

Medieval Urban

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Introduction

This Medieval Urban section of the Regional Research Framework presents a brief review of current national agendas, followed by an exploration of recent projects in the region that have contributed to understandings of medieval town life since the previous review of the framework in 2008. It then highlights gaps in knowledge and presents areas of new research drawn from within and well beyond the region. This is followed by an overview of current key themes that can shape future projects towards contributing to these research angles.

1. Review of National Agendas

The archaeological records of towns offer high densities of rich and diverse medieval deposits, structures, objects and environmental evidence that are related to the dynamic and changing medieval urban experience, and to the broader role of urban centres in economy, society and culture. Whilst Historic England's draft 'Research Strategy for the Urban Environment' (2010) should be a point of reference for urban projects, there is still as yet no national research agenda for Medieval Urban Archaeology (or Medieval - or Urban - Archaeology). However, existing research agendas for the East of England Region, which frame 'the town' as an ultimate unit of analysis for interdisciplinary study, continue to provide a highly relevant manifesto for the directions of urban research where each element or site contributes to an understanding of the varied social, economic and cultural geographies of the whole through time (Ayers 1993; Wade 1993; Ayers 1997; Ayers 2000).

Shaped as it was through engagement with urban research more widely, many of the themes in the existing regional framework resonate with those drawn together in Grenville Astill's broad review paper for the 50th anniversary celebrations for the Society for Medieval Archaeology (2009). This paper considered a number of strands: the impact of urban archaeology on identifying and understanding the processes of urbanisation; the potential to appreciate nuances of urban growth, decline and changing distinctive character across and within settlements; the scope for researching social and cultural development of urban societies through considerations of spatial patterns, space, buildings, and material culture (urban mentalities as well as economic development); urban-rural relations; and the still present issue of a lack of archaeological evidence from small towns. In this regard, the East of England Regional Research framework is highly reflective of national themes, although two in particular raised by Astill are noted further below: the scope to think about impacts of pilgrimage on towns and networks of towns, and exploring evidence for diversity in religious practice.

Themes in the regional frameworks also resonate with a pan-European review published in 2011, which captured current areas of interest in medieval urban archaeology: definitions of 'what is a town?'; broad chronologies in urbanisation with a re-emergence of town life in the 12th/13th centuries, crisis in the 14th and 15th centuries, and impacts of reformation; sources and interdisciplinary study; town plan and structure; towns and their hinterlands; urban houses; urban infrastructure; the topography of craft and trade; urban sacred topography and public health (Andersson 2011, Scholkmann 2011). Further opportunity to reflect on research frameworks will come with the publication of the forthcoming *Oxford Handbook of Later Medieval Archaeology in Britain* edited by Christopher Gerrard and Alejandra Gutierrez, which will cover such topics as living in towns, urban housing, shops, town and countryside and urban infrastructure, with the brief for authors of individual chapters to present a national topic overview, and highlight research gaps and directions.

2. Review of period summary from the 2008 Regional Research Framework

2.1 Urban Archaeological Databases (UAD), Extensive Urban Databases (EUS), analysis of urban growth and associated publications

The publication of the UAD for St Albans in 2005 (Niblett and Thompson 2005) has been followed by publication of the archaeological assessment for Colchester (Gascoyne and Radford 2013). The UAD for Cambridge is also complete and has been updated. Consideration is being given by Norfolk Historic Environment Service to a thorough review of the unpublished Norwich UAD utilising in-house funding but to date it has not been possible to initiate this proposal. More positively, a major re-cataloguing and summary of excavations undertaken between 1974 and 1990 in Ipswich has been undertaken and an archive and summary information is available online at the Archaeology Data Service (http://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/archives/view/ipswich_parent_2015/), allied to a UAD programme for the borough. Funded by Historic England, this is due for completion in Autumn 2017, with intentions to pursue options for publication, although the traditional form of research assessment and research agenda is unlikely.

