



# UrbNet Highlights 2019



## 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.

## Building Urbanity in Odense, Denmark

A new study shows that changes in settlement patterns and increased interaction with the town fabric are a materialisation of changed behavioural patterns and practices of the inhabitants in the medieval town. It represents a mental change and an emerging sense of urbanity.

DOI: [10.1111/j.1600-0390.2019.12212.x](https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1600-0390.2019.12212.x)



Remains of a 15th-century merchant house in Odense, Denmark. (Photo: Lars Skaaning)

## Excavation at Machkhomeri, Georgia

New excavations at the hill-top settlement of Machkhomeri (Khobi Municipality, Georgia) reveal the remains of a late antique church. Material from the 2019 fieldwork will shed light on fluctuations in trading activities and how trade was a catalyst for the transformation of cities in the region.

Machkhomeri site. (Photo: Davit Naskidashvili)



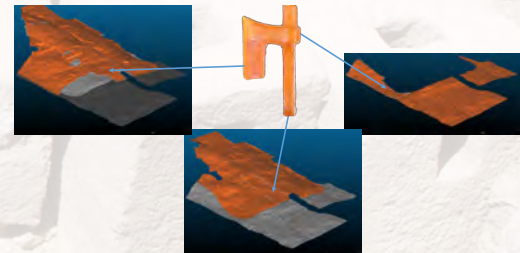
## Statistics

- PhD courses: 2
- Conferences/workshops: 18
- Lectures/seminars: 53
- PhD defences: 6
- Invited talks: 109
- Press and media appearances: 76
- Publications: 128

## From Single Context to Metacontext

A major study published in *Journal of Archaeological Method and Theory* concluded that new fieldwork technologies used in the Northern Emporium excavation in Ribe have unexpected impact for archaeological research methods. 3D laser scanning and intensive soil and sediment micromorphological sampling represent major advances in documentation, but also reveal major gaps in current theory of archaeological excavation.

DOI: [10.1007/s10816-019-09417-x](https://doi.org/10.1007/s10816-019-09417-x)



Reconstruction of the deposit of a tiny amber-axe pendant. (Graphics: Northern Emporium)

## Flagship Grant

In 2019, Aarhus University Research Foundation awarded a Flagship grant of 10 m DKK to the project *Caesar's Forum in a Long Durée Perspective: The Creation of an Urban Tradition*. The project is affiliated with the large-scale excavation project *The Excavation of Caesar's Forum in Rome*.

## Dansk Magisterforening's Research Prize 2019

Professor and Centre Director Rubina Raja received DM's research prize for research in the humanities and social sciences. It was given for her research on ancient urban societies and portrait cultures and the interdisciplinary high-definition studies she has pioneered at UrbNet.

## New Data for Copper Coins from the Eastern Mediterranean

A study of copper coinage in Gerasa/Jerash gives crucial new insights into monetary organisation in the Eastern Mediterranean during the Roman, Byzantine and early Islamic periods, revealing creative local responses to wider socio-economic events.

DOI: [10.1007/s12520-019-00866-9](https://doi.org/10.1007/s12520-019-00866-9)

## Tropical Archaeology

A multi-scalar and statistically based approach enabled the mapping of indoor/outdoor activity zones in a medieval daub (clay) house in Menai Bay, Zanzibar. It showed that anthropogenic geochemical signals retained in tropical soils are not directly comparable to signals found in other climate zones. Results showed a change over time, with a growing focus on the house as a space for production and more intensive use of resources.

DOI: [10.1016/j.jas.2019.01.010](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jas.2019.01.010)

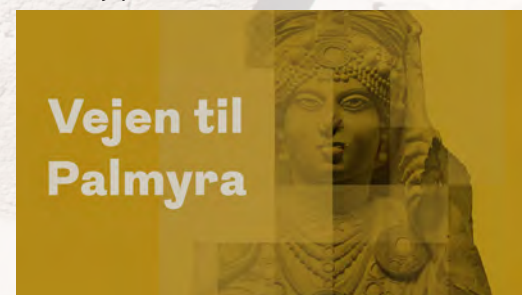


Near-invisible traces of a medieval house in Menai Bay, Zanzibar, were revealed by a multi-element and statistically based approach. (Photo: Federica Sulas)



## The Road to Palmyra

This special exhibition at Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, Copenhagen, was co-curated by Professor and Centre Director Rubina Raja together with curator Anne Marie Nielsen. The museum houses the world's largest collection outside Syria of Roman-period Palmyrene funerary portraits.



Exhibition, "The Road to Palmyra". (Layout: Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek)

A minimus, a pre-reform Umayyad fals of Skythopolis imitating a Byzantine follis of Justin II, and an epigraphic post-reform Umayyad fals of Jerash. Scale in cm. (Photo: Thomas Birch)