

Facts about the field of study

The chronological framework for the study is c. 1000 to 1500 AD.

The geographical framework is primarily Odense and towns in Scandinavia with views to selected town in Northern Europe.

The point of departure of the dissertation is the archaeological record provided by excavations in the central part of Odense, Denmark in the period 2013 to 2014.

Odense is the third largest town in present day Denmark. By the end of the medieval period it is estimated to have c. 4000 inhabitants, making it one of the largest towns then too.

About Kirstine Haase

Kirstine Haase holds a MA in medieval and renaissance archaeology from Aarhus University and has been employed at Odense City Museums since 2013 as an archaeologist. Kirstine Haase was a doctoral candidate at UrbNet from 2016 to 2019 and also part of the research and outreach project *Urban Encounters*.

Supervisor was professor MSO and Deputy director of UrbNet Søren Michael Sindbæk and Co-supervisor Deputy director of Moesgaard Museum, and Head of Dept. of Conservation & Environmental Archaeology, Moesgaard Museum Peter Hambro Mikkelsen.

Time and place for the defence

6 June at 13.15

Venue: AU Campus Moesgaard, The Lecture Hall (4206, 139).


Contact

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AN URBAN WAY OF LIFE SOCIAL PRACTICES, NETWORKS AND IDENTITIES IN ODENSE, C. 1000—1500 AD

PhD dissertation by Kirstine Haase

AN URBAN WAY OF LIFE – SOCIAL PRACTICES, NETWORKS AND IDENTITIES IN ODENSE, C. 1000–1500 AD

Summery of PhD dissertation by Kirstine Haase, Centre for Urban Network Evolutions (UrbNet), School of Culture and Society, Aarhus University.

The dissertation is about the interaction between the people, the material culture and the physical framework that shaped the medieval town.

Urbanity as a way of life

The main purpose of the dissertation is to discuss when and how living in a town becomes associated with a particular way of life. In addition, the dissertation aims to describe and define the elements and dynamics of life in the town. All in the effort to formulate a renewed approach to archaeological research on towns and urbanity. The dissertation also seeks to illustrate the great potential of the archaeological record from recent years' major urban excavations in Denmark and to highlight promising aspects of recent theoretical and methodological initiatives.

A key point in the dissertation is the call for seeing the town as more than a physical entity categorised and studied on the basis of topographical, administrative and functional fea-

tures. Instead, a focus on practices, dynamics and processes will bring the human role and actions to the fore.

Dissertation outline

The dissertation consists of four introductory chapters, six papers and a finishing chapter. Together, the six papers provide case studies on the development in the organization of settlement space, use of resources, social identities, trade and cultural networks, animal husbandry and crafts as well as a chronological model of the site based on dendrochronology, radiocarbon dating, stratigraphy and Bayesian statistics. This gives a detailed picture of the processes and dynamics that unfold in the interaction between people and material culture in the medieval urban environment. They illustrate the potential in a relational and contextual approach to the research on urban settlements. The papers also reflect the variations in how and when urbanity is expressed.

Main conclusions

It is concluded that urbanity is seen clearest from the middle of the 12th century onwards in the archaeological record of Odense. It can also be concluded that urbanity must be perceived as composed of different, sometimes contradictory, practices. It is present to varying degrees and not in all aspects of life in the town. Urban life evolved into a particular way of life as the interaction between the material, the physical environment and the inhabitants triggered a high degree of connectedness, interdependence and a network of complex social practices. Based on this, we must revise our perception of the medieval town to include these multi-faceted expressions.

A future perspective is to pursue a contextual agenda and use the concrete methods and analytical approaches demonstrated in the dissertation. This will contribute to a continued ambitious development in both fieldwork and research within urban archaeology.