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FREDERIK BUYLAERT

THE »VAN BOSCHUYSEN AFFAIR« IN LEYDEN

Conflicts between Elite Networks in Late Medieval Holland¹

Introduction

The 1480s were a turbulent age in the city of Leyden in the county of Holland. In 1481 the city, which was controlled by the so-called Cod faction (*Kabeljauwen*), was briefly taken over by its opponents, the so-called Hooks (*Hoeken*). The city was again put in the hands of the Cods soon enough, but in 1486 the urban elite was again startled by another crisis. This disturbance was caused by the prominent Leyden nobleman Willem van Boschuyzen, nicknamed »the Younger«. He was appointed sheriff (*schout*) of Leyden by the sovereign after the death of his predecessor, sheriff Adriaan van Zwieten, in August 1486. The sheriff of Leyden was an important figure. As local representative of sovereign authority, he also held a permanent place in the municipal authority of Leyden. The sheriff was not only involved in day-to-day government and ordinary city council jurisdiction, but also wielded high judicial power in the city. His position was much coveted and obtained only by the most powerful Leyden families. Since 1434 the sheriff invariably descended from one of the three most powerful families of the city, namely, the noble families Van Boschuyzen, Van Zwieten and Van Poelgeest.

Although Willem van Boschuyzen belonged to this circle of happy few, his appointment worried the Leyden elite greatly. The city council of Leyden paid heavily to bribe a series of prominent figures at the Burgundian-Habsburg court to counteract his claim. Their aim was to push through the appointment of their own candidate, Adriaan van Poelgeest, at the expense of Willem van Boschuyzen. The result of this war of bribes (Willem had received his appointment through a »gift« as well) was that the Leyden city council had spent an enormous amount on bribes when it won the battle in June 1487.

This incident has repeatedly been studied. Since the growing input of cultural anthropology in the historical profession in the 1970s, state formation historians have stressed that both the late medieval princely state and the cities made use of gifts and other »informal« techniques to support official political means². After studies on

1 I wish to thank Marc Boone (University of Ghent), Peter Hoppenbrouwers (University of Leyden) and Werner Paravicini (Deutsches Historisches Institut Paris) for their encouragement and critical remarks on earlier drafts. Used abbreviations are ARAB (Algemeen Rijksarchief Brussel), NAN (Nationaal Archief Nederland), GR I (Grafelijkheidsrekenkamer I: registers en stukken), GR II (Grafelijkheidsrekenkamer II: afgehoorde en gedeponeerde rekeningen), RH (Raad van Holland) and SAL (Stadsarchief Leiden).

2 Valentin GROEBNER, *Liquid Assets, Dangerous Gifts. Presents and Politics at the End of the*

gift culture in fifteenth-century Lille, Douai and Ghent, this gift match in Leyden received attention as well³. It is striking, however, that the »Van Boschuyzen affair«, as the crisis in Leyden soon came to be called among historians, has not yet been studied from the point of view of the instigator, Willem van Boschuyzen himself. In comparison with other late medieval elite families, the Van Boschuyzens have nonetheless received special attention. This is due to the fact that they were one of the few families in Holland that had been able to forge a close relationship with the Burgundian court before 1477. The Van Boschuyzens are generally referred to as the representatives of the Burgundian dukes in the city of Leyden⁴. Seen in this light, the »Van Boschuyzen affair« seems a logical consequence of the difficult relationship between the Burgundian-Habsburg court and society in Holland after 1477. The centralist policy of Charles the Bold had strongly corroded the rights of the cities of Holland. The States of Holland (the six leading cities and the Knighthood of Holland) made use of the unexpected death of the duke in 1477 to reinstate their regional autonomy. They enforced political rights that were recorded in the Great Privilege of Holland. The stubborn resistance of the Leyden city council against Willem van Boschuyzen as sheriff, then, would have been inspired by the desire to protect urban liberties against Maximilian of Austria, the political heir of the Burgundian Valois. From this point of view, the sheriff of Leyden is not so much a member of the city magistracy, as a direct representative of the sovereign interests in Leyden⁵.

In this article I will demonstrate that the »Van Boschuyzen affair« was more than a reaction against a Burgundian pawn on the Leyden chess board. This crisis of 1486–1487 in the Leyden political elite was indeed quickly connected to the debate on the compliance with the Great Privilege, but the actual cause lay in the internal

Middle Ages [original title: *Gefährliche Geschenke: Politische Sprache und das Reden über Korruption am Beginn der Neuzeit*, translated by P. E. Selwyn], Philadelphia 2002, gives a historiographical introduction to this subject.

- 3 Alain DERVILLE, *Pots-de-vin, cadeaux, racket, patronage. Essai sur les mécanismes de décision dans l'état bourguignon*, in: *Revue du Nord* 56 (1974), p. 341–364; Id., *Les pots-de-vin dans le dernier tiers du XV^{ième} siècle*, in: Wim BLOCKMANS (ed.), *1477. De algemene en de gewestelijke privilegiën van Maria van Bourgondië voor de Nederlanden, Kortrijk, Heule 1985*, p. 449–471; Marc BOONE, *Dons et pots-de-vin, aspects de la sociabilité urbaine au bas Moyen Âge. Le cas Gantois pendant la période Bourguignonne*, in: *Revue du Nord* 70 (1988), p. 471–487. This Leyden case was first described by J. W. MARSILJE, *Het financiële beleid in de laat-Beierse en Bourgondische periode, c. 1390–1477*, Hilversum 1987, p. 39, 48–53 and especially by Hanno BRAND, *Over macht en overwicht. Stedelijke elites in Leiden (1420–1510), Leuven, Apeldoorn 1996* (*Studies in Urban, Social, Economic and Political History of the Medieval and Modern Low Countries*, 6), p. 133–138, who provided an extensive reconstruction of this affair. The most recent article on gift culture in Leyden is James WARD, *Guillaume de Clugny, Guillaume de Bische and Jean Gros. Mediators between Charles the Bold of Burgundy and the cities of Holland (1460–1477)*, in: *Francia* 33/1 (2006), p. 69–99.
- 4 Hanno BRAND, *Floris en Jan van Boschuijsen: Leidse edelen aan het Beierse en Bourgondische hof*, in: *Leidschrift* 14 (2000), p. 64–99, and p. 76–78, 82–83, 94–95, 98–99 in particular.
- 5 BRAND, *Over macht* (as in n. 3), p. 42–45, 123–125 sees the sheriff of Leyden in the first place as a sovereign agent. Henk KOKKEN, *Steden en staten. Dagvaarten van steden en staten van Holland onder Maria van Bourgondië en het eerste regentschap van Maximiliaan van Oostenrijk (1477–1494)*, Den Haag 1996 (*Hollandse Historische Reeks*, 16), p. 160 is of the opinion that the sheriff, as a member of the Leyden city council, put the interests of Leyden first.

balance of power within the Leyden political elite. The tug-of-war over the office of sheriff was a consequence of the tense relationship between the most powerful Leyden families. The efforts of the city council to pass the office of sheriff to Adriaan van Poelgeest, were inspired by the fear that the opposition of interests between the Leyden families would degenerate into an open conflict that would tear the urban elite apart.

