

Élite and government in medieval Leiden

F.J.W. van Kan

Jacob Catsstraat 20, 2274 GW Voorburg, Netherlands

Abstract

This paper is a study of the urban élite of medieval Leiden from its first appearance at the end of the thirteenth century up to 1420, and is based on extensive prosopographical research.

The urban élite of Leiden was not merely a political élite, it comprised also the economic, the ecclesiastic and part of the count's administrative élite. To the Leiden élite belonged more than 200 families; these families cannot be called clans, because they did not have the size and influence to justify this. Leiden developed on grounds belonging to the count of Holland. Nevertheless, the oldest élite did not originate in *ministeriales* of the count; nor did it have its origins in the nobility, although the Leiden élite included an important noble element. The oldest élite consisted first and foremost of families that obtained their wealth in trade and industry; landed property and a career in the service of the count came in second place.

1. Introduction

The study¹ of élites in medieval cities has a long international tradition; German historians especially have pursued the subject on a large scale. In The Netherlands this aspect of urban history has so far been investigated mainly in relation to the modern era, particularly in the Dutch Republic, while very little

F.J.W. VAN KAN studied medieval history at the University of Leiden, The Netherlands. In 1988 he obtained his thesis regarding the development of the Leiden's élite up to 1420. He is employed at the Municipal Record Office in The Hague as Head of the Department Collections.

¹ This paper is an adaptation of the author's thesis (F.J.W. van Kan, *Sleutels tot de macht. De ontwikkeling van het Leidse patriciaat tot 1420*. (Studies over Holland in de middeleeuwen 2, Hilversum, 1988). References to this thesis are included as little as possible. It has been translated into English by Doctorandus C.F. Meijer of Amsterdam.

research focusing on the élites of individual cities in the medieval period has been carried out². De Boer wrote an article about the political élite of Leiden at the end of the fifteenth century³, Blockmans published two limited studies comparing the élites of several Dutch cities and Flemish Ghent⁴, and recently Verkerk described the political élite of Arnhem⁵. The reason for this study of the urban élite of Leiden is not only because of the position of this city as one of the administrative centres of the County of Holland, but also because of the wealth of source material that has been preserved in its archive.

The development of Leiden's élite is traced up to 1420. The siege of the city in that year and the assumption of power by Jan van Beieren resulted in important changes in the urban government: the faction of the *Hoeken* finally lost ascendancy and the viscount of Leiden ceased to have control over the city's administration.

Urbanisation in the County of Holland only really began during the course of the thirteenth century; this was connected with the fact that during the two preceding centuries the population surplus had found employment in the reclamation of Holland's peat bogs, while the land thus opened up yielded sufficient corn to supply demand. Also, there was the possibility of colonisation in the eastern

² D.J. Roorda, 'Het onderzoek naar het stedelijk patriciaat in Nederland', in: *Kantelend geschiedbeeld. Nederlandse historiografie sinds 1945*, ed. W.W. Mijnhardt (Utrecht, 1983), 118–42, and J. Gabriëls, 'Patrizier und Regenten: Städtische Eliten in den nördlichen Niederlande 1500–1850', in: *Bürgerlichen Eliten in den Niederlanden und in Nordwestdeutschland*, eds. H. Schilling and H. Diederiks (Städteforschung Reihe A: 23, Cologne/Vienna, 1985) 37–64; for Leiden: S.A. Lamet, *Men in government. The patriciate of Leiden 1550–1600* (s.l., 1979) and S.A. Lamet, 'The vroedschap of Leiden 1550–1600: The impact of tradition and social change on the Governing Élite of a Dutch City', *The sixteenth century Journal*, 12 (1981), 15–42.

³ D.E.H. de Boer, 'Die politische Elite Leidens am Ende des Mittelalters. Ein Zwischenbilanz', in: *Bürgerlichen Eliten in den Niederlanden und in Nordwestdeutschland. Studien zur Sozialgeschichte des europäischen Bürgertums im Mittelalter und in der Neuzeit*, eds. H. Schilling and H. Diederiks (Städteforschung Reihe A: 23, Cologne/Vienna, 1985), 85–105.

⁴ W.P. Blockmans, 'Verwirklichungen und neue Orientierungen in der Sozialgeschichte der Niederlanden', in: *Niederlande und Nordwestdeutschland. Studien zur Regional- und Stadtgeschichte Nordwestkontinentaleuropas im Mittelalter und in der Neuzeit. Franz Petri zum 80. Geburtstag*, eds. W. Ehbrecht and H. Schilling (Städteforschung Reihe A: 15, Cologne/Vienna, 1983) 41–60 and W.P. Blockmans, 'Mobilität in stadsbesturen 1400–1550', in: *De Nederlanden in de late middeleeuwen*, eds. D.E.H. de Boer and J.W. Marsilje (Utrecht, 1987) 236–60.

⁵ C.L. Verkerk, *Coulissen van de macht: een sociaal-institutionele studie betreffende de samenstelling van het bestuur van Arnhem in de middeleeuwen en een bijdrage tot de studie van stedelijke élitvorming* (Werken uitg. door Gelre, Vereniging tot beoefening van Geldersche Geschiedenis, Oudheidkunde en Recht 42, Amsterdamse Historische Reeks, Grote Serie 14, Hilversum, 1992).

parts of Germany. Apart from that, floodwaters of the sea and rivers impeded economic development during the twelfth century⁶.

Leiden emerged on the south bank of the Rhine between the extant castle (Burcht) and a count's court with chapel, currently the Pieterskerk⁷. It occupied a special place among the cities of Holland; Leiden was the only city with a viscount. The viscount was invested with the local jurisdiction and in this capacity appointed sheriff and aldermen. In contrast with Flanders, no extensive district was associated with the castle of Leiden⁸.

The count enfranchised Leiden at the end of the twelfth century, on demand of the jurors (*jurati*) as representatives of the local community; Kruisheer has argued this from a reconstruction of the oldest Leiden municipal rights⁹. Only a copy of the charter of 1266 that was granted to Leiden by Floris V has been preserved¹⁰. It is estimated that the city had about 1100–1300 inhabitants in the middle of the thirteenth century, a number that had increased to between 5000 and 6000 by 1400¹¹. Possibly this last number of inhabitants was reached in the middle of the fourteenth century, after which a drop occurred as a result of the plague in 1369, 1382, 1399–1400, and 1411. Around 1400 Leiden was a medium-sized city with a population comparable with that of Delft and Gouda. Only Dordrecht and Haarlem had more residents, around 7500 and 10000, respectively. These Dutch figures, however, are nothing compared with those of the

⁶ H.P.H. Jansen, 'Holland's Advance', in: *Acta Historiae Neerlandicae*, 10 (1978), 1–19, see 16; H. van der Linden, *De Cope. Bijdrage tot de rechtsgeschiedenis van de openlegging der Hollands-Utrechtse laagvlakte* (Bijdragen van het Instituut voor Rechtsgeschiedenis der Rijksuniversiteit te Utrecht, 1, Assen, 1956), 322 and H. van der Linden, 'Het platteland in het Noordwesten met nadruk op de occupatie circa 1000–1300', in: *Algemene Geschiedenis der Nederlanden*, 2, eds. H.P.H. Jansen and R.C. van Caenegem (Haarlem, 1982), 48–82, see 74; A.P. Pruissers and H.H. Vos, 'Een Hollandse stad in doorsnee. Leiden in de geologische geschiedenis van de Rijnmond', in: *Bodemonderzoek in Leiden. Jaarverslag 1981* (Leiden, 1982), 69–81, see 73.

⁷ H.A. van Oerle, *Leiden binnen en buiten de stadsvesten, de geschiedenis van de stedenbouwkundige ontwikkeling binnen het Leidse rechtsgebied tot aan het einde van de gouden eeuw, 1. Beschrijving* (Leiden, 1975), 24–5.

⁸ F.W.N. Hugenholtz, 'De 'Castellanus de Leithen'', *Leids Jaarboekje*, 58 (1966), 41–50; W.H. Lenselink and A.D.A. Monna, *Studies over het Zeeuwse en Leidse burggraafschap* (Bijdragen van het Instituut voor Middeleeuwse Geschiedenis der Rijksuniversiteit te Utrecht, 37, Groningen, 1976) XI–XII, 88–90, 93.

⁹ J. Kruisheer, 'Het ontstaan van de oudste Leidse stadrechtsoorkonden (waarschijnlijk einde twaalfde eeuw-1266)', in: *Feestbundel aangeboden aan prof.dr. D.P. Blok*, eds. J.B. Berns e.a. (Hilversum, 1990), 182–203, see 193–4.

