SYMBOLIC COMMUNICATION IN LATE MEDIEVAL TOWNS

Edited by
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Introduction

(17th-18th CENTURIES)

The Function of Cities in the City of London

Margo Daven
In this contribution an attempt is made to demonstrate on the one hand how the city administration of Leiden used the wine gift in its contacts with the world outside the city walls, and on the other hand what function wine had during political and religious ceremonies within the city. Leiden was the third of the six so-called capital or major cities of the county of Holland. Around 1500 the city counted approximately 12,000 inhabitants. The economy depended largely on the production of beer and cloth, goods that had a good market abroad. Together with Haarlem, Leiden is one of the best-documented cities of Holland. The sources used for this paper are mainly the accounts of the burgomasters and treasurers and in addition the resolution books of the local council, the vroedschap. The oldest account book available, that of 1391/92, was the starting point and with intervals of twenty years the accounts until 1572/73 were studied, depending on their availability. As the investigated period covered a 160 years, changes in the use and the function of wine gifts could be detected.

In the accounts we find liquid consumption in two chapters. The costs of the wine poured in the so-called ‘stedecken’, jugs, were clustered in a special chapter in the accounts. Whereas originally this chapter was titled ‘Van geseeynten wijn’, that is ‘poured wine’, in the course of the fifteenth century it was abbreviated to ‘Scheycken’. In middledutch as in modern Dutch this means both the presentation of a gift and pouring out a liquid. In addition to the chapter of ‘Scheycken’, another chapter called ‘Cost open hyuye’ existed which accounted for the meals and wine consumed by the city administration and their guests in the city hall or in a tavern elsewhere in the city. Whereas the wine gifts in the chapter ‘Scheycken’ were primarily destined for guests and visitors, the consumption goods registered in ‘Cost open hyuye’ were used by the city administration together with the guests in the city hall. There is no evidence that in Leiden a special officer was in charge of the distribution of the wine and other presents as was the case in Ghent. Nevertheless, the administrative classification shows that the wine gift had become an inextricable part of city politics.

7. Groebner, Liquid assets, p. 23.
8. See on this Leiden Gemeentearchief, Secretarie-archief I (hereafter SA), 563 fol. 118r.
offered 'in eerbairheit van der stede' that is, to maintain or, even better, to increase the honour or reputation of the city. Thus contemporaries did realise that both solid and liquid gifts could play an important role in the maintenance of the social and political network of the city.

Wine was the pre-eminent lubricant of the late Middle Ages. As pure water was lacking, wine was consumed on a far larger scale than nowadays. Wine had (and still has) a higher status than beer and that is why it was the most adequate liquid to use within social and political relationships. This becomes very clear in 1512. On March 1 of that year, stormy weather provoked the collapse of the tower of the church of St. Peter, which functioned as archive of the town administration. As a result the documents were buried under the debris of the tower that was scattered all over. A group of fullers, who were ordered to carry away the debris, found the privileges of the town and took them to the house of the bailiff where at that time the bench of aldermen was deliberating. The aldermen awarded themselves some 22 litres of wine, whereas the fullers received two barrels of beer as a reward.\textsuperscript{11}

The wine was presented to guests in tin jugs with a content of 4.85 litre. On the lid of the jug the coat of arms of the city, the keys of St. Peter, was engraved so that it was clear who was the donor of the wine and the owner of the jug. The wine was not taken home but consumed directly by the receiver and his retinue. The jug was given back so that it could be used again. The wine most often given, white Rhine wine, was the most popular wine in the Northern Netherlands. The less expensive red wine was poured only occasionally.\textsuperscript{12} Until 1500 the more expensive sweet wines from the Mediterranean, such as malvoisie and romani, were given especially to high-ranked visitors (for example the count, a papal legate) or on special occasions (for example the auditing of an account, the election of the burgomasters).

