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TWELFTH TO SIXTEENTH CENTURIES

The Archaeology of Medieval Europe

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CHAPTER 9

TOWNS

PART 1: THE DEVELOPMENT OF MEDIEVAL TOWNS *by Hans Andersson*

Definitions

In most societies there are central places, where people meet to perform duties of political, economical, social, religious and cultural character. Those in power also use such places to control the surrounding regions. What is a central place? What is a city or a town? Central places differ in their appearance from period to period and region to region, and may perform a variety of functions, but they are thought to be connected by a characteristic that we call "urban." Important considerations for research in the Later Middle Ages are the mode, degree and significance of urbanisation.

Archaeology studies the physical manifestations of a settlement and life within it, and archaeological work in old cities and towns as well as in smaller central places or market places has been intensive in Europe and beyond. It has been especially strong over the last 40 years, although coverage remains uneven from country to country (Council of Europe 1999; Schofield 2003; Schofield & Vince 2005, 1-19). But archaeology has not influenced the general urbanisation discussion to the extent it deserves. Archaeologists themselves have not always followed the important discussions that are going on in other disciplines. The study of urbanism can profit from the integration of archaeological with historical and geographical approaches.

Which are the towns? Urban criteria may be defined in three main ways: administrative, topographical and functional (Haase 1960), none of which is sufficient on its own. Historical research tends to rely on documented administrative status, as read from charters and privileges. The geographic approach describes processes of nucleation on the ground, whereby people aggregate and share tasks, resulting in a hierarchy of specialisation. The ascription of functional criteria is insufficient, since central functions can also be found in other types of places, which cannot physically be defined as towns. In Europe, there are regions where towns are entirely lacking, for example in northern Scandinavia and in Iceland, but it is still possible to find places with one or several central functions. Such "simpler" central places can of course also be found in regions with fully developed towns. Sometimes, therefore, it is more appropriate to talk about central regions than central places (Andersson H 2002).

For the archaeologist this suggests the benefits of keeping an open mind (Andersson H 2003). The places we study are part of a greater process, but the forms can be radically different, as also the economical, political and ideological contexts. If the most appropriate target for archaeological research is urban function, we must accept that these are spread to more places than the documented towns alone. This implies in turn that the towns should not be treated as isolated objects, but seen in a landscape context. Functions can be exchanged between town and country, sometimes privileging one at the expense of the other, as the politics, economy society and ideology changes (cf Carver 1993; Anglert & Larsson 2008).

Regional differences are also significant. The Roman Empire provides one enduring regional division. Inside its borders many Medieval towns and cities can be tracked to a Roman origin, even if it is often a problem to demonstrate continuity between them. Outside the Roman Empire, towns had many other diverse starting points (see Schofield & Steuer 2007).

The re-emergence of towns in the late twelfth and thirteenth century

Although post-Roman urbanisation had begun in the later first millennium (see AME 1, Ch 4), there are important qualitative and quantitative changes beginning in the later part of the twelfth century and peaking during the thirteenth century, which make this period especially important in the history of urbanisation. The existing cities and towns enlarged their areas and their population rose drastically, and all over Europe new towns were founded or rationalised, for example *poblaciones* and *villanovas* in Catalonia, *borghi nuovi* in Italy, *villeneuves* and *bastides* in France and *Gründungsstädte* in Germany. There were increased international contacts, trade and economic exchange and also an increasing tendency to organise and control society through administration, law, privileges and the church. These were the keystones of the success story of the thirteenth century. This renaissance was a part of the general economic and cultural development in Europe.

The century also meant increased contact outside of Europe. This is true for the relations to East Asia in particular, but also to Africa (Ch 8, p 361). The Italian cities played a key role as points of exchange with the eastern and southern parts of the world. This fact has been used in the great discussion about world systems. This may be a reminder that studies of urbanisation cannot only be limited to Europe (Abu-Lughod 1989 (1991), Andersson 2002).

Urban trajectories in northern and western Europe

The urban growth of the late twelfth-thirteenth centuries can be observed in a number of examples. Many existing places doubled in size. Metz (France) in the Roman period covered 71 ha, but grew to 159 ha in the thirteenth century. It meant that several villages around the original Roman city were incorporated in the city. A similar pace of development can be seen in many Roman cities in France and also in other Mediterranean countries. The increase was also typical for towns and cities that had their origin

in the early Middle Ages. Montpellier got its first wall in 1091. In the second half of the twelfth century a new wall was built, to include some new suburbs. In approximately 1180 the area within the wall was 40 ha and perhaps 10,000 inhabitants lived there. During the thirteenth century the population increased four times. Montpellier is also an example of the new medieval towns in France, where many cities achieved great importance. One measure of a city's importance was the number of houses of friars it supported. In France there were 52 cities with 3 or 4 mendicant houses, and both Metz and Montpellier had four (Le Goff 1980: 403).

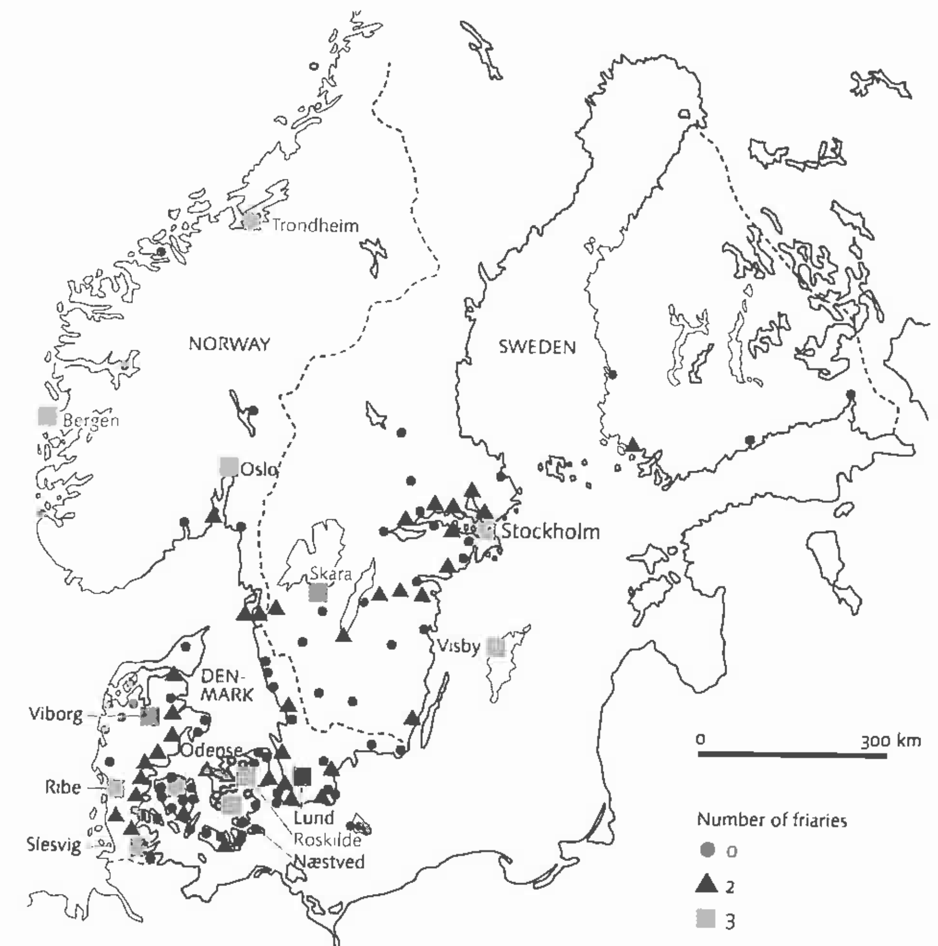
The urbanisation process was not only limited to the bigger cities and towns. Around 350-400 *bastides* were founded in the south-western parts of France. These were new fortified settlements mainly founded by magnates to re-settle part of the population. Like *poblaciones* or *villanovas* in Spain and their counterparts in Italy, they are seen as a major colonisation and restructuring of the medieval countryside of Europe (Higounet 1992 (1979), 17 ff)

In England rapid urban growth from the late twelfth century is seen both in the development of the bigger towns and cities, some with Roman ancestry, and in the emergence of regional centres and smaller towns. During the thirteenth century around 2500 markets and 300 boroughs were created in England. An urban hierarchy appeared, with London at the top, a series of provincial towns – York, Norwich, Lincoln, Bristol, Northampton, Canterbury, Dunwich, Exeter and Winchester – and even smaller towns below these. There were clear signs of growing self-government, the development of laws and craft regulation. At the end of the thirteenth century the urban network was at its height, and towns were now fully embedded in medieval society (Astill 2000:46 ff; Schofield & Vince 2003, 26 ff).

In Germany in the first decades of the twelfth century there were about 30 *Grosstädte* with international markets and several hundred regional towns. By 1320 there were perhaps 4000 towns. Among them were 50 with more than 5000 inhabitants; Köln was the biggest with more than 50 000 inhabitants. Mainz, Augsburg, Speyer and Erfurt had more than 20 000. To these may be added, many much smaller towns that were of only local importance (Scholkmann 2009: 67 ff).

In his study of Westphalia (North Germany) in1960, Carl Haase did not use archaeological material (understandable because the main development of urban archaeology was yet to come) but his results are instructive. He used the year 1180 as a start point, since there were rather few places that were urban before then, but a rapid growth thereafter. In the period 1180-1240, 30 new towns were founded in Westphalia. Two of them could not be reliably dated and four of them were *Fehlgründungen* where nothing or very little happened. In the following period (1240-1290) there were another 31 new towns. Three of these were again of uncertain date, and another three Fehlgründungen. This period saw the appearance of small towns, and he named it *das Zeitalter der Klein- und Zwergstädte* (Time of the 'Dwarf towns'), which continued to the end of the Middle Ages (Haase 1960).

The northern parts of Germany can be treated together with Scandinavia and Eastern Europe. From the end of the twelfth century on, many places have both archaeological and written source material, and it is evident that both a qualitative and quantitative change occurred at this time (Fig 9.1). It happened first in Norway and Denmark, somewhat later in Sweden-Finland. The settlements became more densely built; the churches were rebuilt and enlarged, sometimes changed from wooden churches to stone. Denmark got the highest frequency of towns, while Norway only got a few but rather important towns and cities. The same was the situation in present-day Finland, while Sweden was somewhere in between (Andrén 1989). Bergen in Norway, to take only one example, developed from a local harbour to its status as the most important trading city in Norway during the Middle Ages, with a German Hansa Office (Hansen 2003). Some of the other Scandinavian towns also played a great role economically and politically, as for instance Bergen, Trondheim and Oslo in Norway, Stockholm, Visby, Tallinn and Riga in the Baltic region. The old herring markets around the Sound



Urban growth in Scandinavia, 1150-1350, using the number of friaries as a proxy for ranking (after Andrén 1989, fig. 2). **Fig 9.1**

Fig 9.2 *Vágar on Lofoten, Norway, located to take advantage of two landing-places. Archaeological deposits are confined to the areas by the water's edge.*

were of considerable proportions, frequented by people from cities on the southern coast of the Baltic. In the Mälar region around Stockholm the iron from the mines in Bergslagen was essential for the establishment of the towns around the lake. Stockholm established a strong position through its monopoly in the export of iron.

In the northern parts of Scandinavia, no town received privileges, but this did not mean that there were no central places. Ongoing urbanisation still influenced the area. An example was Vágar on Lofoten in Northern Norway (Fig 9.2). A headquarters for the local leader in the tenth century, the place developed into a centre for trade, especially in fish, but also for the tax enforcement of the king. As late as 1384 a royal charter tried to uphold the trade monopoly of Vágar in the region (Bertelsen & Urbanczyk 1988, Urbanczyk 1992). In Iceland, Reykjavik got its town privileges as late as 1786. In these northern regions the population was very sparse and did not encourage the imposition of towns (Andersson H 2003; Carlsson 2008; Andersson H et al. 2008).

Crisis – Fourteenth and fifteenth centuries

The peak of urbanisation was reached at the end of the thirteenth century, by which time an urban network had been established that did not change radically until the industrial revolution. But signs of crisis were already evident, and they were exacerbated by famines and plagues during the fourteenth century. The food supply sometimes

failed to support the urban populations. The crisis became economic, demographic and political. In most of Europe fewer new towns were founded; in Denmark for example there were no new towns at all during the first half of fourteenth century. Such towns as were founded were mostly small and with a local range, as with the *Zwergstädte* mentioned above (Stoob 1959, Haase 1960). In many cases, they hardly differed from the villages in the region. They had very little, if any, international contact. Rather soon many of these towns disappeared totally. The houses fell into decay. Some places had privileges, but still there was nothing built. This sometimes happened also to the older towns. Winchester in England is such an example (Schofield & Vince 2005, 28 f, 57).

These changes also included a greater differentiation within the urban network. Some of the older cities and towns grew rapidly and got a stronger position, domestically as well as internationally. Bergen, Stockholm and Copenhagen can be mentioned as examples for Scandinavia. The two last-mentioned towns had also begun to be transformed into the capitals of their countries. In England, London reinforced its position as the leading city. Thus, the towns of the late Middle Ages display a contradictory picture, steep decline on the one hand and great rise in importance on the other.