The »Van Boschuyzen Affair«: Events and Aftermath

Before discussing the position of the Van Boschuyzens around 1487 it is desirable to examine the facts and their political context a little further. On 3rd September 1486 Willem van Boschuyzen had acquired an appointment as sheriff by paying the sizeable sum of 1,200 Rhine guilders to Pieter Lanchals, a high-ranking Burgundian official. Lanchals gave a verbal promise to Willem that he would get his money back if Pieter did not succeed to convince Maximilian⁶. That Lanchals thought he could ensure that Willem was appointed is connected to the fact that the Leyden office of sheriff had been leased by the sovereign since 1434. To lease the office one had to be very wealthy. Beside the non-recurrent purchase price the lessee also had to pay an annual rent to the sovereign. Over the years, the purchase price had risen continuously because the sovereign, plagued by financial trouble, kept on contracting new loans with his sheriff, who deducted them from the annual rent he himself had to pay. In the end a fixed burden of debt in unpaid loans had even come to be attached to the office. Every new sheriff had to pay that debt to his predecessor. That the office of sheriff remained popular nonetheless illustrates the power that the position carried. In view of Willem's considerable gift and Lanchals' position of trust with Maximilian it is not surprising that Van Boschuyzen was appointed at first.

The Leyden city council was alarmed and initially countered that appointment by referring to the Great Privilege of 1477, enforced by the States of Holland, since it stipulated that Leyden could block an unwanted appointment by paying the lease due itself⁷. This was obviously considered a very weighty case, because the city council immediately decided to sell annuities. This threatened to disrupt the city finances even more, which were already destabilised by fiscal pressure. Furthermore, the members of the Leyden political elite did not hesitate to dip into their own purses to come up with the lease for their own candidate⁸. Finally, the city council put Willem van Boschuyzen under great pressure as well. This last measure was initially successful. Willem declared himself prepared to step down as sheriff. In the company of two members of the city council he travelled to the Southern Netherlands to tender his resignation in favour of Adriaan van Poelgeest, the opposing candidate

6 A biography of Lanchals is being prepared by Marc BOONE (Universiteit of Ghent). Meanwhile, see Marc BOONE, Lanchals, Pieter, ridder en Bourgondisch topambtenaar, in: Nationaal Biografisch Woordenboek 13 (1990), p. 471–480.

7 Adrie JONGKEES, Het Groot Privilege van Holland en Zeeland (14 maart 1477), in: BLOCKMANS (ed.), 1477. Het algemene ende gewestelijke privilegiën (as in n. 3), p. 145–208.

8 SAL, vroedschapsboek 1486, fol. 203v–205r, 209 r. Adriaan van Poelgeest was guaranteed by the Leyden city council that he would not have to pay the costs of his office himself.

who was sponsored by the city council. However, instead of Maximilian, the three met Pieter Lanchals, who refused Willem's resignation for the time being because a few seals were missing.

In the autumn of 1486, Willem van Boschuyzen may have officially buried his ambitions, but behind the scenes he made a countermove that was as plain as day, with the help of Pieter Lanchals. While Lanchals delayed the matter endlessly, much to the frustration of the Leyden elite, he convinced Maximilian to let Willem become sheriff after all. When in January 1487 yet another delegation was sent to Pieter Lanchals to ask him about the commission that was promised to Van Poelgeest, he replied *dat hij geen commissie over geven en soude want heere Willem van Bosschuysen, heere Gerijt van Abbenbrouck, ridder, ende Jacop van Bosschuysen tsamen waeren ten Damme ende begheerden eerst mit hem te spreken* (»that he would not give a commission because lord Willem van Boschuyzen, lord Gerijt van Abbenbrouck, knight, and Jacop van Boschuyzen were together in Damme and wished to speak to him first«). In early February the Leyden delegates were in Bruges again, only to encounter Willem van Boschuyzen at Lanchals' house as well. Maximilian now declared he did not accept the candidature of the Leyden opponent, and had reappointed Willem as sheriff of Leyden. Lanchals suggested menacingly that the Leyden delegates had better *sien souden dat sij met heere Willem voirs. composeerden ende seyde hemluyden wairschouwende van vele inconveniente die der stede dagelicx op comen mochte indien sij den selfden heere Willem niet en ontfangen soude* (»make sure they came to an agreement with the said Willem and warned them of many inconveniences that would trouble the city every day if they would not receive the same Willem«)⁹.

The Leyden city council, however, adamantly refused to accept Willem as sheriff. In March 1487 Willem van Boschuyzen had nevertheless managed to obtain letters from the sovereign, calling upon the sheriff and the Leyden judiciary to no longer hinder Willem. When it became clear that at any moment Willem would be able to hold his office, the city council sent a mounted messenger in the middle of the night *om haestich voirt te ryen ... tot Brugge* (»to race ... to Bruges«). There the Leyden alderman Jan van Lokhorst waited, who, by order of the city, bribed a whole host of people in the entourage of the sovereign in ten days' time to promote the Leyden interests with Maximilian. Among them were the earl of Polheim, the lord of Nassau, Vijt van Wolkestein and chancellor Carondelet, later joined by the bishop of Cambrai and Philip of Cleves¹⁰. That those court aristocrats realised that the Leyden elite was