\textit{A quantitative approach}

In order to quantify the gift-giving policy of the city-administration, a number of figures were collected from the accounts for the period 1392-

\begin{table}[h]
\centering
\begin{tabular}{|c|c|c|c|}
\hline
Year & Total expenditure & Costs of wine and meals & Percentage \\
\hline
1392 & 1,727 & 172 & 10 \\
1413 & 13,068 & 355 & 2.7 \\
1434 & 25,117 & 424 & 1.7 \\
1452 & 24,534 & 328 & 1.3 \\
1473 & 41,726 & 266 & 0.64 \\
1493 & 25,514 & 255 & 1 \\
1513 & 55,690 & 131 & 0.23 \\
1533 & 40,229 & 74 & 0.18 \\
1556 & 31,591 & 264 & 0.84 \\
1573 & 37,671 & 35 & 0.09 \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\caption{Costs of wine and meals (pounds of 30 grouts\textsuperscript{13})}
\end{table}

1573. Of course these figures are only indicative since I took a (select) sample of no more than ten. Nevertheless, some trends become clear. Table 1 shows the total amount of money spent on wine and meals in absolute figures and as a percentage of the total expenses of the city. In 1434 most money was spent on wine and meals, namely 424 pounds Hollands. In that year a master mason had to work 1272 days to earn this amount of money. Nevertheless, the costs represented less than two per cent of the total expenses of the city in that year. In contrast, in 1392 less money was spent, but the costs for wine and meals took ten per cent of the total expenses. Still, it is evident that the city administration did relatively spend not much money on wine and meals; in most of the years less than one per cent. Furthermore, in the course of time the amount of money spent on this purpose decreased both in absolute and relative figures.

The figures of Table 2 confirm this decrease. For this table I counted the number of visitors who received jugs of wine, a meal or wine in another form than in jugs. First, the number of visitors increased steadily, up to 151 in 1434. After 1473, however, a sharp decline set in with ten visitors in 1573 as an absolute low. Of course political circumstances have influenced these figures. In 1434, for example, a


\textsuperscript{12} A. Meerkamp van Embden, Stadsrekeningen van Leiden, 1390-1434 I (Amsterdam, 1913) (hereafter ME I), p. 240: the treasurer of Holland receives two jugs of red

\textsuperscript{13} 30 grouts = 1 pound.
constant flow of councillors from The Hague came to Leiden to restore law and order after a riot had broken out. Conversely, hardly any guests visited the city in 1572, a year of much political tension when Leiden had chosen the side of William of Orange. In the Bavarian and Burgundian period, which is until 1477, the city offered wine and meals to visitors on average one to three times a week, whereas afterwards in the Habsburg period this frequency was only one to three times a month.

How to explain this decrease? One is tempted to say that the visitors still came but that they were not offered as much as in the preceding period. Leiden suffered big financial problems from the last decade of the 15th century onwards, due to increasing tax demands from the central government and the burden of life annuities sold in the past. However, as was shown the costs of wine and meals represented only a small percentage of total expenses of the city. Another explanation could be that political decisions in the Habsburg period were increasingly made at a central level, in meetings with the representatives of the prince in The Hague or Brussels for example. The same kind of centralisation can be observed at another level. Whereas in the Bavarian and Burgundian period meetings of the representatives of the towns and nobles often took place in Leiden, in the Habsburg period they preferred The Hague as a central meeting place.14 As I will demonstrate the officers of the prince and the city deputies were two of the most important groups of beneficiaries of wine gifts, so a decrease in the frequency of visits of these men will be noted strongly in the total number of visitors. However, similar research for Haarlem showed that wine gifts for representatives of the towns did not diminish in the sixteenth century, so in that town bilateral consultations remained important.15

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of jugs</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Wine (not in jugs and meals)</th>
<th>General totals</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1392</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>75</td>
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<tr>
<td>1413</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>90</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1434</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>151</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1452</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>25</td>
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<tr>
<td>1473</td>
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<td>24</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td>63</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>73</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<td>27</td>
<td>13</td>
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<tr>
<td>1513</td>
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<td>17</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>1556</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td>-</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>1573</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
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<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>213</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>356</td>
<td>196</td>
<td>552</td>
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</table>

Table 2 shows that eight jugs (approximately 38.8 litres) was the maximum quantity of wine given. However, only thirteen dignitaries received this number of jugs, about 4 percent of totally 356 wine gifts. Most frequently, two jugs of wine (9.7 litres) were given: 213 times of the 356 wine gifts, which is about 60 percent. The second most popular gift was four jugs, given a 144 times (32 percent). The conclusion is that the standard gift was two or four jugs and only occasionally other amounts were given. The number of jugs depended on one’s place in the social hierarchy as perceived by the city administration. The higher up the position on the social ladder, the more men and servants there were in the retinue of the visitor, the more jugs were needed to satisfy everybody’s needs.