The dynamics of urbanisation over time has been described in a diagram for Central Europe by H. Stoob, later corroborated for the north by Andrén (Fig 9.3; Stoob 1956, 21; Andrén 1985, 32). While there will be uncertain details in the sources used, it can be accepted that these models describe the rise and decline of the regular town with privileges in western, central and northern Europe. It is important to emphasise that this trajectory of urbanisation was a part of a common trend experienced throughout much of Europe.

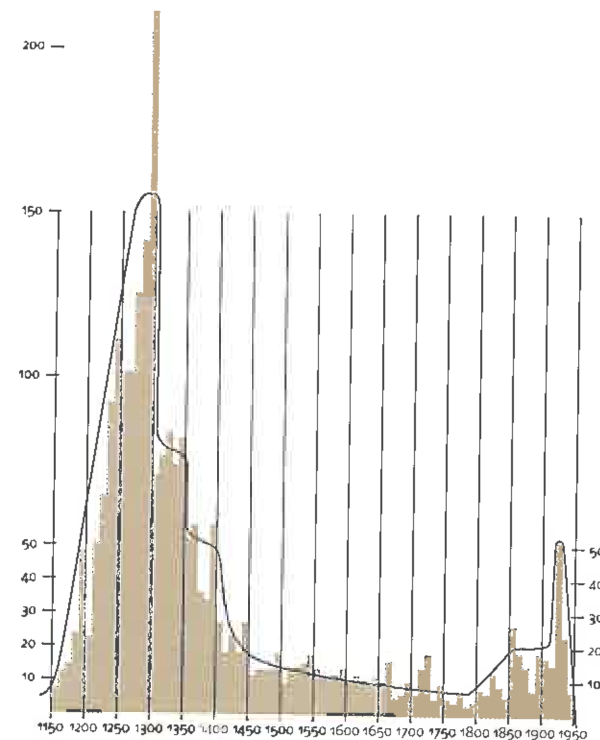


Fig 9.3 *The extent of urbanisation in Central Europe (Stoob 1970a, Abb. 2).*

Urban archaeology in Wrocław, the main centre for Silesia and a major city of medieval and modern Central Europe, has furthered understanding of the origins of the town, the development of its structure and infrastructure, and the conditions of daily life (Wachowsky 1999). Wrocław lies on the Odra at a point where the river forms a number of channels and islands, a fine fording place (Fig 1). The archaeological deposit in Wrocław lies up to 3 m thick and has yielded a large quantity of organic, metal and most of all ceramic finds, an excellent basis for studying medieval and early modern urban material culture (eg Busko 2003) (Fig 2).

During its proto-urban phase Wrocław had a polycentric structure. It consisted of a number of settlement centres that had grown up on the islands and along the river banks. There was an earth-and-timber fortified settlement with the ducal residence and cathedral, a trade settlement, two abbeys, residences of the nobility and agrarian settlements. Intensive development, especially of the trading centre on the left bank of the Odra, took place in the twelfth and early thir-

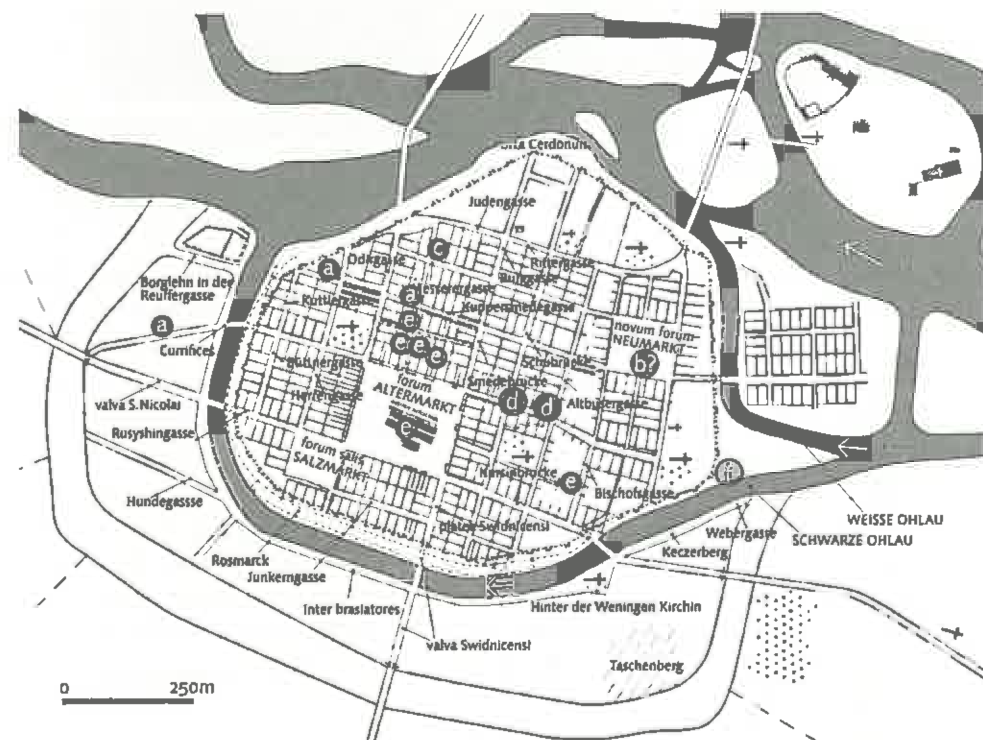


Fig 1

Wrocław around 1300. Production workshops identified by archaeological research: a – production of iron, b – smithy, c – tannery, d – shoemaking, e – bone and antlerworking, f – production of clay figurines (Bilderbaecker).

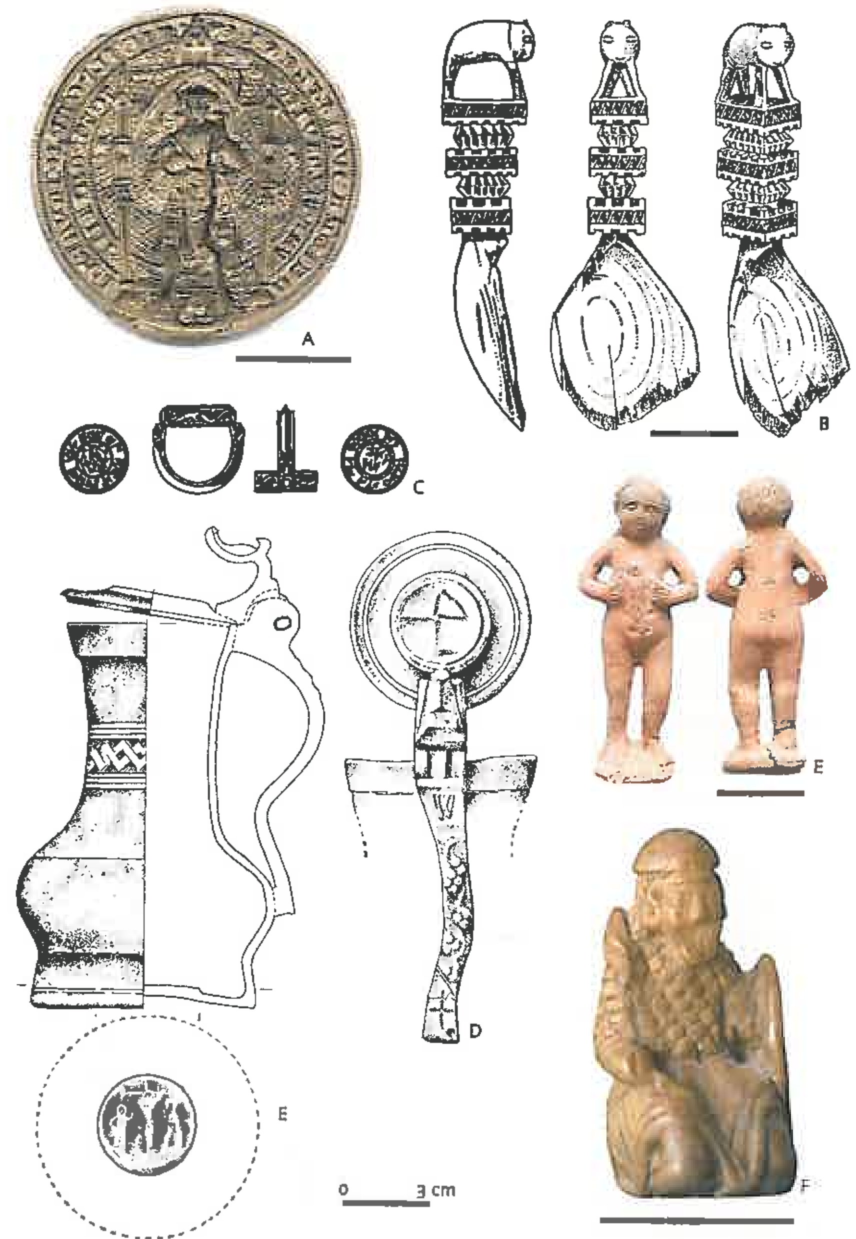


Fig 2

Medieval finds from Wrocław. A – seal of Duke Henryk IV Probus (2nd half of 13th century), B – wooden spoon (15th century), C – signet ring of a Jewish merchant (Aba son of Aba, 14th-15th century), D – tin jug (15th century), E – clay figurine of Jesus with Holy Spirit (15th century) F – chess piece made of red deer antler (13th century).

teenth century. At a later stage its community became multi-ethnic, with a Polish, German, Walloon and Jewish population. The importance of Wrocław outside the region was marked from 1150 by an annual fair of St Vincent, one of many stops on the *via regia* running from Brugge and Köln to Kiev. It became the capital city of the province of Silesia, the principality ruled by the Piast dynasty until the fourteenth century, when they were superseded by Bohemian kings.

Transition to the communal phase took place in the first half of the thirteenth century, with the establishment of a town of a new type on the periphery. Its rapid development and new legal and economic status led to the decline of the old settlement. The demographic base of the new town's commune was formed by colonists from the German Empire, using a legal model adopted from Magdeburg. The new regular street plan combined an aesthetically satisfying layout with the practical necessity of having plots with areas (and taxes) that were easy to calculate.

A central feature in the street plan of Wrocław was its large rectangular market square (Ring/Rynek). Its main function was commerce, reflected by the presence of a fine cloth hall and lines of stalls, property of the duke, but rented out to the townspeople. Commercial activity in private houses was forbidden. When the trading facilities were sold to the townspeople in the second half of the thirteenth century, they were not pulled down but remained in the city plan as a lasting distinctive feature. Research carried out in the Town Square identified traces of small-scale production, for example the making of gaming dice. In addition to its dedication to commerce and production, the square was also the centre of administration and self-government, the judiciary, the centre of local and regional exchange of information and also the focus of recreation and festivities. Other important elements in the city plan were two smaller market places, churches and churchyards.

Town houses were built of timber in a frame construction, also of brick. From the fifteenth century, brick houses became dominant. Water was supplied by a system of ceramic water mains built in the fourteenth century. Sewage was disposed of in cesspits in the backyards, or more rarely, dumped in open drains in the street. Streets were surfaced with timber, later, increasingly with stone paving. From around 1350 waste was systematically removed from the streets which prevented further accretion of layers.

Before 1250 the regularly planned area of the city was encircled with a system of brick ramparts, complete with towers and a moat. Around the middle of the fourteenth century districts added to the city on its south and west side were fortified in a similar manner. At the turn of the early modern period the city wall was equipped with bastions as a defence against artillery. From the middle of the sixteenth century, modern bastions started to be built giving the town the character of a state fortress (see also Ch 6, p 248).

by Jerzy Piekalski

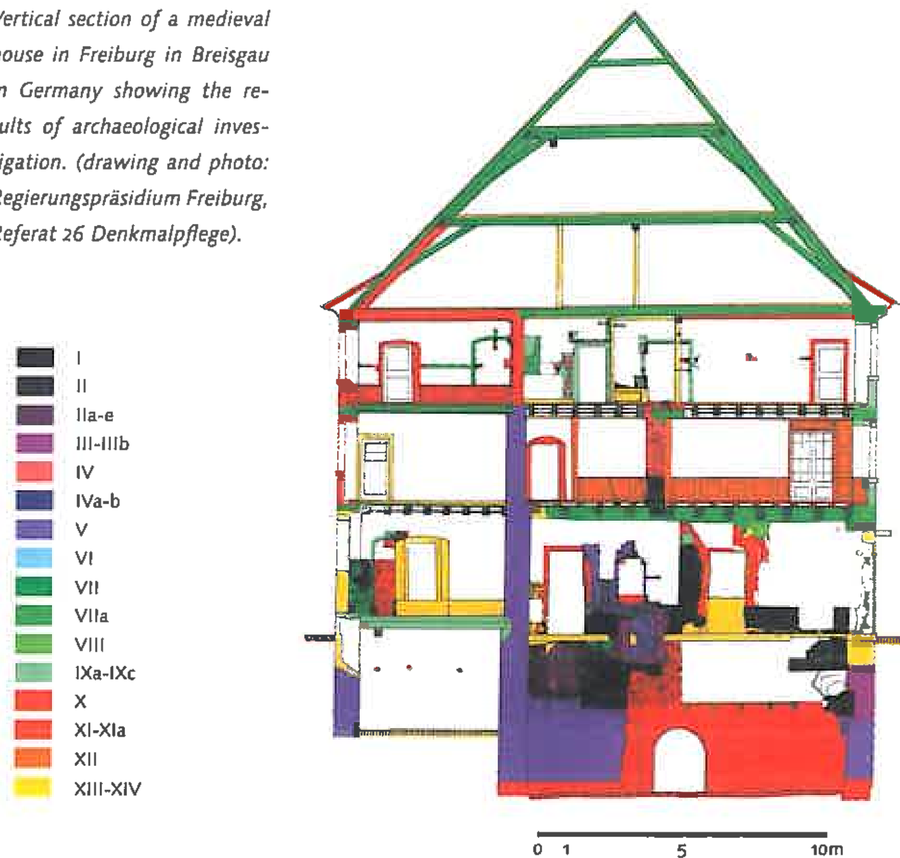
Sources

In contrast to early medieval towns, which are known to us almost entirely through archaeological research (AME 1, Ch 4), late medieval towns possess a written and pictorial documentation that increases steadily in volume and variety from the thirteenth century onwards. Charters, law books, chronicles and administrative documents provide information about the foundation of a town and the people involved, about its constitution, governance, civic law, the urban middle class, the guilds, the development of the urban administration as well as the formation and organisation of urban and ecclesiastical structures (Pervenier & de Hemptinne 2000). Townscapes and depictions of daily life on altar panels frequently provide, albeit under varied artistic influences, an idealised picture of urban buildings and urban life (Raynaud 1998; Boockmann 1986). Map evidence in the form of historic town plans generally does not go back to the Middle Ages, but appears in the modern period, in Scandinavia for example from the seventeenth century onwards, in Central Europe mainly from the nineteenth century onwards. They document the urban topography and its transformations from the time they were founded (Opll 2009).

