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Private Life Made Public

One Aspect of the Emergence of the Burghers in Medieval Denmark

JOAKIM THOMASSON

The central theme of this article is the emergence of the burghers in Denmark and how their everyday life was shaped and manifested. The starting point is a brief thematic discussion of architecture and the concept of class. The period studied comprises the development from the congested countryside of the thirteenth century to the mercantile proto-capitalist city in the age of absolutism in the early eighteenth century. During this period Protestantism was introduced.

A conglomerate of temporal horizons

The concepts of feudalism and capitalism may refer to different levels of history. As regards feudalism, there are broadly speaking four different research traditions (Klackenberg 1986, pp. 341 f.). One of these broadens the concept from that used in the other research traditions, to include "not just judicial and administrative conditions in the upper stratum of society, but also the relations of social dependence that existed at all levels of society" (Klackenberg 1986, p. 342).

Similar research traditions exist as regards the concept of capitalism. Matthew Johnson makes a distinction here between definitions that include a social totality and those which encompass specific elements. Johnson's definition of capitalism as a social totality should be equated with the research tradition described above by Klackenberg. Using different terminology, the French *Annales* historian Fernand Braudel (1982) has considered the same problems. He has divided history into three different phases determined on the basis of their proneness to change. The different phases are on a falling scale of changeability: political history, economic development, and material life. Briefly, according to Braudel, the

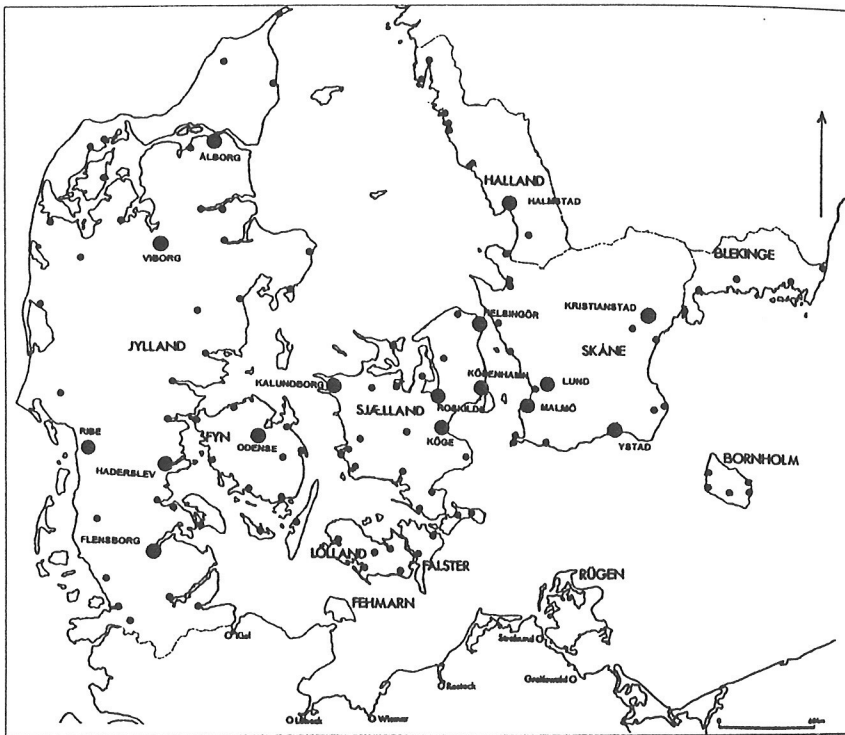


Fig. 1. Map of medieval Denmark showing the towns mentioned in the text.

material world constituted the limits to what was possible in people's everyday lives. Material life thus determines the possibilities for the formation of a new social class and a new social system. The foundations of different types of social changes should thus be viewed in a social totality, as a conglomerate of temporal horizons.

Class consciousness in Braudel's temporal space

E. P. Thompson (1963) has discussed the making of the working class from an ethical and hermeneutic perspective. He claims that class can never be regarded as a thing, as a category existing at any time independent of the subjects; in other words, a class can only exist if it has a consciousness of itself as a class (see Lindqvist 1987, pp. 24 ff.). Thompson (1983, p. 161) compiles examples of criteria for when peo-

ple acquire class consciousness. These comprise, in chronological order, first a perceived antagonism *vis-à-vis* other classes, which is then generated into a commitment to class-related issues. This means that Thompson sees class and class consciousness as always being the last stage in the historical process. The process leading to class consciousness begins in Braudel's most sluggish category of change, everyday life, and every transformation in history thus has its point of departure in everyday life and is a result of people's practice (Lindqvist 1987, p. 28). The concept of practice has been defined by the Czech philosopher Karel Kosík (1979, pp. 193 ff.), who says that practice is shaped by man himself as an independent being and a historical actor.

The relevance of practice for the understanding of buildings

Housing plays a central role for the understanding of everyday life. Some scholars think that a building is an archetypal image of the owner, while others see the matter as being more problematic. The latter believe that there is a dialectical relation between form and function, that is, that the owner of a house influences its shape and the shape of the house in turn influences him (Parker-Pearson and Richards 1994, pp. 3 ff.).

The continuous dialectic between form and function should be interpreted in this context as the result of people's practice, that is to say, created in the tapestry of everyday life. In principle, then, all changes in practice must take their departure in the existing social totality and the historical context. This reasoning automatically leads to the problem of agent versus structure. There is no room here to dwell on this to any extent, so I shall content myself with a declaration. Like Matthew Johnson (1989, p. 206), I believe that the agent cannot be distinguished from the surrounding structure, that "agency is manipulation of an existing structure, a structure that is external to the individual ... and appears to that agent as a synchronic construct, as something to be drawn upon".

Another aspect of the interpretation of a building is the relationship between idiom and sociality. Here the architectural idiom should be perceived as an analogous reflection of social relations. The architectural theorist Finn Werne (1993,

pp. 78 ff.) argues that in small societies, where everyone knows everyone, the scope for all representation is small. Instead solutions to constructive problems are emphasized as decorative art. In larger societies the art of representation is given greater prominence. Werne (1993, p. 81) sees this in the opposites of representativity and presentativity, with the former being an agent for something that cannot be present (God, wealth, power, social status, etc.) and the latter presenting itself.

In its representative guise, the architectural idiom communicates a message. Yet a representative idiom may also be seen as a statement in a conflict of ideas in society, for example, concerning class relations, and may have several different levels of expression depending on the society as a whole. In this respect the idiom should be interpreted as an aspect of the development of class consciousness. The layout of the house should be perceived to a greater extent as an expression of human practice, in other words, something that anticipates the manifestations of an articulated idiom.

Selected features of the urban context: the historical context

The urban–feudal dispute

The role of the towns in feudal society was full of contradictions. While the town was an organic and necessary part of the feudal system, it also played a crucial role in the collapse of the system (Hilton 1980, pp. 16 f., 28 ff.). The towns were initially a part of the feudal sovereignty, the rights to which could be granted as fiefs to different lords. Craftsmen were treated like tenant farmers in the countryside (Andrén 1985, pp. 119 ff.). The production and the market in the town were an essential requirement for the conspicuous consumption of the upper class, by which they manifested their position in society and thus legitimated their mastery (Dyer 1989). Changes in class relations in society made the town a closed unit, both fiscally and architecturally. The liberation of the towns meant that the town and the burghers in the late Middle Ages became a power factor, an agent, in political life (Andrén 1985, pp. 118 f.). The burghers were still, however, a class constituting a part of the feudal system, which was

divided in the late Middle Ages into nobility, clergy, burgherdom, and peasantry. Yet the burghers' livelihood – capital formation – and their internal class relations – a reified relation between producer and consumer – contained the embryo of industrial capitalism (Braudel 1982).