**Beneficiaries: the prince and his servants**

Who were the beneficiaries of all the gifts of wine and meals and did the city administration have a special intention distributing these gifts in kind? In Chart 1, based on data for the entire period, seven categories are distinguished: the prince, the courtiers and officers of the prince, the viscount of Leiden (the lord of Wassenaar and his family), other nobles, clergy, city deputies and others who do not fit in these categories, mainly heemraden or dyke reeves of Rijnland, the administrative region...
The count of Holland, the uppermost dignitary in the social and functional hierarchy, always received the biggest quantity of wine. Gifts of wine to the prince can be traced back to 1266 when in the first charter granted to the city Floris V stipulated that the count should receive a barrel of wine on the occasion of the confirmation of its privileges. However, in the course of time the distance between the prince and the citizens was widened by the integration of Holland and Zeeland into bigger personal unions. This distance is reflected in the wine gifts. In the years under investigation, William VI of Bavaria received wine on no fewer than seven occasions in the year 1413, whereas Charles the Bold in 1473 received wine once only (on 5 February). William VI, who resided in the county during 20-50 percent of his time, was physically present and accessible for his citizens. Charles the Bold resided mainly in the southern principalities of the Netherlands and visited the county of Holland only twice, in 1468 for his inauguration and in 1473. When they visited a city, they had always a specific reason: both princes came to ask the city for a contribution in the subsidies, the so-called ‘beden’, which were of growing importance to the income of the prince. Whereas William VI normally received eight jugs of wine, Charles the Bold received a whole barrel, the equivalent of 56 jugs or 271.6 litres of wine. Is this simply an inflation of the gift to the prince or was the barrel reminisce of the privilege of 1266? The first explanation is rather more likely: although in the Bavarian period the number of eight jugs was reserved for the count, in the Burgundian period this amount of wine was granted too to his substitute in Holland, the stadtholder or lieutenant. In the Habsburg period eight jugs were even given to high nobles.

Of course, the prince could never consume this quantity of liquid by himself and his retinue probably drank the majority of the wine. However, in addition to the barrel for Charles the Bold in 1473, fifteen high-ranking courtiers received jugs of wine. The city distinguished among these courtiers between councillors with a university degree, local officers and young nobles, who received two jugs, and prominent officers like the steward Guillaume de Bische, high nobles like the lords of Broderode,

18. ME I, pp. 239-243; SA 549, fol. 71r.
19. SA 549, fols. 71r-72r.
20. SA 549, cost.
istrate. However, the services of the highest financial officer in the Habsburg state-apparatus entailed more than a promise. Later that month he helped the secretary of the city to sell 'renten' or annuities in his hometown Antwerp and in Mechelen. By selling annuities, the city borrowed money at interest to finance the subsidies it had to pay to the prince.21 Certainly, the treasurer general would not encounter many difficulties to interest members of his extensive financial network in these high-interest-loans.

Leiden did not only pay attention to high officials but also to the local officials with whom the city had to deal on a more day-to-day basis. In the Bavarian period the baljuw or sheriff of Rijnland, the officer for judicial affairs in the area around Leiden, and the rentmeester or receiver of Noordholland, responsible for the princely domains around Leiden, received each two jugs of wine when they were newly appointed.22 But the offerings could go beyond these courtesies. In 1433/34 the burgomasters bestowed the sheriff of Rijnland three times with wine (in total 29 mengel, that is a bit more than 35 litres) in order to be 'voorderlijk', helpful, to some burgurers of the town.23 Similarly, the city approached the third local officer, the houtvester or ranger of the princely forestry next to Leiden, the Haarlemmerhout. He received special attentions when he came to the town in November 1433 to investigate damage in the forestry caused by burgurers of Leiden. The burgomasters paid his expenses and meals in several inns (8 pounds Hollands) in order that he would not investigate too thoroughly: 'omdat [hij] 't scarpest op hem niet soeken en soude'.24

In particular the decision makers and information brokers within the state apparatus were bestowed with wine; they were the essential targets for the city administration. The lower categories of officers (clerks, doorkeepers, messengers) were bestowed in other ways: with small amounts of money ('drinking money') or with New Year's gifts.25

21. SA 592, fols. 42r, 50v.
24. ME II, p. 312.

Chart 1: Beneficiaries of wine and meals in
Leiden (1392-1573)

Nobles and clergymen

In Chart 1 the nobles constitute a special category. Although most categories are distinguished by functional criteria, this one is based on a social criterion. In reality the percentage of 17 per cent of noble beneficiaries is an underestimate as there were clergymen and courtiers and officers of the prince who were of noble origin. So the noblemen included in this category did not occupy a function in the secular and religious hierarchies. Moreover, the gifts to the viscount of Leiden and his family (6 per cent of the gifts) were put aside.

