

# FROM CENTRAL SPACE TO URBAN PLACE. THEORIES, METHODS AND MODELS FOR ANALYZING PROCESSES OF URBANIZATION IN A EUROPEAN PERSPECTIVE

**Theme:** The archaeology of material culture, bodies and landscapes

**Organisers:** Runge, Mads (Odense City Museums, Denmark) - Hansen, Jesper (Odense City Museums, Denmark) - Iversen, Frode (Department of Archaeology, University of Oslo, Museum of Cultural History, Norway) - Ljungkvist, John (Department of Archaeology and Ancient History, University of Uppsala, Sweden)

**Format:** Regular session

The session is focusing on the dialogue between theories, methods and models for analyzing processes of urbanization in a European perspective.

One focus point is the characteristics and processes, that on the empirical background of archaeology can be registered in the gap between localities with pre-urban features and the regular urban settlements. Another focus point is the relationship between the town and the surrounding

society. Here attention is drawn to the early urbanization as setting for concentration of fundamental functions in society (e.g. law, trade and religion). These functions might operate within international networks (e.g. European trade systems and religion) as well as in local relations, that supports the shaping of urban environments.

We welcome papers with a microscale starting point in an archaeological case as well as in larger, comprehensive studies, that addresses the theme from an overall and macroscale perspective. Obvious themes might, besides the theoretical and methodological perspectives, be founded in both "bottom-up" as well as "top-down" processes.

The intention is to explore new and varied approaches to early urbanism and to present contributions that spread widely in time and space, i.e. across Europe in the period c. AD 200-1200.

Confirmed speakers:

Dr Manuel Fernandez-Gotz, School of History, Classics and Archaeology, University of Edinburgh, Scotland.

Associate Professor, Soren Munch Kristiansen, Department of Geoscience, School of Culture and Society - Centre for Urban Network Evolutions (UrbNet) Aarhus University, Denmark.

## ABSTRACTS

### **01 FROM THE CENTRAL SPACES OF THE IRON AGE TO THE CITIES OF THE MIDDLE AGES**

**Author(s):** Runge, Mads (Odense City Museums, Denmark)

**Presentation Format:** Oral

The earliest "wave of urbanization" in South Scandinavia is seen at the emporiums, which were established as continentally orientated phenomena during the late Iron Age. Later, the next generation of cities evolved and replaced a system of preurban central places.

How this development took place is still in many ways an open question in archaeology and history. Recent research indicates a multi faceted development, combining elements of bottom-up-processes, grounded in the relations between the local hinterland and the early town, as well as top-down-controlled elements.

In a new interdisciplinary project, the complex development from the central spaces of the Iron Age to the cities of the Middle Ages is analyzed. The project incorporates the Danish cities Odense and Aalborg as cases within the temporal frame AD 400-1100. The project combines a landscape analytical and context-based approach with detailed studies of artefacts as well as structures of settlements, metal rich sites, cult sites, fortification, infrastructure and other fundamental elements of society. The data includes the traditional archaeological record as well as place names, topography, geology, historical documents and the natural sciences. Theoretically, the primary foundation is inspired from the social, geographical and economic sciences.

The paper is an introduction to the session with the interdisciplinary project functioning as a case study.

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### **02 FAILED URBANIZATION OF THE EUROPEAN CHALCOLITHIC. TRYPILLIAN "MEGA-SITES" CONTEXTUALIZED**

**Author(s):** Ohlrau, Rene (Kiel University, Graduate School „Human Development in Landscapes“) - Hofmann, Robert - Muller, Johannes (Kiel University, Institute for Pre- and Protohistoric Archaeology; Kiel University, CRC 1266: „Scales of Transformation - Human-Environmental Interaction in Prehistoric and Archaic Societies“)

**Presentation Format:** Oral

Trypillian "mega-sites" have experienced a renewed interest in recent years. The interpretation of these sites in terms of their urban character is however heavily disputed depending on the theoretical and disciplinary background of scholars. Even when the urbanity is refuted, their formation and abandonment depict an important step towards Eurasian urbanization.