Power and lordship – the development from 1000 to 1750

Anders Andrén (1985, p. 120) has outlined three phases in the development of the Danish state in the Middle Ages. In the first phase (1000–1200) the town functioned as a point of support in regal lordship. In the second phase (1200–1350) this regal lordship was granted in fief to a large number of local magnates. These used the towns to convert their surplus into luxury consumption and craft production. In the third phase of development (1350–1550) the character of lordship changed. From having been based on older types of feudal lordship, it was now based on a type of mercantile lordship which used the towns to control the distribution of the surplus produced in the countryside. All goods in principle had to pass through the burghers' hands, and all craft products were to be made in the towns (Andrén 1985, pp. 111 f.). Mercantile lordship was exercised by the burghers over peasants and foreign merchants. The state in turn controlled the burghers through direct tariffs and duties. Against this background, the form of lordship may be described as having a dual character: borough charters were granted directly by the king to the council of each individual town, and at the same time an almost capitalist relation prevailed between the inhabitants of the town.

In the following centuries (1550–ca. 1700) lordship changed character as a result of the coming of the absolute state. The dominating economic system – mercantilism – may be regarded as an expression of a feudal class which adapted to an integrated market (Anderson 1994, p. 37). Perry Anderson argues that mercantilism required the abandonment of local and regional trade barriers within a national territory, sought to achieve a common domestic market for commodity production, and encouraged exports, while simultaneously banning the export of, for example, precious metals (1994, p. 36). Denmark and Sweden, however, were exceptions to these principles. At the end of the sixteenth century, foreign trade was already restricted to certain towns

(Tomner 1971). At the end of the seventeenth century domestic trade in Sweden was subject to the so-called minor customs (*ibid.*) The towns also lost the independent role they had played in the Middle Ages. With the placing of the county sheriff (*länsman*) in the towns, lordship was decentralized and devolved to a paid staff of officials manned by nobles. The towns also lost some of their trade monopoly, which had been one of the cornerstones of their income and power.

The burghers' buildings

Single-cell building

The earliest houses in Danish towns greatly resembles the building culture of the countryside. In Lund, for example, excavations have unearthed a convex-walled long-house of the Trelleborg type (Nilsson 1976, pp. 41 ff.). The house was divided into three rooms with the all-purpose living-room in the middle. This type of house is usually associated with royal structures such as the forts of Fyrkat and Trelleborg and should probably be regarded as a noble building culture.

With the twelfth century, town buildings assumed a clearly urban character (Andrén 1985, p. 80). A characteristic feature of early medieval urban settlement is the principle of "one room, one house" (Hartman 1979, p. 54). This pattern is general throughout medieval Denmark, being represented in Malmö (Romberg 1982, p. 201), Lund (Andrén 1976, pp. 34 ff.), Halmstad (Augustsson 1992, pp. 90 ff.), and Oslo (Shia 1982, p. 155). In Halmstad, Augustsson (1992, pp. 90 ff.) has observed that this form of housing dominates until the sixteenth century. In the thirteenth century Lund showed an interesting departure from this principle. In the St Clemens quarter there was a three-room timber-framed house with the living-room – *stuga* – and kitchen in the middle room (Blomqvist 1951, p. 347). The interesting thing about this building is the emphasis on the living-room, which had a sturdier foundation and was better built than the two side rooms. This type of building is common in the villages of Skåne from the thirteenth century onwards (Thomasson 1996). The rural houses have exactly the same plan as the house in St Clemens, with the living-room in the middle and service rooms at either gable. It can also be related to the *sydgötisk* type of house (so-called because it was characteris-

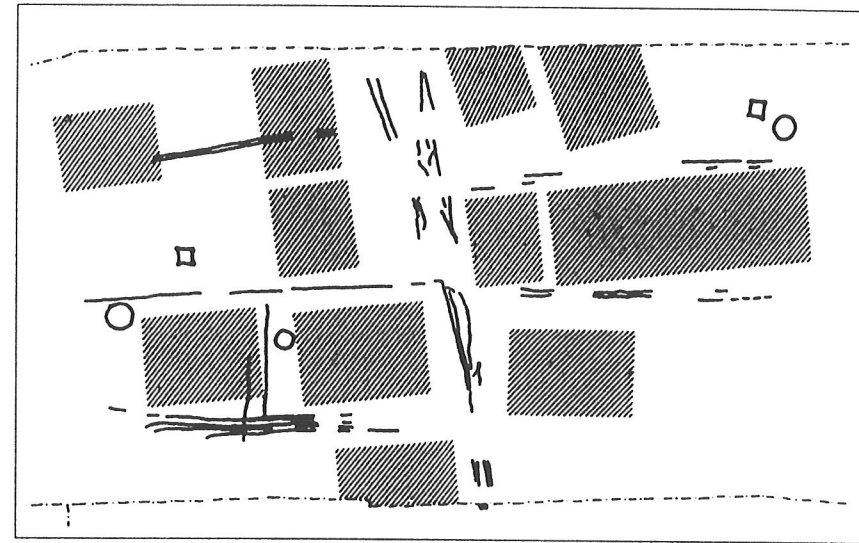


Fig. 2. One-room house from the St Clemens quarter, Lund. After Andrén 1976. Scale approximately 1:500.

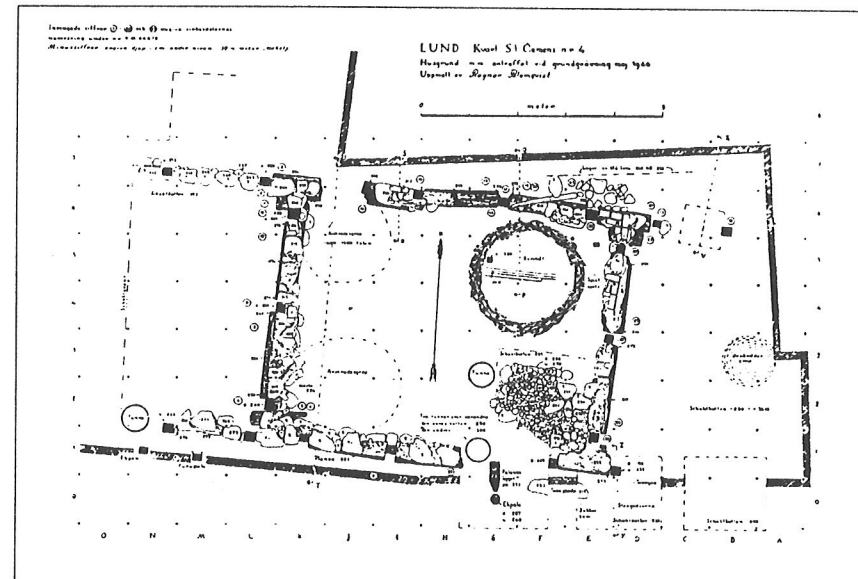


Fig. 3. The St Clemens house in Lund, middle room, living-room. After Blomqvist 1948.

tic of southern Götaland), which can be characterized by the combination of several separate wooden buildings constructed using different techniques (Augustsson 1986, p. 272). Even though the St Clemens house was not built of wood, the analogy with the *sydgötisk* type and the context of the building culture in which it was erected must be beyond all doubt.

The disposition and architectural design of the St Clemens house, however, shows that the different rooms each have their own prehistory as separate elements. They were previously single-room houses. The single-room principle continued to characterize building culture into the eighteenth century, bearing the stamp of an almost organic way of thinking, according to which each building was constructed in keeping with prevailing needs and supply of materials (Deetz 1977, p. 99). James Deetz states that the one-room principle was a medieval building tradition which was replaced by Renaissance architecture. What distinguishes Renaissance architecture is that it was planned and built by people with a literate education who had studied architecture (Deetz 1977, p. 111). The dwelling-house constituted a totality in which the function of the rooms was determined in advance. Deetz's interpretation (1977, p. 117) is that the medieval building tradition was based on a collective world view which was replaced by the emphasis on the individual in the Renaissance.