Colchester aside, Niblett and Thompson's synthetic topographical account of the development of the medieval town and abbey of St Albans has not been replicated for any other major town in the region although an updated edition of *'Norwich: Archaeology of a Fine City'* by Brian Ayers has been issued (2009). Two papers on the archaeological contribution to the understanding of the growth of medieval Norwich have also been published (Ayers 2011 and Ayers 2015) and a survey of the churches of the medieval city is currently in train. This interdisciplinary project, funded by the Leverhulme Trust, is exploring the interdependent relationship between the city, its community, and church architecture (Ayers et al 2017). Elsewhere, Abby Antrobus undertook a major study of Bury St Edmunds for a doctoral thesis (Antrobus 2009) and *'Late Medieval Ipswich: Trade and Industry'* (Amor 2011) and *'Medieval Lowestoft'* have also been published (Butcher 2016). Both of these latter volumes, however, were primarily reliant upon historical information rather than archaeological data.

No further EUS has been compiled since the last revision of the Regional Research Framework in 2008. However, monograph publications on Wisbech (Hinman and Popescu 2012) and King's Lynn (Brown and Hardy 2011) enabled significant aspects of the urban topography of these towns to be explored. The Wisbech evidence for occupation and flooding was noted in 2008 as being 'almost without parallel in terms of its completeness, depth and state of preservation', a claim borne out by the publication (Medlycott 2011, 63). Related to studies of smaller towns, detailed survey of historic buildings in Little Walsingham, Norfolk has been published (NHBG 2016).

In a further suite of characterisation work, Cornwall Archaeology Unit on behalf of Historic England has undertaken a series of studies of North Sea port towns, in recognition of schemes for renewal and regeneration. These studies present a high-level review of the built environment of each port, and identify key threats and issues. In the eastern region, the project included Felixstowe, Great Yarmouth, Harwich, Ipswich, King's Lynn, Lowestoft, and Wells-next-the-Sea. The reports are available through the Archaeology Data Service http://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/archives/view/northsea_eh_2016/index.cfm

2.2 Recent work in urban centres

The excavation in 2010-2012 of four hundred complete and partial *in situ* burials from the Hospital of St. John the Evangelist, Cambridge, represents one of the largest medieval hospital osteo-archaeological assemblages from the British Isles. The significance of the group is enhanced by the detailed investigation of a carefully maintained network of pathways associated with the cemetery, the archaeological sequence that pre- and post-dated its use, and a number of contemporary properties that were situated immediately outside its bounds. This evidence allows the cemetery to be placed within its urban context in a way that is rarely possible. The overwhelming majority of the burials were extended west-east aligned supine inhumations without grave-goods. Atypical burials included examples aligned east-west and south-north, a

double burial, a prone burial and individuals buried with a jet crucifix and a brooch. Other significant finds included a nearby pit with four bodies in it, an anthropomorphic bone handle and a reused cruciform horse harness pendant. The proportion of males and females in the burial population is similar, whilst individuals who died under the age of sixteen are relatively uncommon and individuals aged under five are completely absent (publication ref needed).

In addition to demographic studies, urban cemetery populations contribute to ongoing palaeo-health research – in 2009, publication of the graveyard of St Margaret Fybriggate, Norwich, a church which was redundant in 1468, included six skeletons recorded with trepanomal disease (Stirland 2009).

In Ipswich, major excavation of the site of St Augustine's church and associated cemetery at Stoke Quay revealed over 1100 burials. The church, lost for some 500 years, was located within one of the poorer areas of medieval Ipswich and 'the population must surely have included a high proportion of 'men of the sea' as is suggested by the presence of reused boat timbers in many of the graves' (Brown et al forthcoming). The church was seen to develop in form from an apsidal to square ended chancel and was associated with a possible priest's house. Analysis of the burials indicates that the individuals represented a 'mobile and mixed population'.

Further burials were recovered from an evaluation at Fore Street, Ipswich where the cemetery may represent that of a lost chapel at East Gate. Medieval dumping was seen in the intertidal zone ahead of construction of a building with flint and septaria foundations, and a sequence of buildings was also identified (Suffolk HER IPS 639, excavated 2011).