While historical and topographic research into late medieval towns, based on documentary, map and pictorial evidence, follows a long tradition going back to the nineteenth century, archaeological evidence has only been sought over the last few decades. Of primary significance are the surviving buildings. In Germany for example, despite the destruction of the Second World War, countless buildings of the late Middle Ages survive: churches, public buildings, town houses, residences, some of the oldest going back to a period starting shortly after 1200, and sometimes entire town quarters. Though they have been frequently remodelled in the course of the centuries, they still provide high quality evidence for the late medieval town. The archaeology of still extant buildings and its connexion with the archaeological results obtained from the ground have increased in importance (Fig 9.4).

At the centre of the research agenda throughout Europe is a broad spectrum of topographical enquiries that address the process of development of individual towns and of the medieval townscape in general (Fehring 1996; Schofield & Vince 2003). The spatial requirements for town foundation at a specific location and the previously existing, abandoned or partly or wholly subsumed earlier settlement nuclei form part of this enquiry. Just as important is the investigation of the different phases in the constitution of the town plan and townscape, complete with harbour, street pattern, open spaces and organisation of plots. Seats of power and public buildings, the development of urban housing, the formation of different types of town houses and the sacred topography including churches, chapels and monasteries constitute a further area of research. The same applies to the infrastructure, above all the provision of water and the management of refuse, as well as the interaction between town and its surroundings. The archaeological evidence for artisan production and short- and long-distance trade occupies a large part of research (see Ch 7 & 8). Finally, daily life reflected in archaeological de-

Fig 9.4 *Vertical section of a medieval house in Freiburg in Breisgau in Germany showing the results of archaeological investigation. (drawing and photo: Regierungspräsidium Freiburg, Referat 26 Denkmalpflege).*



posits is a theme that concerns all settlements but is particularly well documented for the inhabitants of the late medieval towns (see Ch 4 & 5).

The results of numerous archaeological investigations in late medieval towns indicate that there are trends in the emergence and development of towns detectable all over Europe (Schofield & Vince 2003. 257 ff.; see part 1, above). This is especially true for the part of Europe located north of the limits of the Roman Empire, i.e. an area extending from Ireland to South-east Europe and from Scandinavia to the Alps. The towns possess a great variety of individual characteristics conditioned by different political, economic and cultural regional influences; but at the same time the European townscape constitutes an extremely coherent cultural sphere.

Today we have at our disposal, in greater or lesser amounts, archaeological data for many European towns (Schofield & Vince 2003, Appendix, Report 1999, Andersson H *et al.* 2008, Gläser ed. 1997). Good insights into the archaeology of town centres in individual European countries can be found in the proceedings of the Medieval Europe conferences in York in 1992 (*Medieval Europe* 1992), Bruges in 1997 (De Boe & Verhaege eds. 1997) and Basel in 2002 (Helmig *et al.* eds. 2002). Each town experienced its own evolution through the Middle Ages and this was influenced by a variety of factors. The large number of archaeological investigations in town centres nevertheless allows us to recognise common and typical traits, to compare them and to interpret them. The greatest insights, given the focus of interest in the larger and most important towns, have so far come from these towns, whereas the numerous medium-sized and small towns (which form the majority) have been investigated intensively only in some regions of Europe. What follows is a presentation of results, using examples from Central Europe and Scandinavia.

The emergence of towns

Decisive elements in the development of urban space were politics, the economy and a convenient location for transport. Pre-existing settlements might become towns through the granting of municipal law or trade privileges or a town was newly founded. A key question is therefore whether a town evolved from an earlier nucleus or was a new foundation on a previously unsettled area. The process of town emergence can be read in the surviving town plan only with caution. The layout does indeed often reflect earlier conditions, sometimes of the time of foundation, but in many cases it was remodelled in the course of the Middle Ages; therefore only archaeological evidence can give secure indications. For example, the city of Bern in Switzerland originated around 1200 as a seigniorial castle to which a founding town was attached on a hitherto unsettled loop of the river Aare (Baeriswyl 2003, 159-92). Freiburg in Breisgau in Germany, with a foundation charter dating to 1120, was also a 'green-field' site whose earliest urban traces are dated to around 1100; a presumed earlier settlement has so far not been encountered (Untermann 1995). When previous settlement nuclei were present, town development often took place as a 'polycentric' process. Pre-existing adjacent settlements such as castles, villages, seigniorial courts or mills coalesced, partly or totally, into an integrated town. Such is the case for the planned town of Villingen in south-western Germany in the second half of the twelfth century (Jenisch 1999). It is also possible that a town 'appended' itself to an earlier settlement. Göttingen emerged in the second half of the twelfth century in this way, next to a rural settlement in existence since the early Middle Ages which was abandoned as the town developed and was part-integrated into the new city (Arndt & Ströbl 2005).

When towns were founded or re-developed the topography was remodelled, sometimes with long-lasting impact. Extensive dumping to heighten low-lying areas was undertaken for example in Braunschweig, where an estimated 2 million tons of earth was dumped to level the low lying ground of the river Oker and create building areas for the town which was established in the second half of the twelfth century (Rötting 1997, 16-20). Similar arrangements were made in the episcopal town of Konstanz, where land was gained from the twelfth century onwards from the shallow water zones of Lake Constance in the form of dumps revetted by timber; thus land reclamation enlarged the episcopal town which had hitherto been confined to a conveniently located moraine (Flüeler and Flüeler 1992, 53-68). Stockholm in Sweden was a new town founded in the mid thirteenth century, which grew rapidly from a ridge beside Lake Mälar, and soon expanded into the lake using material dumped from the shores.

Town plan and structure

The topographical layout of the late medieval town is formed by its defensive circuit, the network of streets and the plots adjoining them, one or several marketplaces, the densely built fabric of houses, and civic buildings such as an urban castle (*Stadtburg*), town hall, mercantile halls and warehouses, and ecclesiastical buildings including parish churches, urban monasteries and chapels. But it is only the well-populated, largely autonomous, economically strong and socially differentiated towns that possessed all these elements. Small towns and 'minor towns' developed only partly along these lines. This led, despite the general trend of urban investment, to a most varied topography (see Box 9.1).

Town defences are a central element of the townscape (cf Ch 6, p 248). The defensive purpose of their construction was as important as their significance as a symbol of the town *per se*. Providing security for the urban community against the outside world was the communal duty of the townsfolk. There are a number of sources for the establishment of defences in numerous European towns (Isenberg & Scholkmann 1997). Defences were generally laid out soon after the foundation of the town and, within the limitations of the local topography, as close as possible to an ideal geometric form. Freiburg in Breisgau provides an example. There, the course of the town wall was laid out apparently just a few decades after the town's foundation and this caused the abandonment of the buildings that had been erected only shortly before (Porsche 1994). In towns with earlier settlement nuclei, the latter were enclosed within the town walls and the gaps between them closed. So, for example, Zürich was provided in the thirteenth century with a new town wall with numerous towers and a ditch over 20m wide and 6m deep (Fig 9.5) (Stadt Zürich 2004). The town defences of Central Europe were generally built of stone and the few known examples of timber and earth defences were mostly soon replaced. But in Scandinavia, stone walls are rare. Only three are known from Sweden: Visby (still extant; Fig 6.1), Stockholm and Kalmar. Other towns had mostly earthen banks sometimes complemented by timber fortifications and a ditch, such as in Lund.

The development of the internal urban topography consisted of the laying out of streets and open spaces, and the establishment of plots or *tenements*. Archaeological investigations have shown that the street network or even the course of the urban drains were set up very early on in the establishment of the towns and that they, as well as the open spaces, were not altered by later development. Freiburg in Breisgau again provides a good example: shortly after the beginning of the town after 1200, the layout of the streets, the size of the plots and the building lines were determined and not altered later. In some Scandinavian towns the layout goes back to the early twelfth century. The street network, access to water - the sea or river - and the first churches were especially important when the town plan was set down; during the thirteenth century the streets were infilled and the buildings became more densely packed. An example is Lund in Skåne, where the plan was established in some parts as early as the eleventh century but developed during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. The same situation can be found in Bergen in Norway.

The fact that the town walls delineated a finite urban area meant that, as the population increased, room could only be found for new houses by packing them more densely, so plots laid out at the time of a town's foundation had to be divided. Long

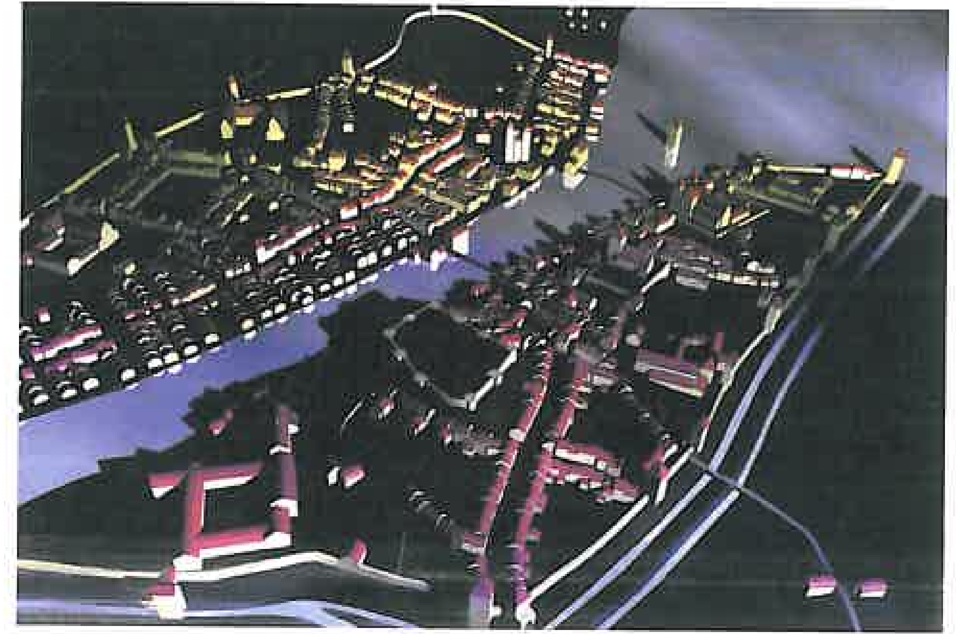


Fig 9.5 *Model of the late medieval town wall of Zürich in Switzerland (Stadt Zürich. Amt für Städtebau, Archäologie und Denkmalpflege).*

and narrow plots with their short end facing onto the street are typical of late medieval towns. During the late Middle Ages and often soon after their foundation many towns outgrew their original defences and were enlarged by planned suburbs defended by walls. These enlargements do not always prove, as archaeological investigations have demonstrated, to be a later addition to the town. More often, as has for example been shown at Burgdorf in Switzerland, they were pre-urban settlements which were incorporated as suburbs into the defensive circuit of a town (Baeriswyl 2003: 35-86). Inner city 'redevelopment measures' are also documented. New open spaces were created by demolishing houses, as happened in the small town of Laufen in Switzerland which emerged in the last quarter of the thirteenth century: There a whole row of houses which had burnt down around 1500 was not rebuilt to make space for a new market place (Pfrommer & Gutscher 1999). New churches and monasteries could also often only be established if existing buildings were given up.