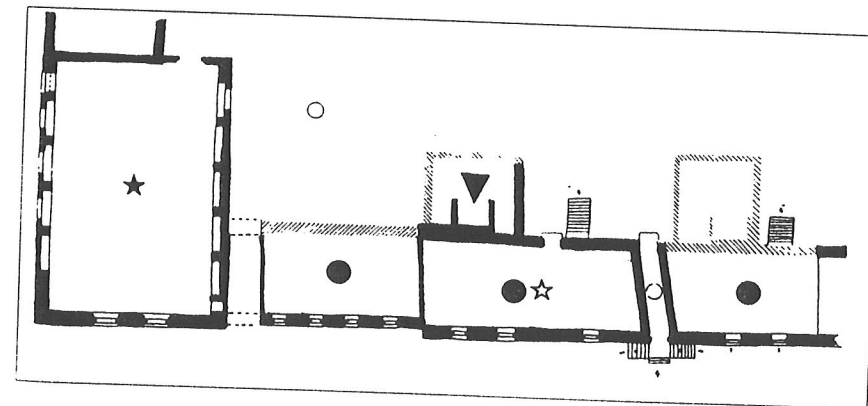
The St Clemens house is thus a very interesting document of its times. The early housing found further south in the same quarter of Lund consists largely of separate one-room houses (Andrén 1976; Nilsson 1976). The St Clemens house has a more densely built plot, which meant that buildings with different functions were joined. Houses facing the street were combined with houses in the yard in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries (Hæddersdal 1987, p. 23; Augustsson 1992, pp. 90 ff.), which meant that the one-room house was gradually abandoned, although the mentality behind it survived. This process is known from several places in Sweden, but it is thought to have originated in the towns of northern and western Germany (Sandblad 1949, pp. 96 ff.).

The disposition of the houses

Despite the different architectural design of the townyards, their plans follow the same division. The dwelling-houses

were often withdrawn into the middle of the plot while the buildings by the street were shops and craft workshops (Engqvist 1989, pp. 61 f.). The dwelling-houses consisted of one room which was at once a kitchen and living-room. The middle room, in the physical sense of the term, was an open unit. Similar phenomena in England have been interpreted as an expression of the collective nature of the household, which included the servants (Johnson 1996, p. 81).

At the end of the fifteenth century the dwelling-house was moved forward to be in line with the street, usually with the gable facing the street (Engqvist 1989, pp. 61 f.). These gable houses should be viewed as one-room houses in which the shop on the street has been merged with the dwelling-house. In this process a functional division was made between kitchen and living-room. This division came as early as the fifteenth century. An example is the bishop's house, Bispegården, in Kalundborg (fig. 4, Riis 1983, p. 31), where a double-house was erected in 1408, with the living-room facing the street and the kitchen in an adjacent side wing. This arrangement became very common in the sixteenth century and later. It may be interpreted as reflecting a separa-



- Hall
- Parlour
- ▼ Kitchen
- Chamber
- ★ Great Hall
- ☆ Store/Working Room

Fig. 4. Bispegården in Kalundborg.
After Riis 1983.

tion of the family members proper from the servants in prosperous homes, or from the woman in poorer households. Yet the move of the living-room to the street façade makes the interpretation more problematic, since it must have meant that everyday life became more public. The change may therefore be simultaneously viewed as an increased manifestation of status as regards everyday life.

Tower houses and stone houses with gable façades

As a result of the greater density of building in town plots and the development of society as a whole, other forms of organic building structures emerged. In Malmö (Reisnert 1992), as in Lund (Andrén 1987), Kalundborg (Riis 1983), and Odense (Christensen 1987), there are examples of townyards where an almost square stone house was built close to the street and dominated the other adjacent buildings in the yard. This pattern, which is also known from the continent, is a form of monumental tower architecture. In its initial phase, this type of architecture had its direct models in contemporary castles (Hæddersdal 1987, p. 21). In the central and southern parts of Europe, the tower was through time incorporated architecturally in the other buildings, thus losing its monumental character.

The tower houses which were still a part of the old building culture and erected according to the principle "one room, one house" must be understood on the basis of their monumental message. Leif Gren (1990) has discussed the concept of monumentalism, arguing that the monument must be seen as a message intended to exert an ideological influence on the receiver. He also thinks that the monument presupposes the existence of an opposite message which could not be implemented and was therefore forced to retreat. Monumentalism may be seen from two points of view, the first urban, the second political. From the urban perspective, the tower houses can be seen as an assertion of the town as a fiscal unit. This phenomenon can also be studied in the construction of the many Gothic town churches and the building of ramparts round the towns (Andrén 1986). Monumental architecture can be interpreted as an assertion of urban autonomy *vis-à-vis* the rest of society. Using contemporary analogies from northern Germany and the absence of fireplaces in the tower houses, they should be interpreted as petrifications of the

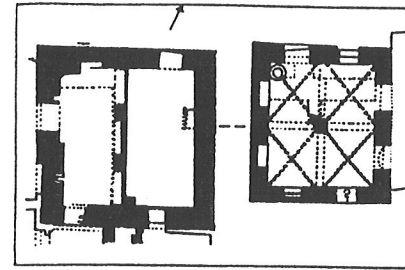


Fig. 5.
Two tower houses
from Ovegade in
Odense. Scale 1:300.

shop/workshop part of the townyard. If these assumptions are correct, it is natural to see the tower houses as symbolizing the urban livelihood, which reinforces the impression of autonomy.

The political perspective is based on the fact that the kingdom of Denmark in this period was torn by civil strife because of a power struggle between the crown and the aristocracy, which led to the total collapse of the kingdom in 1319 (Andrén 1986, p. 95). At the same time, the volume of trade increased, with the consequence that fiscal interest was shifted from the individual merchant to the commodity, which acquired a more out-and-out economic significance (Andrén 1986, p. 96). In this context, the merchants did not have the same self-evident position but needed to manifest their status more, perhaps by building tower houses.

A slightly younger pattern of building can be seen in the Klingenberg house, which was situated on the medieval main street of Malmö, consisting of a large hall with a stone foundation built a short distance in from the street (Reisnert 1992). The house is dated to the start of the sixteenth century, but Reisnert (p. 212) argues that it is probably a hundred years older. This arrangement is known throughout medieval Denmark, from Flensburg in the south-west to Helsingør in the north (Hartman 1979, p. 55). Towards the street there was a stone-built or timber-framed house with the gable facing the street. This is once again a variant of the one-room principle, but with a monumental emphasis on the hall building.

Stone houses with a gable façade

Stone houses with a gable façade are known from the fourteenth century (Reisnert 1992). In their earliest form the houses usually consist of one room, either a hall (*sal*) or a

room with a commercial function, sometimes combined with a half-cellar. In the course of the fifteenth century, and above all in the sixteenth century, the gable houses took on a different character. Several functions which had previously been divided between different houses were combined in one building. This took place at the same time that the living-room in certain buildings was moved to the street façade. As a consequence of this, the houses were built in two storeys, almost always with a half-cellar. The most common arrangement was that a shop was housed in the half-cellar, and above this the living-room or a shop, while the hall was usually on the upper floor. An example of this type is Jacob Nickelsen's house in Malmö. This was built at the start of the sixteenth century by the mayor of that name. It consists of a three-storey brick house with the gable facing the street. Archaeological investigations of the façade revealed four large arched window openings on the second floor, facing the yard (Bager 1971, p. 298).

The building was entered directly from the street, with separate entrances to the cellar and the vestibule/shop. The disposition of the gable houses was partly different in eastern and western Denmark. In the western parts the gable houses usually consist of two rooms: a vestibule/shop next to the street and then the living-room. In the eastern parts there are several examples where the first half is divided into a narrow vestibule or passage running the length of one long wall and a living-room. In the part of the house further from the street there was a kitchen and chamber (Engqvist 1989) (fig. 6).

