

Upcoming workshop:

Water systems and urbanization in Africa and beyond

1-2. March 2012, Uppsala, Sweden

This workshop aims to present an overview of current research and discuss what we know about the relationship between water and urbanization in a historic and comparative perspective. The workshop will be especially concerned with the connection between urban *expansion* and water control, with a focus on regional and local long-standing spatial patterns of water landscapes that have influenced and framed urban development options and policies, and how the struggle and ability to utilize water supply sources have encouraged urban expansion. The workshop will highlight how different rainfall patterns, river systems and aquifers in Africa and other places have impacted urban development and urban expansion and how planners, politicians and city dwellers have adapted to and tried to control these varying physical water systems and thus transformed both the water systems themselves and the urban landscapes.

In 2007 the United Nations reported that for the first time in human history half of the world's population is living in urban areas. This follows decades of continuous and rapid increase in the proportion of the global population living in urban areas. Most of the growth in the world's population over the next 25 years will happen in urban populations, especially in low and middle income countries, particularly those of Africa and Asia. There is now a general agreement that one of the most important issues this growth in urbanization must handle is the water issue; it will require more efficient water management systems under increasingly complex social environments and uncertain natural conditions due to climatic variability. *Understanding the urbanization-water nexus will therefore be of utmost importance in future development processes because it involves the lives and welfare of billions of people.*

History does not provide any definite lessons, but in this case it teaches us that public solutions might work in some cases and private solutions may function well in other cases. History demonstrates pragmatism in how cities and water systems can co-exist and benefit from each other in different ways. The water system of every city has its own unique location and quality, and each city has its own unique physical, social and administrative morphology, and therefore good solutions for one city may not work at all for another city.

Leading experts on water and urbanization will present papers and state-of-the-art research at the workshop.

The workshop will be the basis for the forthcoming book *A History of Water, Series 3, Vol. 1. From Jericho to Cities in the Seas: A History of Urbanization and Water Systems* (2013). This will be volume seven in the series of altogether nine volumes on water history published by I.B. Tauris, London.

The workshop is co-organized by the Nordic Africa Institute, Uppsala, Department of Archaeology and Ancient History, Uppsala University and Department of Geography, University of Bergen, Norway.

The workshop will be open for everyone and there will be no fees or registration

More information and programme will come later