



Call for Papers

Norwegian Institute for
Cultural Heritage Research

Nature and Culture in Medieval Towns

NIKU is pleased to announce the conference 'Nature and Culture in Medieval Towns', to be held at Gamle Festsal, University of Oslo in Oslo on **6th-7th of March 2019**.

The current focus on climate and changing environment requires of the world immediate and sustainable solutions that look beyond the world of economics and politics into the world of humanities and ethics. A historical long-term perspective can give us new insight into the roots of our thinking about our place in the environment and help us make our adaptive solutions today more salient. This conference turns to the long Middle Ages, when the ecosystem, including environment and mankind, was pressured and transformed through intensified centralization and urbanization. The main aim of this conference is to discuss how the dynamics between various elements of the ecosystem (nature and culture) transformed and developed during medieval urbanization processes. Understanding the dynamics of the meeting between nature and culture will raise our awareness and shed new light on urbanization processes and intensified exploitation of our contemporary ecosystem.

The conference will seek to understand the two-way dynamics between nature and culture. On the one hand we will ask: How did climate changes (for example the Little Ice Age) affect the establishment and development of medieval towns? What role did nature, i.e. the geology, landscape and topography, and available resources, play in the very instigation process of urbanization, and in processes of change and continuity within urban medieval settlements? On the other hand, we will discuss: How did people and their societies influence, relate to, use, misuse, change, etc. nature and landscape? How did the organization principle behind urban societies condition the relationship to nature and its resources?

We urge contributors to demonstrate how these questions may be discussed through a variety of source material, methods and theoretical approaches from different disciplines. The conference will focus primarily on Northern Europe, but comparative studies of urbanization in Central and Southern Europe are welcome as well.

Confirmed plenary speakers are:

Roberta Magnusson, Associate Professor in Environmental History of Medieval Europe, University of Oklahoma

James Barret, Reader in Medieval Archaeology, Cambridge University

Axel Christophersen, Professor in Archaeology, Norwegian University of Science and Technology

The conference will include paper presentations and posters. Presentations will be in English and 20 minutes in length, allowing for additional 10 minutes of discussion. Proposals for papers or posters should include the author's name, affiliation, address, a brief autobiography/CV and an abstract of approximately 250 words.

Proposals should be sent to Elise Naumann, Elise.Naumann@niku.no, **before May the 15th 2018**. All proposals will be reviewed by a scientific committee, consisting of Elise Naumann and Stefka G. Eriksen.