Work in the review period has contributed to understanding of Bury St Edmunds. Within the Abbey, the compilation of a Management Plan included topographic, geophysical and paleo-environmental surveys, followed by test-pitting (Suffolk HER BSE 010). These works resulted in evidence for the former course of the River Linnet, with environmental history suggesting the existence of an open sedge fen prior to extension of part of the eastern side of the abbey precinct towards the river. Elsewhere in Bury, evaluation within the pre-Conquest core of the town adjacent to the Records Office on Raingate Street revealed a sequence of deposits dating back to the 10th century, further demonstrating that the best-preserved material survived in areas that had become gardens in the 17th century (Suffolk HER BSE 375 and 6). Test pits in the vicinity of the early 13th century Guildhall suggested that it had been built on a virgin site in the 12th or 13th century (Suffolk HER BSE 446). Work at Eastgate Street/Minden Row added to understanding of suburban activity and development, with evidence for the activities of tanners immediately downstream of the abbey precinct (Suffolk HER BSE 329). At College Street, the excavation of a 12th-century stone cellar suggested that it was possibly associated with College of Jesus (Martin and Plouviez 2013, 97). A further detached building, possibly a kitchen and potentially associated with religious artefacts, was uncovered recently during works at Guildhall Feoffment Primary School (Suffolk HER BSE 493). Another probable kitchen of 14th- to 16th-century date was revealed on land to the rear of Thinghoe House, Northgate Street together with masonry-lined cesspits and a stone-lined well. Excavations here also recorded medieval quarrying of gravel on a massive scale in the 12th-14th centuries, likely illustrating the practicalities of monumental construction of the abbey (Suffolk HER BSE 378). At Peckham Street, a busy intramural site between the 12th and 16th centuries contained changing sequences of industry, with baking and drying ovens, steeping pits, querns, sunken tubs and troughs (these possibly for the storage of lime putty) and evidence of horn working (Brown, Martin and Plouviez 2012, 512).

Work has also taken place in some of the smaller towns of Suffolk. At Clare, 12th-century suburban occupation was uncovered (ref needed to PSIAH 43 pt 2, 271); in Lavenham at the Swan Hotel, furnaces probably associated with the textile industry were found, together with a workshop at the rear of the property dating to the 14th and 15th centuries (ref needed to PSIAH 43 pt 2, 282); in Lowestoft, at both Compass Street and White Horse Street, late medieval buildings and assemblages were identified (ref needed to PSIAH 43 pt 2, 284); and in Stowmarket, monitoring revealed both tile and pottery kiln wasters as well as horn cores and metal-working (ref needed to PSIAH 43 pt 3, 468). At Dunwich a community project demonstrated survival of medieval settlement in woods and roads adjacent to the lost medieval port (Suffolk

HER DUN 137-140). Offshore, diver surveys complemented cartographic and geophysical research to assist plotting of the extent of the medieval town and major buildings within it (Sear et al 2011).

In Norfolk, the most extensive work in Norwich in recent years took place in 2015 on the site of the Augustinian Friary on King Street. Here it was observed that the friars had cut back a steep slope to improve access and to extract spoil for levelling of a riverine marshy area. A small tributary (or cockey) to the river was culverted and vaulted over, safeguarding also a well which was lined with flint for the drawing of clean water (Ayers 2016, 56 and fig. 2.10). The footings of the large choir of the friary church were exposed as well as elements of other claustral buildings. The work here complements that undertaken at the Franciscan and Carmelites friaries of Norwich (Emery 2007; Clarke forthcoming). The publication of excavations at St Faith's Lane reveals a cemetery with an unusual demographic profile which may relate to a known Franciscan School of international renown (Soden 2010).

Elsewhere within Norwich small-scale excavation at the cathedral uncovered evidence for early medieval structures within the cloister, possibly associated with the lavatorium (Cattermole 2013, 574); survey recording was undertaken of the a D-shaped tower in the city wall, newly-exposed following demolition of an adjacent building at Magpie Road (Cattermole 2014, 128); medieval structural remains were located on King Street (Cattermole 2014, 127); and a 13th- to 14th-century cellar was excavated at St Giles Street (Gurney et al 2011, 271).

In King's Lynn only minor archaeological works have been undertaken. Elements of previously substantial structures were nevertheless observed. Evidence for the line of the medieval defences was uncovered at Littleport Street (Cattermole 2013, 571) and masonry fragments associated with the Carmelite friary as well as a putative medieval watercourse were located ahead of road construction (Gurney et al 2011, 270). Part of the town wall of Great Yarmouth, an arched embrasure and its associated arrow loop, has also been recorded (Cattermole 2014, 124 and plate 3). Structures, described as 'relatively insubstantial' and dating to the 13th and 14th centuries, were seen in excavation at Bridge Street, Thetford and probably functioned as workshops. They were erected above riverside land reclamation that may have been associated with revetments or wharves (Cattermole 2014, 129).

