

In the Street

On the Transformation of Spatial Practice in Medieval Trondheim

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Abstract

Lived space is about space entangled in social practices. It is endowed with characteristics that go beyond metric measures and require mental, social and material insight. I will approach the issue of lived urban space perceived as the transformation of performed urban spatial practices. Based on a case study of the main street and its adjacent properties in medieval Trondheim, I intend (1) to recognize and describe practice patterns which have created and recreated the urban populations concept of spaces, and (2) to examine how these practices may have influenced the customary notions of space and spatial relations. I will address issues such as (a) how urban spatial practice can be archeologically observed as performative actions; (b) how changes in spatial practices can illuminate the contemporary conception of space. A basic assumption underpinning my use of proxy data is that the continuous recreation of urbanscape is nourished by the performing of everyday practices.

Introduction: Objectives and approaches

Living in towns means that one is incessantly confronted with requirements for the comprehension of and adequate approach to urban space. Inasmuch as “lived space” is about space entangled in social practices it is endowed with characteristics that go far beyond metric measures and require mental, social and practical insight. In the following I will approach the issue of the transformation of *lived urban space* perceived as the transformation of *performed urban spatial practices*. Based on a case study of the diverse spatial uses of the main street area in medieval Trondheim I intend (1)

to recognize and describe practice patterns which have contributed to create and recreate the relation of the urban population to public spaces, and (2) to shed some light on how these practices may in turn have influenced the customary notions of space and spatial relations, ultimately so decisive for the creation of urban lived space and hence for the transformation of the medieval urban way of life. Below I will specifically address the following research issues: (a) How can urban spatial practice be archeologically observed in the sense of *performative actions*? (b) How can observations of changes in

spatial practices illuminate the contemporary conception(s) of space? and (c) How and with what consequences for the urban spatial use specifically, and medieval urban people in general, did the concept of “space” change during the Middle Ages? For this purpose, I will investigate how the property owners along one of the main streets in medieval Trondheim, named Kaupmannastretet (“The Merchant’s Street”), performed their perceived social opportunities, rights and responsibilities at the border between the private properties and the public street space.

A basic assumption underpinning my use of proxy data is that urbanscape is a continuous recreational process whose dynamic is nourished by the performing of everyday practices. This theoretical point of departure may be close to Lefebvre’s statement that “(Social) space is a (social) product” and “spatial practice” as space embracing the production and reproduction of social practices embedded in social formations and thus a result of a specific mode of production. This presentation basically acknowledges Lefebvre’s “spatial triade” as a relevant theoretical approach to investigate the pathology of “lived urban space” (Lefebvre 1991, 38f.; Watkins 2005, 210). Zhang (2006, 220f.), Elden (2004) and Hernes (2004) state that the notions of perceived, conceived and lived space are easily confused and that they are locked in oppositions without any reconciliation. Lefebvre himself pointed to “representation of space” or “conceived space” as the most dominant space in current society. He uses this notion for space made up of symbols and codification, thus strictly dependent on an idealistic approach to the world which is close to social-constructivist conceptions. Although Lefebvre in his later writings gradually became aware of this and started to see “lived space”, in the sense of pure human experience, as a bridging notion between perceived and conceived space (Zhongyuan

Zhang (2006, 221), the analytical use of Lefebvre’s triade construction will reduce the necessary comprehension of complexity and dynamics of spatial phenomenon in the development of everyday spatial practice patterns, and thus is not particularly helpful in the search for the same. An alternative approach is a variant of social practice theory based on works by, amongst others, Andreas Reckwitz (2002), Theodor Schatzky (2008, 2009) and Elizabeth Shove, Mika Pantzar and Matt Watson (2012). I will not go deep into this matter apart from briefly rendering some basic concepts in order to facilitate the logic of the following attempt at an overall interpretation. Following Shove, Pantzar and Watson (2012) I will use the concept of “*practice pattern*” for certain routinized behaviour patterns encompassing the three essential elements of *material resources* (things, technologies, raw material, physical entities landscape, climate, space etc.) *competence* (skill, know-how, experience), and *meaning* (symbolic meanings, ideas, aspirations, intentions, social and cultural norms and concepts etc.). Through the manifold different everyday activities these elements come across and intertwine in definite constellations or patterns named practice patterns, bundles and complexes. The significant dynamic agent which brings these elements together, maintaining and/or dissolving the relations, is the act of performance. We shall not go further in this extremely short introduction except to emphasize a point made by Theodor Schatzky that performance, or human activity, always develops within the dimension of *timespace*, a situation where the actual performative act becomes dependent on the individual’s past (individual intentions, projects), present (the terms of actual doings and sayings) and future (expectations, dreams): “Timespace is, strictly speaking, a feature of an individual human life” (Schatzki 2009, 2013, 39). Lifted to a collective social level, it is the dynamic of

creating and recreating social practice patterns and bundles that imbues urban life with its specific content and performative expressions. To comprehend how the elements in practice patterns and bundles entangle, stick together and eventually dissolve is essential when it comes to shedding light on the evolution of medieval urban life.