The process of emergence and topographical development of a town's layout can be followed nowhere better than in Lübeck, the first German foundation on the Baltic which was soon to become a commercial hub between the North Sea and the Baltic, Central Europe and Scandinavia, and which, with other Hansa towns, is considered a prototype of a foundation town (Gläser & Mührenberg 2002). Around 130 excavations in the urban zone make it the best archaeologically investigated town in Central Europe (Fig 9.6). Lübeck grew from the site of a Slavic castle with bailey on a hill in the north part of the eventual town. The Earl of Holstein, Adolf II, took it over, enlarged it and founded a town

there in 1143; in 1158 he had to hand it over to his lord, Henry the Lion. There are hardly any traces of occupation from the phase of first foundation between 1143 and 1158 and therefore no conclusions can be drawn regarding its extent or the type of buildings. After 1158 the first urban structures grew in the centre of the town and a harbour was established on the river Trave. The earliest town was surrounded by a brick wall. The western

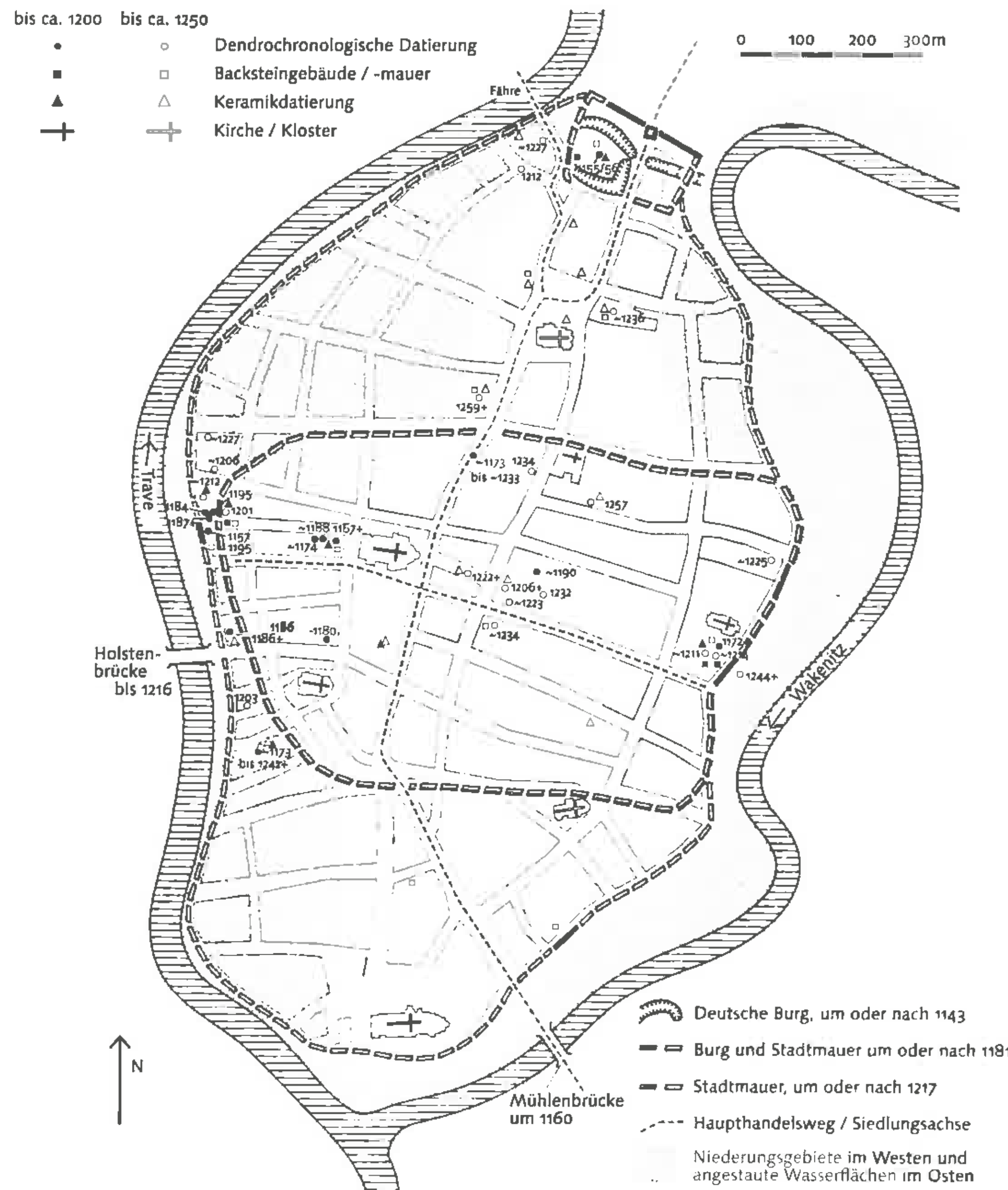


Fig 9.6 *The town plan of Lübeck in Germany: the development of the town in the 12th and 13th century (Hansestadt Lübeck. Der Bürgermeister. Bereich Archäologie).*

area, later to become the merchant quarter, also obtained already (in the twelfth century) its small narrow tenements that survive to this day (Fig 9.7). From 1217 the town was protected by a wall which also enclosed the flood-plain to the north and south, following landfill revetted by timber up to 6m deep. This extended the habitable surface by *c.* 25 per cent. After the cathedral (*Dom)* and the church of St Mary (*Marienkirche*), Lübeck's earliest stone buildings were erected already in the twelfth century, further churches and monasteries were established in the thirteenth century, as well as the new merchants' hall (later the town hall). Around the middle of the thirteenth century, the topography of the town was set and the merchant quarter was already built up, with buildings fronting onto the streets. The area occupied by the town was not enlarged later; the growth in the urban population in the following centuries resulted in an increasingly dense pattern of occupation, a subdivision of plots and in the construction of rows of small houses in backyards, the so-called *Gänge* which still characterise today's townscape.

Bergen in Norway can also be traced archaeologically through the centuries. The medieval townscape can partly still be seen in the Bergenshus castle, the churches and the timber-built settlement by the harbour, the latter a reminder of the German Hansa (see Ch 8, p 340). Activity started already before 1000 with the building of a jetty. During the first half of the eleventh century, plots were laid out according to some kind of regulation, probably a royal initiative. In the ensuing period there were many new initiatives, probably taken by king Olav Kyrre: it included the organisation and enlargement of the town's area and the building of new churches. Development continued in later periods. By the end of the twelfth century Bergen had became a centre for both internal and external trade and shipping. During the thirteenth century the town grew further and became stronger. The harbour area was enlarged and parts of the shore were

Lübeck: A model of the merchants' quarter in the first third of the 13th century (Hansestadt Lübeck, Bürgermeister, Bereich Archäologie). **Fig 9.7**

BOX 9.2 A PRESERVED MEDIEVAL SUBURB – SEZIMOVO ÚSTÍ (CZECH REPUBLIC)

The medieval town of Sezimovo Ústí in South Bohemia was founded around the middle of the thirteenth century by one of the foremost aristocratic dynasties of the kingdom of Bohemia. On 30 March 1420 it was engulfed by fire and an urban centre of ten hectares disappeared, along with three suburbs outside the walls. The destruction was deliberate. The supporters of the Hussite movement, who had seized the town shortly before, decided to transfer the inhabitants to a new foundation in a strategically more advantageous position, named after the Biblical Tabor. The whole event was part of the liquidation of the old world.

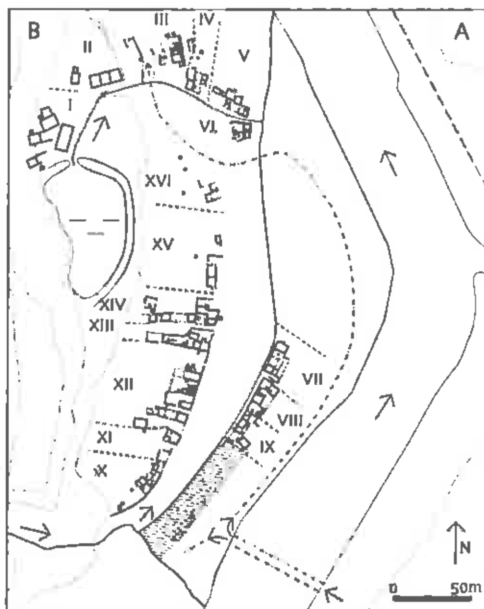


Fig 1

Sezimovo Ústí (Bohemia), the town core (A) and the suburb on the left bank of the River Lužnice (B). A generalised ground plan of the built-up area from the beginning of the 15th century, reconstructed according to the archaeological research. The allotment system of Homesteads I-XVI, a reconstruction of the water network and the likely road network have been added. The hatching denotes the settlement area indicated by the geophysical research (after M. Richter).

The urban renewal of the site of Sezimovo Ústí had to wait until the nineteenth century, but when it came, the newly built-up area did not cover all of the old medieval complex. One of the former suburbs, situated on the other side of the River Lužnice, was not affected. The dramatic chapter in medieval history thus provided a unique archaeological opportunity, where extensive programmed research took place from 1962 to 1988. It was here that, to a significant degree, Czech archaeology of the late Middle Ages was shaped in the 1960s, developing the scope of its activity and methods of field research. The archaeological excavations, led by Miroslav Richter, uncovered roughly 1.5 ha. and identified three stages between the mid-thirteenth century and 1420. The third and last stage, in particular, offered the prerequisites for an outstanding archaeological testimony (see Richter 1986, Richter 1994, Richter – Krajíc 2001).

In the first stage (dated to the second half of the thirteenth century), a substantial part of the area of the suburb was already settled. The buildings were of wood and clay, placed directly on the surface of the ground and anchored by earth-fast timber posts. Some rooms had sunken floors. There were several non-agrarian production activities. Blacksmithing slag was distributed over almost the entire investigated area. Clay moulds testified to the casting of small bronze artefacts. Pottery wasters were evidence of pottery manufacture on site. There was material from tanning and leather-working, and fishing weights indicating the dwelling of a fisherman. The second stage (dating to the first half of the fourteenth century) followed without interruption, but there were now signs of a more structured layout.

The third stage embraced the period between the mid-fourteenth century and the abandonment of the site in 1420. The ground plan of the suburb then comprised two rows of homesteads staked out on the lower terrace parallel to the axis of the river (Fig. 1). Twenty homesteads were identified, of which sixteen were examined by archaeological excavation. The width of the majority of the plots was between 18 and 30 m, but Homesteads I and XV stood on plots 48 m wide, and Homestead XII was located on a plot 54 m wide. Water, indispensible for the life and operation of each of the homesteads, was provided by several sources. In the immediate vicinity, the River Lužnice flowed and a brook running down from the neighbouring slopes was canalised to the centre of the suburb. On the elevated northern edge of the suburb, there was a system of reservoirs and the individual homesteads also had wells usually 3.5 to 4.5 m deep.

Although houses were still constructed mainly in timber and clay, in this final stage stone found an important application in building. It provided walls for the cellars and formed the foundation walls for elevations in wood and clay. With rare exceptions, the stonework was not bonded by lime mortar; drystone walling provided sufficient stability and durability. Stone was used also for lining the sides of wells and channels, the latter used, for example, to drain water out of the cellars. The plan and superstructure of the buildings was variable. Several houses had one room with a fireplace or oven, built directly on the surface of the ground, and another room for storage, with a cellar beneath.

Evidence for production was richly preserved. The most numerous group were potters (Homesteads VIII, X, XII, XIII and likely also IX), while brick-makers worked in two homesteads (Homesteads I and II). There was a blacksmith working in the Homestead VI (Krajíc 2003) and a tanner in Homestead VII. Food production was represented by a butcher in Homestead XIV, a maltster in Homestead III (Krajíc 1989) and perhaps also a baker in Homestead IV. In the remaining four homesteads, signs of production were lacking. Craft was not necessarily practised continually on the same plot. Whereas in Homestead III malt production took place through the fourteenth century until 1420, in a number of other cases striking changes occurred. The potters in Homestead X took the place of a tanner, and in Homesteads XII and XIII potters were new arrivals in the mid-fourteenth century. All the sixteen plots investigated lacked agricultural outbuildings and artefacts, and it is clear that none was primarily focused on agriculture. A similar conclusion was reached also by the analysis of the archaeobotanical macro-remains (Opravil 1997).

