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Institution Name
University of Vienna



Country
Austria



Research Area (failing down menu, Frasca ti Manual)
History, Egyptology



Thematic Focus
The use of space and spatial networks in antiquity



Stakeholders involved
Governments, Citizens,
Education Organizations



Research Phase
In progress

RESEARCH ASSET

ENCOUNTERING SOCIAL CHANGE IN SPACE WHAT CAN ANCIENT CITIES DO FOR US?

History has traditionally been seen as a succession of events, punctuated by defining moments that have been normally defined by archaeological or historical “discoveries” and equated with behavioural change. This change has always been perceived as immediate and total.

However, practice shows that history rarely goes on only in a “forward” motion, but it is instead composed of events and bifurcations that appear at different scales. These events happening at various levels can profoundly impact the outcome of phenomena occurring at a bigger scale, and space can play a decisive role at the level of collective behaviour acting either as a catalyst or as a constraint for human activity.

Ancient cities are a good example of how these mechanisms worked. We do know that other biological mechanisms use either regeneration and adaptation, or failure, and this dynamic can subsequently be applied to the study of human social systems and their manifestations in space.

Far from approaching the analysis of ancient settlements as a study of places that appear or disappear in the archaeological record but are void of time and space, it is of utmost importance to assess how ancient societies negotiated change occurring at higher scales -political transformations- with their everyday lives, using an evenemential approach based on complex systems interaction. This will contribute to create viable methodologies that can be applied to help social cohesion in modern cities today.

POTENTIAL VALORISATION AREAS

- Collaboration with scientists from the same field as well as from different fields such as social theory and urban planning, promoting transdisciplinary studies.
- Collaboration with education and research institutions to promote study of ancient settlements far from the traditional culture-historical approach that sees settlements as “static objects”.
- Collaboration with government, to promote knowledge of ancient spatial dynamics and their importance for the inclusion of diverse social practices in modern cities.
- Collaboration with citizens in order to show the impact such studies can have to understand ancient and modern social dynamics.



*Geographic Determinism must be challenged.
Social space exists and is both a shaping force, and an active part of social life. Analysing how ancient societies dealt with change at various scales can guide us towards better ways to coexist today*

DESCRIPTION OF VALORISATION ACTIVITY

Defining variations and adaptations in the spatial configuration of ancient settlements in relation to changes at diverse political, social, economic, or cultural scales, by integrating quantitative methods (GIS, Modeling) with qualitative studies.

Explore the dynamics of social mechanisms in lived-space, in opposition to built-space only.

Publication of PhD Manuscript, promoting its dissemination as well via Open Source.

VALORISATION TARGETS/POTENTIAL FUTURE COLLABORATORS

Short description of the stakeholders that can be important for future collaborations:

- Local and Regional Governments.
- Universities.
- Institutional Project like “The Social Reactor” project, University of Colorado Boulder (USA), the Santa Fe Institute (USA), or the Centre for Urban Network Evolution (Aarhus University, Denmark).