9 SAL, tresoriersrekening 1487, fol. 131v–132v, 134r, 194v–199v., 207v. and tresoriersrekening 1486, fol. 206v.

10 These courtiers are identified by BRAND, *Over macht* (as in n. 3), p. 136 (footnote): the courtiers concerned were Jan van Eynatten, provost of the Saint-Gervase church in Maastricht, Jean Carondelet, chancellor of Maximilian, Jean de la Bouverie, lord of Wiere and president of the Great Council, Hendrik de Glymes, bishop of Cambrai, Engelbrecht II, count of Nassau and lord of Breda, Filips van Kleef, lord of Ravestein and Wijnendale and the German high noblemen Vijt von Wolkenstein, lord of Purmerend, and Martin, baron von Polheim zu Wels. Additional information can be found in the prosopographical repertory of Hans COOLS, *Mannen met macht. Edellieden en de Moderne Staat in de Bourgondisch-Habsburgse landen (1475–1530)*, Zutphen 2001, p. 183 (Jean Carondelet), p. 217 (Hendrik de Glymes), p. 240 (Filips van Kleef), p. 269–272 (Engelbrecht van Nassau), p. 280 (Martin von Polheim), p. 306–307 (Veit von Wolkestein).

prepared to do anything to keep Willem from becoming sheriff is evident from a letter written by the greedy provost of Maastricht to Leyden, in which he complained *dat hy veel meer arbeyt gedaen hadde dan sommige andere die veel meer gegeven waeren, menende dat hem veel meer toebehoorde* (»that he had worked much harder than some others who had received more, being of the opinion that he was entitled to more«). In the end the Leyden city council had paid about 3,000 pounds in bribes when Maximilian was finally persuaded¹¹. In June 1487 Adriaan van Poelgeest was eventually assigned the office of sheriff after all.

The final calculation of the expenses of the Leyden victory in the »Van Boschuyzen affair« amounted to a staggering 15,000 pounds, or one fifth of the annual city income. Apart from the actual bribes the city now had to pay the debt attached to the office of sheriff (2,000 pounds) and the actual lease as well as the loans connected to it (4,000 pounds), not counting all legal fees connected to a lawsuit filed by the city about this case with the Great Council. Furthermore, Maximilian demanded that Willem van Boschuyzen receive a compensation of 2,200 pounds. Leyden immediately paid Willem 1,200 pounds, but was not inclined to pay the remaining amount later on.

It soon came to a court case before the Council of Holland and the Great Council. In the end, arbitrators were appointed to settle the case. With a majority, Willem was finally awarded a third of the demanded sum. Two arbitrators, however, namely Brunink Spruyt and Jan van Lokhorst, who had bribed the high nobles in the name of Leyden, distanced themselves from the verdict because Willem had severely damaged the interests of the Leyden political elite. In the end, Willem received his money after all. Even the expenses Willem had incurred in his lawsuits against Leyden were reimbursed¹².

For historians, it remains an enigma why the Leyden elite made such stubborn efforts to keep Van Boschuyzen out of the office of sheriff¹³. At the city council meeting of September 1486, during which it was decided to block Willem's claim at all costs, it justified its decision only by stressing the necessity of maintaining urban peace in Leyden¹⁴. Willem van Boschuyzen was a tough old war horse in any case. In 1508 it was testified that during the last forty years he had taken part in the campaigns of the dukes of Burgundy against France and Liège, and in the conflicts in Holland and Utrecht *zonder daer inne gespaert te hebben lijf ofte goet* (»without having spared therein his life or his worldly goods«). As a *condottiere* of the States of Holland he did not miss a single skirmish north of the Scheldt in the turbulent 1480s. In short, Willem van Boschuyzen was a professional soldier in an age in which soldiering was no longer self-evident for the nobility in Holland. It had grown to be a career some nobles deliberately chose. Despite occupational hazard, such leaders were able to make their fortunes by collecting ransoms and loot¹⁵.

11 SAL, tresoriersrekening 1487, fol. 113v, 115v, 163r, 200r–209v and 212r–216v.

12 SAL, tresoriersrekening 1487, fol. 114v, fol. 210v–211r, 217r, NAN, GR I, nr. 28, fol. 107v–109r, nr. 491, fol. 144r–144v.

13 BRAND, *Over macht* (as in n. 3), p. 134 (footnote).

14 SAL, vroedschapsboek 1486, fol. 203v.

15 Antheun JANSE, *Ridderslag en ridderlijkheid in laat-middeleeuws Holland*, in: *Bijdragen en*

Furthermore, Willem had been bailiff of the Rhine Country for years. This was an important position with elaborate fiscal and judicial powers over a large part of the county of Holland. The bailiff of the Rhine Country was a key figure in the implementation of the policy of the States of Holland and the Court of Holland. Moreover, the bailiff almost always belonged to the Leyden elite. The Leyden city accounts show that the bailiff was closely involved in urban policy. In view of his connections of many years' standing with the States of Holland and the Leyden elite, speculations about his supposedly diabolical personality do not suffice to explain the obdurate stance of the Leyden urban elite against Willems candidacy.

The »Van Boschuyzen Affair« and the Late Medieval State Formation Process

The »Van Boschuyzen affair« was in no way perceived as an internal matter for Leyden. When in March 1487 it seemed that Willem van Boschuyzen would in fact become sheriff, he received a visit from an extensive delegation of the States of Holland. This delegation tried to convince him to leave the office to the Leyden candidate. As I mentioned earlier, Willem had obtained letters from the Burgundian court that same month, in which every objection against his being sheriff by Leyden and by the stadtholder of Holland was explicitly forbidden. The conflict about the office of sheriff also stirred up feelings on a regional level with an intensity that was no longer in proportion to the political power connected to the position. The involvement of the States of Holland was partly inspired by the fact that the political peace in Leyden (one of the largest cities in Holland) was a regional matter. Although the city had been taken in a surprise attack by the Hooks six years before, it was probably not the case that the States feared that this affair would cause a revival of factional strife in Leyden. Both Willem van Boschuyzen and the city council were in favour of the Cods. The leading cities of Holland were solidly in the hands of Cod political elites and a Hook threat was out of the question in the spring of 1487¹⁶. It was the relationship with central state power that worried the States of Holland.

With the succession of the Wittelbachs by the Burgundian Valois in 1428, the personal union of Holland, Zeeland and Hainaut was included in a larger dynastical complex, the Burgundian Netherlands. This changed the balance of power between sovereign and subject in Holland. Under the Bavarian dynasty Holland and Zeeland

Mededelingen betreffende de Geschiedenis der Nederlanden 112 (1997), p. 335 (quote); ID., *Ridderschap in Holland. Een portret van een adellijke elite in de late Middeleeuwen*, Hilversum 2001, p. 290–295, 302–310, 312–313, 425–426; Henk VAN NIEROP, *Van ridders tot regenten. De Hollandse adel in de zestiende en de eerste helft van de zeventiende eeuw*, Amsterdam 1990, p. 172; ARAB, *Grote Raad, Beroepen uit Holland*, nr. 182, p. 123–127.