In 1340 the lord of Wassenaar became viscount of Leiden. Until 1420 the viscount had a special relationship with the city because he had the right to appoint the schout or bailiff of the city, and the eight aldermen, who were renewed yearly. So he strongly influenced the day-to-day administration of the city.26 Not surprisingly the viscount was a frequent visitor of the city hall. In 1391/92, for example, viscount Philip of...
Wassenaar and his closest family members received wine on seven occasions. In February 1413, the son of the viscount was released from captivity. At the viscount’s request, the city had helped to pay the ransom. Father and son visited the city hall to celebrate his liberation and they received twice eight jugs, exceptional because they normally got only two or four jugs. The city administration considered it important to stay on good terms with the viscount since those who offered him wine had generally been appointed by him before. In other words: the clients wanted to strengthen their relationship with their patron. Moreover, the viscount was one of the most influential nobles at the court of the Bavarian dukes so he could look after the interests of the city at the highest political level.

Among the other nobles who received wine we encounter members of the most important noble lineages in Holland: Van Assendelft, Van Arkel, Van Brederode, Van Egmond, and Van Montfort. Of the nobility of Zeeland we only encounter those who were active in the household or council of the prince. The number of jugs given to these nobles increased over time. In the Bavarian and Burgundian periods they received two or four jugs, whereas in the Habsburg period most nobles received four jugs. In 1573 some nobles even received eight jugs. This can be explained by the rise of the status of these noblemen who acquired domains all over the Netherlands and behaved like princes with their own court and corresponding culture. Finally, only among the nobles female beneficiaries can be found. They received normally two or four jugs of wine, when they visited the city, apparently on their own; when they accompanied their husbands no special gifts of wine are mentioned. Again, the city showed a courtly behaviour towards high-ranked visitors. The urban elite was concerned for its reputation and honour and probably had to make even more efforts than nobles to demonstrate this.

The same is true for the wine-gifts to the clergy. The city perceived a clearly defined hierarchy within the clergy. To give some examples: the minister of the Franciscans received two jugs, the abbess of the convent of Rijnsburg, close to Leiden, four jugs and the bishop of Utrecht eight jugs. The hierarchy within the clergy was apparently better defined than in the court and state apparatus. The city administration maintained a special relationship with the convent of the Franciscans, founded in 1445 just outside Leiden’s city walls. The friars were not only helped financially with the restoration of their buildings but were also given two, later four, jugs of wine yearly on the occasion of the most important feasts of the liturgical calendar like Christmas, Easter and Whitsuntide. Moreover, from 1465 onwards the Franciscans could collect the wine needed for the Masses free of charge. In 1473, for example, no less than 209 mengel (approximately 225 litres) of malvoisie were poured for this reason. The costs of this free wine increased so heavily that in 1475 the city administration decided to pay a fixed amount of money of 16 pounds Hollands to the friars instead. In 1499 this amount was raised to 24 pounds as a compensation for the abolition of wine gifts on Christian holy days. Wine gifts to the Franciscans were restricted to the occasions when high functionaries of the order visited the town.

Not surprisingly, the gifts of the city-administration were reciprocated. The friars invited the city governors for a meal on the day of St. Francis, October 4, or in the weeks afterwards, which, however, was paid by the city administration. This custom was continued until the 1560s. The countergift of the friars went nonetheless further than this invitation. The Franciscans were essential for the religious life in most of the towns of the Netherlands because they regularly delivered sermons in several places in town. Moreover, they had a special relationship with the civil militias, they celebrated mass on the occasion of the renewal of the city-administration and had an important role in the procession of Corpus Christi. An exchange took place of material goods for services, which were partly connected with the legitimacy of the political elite of the town.

