *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the USA*, combined aerial images from the World War I period with modern aerial photography and airborne laser scanning as well as observations stemming from on ground surveys. This resulted in detailed mapping of archaeological and non-archaeological features, which have added important information about the ancient city Gerasa (modern-day Jerash, Jordan).

Water and Urban Societies

How does the network of water influence urban processes? This is one of the questions addressed by a new collection of scholarly essays that was published in 2018 by Routledge. The interaction between society, environment and water can best be understood from a perspective that takes long-term dynamics into account and addresses questions from an integrated, interdisciplinary perspective. The new publication places water at the centre of urban dynamics, and explores the social roles of water, its provision, uses and significance in different parts of the world. In the reviews, it has been described as an excellent collection that helps fill a gap in the current literature on the topic.



View of Angkor Wat, Cambodia, the capital of the medieval Khmer state, discussed in the Water and Society volume (Photo: Wiki Commons).

UrbNet CENTRE FOR URBAN NETWORK EVOLUTIONS The Danish National Research Foundation
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