An important part of Schatzki's theory of practice is his "site ontology", which puts the focus on spatial dimensions in social life (Everts *et al.* 2015, 324f.). This approach combines "general" practice theory and "arrangement theories" and aims at illuminating how different entities of material and immaterial elements are connected within complex networks. From this evolves a process of ordering comprising entities such as material things, people and meaning. While "practice" can be conceptualized as an organized nexus of doings and sayings (Everts *et al.* 2015, 326), orderings and arrangements are relations and positions which in Schatzki's conceptualization encompass a specific quality of being labile: Principally no orders are stable but rather "temporally and spatially unfolding sites that are made of the mesh of practices and orders" (Everts *et al.* 2015, 326). From this come possibilities of unforeseen change, transformation and becoming. Consequently there is no such trajectory like a straightforward direction according to Schatzki, on the contrary, he characterizes the life and death of orders as fuzzy, threatening, unsurveyable and cognitively dissonant (Schatzki 2002, 226). This subject is of extreme importance for the comprehension of the evolution of urban social practice, and will be demonstrated and discussed in the following analysis of the inconsistent use of public and private space along Kaupmannastretet.

Based on these short and incomplete theoretical statements I will give priority to studying *how* social practices related to the use of public space occur rather than *why*: While

this "why" will make us focusing on simple functional and causal relations, the question of "how", will force us towards a focus on the inner discursive connections between the practice pattern elements, thus preventing us from a fatal delusion of lived urban space as simple functional relationships between forms and structures.

Spatial practice in medieval Kaupmannastretet

In an article from 2010 Megan Cassidy-Welch pointed out that spatial phenomena "might be abstract, material, performed and imagined" (Cassidy-Welch 2010, 2), and thus ideal as an "analytical category which has the potential to add methodological weight to discussions of past spatial practices" (p. 3). She particularly points out the lack of research on the creation of public space tied to the development of ideas about citizenship and sovereignty (Cassidy-Welch 2010, 8). My follow up of Cassidy-Welch's methodological challenge is to show within an urban context how social practices where use of space is decisive link intentions ("projects"), material environment, norms and concepts of space and rights which constitute new urban spatial practices which in turn are influential in the evolution of a concept of "urban citizenship" in advance of a legal codification of the term. Archaeology is about the material remains of social practice processes (Christophersen 2015, 110ff.), or put more sophisticatedly, "*fossilized performativity*". Following Show and Pantzar (2006, 58ff.) social fossilization can be comprehended as a process where social elements such as materials, knowledge and meanings, ideas etc. that previously were entangled elements in social practice patterns, bundles or systems, for various reasons have lost their interlinkage, are dissolved and stranded. In the case of archaeology, all the

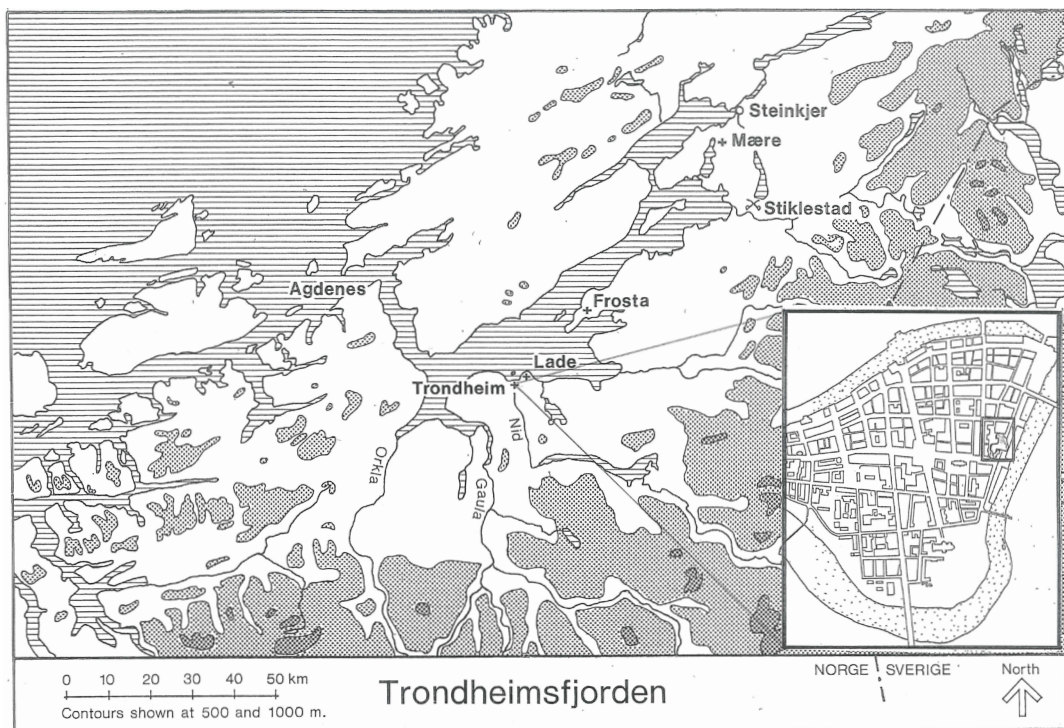


Fig. 1. Trondheim and its natural surroundings. The small map shows Trondheim city and the location of the Library Site. After Christophersen 1994 fig. 1 with small map addition.