34. SA 643, fols. 40v-41r.
35. SA 629, fols. 32r-33r.
37. SA 643, fols. 32r-33r.
39. SA 549, fol. 75r.
40. SA 616, fol. 36v.
City deputes

The deputes of other cities, mainly in Holland, received 17 per cent of the total amount of wine and dinners offered. City deputes regularly visited Leiden for bilateral deliberation. For example, in August 1392 two jugs of wine were given to deputes of Gouda because there was a legal dispute between the sheriff of Gouda and a burgher of Leiden. Delegates visited the city also for a multilateral meeting or diet of the Estates of Holland in which the representatives of the cities and some nobles and clergy gathered to discuss matters concerning the whole county. In 1473 for example, the deputes of Haarlem and Amsterdam each received two jugs when they discussed the payment of the new subsidies granted to the prince. Thus the wine had a clear function: it was used to confirm the settlement of a dispute or to drink to cooperation in political or financial matters.

Not only with nobles and non-nobles one stood on rank. When delegates of several cities received wine at the same time, for example during a diet, the order in which they were registered in the account reflects the order in which they had received their first charter: Dordrecht first, followed by Haarlem, Delft, Gouda and Amsterdam. Except for Dordrecht deputes from these cities were the most frequent visitors. Some significant differences become clear in comparison with other beneficiaries of winegifts. First, the city deputes received wine as an anonymous group and not as individuals. In the accounts they are registered as ‘the city of Haarlem’, ‘the city-administration of Gouda’ or ‘the deputes of Amsterdam’ and the names of the visitors are only rarely mentioned. Furthermore, throughout the investigated period the city deputes received the same amount of two jugs; no inflation of the winegift occurred. Finally, the wine gifts to city-deputies were the only ones that were given to people who were positioned on the same step of the social ladder; the deputes of Leiden would receive the same quantity of wine when they visited another city.

Wine for the urban elite

The city administration did not only pour out wine for visitors with a certain rank or prestige but was also generous to its own members and servants. On several fixed moments during the year the city poured out wine to its own benefit. The most important occasions were the election of the four burgomasters on St. Martin’s eve and the celebration of Corpus Christi, the second Thursday after Whitsun. During these festivities a great number of people – up to 537 people with Corpus Christi in 1556 (see Chart 2) – were given a mengel (1.2125 litre) of wine. Among the beneficiaries were: the political elite (the members of the vroedschap or council, the bailiff, the aldermen and the burgomasters); a second group of urban officers (the clerk, the secretary, the messengers, the trumpet player and the three pipers and other subordinate servants) and a third group of others appointed by the city (for example the schoolmasters and the physicians). However, numerically the most important group were the members of the shooting fraternities, both archers and crossbowmen.

Chart 2 suggests that the number of people who received wine on St. Martin’s eve increased significantly in the fifteenth century. However, in the sixteenth century the gifts of wine on the occasion of the election of the burgomasters stopped. Instead, fixed amounts of presence money were given with which one had to buy one’s own wine in one of Leiden’s taverns. Still, on Corpus Christi the tradition of the distribution of wine was preserved; in the course of 160 years the number of receivers of wine gifts on this occasion even tripled.

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40. ME I, p. 26
41. SA 549, fol. 74r.
42. See for example SA 523, fols. 77r, 81v.
Calculations for 1473 give an impression of the quantity of wine that was poured on these days. On St. Martin’s eve and Corpus Christi altogether 568 people received a mengel, which implies that almost 690 litres of wine was poured. During this year the city donated to visitors 178 jugs of wine, together with a barrel for the duke and 209 mengel for the Franciscans, in total almost 1390 litres of wine. This means that on the two festival days alone, the city’s political elite consumed half of the quantity wine that was given to the visitors during the whole year.

Thus, the political elite of the city participated intensely in the public festivities on these two festival days. Several functions can be attributed to the distribution of wine on these days. First, with the slogan ‘wine for free’, the city-administration could count on a massive attendance of the political and religious ceremonies. In this way the entire political and official elite of the city became involved with the festivities which could stimulate the internal cohesion. Because of the yearly regularity of the gifts the relationship of the city with its servants was continuously renewed and confirmed. However, the range of the gifts went beyond the walls of the city hall. Both festivities were to some extent designed to legitimise the political order of the city. On St. Martin’s eve both the old and the new elected burgomasters were bestowed with wine. In this way, the transfer of authority was communicated to a larger audience, although that audience was more or less limited to the political elite. On Corpus Christi, however, a larger audience was reached because all those who received wine had participated in a procession through the city in which the holy sacrament was carried. In the procession the magistrate of the town had the most prominent place, closest to the monarch in which the sacred host was carried. That is why this Corpus Christi has been interpreted as a symbol of the body politic of the city of which everybody formed part but which was of course governed only by a select few. Once again the legitimisation of the political order was celebrated with wine.