Results of the past years allow us to trace the development and decline of "mega-sites" on a settlement and regional scale. Surveys on a variety of Trypillian sites, ranging from a few to hundreds of hectares revealed an overarching layout. This settlement pattern shows several levels of spatial organization reaching from neighborhoods to quarters, areas of craft production, and large plazas with special buildings comparable to the "mega-structure" of Nebelivka. While smaller sites have the same circo-radial layout, they seem to lack production areas, making them an interesting case to discuss rural-urban relations. A comparison of the structure and

partitioning of larger and smaller sites revealed a “top-down” pattern which seems connected to synoecism. The social impact of population agglomerations becomes also apparent in the material culture. Here, naturalistic figurines depicting “the rise of the individual” and tokens referring to anonymous trust exchange systems give a glimpse at a developing urban way of life.

Besides agro-pastoral limitations and changing environments, failure of social integration might have ended further development in the mid-fourth millennium.

Various theoretical and methodological approaches towards urbanization processes, including non-eurocentristic ones, will be discussed to put these sites into an overarching context.

### **03 COULD URBAN SETTLEMENTS SURVIVE (AND PROSPER) WITHOUT A HINTERLAND? THE CASE OF THE TRYPILLIA MEGA-SITES OF UKRAINE**

**Author(s):** Gaydarska, Bisserka (Independent researcher) - Nebbia, Marco - Chapman, Jonh (Durham University)

**Presentation Format:** Oral

The Trypillia mega-sites of the Ukraine constitute the largest known settlements in 4th millennium BC Europe, if not the world. Investigations into the 10-km territory of the Nebelivka mega-site revealed a tiny number of coeval settlements and remarkably little off-site ceramic or lithic discard. This absence of evidence makes it hard to talk about a ‘hinterland’ of neighbouring sites which may have offered logistical support to a massive central place. Instead, we propose an alternative social model of annual rotational service and governance, carried out by extended social groups of common descent. Some members of these groups, totalling between 2,400 and 3,200 people, were living in cca 400 houses in Nebelivka on a more or less permanent basis. A substantial part of their annual subsistence was provided by the remaining members of the single group that was in charge/power on any particular year. These members were living in 10 to 13 small sites dotted across the 100 km catchment area of the mega-site. This model fits two important constraints on the number of houses built and burnt as established by geophysical survey of the whole mega-site and on the lack of any major ecological impact throughout the 150-year duration of the mega-site. The model shows that Trypillia mega-sites can indeed be considered as ‘urban’ but as a distinctive form of ‘urban’ space.

### **04 THE EMERGENCE OF LATE IRON AGE URBANISM: BOTTOM-UP PROCESSES OR TOP-DOWN PROJECTS?**

**Author(s):** Fernandez-Gotz, Manuel (School of History, Classics and Archaeology)

**Presentation Format:** Oral

In large parts of Temperate Europe, the last centuries BC witnessed the emergence of large agglomerations, both open and fortified. Although most of the attention has been traditionally focused on the fortified oppida of the late 2nd and 1st centuries BC, new research emphasises the important role of large open settlements that in many cases preceded the oppida by several generations. There is increasing agreement that the development of urban sites needs to be understood within the wider context of their surrounding landscapes, the nucleation of settlement being the result of political and economic transformations and an increase in ‘social density’. In terms of power relations, there are differing interpretations about the driving forces behind these processes: were large centres the manifestation of bottom-up enterprises within social networks of a predominantly heterarchical nature, or should we envisage them as top-down projects directed by members of the social hierarchy? Can we observe multiple pathways to urbanisation, and differences between the processes that lead to the development of open vs. fortified sites? And were the push factors of a predominantly endogenous nature, or rather influenced by the increasing contacts with and pressure from the Mediterranean world? These questions will be addressed with reference to relevant case-studies that exemplify some of the core discussions in the field of Iron Age urban studies.

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### **05 THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MONUMENTAL PHASES OF THE FORA AND LEGAL STATUS OF THE ROMAN CITIES**

**Author(s):** Canino, Dario (Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona - Sapienza Università di Roma)

**Presentation Format:** Oral

The construction or the monumentalization of a public area is closely related to the legal status of the settlement. The city, in fact, will always have the need to equip itself with different types of structures necessary for carrying out its administration: a series of buildings that are fundamental for the management not only of the city but also of the surrounding territory, that changes according to the statutory condition of the city.