The most distinctive late Gothic stone gable houses have a highly sophisticated plan. In Jörgen Kock's house in Malmö we see a significant change of trend in building culture. It was built according to a holistic idea, of the kind that James Deetz would call Renaissance architecture. It consists of a main building which included everything from shops to toilets. The rented shops were separate from the main house and from each other. The kitchen sections had a similar position in relation to the other rooms in the house. They were clearly separated, and a look at an adjusted access analysis shows that they had their own entrances and that the only other room to which they gave access was the living-room (fig. 7). The most accessible parts were the shops, while the

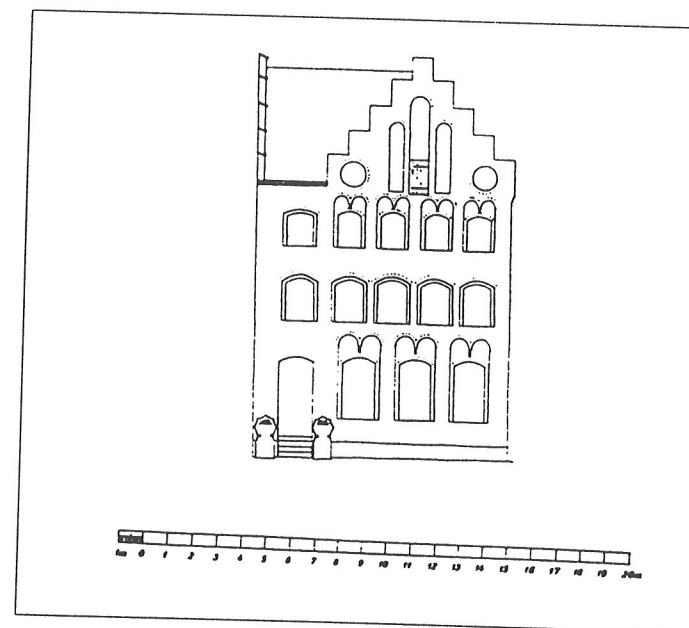


Fig. 6. Examples of a medieval stone house with the gable facing the street. After Hæddersdal 1989.

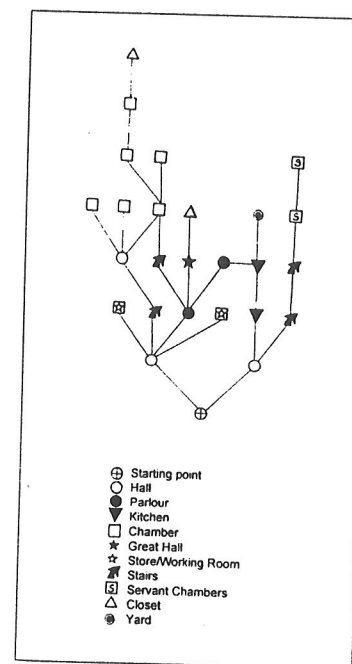


Fig. 7. Access diagram of the Jörgen Kock house in Malmö.

least accessible have been designated as chambers. The Kock house thus differs as regard the architectural concept, the number of rooms, and the separation of masters from servants.

Aristocratic town houses

In stark contrast to the other townyards were the “central-house plots”. These consisted of stone dwelling-houses built a little way back from the street (Engqvist 1989, p. 25; Hæddersdal 1987, pp. 7 ff.). A characteristic of this form of settlement, besides the position of the dwelling-house, is the surrounding outhouses and the square plot, sometimes surrounded by a wall. Hæddersdal (1987, pp. 15 ff.) associates this phenomenon with noble *søgningsgårde* or town houses. These are known from all over north-west Europe. Hæddersdal (p. 11) says that the central-house plots were first used in the fourteenth century. This agrees with observations in Malmö, where it can also be seen that the youngest central houses were built in the sixteenth century (fig. 8). The stone house built some way in from the street should be seen in connection with the contemporary tower architecture. We have previously seen how the shop and hall functions were monumentalized, and it seems natural to interpret the *søgningsgårde* as a monumentalization of the dwelling function. There is also a certain similarity to the contemporary manor tofts in the villages as regards the disposition of the buildings and the form of the plot. The noble element in the towns may possibly be related to the medieval agrarian crisis and the change in feudal lordship. The latter came to be increasingly based on commodities that were channelled into

the towns (Andrén 1986, p. 100). This, together with the more independent role of the towns and the fact that trade and fishing increased in importance at the expense of farming must have encouraged the aristocracy to be represented in the towns as well (fig. 1).

Two examples from Malmö are worth mentioning in this context. In the von Conow quarter, excavations in the middle of the 1970s and the early 1980s uncovered a very interesting townyard complex consisting of three buildings in all (Reisnert 1994, pp. 12 ff.) (fig. 9). Two outhouses (B & C) stood with their gables facing Själabodgatan; they were probably used for service functions and to house the servants.

Fig. 8. Diagram showing the number of *søgningsgårde* in Malmö and their datings. Compiled from information in Rosborn 1984.

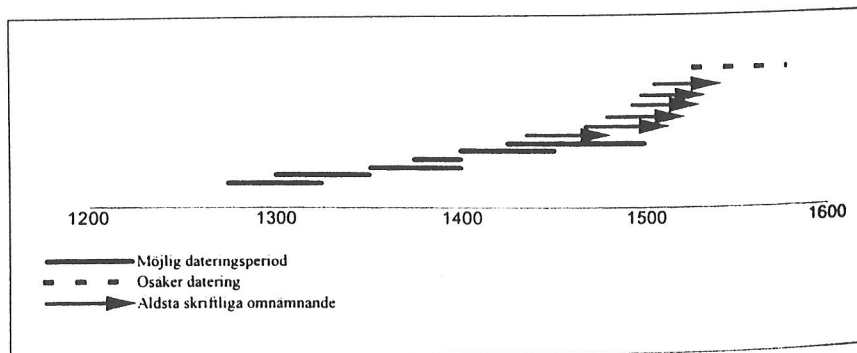
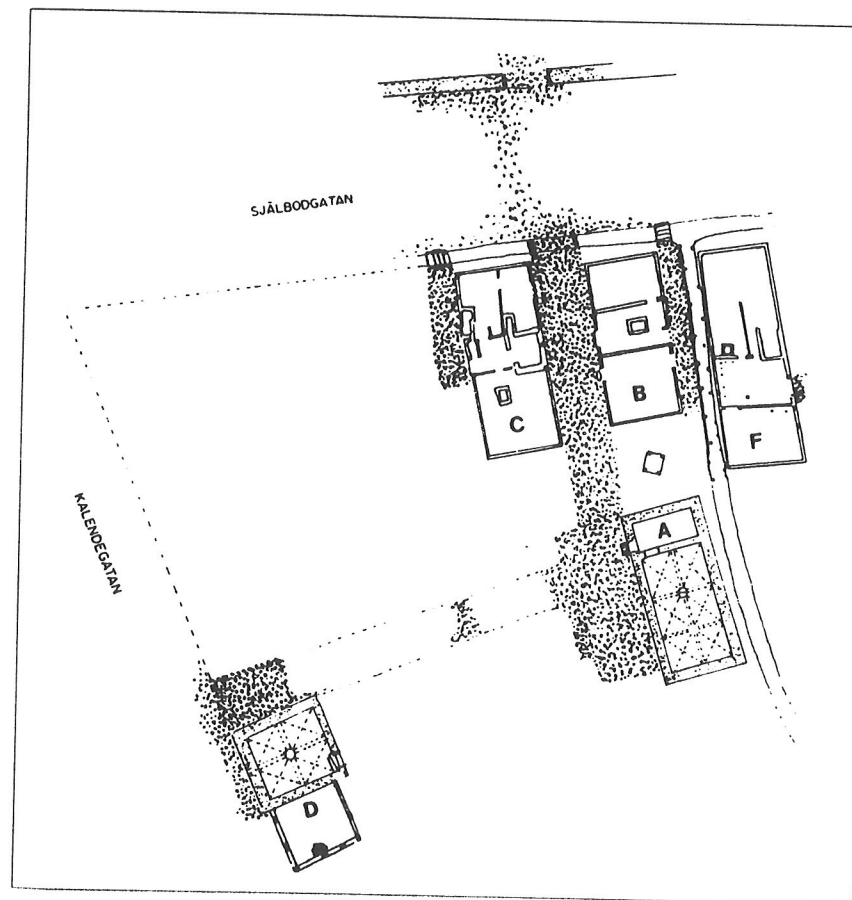


Fig. 9. The townyard in the von Conow quarter. After Reisnert 1994.



