



# UrbNet Highlights 2017



## 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 to the Indian Ocean World.

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

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: 4

Conferences/workshops organised: 16

Lectures/seminars organised: 32

Invited talks: 153

Press and media appearances: 217

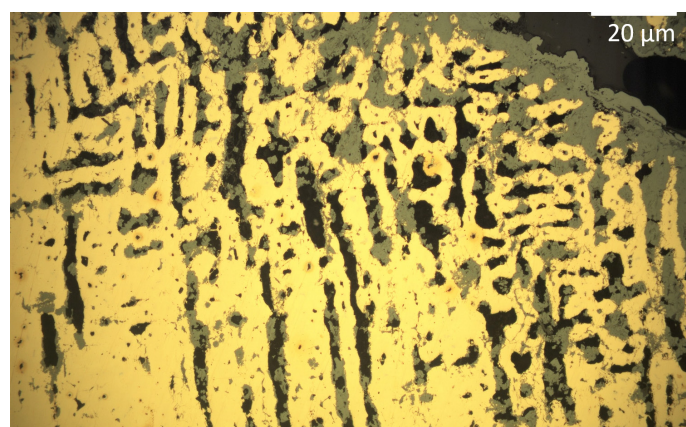
Publications: 135

## Mosaics from Jerash

In 2017, groundbreaking evidence for mosaic production in an Early Islamic domestic context in Jerash, Jordan, was published in the high-ranked journal *Antiquity*. The article spurred a lot of international attention, substantially adding evidence for the continuity of technological practices from the Roman and Late Antique periods into the Early Islamic period. Furthermore, the material showed that the complete circle of production could take place in a domestic context – an issue that, in scholarship, has been the topic of discussion for decades.



*Close-up of some of the tesserae recovered from the trough in trench P (Photo: Danish-German Jerash Northwest Quarter Project).*



*Photomicrograph of metal microstructure of bar ingot from Ribe (Photo: Vana Orfanou).*

## Urban metals

Metals and metallurgical remains from Jerash, Jordan, and Ribe, Denmark, were studied in order to investigate the respective technological attributes, social organisation, resource networks and urbanisation processes. Materials were examined with analytical techniques for the diachronic reconstruction of past metal technologies. Results suggest a shift in technological practices in Jerash in the transition from the Roman to Islamic administrations and fluctuations in its minted coinage throughout its occupation, which are likely related to contemporary socio-economic events. In Ribe, intensity of metallurgical activities attests to a polymetallic technology characterised by a high degree of specialisation, which highlights the interconnection of resources and technological transfer with connectivity and urbanisation.

## Excavation of Caesar's Forum in Rome

In 2017, a major grant was received from the Carlsberg Foundation for extensive new excavations of the, until now, covered parts of Caesar's Forum in Rome. UrbNet, the Danish Institute in Rome and the Sovrintendenza Capitolina ai Beni Culturale will conduct large-scale excavations in the northeastern part of the Forum, with the overall aim of shedding light on the urban development of central Rome from c. 1300 BCE until modern times. Through the application of high-definition methods to remains in the excavation area and with the help of e.g. geochemical element analysis, DNA analysis and micromorphology, the project will study the complex archaeological stratigraphy, which covers several millennia.



*Caesar's Forum (Photo: The Danish embassy in Rome).*