The characteristics of the public and community spaces and, in particular, the types of structures contained in them, can be good indicators for the nature of a certain urban entity. For example, the public area of a *civitas stipendiaria* in a Roman province is certainly different from that of a *colonia* or of a *municipium*.

The cities with a privileged status, in fact, played a fundamental role for the whole territory which was part of their jurisdiction and, in these cities, the forum was a celebratory space of particular importance, in which, in the various monumental phases, some specific characters played a role in the construction or renovation of public buildings.

In these operations, the evergetism has often guaranteed the financing of numerous public works, which contributed, often in different times, to the achievement of an urban *amoenitas*. The public monuments of the cities were, in fact, often built with the donations of wealthy citizens. These type of donations were connected with the desire for ostentation of economic power and social prestige and gave to the donors a strong political power at a local level.

It will be analyzed, through some significant examples of Roman cities in Italy and in Spain, the relationship between the legal status of the settlement, the monumentalization of the public areas and the patrons and the curators of the public works

## **06 NORTH SEA CENTERS: AN EVALUATION OF THE EFFECTS OF ACADEMIC INTERPRETATION ON UNDERSTANDING OF THE SCANDINAVIAN 'CENTRAL PLACES'**

**Author(s):** Maddox, Timmis (Independent)

**Presentation Format:** Oral

Over the past forty years, the cultural landscape of Pre-Christian Scandinavia has become increasingly accessible, allowing archaeologists to better understand a part of Scandinavian history which had previously depended on unreliable texts. This is due to the discovery of large prehistoric settlements dating to the Late Roman/Germanic Iron Ages (AD 200-AD 800). Yet despite the opportunity which these sites represent, archaeological interpretation has remained limited. This is reflected by their varying interpretations, which are summarily lumped under the overarching term of 'central places'. Not only has this made the term 'central place' vague, but this also emphasizes a lack of understanding of how these sites were 'central' to wider society. For example, Morten Axboe, Birgitta Hardh, and Lotte Hedeager respectively argue for administrative, economic, and social definitions of centrality. While a central place need not be limited to one form of centrality, these arguments represent a limited understanding of the core aspects which drove these settlements. What elements drove their emergence and further development? How were these settlements central to the cultural landscape of Iron Age Scandinavia? Urban definitions are also a constant issue for these sites, as scholars debate over whether or not these settlements represented examples of early urban centers. Using the neutral term 'focal settlement' this study evaluates the history of academic research into the Scandinavian 'central places'. By investigating how interpretations of centrality and urbanism have affected understanding of the focal settlements and then juxtaposing them with the Late La Tene oppida and Early Medieval emporia, this study establishes a general interpretation characterizing them as urban centers which served a socio-administrative centrality in Iron Age Scandinavia. Representing prehistoric examples of urbanism for their cultural context, the focal settlements functioned towards instituting and maintaining elite-driven collective identities, establishing themselves as the first centers of Iron Age Scandinavia.

## **07 THE PALACE AND THE VILLAGE – STRUCTURES AND ACTIVITIES IN GAMLA UPPSALA**

**Author(s):** Ljungkvist, John (Dept. of Archaeology & Ancient history)

**Presentation Format:** Oral

The character of central places and proto-urbanity have been discussed for decades. Perhaps it is particularly hard to define some of the very large inland sites in Scandinavia with a pre Viking origin. Places like Uppakra, Gudme, Sorte Muld and Gamla Uppsala are larger, richer, and more monumental sites than their surroundings. They have a completely different settlement layout and landscape placement than later coastal sites such as Birka, Ribe or Hedeby, all defined as either urban, proto urban, as emporia etc. But these old places are all not only royal residences or cult places, they filled a specific roles in their societies that could involve a royal presence, law, religion, military aspects, as regional assemblies and symbols. Finally they could have filled some of the economic roles of the emporia.

This paper is based on a very basic question surrounding a large inland sites. What did people do in Gamla Uppsala? This is an almost ridiculous question, but it has actually been hard to specify the character of the material culture of this site beyond the rich finds and monuments. New investigations makes it possible to discuss its settlement patterns, the diversity and intensity of crafts, and activities set in relation to sites in the surrounding landscape. Gamla Uppsala represents in some ways the idea of the pre medieval

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manor or village (although very large) but there is also evidence for an ambition to create something different compared to other rural settlements. That includes not only the construction of the famous great mounds and halls. It also involves concentrating a number of workshops in the palace area, evidence of deviant agrarian activities, a peculiar village structure and not the least the evidence of spectacular rituals and peculiar finds that signal international contacts and a taste for special foodstuff.