¹⁰ Kruisheer, 'Stadrechtsoorkonden, 182–203; A. Versprille, 'Het stadsrecht van Leiden', *Leids Jaarboekje*, 58 (1966), 29–40.

¹¹ D.E.H. de Boer, 'Op weg naar volwassenheid. De ontwikkeling van productie en consumptie in de Hollandse en Zeeuwse steden in de dertiende eeuw', in: *De Hollandse stad in de dertiende eeuw*, eds. E.H.P. Cordfunke et al. (Muiderberg, 1988), 28–43, see 42 and D.E.H. de Boer, *Graaf en Grafiek. Sociale en economische ontwikkelingen in het middeleeuwse 'Noordholland' tussen ± 1345 en ± 1415* (Leiden, 1978), 41, 77–8 and 82–9.

Flemish towns of Ghent (64 000), Bruges (46 000), and the Brabantine town of Brussels (19 422)¹².

Economically, Leiden was little more than a regional centre at the beginning of the fourteenth century. This changed during the course of the century with the emerging cloth industry and trade¹³.

2. Definition of the urban élite

Research on the urban élite is usually restricted to the study of the ruling upper class, the patriciate. This patriciate is regarded as a more or less closed group, monopolising public offices. There are numerous examples of this kind of research in German and French literature¹⁴, and Reynolds advocates the study of a patriciate with regard to British towns¹⁵.

In Belgium, research on the patriciate received an injection from the work of Blockmans concerning the urban patriciate of Ghent (1938)¹⁶. His study centres upon the *virī hereditarii*, in whose hands rested the political power in Ghent until 1302. Espinas' study of the patrician Jehan Boinebroke of Douai appeared around the same time (1933)¹⁷. He, too, stressed the political aspect. Lestocquoy (1952) and Joris (1959) did the same¹⁸.

¹² W.P. Blockmans et al., 'Tussen crisis en welvaart. Sociale veranderingen 1300–1500', in: *Algemene Geschiedenis der Nederlanden*, 4, eds. A.G. Weiler and W. Prevenier (Haarlem, 1980), 42–86, see 51.

¹³ D.E.H. de Boer, 'De verhouding Leiden–Rijnland 1365–1414; veranderingen in een relatie', *Economisch- en Sociaal-historisch Jaarboek*, 38 (1975), 48–72, see 53–7, Jansen, 'Advance', 8, 10.

¹⁴ Cf. F. von Klocke, *Das Patriziatsproblem und die Werler Erbsälzer* (Geschichtliche Arbeiten zur Westfälischen Landesforschung 7. Veröffentlichungen des Historischen Kommission Westfalens 22, Münster in Westfalen, 1965), 12, A. von Brandt, 'Die gesellschaftliche Struktur des spätmittelalterlichen Lübeck', in: *Untersuchungen zur gesellschaftlichen Struktur der mittelalterlichen Städte in Europa*, ed. Th. Mayer (Reichenau–Vorträge 1963–64. Vorträge und Forschungen XI, Konstanz, 1966), 215–40, see 232, K. Bosl, *Die wirtschaftliche und gesellschaftliche Entwicklung des Augsburger Bürgertums vom 10. bis zum 14. Jahrhundert* (Sitzungsberichte. Bayerische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philosophisch–historische Klasse, 3, Munich, 1969), 35, W. Herborn, *Die politische Führungsschicht der Stadt Köln im Spätmittelalter* (Rheinisches Archiv, 100, Bonn, 1977), K. Militzer, 'Führungsschicht und Gemeinde in Köln', in: *Städtische Führungsgruppen und Gemeinde in der werdenden Neuzeit*, ed. W. Ehbrecht (Städteforschung Reihe A: 9, Cologne, 1980), W. Ehbrecht, 'Gab es im Spätmittelalter ein Patriziat in Soest, Bremen und Lübeck? Ein Beitrag zu Merkmalen politischer Führungsgruppen in den Hansestädte' (Paper for the colloquy Städtische Élitens in den Niederlanden und in Nordwestdeutschland; Wandlungs- und Differenzierungsvorgänge vom 15. bis zum 19. Jahrhundert, Leiden, 1983), G. de Valous, *Le patriciat Lyonnais aux XIII^e et XIV^e siècles* (Paris, 1973), M. Hebert, *Tarascon au XIV^e siècle, histoire d'une communauté urbaine provençale* (Aix-en-Provence, 1979).

¹⁵ S. Reynolds, *An introduction to the History of English Medieval Towns* (Oxford, 1977), 68.

¹⁶ F. Blockmans, *Het Gentsche Stadspatriciaat tot omstreeks 1302* (Antwerp, 1938).

¹⁷ G. Espinas, *Les origines du capitalisme, 1. Sire Jehan Boinebroke, patricien et drapier Douaisien* (Bibliothèque de la société d'histoire du droit des pays flamands, picards et wallons 7, Lille, 1933).

¹⁸ J. Lestocquoy, *Aux origines de la bourgeoisie: Les villes de Flandre et d'Italie sous le gouvernement des patriciens (XI^e–XV^e siècles)* (Paris, 1952), A. Joris, *La ville de Huy au Moyen Age* (Paris, 1959).

A limitation of the object of study to those families only actively involved in politics may be justified when made explicit, but it is not always worthwhile. When only the ruling families are studied, individuals or families who equalled them in economic or social position, sometimes even their next of kin, are left outside of consideration; the same holds true for members of the clergy. A case in point is the fourteenth-century corn merchant Willem Jansmansz, who, though specifically asked, refused a post in the urban administration¹⁹. Moreover, Leiden was the place of residence of the count's officials up to and including the highest échelons and, since 1366, of canons connected with the chapter of St Pancras: two functional groups that certainly merit attention in a study of the urban upper class.

Research into the often neglected social frameworks in the political, social, ecclesiastical and cultural spheres, as suggested by Heers, is of great importance²⁰. Even in towns like Ghent, where up to 1302 an easily identifiable, closed political élite divided public offices between themselves it makes sense to ask a less-restricted question, because beyond the political scope the borders between groups may well have been crossed. In his study of the patriciate in Ghent, Blockmans indicates that not all those belonging to the circle of the landed nobility had a political career in store for them²¹. When the political criterion is stressed, these people disappear from view, while they and their offspring probably continued to be linked with the patriciate on a social basis. The same holds true for Cologne; the 15 families belonging to the upper class may have thought themselves superior to the other citizens²², their self-awareness could be tested precisely by paying attention to non-political aspects, for instance by studying whom they married. The extent to which the political élite overlapped with, for example, the economic and clerical élites can be determined in this way too. The political criterion, however, is easiest to apply: either one belongs to the group of political leaders or one does not; the same applies to the criterion of kinship for that matter. In contrast, the criterion of wealth is harder to use, not only because evidence is often fragmentary, but also because the lines that are drawn between different groups on the basis of their wealth often remain arbitrary. Nevertheless, this is no reason not to study their financial position; seeing that a certain measure of wealth is a precondition for a certain lifestyle, a number of occupations and for the acquisition of fiefs, and that it is essential when

¹⁹ Leiden, Munipal Record Office, Archieven van de Kerken 415 f. 10.

²⁰ J. Heers, *Le clan familial au Moyen Age* (Paris, 1974), 12 and J. Heers, *Parties and political life in the medieval West* (Europe in the Middle Ages. Selected Studies 7, Amsterdam, 1977).

²¹ Blockmans, *Stadspatriciaat*, 334–5.

²² W. Herborn and Militzer, K., *Der Kölner Weinhandel. Seine sozialen und politischen Auswirkungen im ausgehenden 14. Jahrhundert* (Vorträge und Forschungen, Sonderband 25, Sigmaringen, 1980), 3.

one wants to live off one's investments. In short, there is a correlation between wealth and social standing²³.

To gain an idea of the composition of the upper class of Leiden and the extent to which its political and other élites overlapped, extensive prosopographic research was carried out²⁴. The diversity of sources that have been preserved in Leiden precludes the problem pointed out by Freise, that this kind of research reveals only the circle of persons involved in a certain institution or community²⁵.

In order to work out the position of the social upper class within the urban social structure as a whole, it would have been advisable to compile a database about all known persons and the most diverse aspects of medieval life, as Blockmans suggests²⁶. Such a plan, however, would not only have been too comprehensive, but also impracticable owing to the lack of source material with which to represent the lower strata. This is why data were collected regarding the upper class of Leiden society²⁷; the point of departure was a number of interconnected élites that came to the fore in medieval Leiden, namely the political, economic and clerical élite and the élite of count's officials originating from Leiden²⁸.