The main house (A) consisted of a stately main building standing a little way into the plot. The cellar was divided into two rooms, the first of which was a vestibule and the other probably a vaulted store. The property as a whole can be dated to the first half of the fourteenth century (Reisnert 1994, p. 24). Like other *søgningsgårde*, the von Conow house shows a noticeable separation of the kitchen functions and the dwelling premises of the master's family (fig. 2).

This tendency is even clearer in the Thott house (Rosborn 1981). This property consisted of a two-storey timber-framed building, constructed in 1558, along the street, and a stone house, undated, in the yard. The timber-framed house had three apartments, the one on the ground floor being occupied by the servants, and the two upstairs probably being used as guest rooms. The interesting thing, however, is that the timber-framed house had virtually no windows or doors facing the yard, there was only one window and one door, both right beside the steps from the upper storey, and a door leading into the main house. This clearly emphasizes the bipartite spatial segregation of masters and servants.

Late Gothic stone buildings with the long side facing the street

Besides stone gable houses, people in the sixteenth century also began to build stone houses with the long side facing the street. The whole concept of the long-side house was a new feature in the range of town buildings, while the gable houses were a relic of an earlier building culture. The new type consisted of two categories: single houses and double houses. The difference between the two is that the single house was built for one household while the double house was made for two. Despite this, they both had a largely similar, highly symmetrical plan. From the door to the street there was a narrow passage running through the house to the yard. On one side of the passage was the living-room while the other side consisted of kitchen, chamber, and/or shop. This plan is found only in the bigger Danish towns, and Engqvist (1989, pp. 63 f.) believes that it was confined to the upper class (fig. 3).

Malmö has two good examples of double houses. The Rosenvinge house was built in 1534 by Anne Pedersdotter, widow of a mayor of Helsingør (fig. 10 A). The house is built of brick facing the street and timber framing facing the yard.

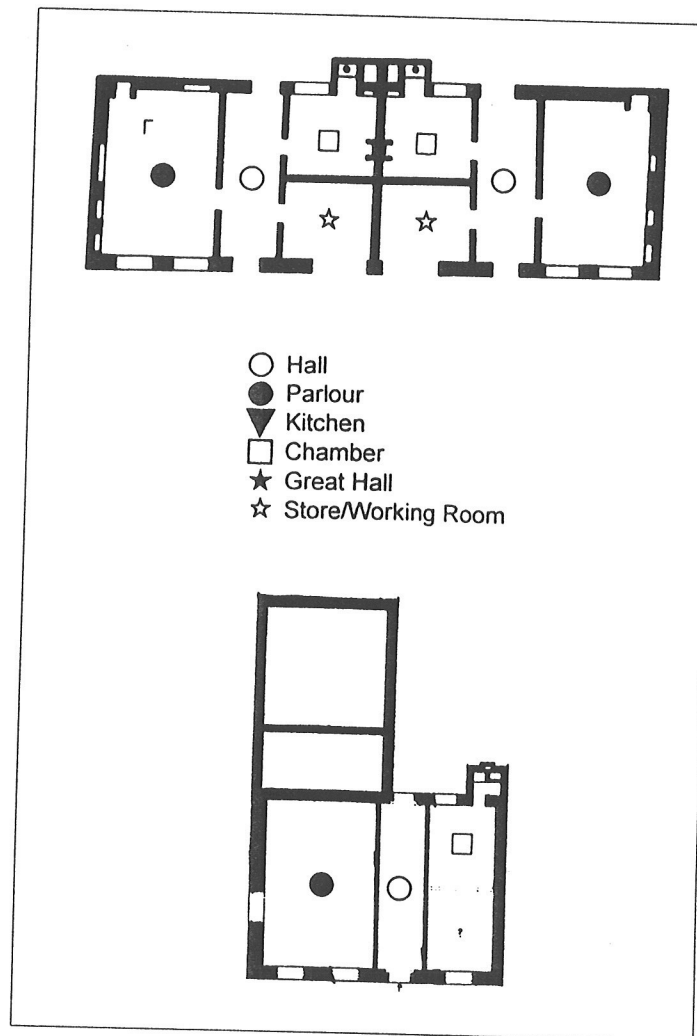


Fig. 10. Examples of single houses and double houses with a similar layout. A: Double house, the Rosenvinge house in Malmö (after Johansson 1987). B: Single house, Stengade 66 in Helsingør (after Engqvist 1987).

It consists of two identical apartments in mirror image. Each apartment is divided into two equal-sized halves by a passage running right through the house. The living-rooms are closest to the gables, while a shop and bedroom are on the other side of the passage. There was also a privy in the bedroom (Johansson 1987, pp. 48 ff.). Mayor Niels Kuntze's house was built in the 1530s, totally of brick. The building

had almost exactly the same plan, with the sole difference that the kitchen was integrated in the main building in the room that served as a chamber in the Rosenvinge house (Johansson 1987, pp. 50 f.). The upper storeys in the two houses differed somewhat, but in both houses they consisted of a hall and two chambers.

Helsingør has two good examples of single houses with the same type of plan as in the separate apartments of the double houses. Stengade 66 was built at the end of the fifteenth century by the country sheriff at Kronborg Castle, Johan Oxe (fig. 10 B). The plan consisted of a passage running through the house, dividing it into two parts. The living-room was on one side, while the other consisted of a bedroom with a privy and probably a shop (Engqvist 1987, pp. 158 ff.). The other house was built at the start of the sixteenth century by Mayor Sander Leyell. The property had formerly had a stone gable house to which was added the stone house with its long side facing the street. Like the older stone house, the later one was divided into two halves by a passage, with two rooms on either side (Engqvist 1987, pp. 178 ff.). The two Helsingør houses had the kitchen in a building in the yard attached at right angles.

Despite the new plans, an old architectural idiom was chosen for the building of both single and double houses. Niels Kuntze's house boasted corbie gables, as did the two Helsingør houses. Despite these old features, however, there was a completely different stress on the façade facing the street. The earlier and contemporary gable houses emphasized verticality while the long houses rather stressed the horizontal dimension. In addition, private life was emphasized by the movement of the living-room, but not the kitchen, out to the street. In other words, everyday life became a public phenomenon, and the living-room can be interpreted as a stage on which the burgher acted the play of his private life. At the same time, we can see a clear process away from single-cell building. Buildings came to be built in a more academic way, with functions that had previously been divided among separate buildings in the yard now being integrated in the same building. The dwelling-house usually contained the living-room, the chamber, and the hall. The most distinguished dwelling-houses also had a privy, a kitchen, and a shop.