## **08 CENTRAL PLACE OR TRADING PLACE? – TRAJECTORIES FOR UNDERSTANDING THE EARLY HISTORY OF DANISH TOWNS**

**Author(s):** Sovso, Morten (Museum of Southwest Jutland)

**Presentation Format:** Oral

By c. 1200, a network of (mostly) small towns covered the Kingdom of Denmark spaced at c. 30-50 km intervals across the diverse landscapes of Jutland, Funen, Zealand, Scania, Halland and Blekinge.

The urbanization process behind this apparently homogeneous picture has been a matter of debate since Hugo Matthiessen's classic works of the 1920's: Torv og Harstrade (1922) and Middelalderlige Byer (1927) applying a Darwinist, evolutionary view emphasizing gradual development and trade as the most important factors behind town growth.

A contrasting view was presented in Anders Andren's Den urbana Scenan (1985) suggesting towns were something new: royal foundations propagating ideology in the form of Christian Kingship and economic control through taxation.

In different shapes and forms, these two contrasting stances are embedded in most urbanization discussions. Including the more recent ones aiming at sociological questions like identity, ethnicity and gender.

In the paper, the four medieval towns on the West coast of Jutland: Ribe, Tonder, Varde and Ringkøbing will be investigated. It will be argued, that all four of them are rooted in power structures that can be tracked deep into the first millennium.

Between 700 and 1200 they developed in very different ways. Ribe was an important emporium later to become the centre of a diocese. A result of a double role as both a “trading place” and a “central place”. The other, smaller towns do not seem to go back to before 1050 and more closely fit a “central place” model.

## **09 PROSPEROUS TOWNS! EARLY COASTAL URBANISATION IN WESTERN SCANDINAVIA AD 800-1200**

**Author(s):** Iversen, Frode (Museum of Cultural History University of Oslo)

**Presentation Format:** Oral

Compared to Europe, the degree of urbanisation in Scandinavia was low, particularly in Norway. During the Viking-Age (800-1050) separate trade laws, Bjarkoyretter developed and towns became separated from the rural jurisdiction and obtained their own laws and courts (“mot”), defining urban space. Beyond the town boundary (“takmark”), rural law (“herads rett”) applied.

The saga phrase ‘setja kaupstad’ may indicate when an existing market or ‘embryo town’ became a judicial entity and achieved formal trading rights, and hence changed from a central place to an urban space. Around 1150-75, the coastal land of Norway is described as a ‘Decapolis’, an area with ten towns, traditionally identified as Nidaros, Bergen, Oslo, Borg, Tonsberg and Konghelle, together with Stavanger, Veoy, Skien and Kaupanger in Sogn. By the end of the Middle Ages there were only 16 towns in Norway, compared to more than a hundred in Denmark and 40–50 in Sweden.

The Norwegian kings seem to have had a relatively stronger grip on trade and towns compared to their European counterparts. There were few towns, and most of them were subordinated to the king. In this paper we will investigate the factors behind the prosperous royal towns emphasising pre-urban ownership of land, early assembly site-functions, elite-estate and production sites and the role of archaeological monuments in the development from central space to urban space.

## **10 FAILED TOWNS IN WESTERN SCANDINAVIAN AD 800-1200**

**Author(s):** Loftsgarden, Kjetil (University of Oslo, Museum of Cultural History)

**Presentation Format:** Oral

This paper explores local, regional and international factors for the development from central space to urban place in western Scandinavian emphasising the role of inland resources and exchange between the inland regions and the coastal areas, c. AD 800-1200, and why some towns failed while others succeeded.

Iron production in the western Scandinavian inland was on a massive scale in the late Viking Age and early Middle Ages and exceeded both regional and national demands. Iron did not only constitute a necessary commodity for regions with little iron production, such as the coastal areas of eastern Norway and large parts of western Norway, but played also a significant role in international trade, especially towards Denmark. As such, the inland production of Iron was important for trade and export and played a substantial role in the development of complex economic networks of this period.

