

RESIDENZENFORSCHUNG



SOCIAL FUNCTIONS OF URBAN SPACES THROUGH THE AGES SOZIALE FUNKTIONEN STÄDTISCHER RÄUME IM WANDEL

Edited by Gerhard Fouquet, Ferdinand Opll,
Sven Rabeler and Martin Scheutz



THORBECKE

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Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen

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Introduction

GERHARD FOUQUET, FERDINAND OPLL, SVEN RABELER, MARTIN SCHEUTZ

Frankfurt – Kiel – Nuremberg: dynamics of urban spaces

In mid-thirteenth century Baldemar von Peterweil († ca. 1382), a canon of St Bartholomew (›Bartholomäusstift‹) in Frankfurt on the Main, compiled the revenues of his convent. At the beginning of his ›*Liber reddituum*‹¹ he placed a topographical description of Frankfurt in the form of a long list of the town's streets, thereby giving orientation for the use of the following register. This corresponds with his prepedended definition of towns (*civitates*) as *opida muris [...] vallata*. In the author's perspective this urban space within the town walls (*partes civitatum seu opidorum*), divided in a *superior* (eastern) and an *inferior* (western) part, is structured by streets (*vici*) classified in three groups: the broad main streets (*principalis major*), the smaller alleys between them (*transitus videlicet inter illos*), and at last the blind alleys (*inpertransibilis, qui non transitur*)². Baldemar's construction of urban space has a rather formal character, and in the context of the ›*Liber reddituum*‹ its obvious function is to place economic values, namely the convent's revenues from specific estates³.

But at one point Baldemar von Peterweil suspends the endless enumeration of names and positions of streets: Off the (*vicus*) *fabrorum* or *Fargazze* (›Fahrgasse‹ till now), the central road which traverses the old town from *Burnheymer dor* in the north (›Bornheimer Pforte‹, the gate at the road towards Bornheim) till *porta pontis Mogi* in the south (the gate at the bridge over the River Main)⁴, he describes a blind alley *dictus vf der Swines mystin* (›called on the pigs' dung‹)⁵. This detail does not refer only to the social topography of the town like many other of the streets' names. On the contrary, it attaches a specific func-

1 Baldemar uses the expression *liber [...] reddituum* in the introduction of his work. Baldemars von Peterweil Beschreibung (1896), p. 4. – For Baldemar von Peterweil (Petterweil) see KELLNER, Reichsstift St. Bartholomäus (1962), pp. 54–58.

2 Baldemars von Peterweil Beschreibung (1896), p. 4.

3 For later perceptions of Frankfurt (sixteenth to eighteenth centuries) see STALLJOHANN-SCHEMME, Stadt und Stadtbild (2017).

4 Baldemars von Peterweil Beschreibung (1896), p. 6.

5 Ibid., p. 8.

tion to this site: The name reveals that the town's inhabitants, perhaps especially the bakers, kept their free-ranging pigs there. However, still in the Middle Ages this use of urban space, resulting not least in dung and excrements, could be interpreted as a dysfunction – and it was fought against. In a decree from 1349/52 the council limited not only the number of pigs each baker was allowed to hold, but determined holding conditions, too: When the bakers drove out their pigs from the stables, they had to drive them to the River Main or in the fields beyond the town walls while it was forbidden to let the cattle stand in front of people's doors and to bother people by the stench⁶. In 1409 the council even regulated in detail through which gate the bakers had to drive their pigs out of the town, depending on the streets they inhabited⁷, and in 1421 it was emphasised that pigs should not walk through the city⁸. Apparently, all these decrees had rather small effects. As a consequence, the council made a radical attempt to banish pigs entirely from the central ›Altstadt‹ by pushing their keeping to the more peripheric ›Neustadt‹ or to Sachsenhausen across the River Main in 1481⁹ – probably again with little effect. Frequently it should take until the nineteenth century before the last dunghills were removed from bigger cities like Frankfurt in the course of initiating and strengthening sanitation of urban spaces and the organisation of municipal utilities¹⁰. In a functional perspective, central and peripheric sites as main street and dung heap lay close together.