material remains from houses to plants have lost their contemporary social, cultural and productive qualities and are, literally, pacified, neutralized and eventually “wrapped up” in the refuse of forthcoming social activities. In the following I will try to demonstrate how archaeological material from medieval Trondheim is able to reveal changes in the material uses of space along the border between a public area, Kaupmannastretet, and the privately owned properties on each side of the street. From this empirical point of departure, we will search for clues about possible premises for the transformation of practice patterns behind the observed changes of lived space.

Between 1973 and 1985 around 60 m of the main street named Kaupmannastretet in 1276 was uncovered in the centre of medieval Trondheim (Fig. 1). The street originated from

an earlier narrow stone- and gravel-paved trackway following a sand ridge dividing the river from a shallow inlet, around which the first regulated settled area grew up probably during the 10th century, if not earlier (Fig. 2). The street could be followed through 19 layers covering a period of more than 700 years, from the last half of the 10th century to *c.* AD 1700 (Christophersen & Nordeide 1994, 73ff.). The trackway – in which wheel tracks were observed in the middle – was clearly incorporated in a regulation of the spatial use of land around a small inlet leading out to the river and ultimately to the Strindfjord which is connected with the sea and the inner shipping lane along the coast. From an early stage the space occupied by the trackway seems to have been formally decided because ditches were dug and fences were set up along the gravelled trackway. It seems that the

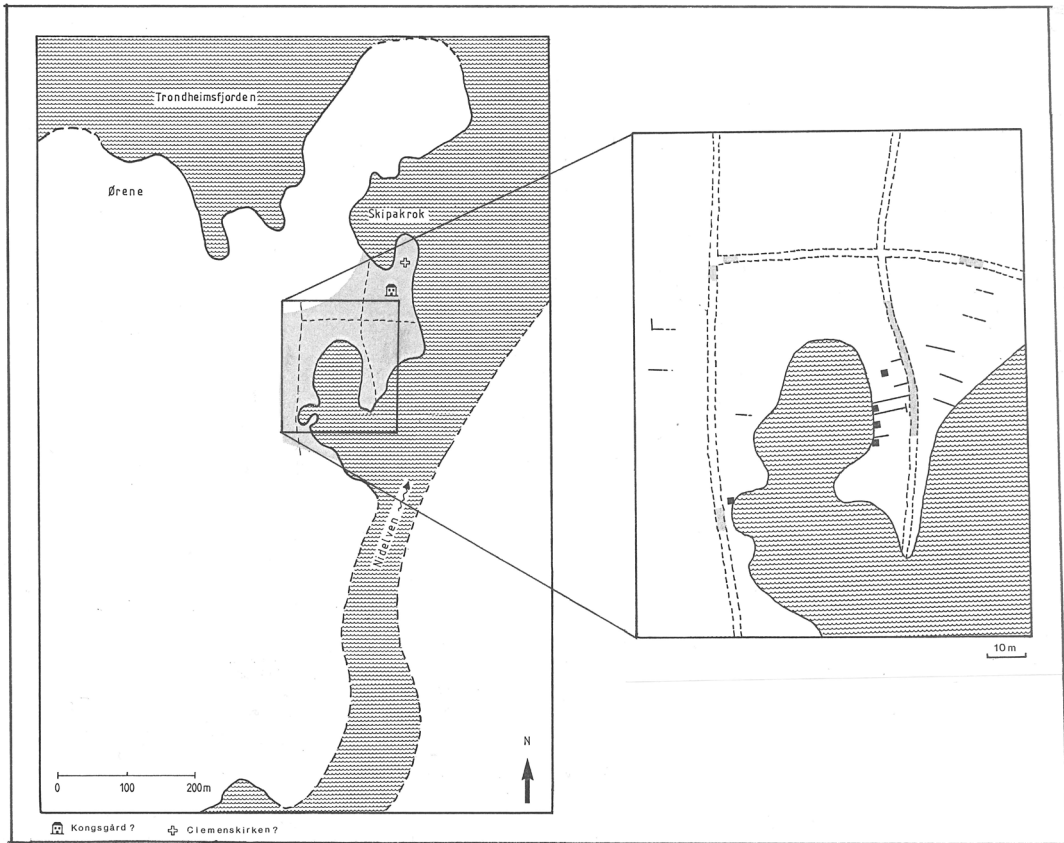


Fig. 2. The Nidarnes peninsula and the oldest regulated settlement area. After Christophersen 2001, fig. 2.