In Great Yarmouth, excavation at Howard Street South uncovered deposits which suggested that the laying out of the Rows in this part of the town post-dated the Dissolution (the site was probably occupied before that by the Franciscan Friary) (Cattermole 2013, 571).

A major publication from Hertfordshire concerns the medieval pottery industry of the small town of Harlow. This assesses production sites and pottery types from an industry that was centred around Potter Street from the 13th century onward (Davey and Walker 2009). Industrial activity has also been explored elsewhere in the county; at Bank Mill in Berkhamsted a forge linked with a medieval hospital was located (Herts HER 15578 and 30543); and at Brookers Yard, Hitchin pits associated with kilns were recorded (Herts HER 18275). As at Clare in Suffolk, aforementioned, large pits uncovered in Berkhamstead seem to have been associated with construction of the Norman castle (Herts HER 30110) while rubbish deposits in the borough aided medieval reclamation of the riverbank (Herts HER 31211). Excavation of a large water filled ditch also in Berkhamstead possibly demarcated the Norman town with an industrial area beyond it, with evidence for a later medieval plot boundary (Hertfordshire HER 16203). Remains of the lost priory church of St John in Hertford were excavated (Herts HER 18735) with burials enabling plotting of a lost medieval churchyard (Herts HER 18283).

3. New research

Although publication of medieval urban archaeological research improves, major lacunae continue to exist, despite notable initiatives such as the current backlog project in Ipswich. The backlog on publication of projects in centres such as Norwich needs to be addressed as does the lack of research and synthesis in many towns. The paucity of information concerning major towns such as Great Yarmouth, for instance,

seriously hampers the development of greater understanding of the medieval economy. In addition synthesis of urban research within the region remains poorly served. The cessation of work on UAD and EUS projects is particularly unfortunate and has led to a lopsided research environment whereby certain locations, such as St Albans, are well-served while urban areas such King's Lynn lack such 21st-century tools. Existing UAD and EUS surveys also now require revision and here the proposed work on the Norwich UAD needs to be supported. Integration with HERs is crucial.

Towns clearly exist within a wider context and there is growing evidence of an increasing commitment to improving awareness and understanding of the pre-urban environment and the manner in which this influenced urban development (e.g. Ayers 2014a). Several projects have sought and/or recorded examples of landscape adaptation for urban development (e.g. Spoerry et al 2008 noting the improvement of waterways or lodes to assist the trade of Ely). However more could be done on exploration of systemic landscape change, as was effected for Amsterdam in the Netherlands (see Abrahams and Kosian 2013).

Developments in the understanding of the relationships of towns to their hinterlands have also been made on the continent in recent years at places such as Deventer in the Netherlands. Here linkage of archaeological research to both night-soil evidence and to rural resources utilised within the urban area has led to a more broad-based awareness of the medieval economy (as examples - Spitzers 2004; Bartels 2006). The adoption of such research initiatives within the East of England, particularly within the hinterland of smaller towns, many of which may be threatened by increasing development for housing in the next decade, would be beneficial, and could draw in a wealth of data from the Portable Antiquities scheme. New research projects also need specifically to consider the potential of suburban sites (as raised in previous research agendas) with dividends in doing so demonstrated, for example, in the 15th-century brick kiln site excavated at Clare and an (albeit post-medieval) tenter frame at Glemsford (Suffolk HER CLA 061 and GFD 044). In Astill's 2009 review, a national flag was that small towns are still under-investigated and understood (2009, 257).