The political élite includes not only families who supplied the urban administrators, but also individuals who held a position in one of the town's institutions, like church wardens. This is in accordance with a fourteenth-century statute which regulated burials in the choir of the St Pancras Church; this privilege was reserved for the clergy, the nobility and their equals, as well as the sheriff, aldermen, councilmen, and other administrators of Leiden and their heirs.

²³ J. Ellermeyer, 'Sozialgruppen, Selbstverständnis, Vermögen und städtische Verordnungen', *Blätter für deutsche Landesgeschichte*, 113 (1977), 203–75, see 273–5 and J. Ellermeyer, *Stade 1300–1399. Liegenschaften und Renten in Stadt und Land. Untersuchungen zur Wirtschafts- und Sozialstruktur einer Hansischen Landstadt im Spätmittelalter* (Einzelschriften der Stader Geschichts- und Heimatvereins e. V. 25, Stade, 1975), 139–40, R. van Uytven, 'Bronnen en methoden voor de studie van de vermogensgroepen in de steden (14e–16e eeuw)' in: *Handelingen van het XXVle Vlaams Filologencongres* (Ghent, 1967), 377–93, E.M. Carus-Wilson, 'Towns and Trade', in: *Medieval England 1*, ed. A.L. Poole (Oxford, 1958), 251.

²⁴ See for the application of prosopographical methods on medieval source material the survey in G. Beech, 'Prosopography', in: *Medieval Studies*, ed. J.M. Powell (Syracuse, 1976), 151–84, the papers in *Medieval Lives and the Historian. Studies in Medieval Prosopography*, eds. N. Bulst and J.Ph. Genet (Kalamazoo, 1986) and in *Prosopographie et Genèse de l'état moderne*, ed. F. Autrand (Paris, 1986) and especially for the Low Countries Blockmans, 'Verwirklichungen', 57–60.

²⁵ E. Freise, 'Wie repräsentativ ist die mittelalterliche 'Persönenerlieferung'?' in: *Prosopographie als Sozialgeschichte? Methoden personengeschichtlicher Erforschung des Mittelalters. Sektionsbeiträge zum 32. deutschen Historikertag Hamburg 1978* (Deutscher Historikertag 32, Munich, 1978), 26–44.

²⁶ W.P. Blockmans, I. de Meyer en J. Mertens, *Studiën betreffende de sociale structuren te Brugge, Kortrijk en Gent in de veertiende en vijftiende eeuw*, 3 (Standen en Landen, 63, Heule, 1973), 209–10.

²⁷ Van Kan, *Sleutels*, appendix 8. This appendix with prosopographical material has been published on three 5.25 inch floppy disks in ASCII.

²⁸ In absence of records the cultural élite could not be studied.

²⁹ *De Middeneeuwse Keurboeken van de stad Leiden*, ed. H.G. Hamaker (Leiden, 1873), 42.

To determine whether a family belonged to the economic élite, one of the following criteria was applied: an estate (personal) of 60 acres or more, this being the area of land usually associated with a castle in Holland³⁰; a ground rent income of 450 groats, which equals the annual income of a canon of the Leiden chapter of St Pancras³¹; a single individual lending funds to the government more than 20 times or acting as surety more than ten times. Involvement in a certain industrial or commercial activity was not considered a criterion for membership of the economic élite, since nothing can be determined about the financial strength of those involved without additional information³².

The clerical élite were considered to be the canons of the St Pancras chapter, together with university teachers and deans of Rijnland.

A group can be distinguished consisting of the count's civil servants. These officials continued to be tied to Leiden; they usually lived there and often they started their careers filling an administrative post in the city, but they did not belong to a class of civil servants as described by Prevenier³³. These civil servants played an important part in the count's administrative machinery. In the first half of the fourteenth century the count's chancellery was controlled by Leiden continuously and in addition a few officials from Leiden were involved as members of the count's council in the national government.

The political élite consisted of 187 families (Fig. 1.), including the family of the grain merchant mentioned before who did not wish to join the local court. The economic élite was made up of a total of 31 families, nearly all of which also belonged to the political élite. The clerical élite included members of 33 families. Here the link with the political élite is less obvious: nine families did not belong to it and six families were only related by marriage to members of the political élite³⁴. The 30 families that supplied civil servants to the count largely belonged to the political élite³⁵. Clearly, these élites did not exist in isolation; the families of the different circles are usually found back in the extensive political élite.

When the political élite is not concentrated on as a binding factor, but an attempt is made to determine to what extent members of the various élites

³⁰ S.J. Fockema Andreae et al., *Kastelen, ridderhofsteden en buitenplaatsen in Rijnland* (Leiden, 1952), 5.

³¹ B.N. Leverland, 'Het kapittel van St. Pancras te Leiden', *Leids Jaarboekje*, 58 (1966), 69–86, see 75.

³² Only for this élite research was limited to the period 1350–1420; previously to little source material is available.

³³ W. Prevenier, 'Ambtenaren in Stad en Land in de Nederlanden. Socio-professionele evoluties (veertiende tot zestiende eeuw)', *Bijdragen en Mededelingen betreffende de Geschiedenis der Nederlanden*, 87 (1972), 44–59.

³⁴ Van Kan, *Sleutels*, 304–9.

³⁵ See for the interrelation of political élite and the circle of civil servants in London G.A. Williams, *Medieval London, from Commune to Capital* (London, 1963), 70 and S.L. Thrupp, *The merchant class of medieval London (1300–1500)* (Chicago, 1948), 53.

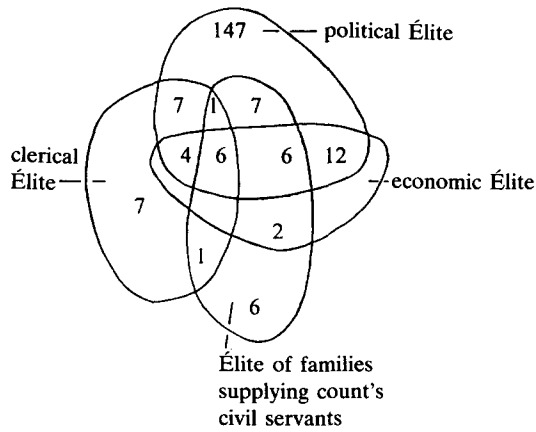


Fig. 1. The connections between the different élites. (The numbers stand for the number of families in that élite or overlapping of élites.)



Fig. 2. Great seal of Leiden. Legend: S(igillum) Sculteti octo iurator(um) (et) comunitatis opidanor(um) i(n) Leyde. In a great niche resides St Pieter, patron of Leiden, flanked by two angels; underneath the eight aldermen, kneeling. At the foot the sheriff (Public Record Office in the Province of Zuid-Holland, Archief van de abdij Rijnsburg nr. 957, 20 Febr. 1364).

belonged to the economic élite, it was found that 60% of the count's administrative élite (20 out of 33 families) belonged to the economic élite, while the other families had substantial landed and rental property at their disposal. Members of the clerical élite, could usually fall back on relatives with substantial means. Half of them originated from families belonging to the economic élite, the other half came from families who owned sizeable amounts of land and rents.

To gain insight into the correlation between political and economic élites, an examination was carried out as to whether there was a connection between the degree of involvement in the urban administration and the economic position of the family concerned. It soon became apparent that a small number of offices came together with a limited property of land and rents. As far as it is known, over half of the families who supplied an official one to six times was without landed or rental property. Even in the middle group, composed of families who exercised official duties in the urban administration from six to 15 times, one-third of the families did not possess land or rents. Only in the circle of families that filled 16 posts or more did each family own landed or rental property; half of them belonged to the economic élite.

Contrary to what Van Uytven³⁶ concluded for Dutch cities in general, in Leiden wealth was not a decisive factor for involvement in the urban government, although some wealth was necessary to fill an administrative post³⁷; Brand concluded the same for Leiden in the last years of the fifteenth century³⁸. However, it was found that the bigger the property or the higher the rents a family owned, and the more they could thus invest in a post, the larger, generally speaking, the number of posts filled.

Lastly, the interrelation of the various élites is shown by their members' marriages; for 132 marriages it was possible to establish the origins of both spouses. Ninety-seven cases concerned marriages between members of the Leiden élites under investigation³⁹; more often than not the boundaries between élites were crossed. In 20 cases the marriage concerned a member of the Leiden élites and a member of the nobility, while 15 cases concerned marriages between daughters of the élites and partners from Leiden for whom no evidence exists that

³⁶ R. van Uytven, 'Plutokratie in de oude democratieën der Nederlanden. Cijfers en beschouwingen omtrent de korporatieve organisatie en de sociale structuur der gemeenten in de late middeleeuwen', *Koninklijke Zuidnederlandse Maatschappij voor Taal-en Letterkunde en Geschiedenis. Handelingen*, 16 (1962), 373–409, see 381.