16 The revival of the Hook faction during the Jonker Fransen War in November 1488 was a complete surprise to the cities of Holland and the sovereign. Michel VAN GENT, *Pertijelike saken. Hoeken en Kabeljauwen en het Bourgondisch-Oostenrijkse tijdperk*, Den Haag 1994 (*Hollandse Historische Reeks*, 22), p. 384–392; J. W. MARSILJE, *Ordeverstoring en partijstrijd in laat-middeleeuws Holland*, in: ID. (ed.), *Bloedwraak, partijstrijd en pacificatie in laat-middeleeuws Holland*, Hilversum 1990 (*Cahiers Sociale Geschiedenis*, 7), p. 58–59; SAL, *vroedschapsboek 1488*, fol. 226, 245r–246v, 264r–265r; *tresoriersrekening 1491*, fol. 242r.

weighed heavily on county politics, because they held the key to county finances. In the Burgundian Netherlands, Holland's fiscal share remained considerable as well, but in the extensive conglomerate of united regions no single region was *incontournable* any longer. The position of the subjects of Holland vis-à-vis their sovereign was relatively weak¹⁷. The sovereign's foreign policy was no longer concentrated on the needs of Holland and Zeeland, but on those of the Netherlands as a whole.

That reshuffle of the balance of power at the dawn of the Burgundian era was accompanied by a thorough change in the internal political structure of Holland. In view of their international ambitions, the dukes tried to develop a powerful administrative machinery that could quench their financial thirst¹⁸. In 1447, the Chamber of Accounts of The Hague was established and the existing Court of Holland was fitted into the state structure. In the case of the Court of Holland, officials of Burgundian and Flemish origin were often appealed to take leading positions in this institution. This did not please the local population¹⁹. Moreover, the comital court of Holland disappeared in 1428. It had functioned as an important point of contact between the sovereign and his subjects. Only after 1477 the first Holland courtiers appeared at the Burgundian-Habsburg court²⁰. The integration of Holland into the Burgundian personal union was the beginning of an era in which many must have felt that the autonomy and individuality of Holland were jeopardised. There was no opposition between particularistic Hook resistance and pro-Burgundian Cods after 1428, but it is nonetheless striking that the few traces of the Hook ideology refer to the preservation of old *mores*²¹.

Holland showed its displeasure when Charles the Bold died unexpectedly in January 1477. In that unforeseen dynastical crisis, the regions jointly decided that the Burgundian Netherlands would be continued. At the same time they took the opportunity to curb the excesses of the state formation process. In one general and a series of regional statutes (the so-called Great Privileges) the Parliament of Mechlin and the Hague Chamber of Accounts were abolished and the powers of the other state institutions were again curtailed. Moreover, the privilege of Holland stipulated that it was

17 Frederik BUYLAERT, Gevaarlijke tijden. Een vergelijking van machtsverwerving en machtsbehoud bij stedelijke elites in laatmiddeleeuws Holland en Vlaanderen, in: Tijdschrift voor Geschiedenis 119 (2006), p. 314–316. In 1473 Holland bore 17 per cent of sovereign aides. The notoriously rebellious county of Flanders paid 25 per cent, but had almost three times the number of inhabitants.

18 Specifically for Leyden, zie Hanno BRAND, Urban Elites and central government; co-operation or antagonism? The case of Leiden at the end of the Middle Ages, in: Publications du centre Européen d'études bourguignonnes (XIV^e-XVI^e s.) 33 (1993), p. 49–60.

19 Mario DAMEN, De staat van dienst. De gewestelijke ambtenaren van Holland en Zeeland in de Bourgondische periode (1425–1482), Hilversum 2000 (Hollandse Studiën, 36), passim; Marie-Charlotte LE BAILLY, Recht voor de Raad. Rechtspraak voor het Hof van Holland, Zeeland en West-Friesland in het midden van de vijftiende eeuw, Hilversum 2000, p. 10–12; Adrie JONGKEES, Vorming van de Bourgondische staat, in: Nieuwe Algemene Geschiedenis der Nederlanden, Haarlem 1980, vol. 4, p. 223–224.

20 Werner PARAVICINI, Expansion et intégration. La noblesse des Pays-Bas à la cour de Philippe le Bon, in: Bijdragen en Mededelingen betreffende de Geschiedenis der Nederlanden 95 (1980), p. 301–305.

21 VAN GENT, Pertijelike saken (as in n. 16), passim.

forbidden to appoint foreign councillors at the Court of Holland. Finally, the cities of Holland demanded that all their rights of appointment, which had been trampled on mostly by Charles the Bold, be strictly adhered to²².

1477 was an important turning point in the relationship between sovereign and subject. Half a century of growing sovereign centralism was strongly scaled down. This was unacceptable to Maximilian of Austria. Through his marriage in 1477 to Mary of Burgundy he had inherited the political goals of the Burgundian Valois. As soon as 21st December 1477 he ordered a few top officials to make an overview of the attainments made by Holland in 1477. His goal was to undo them one by one²³. This planned royal offensive was initially interrupted by political reality. After the death of his wife in 1482, Maximilian had to make large concessions to his subjects to obtain regency for his underage son Philip. Subsequently, his attention was absorbed by an insurrection in the county of Flanders. Only after 1485 the sovereign could again focus his attention on the restoration of the old position of power in Holland.

The tense relationship with Maximilian explains the extraordinary attention of the entire county for the »Van Boschuyzen affair«. In its attempt to counter Van Boschuyzen's claim on the office of sheriff, the Leyden city council had used the right to give precedence to a candidate of their own, a right obtained with the Great Privilege of 1477. In the royal camp, Lanchals did not think he would have much trouble obtaining another commission for Willem van Boschuyzen. Maximilian now had a splendid opportunity to undermine the attainments of the Great Privilege of Holland by thwarting those appointment claims in Leyden²⁴. For the States of Holland, filling the office of sheriff had become a matter of principle. Not only did the States put informal pressure on Willem, they also instituted legal proceedings with the Great Council to contest the violation of their rights. For the States of Holland and Maximilian, not so much the office of sheriff in Leyden *an sich*, but the compliance with the Great Privilege of Holland was what was really at stake in the »Van Boschuyzen affair«.