Timber-framed houses

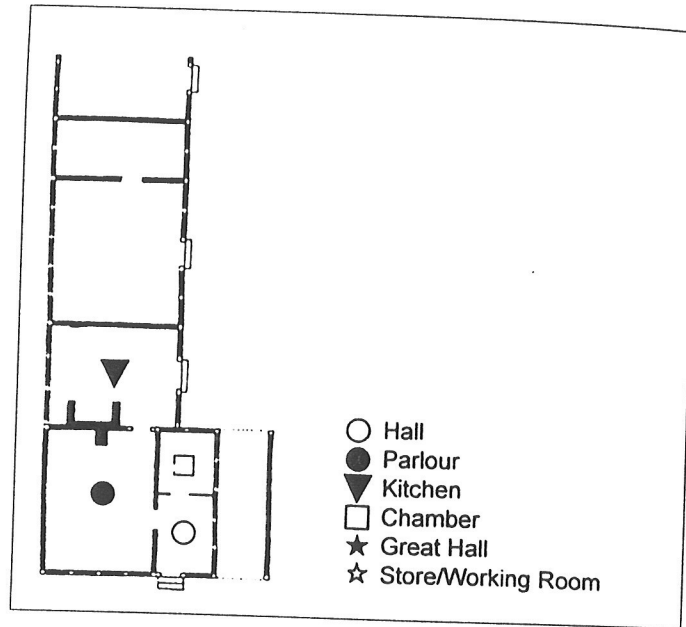
With the sixteenth century and the Renaissance, the era of the timber-framed house began. Many ostentatious timber-framed houses were built, usually with their long side facing the street. The second floor of the building was cantilevered with decorative constructional elements. The entire bearing structure of the building was emphasized, as was the horizontal dimension. Above the doors and gateways there were carved plaques with the name of the builder and the year of construction. In front of the entrances there were projecting porches consisting of steps bordered by a low wall and ending in upright stones with carved patterns.

In eastern Denmark the plan of the buildings usually consisted of a doorway, either between the dwelling proper and the gable or a shop/room for hire (Bager 1936, p. 19; Engqvist 1989, p. 40). Beside the doorway, in bigger houses, there was a passage running through the house, and after this came the living-room. The kitchen was adjacent to the living-room in a yard house set at right angles. In larger burgher homes there was also a kitchen in the main building. Through time, a chamber facing the yard was divided from the passage. There were also examples of a chamber being divided off at the gable end of the living-room. The hall was normally on the upper floor of the dwelling-house. An example of this is the timber-framed house in Store Kirkestræde in Køge, built around 1590. Counting from one side to the other, the dwelling-house consisted of a doorway, then a vestibule and chamber, a living-room, and the kitchen in an adjacent building in the yard (fig. 11).

In western Denmark the dwelling was usually in a gable house. It consisted of a living-room (closest to the street), followed by a kitchen and a chamber.

The timber-framed houses represent a new architectural idiom. The exterior emphasizes the bearing elements of the structure; the consoles were often decorative or figurative, the wall plates were often decorated, the diagonal trusses between the posts formed ornate patterns, and the panels were filled with brick laid in patterns. The consoles above all were very conspicuous in their figurative design. Biblical motifs were most common; at the Lembke house in Malmö, for example, Justice, Adam, and Eve were depicted on the consoles (Bager 1948) (fig. 12).

Fig. 11.
Plan of Store
Kirkestræde
in Køge.
After
Engqvist
1989.



The inscriptions on the door plaques often cited hymns and the Bible, but they also emphasized the name of the owner and the year of construction. This should be interpreted as a way of marking individual ownership. The timber-framed houses were built with a view to assembling the everyday and representative functions of the dwelling in one building. The kitchen was excluded from this, however, and located in an adjacent building. This may be interpreted in two ways. The process towards integration into a single all-embracing main building may have been incomplete. There are examples from contemporary stone buildings in which the toilet and the kitchen were housed in the main building, which indicates that this was socially acceptable. Alternatively, the kitchen was the domain of the servant folk and therefore did not belong in the main building. Through time more rooms were divided off, which should be interpreted as increased privatization of the rooms in the house (fig. 13 A + B).

In the timber-framed houses it is possible to interpret two interwoven processes, the first of which can be related to the development of society towards capitalism while the other

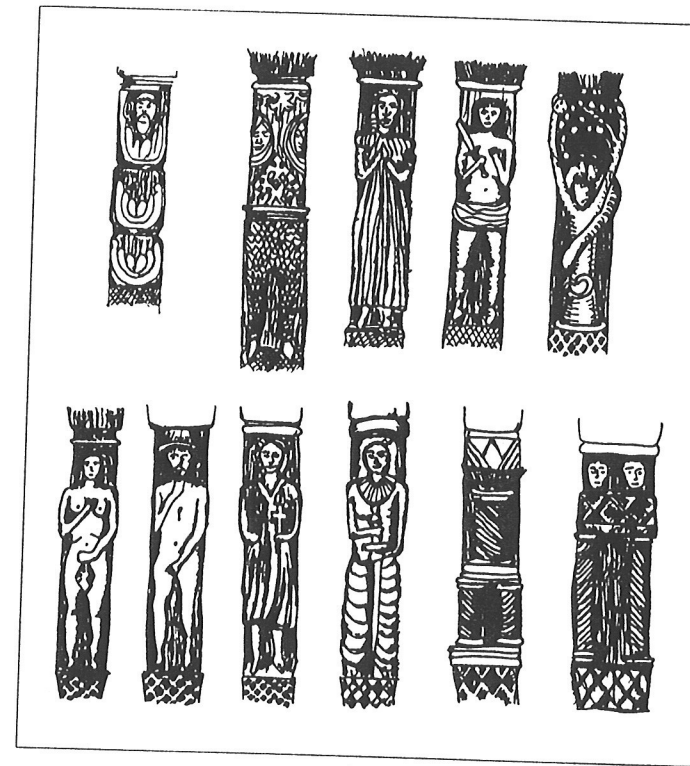


Fig. 12.
The consoles
on the
Lembke house
in Malmö.
Drawn by the
author from
Bager 1949.

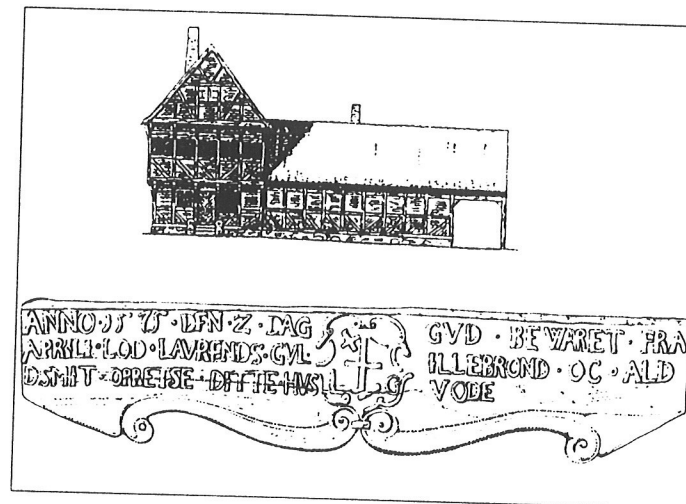


Fig. 13.
A: Exterior of
timber-framed
house on
Pilgränden in
Ystad. The
dwelling-house
was built
around 1520
(after Sandblad
1948).

B: Door lintel
bearing the date
1575 from
Stora Öster-
gatan 4 in
Ystad.
Drawn by Ch.
Borstam.

can be related to the dwelling as a concept. Max Weber (1986, pp. 67 ff.) argued that the emergence of capitalism was due to the successive factors of the Reformation, rational thought, and the Protestant ethic. The timber-framed houses in their Renaissance form should be studied in this context. The fixed division of the timber-framed houses into bays of standard dimensions, the symmetrical design of the façade, and the ground plan should definitely be interpreted as a reflection of rational thought. Yet it can also be seen as part of a process by which the building came to be regarded as a commodity. The division of the building into bays, together with the dates on the door plaques, expresses the value of the buildings, which meant that the houses constituted at once a home and a capital. The biblical quotations together with the figurative consoles were thus a time document with a moral message and a guarantee of the irreproachable construction of the capital – the house. The increased number of private rooms in the houses should be interpreted in the context of broader changes. Matthew Johnson (1996, p. 81) sees it as a reflection of the greater significance attached to the individual, and of changes in household relations between masters and servants and between husband and wife.

