



UrbNet Highlights 2020

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.

We are an interdisciplinary research initiative, which integrates contextual cultural studies rooted in the humanities with the natural sciences.

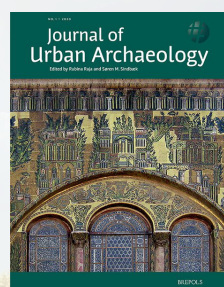
Approaching urbanism as network dynamics, we aim to develop a high-definition archaeology to determine how urban networks catalysed societal and environmental expansions and crises in the past.

Roman Glass from Gerasa (Jerash, Jordan)

This study found a way to determine the origin of Roman colourless glass and showed that hafnium isotopes can be used to distinguish between Egyptian and Levantine glass. Analyses provide compelling evidence that the prestigious 'Alexandrian' glass was indeed produced in Egypt.

Colourless Roman glass with purple splashes due to weathering (Photo: Danish-German Jerash Northwest Quarter Project).

See: Barfod, G. H., Freestone, I., Leshner, C. E., Lichtenberger, A. & Raja, R. (2020). 'Alexandrian' Glass Confirmed by Hafnium Isotopes. *Nature Scientific Reports* 10, 11322.



Journal of Urban Archaeology

JUA is the first dedicated academic journal to recognise urban archaeology as a field in its own right. It provides an intellectual forum for researchers working on the archaeology of urban societies and networks in all parts of the world and across all periods. The journal has emerged from the work done at the Centre for Urban Network Evolutions (UrbNet) and it is published by Brepols Publishers.

The first volume of Journal of Urban Archaeology.

Urban Ecology and Transitions on Zanzibar

UrbNet's work at the site of Unguja Ukuu has focused on excavating domestic structures, in order to understand the precise chronology of settlement here and the ways that people exploited landscape resources in their daily lives. In 2020 a visitor centre was launched at the site, using displays and materials produced by the UrbNet team.



Excavations of a house, showing Ema Bauzyté, Henriette Rødland and Said Said, September 2019 (Photo: Stephanie Wynne-Jones).

See: Wynne-Jones, S., Sulas, F., Out, W. A., Kristiansen, S. M., Fitton, T., Abdallah, A. K. & Olsen, J. (2020). Urban Chronology at a Human Scale on the Coast of East Africa in the 1st Millennium a.d., *Journal of Field Archaeology* 46.1. DOI: 10.1080/00934690.2020.1854549.

Urban Networks in the Caucasus

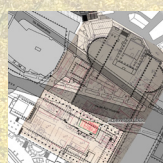
A new study has reconstructed the network of cities and villages that functioned as nodes of a complex network of communication and trade along the River Rioni (Western Georgia) in the 17th–19th centuries. The paper advocates the importance of moving beyond single sites' historical narratives and exploring human occupation in riverine settings with a network and landscape perspective.



River Rioni at Simagre, August 2020 (Photo: Emanuele E. Intagliata).

See: Intagliata, E. E. 2020. Settlement Networks and River Navigation in the Rioni – Western Georgia: From Strabo to Jean-François Gamba and Back Again. *WIREs Water*. DOI: <https://doi-org.ez.statsbiblioteket.dk/10.1002/wat2.1492>.

Urban Archaeology: A Best-Practice Scenario

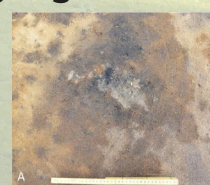


Excavation area in relation to the Imperial Fora and the houses of the Alessandrino Quarter (Photo: Caesar's Forum project).

See: Jacobsen, J. K., Murro, G., Presicce, C. P., Raja, R. & Saxkjær, S. G. (2020). Practicing Urban Archaeology in a Modern City: The New Excavations of the Alessandrino Quarter in the Heart of Rome. *Journal of Field Archaeology*. DOI: 10.1080/00934690.2020.1834255.

Individual Geographic Mobility in Viking-Age Ribe

The project The City of the Dead analysed human remains from Viking-age Ribe in order to assess the degree of cultural diversity, integration and mobility. The full integration of the various specialist studies proved the validity of the high-definition approach and the necessity of incorporating several variables in studies of cultural affinity and mobility among buried urban communities.



Various burial practices are attested at Ribe's earliest cemetery, including cremation deposits in small pits and inhumations in pits (Photo: Aarhus University/Museum of Southwest Jutland).

See: Croix, S., Frei, K. M., Sindbæk, S. M. & Søvsø, M. (2020). Individual Geographic Mobility in a Viking-Age Emporium: Burial Practices and Strontium Isotope Analyses of Ribe's Earliest Inhabitants, *PLOS ONE* 15.8, e0237850.



Sapere Aude Grant

Tom Brughmans has received a Sapere Aude Grant from the Independent Research Fund Denmark for the project MINERVA: Understanding the Centuries-Long Functioning of the Roman Economy. The project will explore how the Roman Empire evolved over centuries, by combining archaeological ceramics and the Roman transport network in computational simulation experiments.

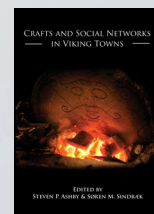
Tom Brughmans (Photo: Tariq Mikkil Khan, DFF).

Statistics

Conferences/workshops: 5
Invited talks: 45
PhD defences: 2
PhD courses: 1
Press and media appearances: 124
Publications: 113

Crafts and Social Networks in Viking Towns

A new volume shows that artisans of the past often learned new skills across long distances, while they maintained locally distinctive manufacturing traditions. Tracing the spread of these ways of working offers great insight into communication pathways, and by looking at waste material, tools and finished artefacts, we gain insight into how the products of Viking towns were made, and how practices varied across time and space.



See: Ashby, S. P. & Sindbæk, S. M. (eds.) (2020). *Crafts and Social Networks in Viking Towns*. Oxford: Oxbow Books.