

**W.M.H. Hupperetz, The memory of a street. Eight-hundred years of living in the Visserstraat in Breda (Utrecht 2004).**

Summary

This research project is aimed at telling the story of the residents of a street located in an historical city centre. For this purpose, the history of the occupants of the houses in the Visserstraat, located in the city of Breda, has been studied. What have been the changes that the Visserstraat has been through in a spatial-physical matter, in a social-economical matter or in the sense of the housing culture since the establishment of its first residents in the twelfth century, through to the commencement of the twenty-first century? These research questions are to be addressed in this dissertation.

The conducted study did not only yield interesting results with respect to the content of the findings – these will be elaborated upon in chapter seven – but it also led to a methodological quest aimed at answering four main questions. First of all, research efforts were aimed at establishing the *size and span of the memory* of one specific street, the Visserstraat in Breda. Two aspects can be distinguished for this purpose: the social-cultural proceedings and the spatial-physical objects. Of both aspects sources are provided that can be used as the fundamentals of a memory. In turn that memory can give rise to specific recollections that are closely related to historical notions. Three sorts of historical notions can be specified, which can be linked to three different time-levels, as described by Braudel. In the description of the history of residence in this street I will use this specification for providing structure. This study thus also provides insights into the availability of different sources. Because of the current academic tradition the possibilities of combining research results provided by distinct disciplines remains underutilized.

While establishing the size and span of the memory, the possibilities for gathering information on the micro-level of houses and street facts were also assessed. Following a micro-historical approach, the street and two construction blocks were studied in detail. Limiting the scope of research is an analytical principle that has a special added value if data are collected from different disciplines. Archaeological findings and historical data regarding construction then allow a much more precise dating as well as a more precise meaning. Naturally, these sources regarding the micro-level of houses and streets were not available for all periods. For this reason, the developments in the twelfth and thirteenth century are described at a city-level.

In second place, this study has tried to explore the *boundaries of an integrated approach*. This refers to the fact that data have been gathered and interpreted from the scope of various disciplines, ultimately yielding to combined results that show the social-economical, living-culture and urban development. It is even one more step to arrive at an interdisciplinary approach which allows the combination of results beforehand. For the ordering of the different disciplines and ways of study a distinction was made between three approaches, namely an object-oriented approach, a society-oriented approach which emphasizes the human being, and an ethnological approach. The distinction between the first two will be evident; the difference between the first two and the last approach lies in the fact that the ethnological approach relates the found data to the current state, thus placing a greater emphasis on their contextual meaning. Besides, it is not likely to state that these approaches could be used independently, as ethnological studies are often based

on studies of materials, or on the results of social-economical studies. Conversely, ethnological concepts and interpretations are often tested using the 'hard data' of the other two disciplines.

Thirdly, the long-term perspective was studied, as the gathered data refer to eight-hundred years of history. For ordering the data the classification as event-, conjectural- and structural aspects was restored. In the Chapters two through six, different objects and events are described. Each chapter refers to a time-span of two-hundred years, allowing the surface of the most important conjunctures. These are described in Chapter seven using an integrated approach where possible. In the cultural-historical analysis the structural elements of the studied area were brought to light. With respect to the spatial-physical matters, the parcellation, the structure of the construction blocks and the body of the houses were used as structural elements. With respect to the social-cultural aspects, the usage of the residences is the structural element, which can change of meaning depending on the conjectural state.

The fourth question refers to the *possibilities of implementation of the cultural-historical analysis for cultural urban planning* of the historical city centres. With respect to this implementation, a gap can be stated between the work of the historians and the specialists from urban development. This gap is the result of a lack of attention for:

- the social-cultural perspective of the inhabitants on the part of the urban development specialists
- the built environment by the historians

The memory of a street and the cultural-historical analysis can be used to aid the enduring debate regarding tradition and modernization, as it is conducted within the sector of the preservation of monuments and historic buildings and Urban Development, especially with respect to historical city centres. The tasks at the crossroads of these two disciplines, are currently being delegated to the discipline of Cultural Urban Planning. It is important to provide this relatively new discipline with a new content which ensures the conduction of studies from a truly integrated and multidisciplinary perspective.