The »Van Boschuyzen Affair«: the History of a Family Network

The balance of power between the cities of Holland and the sovereign was undoubtedly one of the reasons why the Leyden city council wanted to stop Willem van Boschuyzen at all costs. Still, this does not suffice to explain why Willem was in no circumstances acceptable as sheriff of Leyden. The compliance with the Great Privilege was not a matter of concern until March 1487, when it became clear that Van

22 JONGKEES, *Het Groot Privilege van Holland* (as in n. 7), p. 270–278, 284–301. For an edition, see ID., *Privilege voor Holland, Zeeland en (West)Friesland verleend door Maria, hertogin van Bourgondië enz.*, in antwoord op klachten die de gedeputeerden van deze gewesten, bij die der andere landen van herwaartsover gekomen haar hadden te kennen gegeven, bijstand tegen de koning van Frankrijk belovende, in: BLOCKMANS (ed.), 1477. *Het algemeen en de gewestelijke privilegiën* (as in n. 3), p. 209–234.

23 Marc BOONE, Hanno BRAND, *De ondermijning van het Groot Privilegie van Holland, Zeeland en West-Friesland volgens de instructie van 21 december 1477*, in: *Holland. Regionaal-historisch tijdschrift* 24 (1992), p. 2–21.

24 *Ibid.*, p. 14–16.

Boschuysen and Lanchals did not hesitate to even undermine the achievements of 1477 to obtain their goal. During the previous seven months of the affair, it did not come into play. An important clue is that during his visit to Pieter Lanchals, Willem van Boschuysen was accompanied by his younger brother Jacob van Boschuysen and Gerrit van Abbenbroek. Since 1477, Jacob had been one of the leading figures in the Leyden political elite (he had been mayor in 1485). Gerrit van Abbenbroek, for his part, was married to an aunt of the brothers and was councillor in the Court of Holland (in 1484, together with Pieter Lanchals, he was responsible for checking the accounts of the States of Holland). Furthermore, Willem was supported by Gijsbrecht van Raaphorst, a member of the city council who belonged to one of the prominent families in Leyden²⁵. In short, the affair was in no way the work of an *Einzelgänger*, but of a powerful group of people.

For a better understanding of the »Van Boschuysen affair« in 1486–1487, the history of this political network should be taken into account. The power base of the van Boschuysen family was built in the fifteenth century. The ancestor of the Van Boschuysen family was Willem Luutgardenz. Around 1350 he was active as county official and in Leyden city politics. Through his marriage to the noblewoman Bartraad van Oegstgeest he had at least a semi-noble profile. From his offspring originated amongst others the »second family line of Van Boschuysen«. Herman Willemszoon, grandson to Willem Luutgardenz., bought the castle of Boschuysen in Zoeterwoude around 1390 from the original line of Van Boschuysen, which had come down in the world. Herman's grandson Willem adopted the last name of Van Boschuysen shortly after 1400. In the early fifteenth century the family was therefore knighted and for several generations had belonged to the top layer of prominent families dominating Leyden. The family mostly married members of the other top families in Leyden, such as the Van Zwietens, the Van Sonnevelts and the Heermans²⁶.

As fervent Cods the Van Boschuysens booked great successes under count John of Bavaria, who passed several positions in the official corps of the county to them. During this period, the Van Boschuysens, together with the Van Zwieten and Van Poelgeest families, established themselves at the top of the *Beau Monde* in Leyden. From that moment on they managed to reserve the top offices, to wit, the offices of sheriff of Leyden and bailiff of the Rhine Country, for themselves. This privileged connection with the count was lost in 1428 when Philip the Good came on the scene

25 BRAND, *Over macht* (as in n. 3), p. 135 (footnote).

26 A family tree can be found in Fred VAN KAN, J. HEINS, M. DE BYE DOLLEMAN, *Het nageslacht van Willem Luutgardenz., schepen van Leiden V, de takken van Willem Cuser en Floris van Boschuyzen*, in: *De Nederlandse Leeuw. Koninklijk genootschap voor geslacht- en wapenkunde* 110 (1993), p. 109–143. For an extensive prosopographical record of the fifteenth-century family, see Frederik BUYLAERT, *Crisis en continuïteit. De strategie van adellijke staatsfeodale families in de crisis van de late vijftiende eeuw in de Bourgondisch-Habsburgse Nederlanden (1477–1492). A comparative case study of the Flemish de Baenst family and the van Boschuysen family from Holland* (unpublished M. A. thesis, University of Ghent), 2003, vol. 1, p. 89–165, 218–244; vol. 2, *passim*. For the noble status of the family, see Fred VAN KAN, *Sleutels tot de macht. De ontwikkeling van het Leids patriciaat tot 1420*, Hilversum 1988, p. 18–19, 24–25, 30–52, 104–105, 121–124, 133–134, 179–190; BRAND, *Over macht* (as in n. 3), p. 250–252 en JANSE, *Ridderschap* (as in n. 15), p. 230–232.

(the duke rarely showed his face in Holland)²⁷. The family kept its prominent place in the political pantheon of Leyden, but, strikingly enough, it now also assumed Hook traits. After 1430 a new generation stepped forward, counting several Hooks²⁸. The main figures were Claas van Boschuyzen and his younger brother Floris.

Floris played an important role in the Hook and Cod crisis of 1445. Since 1420, Leyden had been dominated by the Cods, but this predominance was threatened by a Hook faction that was gaining strength. Tension increased even more in 1442 because Floris of the Hook faction managed to lease the office of sheriff of Leyden, while Boudijn van Zwieten of the Cods claimed the office for his son Gijsbrecht. The eagerness with which both families tried to secure this office is apparent from the fact that Van Zwieten had himself snatched the office away from Claas van Boschuyzen in 1429. In the end, Floris van Boschuyzen won and then, as sheriff, did not hesitate to favour the Hook faction and his own family. When in 1445 he was dismissed as sheriff and councillor of the Court of Holland due to abuse of power, he incited his political friends to revenge him. In the street fights that followed, the Hook faction was defeated in Leyden²⁹.

Although the Van Boschuyzen and Van Zwieten families were reconciled in the end, the family's position had been dealt a severe blow. A few members of the Van Boschuyzen family kept their seats in the Leyden city council, but the top offices were lost to them from then on.