practice of physically marking the property boundary was introduced when the first inhabitants settled continually on the plots one by one, as if it was necessary for some reason to demarcate and make visible the property boundary and the border between the private plots and the public trackway. Up to the second half of the 11th century the trackway changed both in construction and in the use of material, but it did not change its layout or proportions, neither in relation to the natural terrain or to the adjacent plots. From the second half of the 11th century (phase 4) the trackway increasingly took the shape of an ordinary street, which from now on and during the rest of the Middle Ages was entirely paved with longitudinally oriented

planks resting on joists. Due to a considerable growth in population and settlement activity, the width of the street was for obvious practical reasons extended from the previous 3 m to 3.6 m. which seems to have been the standard width of the street area during rest of the Middle Ages. An interesting detail, to which we shall return in our final discussion, is the existence of a division of the street area, clearly marked out from the beginning of the 12th century (phase 5) with big, longitudinal logs or planks. In the following I will, however concentrate on another phenomenon triggering the crucial question of *how those who lived and worked on the plots along the street related to the public area right outside their living space*. An early observation of the street

area revealed alterations in the borderline between the street and the plots (Fig. 3): The borders between the private plots and the public street area were pushed back and forth in a “grey zone” of about one metre. These alterations seem to have been irregular and temporal. An early explanation was that when old and rotten foundation posts supporting the log cabins adjacent to the street had to be replaced by new ones, they had, for practical reasons, to position the new posts a bit outside the old ones, causing a grey zone of “no-man’s-land” between private and public space to arise (Fig. 4). A new examination of the primary documentation shows, however, that the “fluid borders” were not a materialized result of a shared spatial practice carried out amongst all the property owners along the street, despite the fact that all the houses had changed foundation posts several times. It rather seemed that the phenomenon of “fluid borders” was restricted only to a few plots on both sides of the street (Fig. 5a): While e.g. the border in front of plot 6 west of the street in the northern part of the parcel system practically did not move or change direction at all between AD 1100 and 1325 (phase 5–9) (Fig. 6a), the big merged plot 2B+3 in south of the parcelled area on the same side of the street had gradually moved its border towards the west around 1.10 m between 1150 and 1325 (phase 6–9) (Fig. 6b) This displacement of the border between street and property caused a considerable secondary, locally defined dislocation of the border without changing the overall direction of the street further south (Fig. 7). Nor was it caused by the replacement of deteriorated foundation posts. The remaining seven plots on the west side of the street exhibited minor variations, a 10–30 cm deviation in the border between the private plots and the street area. The *east side* of the street was partially damaged by younger disturbances except outside some plots, e.g. plot 8A in phase 5 (AD 1100–1150): just

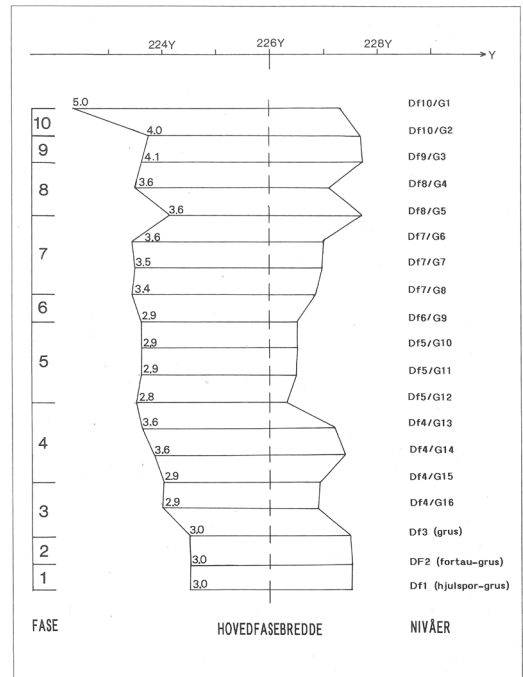


Fig. 3. “Fluid borders” along Kaupmannastretet on the Library Site, Trondheim. After Christophersen & Nordeide 1994, fig. 54.



Fig. 4. Northern part of Kaupmannastretet in phase 9 (AD 1275–1325) with rows of foundation post for workshops and stalls along the west side of the street. Note that half of the street to the west is unpaved. Photo: Riksantikvarens Utgravningskontor i Trondheim.