³⁷ J.W. Marsilje, *Het financiële beleid van Leiden in de laat-Beierse en Bourgondische periode ± 1390–1477* (Studies over Holland in de Middeleeuwen, 1, Hilversum, 1985), 24–36, 39–54.

³⁸ A.J. Brand, 'In politieke kringen. De familie Paedze van Sonneveld en de verdeling van de macht in Leiden aan het einde van de middeleeuwen', *Leidschrift*, 3 (1987), 40–63, see 49–50.

³⁹ Cf. for the coennubium H. Mitgau, 'Geschlossener Heiratskreise sozialer Inzucht', in: *Deutsches Patriziat 1430–1740*, ed. H. Rössler (Büdingen Vorträge 1965. Schriften zur Problematik der deutschen Führungsschichte in der Neuzeit, 3, Limburg am Lahn, 1968), 1–25, see 1.

they were drawn from the *élites*. On the basis of their ties of marriage it was considered that these husbands were part of the upper class of Leiden.

Considering the fact that the aforementioned *élites* were closely interwoven, it was assumed that the urban upper class formed a unity. This term is not used here just as an artificial notion, in the way Schilling did for the modern era⁴⁰. Indeed, it is the various *élites* that should be considered artificial, although their classification as such is very useful for the research.

After the Middle Ages, Leiden's urban *élite* formed a similar unity; Howell found a correlation between political and economic *élites* in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries⁴¹.

Taking the above into account, the term urban *élite*, for the purposes of this paper, is defined as the social layer⁴² of prominent families of medieval urban society, consisting of the governing families, their next of kin, and those equal to them socially and economically. This is in agreement with Elben who studied the patriciate of Rottweil in Germany and stated that membership of the urban administration was not a requirement for membership of the patriciate, but a privilege, which was not used by all patricians, but nonetheless defended by them against claims of other sections of the population⁴³. When Elben's definition — patricians are *Ratsfähigen* — is applied to Leiden, more justice is done to reality than with the strict application of a political definition of the patriciate, which, as has been said before, can lead to an artificial distinction between governing and non-governing members of the upper class. Holding an office, however, remains the first criterion in Elben's definition. Since the term patriciate is commonly reserved for the political *élite* its use is avoided and urban *élite* is referred to instead.

3. Origins of the urban *élite*

Judging from the traditionally large influence of the viscounts and a comparison with British and German cities, Fockema Andreae assumed that the oldest Leiden *élite* included an important element of *ministeriales*. He based this assumption largely on the number of aldermen (eight) in Leiden — in other cities usually seven — appointed by the viscount, and concluded from this that the assembly of

⁴⁰ H. Schilling, 'Wandlungs- und Differenzierungsprozesse innerhalb der bürgerlichen Oberschichten West- und Nordwestdeutschlands im 16. und 17. Jahrhundert'. Paper for the colloquy *Städtische Eliten in den Niederlanden und in Nordwestdeutschland; Wandlungs- und Differenzierungsvorgänge vom 15. bis zum 19. Jahrhundert* (Leiden, 1983), 2.

⁴¹ M.C. Howell, *Women, production and patriarchy in late medieval cities* (Chicago, 1986), 54–55.

⁴² J. Kocka, 'Theorien in der Sozial- und Gesellschaftsgeschichte. Vorschläge zur historischen Schichtungsanalyse', in: *Soziale Schichtung und Mobilität in Deutschland im 19. und 20. Jh.* (Geschichte und Gesellschaft, 1 (1975), 9–42, see 37.

⁴³ R. Elben, *Das Patriziat der Reichsstadt Rottweil von der Anfang bis zum Jahre 1550* (Stuttgart, 1964), 5.

aldermen would originally have comprised four viscount's *ministeriales* and four 'common' citizens⁴⁴. Before going into this, it should be noted that, in contrast with the eastern part of The Netherlands and Germany⁴⁵, in Holland the institution of *ministeriales* can no longer be discerned in the first half of the thirteenth century, while the manorial organization with which it was connected had, with a few exceptions, disappeared even before then⁴⁶. This makes it hard to examine the occurrence of *ministeriales* in Leiden.

The viscount did not own the land on which the oldest part of Leiden was built, the Breestraat and environs; the city developed on the count's grounds. The fact that the viscount was lord of the market⁴⁷, was not because of his entitlement to the accretion of land along the Rhine, where some prominent Leideners held their houses in fief from the count of Holland⁴⁸. It was presumed that the judicial powers of the viscount led to his privilege to hold a market.

Even over the districts surrounding the castle the viscount did not hold absolute sway⁴⁹; only the grounds in the immediate vicinity of the castle belonged to the viscount up to 1360⁵⁰. Thus, relations of servitude can hardly have existed between viscount and burghers in Leiden.

From the fact that Jacob van der Woude, Lord of Warmond, leased land in the castle's grounds, Fockema Andreae⁵¹ concludes that originally the viscount must have had a considerable number of such 'burgmannen' (*ministeriales* of the Burcht). But Van der Woude was of free origins and only appears with this fief in 1355⁵². Moreover, nothing in the feudal records of the viscounts points to obligations of the leaseholders to the castle, not even in the case of Jacob van der Woude.

That protégés of the viscount are found among the urban élite of Leiden is a

⁴⁴ Fockema Andreae, *Rijnland*, 4.

⁴⁵ See for the *ministeriales* in the Netherlands R. van Uytven, 'Stadsgeschiedenis in het Noorden en Zuiden', in: *Algemene Geschiedenis der Nederlanden*, 2, eds. H.P.H. Jansen and R.C. van Caenegem (Haarlem, 1982), 208–9, J.M. van Winter, *Ministerialiteit en ridderschap in Gelre en Zutphen* (Bijdragen van het Instituut voor Middeleeuwse Geschiedenis der Rijksuniversiteit Utrecht, 21, Groningen, 1962), 183, Lestocquoy, *Aux origines*, 22, 54 and Joris, *Huy*, 358–61; for those in German towns *Stadt und Ministerialität. Protokoll der IX. Arbeitstagung des Arbeitskreises für südwestdeutsche Stadtgeschichtsforschung* (Freiburg in Breisgau 13–15/11 1970), eds. E. Maschke and J. Sydow (Veröffentlichungen der Kommission für geschichtliche Landeskunde in Baden-Württemberg, Reihe B. Forschungen 76, Stuttgart, 1973).

⁴⁶ D.Th. Enklaar, *De ministerialiteit in het Graafschap Holland* (Assen, 1943), 15, Van der Linden, 'Het platteland', 76–7.

⁴⁷ Fockema Andreae, 'Burggrafelijk Leiden', 55.

⁴⁸ The Hague, Public Record Office in the Province of Zuid-Holland, Archief der Graven van Holland 242 f. 83.

⁴⁹ L.Ph.C. van den Bergh, *Oorkondenboek van Holland en Zeeland*, 2 (Amsterdam, 1870), 410.

⁵⁰ Leiden, Municipal Record Office, Archieven van de Kerken 603.

⁵¹ Fockema Andreae, 'Burggrafelijk Leiden', 54.

⁵² C. Hoek, 'De leenkamers van de heren van Wassenaar', *Ons Voorgeslacht*, 33 (1978), 52–233, 461–665, see 102.

logical consequence of his local influence, but this does not mean that they were *ministeriales*. The protégés are to be found, if at all, not in the circle around the viscount, but around the count of Holland, who owned the land on which Leiden developed. After all, the institution of *ministeriales* and the manorial system were linked; service at court offered serfs the opportunity to rise⁵³.

Not only Leiden, but also towns in Holland like Haarlem, Delft, Rotterdam and Alkmaar, which emerged in the surroundings of a count's manor, owed part of their flourishing to the proximity of the count and were granted a charter by him⁵⁴. The heart of the count's court in Leiden was 'Gravensteen', the count's residence, the chapel (Pieterskerk) and the orchard. Here the count and his retinue regularly stayed⁵⁵. At the beginning of the fourteenth century, and also later, the count received an income from the rents of farms and houses in Leiden; this income gives a clear indication of the count's property in that area⁵⁶.

The close link between count and city is also evidenced by the fact that in the event of war, 25 Leideners were assigned to protect the count's tent. Leiden thus occupied a unique position among the cities of Holland⁵⁷.