But urban spaces were not only marked by denoting specific functions – these functions were part of the ›production of space‹ (Henri Lefebvre)¹¹, thus linking structures and regulations, uses (or misuses) and perceptions. Such dynamics of urban spaces (in the view of contemporary acting and modern analysing as well) resulted in social practises which made urban areas part of life, habitus and order. To give but one example: In Kiel, a rather small town on the Baltic Sea with at most 2.000 inhabitants in the fifteenth century¹², the council arranged the procession on Corpus Christi Day in 1472 as follows: The craft guilds (*ampte*) had to go ahead of the sacrament, beginning with the cobblers (*oltbotere*) while more prestigious guilds like grocers (*kremere*) or butchers (*knakenhouwere*) and the marks-

6 Gesetze der Stadt Frankfurt (1969), no. A 3, p. 83 (§ 5): *Wanne auch die beckere ire swyn uzdruben, die sullen sy gerigelingen zu dem Moynne adir zu felde driben unde sullen sie nicht vor der lude turen adir hoben lazsen sten unde die lude irstencken*. Cf. Frankfurter Zunfturkunden, vol. 1 (1914), p. 23 (ordinance of the council from 1372, § 5); p. 26 (ordinance of the council from 1377, § 17). – Regarding the maximum number of pigs, cf. also *ibid.*, p. 19 (ordinance of the bakers from 1355); pp. 24–25 (ordinance of the council from 1377, § 4). – Here and in the following cf. SCHNEIDMÜLLER, *Städtische Umweltgesetzgebung* (1989), esp. pp. 124–129.

7 Gesetze der Stadt Frankfurt (1969), no. 127, pp. 217–218.

8 *Ibid.*, no. 186, pp. 276–277.

9 *Ibid.*, no. 289, p. 376.

10 For these aspects of ›inner urbanisation‹ and ›Städtetechnik‹ cf. FOUQUET, ›Fäkalienbeseitigung‹ (2006); IDEM, ›Stadtthygiene‹ (2010); IDEM, ›Straßenreinigung‹ (2010) – with further references to the literature.

11 LEFEBVRE, *La production de l'espace* (1974).

12 For the history of Kiel in the Middle Ages see WALTHER, *Holstenstadt* (1991); AUGÉ, *Kiel* (2017).

men's guild (*schutten*) marched further back near the sacrament¹³. The religious fraternities, arranged according to age or rank, followed, probably after the sacrament and with the *kaland*, a prestigious association of clergymen and laymen, at the head¹⁴. Certainly, the starting point of the procession was the parish church St Nicolai situated at the market place near the town hall. Thus, the performative shaping of urban space, beginning at the religious, economic and political centre of the city, became an instrument of representing social order and hierarchy. Furthermore, it was laid down in the council's decree that the keeper of the city's keys (*sluter*) had to lock the town gates before the procession started¹⁵. On the one hand this was motivated by aspects of security when almost the whole town participated actively or passively in the procession, but on the other the civic community was thus completely separated from the surrounding area beyond the walls. In another way, this frontier between ›inside‹ and ›outside‹ was accentuated by Baldemar von Peterweil, too, who clearly distinguished the space within the town walls from the buildings *extra et prope muros* forming the *suburbia*¹⁶.

The hierarchical order of this procession on Corpus Christi Day suggests that social functions of urban spaces also reveal vertical dimensions. Heinrich Deichsler († 1506/07), a chronicler from Nuremberg, describes the marriage of Friedrich Schelm, the *schelmschinder* (knacker)¹⁷, with the sister of the *huntslaherin*¹⁸ on Sunday before Pentecost in the year 1506¹⁹. On the way to the church the bridal couple was accompanied by an illustrious company: Deichsler mentions the hangman (*benker*) himself and his wife, the widow of the late hangman, the hangman's assistant (*lebe*) and his wife, the *huntslaher* and his wife (the brother-in-law and the sister of the bride) and the two gravediggers of the parish churches of St Lorenz and St Sebald, besides *vil hurn und puben und wenig frumer leut* (›many harlots and scoundrels and just a few honourable people‹). The starting point of this ›procession‹ was the *Siechgraben vor dem Frawentor* (the moat which flowed into the River Pegnitz outside the town wall near the southeastern gate)²⁰, and the subsequent feast took place in the house of the knacker, which was also located beyond the town walls.