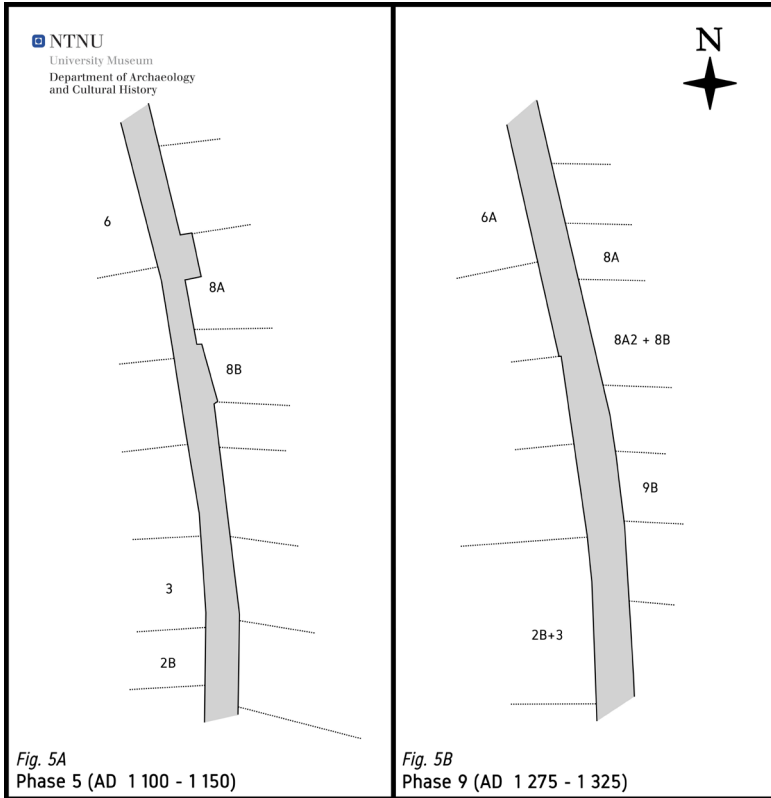


Fig. 5a-b.
Kaupmannastretet in
phase 5 (AD 1100–
1150) and phase 9
(AD 1275–1325) with
some of the properties
mentioned in the text
outlined. Drawing: Axel
Christophersen and
Trond Sverre Skevik,
NTNU University
Museum, Department of
Archaeology and Cultural
History.

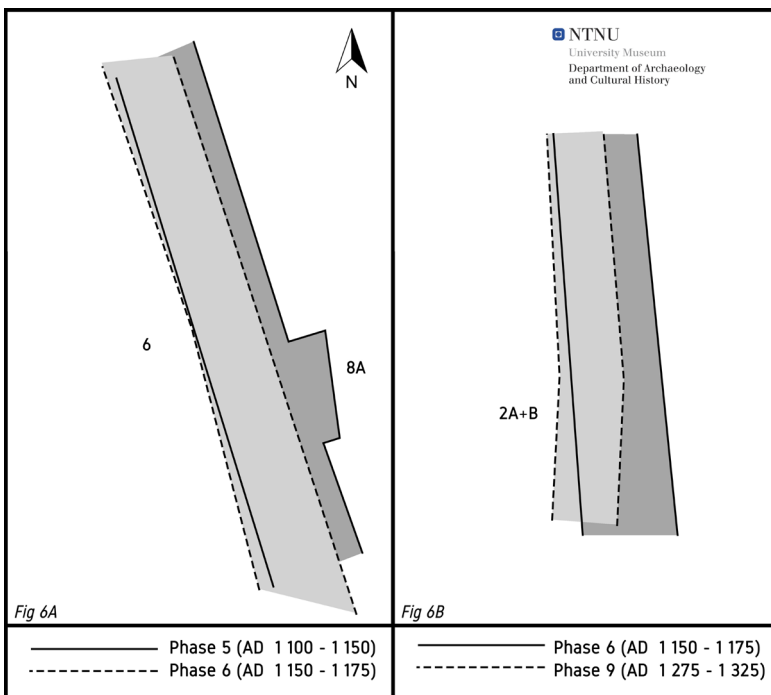


Fig. 6a-b. The
borderline between
Kaupmannastretet and
the property 6 and
8A in phase 5–6 (AD
1100–1175) and 2B+3
in phase 6 and 9 (AD
1115–1325). Drawing:
Axel Christophersen and
Trond Sverre Skevik.



Fig. 7. Two levels of paving in Kaupmannastretet in upper phase 4 (c. AD 1100.) The upper paving has a different direction from the underlying paving because it had been led on to an open area in property 9A E of the street. Photo: Riksantikvarens Utgravningskontor i Trondheim.

outside the poor remains of a house adjacent to the street located in this plot, a section of the street pavement had been extended by 3.5 m with long joists and thus established a roughly 3 m long and 1.3 m wide section of the street pavement directly on the private space of property 8A (Fig. 6a). The paved area in phases 5 and 6 (AD 1100–1175) covered an earlier house in phase 4 (AD 1050–1100) on the same spot, but in phase 7 (AD 1175–1225) it was once again occupied by a house.