Resource acquisition for urban construction, sustainable food provision and industrial activity has been explored tangentially through excavation specialist reports but synthetic consideration remains rare. The prodigious quantities of timber required in medieval urban buildings for instance has led to the 13th century in the Netherlands being termed 'de houten eeuw' or the wooden century (Haneca et al 2009). Importation of Baltic timber is increasingly known from urban buildings in the region but a synthetic study utilising a combination of dendro-provenancing, dendrochronology and documentary research would have a positive impact upon understanding of commercial relationships, most of which were controlled through towns. Furthermore, the introduction of brick as a medieval building material remains problematic in an English context. The proximity of the region to continental Europe where the urban centres of the Low Countries and Germany retain numerous visible examples of early brick construction ensures that this too is a focal point for research, as has been demonstrated by the work of Andrews in Essex (2008). The inter-relationship of rural estates with urban institutions, increasingly explored through documentary research (e.g. Slavin 2012 for Norwich), has considerable potential for increasing understanding of urban/rural dynamics. The requirement of urban centres for large quantities of protein has been dramatically illustrated in recent years by the innovatory work on the provision of fish resources by Barrett and his colleagues, much of their research utilising urban assemblages (Barrett et al 2008; Barrett and Orton 2016). Future policies of acquisition (and disposal) of archaeozoological and archaeobotanical material from urban sites require close liaison with emerging scientific analytical techniques. Comparative analysis of urban faunal assemblages across the region has potential; as an example, work in the neighbouring Swedish towns of Lund and Malmö has shown that locally-based resources were exploited from the 11th century onward in Lund, assisted by an open form of urban settlement, whereas Malmö appears primarily to have relied upon imported foodstuffs, often salted and dried (Ayers 2016, 89).

Work on the demographics and health of urban populations continues to make advances although mostly through analysis of cemetery assemblages from larger towns (e.g. Loe forthcoming). Comparative evidence from the smaller towns of the region would be welcome. Material which also assisted investigation of key demographic research areas, such as migration, infant and child mortality, longevity, and pandemics remains

important. There is an increasing applicability here of scientific investigative techniques such as isotopic and DNA analysis (Pringle 2007) which should be encouraged. Concerning plague and pandemic research, urban cemeteries remain the most likely locations for securely-dated assemblages, as has been demonstrated recently by results from London and Eindhoven (De Witte 2014).

An emphasis upon gender and gender roles has the potential for a broader understanding of societal dynamics, as in the case of the differences in urban male and female skeletal development noted recently by Kowaleski (2014, 593-4). Minority groups may also be identifiable within towns; an excavated skeletal assemblage from Norwich appears, from preliminary evidence, to suggest that it comprised members of the medieval Jewish population (Emery 2010). There are still three unstudied friary populations from Ipswich, excavated largely prior to 1990, which, along with other assemblages in the region not studied in recent times, form large datasets for exploring these themes.

The formation of towns, including identification and chronology of 'organic' and 'planned' areas, requires consideration within an awareness of theoretical developments as exemplified by Lilley when discussing Pleshey in Essex (Lilley 1999). Lilley's work seeks to explore 'a wider understanding of the intimate dialectic between urban space and medieval society', exploring the urban mentalities behind the creation of urban space. Much of his work examines small towns and extending his technique to the larger urban entities of the region could prove instructive. Similarly, an approach which explored 'mentalities' might well be beneficial when considering the end of the medieval period, the impact of Protestantism having been observed as often most clearly evident amongst mercantile and urban groups (as an example, Giles has written on the archaeology of corporate charity - Giles 2003).

Institutions within towns, their impact, both positive and negative upon the urban landscape, interaction between such institutions and community resources, and their economic contribution to the growth of urban society can all be considered from archaeological evidence. The importance of industries such as those of bell-founding, glass-making and vellum manufacture to the wider region from ecclesiastical centres such as Norwich and Bury St Edmunds can be assessed as can influence from outside, notably the continent, which frequently entered the east of England through urban centres (e.g. King 2013). Institutions also covers influences of aristocratic households.