Renaissance stone houses

The plan of Renaissance stone houses does not differ noticeably from that of the timber-framed houses and the late Gothic long-side houses. The entrance was normally beside one of the gables, followed by the living-room and a chamber. Upstairs there was often just one big hall, but sometimes a chamber was also divided off from it. Many of the houses, however, were located on corner plots. In the Ulfeld house in Kristianstad the kitchen, larder, and a chamber were housed separately in an adjacent building at right angles to the main building. This house was also unique in that it had a gallery built entirely of brick which ran like a corridor on the side of the building facing the yard (Sandblad 1949, pp. 372 f.). Another type of plan that did not suit the timber-framed houses could be found in Jens Bang's house in Ålborg, built in 1624 (Hartman 1979, pp. 67 f.) (fig. 14). This was built to a plan in which the vestibule was located in the centre. The vestibule did not run the entire width of the house; behind it was a staircase leading to the first floor. On one side

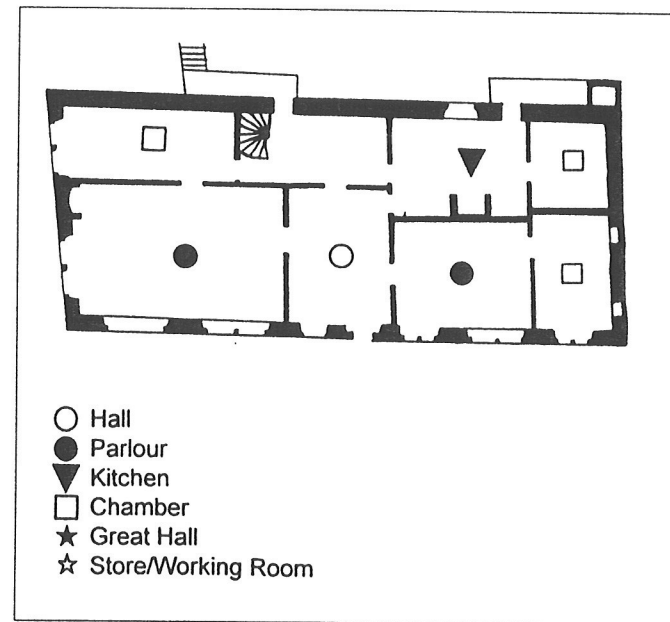


Fig. 14.
Plan of Jens
Bang's house
in Ålborg,
built in
1624. After
Engqvist
1989.

of the vestibule was the living-room, a bedchamber, the kitchen, a room that was probably a larder, and the privy. On the other side, besides the staircase, there was the large room used for entertaining and a chamber. Jens Bang's house likewise did not have the kitchen in the main building. This was also the case in the buildings at Strandgade 28 in Christianshavn (Copenhagen). The house had its gable facing the street and was laid out roughly like a Gothic house with a passage running all along one long wall, except with a staircase, and with the living-room facing the street and the chamber and kitchen looking into the yard (Engqvist 1989, p. 60).

In other houses the vestibule ran the entire width of the building, as in the Gyllenpalm house in Malmö (Sandblad 1931, pp. 10 f.). This form of plan was similar to that of late Gothic brick houses.

The exterior design of the buildings was characterized by the sturdy gable ends, with carved stone ornaments in the form of scrolls and circles. These often followed the edge of the window reveals and the edges of the gable end, which

were emphasized in this way. The houses often had carved doorway surrounds, and some also had carved window surrounds. A doorway in Hans Michelsen's house in Malmö had ornamental fixtures, carved diamonds, and a lion mask (Sandblad 1949, pp. 382 f.).

With the Renaissance houses, architects and specialized master builders began to take over the design and construction of houses (Villadsen 1979, p. 68). In addition, the houses were heavily influenced by contemporary castles. For example, several burgher houses were built in Renaissance style in Helsingør in conjunction with the construction of the royal castle of Kronborg. Similar examples are known from Haderslev (Villadsen 1979, p. 58). Despite the many similarities, however, between the magnates' castles and the contemporary stone houses in the towns, Sandblad (1949, p. 380) believes that the burghers' houses are far from being copies. He thinks that the relationship is not so simple that the town houses can be described as mere copies of noble architecture; instead, the buildings can be grouped according to the architects. The groups could contain a large number of house types such as burghers' houses, castles, and churches. The house owners, the upper class of society, should therefore be interpreted as a unit which had formerly been divided into different categories.

The Renaissance stone houses represent a distinct change of trend in the prevailing architectural culture. The houses had previously been built in accordance with a collective cosmos as regards design and choice of materials. In the new tradition, much of the design of the building represented not just the owner but also – and even more so – the architect. It may be said that the earlier type of building culture was based on a regional collective tradition, while the stone houses emphasized an international and individual knowledge created in a literate context. It must of course have been a deliberate choice on the part of the owners to express this message through their individual houses (fig. 15).

Private life made public – an epilogue

How can the homes of the burghers contribute to a discussion on the subject of class formation and class emergence? Is it relevant at all to speak about classes before the concept

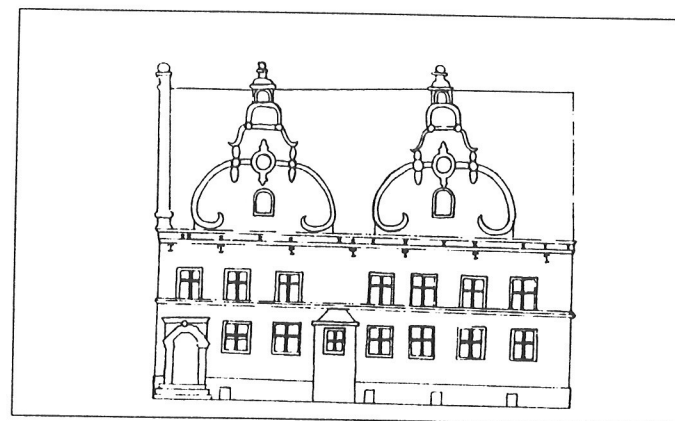


Fig. 15.
Exterior of
the Ulfeld
house in
Kristianstad.
After
Sandblad
1949.

of class was established by Marx, or without the possibility of substantiating class consciousness by means of historical sources? Marx and Engels used the concept of class as an analytical tool for social relations chiefly manifested in relations of production. The disadvantages of their definition have been frequently pointed out, and they are indisputable. The fundamental and immediate criticism is ethical: people – not economic structures – create class. Both Thompson and Lindqvist give the concept of class an all-embracing dignity which means that it is not specific to any particular period in history (as Marx's definition tended to be). These definitions also make archaeological source material and archaeological methods useful. This article, however, studies the cultural mobilization of burgherdom, not their specific relations of production.

The ethnologist Mats Lindqvist (1987, p. 147) describes the emergence of the working class in two stages: first they transgressed the frames of the ruling class, and then they took control and initiative of the rules governing social and cultural space. As a result of this, the values of the new class made their mark on the concrete social structure. This process also involved alienation and distance (Ågren 1988, p. 151), some kind of collective unity, and some type of cultural distinction. When performing an analysis based on archaeological sources, it should be possible to study the changing utilization of space and symbols in order to learn about the emergence of class consciousness. This may be studied on two levels.

The first level comprises the collectively built manifest remains in the towns. Anders Andrén (1985) has shown that the character of the town changed in the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries. From having been open towards the surrounding countryside in the early Middle Ages, the town became a closed unit. Walls or ramparts were often constructed around the town, and Gothic churches were built. This should be interpreted as collective manifestations of burgherdom as a unit, a definition of space and exclusion in the feudal landscape. But this was complex. At the same time, the town as a phenomenon was, as we have seen, a feudal power symbol. The feudal system thus recognized and encouraged the emergence of an autonomous new social class. This phenomenon can also be studied in the emergence of the working class in Sweden. Lindqvist (1989, p. 163) believes that part of the reason for the growth of this class may be found in the bourgeois recognition of social mobility.