Ironically enough, it was Floris van Boschuyzen, whose recalcitrant behaviour had caused him to be banished from Leyden in 1452, who laid the foundation for his family's restitution to power. It was he who managed to rise in the entourage of Philip the Good and had his son Jan raised as page at the Burgundian court³⁰. From 1454 the same Jan van Boschuyzen appeared as valet to Charles, the young count of Charolais (they were more or less the same age). It soon became clear that Jan belonged to the intimate circle of Charles³¹. After Charles had a fierce argument with his father in 1457, he was to hold a modest court in Holland for years, clearly counting the Van Boschuyzens as being among his faithful supporters. Floris and Simon Willemzoon van Boschuyzen were both involved in the management of Charles' properties in Holland in 1454. Charles, for his part, made sure that Floris could return to Leyden in 1455, much against the wishes of the Leyden city council. Floris became a member of the county council in 1459 and from 1467 onwards even became active again in the Leyden city council. His son Jan, who had been appointed Charles' *sommelier de corps* in the meantime, received much more important positions such as

27 See Henri VANDER LINDEN, *Itinéraire de Philippe le Bon, duc de Bourgogne (1419–1467) et de Charles, comte de Charolais (1433–1467)*, Brussel 1940.

28 BUYLAERT, *Crisis en continuïteit* (as in n. 26), p. 112–114.

29 BRAND, *Over macht* (as in n. 3), p. 86–91; ID., *Twistende Leidenaars. Verkenningen naar het voorkomen van clan en kernezin, partij en factie aan de hand van drie oproeren in een Hollandse stad in de 15de eeuw*, in: MARSILJE (ed.), *Bloedwraak, partijstrijd en pacificatie* (as in n. 16), p. 88–91; Hanno BRAND, *Urban Elites and central government* (as in n. 18), p. 53–54; VAN GENT, *Pertijelike saken* (as in n. 16), p. 58–61.

30 For details, see BRAND, *Floris en Jan van Boschuijsen* (as in n. 4), p. 64–99.

31 Werner PARAVICINI, *Karl der Kühne. Das Ende des Hauses Burgund*, Göttingen 1976, p. 17–20, 24.

that of castellan of Gravelines, bailiff and dike warden of Putten and Strijen. Jan had first his father and later his brother-in-law Gerrit van Abbenbroek replace him in those offices. The latter was the councillor closely involved in the »Van Boschuyzen affair« in 1487. In 1463 Brunink, Jan's younger brother was appointed valet to Charles as well.

When in 1464 Charles became reconciled with his father and succeeded him in 1467 as duke of Burgundy, Jan remained one of Charles' main confidants. In his description of Charles the Bold's reign, the famous chronicler and courtier Philippe de Commynes did not hesitate to describe Jan as *homme fort privé de luy* (»a man who was very close to him« [i. e. Charles])³². Indeed, Charles did put Jan in charge of several diplomatic and military assignments³³. His service was rewarded with different functions which were passed on to family members most of the time³⁴. After 1476 Jan van Boschuyzen let his cousin Willem van Boschuyzen the Younger – the leading figure in the affair of 1486–1487 – hold the offices of castellan, bailiff and dike warden of Woerden. Jan's younger brother Brunink benefited from the confidentiality with Charles the Bold as well, and was appointed Keeper of the Registers of the Court of Holland and Keeper of the Register of the fiefs in Holland and Zeeland. Interestingly enough, Dirk van Zwieten, a member of the family the Van Boschuyzens had clashed with in 1445, had earlier received an appointment from Philip the Good. Dirk was now bypassed for this office in favour of the Van Boschuyzens³⁵.

Due to the fact that Jan van Boschuyzen was one of the few courtiers from Holland at the Burgundian court before 1477, the Van Boschuyzen family held a special position. Thanks to this privileged connection with Charles the Bold, the Van Boschuyzens managed to recover their position of power in Leyden, which had been lost in 1445. Since 1460, the family dominated the Leyden city council more than ever. Willem van Boschuyzen the Elder was alderman of Leyden in 1461–1462, 1464–1465 and 1466–1467. Floris van Boschuyzen had returned to Leyden in 1456 and in 1466–1467 even became mayor of the city that had at one time spit him out. His son Willem Florijsz. was alderman in 1469–1470, the year after he became mayor and in 1472–1473 he was sheriff. From 1464 to 1474 without interruption, one of the four mayors of Leyden was a Van Boschuyzen. The family was again a part of the select group of about sixteen Leyden families that managed to monopolise a disproportionately large share of the seats in the city council³⁶.

32 Philippe CONTAMINE (ed.), Philippe de Commynes. Mémoires, Paris 1994, p. 134.

33 He was often Charles' envoy to the French Court and since 1470 he also was one of Charles' fleet commanders. He participated in Charles the Bold's campaign against Zierikzee and Neuss as *overste capetein*. (commanding captain) and was involved in the duke's amortisation policy for the clergy of Holland. That Jan was a prominent courtier is evident from the marriage of one of his daughters to the court aristocrat Jacob de Glymes. For the Glymes-Van Bergen family, see COOLS, Mannen met macht (as in n. 10), p. 218.

34 NAN, GR II, nr. 310, fol. 111v, 114r and 174r.

35 NAN, GR I, nr. 170, fol. 68v.

36 BRAND, Over macht (as in n. 3), p. 39, 44–54, 55–57 and 241–245, ID., Twistende Leidenaars (as in n. 29), p. 91–92; Wim BLOCKMANS, Mobiliteit in stadsbesturen 1400–1550, in: Dick DE BOER, J. W. MARSILJE (eds.), De Nederlanden in de late middeleeuwen, Utrecht 1987, p. 242, 256 and the outdated Pieter BLOK, Geschiedenis eener Hollandsche stad. II. Een Hollandsche stad onder de

Aside from the fast accumulation of important offices, there were other ways in which the Van Boschuydens derived power and prestige from their »Burgundian connection«. In Holland, cities did not hesitate to provide courtiers and royal officials with expensive gifts, so that the courtier in question would use his influence for the good of the city³⁷. Leyden was no exception and made good use of the special connections the Van Boschuydens had. In 1467, the Leyden city council sent a representative to Jan's wedding with a present of two silver jugs. This courtliness was payment in return for favours Jan van Boschuyden had obtained for Leyden from the duke. When Leyden ships were confiscated during the war against France (1470–1475), the city councillors again appealed to their prominent fellow townsman to recover those ships. Jan did not only receive gifts from Leyden or from the cities of Holland, but also from cities in other regions of the Netherlands³⁸.