Study of urban buildings has the potential for sharpening awareness of sub-regional variation, as exemplified by differences between buildings in Norwich compared to Ipswich or Colchester. The role of elite structures in Norwich has been explored by King (2009) and such assessment could be extended to other urban areas within the region. Nationally, dendrochronological dating is pushing back the gap between known extant and excavated buildings (Pearson 2009). Historic England is currently funding a project into 'Early Urban Buildings' and is undertaking, in-house, a pilot study into the significance of early urban fabric in Ely to improve understanding of often hidden elements and to inform management. Additionally, changing function within urban buildings needs contextual assessment both locally and at a wider regional level, with assessment of commercial elements of buildings offering potential to shed light on the organisation of trade and production (Keene 2006). Investigation of the use of spaces for storage and commerce versus domestic purposes is a challenge, but on a macro-scale, several trends in commercial buildings can be noted. A national review of shops, for example, indicates a general intensification of the use of urban space with a proliferation of small shops and selds through the 13th century, with a noted change in the 14th century and a merging of plots related to economic factors such as the Black Death and changes in commercial practice (Antrobus forthcoming). The key to the success of these studies is recognition of detail, and synthetic assessment.

An awareness of continental influence - or the lack of it - is particularly important in the towns of the eastern part of the region but needs consideration in all urban locations (the role of Cambridge as a European centre of learning should not be overlooked nor that of important monastic schools such as the one known from the Franciscan friary in Norwich (above and Emery 2007, 80). Related to this, questions of settlement dynamics and hierarchy are still relevant, but can be nuanced with consideration of what characterises East Anglia towns in terms of similarities and distinctiveness in relation to each other and elsewhere, and the

fluorescence of places at different times in response to different stimuli. The wider relationships between settlements in the region and their social, economic and cultural connections and interdependencies can be considered in the light of recent research on London as it developed as a capital city (Schofield 2011), framing questions of the significance of east coast trading centres prior to London's pre-eminence, and their role within London's changing orbit.

The development of urban centres of exchange remains under-explored. This is especially true in key locations on the east coast such as Great Yarmouth where the lack of research, both below- and above-ground, is marked (as is recent archaeological publication). Documentary evidence implies, but does not categorically reveal, that the cliff at Lowestoft was substantially remodelled by the creation of terracing but this remains unexplored (Butcher 2016, 91). The early importance of the Glaven ports in north Norfolk is well-known but archaeological research has been restricted to the limited, if highly commendable, activity of community test-pitting (www.access.arch.cam.ac.uk/reports/norfolk/wiveton/2008). Investigation of the smaller ports of Essex would be beneficial. Renewed activity within King's Lynn could explore the early landscape development of the town as well as its commercial activity and could be aligned with research on inland ports such as that at Ely and Wisbech. New pottery studies link to economic connections both here (Spoerry 2016) and in Essex (Walker 2012); the need for assessment of Suffolk and Norfolk wares and its related insights into trading networks is a research gap that would contribute (Anderson 2017 pers comm).

Finally, developments in methodological approaches to urban archaeology need to be considered. It can be instructive to explore the approaches being adopted by colleagues in other European countries. As an example, Larsson has recently published - in English - an assessment of methodologies adopted in the southern Swedish city of Lund (Larsson 2009). These range from consideration of waste material to expressions of power relationships and are complemented by illustrations which present innovative mechanisms for the display of information (such as changing use of urban social space).

4. Key themes

Key themes and their attendant desiderata were presented in the original Research Strategy for the region published in 2000. All these themes stand, together with additional desiderata added to each section. Throughout the text, archaeological enquiry extends to both the above- and below-ground urban environment.

4.1 Demography

The following bullet-pointed themes are drawn from the earlier document:

- intensive study of settlement patterns through time
- spatial analysis of such settlement within a chronological framework
- quantification of population density and mobility
- definition of non-urban, proto-urban and urban settlement
- assessment of populations and population structure through time
- comparison of population structures within towns and between towns
- correlation of population density with economic indicators for urban sustainability
- analysis of immigration and emigration as factors in urban development
- rural interaction and colonisation

The issue of provisioning has become much more important given the advent of scientific investigative techniques which significantly enhance the potential of information recovery and understanding. This is particularly the case for well-dated assemblages of fishbone as noted above (with an impact upon macroeconomics, demographic and dietary studies, and awareness of the diversity of species exploitation). Information concerning the utilisation of animals and animal products within medieval towns also benefits from study of animal bone assemblages, evidence now being recovered for urban husbandry as well as consumption (e.g. Grimm 2006). To these can be added the development of food industries such as brewing, the importation of exotic fruits and the use of diet as a social indicator (see a range of useful papers in Karg

2007). Comparison of patterns of dietary consumption between large and small towns, urban and rural sites, and institutions within towns would also be informative. For example, just one theme is the presence of wild animals in urban assemblages – are they more evidence of elite consumption, from hunting, or lower status, from poaching?