The excavation revealed details of the life style of different craftsmen. The blacksmith (Homestead VI) worked in a plot of circa 600 m^2. He had a house with five rooms in it, of which the largest area, roughly 38 m^2, was taken by the smithy, with the forge in one corner. Living space seems to have been

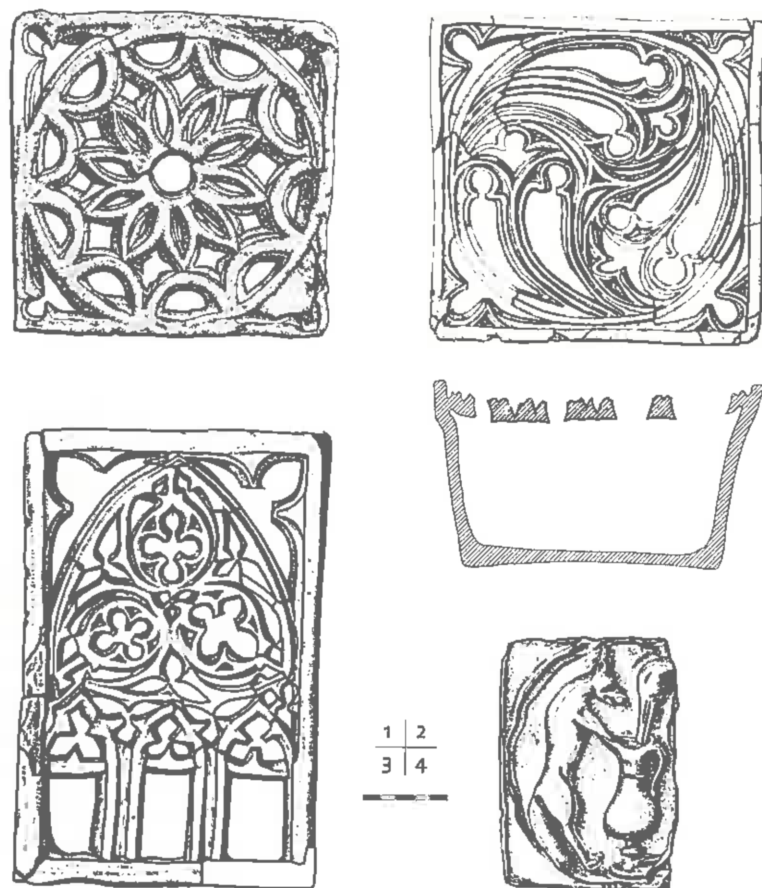


Fig 2

Sezimovo Ústí (Bohemia), Homestead XII. (1-3) stove tiles carved in openwork, (4) a tile with a scene from Aesop's fable, The Fox and the Stork, early 15th century (after M. Richter).

confined to a single room with an area of 14.7 m². The production space included the courtyard, from which came almost 400 kg of smithing slag. The inventory of finds includes 2,643 iron objects, comprising a wide spectrum from raw material to prepared products. The blacksmith started with bar or strap iron but also made use of a supply of obsolete artefacts prepared for recycling. The sequence of manufacture can then be tracked from sundry semi-finished products and defective objects, damaged during the production process. Finished products mark the end of the production line, these being objects undoubtedly intended for the local urban market. The value of iron to the inhabitants was here shown with unusual clarity, since the site was deserted suddenly and not subsequently pillaged. A cloth sack with nineteen coins from 1407-19 remained under the floor of one of the rooms of the smith's house. It was apparently personal cash hidden at the beginning of 1420, for which the owner never returned. Stocks of damaged iron artefacts were found in Homesteads VIII and XI, whose inhabitants were not smiths, showing that scrap too had its value.

The brick-makers worked in two homesteads (I and II) situated in the immediate vicinity of a source of brick-making clay. At the time of abandonment, the first of the brick-makers' plots covered 1,720 and the second close up 2,160 m²; in the first, there were three and in the second two kilns. The initial step of production was the preparation of air-dried bricks for firing. The second step is represented by the wasters that the brick-makers had not managed to remove from their kilns, and the third step was evident from the fired products stored under the porches and ready for sale. One of the kilns in Homestead I preserved burnt roof tiles and floor tiles, whereas in one of the kilns in Homestead II were burnt floor tiles and bricks. These were the basic products of both brickworks, which left their mark also in exceptionally abundant waste.

The potters' homesteads were of radically different sizes. While the plot of Homestead VIII occupied only about 1000 m², Homestead XII covered 2950 m², almost three times as much, a difference reflecting the extent of the production facilities. The commencement of production required masses of potter's clay, some prepared in pits dug below the level of the water table. Supplies of sand were quarried from pits in the plots. The firing most likely began in drying kilns and continued in firing kilns. The production was concentrated in central workshops, accompanied by other buildings. The storage areas for the finished goods are likely to have been on an upper floor. In Homesteads VIII and XII, pots as well as potter's instruments had apparently fallen into cellars from a raised floor during the conflagration. The potters' output included table- and kitchen-wares and stove tiles. Evidence for the production of stove tiles was preserved in Homestead VIII, where a stock of approximately eighty vessel-shaped stove tiles stacked in columns had tumbled from an elevated floor. In Homestead XII the fallen products included as many as 150 stove tiles carved in openwork with architectural motifs (Fig. 2:a-c). The 'rotating flame' motif (Fig 2b) appeared on stove-tiles manufactured at Sezimovo Ústí roughly one generation after it had first featured in Bohemian Gothic architecture (Hazlbauer – Chotěbor 1990; see also Box 4.1). The ceramic tile with the scene from Aesop's fable, *The Fox and the Stork* (Fig. 2:d), allows us a glimpse of the intellectual context of the craftsmen's clientele.

Archaeological study has also set the suburb of Sezimovo Ústí in its wider regional context, comparing it with the culture of the adjacent town itself and with the rural hinterland. The neighbouring villages in the vicinity similarly abandoned during the Hussite period provide an invaluable resource for archaeological research into Europe of the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries (Smetánka 1965, Krajíc 1987).

by Jan Klápště

reclaimed from the sea for new jetties and houses up to three storeys high (Helle 1995, Hansen 2003; for the study of a well-preserved suburb, see Box 9.2).

Towns and their hinterland

The impact of the newly founded towns on their hinterland, in other words the interaction between towns and their surroundings, is a topic so far little touched by archaeology in Central Europe and Scandinavia. Yet the emergence of a town had huge repercussions. The forest clearances, drainage and dumping operations as well as the provision of building materials, particularly timber for the construction of houses, had a considerable impact on the landscape. The surroundings were also directly affected by the establishments connected with towns but located outside the town walls, such as the leper colonies that were constructed outside because of the danger of contagion. Gallows, some of which have been rediscovered and excavated in recent years (Becker *et al.* 2007), were located outside town too. Moreover, the town walls did not always constitute the outermost defences of towns: there were often obstacles constructed further out. Above all many towns protected landholdings located outside the walls or agricultural land used by the townsfolk with further defensive works, the so-called land defences *Landwehren* (Landschaftsverband Westfalen Lippe ed. 2007). They consisted of ditches, often water-filled, and banks reinforced by hedges which were as high as a person and interwoven to create a barrier that was difficult to penetrate. The roads leading into town were blocked by barriers, which were guarded. Sometimes lookout towers were also erected there. These external defences provided effective protection against attacks but it also demarcated a town quite visibly from its surroundings.

The most enduring impact was however the 'flight from the land' (Scholkmann 2009, 70) or rural exodus, which the emerging towns caused. Many people left the settlements in the surrounding countryside to settle in the newly flourishing towns. The prospect of a secure life behind the town walls and the possibility of freeing oneself from servitude to landlords by settling in towns were probably the most important reasons. As a result, many rural settlements in the vicinity of towns lost their inhabitants and were abandoned. The surroundings of the small medieval town of Rottenburg in southern Germany show the effect of these processes quite clearly. At the time of its foundation in the thirteenth century there were at least three rural settlements within close range. The largest of these was excavated: It had been established in the fourth-fifth century but was completely abandoned during the thirteenth century. Only the church remained and it became the parish church of the later town. The other two villages were abandoned during the Middle Ages. All that remains is a chapel in one instance, a farm in the other.

Urban houses

The results obtained by archaeological investigations and buildings' analysis are particularly rich in information about the development of town houses (Gläser ed. 2001). A characteristic of urban house-building in Central Europe is the fact that they are multi-

storeyed. In contrast to rural settlements, the lack of space available in towns led to the combination of different functions – housing, storage, workshops, warehousing – accommodated in the vertical plane in a single building. The first step was seemingly the integration of structures which had hitherto been separate, such as the incorporation of *Grubenhäuser* as cellars dug into the ground beneath houses, which later developed into stone cellars. Such trends can be detected in towns that emerged already in the twelfth century. In Lübeck, for example, the earliest houses were timber buildings of one or two floors, whose sides measured 4-6m and which had a cellar accessed from the outside.

The town houses of Central Europe are regionally differentiated, influenced by earlier building traditions and conditioned by the availability of building materials (cf Ch 4, p 2, 66). An important influence on the townscape was the arrangement of the houses, with the house gables facing onto the streets or, as is the case in many regions of southern Germany and Switzerland, with their eaves along the street frontage. Throughout Central Europe townhouses were built of timber as well as of stone or brick and their appearance side by side marked the urban landscape from the beginning. Timber and stone buildings coexisted side by side in southern Germany (Flüeler & Flüeler eds. 1992, 225-87). In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, two- or three-storied, rectangular or square, cellared, massive stone houses of various ground plans and elevations are documented; in most towns they existed as single buildings only. Their owners belonged to the urban elite. This is the case in important towns such as Basel, Zürich, Trier or Regensburg where such buildings are found in greater numbers and where the urban nobility's 'house-towers', which also had a defensive character, are still in part preserved. There were also towns where stone buildings were predominant in the more modest quarters, for example in Freiburg in Breisgau. But most townscapes were characterised by timber buildings, half-timbered houses on stone foundations or with a stone ground floor, which developed differentially by regions. The earliest surviving houses go back to the thirteenth century and exhibit construction types that differ from the later houses. The late medieval townhouse with its typical elements, such as heated panelled living rooms with bay window (oriel) on the first floor developed from the fourteenth century onwards. These buildings marked the late medieval townscape, while the stone buildings lost prominence.

Late medieval house building was different in northern Germany (Gläser 2001 ed. 233-472). High two-storied half-timbered buildings conceived as a hall with a superimposed floor are known from the thirteenth century onwards. One type of early town house were tower-like massive buildings, the so-called *stoneworks* or *Kemenaten*. These square or rectangular multi-storied and mostly cellared buildings are documented from the twelfth century; they were often combined structurally with timber houses on the street frontage and are to be attributed to the urban upper classes. A second type of building found throughout northern Germany consists of brick-built timbered halls with gable-ends facing onto the street. They are known from the late thirteenth century onwards, for instance in Lübeck, where brick buildings have been recorded archaeologically from shortly after 1200. Multi-storied buildings occupying a large surface area and mostly without cellars, the positioning onto the street frontage of a heated living room

(the so-called *Dornse*), and elaborate façades are characteristic elements which mark historic towns of northern Germany up to this day.

In Scandinavian countries it is possible to follow an evolution that to some extent was similar to that in Lübeck. Normally only churches and castles, and some cellars, were built in stone, although some towns had stone houses: Visby and Stockholm, and Riga and Tallinn on the other side of the Baltic; at the end of the Middle Ages also Malmö, in today's southern Sweden. Elsewhere timber building predominated, mostly of a single storey but at Lödöse in western Sweden there are archaeologically recorded examples of two-storied houses, and in Bergen they could possess up to three storeys.

Urban infrastructure

It was essential to provided the new dense population with a comprehensive access to water and a regulated way of disposing of refuse (Gläser ed. 2004). In many towns water was procured by means of private wells or cisterns in the backyards of the plots; they were constructed in different ways, such as barrel or timber-clad wells as well as stone-built ones. Public fountains were mainly fed from springs whose water was brought into town by means of water pipes. Examples in lead, clay or hollowed timber trunks are well documented. The earliest known medieval urban water pipe system is the *Wasserkunst* recorded in 1294 in Lübeck, where a water-wheel scooped water out of the river Trave and fed it into a system of wooden pipes supplying the eastern part of town. Here several breweries were established. After extending this network up to AD 1500, some 3000 households could be supplied over a pipe system measuring around 9.8km, which survived into the nineteenth century (Gläser ed. 2004, 182-90).

The accumulating refuse, i.e. organic refuse and non-reusable waste from domestic and craft activities, had to be discarded. Especially in large towns strategies for this disposal had to be developed. Solid waste was largely disposed of the rear of properties. This is documented by the many, sometimes very large and timber- or stone-clad, pits which were used as rubbish pits for discarding solid waste and as cess-pits (Fig 9.8; see also Box 4.2). Abandoned cess-pits and wells were also used. Large quantities of waste, such as waste from craft activities, could be used in land reclamation schemes or for drying out humid zones. Waste was also discarded, together with all the waste water, in the towns' rivers and streams. The waste water from households flowed from the narrow lanes between the houses onto the streets and then onto the water courses. The crafts that needed a lot of water, such as tanning and dyeing were located on the banks of rivers and the waste flowed directly back into the river (see also Ch 7, p 320).

The topography of craft and trade

There were a great many different trades exercised in the late medieval towns that produced goods for local or long-distance trade, depending on their importance, quantity or demand. While the houses of merchants were always located by preference in the vicinity of the marketplace, the workshops could be spread all over town, even crafts

which involved a fire risk, such as potters' workshops or smithies and forges. Some craft activities were however tied to certain areas on the grounds of the conditions for production, especially the tanneries because of their need for water and their smell. As a result artisan quarters containing the houses and workshops of these artisans developed in many towns (for examples of shops and workshops, see Ch 4, p 169).

The processes of production and the resulting products, as well as the movement of goods are amply documented (Gläser ed. 1999, Gläser ed. 2006; see Ch 7, passim). Archaeological excavations have uncovered workshops of potters and metalworkers such as forges and the workshops where non-ferrous metals were smelted and cast. There exists also frequent indirect evidence for the work of wood-turners, coopers and wood-carvers as well as workers in bone, horn and antler. Leather is well attested archaeologically since tanning required static, excavated structures; as for the leather-workers, it is the cobblers that are best represented by their products. A technical innovation in the weaving workshops of late medieval towns, the treadle loom with horizontally arranged warp which could be lowered or lifted by pedals, led to a significant improvement in weaving techniques and to an acceleration of production. The workshops were located, as shown for example by findings from Winterthur in Switzerland (Windler 1999/2000) in the basement floor of townhouses as the damp conditions there were particularly appropriate for such work (Fig 9.9). As for the products of the building trade, they survive today in medieval buildings.

