

About Kristine Damgaard Thomsen

Kristine D. Thomsen holds an MA in Classical Archaeology from the Department of Culture and Society at Aarhus University. The PhD dissertation was conducted at the Centre of Excellence, Centre for Urban Network Evolutions at Aarhus University. The research has been focused on the technological and stylistic development of ancient mortars, plasters and wall paintings.



Time and place for the defence

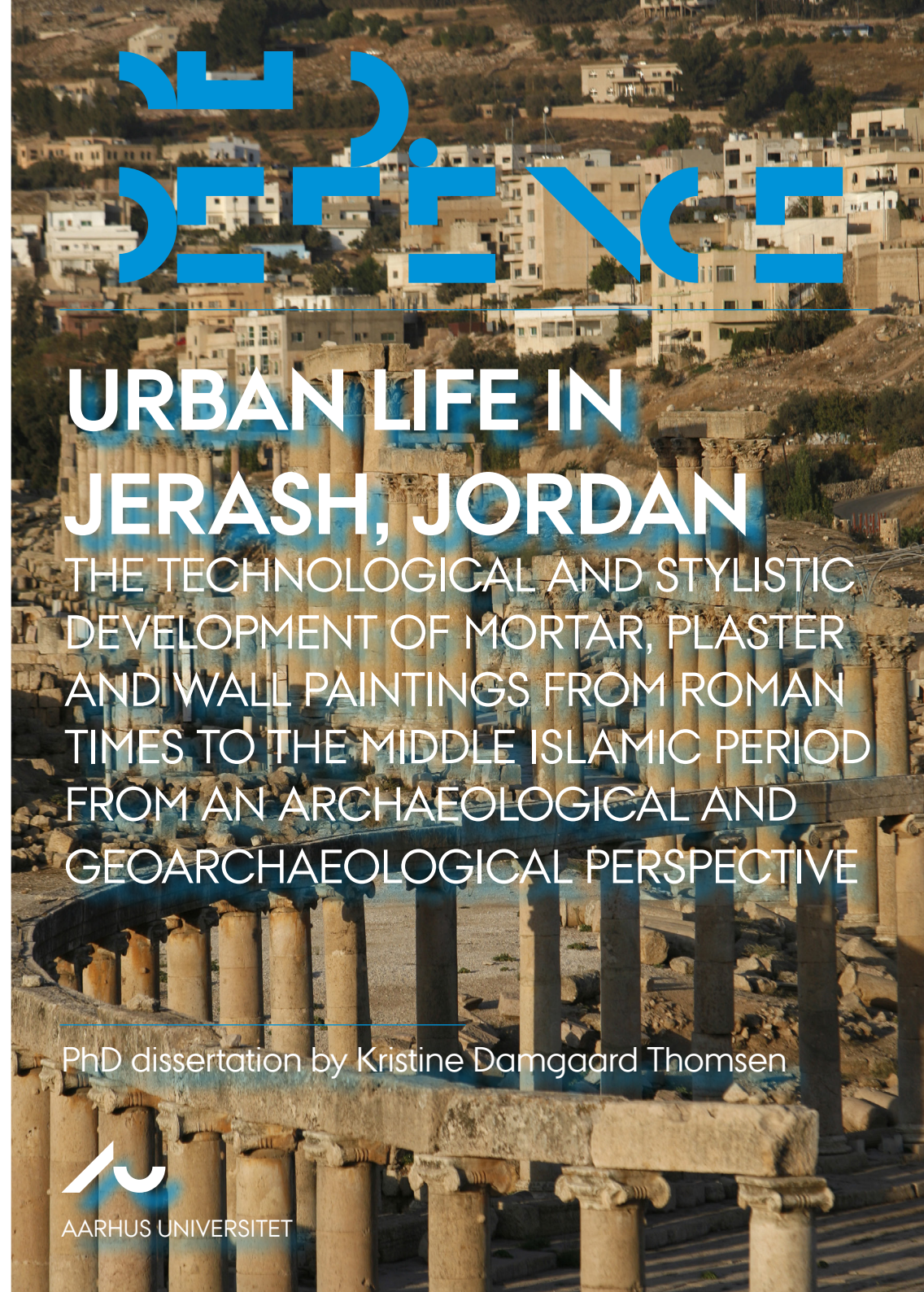
Date: Friday the 10th of May 2019

Time: 13:15 - 16:15

Location: Campus Moesgård, Aarhus University, Building 4206, room 139 (Foredragssalen)
Moesgård Allé 20, 8270 Højbjerg, Denmark.

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URBAN LIFE IN JERASH, JORDAN

THE TECHNOLOGICAL AND STYLISTIC
DEVELOPMENT OF MORTAR, PLASTER
AND WALL PAINTINGS FROM ROMAN
TIMES TO THE MIDDLE ISLAMIC PERIOD
FROM AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND
GEOARCHAEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

PhD dissertation by Kristine Damgaard Thomsen

URBAN LIFE IN JERASH, JORDAN: THE TECHNOLOGICAL AND STYLISTIC DEVELOPMENT OF MORTAR, PLASTER AND WALL PAINTINGS FROM ROMAN TIMES TO THE MIDDLE ISLAMIC PERIOD FROM AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND GEOARCHAEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

Summary of the main points of the PhD dissertation *Urban Life in Jerash, Jordan: The Technological and Stylistic Development of Mortar, Plaster and Wall Paintings from Roman Times to the Middle Islamic Period from an Archaeological and Geoarchaeological Perspective* by Kristine D. Thomsen, Centre for Urban Network Evolutions, Department of Culture and Society, Aarhus University. The dissertation aims to investigate mortar and plaster from a technological perspective as well as present and contextualize the wall paintings excavated in the Northwest Quarter in Jerash, Jordan.

Analysing Mortars and Plasters

Two main topics were investigated throughout the dissertation:

- The technological development of mortar and plaster.
- The stylistic expression and contextualization of wall paintings.

Past research has dealt with both topics, however both mortar, plaster and wall paintings from

the northern part of Jordan has never been thoroughly examined in a diachronic perspective. By combining archaeological and geoarchaeological methods, it has been possible to achieve a better understanding of these crucial building materials.

Applied Methods: Mortar and Plaster Analysis

By applying innovative new analytical methodologies based on integrated thin section micromorphology and Scanning Electron Microscopy (SEM) – energy dispersive X-ray (EDX) analysis it was possible to see variations in microscopic and sub-microscopic mortar and plaster structures as well as contrasts in elemental compositions. These analyses permitted the identification of materials contributing to the mortar 'recipes' and how the mortar had been mixed and applied.

Contextualising Wall Paintings

Vast amounts of wall paintings were found during the excavations revealing elaborately painted buildings dating from the Roman period through Umayyad and Mamluk times. The wall paintings were fragmented and the colours damaged, however this important material testifies to hitherto unknown knowledge of the artistic development in this particular area of the ancient world. By contextualizing the material, we add information to the discussion and understanding of the paintings both in a local and regional context.

Facts about the empirical basis of the dissertation

- Jerash is situated in the northern part of Jordan and was known as Gerasa in antiquity.
- The city prospered throughout the Roman, Byzantine and Umayyad periods until a devastating earthquake in 749 AD left the city in ruins.
- The Northwest Quarter was situated on the highest point overlooking the rest of the ancient city.
- Excavations of the Northwest Quarter were carried out from 2012-2016 by the Danish-German Northwest Quarter Project directed by Prof. Dr. Rubina Raja and Prof. Dr. Achim Lichtenberger.