On both property 2A+B and 8A the archaeological remains indicate that a spatial prioritization had taken place grounded in an intentional, provisional, reversible

and individually completed task, most likely implemented by the property owner: Dragging a part of the public street pavement into the property's private area was a way of making private space available for public use. Why? To answer this, we need to take into account the function of the houses and related activities facing the street. Earlier research (Christophersen 1990, 1997, 1999) has proved that these houses without exceptions were workshops and stalls, and as such local "hot spots" for productive and commercial activities (Fig. 8). While there are no objects clearly related to trade and craft activities on property 8A in phase 4 (Nordeide 1989, 60f.), comb- and needle making was extensively carried out on the property between AD 1100 and 1175 (phases 5 and 6) (Nordeide 1989, 77f.). Likewise, extensive metalworking was carried out on the merged property 2B+3, where casting of small silver crosses and brooches was replaced in the first half of the 12th century by smithing (Bergquist 1989, 120ff.). Leading, or rather widening, the street's wooden pavement in front of the workshop located on the property's private space was an effective way to direct people in the street onto the stall in order to facilitate the desired commercial transaction by giving space, distance and isolation from the crowded and disruptive street life.

From written sources we witness an interesting parallel but different spatial practice performed on the edge of private and public space: In Magnus Lagabøte's Town Law from 1276 there are sections which aim to regulate the construction activities in the town: If owners of the properties built houses that reached out into the street, as much of the house should be cut away as extended beyond the legal building line. We have no such archaeological observations, but we know from written sources that this practice seems to have been a serious problem at least in the 13th century. In 1313 King Håkon V



Fig. 8. Workshops and stalls dominated the front buildings along Kaupmannastretet c. AD 1250. Note the big logs which indicate the middle of the street. Reconstruction in the medieval exhibition, NTNU University Museum, based on the archaeological excavations at the Library Site 1973–1985. Photo: Trond Sverre Skevik, NTNU University Museum, Department of Archaeology and Cultural History.

Magnusson gave amnesty to those who had built their houses out in the “commons”, which was a wide, public street area, after a major fire in the 1290s (Blom 1956, 282f.). If this practice continued every house should be demolished and the property owners should pay a sizeable fine, the king proclaimed. These examples indicate that the spatial practice of using public street space for private purposes was so common that it eventually called upon royal action and legal regulation. We shall return to this point later.

When it comes to the enforcement of borders between *private properties*, the borders stand out as more stable and continuous. This may imply that the perception of private space was, or became, an element in spatial practice in Trondheim during the first half of the 12th century which differed from the perception of public space and thus contributed to establishing a spatial practice that was stricter and more respectful of private property

borders than the same between private and public space. A consequence of this practice is the regularly archaeological observed remains of densely built houses on each side of private property boundaries, leaving only room for an eavesdrop between the houses. This practice led to a cementation and further stabilization of the borders between private urban space.

To sum up so far: A provisional interpretation of the archaeological remains of a part of Kaupmannastretet and the front houses adjacent to the street has revealed in this part of the town a shared spatial practice that caused “fluid borders” between public and private space during the 12th and 13th century. This practice was performed in such a way that spatial proportions, scope and design could differ from property to property, which emphasizes on the one hand the *individuality* in the performance of the practice, on the other hand that the performative act unfolded itself within a shared mental framework allowing

a seemingly loose and to a certain extent unrestricted spatial practice of entangling private and public space.

Why was the spatial practice in the street transformed?

The question of why this spatial practice developed can possibly be tied to intentions where personal gains and interests – such as “more customers, better sales, more revenue” and “I need more space for my planned new building” – are closely related to decisive challenges in living and surviving in an urban society that experienced rapid population growth, increased market competition and an urbanscape with great difficulties complying with enough space for both public nor private space requirements. The main question is however, *how* this spatial practice went from a proto-practice in the first half of the 12th century, stabilized during the next two decades and finally, as we soon shall demonstrate, became an ex-practice in the first half of the 14th century and from then on no longer was a part of the daily spatial routines in the urban society of Trondheim. To approach this issue, we shall return to our analytical point of departure, the concept of *social practice* and its basic elements *material resources* (i.e. things, technologies, raw material, physical entities landscape, climate, space etc.) *competence* (i.e. skill, know-how, experience), and *meaning* (i.e. symbolic meanings, ideas, aspirations, intentions, social and cultural norms and concepts etc.). In our case study *material* is the local urbanscape, particularly the streets and the adjacent houses, *competence* is the current norms and concepts defining the nature of spatiality and how they are applied locally, *meaning* is the intentions behind the actual “doings”. I have already suggested what possibly could be an important intention behind the practice of transforming private

space to a public place, i.e. to create a competitive edge in the struggle for consumers of urban commodities. In the following I will concentrate on the two remaining elements embedded in social practice pattern, material and competence.