The core of the oldest urban élite was formed by an extensive circle of relatives, a large number of whom held posts at the count's court. They are usually referred to as 'van Leijden', after their place of origin. Although the first Leidener linked to the count's chancellery who is known by name appears only after 1270, *magister* Gerard van Leijden⁵⁸, it is likely that Leiden clerks belonged to the count's civil service before then. Perhaps the Leideners at court were descendants of the families who filled administrative posts for the manor during an earlier period. Leupen assumed that the prominent fourteenth-century families of civil servants had their origins in the *familia* of the bishop of Utrecht, who was in control of the Leiden manor for some time during the second half of the eleventh century⁵⁹. In that case the civil servants originating from Leiden would represent the *ministeriales* of the Leiden patriciate. However, by the time their families appear in the records, they are engaged in trade and industry, as is shown by their surnames *snider*, *scomaker* and *smit* or *smeder* (tailor, cobbler, smith). Of course,

⁵³ Enklaar, *Ministerialiteit*, 12–13.

⁵⁴ I.H. Gosses, *Stadsbezit in grond en water gedurende de middeleeuwen. Een historisch-oeconomische beschouwing* (Leiden, 1903), 10–18, J.C. Kort, 'De grafelijke hofstedeheer in Haarlem', in: *De Nederlanden in de late middeleeuwen*, eds. D.E.H. de Boer and J.W. Marsilje (Utrecht, 1987), 168–81, see 168–169.

⁵⁵ Van Oerle, *Leiden*, 46, Versprille, 'Stadsrecht', 32, J.G. Kruisheer, *De oorkonden en kanselarij van de graven van Holland tot 1299* (2 vols., The Hague 1971), II 249 nr. 31ff.

⁵⁶ *De Rekeningen van de Grafelijkheid van Holland onder het Henegouwsche Huis*, ed. H.G. Hamaker (Werken uitgegeven door het Historisch Genootschap, Nieuwe Reeks 21 and 24, 2 vols., Utrecht, 1875–6), I 23, 78 and II 19 and 38.

⁵⁷ Versprille, 'Stadsrecht', 34.

⁵⁸ Kruisheer, *Oorkonden*, II 492.

⁵⁹ P.H.D. Leupen, *Philip of Leyden, A Fourteenth-Century Jurist. A Study of his Life and Treatise 'De Cura reipublicae et sorte principantis'* (Rechtshistorische studiën 7, The Hague, 1981) 82.

they no longer have anything to do with the count's court, though they may well have been purveyors to the court. It is not impossible that ancestors of members of the élite were linked to the manor as serfs or villeins in a pre-urban phase, but this is pure conjecture. Besides, the question remains whether the leading families of 1300 had settled in Leiden only recently; as will be shown, there was a considerable and continuous influx into the élite families coming from outside Leiden. Lastly, a career path at the count's court would not have been through the framework of *ministeriales*, but via the clergy. Just as the count of Holland appointed mostly clergymen as civil servants around 1300⁶⁰, he would have done the same in the thirteenth century. Then members of the leading families of Leiden would have been given posts at court on the grounds of their education.

Traditionally, the membership of the urban élite and the ownership of municipal land went hand in hand in Leiden; but it may not be deduced from this that the local landowners ever formed the oldest urban élite. It may be that members of the élite are found exactly where the town emerged (at the Breestraat, along the Rhine, in the surroundings of the castle, near the Pieterskerk), but this does not mean anything, because the whole population of Leiden was initially concentrated in those places. The main fact against the urban élite originating from local landowners is that the land on which the oldest settlement stood belonged to the count's estate. In addition, nearly every house and farm in Leiden was held in fief; unencumbered, free ownership hardly existed. A link between administrative power and the ownership of land, as with the *virii hereditarii* in Ghent⁶¹, is not very likely and neither do the sources point in that direction. The Leiden élite is thus comparable with the élites in Leuven and the cathedral cities of Liège, Tournai and Utrecht, where landownership was not the sole criterion for admission to urban administrative posts either. It should be noted that in those cities it concerned *ministeriales*⁶².

The ties between the urban élite and the countryside were extremely close⁶³. This becomes apparent from the considerable areas of land that were owned by the Leiden élite in the surrounding countryside; already at the beginning of the fourteenth century about one-third of the lands around Leiden were owned by the urban élite. The origin of members of the élite is significant as well. In the period 1295–1325 the names of 23 aldermen and sheriffs are known. Little is known of about nine, but of the 14 others, 13 had ties with the surrounding country of Rijnland and proved for the most part to have originated from it. Among these 'newcomers' members of the noble families were in the majority.

When the origins of élite families are examined over a longer period (1296–

⁶⁰ Kruisheer, *Oorkonden*, I 187–196.

⁶¹ Blockmans, *Stadspatriciaat*.

⁶² Van Uytven, 'Stadsgeschiedenis', 208–9.

⁶³ Rightly Ellermeyer pleads for studying the town as part of the surrounding countryside (*Stade*, 214).

1420), a prominent migration of families to Leiden becomes apparent. This is in accordance with the fact that a continuous influx of country dwellers into the city occurred during the fourteenth century⁶⁴. For a quarter of the families there is evidence of origins outside Leiden (64 out of 223), largely from places in the surrounding Bailiwick of Rijnland. Over half of the families (36) who are known to have migrated to the city evidently belonged to the nobility.

4. Nobility and urban élite

During the period under study, noblemen filled more than one-third of the posts in town government and other governing bodies, from sheriff to church warden, while their families made up just one fifth of the total number of families involved. The move to the city of these noblemen cannot be explained simply by developments in the country that were unfavourable to the nobility; already in the first half of the fourteenth century, when agriculture in the peat and clay areas of Holland flourished⁶⁵, noblemen were found among the urban élite. Moreover, the agricultural crisis described by De Boer that occurred between the Haarlemmermeer and Maas in the County of Holland during the second half of the fourteenth century manifested itself in the peat and clay areas, which suffered flooding and shrinkage; on the *geests*, the sandy soil between dunes and polder, agriculture continued⁶⁶. Yet the circumstances in the countryside will not have led to the migration to the city, since the noblemen who settled in Leiden during that period originated from the *geests* and peat areas. Generally, it was families of the lower strata of the nobility that came to Leiden; the economic possibilities of the city had great attraction for these families. Here one could invest in trade and industry and make a fortune. Members of the nobility thus not only had the opportunity to maintain their position, but also to improve it. There is abundant evidence for the involvement in trade and industry of élite members of noble origin. In nearly all cases they were involved in (wholesale) trade or industrial enterprise (cloth making). Leiden may have attracted the nobility with the presence of the count's residence, at which the count's family still stayed regularly in the thirteenth century⁶⁷.

Even though the Leiden élite included an important noble element, it did not trace back its origin to the nobility. It has been seen that the leading families of the oldest patriciate derived their prestige first of all from trade and industry, and

⁶⁴ De Boer, *Graaf en Grafiek*, 139–57.

⁶⁵ Van der Linden, *De Cope*, 62–9, De Boer, *Graaf en Grafiek*, 218–24.

⁶⁶ De Boer, *Graaf en Grafiek*, 218–24, 334–5, 337.

⁶⁷ Van Oerle, *Leiden*, 50.

not from landed property, the economic basis par excellence of the nobility. What Nicholas concluded regarding the urban élite of The Netherlands in general is applicable to Leiden as well, i.e. that in origin it differed fundamentally from that of the Italian cities. In Leiden the families involved in trade and industry initially dominated, but in Italy the landed nobility dominated⁶⁸.

Not only did noble families take part in city life, but also, conversely, families who assumed the airs of the nobility and sometimes merged with it. Through marriage, the purchase of country mansions, the acquisition of domains and the exercise of an office, various families in Leiden became the nobility's equals and were absorbed into it with the lapse of time. The lifestyle and status of the nobility will have appealed to members of the urban élite chiefly because of the connected prestige⁶⁹. They tried to become the equals of the nobility in whose circle they moved and into which they married. The noble prerogatives probably assumed second place.

5. Trade and industry

The importance of trade and industry for the élite has been stressed before. First of all there was the producing and selling of cloth; a major economic activity of the élite that probably started as early as 1300⁷⁰. It seems likely that Leiden had a prominent guild of so-called *wantsnijders* who retailed cloth, as was the case in various Dutch and German cities⁷¹, but there is no evidence for this and the guilds in Leiden were forbidden by the count of Holland in 1313⁷². Only much later are there indications which point to a fraternity of *wantsnijders*. In 1366 a collective, *die cledersniders*, appears, a fraternity that was probably religious in character⁷³.