The other level comprises the development of the burghers' everyday life. This article has worked on the assumption that class consciousness was preceded by efforts at collective cultural unity in everyday life. There are indications that building culture was homogeneous in town and country until the fourteenth century, when people began to build stone houses in the towns (although there were already examples of stone houses in the thirteenth century). The stone houses may be interpreted as dual manifestations. On the one hand, they may be interpreted as signs of an emancipation of burgherdom, and on the other hand as expressions of competition between townspeople (a symbiosis of status and sociality) as a consequence of changed forms of lordship in feudal society. The new forms meant that the burghers could receive mercantile fiefs. Previously this had been reserved for the nobility and the king himself (Andrén 1985, pp. 111 f.). The forms constituted an expression of an urban idiom which communicated social representations and social role play. According to Werne (1994, pp. 78 ff.), this is symptomatic of societies where people represent themselves and play a role, in this case as burgher or merchant or craftsman or noble. As we have seen, the square plots with stone town houses in the middle – the *søgningsgårde* – represent the role of noble, while large stone houses with the gable facing the street represent the role of merchant. The show houses were

thus also markers of social distinction in the town.

Social manifestations in the town can also be studied at the transition from timber-framed houses to Renaissance stone houses. The change in idiom between the two types of building may be understood in terms of the pair of concepts described above: presentativity and representativity (Werne 1994, p. 81). The timber-framed houses present someone who is present, mostly through decorative elements. The idiom of the Renaissance houses should rather be regarded as representative and absent. The structural elements are often concealed behind elements which merely represent structural details (Werne 1994, p. 79). An example of this is the gable ends dominating the façade, which are related to house types with the gable facing the street. This should be interpreted as a duality between the old, present burgher class and the new, absent upper class (or at least aspirations to belong to this). The new upper class, as revealed in the architecture, was a conglomerate of earlier classifications.

Social role play can also be studied in the utilization of space in the town. In Malmö the mayors, with few exceptions, lived until the eighteenth century in the mercantile centre of the town (Thomasson 1993). In addition, corner plots in the blocks were particularly attractive. This was especially noticeable in the period from the middle of the sixteenth century until the middle of the following century (fig. 16).

The corner plots should be regarded as especially significant in the medieval town. By building and owning a corner plot along the main street, one ensured that the house dominated the visitor's field of vision. The use of space in the town was thus influenced by the quest for prestige in the burghers' role play and their claim to the mercantile centre. The diagram (fig. 17) shows a decline in the number of mayors living in corner plots in the second half of the seventeenth century (Thomasson 1993). In attempting to understand this, one should relate it to the greater development of burgher housing. This development may be summed up as a demythologizing of an older architectural idiom and the breakthrough of a new idiom – a remythologizing: the myth of rational thought.

The toning down of the significance of corner plots coincided with several parallel phenomena that went hand in hand with the emergence of rational thought in relation to burgher

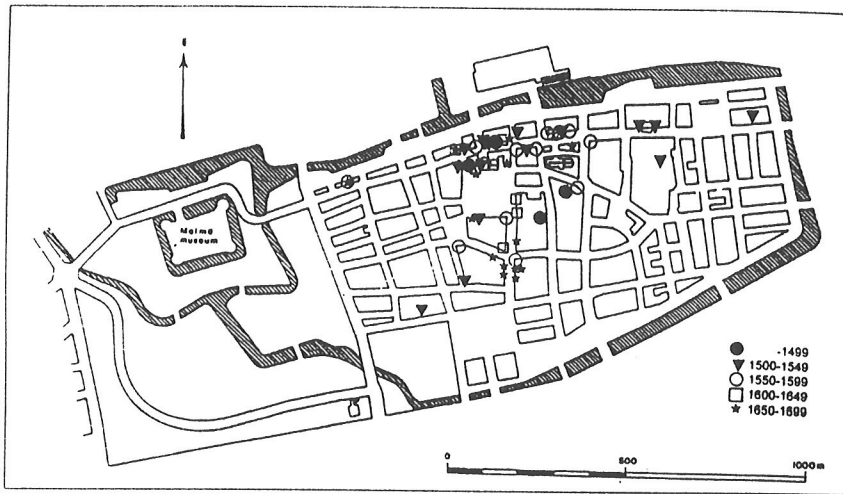


Fig. 16. Map of Malmö showing the location of mayors' houses, 1300–1699.

housing. An example of this is the abandonment of the equation of a room with a house. In this process the living-room – *stuga* – was broken up into several smaller constituents such as kitchen, vestibule, and chamber, and the addition of a shop, a hall, and a privy to the building. At the same time, the home was given a mercantile value. Before this, the home had been regarded as organically linked to the person who lived in it, but in the sixteenth century it came to be regarded as a commodity. It is symptomatic of this development that the nobles abandoned their town houses during the same century. When the town house was no longer the same fixed point and did not enjoy the same symbolic distinction, the socio-economic need for it disappeared. This is even clearer in the case of the timber-framed houses. The perfect form of these was a symbiosis: rational structure combined with architectural ornament guaranteed the value of the capital.

Max Weber (1986, pp. 47 f., 80 f.) viewed the rational organization of everyday life, of which the view of the home should be regarded as part, as one of the crucial factors in the origin of Western capitalism. He also saw an intimate connection between the introduction of Protestantism and the spirit of capitalism. He believed that the foundation of Protestantism – that one should obey God more than man – was one of the most important pillars of modern individual-

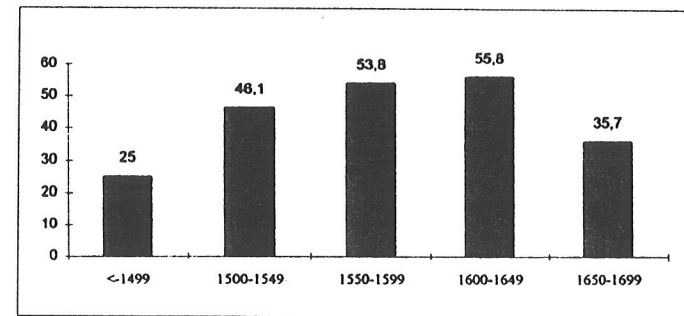


Fig. 17. Diagram showing the percentage of mayors of Malmö living in houses on corner plots.

ism (Weber 1986, p. 93). In Denmark, Protestantism was officially introduced in 1536, but in practice it had been preceded by a few decades of theological dispute and power struggle. On one side stood the rich burghers as advocates of the new doctrine, while the nobles represented Catholicism. It was during this period that the burghers for the first time acted as a social class (Andrén 1985, p. 117), defended their interests, and showed an interest in class-related issues. Andrén (p. 119) argues that the Reformation, paradoxically, meant a reduction in the power of the burghers. The confiscated church property was to be the foundation for the economic and political power of the new aristocracy.

The burghers, however, constituted a cultural space – or an island – in the feudal sea. Despite their dwindling influence in the period 1550–1750, their specific values were reflected in the concrete social structure. The concept of the dwelling shows some interesting dialectic characteristics in the rational mythology of the burghers. There was a gradual divergence of the members of the household (also including the servants) by means of the growing number of rooms. In Matthew Johnson's view (1996, p. 81), the household in the English countryside was originally regarded as a collective unit. He bases this view on the fact that the medieval houses, like the early medieval houses in Danish towns, had a communal living-room. Johnson interprets the increase in room divisions as showing changed relations within the household, with the collective world view being abandoned in favour of an individualist outlook. Such an interpretation appears to be valid for Denmark as well.

Despite the increased privatization of the rooms, the household became more public with the move of the living-room

towards the street, while the kitchen function continued to be located at the back of the house or in a side building, facing the yard. Everyday life was not concealed; it must instead have been regarded as a virtue, something clean which could be shown off on the stage of the street. At the same time, however, entry into the house was as complicated or more complicated than before. Coming from the street, one had to pass through at least one room before entering the living-room.

Private life was inaccessible but public.

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