Gender studies continue to evolve and the role of women in medieval towns, where they may well be more visible than within rural contexts, should be examined wherever possible. Gilchrist has set out both theoretical and practical approaches to gender studies (1994; 2012). Similarly, the role of children can be explored archaeologically, investigating the social, economic and environmental conditions which impacted upon children as well as, through careful study of skeletal material, the stresses to which they could be subjected (Penny-Mason and Gowland 2014). An volume detailing archaeological approaches to the study of children has been edited recently by Hadley and Hemer (2014).

4.2 Social organisation

- study of the relationship of royal villis to later urban centres
- analysis of the impact of the church on urban settlement
- examination of early estates and their relationships to towns
- definition of territorial and other boundaries in relation to proto-urban and urban settlement

These priorities were glossed by data acquisition requirements of which can still be stressed:

- the establishment of basic chronologies
- the ranking of settlement
- the examination of settlement morphology
- the definition of status
- a more developed understanding of spatial analysis in towns
- detailed examination of buildings, their location, function and form
- the distribution of wealth within and between towns
- the adaptation of urban life to specialisation

To these can be added the question of urban identity and its manifestation within the historic environment. Displays of power and status, together with the broadcasting of 'urban' values, can all be explored (see Ayers 2014b). Comparisons between modes of expression within towns, between towns of different size and rank, and between town and country would be useful. The social impact of environmental and political change, notably that of the Reformation at the end of the Middle Ages, requires study.

The following sub-periods for examination of urban growth (and/or decline) remain valid:

- pre-Danish settlement
- Anglo-Scandinavian towns
- pre-Conquest growth
- the impact of the Normans
- the 12th-century 'renaissance'
- later medieval expansion, contraction and renewal
- post-medieval change
- early-modern development; and industrialisation

A further addition here may be interest in the Anarchy period and impacts across the east of England, alongside the observation that continuities as well as change are important.

As before, however, the lack of data for many towns, notably the smaller ones, needs to be addressed. Comparative assessment of urban settlement across the region will not be possible without broader collation and publication of information.

4.3 Economy

Urban change is driven by economics and can be viewed through the complexity of urban society, attendant growth of urban infrastructure and institutions, the variety and diversity of resource acquisition, the range of trades and industries, and commercial outlets. Archaeological research can explore such urban attributes through

- evidence for commercial and industrial activity
- definition, specialisation, marketing and distribution of products
- linkages between social and political development and economic activity
- communications between towns and with the hinterland
- resource acquisition and utilisation
- specialised facilities and buildings
- institutional structures and facilities
- technological innovation

Further and detailed study of buildings and structures is required across the east of England to repeat the success of synthetic work and approaches in Sandwich (Pearson 2009) and Bristol (Leech 2014). Recently for Colchester, for example, it has been flagged that a lack of suitable timbers for dendrochronological dating in a sample from the town suggests that, as in other Essex urban areas, timber came from intensively-managed woodlands reacting to urban pressure. This may highlight a research challenge, where more success in dating may be achieved from only higher status buildings (Stenning 2013:271).

Wider economic development needs to be explored within the context of urban growth and/or decline. Indeed, the concept of urban 'decline' should be investigated both chronologically and conceptually. Archaeological consideration of the matter is not new but nevertheless requires further work. Slater and Higgins asked as long ago as 2000 - 'What is urban decline: Desolation, decay and destruction, or an opportunity?' (2000, 1 - 22) and a recent paper, in revisiting the issue for the 15th century, has noted that perceived decline may easily have been adaptation to changing circumstances and that variability of urban experience perhaps reflects the commercial and political networks of individual towns (Jervis 2017). Comparative data from the east of England, a region with a vibrant and diverse medieval urban network would be a useful addition to the debate.

While the complexity of urban economic organisation needs study, so too does its impact upon urban hinterlands. This impact can be explored by:

- examination of evidence for industrial zoning
- study of the relationship of industrial and commercial sites to distribution routes
- correlation of evidence for status with product specialisation and output
- the relationship of market centres both to one another and within urban hierarchies.