Officials and courtiers who had taken part in the negotiations for aids often received a sum of money as a token of gratitude for their mediation³⁹. For the aid of 1471, the States of Holland paid 60 pounds to Jan van Boschuyden and 28 pounds to Brunink, a lot less than the 300 pounds that were slipped to a top aristocrat such as stadtholder Lodewijk van Gruuthuse, but more than the 50 pounds the bishop of Tournai was paid. It is not surprising that courtiers and officials were guilty of blackmail, often openly threatening cities to urge them to be more generous. When the death of Charles the Bold became known, the Leyden city council immediately put a stop to all payments to Jan van Boschuyden and other officials⁴⁰.

The Van Boschuydens as a Threat to Urban Peace

Until 1477 the Van Boschuyden family functioned as intermediary between the Burgundian court and the Leyden political society. Jan van Boschuyden's position as a power broker has also contributed to restoring the prominence of the family in the

Bourgondisch-Oostenrijkse heerschappij, Den Haag 1912, p. 109 for the admission of the Van Boschuyden family in the electoral college of Leyden.

- 37 DAMEN, Staat van dienst (as in n. 19), p. 18–20, 46–49, 209–211, 426–427; Yvonne BOS-ROPS, The power of money. Financial officers in Holland in the late 15th and early 16th century, in: Robert STEIN (ed.), Powerbrokers in the Late Middle Ages, Apeldoorn 2001, p. 53.
- 38 Werner PARAVICINI (ed.), Invitations au mariage: pratique sociale, abus de pouvoir, intérêt de l'État à la cour des ducs de Bourgogne, 1399–1489, Sigmaringen 2001, index. In 1476 chancellor Hugonet wrote to Mechlin that the city should send a delegation to Jan van Boschuyden's second marriage with gifts, *pour aucunement le remunerer du plaisir qu'il fit a icelle ville*. Since a few years, Mechlin had been the new heart of the Burgundian state institutions and the court, and being a courtier, Jan lived in this city. At his wedding he also received gifts from Brussels and Ghent. This culture of gifts benefited the whole family. In 1473, for example, his brothers Brunink and Willem had received gifts for their sons' baptisms. See on this topic also Harm VON SEGGERN, Herrschermedien im Spätmittelalter: Studien zur Informationsübermittlung im burgundischen Staat unter Karl dem Kühnen, Stuttgart 2003 (Kieler Historische Studien, 41), passim.
- 39 Mario DAMEN, Taxation for princes and officers. The Council of Holland and the aides in the Burgundian period, in: STEIN (ed.), Powerbrokers (as in n. 37), p. 28, 36–37, 40–41, 44–46.
- 40 DAMEN, Staat van dienst (as in n. 19), p. 331–333, 391–392, Id., Taxation for princes and officers (as in n. 39), p. 41–42, 44–45 and BRAND, Floris en Jan van Boschuijden (as in n. 4), p. 82–84, 94–96.

Leyden political elite. The question is whether the family was able to defend its privileged position in the turbulent years after the death of Charles the Bold.

The ducal network of the van Boschuyzen family soon collapsed after 1477. After all, it was based on the personal connections between Jan van Boschuyzen and his patron. The loss of ducal protection was a heavy blow to Jan. He did not dare to show his face in the county of Holland for fear of reprisals and his position at court deteriorated noticeably. In the autumn of 1481 he even fled to the French court, where he spent the last years of his career in the entourage of Louis XI⁴¹. Brunink, who was working in The Hague, got into trouble as well. Dirk van Zwieten, who, in 1468 had lost his office of Fief Holder and Keeper of the Register of the Court of Holland to Brunink, now saw an opportunity to get his job back. After all, the Great Privilege stipulated that all appointments made by duke Philip the Good were valid again. The earlier appointment of Dirk van Zwieten by Philip the Good now took precedence over Charles' appointment of Brunink. The latter tried in vain to have his office back by starting legal proceedings against Dirk before the Court of Holland and afterwards before the Great Council.

Brunink still considered himself entitled to the office because in April 1477 he had been reappointed Keeper of the Register by Mary of Burgundy. This had no result because Dirk maintained his claim based on the Great Privilege⁴². As previously stated, Maximilian immediately started to erode the Privilege. Brunink benefited greatly from this princely offensive. On 18th April 1480, Brunink was appointed for life by Maximilian as keeper of the register of Holland and Zeeland, with *sulcken rechten, proffijten ende emolumenten als hij die voirtijts bij tijden wijlen hertogen Karel placht te besitten* (»such rights, profits and emoluments as he was wont to possess in earlier days, in the time of the late duke Charles«)⁴³.

Despite the loss of its network at court, the power of the family in Leyden remained unshaken. The position of the family had been considerably strengthened until 1477 through the connections with the Burgundian aristocracy, but it by no means depended upon it, so it turned out. The participation in the government of Leyden by Floris, Willem Florijsz. and Willem van Boschuyzen the Elder was continued by a new generation after the deaths of Floris and Willem the Elder in 1474. In 1466–1467, Willem van Boschuyzen the Younger had made his political debut. He was followed by his younger brother Jacob in 1478.

After the crisis of 1477, Willem and Jacob came to the fore as prominent politicians who were solidly nested into the Cod city government of Leyden. In the confrontations of 1479 between the Leyden elite and a Hook faction that was gaining strength, both turned out to be fervent Cods. When the city was taken by surprise

41 NAN, GR I, nr. 2, fol. 188v–189r; Contamine (ed.), Philippe de Commines (as in n. 32), p. 132–135, 256–259, 263–269, 276–277, 323, 279–281, 402–403.

42 ARAB, Grote Raad, Beroepen uit Holland, nr. 3, NAN, GR II, nr. 887, fol. 51v and nr. 187, fol. 50v–50r.

43 Brunink did not go into office until March 1482 and only after Dirk van Zwieten's death (1483) was he able to execute the office of clerk of the fief register (he died in 1498). NAN, RH, nr. 475, fol. 123r–124r and 185r–186r; Pierre COCKSHAW, Le personnel de la chancellerie de Bourgogne-Flandre sous les ducs de Bourgogne de la maison de Valois (1384–1477), Kortrijk, Heule 1982 (Standen en Landen, 79), p. 200–201, 210.

two years later, in 1481, by the Hooks who had been banished in 1479, Willem and Brunink van Boschuyzen were part of the Cod city council that was taken prisoner. Jacob and his uncle Willem Florijszoon escaped prison and afterwards were probably involved in Maximilian's siege of Hook Leyden. After the Hooks fled the city in April 1481, Willem Florijsz. van Boschuyzen went to see Maximilian, armed with bribes, to beg him to return Leyden her privileges. Maximilian consented, but personally appointed the *Veertigraad*, the electoral college which determined the composition of the Leyden city council. No fewer than five Van Boschuyzens were appointed. The appointment took place shortly before Jan van Boschuyzen went over to the French king, thereby dealing his family's connections at court the final blow.