The growing importance of iron as well as other inland resources such as reindeer hunting meant that the fjords became central places, and some places developed to urban places, like Borgund, Kaupanger and Veoy. However, none of these places lasted as medieval towns. In this paper we examine how cheap Swedish blast furnace iron and resource depletion (reindeer), combined with new stock fish trade-routes directly from Northern Norway to the town of Bergen, changed the centrality of the fjord-bound urban places.

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## **11 FEUDAL POWER AND THE EMANCIPATION OF THE MERCHANT IN FLANDERS AS DRIVING FORCE FOR THE URBAN REVOLUTION, 850-1200**

**Author(s):** Tys, Dries (Vrije Universiteit Brussel)

**Presentation Format:** Oral

The development of feudal power in the post-Carolingian world had a lasting impact on the medieval landscape, not only in establishing estates and manors but also by emancipating the already existing merchant class, at least in Flanders between the second half of the 9th and the 13th century. Already Verhulst, followed by Loveluck and Tys noticed how the urban revolution in Europe only initiated properly after the feudal investment in portus towns after the era of the Carolingian emporia (for instance in Bruges, Ghent, Ypres, Lille and other towns). Today, a new assessment of the reproduction strategy of the important 10th to 12th century counts of Flanders, raises the hypothesis that by investing in infrastructure for trade, the feudal lord did indeed draw the card of commercialism to strengthen his princely position. This goes quite direct against Pirennes idea of the importance of the liberal merchant overpowering the conservative feudal lords. One could even say that the counts of Flanders valued the dynamic social and economical power of early-medieval assembly and that by reorganising assembly in the feudal age, they turned this into their own profit, thus giving the final stimulus towards the rise of the successful towns of late-medieval Flanders.

## **12 THE SETTLEMENT(S) OF WISKIAUTEN/MOKHOVOYE – VIKING AGE TRADING PORT OR ONLY PERIPHERY?**

**Author(s):** Sirkin, Annika (Centre for Baltic and Scandinavian Archaeology, Schleswig; Academy of Sciences and Literature Mainz)

**Presentation Format:** Oral

In 1865 a rich Viking Age/Early Medieval graveyard with Scandinavian and indigenous Prussian grave goods and various burial traditions was found near the village Wiskiauten in former East Prussia, nowadays Mokhovoye, Kaliningrad district, Russia. It is situated on the Sambian Peninsula, about 3 km from the Baltic coast. Ever since, an implied settlement which is supposed to belong to that graveyard was interpreted as a “colony” or a port of trade in the silver trade routes, comparable to e.g. Birka in Sweden or Hedeby in Germany. In 2005–2011 multifarious traces of small settlements from Neolithic up to Medieval time were discovered around the

graveyard.

This paper will provide interim results from my PhD thesis on the comprehensive evaluation of the settlement excavations in Wiskiauten, perhaps the first large-scale examination of settlement structures in the surrounding of a supposed Central Place. I would like to discuss why – without concrete evidence – a port of trade is nevertheless expected to have existed in the vicinity. On that basis, my aim is to create a model of Early Medieval settlement structures in former East Prussia. Subsequently, I want to unveil a new picture of an area that is still almost detached from general interpretations of European scale processes in early Medieval Ages.

### **13 THE EMERGENCE OF A NEW TOWN IN NO-MAN'S-LAND. A CASE STUDY OF ENKÖPING IN CENTRAL SWEDEN**

**Author(s):** Lagerstedt, Anna - Gustafsson, Stefan (Arkeologikonsult)

**Presentation Format:** Oral

The town Enköping was founded during the late 11th century in a place that lack previous indication of having central place function or the place of high ranking settlements.

The distribution of large burial mounds, early churches, place name indicating centrality and the concentration of prehistoric cemeteries indicate that the town was founded on a new place in the social landscape, in a place between several magnate farms and on the border between two administrative districts.

At the time of the foundation of Enköping the Swedish Crown had a weak position with regional limited power and it is not likely that the town was founded by the King. Later, during the 12th century, the town was an important place for the church in the province of Uppland. However, the church establishment seems to have been preceded by the laying of regulated urban settlement with long, narrow plots related to a market street.