4.4 Culture and religion

Urban lifestyle was the subject of a recent colloquium held in Lübeck, northern Germany. It explored the manner in which urban living was expressed through material culture (Gläser 2008) and, while it was often possible to identify a distinct urban culture, it was also sometimes difficult to reconcile apparent paucity of material goods with documentary assessments of urban activity. Herein lies a methodological problem for archaeologists and historians alike. Defining lifestyle from partially surviving evidence can be subjective. Nevertheless, broadening the concept of urban culture from surviving portable objects to include urban topography, spaces and buildings, the relationships of urban places and institutions one to another, and the adoption of analytical techniques such as those adopted by King for the elite houses of Norwich (King 2009) enables urban lifestyle to emerge with greater clarity. Urban existence dictated certain modes of living and archaeological research needs to characterise this existence and to explore meaning within the urban landscape.

In summary therefore, identification of urban culture through archaeological research can be achieved by:

- identifying particular characteristics of urban culture
- developing methodologies which explore complexity of and meaning within urban culture
- examining how urban values and ideas were expressed to the wider community
- considering influences and investment strategies which were facilitated by urban living and institutions
- exploring how technological innovation and the adoption of new materials and practices, the production of specialised manufactures were fostered in urban areas

The role of the church within medieval urban society, its relationship to spatial organisation, and its economic contribution to urban life need particular attention. The following areas for research therefore still stand:

- the relationship of the church to urban foundation
- ecclesiastical development within growing towns
- the organisation of parochial life
- the impact of ecclesiastical institutions upon the urban environment and urban living
- the economic influence of the church
- the technological and artistic importance of the church to the local economy and culture
- the social role of the church

Pilgrimage and its economic impacts as well as material traces would be an interesting theme, as well as a consideration of pilgrimage sites along main routes. Impacts of guilds, both religious and craft, can also be a consideration. Diversity of religious practice may emerge through synthetic study (Astill 2009, 267). Recreating processions, ceremonies and urban moments such as crowds for fairs elicits new questions about built space and investments in it, and awareness of streets as symbolic and sensory arenas offer interesting and informative frameworks (e.g. Camille 2001).

Conclusion

It is worth bearing in mind wider resonances of archaeological work. Urban archaeological work can be expensive and, in many towns in the region, there are regeneration issues where viability is an ever-present concern (for example, as at Ipswich waterfront). Public benefit offers opportunities to capitalise on investments and as noted before in the research framework, the linkage of urban themes to contemporary themes is one which offers opportunities. With the emphasis in the NPPF on public understanding, projects should continue to include outreach elements – several high profile projects can provide inspiration, such as those at Cambridge Grand Arcade, York Hungate, or the CTRL infrastructure project. Themes of health, well-being, public realm, identity, groups and under-represented groups in urban communities all have contemporary resonance, along with capitalising on interest in some fundamentals, such as ‘what was this place like?’ ‘What was here?’ ‘How did people live here?’ ‘What makes this place this place?’

In addition, whilst it is perhaps beyond the scope of the research framework to address methodological considerations in much detail, decisions at all points in the design of a project have potential to impact on and shape research outcomes. Approaches and decisions on preservation in situ, for example, need to be made with due consideration of the information potential of what is left behind and the coherency and accessibility for future research, as well as of the impacts of development. There needs to be rigour in sieving, sampling and metal detecting to ensure that the information from a site is of high enough resolution for sites to contribute to detailed questions of the whole. Environmental archaeological approaches have resonance here - the study of social zoning, for example, and the potential to explore assemblages may be affected by decisions in the field surrounding the extent of excavation of latrines and deep features - latrines are of demonstrably high value in exploring social differentiation across plots, but they require management

in the context of development, where restricted excavation or depth is an issue. Decisions should consider information gain against future accessibility or otherwise, as well as condition changes. Residuality is also flagged as a problem in the urban context in Colchester (Murphy 2013, 253). It is suggested that for that town, future work should be targeted on deposits related to discrete short-term events (fires or floods), or clearly involved in processes, as residual pottery may mean residual bone and environmental data also.

One final priority should be highlighting the research potential of collections, and working with universities to design research projects for all levels.

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