13 Concerning processions in medieval cities cf. e.g. HÖLKESKAMP, »Performative turn« (2015); SCHWERHOFF, Ritual als Kampfplatz (2015); HEUSINGER, Durchdringung von Stadtraum (2015); EADEM, »Cruzgang« und »umblauf« (2007); Moving Subjects (2001); LÖTHER, Prozessionen (1999).

14 Kieler Denkelbok (1908), pp. 25–26. It is not quite clear how the second part of the list dealing with the religious fraternities can be understood: The text says that these fraternities have to go behind the crafts guilds (*so de gân scolen na den ampten*), and the fraternities' enumeration starts with the saint Catharine's guild (*Int erste sunte Katherinen gilde*) and ends with the *kaland*. This order is probably to be seen from the end of the procession towards the sacrament in its centre, thus the *kaland* following just after the sacrament.

15 Ibid., p. 25: *Int erste schal de sluter, wanner dat de processio mit deme sacramente ghan wil, de staed sluten alle umme tho.*

16 Baldemars von Peterweil Beschreibung (1896), p. 4.

17 Cf. Deutsches Wörterbuch, vol. 8 (1893), col. 2515, s.v. ›Schelmschinder‹.

18 For the term see *ibid.*, vol. 4, 2 (1877), col. 1930, s.v. ›Hundeschläger‹: The *huntslaher* was the executioner's servant who caught and killed stray dogs, the *huntslaherin* was his wife.

19 Deichsler, Chronik, pt. 2 (1874), p. 705. Concerning the author, see SCHNEIDER, Heinrich Deichsler (1991).

20 DIEFENBACHER, ›Siechgraben‹ (c. 2000); WEINGÄRTNER, ›Frauentor‹ (c. 2000).

[...] *vil leut sein auß der stat Nurmberg gangen zu sehen solchs löblichs wesen* (»many people left the city of Nuremberg in order to see such praiseworthy event«), Deichsler finishes his account ironically.

Deichsler's narrative connects the space clearly indicated in the text (the *Siechgraben vor dem Frauentor*) with two different social functions: On the one hand, it is an area of ill repute in which dishonourable, marginalised people live, it is the space of the »milieu of the night«²¹ at the city's spatial and social periphery. Regarding churchgoing, feast and dance, these people imitate civic habits, at least in our chronicler's ironic view, and thus, they use parts of the urban space for their own purposes. On the other hand, Heinrich Deichsler strictly looks from top at bottom: When the honourable people of Nuremberg go outside the city, as Deichsler emphasises, and marvel at the unusual spectacle, they search amusement and perform social distinction at the same time. So in Deichsler's account all three dimensions – horizontal, vertical, relational – of socially functionalised urban spaces meet: centre and periphery, top and bottom, inside and outside.

Social functions of urban spaces

The general topic of the four conferences organised by the International Commission for the History of Towns/Commission Internationale pour l'Histoire des Villes in the years 2016 to 2019 are the essential functions of urban spaces through the ages, from medieval times to the present²². This reflects the recent years' profound research on spatial structures of towns in the Middle and Early Modern Ages²³. The aim is to deepen these trends in current studies on the history of towns in an international perspective. In 2016 the social functions established the starting point whereas the following conferences deal with political (2017, Kraków), cultural (2018, Salzburg) and economic aspects (2019, Budapest).

As already indicated by the introductory examples from the Middle Ages, at all times urban spaces are connected with various social functions: Within these spaces individuals and groups encounter, they constitute a framework of changing social organisation and form a reciprocal relationship with specific social practises, they are part of the modes of life (»Lebensformen«) and habitus. Yet, these social functions also give urban spaces their orientation, they inscribe communication processes specified by situations or institutions, they form vertical, horizontal, and relational structures by connecting practises, objects, and placings. Based on this functional structuring and the links between social and physical

21 REXROTH, *Milieu der Nacht* (1999).

22 Cf. the paper by Ferdinand OPLL and Martin SCHEUTZ in: Newsletter of the International Commission for the History of Towns 35 (2014) pp. 37–39, https://www.historiaurbium.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Newsletter_35_2014.pdf [4/7/2018].