The towns became centres of organised and professional trade from the twelfth century, thanks to the market privileges bestowed upon them. In many small towns, trade was mainly local, supplying the town and hinterland with the locally or regionally-produced products necessary for daily life. The regional and supra-regional distribution of products and coinage as means of payment enables us to reconstruct the movement of goods. However, only products that survive in the archaeological record can be traced in this way. Thus trade in perishable materials such as timber, foodstuffs including meat, fish, honey, cereals, fruit, spices, wax, furs and skins are rarely found intact. Trade in wine and beer leaves indirect evidence in the form of finds of containers such as barrels or large ceramic vessels, and more direct evidence in the traces of lipids inside them (see Ch 1, p 45). The export of a given product, for example German stoneware (Gaimster 1997) can be traced through the distribution of finds outside its production area (Ch 7, p 291). In contrast 'foreign goods', i.e. goods not produced locally, tend to indicate import. The import of goods in a Hansa town, either as traded goods or for local consumption, can be documented by the example of Greifswald (Schäfer 1999). The following goods were present: timber from northern Poland, the Baltic area and southern Scandinavia, limestone from the latter for building, pottery from the Rhineland, the Low Countries, southern Lower Saxony and Saxony, crucibles from the upper Danube area, millstones from the Eifel area, glass from Bohemia and Italy as well as cloth from Flanders (see Ch 8, p 340).

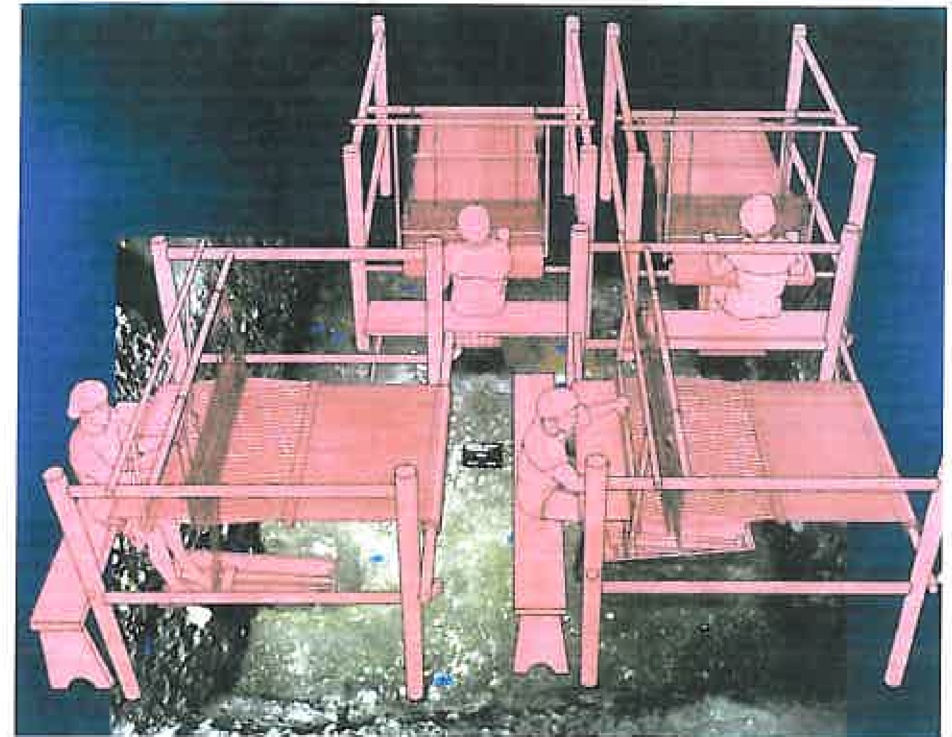
Trade can be understood in part through static structures, such as marketplaces, guildhalls, warehouses and shops or stalls as well as through the instruments specific to trade such as scales and weights. The marketplace was the centre of trade in the late

Fig 9.8 *A latrine pit of 1290 in the medieval town of Greifswald (Archäologisches Landesmuseum und Landesamt für Denkmalpflege Mecklenburg-Vorpommern).*

medieval town. It was laid out at the time of a town's foundation and its surfaces were consolidated with rubble or wooden boards. Sometimes the remains of stalls have also been recorded. Large towns had several marketplaces for trade in different goods. Trade was also conducted from shops within houses. But above all, well-appointed guildhalls were built in which commercial transactions took place; sometimes specialised trade was carried out in such buildings, as indicated by their names: Salthouse (*Salzhaus*), Taylors' Hall (*Gewandhaus*) or Cloth Hall (*Tuchhaus*). Many such establishments survive today, as do the large warehouses in which the goods were stored (see Box 9.3).

Urban sacred topography

The late medieval townscape was prominently marked by parish churches, monasteries and numerous chapels that together show the great importance of the institution of the Church in medieval society (Slater & Rosser 2005; Schofield & Vince 2005, 175-211, Flüeler & Flüeler 1992, 437-93). Large towns and older foundations possessed several parish churches to which different parishes were attached (see the example of Viborg, Box 10.1). A particularity of the ecclesiastical organisation in late medieval towns was that the town churches were frequently put under the control of a pre-existing earlier parish belonging to a village in the area and that the subsidiary town church had no parish rights. The city of Ulm only acquired its own parish church when the Minster construction began in 1377. In Denmark and Sweden there are examples of parishes shared between countryside and town. But the majority were 'pure' town parishes,



Reconstruction of a weaver's workshop (end of 13th-14th century), in the medieval town of Winterthur in Switzerland (Kantonsarchäologie Zürich, Maria Szabó). **Fig 9.9**

for examples at Nyköping, Arboga or Lund (the latter with several) (Andrén 1985). A number of archaeological investigations in parish churches have uncovered the original buildings and their subsequent transformations. Episodes of enlargement and enrichment in these churches provide us with a reflection of the growth and economic success of the town (see Ch 11, part 2). The cemeteries of the parish churches were sacred locations too. They provide data on the demography, the structure of the population, the pathology and the dietary habits of the urban population (see Ch 12, p 494; Arcini *et al.* 1999). The monasteries of the mendicant orders are a specific characteristic of the sacred topography of late medieval towns (see Box 11.3). These monasteries disappeared completely or partly from the regions of Europe that became Protestant after the Reformation, so that it is only through excavation that their structure and sequence can be revealed (Fig 9.10).

The late medieval townscape in many regions of Europe was also marked by the settlements and cemeteries of the Jewish communities. Synagogues and *mikva'ot* or ritual baths were at the centre of Jewish life. The cemeteries are always located at a set distance from the living quarters. However, the plots in Jewish quarters, the houses built on them and the infrastructure are no different from those found in other parts of town. The earliest building phase of the Jewish quarter in Vienna, which began around

Fig 1

Trinity Hall (The Merchant Adventurers' Hall), York (©Giles).

Guilds or 'gilds' were associations of townsmen who grouped together for commercial and social purposes, and defined themselves in relation to certain claims or rights (Campbell 2000: 64; Gross C 1890; Reynolds 1977: 82-93; and see AME 1, 127, 307). In some towns, these guilds were the precursors of later councils and corporations, and by the second quarter of the thirteenth century many of these had their own meeting halls, as in York and London (Fig 1; Palliser *et al.* 2000: 177; Barron 1974: 15-18; Bowsher *et. al* 2007: 65-6). These buildings provided the models for the numerous town halls that existed in England by the end of the middle ages (Tittler 1991: 12, 29). Here, there are clear links with the kinds of guild and town halls built in the Low Countries and Italy throughout the medieval period.

However, by the fourteenth century two other kinds of 'guild' organization had emerged that also had a profound impact on medieval Europe (Farr 2000: 229; Lambrechts & Sosson 1994). The first of these were religious guilds or fraternities, dedicated to particular saints or devotional foci, and providing members with spiritual, as well as charitable benefits (Duffy 1992: 142-54; Hanawalt 1984; Hanawalt and McRee 1992; McRee 1992, 1994; Toulmin Smith 1962; Rosser 1994; Scarisbrick 1984: 22; Westlake 1919). The second group were the secular 'crafts', or 'mysteries', which were central to the organization and regulation of medieval economic life, and which often also played an important role in the political, social and cultural life of many European towns and cities (Epstein 1991: 164; Swanson 1988; Stabel 2004; Rosser 2006).

Urban councils and corporations often allied themselves closely with a particular religious fraternity, such as the close links which developed between the civic elite of Norwich and St. George's guild (McRee 1992) or the St. Christopher and St. George's guilds and the corporation in York (White E 1987). Moreover, religious fraternities also developed strong links with particular crafts, such as those between fraternities dedicated to St. John the Baptist and the Taylors (ie tailors) of London and York (Davies 2004; Dobson 2006). These associations often make it difficult to identify the specific groups or motives behind investment in buildings and other forms of guild material culture. But it is significant because it reminds us that religion underpinned every aspect of medieval European secular life. By the later middle ages, guilds had become one of the major foci for devotional and social activity. They offered their members a range of spiritual and economic benefits, including financial assistance with, and attendance at, funerals, and prayers for the souls of the deceased. Indeed, guild hospitals and almshouses func-

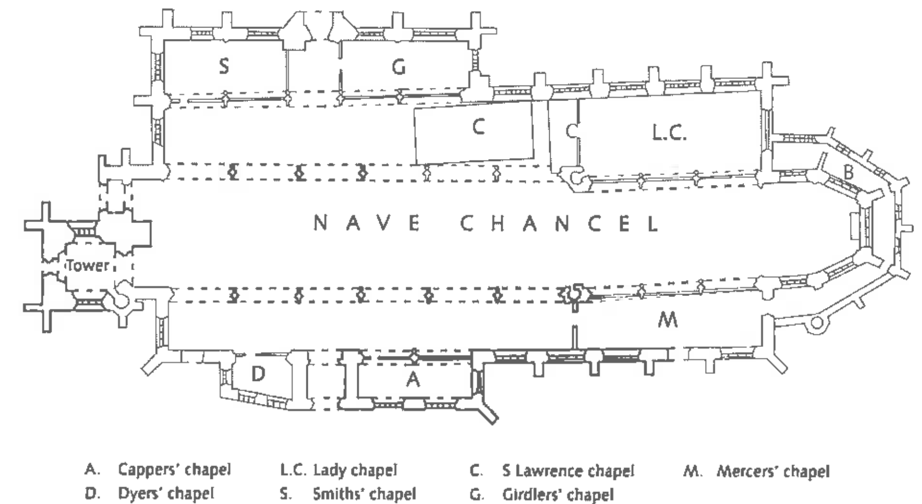


Fig 2

Guild chapels within St Michael's church, Coventry (after Cook 1954).

tioned as a species of chantry (Giles 2000a: 69-73; Rawcliffe 2008).

Given that many religious guilds and craft associations drew their members from particular parishes or occupational 'zones', it is hardly surprising that guilds began to build up portfolios of contiguous or neighbouring properties, often clustering around their church, hall or marketplace. In London, for example, the late-fourteenth century Goldsmiths Hall was newly-built north of the gold-smithy at the north end of Foster Lane, in which there were also fourteen shops also owned by the guild (Reddaway & Walker 1975: 29-30). This trend was not limited to the capital, however. In Leicester, the guild of Corpus Christi built a new hall in *c.* 1390 adjacent to the parish church of St. Martin and began to amass property either side of their hall (Courtney 1998).

English guilds invested in a wide range of buildings, but their initial focus was often the parish church, where they constructed their identity through the appropriation of space within the aisles of the nave. This is evident, for example in St. Martin's, Leicester, where the south aisle of the church and chapel dedicated to the Blessed Virgin was used in the fourteenth century by the Corpus Christi guild, then subsequently extended so that its west end could be partitioned and used by the guild of St. George (Banks 2001: 14-15). In some cases, as St. Michael's, Coventry, almost the entire nave became partitioned by guild chapels and screens (Fig 2; Cook 1954: 110-11). Surviving inventories of guilds such as that of St. Mary's, Boston reveal the breathtaking splendour and wealth of the fixtures, fittings and moveable goods of guild chapels – in this case both within the parish church (again partitioned in the south aisle of the nave) and duplicated in the guild chapel itself (Giles 2010). These inventories also reveal the rich textiles, including altar cloths, ban-

Fig 3

Corpus Christi Guildhall, Lavenham (Suffolk) (©Giles).

ners and hangings and priests' vestments that decorated such chapels and which the guild liveries used in their ceremonies.

Throughout the medieval period, guilds met, traded, worshipped and socialized in parish churches, cathedrals, monasteries and townhouses. In York, for example, the St. Christopher guild met in the south aisle of the nave of York Minster (White E 1987), whilst the wealthy Corpus Christi guild used Trinity hall, Fossgate for its general meetings (Crouch 2000: 165). However, from the late fourteenth century and well into the early sixteenth century, many guilds also built new halls. In London, many of the Livery companies, such as the Taylors, appear to have adapted large houses bequeathed to the company, as guildhalls (Schofield 1994: 44). In large towns these halls often sat at the heart of a guild's parochial base or occupational zone. In smaller urban settlements, such as Lavenham (Suffolk) they were often located close to the parish church or in visually-prominent locations around market places (Fig 3; Alston 2004b). Guildhalls, like other buildings within the guilds' property portfolios, therefore played an important role in the construction of 'public space' in late medieval towns and villages (Giles 2005).