This legitimisation also makes clear why the members of the shooting confraternities played such a crucial role during these festivities. The city-administration could summon these urban militias to restore order or to defend the city against attackers. As the militias should defend the city, and with it the political elite, it was important to maintain a good relationship with them. The regular gifts of wine were a sign of this relationship, besides the fact that it was a reward for the assistance of the archers and crossbowmen during the ceremonies. Wine could even have functioned as bait for participation in the procession. As a sixteenth century chronicler from Amsterdam reports the militia-men were poured wine during the procession and their bellies were full before the procession had ended; such was their devotion.

In addition to these yearly wine gifts, the city contributed financially to the confraternities to cover the expenses of the special clothes the members wore, and of the shooting contests the confraternity organised. The most important one was the popinjay shooting, in which the prince and/or his representatives participated regularly. In 1413 for example, when William VI participated in this contest, the costs were so high that the city-administration donated 40 pounds Hollands. In 1473 stadhouder Lodewijk van Gruuthuse would participate in the popinjay shooting. The city had already financed an expensive militiaman’s cape but in the end Gruuthuse had left for Flanders. Instead his two sons and some members of the Council of Holland and Zeeland were invited; it did not matter who was coming as long as the prince was represented. After the contest the dignitaries were treated generously with a big meal, financed by the city-administration. During this kind of meeting the political elites of both Leiden and the Burgundian lands could establish contacts in an informal way. In years when the costs of the new subsidies had to be apportioned this could be advantageous.

Conclusion

The city administration of Leiden used the wine gift to establish and maintain its external and internal relationships. Especially in the fifteenth century, more people received more wine which caused an increase of the costs of this kind of public relations. However, during the Habsburg

45. SA 549, fols. 75v, 76r-v.
48. Carasso-Kok, *Geschiedenis*, p. 420 (‘dien wert op veel plaatsen de wijn ghesconcken (...) ende het buycskens wert altemet vol al eer de procosie gedaen is: dit is haere devotie die sy hebben’).
50. ME I, pp. 241, 266.
period the number of visitors and subsequently the costs of wine and meals decreased sharply. Moreover, the yearly distribution of wine on St. Martin’s eve and on Corpus Christi was replaced by gifts of fixed amounts of money. Both on these occasions and with the gifts of wine to the Franciscans the character of the gift-exchange was modified: gifts in kind were replaced by gifts in money.

With the wine gifts the city tried first and foremost to increase its honour or reputation. Second, one expected that these material gifts were in one way or another returned to the city. This could happen in the same week, but also next month or even next year. As I have shown, the city authorities explicitly expected this counterfeit from officers of the prince. However, my data demonstrate that also in the case of the Franciscans an effective exchange of material goods and services took place.

The distribution of wine during political and religious festivities was essentially directed to the political elite of the city. As they were the most important actors both during the transfer of authority on St. Martin’s eve and the procession on Corpus Christi, they benefited most from these wine gifts. In this way the cohesion of the political elite and the adherence of its defendants, the members of the shooting confraternities, were enforced. Moreover, the political order of the city was legitimised and communicated towards a broader audience.

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NEGOTIATING AND ESTABLISHING PEACE BETWEEN GESTURES AND WRITTEN DOCUMENTS: THE WALDMANN-PROCESS IN LATE MEDIEVAL ZURICH (1489)*

Introduction

In spring 1489, a violent revolt took place in Zurich and its domains. Hans Waldmann, who had been mayor since 1483, was accused of bribery and of selling out Zurich’s interests for huge sums of money. He was also accused of seducing the citizen’s women and forging documents. These accusations and tensions between Zurich and its territory finally led to Waldmann’s decapitation on the 6th of April. During and after the conflict, Swiss ambassadors came to Zurich several times and tried to intervene, negotiate the peace and calm the tumultuous situation. The unfolding of this conflict and its settlement will be the topic of this essay and serve as case study. We are aided in this endeavour by the fact that for various reasons the events are well documented in the sources.

Whereas earlier studies interpreted medieval diplomacy primarily in terms of a development towards conformity with the rule of law, and therefore as part of a general movement towards statehood and standardization, today the notion is slowly taking hold that diplomatic engagement and politics would be better illustrated as a cultural form with continuously changing political practices and flexible communication strategies.1 The study of communication within conflicts has been a focus

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