23 A comprehensive overview concerning the broad literature on spatial aspects of urban history would by far overstrain this introduction. Cf. in general the remarks on traditions and recent trends in urban history research by PAULY, SCHEUTZ, *Space and History* (2014) as well as by MORSCHER, SCHEUTZ, SCHUSTER, *Ort in der Stadtgeschichte* (2013). See also the following note and the contribution by Pierre MONNET in the present publication, pp. 19–33.

spaces²⁴, the following contributions are divided into three sections focusing on processes of encounter and overlap, of demarcation and separation, of order and hierarchy from different, however closely connected points of view combining spatial and social aspects: centre and periphery, top and bottom, inside and outside.

Centre and periphery

Urban spaces are structured horizontally by the formation of groups and networks, by encounter and distinction, by shaping centres and fringes, by exclusion, inclusion or gradation of public sphere(s). Social groups could be positioned almost entirely at the periphery of medieval and early modern towns. From the fifteenth century onwards (there would be differences regarding the centuries before) the Jews, for example, lived socially as well as spatially more or less separated from the Christian population in towns of Northern Europe – regarding the Jews in Poland, Zdzisław Noga even states that »they were more isolated than in other European countries«²⁵. Yet, these Jewish settlements were centres of their own because of their size and their privileges – the allocation of centre and periphery often depends on the point of view. A complex example of the relations between urban centres and peripheries is the Jewish community in Kazimierz, situated in close proximity to Kraków from where the Jews were expelled in the year 1494: Kraków remained the centre of economic interests – not undisturbed by Christian rivals – whereas in Kazimierz itself the *civitas Judeorum* existed beside the Christian town. Another phenomenon of social peripheries, one might say, is treated by Robert Šimůnek regarding medieval and early modern Bohemia: Spatially however, hospitals, which were quite usual elements of (residence) towns, were not always situated at the city’s fringe, but also at central places or at »the communication axis from the lord’s residence to the town’s parish church«²⁶, thus connecting two significant centres of the city. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries hospitals could further change their social function and spatial context when they eventually became part of the »concept of lordly self-representation«²⁷ and of the residence buildings. Taking up the issue of the encounter of urban and aristocratic spheres, Sven Rabeler points out how urban sites could be shaped in a courtly manner in the Late Middle Ages: Their function was modified by the interaction of courtly and urban groups so that towns often provided a stage for the demonstration of the sovereign’s power and the noble-

24 For sociological theories of space relevant in this context cf. e.g. LÖW, *Raumsoziologie* (2001); SCHROER, *Räume* (2006); REHBERG, *Macht-Räume* (2006). Concerning historical perspectives on these theoretical approaches to spaces see e.g. RAU, *Räume* (2013); PAULY, SCHEUTZ, *Space and History* (2014); RABELER, *Stadt und Residenz* (2016), esp. pp. 49–51 (proposing an analytical model of social and physical spaces); for early modern towns SCHWERHOFF, *Frühneuzeitliche Stadtgeschichte* (2018), pp. 26–28. Regarding the case study Frankfurt/Main where different groups (noblemen, merchants, Jews etc.) had different access to urban space, see SCHMIDT-FUNKE, SCHNETTGER, *Neue Stadtgeschichte(n)* (2018). Cf. also KOOIJ, *Taxonomies* (2018), who proposes a general taxonomy of political, economic, social and cultural urban spaces.

25 Contribution by Zdzisław NOGA, p. 44.

26 Contribution by Robert ŠIMŮNEK, p. 52.

27 *Ibid.*, p. 55.

men's habits, for example by solemn entries or by tournaments. In the perspective of the citizens and especially of the town's political as well as social leading groups, however, this relation could be recognised and exploited the other way round. So the role of urban and courtly actors became open for different constructions in the context of urban-courtly sites.