It is certain that 62 members of the élite took part in the cloth industry and trade; this was more than a third of the 155 members about whom data were found regarding their participation in trade and/or industry. The number of people involved in brickworks and the burning of lime was only 27 persons, 25

⁶⁸ D. Nicholas, *Town and countryside: Social, Economic and Political Tensions in Fourteenth-Century Flanders* (Rijksuniversiteit te Gent. Werken uitgegeven door de Faculteit van de Letteren en Wijsbegeerte, 152, Bruges, 1971), 350, Heers, *Clan familial*.

⁶⁹ Nicholas, *Town and countryside*, 283.

⁷⁰ J.M. Baart, 'De materiële stadskultuur', in: *De Hollandse stad in de dertiende eeuw*, eds. E.H.P. Cordfunke et al. (Muiderberg, 1988), 99–101.

⁷¹ N.W. Posthumus, *Geschiedenis van de Leidsche Lakenindustrie, 1. De Middeleeuwen (veertiende tot zestiende eeuw)* (The Hague, 1908), 265–6, Ellermeyer, *Stade*, 20.

⁷² Leiden, Municipal Record Office, Archief der Secretarie 1253–1575, 114.

⁷³ Leiden, Municipal Record Office, Archief van het Heilige Geest — of Arme Wees — en Kinderhuis 428 f. 21v.

persons were involved in both of peat production and wine trade⁷⁴, and only 16 persons in the corn trade. Only 14 members of the élite were involved in the brewing and selling of beer, although this urban industry came second only to clothmaking.

Wholesale trade seems to have been a common denominator in the participation of the urban élite in trade and industry, besides industrial enterprise. In this, the Leiden élite is no exception: elsewhere in Western Europe it was wholesale trade in which the urban élite was primarily involved⁷⁵. Therefore, the financial means members of the élite had at their disposal, enabling them to participate in wholesale trade and industrial enterprise were important. It proved impossible to work out the profit margins of these enterprises for the period under study, but they must have been considerable, taking into account that a fourteenth-century wine merchant is praised explicitly by the St Pancras Church for having accepted hardly more than an allowance for his efforts and keeping far from speculation in market developments⁷⁶; he seems to have served as an example for the many whose main interest lay in maximal profit.

Participation in the political life of the city did not impede the economic activities of the élite. A transition from long-distance trade to the closer-to-home distributive trade, as described for the Cologne patriciate by Herborn and Militzer⁷⁷ did not take place in Leiden. However, in Leiden it was important that the élite be regularly physically present on the political stage; apparently this problem was solved by having others do the commercial travelling.

In trade and industry, the élite occupied a prominent place, as evidenced by the names of cloth inspectors and masters of crafts passed down occasionally and by the fact that whenever the sources mention the purveyance of cloth, wine etc. to the count, the city of Leiden, or its institutions it is chiefly members of the patriciate to whom the delivery was granted. Here political and economic power went together and, at least where the patriciate was concerned, augmented each other.

As noted previously over a quarter of the members of the élite under consideration invested in more than one sector of trade and/or industry. Presumably, capital was invested in different sectors to spread the risk and to maximize profits. But the degree to which investments and therefore risks were spread was even larger; when the investments were examined according to family

⁷⁴ See for wine-merchants within the urban élite Herborn, *Weinhandel* and G. Sivéry, *Les comtes de Hainaut et le commerce du vin au XIVe siècle et au début du XVe siècle* (Publications du centre régional d'études historiques de l'Université de Lille, 6, Lille, 1969), 109.

⁷⁵ Thrupp, *London*, 15, Sivéry, *Commerce du vin*, 109, Nicholas, *Town and countryside*, 350–1, A. Derville, 'Les draperies flamandes et artésiennes vers 1250–1350', *Revue du Nord*, 54 (1972), 353–70, Ellermeyer, *Stade*, 160, Elben, *Rottweil*, 4.

⁷⁶ Leyden, Municipal Record Office, Archieven van de Kerken 415 f. 10.

⁷⁷ Herborn, *Weinhandel*, 21.

it was found that 75 were involved in trade and industry. Of these 75 families, 60 also invested in land and/or rents⁷⁸. This group included 18 families who not only invested in land and rents, but also in the lease of taxes, tithes and/or tolls. These families spread their risks to a large degree. When it is also taken into account that seven families belonging to this group supplied civil servants to the count and clergymen to the church, the diversity of investment becomes even more apparent.

6. Clan and conjugal family

The unit of relatives used in this study is the family, including all male descendants of the same forefather; in Leiden this unit was predominant⁷⁹. The value attached to descent in the male line is evidenced firstly by the use of patronyms by most of the members of the élite in Leiden and the use of a seal that corresponds to that of the father. Secondly, the importance of male descent can be deduced from the precedence of sons in the inheritance of property, in the right of succession concerning fiefs, as well as in the granting of the right of collation of ecclesiastical institutions. Thirdly, more often than not companies passed from father to son, so that in some families there was an occupational tradition. Finally, in the administrative sphere only once is it mentioned that a son immediately succeeded his father's post, yet a lot of families upheld a tradition in the administration. As will be shown, they often handed down their political opinion as well.

Family names can be misleading in the study of families and their influence. Family names were often regarded as part of the first name, because of the naming after relatives from the mother's side the same names are therefore found within several families⁸⁰. In addition, the use by the élite of a matronym sometimes occurs. It seems that this was not the result of a higher prestige the mother may have had, but as a result of the early death of the father or because

⁷⁸ The many records concerning rents that are preserved make possible a research to the Leiden rentmarket as Ellermeyer carried out for the German town of Stade (1975).

⁷⁹ We do not go further into the bilinear kindred; it played a role in Leiden as elsewhere in Holland, but of minor importance in daily life. Only incidentally, in cases of marriage, guardianship, law of succession and criminal law the kindred came to the fore (see P.C.M. Hoppenbrouwers, 'Maagschap en vriendschap. Een beschouwing over de structuur en functies van verwantschapsbetrekkingen in het laat-middeleeuwse Holland', *Holland*, 17 (1985), 69–108 and recently P.C.M. Hoppenbrouwers, *Een middeleeuwse samenleving. Het land van Heusden, ca. 1360–ca. 1515* (Historia Agriculturae 25, Groningen, 1992), 194–197).

⁸⁰ For Leiden we have no proofs that, as Barthélemy states, the naming of children after their grandfather or other relatives from the mother side had something to do with the prestige of the original bearer of the name (cf. D. Barthélemy, 'Parenté', in: *Histoire de la vie privée. II. De l'Europe féodale à la Renaissance*, eds. Ph. Ariès and G. Duby (Paris, 1985), 96–161, see 107).

of the obscurity of the father's name in Leiden. In those cases where the family name of the mother was adopted, more prestige was attached to this (noble) name.

The families in Leiden cannot be called clans; they simply did not have the size and influence to justify this. The medieval clan has been described extensively by Heers. He found that large and powerful families existed both in the country and the cities in Western Europe during the Middle Ages. He characterises these clans as social groups whose membership is based on descent in the male line. Such a clan may have included one family or a federation of several families and consisted of smaller units of parents and children. Heers includes those connected with the family, their friends and clientèle of subordinates among the clan⁸¹. In the city, the clan was often concentrated in a district that derived its name from the clan. In connection with this Heers refers to the relation between large living quarters and the clan living as close together as possible⁸². In the religious sphere, the clan was brought together by the family chapel⁸³. These family groups, according to Heers, included people from various backgrounds, small pedlars and even the poor as well as powerful merchants⁸⁴. Heers ascribes a large influence to the clan in all aspects of city life.

Heers based his findings mainly on his research on the situation in the cities of north and central Italy, Genoa in particular⁸⁵. The number of families of considerable size in Leiden was extremely low. Only five families had branches of considerable size. Town castles of the Italian type were unknown to the Leiden families and there is no mention in the sources of extensive complexes, where the various family members lived together; in Ghent, for instance, these complexes did exist⁸⁶. The houses of the large families mentioned before usually accommodated one conjugal family, though in some cases members of one family lived close together.

From a religious point of view, the families did not correspond to clans. As far as it is known, they did not possess family chapels. Some members of the families under consideration instituted vicarages and prebends. During the foundation these were chiefly of interest to the founder's direct relatives, as the right of collation of these institutions was bequeathed mainly to descendants of the founder himself or his parents; the same held true for the right of office.

The large number of families belonging to the élite of Leiden in the period

⁸¹ Heers, *Clan familial*, 14, 62–4, 71–90.