1) *Materiality*. From the very beginning of the non-rural habitation on the Nidarnes, the borderline between the trackway and the properties was physically demarcated by ditches and fences and thus made visible in the early urbanscape. This line was never exceeded along the observed part of Kaupmannastretet until the first half of the 12th century. At this time the visibility of the same borderlines had transformed to blurry lines marked by an assemblage of random and reused planks and joists. *There was no longer a physical and authoritative demarcation of the boundary*, which made it considerably harder to exceed the borderline between private and public space. Although the borderline was visually recognizable it was visible in a less distinct, neutral and authoritative way than the previous demarcation practice (Fig. 4). A circumstance that significantly weakened the physical demarcation of the boundary was the introduction of a new practice for street maintenance (Figs. 6 and 9). According to King Magnus Lagabøte’s Town Law from 1276, the owners of the properties were obliged to maintain the street outside their plots to the middle of the street (Blom 1956, 282f.). The archaeological material remains of Kaupmannastretet show, however, a physical demarcation of the street’s median as early as in phase 5 (AD 1100–1150). This might indicate that the provision of the property owner’s maintenance obligations of the street might go back as far as the first half of the 12th century. It is striking that the emergence of “fluid borders” coincides with the introduction of a practice of private street maintenance. In the following I will argue (a) the possibility that this maintenance practice contributed to



Fig. 9. Paving in Kaupmannastretet c. AD 1100 (upper phase 4). Note that the western half of the street is unpaved due to different maintenance routines between property owners along the street. Photo: Riksantikvarens Utgravningskontor i Trondheim.

reduce the awareness and physical visibility of the established borders between the street and the property area, and (b) that the property owners were given an opportunity to physically make use of a part of the public street space that they intentionally covered. The required maintenance obligations gave rise to a changing materiality of the public street area, which unintentionally facilitated a change in a social practice pattern. In its turn this blurred the original borders between

private and public space and made them fluid and flexible for some generations.

2) *The concept of space* is a topic that has attracted much research interest, particularly in the last 10–15 years (for a review see Megan Cassidy-Welch 2010). In the following I will take as a point of departure the work of the German historian Harald Kleinschmidt who has discussed the medieval conceptions of space (Kleinschmidt 2000, 33ff.). He divides the notion in “the space of daily experience,

the space of regular communication and the world” (Kleinschmidt 2000, 34). The category “*space of daily experience*” represents space related to “the inner circle of activities of persons in groups, the estate, the house or the room”, while “*space of regular communication*” is the space “where one meets others, outsiders, friends, aliens, or enemies.” According to Kleinschmidt, there was no medieval territorial conception equivalent to a modern comprehension of the concept of a “public” and “private” space until the 12th century (Kleinschmidt 200, 47f.). The main reason for this conceptual evolution is that the church from the end of the tenth century had challenged the people’s comprehension of space as deeply rooted in family, kinship and group structures when they invited people across these social categories into the same religious space, the church interior for divine service (Kleinschmidt 2000, 46f.). Meanwhile this process of religious practice not was fully approved by the mass of people, the distinctions between the two categories of spatial categories became, according to Kleinschmidt, “vague and shifting in the early Middle Ages and allowed frequent overlaps” (Kleinschmidt 2000, 41). The further practical implication of the ambiguous notion of space was that the two categories did not exclude each other in terms of space and territory, Kleinschmidt states. Consequently, space was sometimes performed, under certain circumstances, as space of daily experience, other times as space of regular communication depending on the actual group belonging and related activities. This is probably what archaeologically has been observed as a particular spatial practice resulting in “fluid borders” in Kaupmannastretet from the beginning of the 12th century: The street outside the private properties 2B+3 and 8A seems during a period in the 13th century to have been conceived as space of daily practice and performed as private territory, for

example when individual or group (family) interests related to subsistence and welfare were threatened and/or had to be secured for the future.

Moving into town: The emergence of a new spatial practice.

Following Kleinschmidt’s analytical trajectory, the conceptions of “the *space of daily experience*” and “the *space of regular communication and the world*” seem to have existed side by side but encapsulated in different spatial practices along the street and between the private properties in Trondheim during the 12th to 14th centuries: While the concept of *space as a place for daily practices* was a well-integrated practice element consequently performed on the border between adjacent private spaces, the concept of *space of regular communication* was not at all consequently practised on the border between the public street area and the adjacent private properties. Under these circumstances fluid borders between private and public urban space were created, a temporary phenomenon which we might take as a striking example of “lived urban space” in the fact that public and private intentions and interests were mixed up in public space. Consequently, how did the two spatial conceptions become entangled and performed as a shared urban spatial practice during the period in question? A possible (but not necessarily the only) explanation is that it was brought into town by property owners, who practically were the only ones who could carry out this practice along the street. Some of them were rich farmers from the surrounding rural districts, and they could have introduced a spatial understanding based on the Nordic concept of “*allmenning*” (*common land*, which is near to Kleinschmidt’s concept of “*space of daily experience*”, but not completely coincidental. The earliest knowledge about