The English buildings are often large, multiple-storeyed structures, with impressive and decorative facades, set within courtyards or adjacent to prominent streets or a river frontage. They appear to have drawn on both contemporary domestic and ecclesiastical architecture for inspiration. What all guildhalls had in common was the hall itself, which was organized hierarchically, with a 'low' end containing services and a high end, with a raised dais, mimicking the halls of the elite and perhaps also the east-west spatial and symbolic divisions of the parish church (Fig 4). These halls were used for business meetings, indenturing new apprentices and feasts, and were often sub-let to other guilds or organizations. Chaucer vividly evokes the use of these halls in his description of the Pilgrims' Guild:

'Wel semed eche of hem a fayre burgeis. To sitten in a gild halle, on the deis' (quoted in Toulmin Smith 1870: xxx)

Some guildhalls, such as St. Mary's Boston (Lincs) and St. George's, King's Lynn (Norfolk), also appear to have provided spaces for the storage, examination and perhaps even the sale, of goods, particularly in undercrofts with easy access to streets and river frontage (see also Ch 4, p 169). In more rural contexts, where guildhalls were much smaller, but still often two-storeyed, such as Lavenham (Suffolk), shops and workshops seem to have been accommodated within the Guildhall complex (Brown R J 1986: 190-202; Alston 2004b: 8-9). Rural guildhalls were often in close proximity to the parish church and therefore rarely accommodated a separate guild chapel. But urban examples often did so, whether

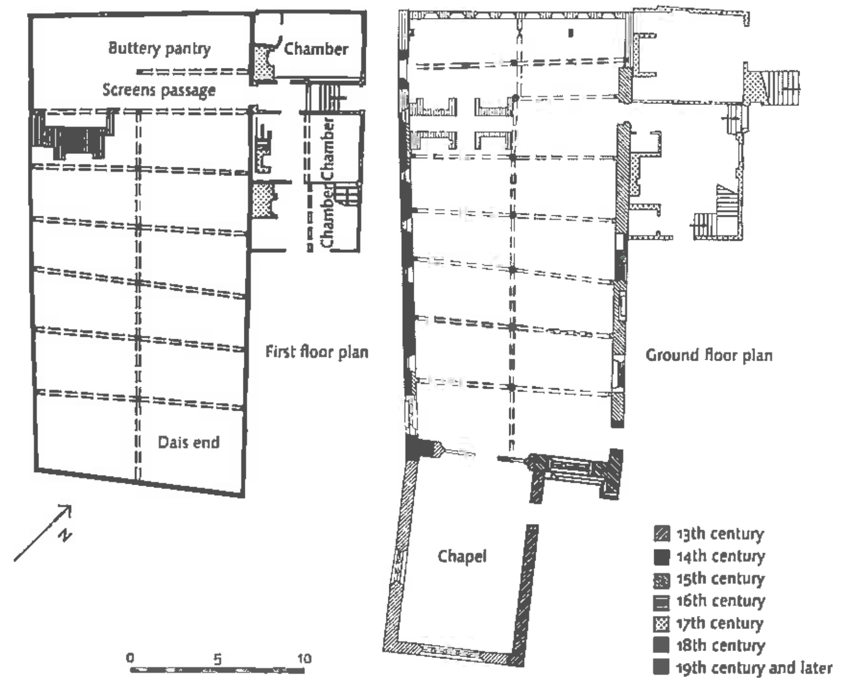


Fig 4

Plan of the ground and first floor of Trinity Hall (The Merchant Adventurers' Hall), York (see fig. 1).

these were relatively small and low-key, such as that at St. Mary's Boston, or large and impressive, such as the chapel of the Holy Cross, Stratford-Upon-Avon. In urban contexts, these chapels were often located in close proximity to guild hospitals, maisons dieu or almshouses, which have recently been the focus of a major synthesis (Rawcliffe 2008). These buildings functioned almost like chantries, in which inmates were encouraged to say prayers for the souls of the fraternity or craft responsible for maintaining them.

The remarkable survival of medieval guildhalls, particularly in the provincial cities, towns and villages of England, make this an exciting and significant area for further research. Patterns are beginning to emerge from detailed archaeological investigation, dendrochronological dating and documentary analysis of individual buildings, such as those of York, as well as Boston (Lincs) and Stratford-upon-Avon (Warwicks). These shed important light on the role of guilds in the formation and development of urban society and the creation and use of public space. Moreover, such analyses are also emphasizing the significance of these buildings in the post-Reformation period, as medieval buildings were deliberately appropriated and adapted to legitimize the authority and power of early modern corporations and communities.

by Kate Giles

Fig 9.10 *Excavations at the Carmelite monastery in the medieval town of Esslingen in Germany. The monastery was destroyed after the reformation.*

the middle of the twelfth century was characterised by timber buildings on strip plots. Stone buildings began to be built from the thirteenth century, as elsewhere in the town. The very large and vaulted stone cellars discovered in Regensburg – often several per single house – indicate an increasing need for storage (see also part 3 of Chapters 10, 11 & 12; also Wamers & Backhaus 2004).

Public health

Provision for social welfare in late medieval towns was through the hospitals (Thier 2002). These were places where orphans, the infirm, the old and the poor, but also travelling pilgrims were cared for. The sick who suffered from contagious diseases like leprosy were excluded from inner-city hospitals and were housed instead in leper hospitals (*Gutleuthäuser*) outside town. Excavations provide a graphic illustration of these hospitals and the living conditions of their inmates. The hospital's infirmary was a large communal room for all inmates, where they slept, ate, lived and were attended to. Attached, frequently without partition wall, was a chapel, as the care of the soul was deemed as important as that of the body. A large hospital like the Hospital of the Holy Spirit (*Heiligengeistspital*) in Lübeck had a communal room which could accommodate up to 200 individuals. From the fourteenth century onwards, as at the hospital on the Kornmarkt in Heidelberg, old people's homes were added; these so-called *Pfründnerhäuser* were places where lifelong care could be bought. The known household inventories of hospitals barely contain any artefacts typical for the care of the sick; instead they contain the utensils also present in ordinary urban households such as cooking and eating equipment in pottery, wood and glass. The archaeological investigation of hospital cemeteries gives insights into the living conditions and diseases of the inmates and indications as to the state of medicine. The skeletons of the inmates of the hospital at Heidelberg, buried in its cemetery between the thirteenth and fifteenth century (Flüeler & Flüeler 479-85) clearly reflect their origin in different social classes, given by the analysis of their dietary status and the examination of tooth wear. Nearly half of the buried population showed pathological symptoms in the skeleton, including caries, deformations of the spine, arthritis, badly-healed fractures,

BOX 9.4 MEDIEVAL BATH IN A ROMAN RUIN: CRYPTA BALBI

The Crypta Balbi excavations from 1981 were notable for their archaeological study of a continuous sequence from early Roman period to the twentieth century, all recorded to a high level of precision (Manacorda 1982). This excavation was the first of its kind in the city of Rome, and set a standard admired over much of Europe. To the director, Daniele Manacorda, and his team, the medieval period was thus as important as any other, and provided an opportunity to put well-known types of pottery (such as maiolica) into a stratigraphic context for the first time (Saguí 1990, 6).

Reading the stratigraphic sequence was, however, far from simple. The Roman presence consisted of a massive theatre constructed by L. Cornelius Balba in AD13. Beside the theatre was an area facing an internal courtyard (the Crypta Balbi), attached to a monumental *exedra* (semi-circular meeting area) (Fig 1).

In 1981 the strata lay 4m deep, and considerable skill was required by the excavators to distinguish the events that occurred and put them in stratigraphic order (Fig 2). The Medieval use of the area had developed within the robust hulk of a partly buried Roman building, itself surviving to different heights, which was tunnelled into, quarried and re-exploited. Its principal function from the eleventh to the fourteenth century was as a bathhouse with two baths, contrived in the corridor of the *exedra* (Fig 3). The eleventh century bathhouse had a water cistern and a furnace used to heat the hypocaust of a room

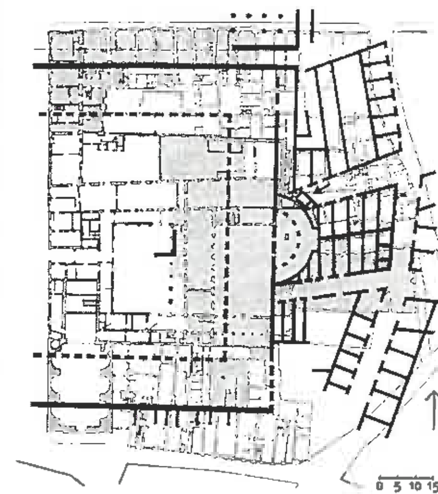


Fig 1
The Roman theatre of Balba (in black) and the convent of the Renaissance period (in grey). The excavated area is stippled, and marked with a black arrow is the part of the semicircular corridor of the Roman exedra that was recommissioned in the Middle Ages as a bathhouse (Saguí 1990, fig. 1).

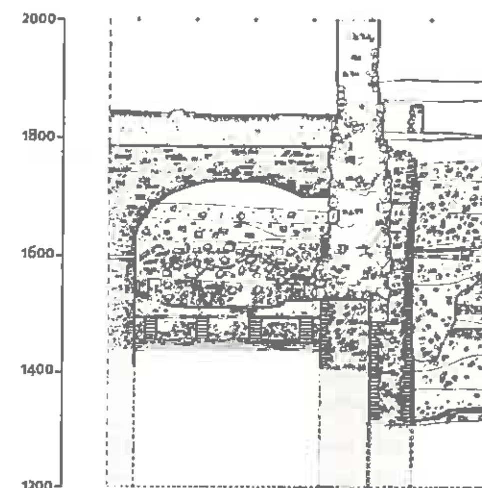


Fig 2
North-south section through the exedra, showing the hypocaust of the bathouse (left) (Saguí 1990, fig. 78).

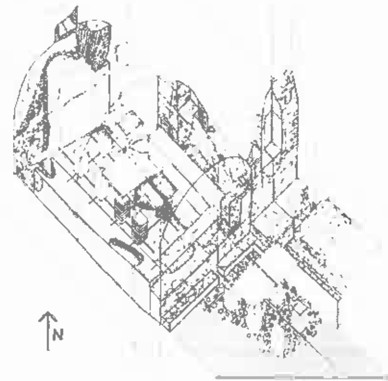


Fig 3

Axonometric reconstruction of the bathhouse in the late 13th century (Period VIIA) (Saguí 1990, fig. 65).

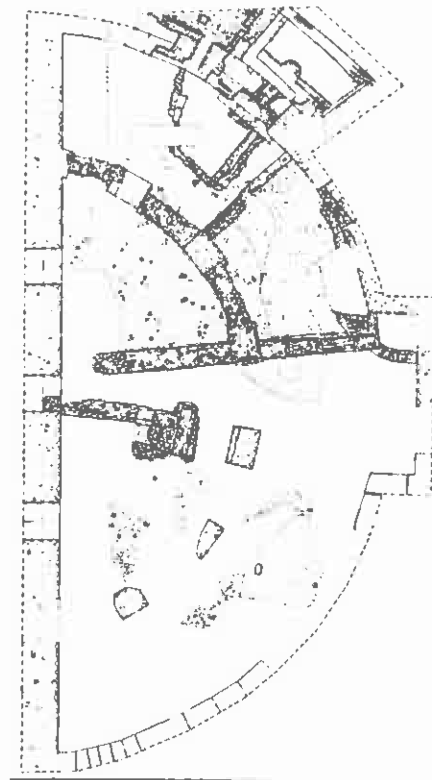


Fig 4

Plan of the exedra in the early 13th century (Period VI). The bath house is at the top right (Saguí 1990, fig. 58).

with a paved floor. In the late twelfth-early thirteenth century, the bathhouse was restored, and a new entrance constructed. This phase was characterised by abundant coins and jetons, and the arrival of green glazed and polychrome pottery and protomaiolica. The bathhouse was enlarged and refurbished in the later thirteenth century, occupying the whole area of the ancient exedra and with an additional heated room – perhaps a sweat room (Fig 4). By the later fourteenth century, the baths were abandoned and demolished.

This example reinforces the situation that many urban excavators have confronted, namely that European towns do not normally create a large dome of deposit, like the Bronze Age tell settlements of western Asia, with the latest phases at the top and the earliest at the bottom. Where there are robust constructions, as in many former Roman cities, the later settlement grows up around and inside them. In Poitiers, for example, the late medieval citizens tunnelled through the rubble of demolished Roman buildings and into the foundations of the town wall to make themselves a suite of cellars, later rediscovered, to their considerable astonishment, by nineteenth century antiquaries engaged in subterranean explorations of the town (Carver 1983, 361-369).

by Martin Carver (source: Manacorda 1982 and Saguí 1990)

rickets and infestation by parasites. There were probably many more diseases whose presence cannot be proved (see also Ch 12, p 479).

Care of the body, health provision and medical care were also provided in public bathhouses (Tuchen 2003; Box 9.4). Their location in the town was obviously dependent on the provision of freshwater. The bath chamber with sweat-chamber or plunge bath was on the ground floor, where there was also the oven for heating the bath chamber and dousing as well as heating arrangements for the boiler to heat the bath water. Next there were also rooms for undressing, cleaning and resting. The upper floor contained the living quarters of the bath attendant. He worked as a barber and attended to wounds and small operations. But he was mainly responsible for blood-letting, which medieval medicine considered to have a particularly beneficial effect. This was carried out through the application of bleeding cups, which, together with combs, brushes and scissors, are part of the assemblage found in bathing establishments.