Top and bottom

Vertical social structures of urban spaces are based on strata and classes, dependence and need, on the formation, adaptation and reproduction of hierarchies, on care and control, deviance and conflict. Marc Boone and Friedrich Lenger, respectively, study the forms and spaces of social protests in which these inequalities resulted again and again in medieval and modern times as well. Concerning the Flemish cities in the Late Middle Ages, Marc Boone analyses »the connection between [...] urban spatial development and social movements«, focusing on »emblematic spaces« like town walls, marketplaces and religious sites²⁸. But the functional shape of urban spaces was also influenced heavily by authoritarian reactions to revolts and unruliness: Citadels turn out to be especially significant for the development of towns because they made »a fundamental shift in the relationship between city and state« visible, had enormous effects on the town's economy and finances, and affected »urban identity [...] by the deliberate attack on the city's spatial integrity«²⁹. Turning towards the ›long‹ nineteenth century, Friedrich Lenger explains that the forms of social protests and the conduct of their participants did not change to the extent often postulated by historians following modernisation theories. Besides the role of violence even present in late nineteenth-century strikes and the basic motive of hunger, the specific spatial contextualisations prove to be astonishingly constant: »While urban revolutions by definition surpass city limits, they are at the same time firmly located within urban space«, including in particular streets and neighbourhoods, but also central places³⁰. Revealing a quite different clash of ›top‹ and ›bottom‹, Andrea Pühringer and Holger Th. Gräf deal with sites of care in spa towns during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries – from institutions of poor relief to elegant sanatoriums. In Bad Homburg social segregations were obvious in the urban space, resulting in a »sectoral segregation of three town areas«: the ›Altstadt‹ as the town's old civic nucleus, the princely residence, and the spa district expanding rapidly since the 1840s³¹. This segregation did not only influence the allocation and kind of the sites of care, but even the immediate environment which was divided functionally in agricultural areas and the »therapeutic landscape«³².

28 Contribution by Marc BOONE, p. 112.

29 Ibid., p. 119.

30 Contribution by Friedrich LENGER, p. 131.

31 Contribution by Andrea PÜHRINGER and Holger Th. GRÄF, p. 160.

32 Ibid., p. 152.

Inside and outside

The »sectoral segregation« of towns and their environments also refers to the relational structures of urban spaces by marking, crossing and staging borders within towns and beyond, by transfer, exchange and migration as well as presence, integration and expansion. There is the ›classical‹ question of the city's relationship with its surrounding area and its hinterland, connected not only with political and economic implications, but with social ones, too. Miha Kosi deals with Ljubljana as »a good example of the relations between a late medieval urban centre and its ›natural‹ environment (more or less influenced by human activities) as well as the rural environment, already heavily transformed by human society«³³. Human activities in changing the urban environment – Kosi cites water, wood and agriculture and thus, among others, the needs for energy, building material and food supply – make clearly visible engagements and interests of different social groups, also demonstrating dependencies as well as conflicts in the relationship with the town's lord. The space outside the town walls is taken in consideration by Harriet Rudolph, too, although the functional context is quite different: Gardens, parks and avenues created in the outskirts of Regensburg in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century served the recovery and leisure of the town's inhabitants. But the concept of ›open urban spaces‹ introduces a further aspect of spatial relations: the difference between interior spaces closed by architectural constructions and exterior (›open‹) spaces often, albeit not always, easier accessible for the public. Within these ›open spaces‹, graded by social relevance and purview, the interaction of the imperial city's three main social circles – the Imperial Diet, the mostly Protestant town and the Catholic clergy – took place to a great extent. The relations between interior and exterior spaces and their functions, now with regard to the architectural presentation, are also the topic of Matthias Müller's final study concerning the construction of the castle church and the town hall in Weilburg an der Lahn after the rise of the county of Nassau-Weilburg to principality in 1688. He describes the church, which did not only serve the court, but also the town, as a »symbol of [...] the connection between civic and courtly sphere«³⁴ and emphasises the functional as well as visual references between the inner and outer areas of the ensemble, which he interprets as an »urban-courtly integration architecture«³⁵.

The tensions described by these horizontal, vertical and relational dimensions of socially functionalised urban spaces are fundamental for the historical development of the town as a »place of the organisation, the structuring and the definition of social groups« as Pierre Monnet states in his subsequent essay: Under changing conditions these social actors had the ambition to live with each other by holding centre and periphery, top and bottom, in-

33 Contribution by Miha KOSI, p. 183.

34 Contribution by Matthias MÜLLER, p. 229.

35 Ibid., p. 222.

side and outside together »not only by streets and buildings, but also mentally«³⁶. With Monnet we think that these are urgent challenges for our present time so much shaped by European urban past.

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