⁸² Heers, *Clan familial*, 157, 137–145.

⁸³ Heers, *Clan familial*, 257, 259.

⁸⁴ Heers, *Clan familial*, 237–41, 263.

⁸⁵ See for Genoa also D.O. Hughes, 'Urban growth and familystructure in medieval Genoa', in: *Towns in societies. Essays in Economic History and Historical Sociology*, eds. Ph. Abrams and E.A. Wrigley (Cambridge, 1978), 91–130.

⁸⁶ Blockmans, *Stadspatriciaat*, 341–2.

under study (223), does not justify the term clans. With such a number, Leiden differs essentially from cities like Leuven, Brussels and Antwerp in Brabant, where political power was shared among two, seven and six (artificial) families, respectively⁸⁷.

In the wider context of the family, the conjugal family played the most important role in everyday life in Leiden. As do Laslett⁸⁸ and Shorter⁸⁹ this term was taken to mean the unit consisting of parents and children. This deviates from Haks, who reserves the term conjugal family for the modern family which did not occur in Leiden as there were no equal rights or a free choice of partner⁹⁰. The importance of the conjugal family was shown before by the regulation of the right to collate and serve ecclesiastical institutions and the accommodation of large families, but is confirmed by the content of the memorial foundations in Leiden, as indicated by Hoppenbrouwers⁹¹. Most of the memorial services were dedicated to the founder and his immediate family, like parents and children. The situation in Leiden is not different from that in the rest of Holland and Western Europe; everywhere family life is centred around the conjugal family⁹².

Although it was not clans that played the principal role in the strife between factions as in Italy⁹³, this does not mean that family relations were insignificant in the forming of factions. Internally, families were quite unanimous in their choice of faction, in just a few cases did faction boundaries run across one family.

As early as 1350, at the start of the quarrels between the factions of *Hoeken* and *Kabeljauwen*⁹⁴, close family ties existed between members of the two factions and it seems likely that these ties influenced which side they chose. In the years after 1350 bonds of marriage strengthened the cohesion within the factions even further, though to a much larger extent in case of the *Hoeken* than in that of the *Kabeljauwen*. The closeness of the two factions was increased by feuds, which played a prominent role in the factional strife. In addition, mutual guarantees interwove the factions even further.

It is assumed that the leading families of the élite gathered around them a clientèle from the lower levels of urban society. However, there is no concrete evidence supporting this assumption, but the fact that members chiefly of these

⁸⁷ Van Uytven, 'Stadsgeschiedenis', 208.

⁸⁸ P. Laslett, 'Introduction: the history of the family', in: *Household and family in past time*, eds. P. Laslett and R. Wall (Cambridge, 1972), 1–89, see 28.

⁸⁹ E. Shorter, *The making of the modern family*, (New York, 1975), 29–30.

⁹⁰ D. Haks, *Huwelijk en gezin in Holland in de 17de en 18de eeuw. Processtukken en moralisten over aspecten van het laat 17de- en 18de-eeuwse gezinsleven* (Historische Herdrukken, 20, Utrecht, 1985), 219.

⁹¹ Hoppenbrouwers, 'Maagschap', 108.

⁹² Howell, *Women*, 12, Hoppenbrouwers, 'Maagschap', 99–108.

⁹³ Heers, *Parties*, 17–9, 101–32.

⁹⁴ See for the beginning of this struggle in the county of Holland H.M. Brokken, *Het ontstaan van de Hoekse en Kabeljauwse twisten* (Zutphen, 1982).

families regularly guaranteed insignificant individuals who applied for burghership may point to the existence or emergence of bonds of dependence.

Finally, apart from playing a role in the formation of factions, family ties were significant for a career in the count's civil service. This was very clearly so in the first decades of the fourteenth century, when a number of relatives of the prominent civil servant Pieter van Leiden filled a post at the count's court.

7. An open or closed patriciate

According to Blok⁹⁵, the government of Leiden was in the hands of 20 or so families as early as the second half of the fourteenth century; there was hardly any room for *homines novi*. Blok's claim was tested on the basis of lists of officeholders and genealogical data, compiled and collected for this purpose, in order to see whether there actually was an oligarchy and, in connection with this, how political careers took shape. The same methods were used as applied by Blockmans for Ghent, Dordrecht, Rotterdam and Zutphen⁹⁶.

Initially, the urban government of Leiden was composed of a sheriff and eight aldermen⁹⁷. Apart from sheriff and aldermen there were councilmen (burgomasters); they are referred to from 1299 onwards⁹⁸. The introduction of councilmen did not increase the influence of burghers in the urban government: aldermen and councilmen were supplied by the same families. The number of families involved in the urban government was considerably higher than the 20 suggested by Blok. From 1296 to 1420 at least 139 families supplied 261 individuals to the court; when the officials of other governing bodies (church wardens and wardens of the charitable institutions of Holy Ghost and hospital) are added together a total of at least 186 families with 330 individuals is reached.

In order to determine whether the élite was open or closed and to what degree, the period 1340–1420 in which people appeared in the urban government for the first time and also whether they belonged to families that had not supplied officials before was examined. The data thus collected were compared with the number of positions held at court for that year and subsequently added up for each decade. The same was done with the positions of Holy Ghost warden and hospital warden; church wardens were not taken into account because their names

⁹⁵ P.J. Blok, *Geschiedenis eener Hollandsche stad*, 1 (The Hague, 1910), 155.

⁹⁶ Blockmans, 'Mobiliteit in stadsbesturen' and W.P. Blockmans, 'Het wisselingsproces van de Gentse schepenen tijdens de 15de eeuw', in: *Handelingen van de Maatschappij voor Geschiedenis en Oudheidkunde* (Nieuwe Reeks, 41, Ghent, 1987), 75–96.

⁹⁷ In the first half of the thirteenth century eight *jurati* are mentioned, but already in 1260 Leiden had eight aldermen instead (Kruisheer, 'Stadsrechtsoorkonden', 187, Haarlem, Public Record Office in the Province of Noord-Holland, Archief van de Abdij van Egmond 595).

⁹⁸ Blok, *Hollandsche stad*, 140.

crop up only incidentally. It became apparent that the opportunities for new families were much wider than Blok presumed; every decade more than a tenth of the officials involved were members of new families. Only in the years 1390–1399 and 1410–1419 is a tendency towards exclusivism found, both concerning the urban government and all other governing bodies. This tendency towards exclusivism was reflected in the institutionalization of the city council in 1385. From this date this advisory body was formed by former sheriffs, aldermen and burgomasters⁹⁹. Lower ranking officials, after their term of office could no longer expect a seat in the city council.

Entry into the city council may be considered a privilege of the political élite; a further legal limitation of the élite, as in German cities¹⁰⁰, did not exist in Leiden. Even the right of burial in the choir of the St Pancras Church was not an exclusive right of the élite alone.

Niermeyer regarded the new members of the Leiden élite as ‘nouveaux riches’, people who had managed to secure a place in the élite on the basis of wealth they had recently acquired in the cloth trades or breweries. According to Niermeyer, this was not at all difficult because the Leiden élite was not very rich and thus easy to rival¹⁰¹. The openness that may have existed, however, does not necessarily point to possibilities for social climbing in Leiden. In many cases the new families had previously enjoyed prestige, but presumably they had only recently settled in Leiden. For over a third of the new families participating in the urban government it was possible to establish that they were newcomers to the city. Williams also observed a similar development in London; there, too, *homines novi* came mainly from outside the city¹⁰².

In the period 1296–1420, 47 families never took part in the urban government and only supplied governors to charitable and ecclesiastical institutions. As a rule, very little is known about these families, they remained outside the city council and are therefore considered less prominent in the élite. However, if social climbing occurred it was among these lower ranking officials and took the form of their acquiring an official post. Apparently the openness that prevailed meant that people of the same social position as the patriciate entered into it; only for families supplying officials ranking a little lower did the openness mean a rise in social standing.

⁹⁹ Blok, *Hollandsche stad*, 145.

¹⁰⁰ Miltzer, ‘Führungsschicht’, 3, B. Schwarz, ‘Der Uplap van den penninghen in Hildesheim 1343’, in: *Städtische Führungsgruppen und Gemeinde in der werdenden Neuzeit*, ed. W. Ehbrecht (Städteforschung Reihe A, 9, Cologne/Vienna, 1980), 99–113, see 103; W. Schich, *Würzburg im Mittelalter. Studien zum Verhältnis von Topographie und Bevölkerungsstruktur* (Cologne/Vienna, 1977), 222, Von Klocke, *Das Patriziatsproblem*.