Decline in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries and the consequences of the Reformation

The economic, demographic and political crisis of the late Middle Ages meant that only a few new towns were founded during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries and that these never developed beyond the status of small or minor towns (see above); this crisis is also noticeable in the development of established towns (Baeriswyl 2003, 270-3). The decrease in population brought the spatial expansion of towns to a halt. The suburbs were no longer occupied and inner-city areas declined as houses were abandoned, leaving larger plots of land. Yet the fifteenth century is also characterised by the fact that it was the period where topographic modifications were made in many towns, and this for the first time since their emergence. Catastrophic fires, but also economic recovery after a period of crisis were motives for restructuring the town, for instance by creating prestigious open spaces.

The Reformation had a long-lasting impact on urban development in the regions of Europe that became Protestant. It led to a comprehensive transformation of the urban topography, in a way comparable to the transformations that took place in the nineteenth century. While urban parish churches were adapted to spaces for Protestant religious services, the large monastic complexes and the chapels lost their function. They came into the possession of the towns or the town leaders or became private property and were either destroyed or given over to wholly or partly new uses (Gaimster & Gilchrist 2003, 221-324). Lund in Sweden provides an example. In the Middle Ages the town had around 20 parish churches. After the Reformation only the cathedral remained and Lund also lost its archbishop, a momentous event for the city. One nunnery church became a parish church and four monasteries disappeared. Even though these transformations did not happen overnight it was a significant change for the townscape. The newly created large open spaces in the inner-cities provided room for newly developing profane uses: town squares, new streets and buildings of different aspect. These developments had a profound effect on the physical aspect of towns lasting up to the remodeling of the nineteenth century.

For a map and historical framework for al-Andalus, please see Ch 1, p 19

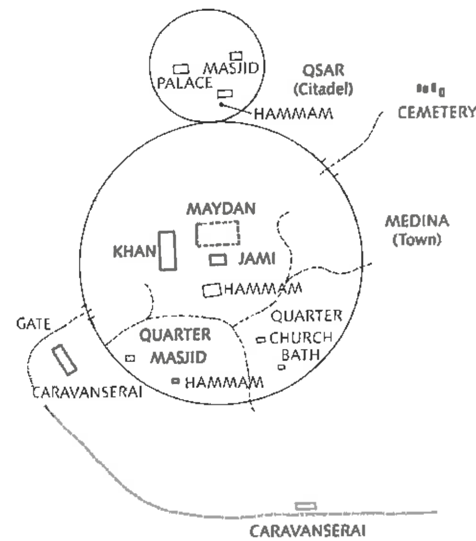


Fig 1

Schematic plan showing the elements of an Islamic town, with the qsar (citadel) the medina (town), jami (Friday mosque [sing.]) masjid (other mosques), hammam (baths) maydan (market hall) and a Christian quarter (Carver 1996, fig. 8.2).

Defining the nature of the city under Islam has naturally been influenced by the background of the scholars concerned, and whether they approach from a western or an eastern perspective. Explicitly or implicitly, the point of departure for most western studies has been the work of Max Weber (1864-1920), who emphasized a difference between the Western and Eastern city. While the western city was engaged in putting Europe on the road to capitalism, the agglomeration of burgesses and merchants free of military and bureaucratic control that he saw in the east, did not, in Weber's opinion, qualify as a proper city.

The Weberian legacy is present in some of the issues that have dominated the historiography of the Islamic city during most of the twentieth century. William and then Georges Marçais examined the cities of the Maghreb that were under French colonial rule (Marçais W. 1928, Marçais G 1945). Their studies, along with input from Brunschvig (1947), incorporating information from Muslim law, that of Sauvaget (1934 and 1941) on Syria and the synthesis of Von Grunebaum (1955), defined what has been called the "traditional concept" of the Muslim city, featuring a long-term continuity of use and character (see Fig 1 for a model). These inquiries, which mainly involved detailed descriptions of the *madîna* (the trading and residential part of the town), must be placed in the context of colonialism. Attitudes changed as decolonisation took hold between 1945 and 1962, since from then on European scholars could hardly maintain a belief in the superiority of their own social, political and cultural system (Raymond 1995, 318).

From the middle of the twentieth century and up to end of the seventies, urban studies continued to develop a more critical, socio-economic interpretation of the role of the medina and its changing history, and since the early eighties most of the literature has been permeated by the thinking of Edward Said, whose book *Orientalism* (1978) postulated that western interpretation was based on a number of insecure ethnocentric assumptions that had acquired scientific value by virtue of their repetition in print. The influence of Said is explicit in most of the voices of the new critical current such as Brown K (1976), Ilbert (1982), Djaït (1986), Abu-Lughod (1987), AlSayyad (1991) and the Japanese school (Haneda & Mihura 1995). The main thrust of the new critique is directed against the alleged immutability of the medina, exposing the city described in the colonial literature as one that was actually itself created in colonial times.

Fig 2

Courtyard house unearthed in the Islamic suburb of Zaragoza (11th century) (photo provided by J. Mª Viladés Castillo).

In Spain, modern investigation begins (as in so many historical fields) with the work of Leopoldo Torres Balbás (1968, 1971). He considered that the cities of al-Andalus were profoundly different from those of contemporary Christian Spain. They manifested a *"uniform urban Islamic mould"* that was *"a consequence of a way of life"* and they were *"totally different to the Christian areas"* (Torres 1968, 68, 92-93). Emphasis on the socio-economic and administrative aspects of the city was taken up in the work of Lévy-Provençal (1950) and Pedro Chalmeta (1973). In 1992 Basilio Pavón published a monograph with the same title as that of Torres Balbás and a content indebted to it, especially with regard to the overall themes treated. But Pavón included a descriptive catalogue of 59 Hispano-Arabic cities plus 5 Luso-Arabic examples (Islamic-Portuguese), adding 35 more in his monumental 1999 treatise. In 1996 Ch. Mazzoli-Guintard published *Villes d'Al-Andalus*, a work based largely on Arabic sources but which also included some archaeological data, especially from the excavations of the abandoned towns such as Madînat al-Zahrâ', Saltés, Siyâsa and Vascos.

Traditional studies of urbanism in al-Andalus drew principally on written sources and the surviving urban fabric in cities like Granada, Toledo and Córdoba. Early medieval archaeologists carried out some investigations at abandoned sites such as Madînat al-Zahrâ', Medina Elvira or Bobastro during the first decades of the twentieth century, but their objectives were mainly artistic or historical and the results obtained were very modest. It is from the seventies that interest in medieval archaeology in general, and al-Andalus in particular begins, accelerating in the following decade thanks to the pace of rescue archaeology in modern cities with an Andalusian past, such as Córdoba, Seville, Granada, Toledo, Málaga, Almería, Murcia, Valencia, Zaragoza, Calatayud and Albarracín. Although some *madînas* and villages were depopulated or abandoned after the Castillian conquest, most settlements have survived as archaeological deposits captured in and under the Christian towns that succeeded them.

The urban planning of the Caliphate period is represented in the splendid courtly city of Madinat al-Zahrâ', the abandoned town of Pechina which corresponds to the former Bayyana (Almería) and, of course, Córdoba. The eleventh and early twelfth centuries see the final phase of Vascos (Toledo) and

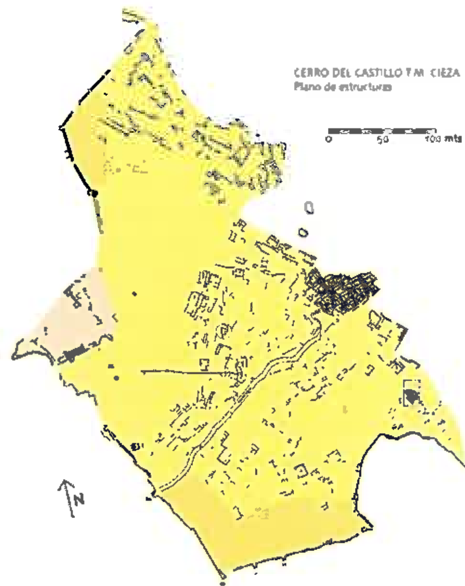


Fig 3

Plan of the abandoned 12-13th century town of Siyâsa (Cieza, Murcia), showing the traces of walls visible on the surface, the area excavated (east), the citadel (west) and the cemetery (south) (see also fig. 4.12).

the recently unearthed urban complexes in Zaragoza (Fig 2). In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries archaeological sequences have come to light in rescue excavations at Murcia, Valencia, Xativa, Denia, Orihuela, Elche, and Lorca, and area excavations have revealed parts of abandoned sites at Bofilla, l'Almisserá, Yecla, Calasparra and especially Siyâsa (Cieza) (Fig 3; and see Fig 4.12).

The complexity of the topic and the great quantity of ongoing information coming from different disciplines, especially from archaeology and Arabic studies, mean that it is still difficult to construct an overall synthesis. This is why the work of the last few years has been mainly reported in the proceedings of scientific meetings. Some of these have dealt with the topic in a general way (AAVV 1991; 2001), whereas others have addressed specific topics, such as the origins of the Andalusian cities (AAVV. 1998), or the information inherent in legal sources (AAVV. 2000b). There is also a large number of articles and monographs dedicated to different localities, cities and villages of Andalusian origin. Some of these study the complete medieval landscape of the town and others a certain urban element (wall, baths, fort, etc.). Some works are based exclusively on written sources, others are fully archaeological, and some combine both types of sources. Further guidance to the bibliography will be found in our monographs on the urbanism of al-Andalus (Navarro and Jiménez 2007a, 30) and on the site of Siyâsa (Navarro and Jiménez 2007b, 194-199).

At present almost all experts accept that the medina was not an unchanging entity (see above), rejecting simultaneously the idea that the traditional examples that survived into the beginning of the twentieth century need resemble their medieval antecedents. However, we have as yet seen very little tangible evidence for the origin and development of the earliest cities and how they were transformed into what survives. A recent thesis proposed the elements, relationships and basic operational rules of urban morphogenesis and then applied them to the Islamic city (García-Bellido 1999). In 2003 we published a study on the Islamic city and its evolution, which took as its basis the idea that all Islamic cities are constantly changing, and tried to define the guidelines governing the formation of the urban fabric. In effect we proceeded in the opposite way from García-Bellido, beginning with the archaeological results and arguing for the general principles that should apply. The sources used were basically three: archaeological, ethno-archaeological and textual, especially Islamic, and we focussed on two exceptional sites: the abandoned town of Siyâsa and the present city of Murcia (Fig 4) (Navarro and Jimenez 2007a).

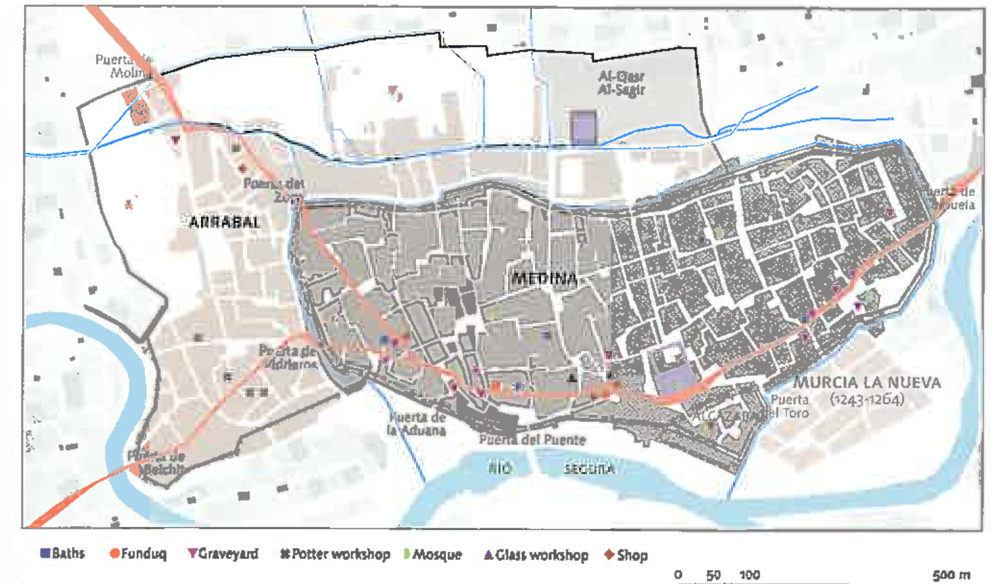


Fig 4

Archaeological plan of the city of Murcia in the 13th century, showing the town wall and the sites of excavations.

The results of these studies show that urban agglomerations were initially much less dense within the city walls than they became in the later Andalusian era (Navarro & Jiménez 2007c). As the urban population grew, green areas disappeared, property was divided, houses acquired multiple storeys, encroached on streets and acquired jetties, and there was a proliferation of alleys and cul-de-sacs to gain access to properties behind. Religious forces were also at work. It was an obligation on all citizens to attend service on a Friday at the same congregational mosque, which meant that there was a regular meeting of all the believers living inside the walls and in the hinterland. This had a number of consequences for urban development. First, it attracted a concentration of commercial establishments around the mosque; second, it developed a network of streets joining the mosque with the gates through the town wall and with other principal routes; and, third, it encouraged the linear development of souks on both sides of the arteries so generated (see also Ch 11, pt4). These changes gave us the town that became characterized as 'Islamic', but the true nature of the earlier, less densely occupied, Islamic cities of the Middle Ages still remains obscure.

by Julio Navarro Palazón and Pedro Jiménez Castillo