



The challenges of living closely together – cross-cultural perspectives

Call for papers for an international workshop on pre-industrial urbanism to be held at Ingelheim (near Mainz, Germany), Friday 12th to Saturday 13th November 2021

Academic fields: Archaeology (all sub-disciplines), Ancient, Medieval and Early Modern History, Assyriology, Urban Geography, Urban Sociology, Anthropology

Organizational context: Thematic Area 3 *Urbane Verdichtung* / urban agglomeration (research area 40.000 Years of Human Challenges at Johannes Gutenberg-Universität Mainz). The workshop is funded and supported by the Mainz Ancient Studies programme.

Call

The 21st century has been described as the "century of cities". Never before did such a high percentage of the global population live in cities and urban agglomerations. Today, as in the past, the urban experience is connected to specific challenges. The workshop announced in this call for papers aims to stimulate a multidisciplinary discussion on the problematic sides of going urban and focuses on pre-industrial cities and other settlements characterized by (relatively) high population densities.

While there are many different factors that incentivized people to move into larger settlements throughout the ages, living closely together brought new and multifold challenges. Particularly where smaller settlements developed into larger population centres, the possibility for communities to organize themselves along the lines of face-to-face interactions waned, while reciprocal dependencies increased. Although challenges develop dynamically and are dependent on a set of individual parameters, we can see some recurring themes resulting from the circumstance of close cohabitation, which invite diachronic and cross-cultural comparison. They range from a radically altered relationship to the environment, poor sanitary conditions and higher levels of social stress caused by crowding, to organizational challenges such as the logistics of sustaining larger populations, the negotiation of decision-making processes, as well as the experience of internal conflicts and dissent, to name just a few. Instead of focusing on one particular challenge, the workshop aims at facilitating a discussion on the overlap of multiple challenges and a more holistic view on the precarious, ever-changing dynamics of densely populated settlements.

In preparation for our workshop, we will invite scholars of larger pre-industrial sites to discuss a particular set of predefined challenges with us (see list provided below). The list offers a very simple, yet robust tool to compare densely populated settlements from different periods and world regions. During the workshop, we will discuss how various communities conceptualized, perceived and dealt with different but recurring structural challenges inherent in living closely together and going urban.

To facilitate a joint discussion, we ask all participants to either focus on one particular settlement (or a group of settlements) and three or more challenges picked from the list provided below.

Alternatively, participants can choose to focus their paper on methodological or comparative approaches referring to one specific challenge from the list.

The following list makes no claim of completeness and deliberately prioritizes social, economic and technological challenges:



1. *Supplying the many* (food, drinking water, construction materials etc.)
2. *Dealing with waste* (waste disposal, sewage)
3. *Negotiating decisions* (e.g. with regard to urban planning, urban expansion, the socio-spatial organization of built-up areas, distribution of urban functions etc.)
4. *Organizing production and exchange* (ensuring the production and distribution of every day necessities and other goods, markets as physical places and institutions, etc.)
5. *Coping with the other (-ed)* (religious minorities, deviant groups, outsiders)
6. *Structuring mobility and access to communal infrastructure* (transport infrastructure, street network, accessibility of ritual infrastructure, public baths, gendered spaces, etc.)
7. *Coping with catastrophic events* (e.g. natural disasters, fire accidents, pandemic disease, warfare)
8. *Regulating conflicts – containing violence – maintaining peace* (settlements as conflict zones, cities as violent actors, the role of violent factions within settlements, construction of fortifications)
9. *Creating, maintaining, and contesting social institutions* (legitimization and visualization of power relations, social norms, etc.)
10. *Coping with socio-economic inequalities* (resisting socio-economic marginalization, channeling economic resources, legitimization of socio-economic inequalities)

We encourage archaeologists of all sub-disciplines as well as historians and urban geographers to submit abstracts. Contributions of researchers from other disciplines devoted to pre-industrial cities are also welcome, as are papers focusing on challenges connected to modern or present-day urbanism, given the potential for contextualizing and broadening our perspective. Moreover, we would be glad to include the perspective of researchers dealing with larger permanent settlements not defined as cities, e.g. larger prehistoric village communities.

Proposals for papers must be sent to: ppasieka@uni-mainz.de

Deadline for the submission of paper proposals: Monday 1st March 2021

Paper proposers must include the following information:

- Title of the proposed paper
- Name, affiliation, postal address and email of the proposer(s)
- A short abstract (c. 200 words)
- The name(s) of the settlement(s) *or* challenge (in case of a methodological paper) the proposed paper addresses
- For papers based on specific settlement(s): choice of three or more challenges from the list above must be included in the proposal
- The world region the paper focuses on (e.g. Western Asia, North Africa, Mesoamerica, Cyprus, etc.)
- The period, the paper focuses on (e.g. 4th Millennium BC, the 17th century AD, etc.)

Paper proposers should note the following:

- The organizers will arrange accommodation for invited speakers. Travel costs will be covered for as well.
- The organizers will inform the paper proposers by April 2021 about the outcome of their applications and issue a preliminary program.



- Presentations should last no longer than 30 minutes. After each presentation, there will be sufficient time for questions and discussion.
- The official conference languages are English and German. Papers should preferably be presented in English.

We are looking forward to receiving your proposals. If you have any questions, please contact one of the organizers by email (see below).

Mainz Ancient Studies is part of the Gutenberg International Conference Center (GICC) at Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz (JGU). The GICC is funded through the German Research Foundation's (DFG) university allowance in the Excellence Strategy program and aims at fostering JGU as a national and international research hub. By organizing regular conferences and workshops in fields of excellent JGU research, the GICC provides a platform to build interest networks and collaborations – to promote exchange and dialog among academics and research groups from all over the world.

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