¹⁰¹ J.F. Niermeyer, ‘Dordrecht als handelsstad in de tweede helft van de 14e eeuw’, *Bijdragen voor Vaderlandsche Geschiedenis en Oudheidkunde*, 8e reeks, 4 (1943), 86–113 and 145–169, see 168.

¹⁰² G.A. Williams, *Medieval London, from Commune to Capital* (London, 1963), 74.

Of course, the above conclusions only concern the political élite. It is assumed that the percentages of new families indicate a tendency towards exclusivism in the élite as a whole, because the great majority of the élite in some way also participated in the government of the city and the urban institutions (186 out of a total of 223 families in the period 1296–1420).

8. Concentration of political power

In order to determine the extent to which power was concentrated in one particular person, the average number of posts a Leiden administrator held was calculated by studying all political careers starting between 1340 and 1400¹⁰³. The evidence for the years before 1340 is incomplete, but after this date the names of almost 90% of the urban government officials are known. For the posts of Holy Ghost and hospital wardens this percentage is lower; of these more than two-thirds of the names are known. Considering these limitations, it is likely that the average number of posts filled will actually have been a little higher than the number calculated. As the careers that started after 1400 usually continued after 1420, beyond the scope of this study, the study was limited to the period 1340–1399 concentrating on about 207 careers. In this period the average career involved 4.6 (annual) posts. When the 46 persons who filled a post only once are left out (22% of the total number), a total of 5.9 posts for an average political career is reached. On the basis of these numbers it was concluded that the amount of flux was considerable and the concentration of power in one person small, at least compared with the averages Blockmans collected for several other cities in The Netherlands concerning the years 1400–1550. With 4.6 posts, Leiden comes close to Ghent (3.3), but remains far behind cities like Dordrecht, Rotterdam, and Zutphen with averages of 10, 12, and 14.5, respectively¹⁰⁴.

The proportionally large number of short careers fits in with a picture of relatively quick mutations. A quarter of the persons involved moved in administrative circles for just a year, another quarter had a career of between 2 and at the most 5 years, and over half filled posts for a period longer than 6 years. In this Leiden is comparable with Dordrecht¹⁰⁵. It was expected that members of the urban élite started their career in one of the minor offices, but the path of their career was different. The majority gained access to the circle of administrators not via a minor office, but via the post of alderman, in contrast with the Blockmans' findings for Dordrecht, Rotterdam, Zutphen, as well as Ghent, where entry indeed took place via the assembly of aldermen but where one started at the

¹⁰³ See the research of Hebert (*Tarascon*).

¹⁰⁴ Blockmans, 'Gentse schepenen', 78 and Blockmans, 'Mobiliteit', 240–1, 259–60 note 19.

¹⁰⁵ Blockmans, 'Mobiliteit', 244.

bottom on account of the internal hierarchy of this governing body. As far as is known, a similar hierarchy did not exist in Leiden¹⁰⁶.

When considering the smaller circle of the urban government of Leiden, it was found that over three-quarters of its participants first filled the post of alderman. Only just under a tenth of them first held a minor office in the urban government. Even if the office of church warden had been included in the calculations the picture would not have changed appreciably. Thus it was deduced that, of the 95 church wardens of the Pieterskerk known to us by name, only 13 started their careers in this office, of which only three made it to the urban government.

Only 9% of the individuals under consideration started their career as burgomaster. This small percentage is explained only in part by the simple fact that annually four burgomasters were appointed against eight aldermen. When the moment at which a member of the élite becomes burgomaster for the first time was studied, it was found that the great majority of officials were appointed burgomaster only after having filled the post of alderman or lower. Evidently, one normally became a burgomaster only after having gained the necessary administrative experience at another post, that of alderman in particular. The same held true for sheriffs, although it should be noted that they never previously filled one of the minor offices.

9. Starting functions 1340–1420

The great majority of participants in the administration, over 70% filled five positions, at most, in any governing body during their career. This percentage was higher for positions in the local court than for the total of official posts. The more important a post was, the smaller apparently the chance of re-appointment; in this the office of sheriff took a special place. In general, it was filled only once in a person's career, because of the small chance of occupying this post: only one sheriff was needed as against four burgomasters and some eight aldermen.

Of the administrators who were most active, filling more than ten posts, it was found that 11% of them held 300 of the 857 annual posts filled by someone known to the author by name during the period 1340–1400, that is 35% of the annual posts. This corresponds with the evidence for Dordrecht in the period 1400–1550, where the political top filled 37% of the posts. In Ghent this group was considerably less enduring, while the most active in Rotterdam and Zutphen had a much bigger part in the administration¹⁰⁷.

When not just the development of individual careers, but also at the number of posts a family filled in the period 1340–1420 is considered, it can be seen that the

¹⁰⁶ Blockmans, 'Gentse schepenen', 80–6 and Blockmans, 'Mobiliteit', 255.

¹⁰⁷ Blockmans, 'Mobiliteit', 242.

concentration of power is even stronger than described above. About 10% of the families involved in urban government had control of as much as 48% of all posts; about 13 families. This group is regarded as the political top élite within the patriciate. The political top élite in Leiden was more powerful than that in Luik in the years 1244–1312; there 25% of the families supplied 50% of the aldermen¹⁰⁸. In Dordrecht the share of the top was more restricted: 9.5% of the families supplied 35.5% of the seats in urban government between 1400–1550. In contrast, Zutphen in that same period knew a less influential top élite, 36% of the officials came from 8% of the total number of families¹⁰⁹.

Hardly any formal restrictions existed for filling a post at the local court (apart from the requirement of seven years of citizenship). Neither the oldest, fourteenth-century statute book, nor those of the fifteenth century refer to any ban on the simultaneous office at the local court of direct relatives, like father and son. The only restriction was, that retired burgomasters were only permitted to be re-appointed to the same office after 2 years¹¹⁰; in practice, however, it turns out that brothers hardly ever served at the local court at the same time and no instances were found of a father and son serving simultaneously.

The above concerns the political top élite. It would be interesting, finally, to see whether an urban top élite existed. For this those families who did not only belong to the political top élite but to the economic élite, the ecclesiastical élite and the circle of officials of the count was added up. Only four families in the entire patriciate met these requirements. They held a strong political influence in the city — they were in control of a fifth of the positions at the local court between 1340 and 1420 — with considerable wealth, supplied canons to the chapter of St Pancras, and in addition filled posts in service of the count, so that their interests and influence reached far beyond Leiden. Three of these families belonged to the nobility or entered into it. The families playing a prominent role in the strife between the factions of ‘Hoeken’ and ‘Kabeljauwen’ at the beginning of the fifteenth century belonged to this absolute top of the patriciate.

10. Conclusion

The urban élite of Leiden was more than just a political élite. The urban upper class in Leiden had various manifestations: it comprised the political, economic, ecclesiastical, as well as the count’s administrative élite. The urban élite in Leiden derived its social status from the exercise of power. Those involved were *potentiores*, as *magister* Philips van Leiden, author of *De Cura reipublicae et sorte*

¹⁰⁸ Van Uytven, ‘Stadsgeschiedenis’, 209.

¹⁰⁹ Blockmans, ‘Mobiliteit’, 247, 253.

¹¹⁰ Hamaker, *Keurboeken*, 11, 154 and 283.

principantis, called them and among whom he reckoned his family¹¹¹. Their power was based on capital resources. Some financial strength was necessary to fulfil a function in the urban government or at the count's court, it made possible a university education, it could be used for the foundation of vicarages and prebends, and was important for the support of younger sons as clergymen; capital enabled the building up of a clientele via guarantees, while it was also important for the investment in lucrative sectors of trade and industry. Depending on its financial strength a family could enter as many fields in the economy and politics as possible and exercise the corresponding measure of power. Although capital was of considerable importance, the élite of the period up to 1420 cannot be called a plutocracy; great wealth was found only in very few cases.

¹¹¹ Philippus de Leiden, *De Cura reipublicae et sorte principantis*, eds. R. Fruin and P.C. Molhuijsen (Oude Vaderlandsche Rechtsbronnen, 2e reeks, 1, Werken der Vereeniging tot Uitgave der Bronnen van het Oude Vaderlandsche Recht, The Hague, 1900), 223. Also for the urban upper class in London the indication *potentiores* was in vogue among others (Thrupp, *London*, 14–5). Von Klocke has pointed out that in the middle ages no superlatives but appellations like *meliores*, *maiores* and *honoratiores* were in use (*Das Patriziatsproblem*, 16).