We suggest, as an alternative, that the earliest urbanization in Enköping was the result of a need for a marketplace for the local aristocracy. We also want to emphasize the importance of identifying several periods and processes of urbanization in the Middle Ages, thus not seeing urbanization as a linear process. Early urbanization may differ from recent developments with different groups that driving change.

The starting point of this study is a recent conducted and extensive archaeological excavation in the medieval town of Enköping. We want to investigate, on a micro level, how these remains can provide a perspective on the earliest urbanization. Who were the people that moved into the first households? How and when does an urban identity emerge? What type of interactions did the people of Enköping have with the rest of Sweden and Europe in the oldest phases of the town?

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### **14 THE BEGINNING OF URBANISM IN ESTONIA (CA. 1200–1300): THE EXAMPLE OF TARTU**

**Author(s):** Haak, Arvi (Tartu City Museum; University of Tartu, Department of Archaeology)

**Presentation Format:** Oral

The development of medieval town of Tartu (Germ. Dorpat) has been seen either as a gradual development from the prehistoric fort-and-settlement system at the same site, or a 13th-century „planted“ town of settlers of German background, only loosely connected to former habitation. After a brief overview on the elaboration of the concept of 13th-century urbanism in Estonia, and the prelude outlining the main developments in Tartu prior to the early 13th-century crusade (1208–1227), the presentation will concentrate on the model formation for the urban development in Tartu. What sources have proved most valuable in reconstructing the urban beginnings, and how have facts and models been integrated?

Using the existing archaeological data as a starting point, the presentation aims at establishing a time frame for several “top-down” processes central to the “planted” town concept. This leads to an attempt to sketch a development model for Tartu between 1225 and ca 1300, and address the earlier presented idea of replanning the urban space within the first 50–75 years of development.

According to my research, the number of 13th-century archaeological features is much smaller than previously suggested, referring to modest rather than rapid urban development. The existence of several “colonial” features is clearly visible, but of equal importance is the discrepancy between any ideal picture, and the actual development, which was as much influenced by local actors as of particular natural and topographic conditions. Yet the existing archaeological and archival data is too scanty for reconstructions based primarily on that data. Thus, model-based approaches could be used to integrate this information into a better understanding of the urban development in Tartu.

### **15 MULTI-SCALAR APPROACH FOR HIGH-DEFINITION CENTRAL PLACE AND URBAN SPACE ANALYSIS ACROSS DIFFERENT ENVIRONMENTS: REMOTE SENSING, GEOPHYSICS AND SOIL MICROMORPHOLOGY**

**Author(s):** Kristiansen, Soren (Aarhus University, Department of Geoscience & Centre for Urban Network Evolution) - Lichtenberger, Achim (Westfälische Wilhelms-Universität Münster; Institut für Klassische Archäologie und Christliche Archäologie/Archäologisches Museum) - Stott, David (Aarhus University, Department of Geoscience) - Sulas, Federica - Raja, Rubina (Aarhus University, Centre for Urban Network Evolution, Department of Culture and Society) - Ljungberg, Thomas (Aarhus University, Department of Geoscience)

**Presentation Format:** Oral

Remote sensing and aerial photography are now routinely applied for mapping and characterising archaeological sites, while geophysical investigations and geoarchaeological methods have proven useful to understand contextual stratigraphies within a site.

However, systematic investigations of ancient urban landscapes remain challenging due to modern disturbances, the multi-period

use of many urban archaeological sites and the fact that early central/urban places may be scattered over waste areas in present-day hinterlands. Drawing from recent and ongoing research, this paper illustrates how a multi-scalar analysis efficiently can refine understandings of complex urban sequences across very different environments and contexts. In Denmark, combined geophysical investigations and airborne laser scanning (LiDAR) data is now transforming our ability to detect human activities testifying Iron Age transition from central places to urban spaces. At the ancient city of Jerash (Jordan), LiDAR, aerial photography, on-ground excavation and geophysical data combined with GIS software have created a new city map of the multi-period city. Zooming into the microscale, integrated soil geochemical mapping and micromorphology have detailed household activities and use of space within early coastal settlement at Unguja Ukuu, Zanzibar. Evaluated together, these case studies show how an approach with spatial resolution from km to micrometer scales holds unique potential for developing improved understanding of the complex urban soil archives in Europe and beyond.