how the *allmenning* derives from the old Norse provincial laws from the end of the 12th century. The Frostating Law Codex applied to Central Norway (Solem 2009, 44ff.). From the sections that mention the common land rights it appears that only individuals or people related to a specific social group, kin or hamlet (Norwegian *bygd*) were granted access to the *allmenning* on a daily basis for fishing and hunting, gathering firewood and material for fencing, grass, berries etc. From this it follows that the spatial practice related to the utilization of the *allmenning* is a mixture of Kleinschmidt's notions of "*a place for daily practices*" and "*space of regular communication*": According to the Frostating Law the criterion of an *allmenning* was that it neither was a private territory nor was it owned by someone; it was accessed by the principle of usufruct and the access was reserved for safeguarding basic daily needs. Subsequently, the daily use of the *allmenning* was accessed through socially and not territorially defined relations, and the exploitation was restricted to safeguarding basic subsistence. The pivotal principle behind the evolution of such a spatial comprehension seems to have been rooted in a need to safeguard access to basic life subsistence resources for a group of socially related persons (through kinship, shared settlement etc.). Bringing into town this shared understanding of spatial practices evolved within an agricultural social and economic context caused a clash in the encounter with the more universal spatial concept of "*space of regular communication*" which did not open for a restricted personal or group presence in what was perceived as public space. This is, however, exactly what seems to have taken place along Kaupmannastretet from the first half of the 12th century. The fossilized remains of this spatial practice are the fluid borders observed between some of the properties adjacent to Kaupmannastretet. It stands out as a fascinating illustration of lived urban

space in transformation and a true verification of Kleinschmidt's statement that "*space of regular communication*" was "*designed for unrestricted, though not uncontrolled, use, and its boundaries are normally imagined lines of separation*" (Kleinschmidt 2000, 34). Both categories could, according to Kleinschmidt, vary from space to space and from time to time (Kleinschmidt 2000, 36). Possibly the property owners behind the spatial performance of the *allmenning* concept perceived the street area as equivalent to the use of the common land as a legally exploited resource for safeguarding the life subsistence instrumental for having a firm grip on the limited urban market.

The end of the fluid border practice

During the high Middle Ages the traditional comprehension of "*space of regular communication*" gradually became, as Kleinschmidt states (2000, 46ff.), equivalent to the modern territorial notion of "*public space*". Consequently, this gave way for practising the ruler's "*dominium secundum imperium*", a legal right to collect fees, fines etc. within a strictly defined territory. During the 12th century, this metrical concept of public space, the "*districtum*" or "*territorium*", gradually transformed the former notion of "*space of regular communication*" into a sharply territorialized comprehension of "*private*" and "*public*" space (Kleinschmidt 2000, 5). In Trondheim, we may get a glimpse of this transformation in the early 14th century: As far as the archaeological evidence allows us to draw conclusions, the phenomenon of fluid borders along the street at this time can no longer be observed after phase 9 (AD 1275–1350) (Fig. 5b). This strongly indicates that the practice of an archaic concept of space inherited from the

surrounding agricultural communities was extinct at that time. When King Håkon V Magnusson in 1313 claims Trondheim as “his town”, he states and confirms this based on an apprehension of the territory occupied by the town as his “dominium”. By doing this, and furthermore underpinning his territorial authority by enforcing the street regulations of the local Town Law from 1276, he performed a concept of space based on a principle of territoriality. He certainly seems to have taken it for granted that the townsmen unquestioningly accepted the legal consequences, whether they fully perceived the notion as the king did or not. Another reason for the king’s action can furthermore be found in the rapid urban population growth and its obvious negative impact on the urbanscape in terms of space requirements, unimpeded transport and a number of unpopular regulatory measures. The fluid borders of Kaupmannastretet obviously challenged the practical needs for a clear and authoritative division between public and private space. For these reasons, and other reasons unknown to us, the spatial practice entangled in the doings along Kaupmannastretet seems to have come to an end during the first half of the 14th century. We cannot yet say when and how, but from what has been stated above, we have suggested *why* this happened: The king’s authoritative performance based on a territorial concept of space coincided with a practical need for a strict division between private and public space. This made the practice of fluid boards an ex-practice during the 14th century.

A final remark

The emergence, existence and extinction of fluid borders between private and public space in Trondheim during the 12th–13th centuries was rooted in rural practices of common land

use. There was no seeming logic and no long-term planning behind it; rather it followed a principle of “the existence of the unforeseen”, so precisely described by Ingold: “What is life, indeed, if not a proliferation of loose ends! It can only be carried on in a world that is not fully joined up, not fully articulated” (Ingold 2013, 132). For a time span fluid borders became a random past event of how entangled elements of intentions, competence and meaning constituted a particular version of lived urban space in high medieval Trondheim.

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