In the years after 1481 the Van Boschuyzen family remained in the limelight of Leyden politics. Old Willem Florijsz. was active in the Leyden city council. He again became mayor of the city and was also involved in Leyden's financial policy. When Willem Florijsz. died in 1485, he was immediately succeeded by his nephew Jacob, who had been undersheriff of Leyden until that time. As mayor, Jacob set himself up as a leading figure in the Leyden city council. He fulfilled no less than eighty diplomatic missions for the city in one decade's time, which was unparalleled.

His elder brother, Willem the Younger, managed to expand the Van Boschuyzens' position of power even more. In 1482, he had succeeded in obtaining the offices of bailiff and dike warden of the Rhine Country in 1482. This bailiff's district covered most of the county. He was responsible for the convocation of the representatives' meetings and the collection of taxes. The office of bailiff also remained important from a judicial point of view (the bailiff had a prison warden and five messengers, one among whom was for regular contacts with the Council of Holland)⁴⁴. In short, this was the most important regional office of bailiff. Therefore it was invariably the object of fierce competition. It was not unusual for people to become burgher of Leyden to have more chance to land the position. The bailiff of the Rhine Country was almost always a member of the Leyden elite (the city even presented him with wine and an official robe every year).

As with the office of sheriff of Leyden in 1445 and the office of Keeper of the Register of Holland in 1468 and 1477–1480, the Van Zwietenens were the main competitors of the Van Boschuyzens in the battle for this position. In 1430, Floris van Boschuyzen had been in office for a number of years. Since 1475 it had been in the hands of Adriaan van Zwieten, who paid the steep rent of 375 pounds Flemish *per annum* for it⁴⁵. In 1482, however, it returned to the hands of the Van Boschuyzens, who even managed to monopolise the office until 1515⁴⁶.

44 S. J. FOCKEMA ANDREAE, Aantekeningen omtrent het baljuwschap Rijnland, in: Tijdschrift voor Rechtsgeschiedenis 11 (1931), p. 242–247, 252, LE BAILLY, Recht voor de Raad (as in n. 19), p. 51–52, 73–74, 80–92, 97–102; Oscar VAN DEN AREND, Zeven baljuwschappen in Holland, Hilversum 1993, p. 101–108, 129–137, 161–166, 244–249, 252–255, 264–265, 285–290, 380–385.

45 SAL, tresoriersrekening 1484, fol. 33v, fol. 134r and tresoriersrekening 1485, fol. 135v, tresoriersrekening 1487, fol. 159r and 172v; Wim BLOCKMANS, Privaat en openbaar domein. Hollandse ambtenaren voor de rechter onder de Bourgondiërs, in: Jean-Marie DUVOSQUEL, Erik THOEN (eds.), Peasants and Townsmen in Medieval Europe. Studia in honorem Adriaan Verhulst, Gent 1995, p. 718–719; JANSE, Ridderschap (as in n. 15), p. 385–388; VAN DEN AREND, Zeven baljuwschappen (as in n. 44), p. 116, 385; BRAND, Over macht (as in n. 3), p. 233.

46 BRAND, Over macht (as in n. 3), p. 232–233. Willem occupied the office for no less than 31 years.

Despite the fact that the family could no longer count on a personal connection with the duke of Burgundy, Willem and Jacob van Boschuyzen had succeeded in bringing their position of power in Holland to unknown heights. Moreover, there are indications that even after the collapse of its royal network in 1477, the family managed to keep a few contacts at court. This was the official Pieter Lanchals, whose career boomed under Maximilian. Pieter was witness in July 1479 when Jan van Boschuyzen was granted special rights for his seignior by Maximilian. When Jan had gone over to the French king in 1481, Lanchals was present when Jan's children successfully requested Maximilian to enable them to buy off the imminent confiscation of their father's properties⁴⁷.

Therefore it might not be a coincidence that it was Jacob van Boschuyzen who came into contact with Lanchals three times during that period, by order of the Leyden city council. The first time was in November 1481, when, as a representative of Leyden, Jacob went to see Lanchals and find out how a notorious Hook exile could be captured. In June 1486, Jacob was a member of a delegation from Leyden that offered gifts to Pieter Lanchals and a few other notables to provide Leyden with a discount for the planned royal aid. In August and December 1486 Jacob visited Lanchals again in an attempt to solve Leyden's problems with the toll of Gravelinges⁴⁸. This points to the fact that the Leyden city council was aware of existing contacts between Pieter Lanchals and the Van Boschuyzen family, and has used those contacts to defend the Leyden interests with the Burgundian-Habsburg state.

In the end, the Van Boschuyzen family used its contacts with Pieter Lanchals in its attempts to secure the office of sheriff in Leyden, against the interests of the city council. The family obviously still had contacts at court, but there was no longer a privileged connection with the Burgundian elite. The family still had a few contacts, but no longer a direct representative at court. Moreover, the relationship with Lanchals was very businesslike. Willem van Boschuyzen had to pay Pieter Lanchals a tidy sum for his help in becoming sheriff. After Lanchals had been decapitated by a furious Bruges crowd in 1488, Willem did not hesitate to appeal to Lanchals' widow in August 1490, in the company of Willem Cant and Gerrit van Abbenbroek, to ask back his bribe on the basis of the result agreement they had arranged in 1486⁴⁹.

The adventures of the Van Boschuyzen network of power in the fifteenth century allow the »Van Boschuyzen affair« to be seen in a new light. Two conclusions are at the centre: firstly, there was no anti-Burgundian reaction against Willem van Boschuyzen. Since 1477 and certainly since the autumn of 1481, the Van Boschuyzen family could no longer be considered a representative of the Burgundian-Habsburg monarchy in Leyden. The family had lost its privileged position in supraregional administrative circles.

In 1513 Willem even obtained a lease for five years for his son Gommer, who died in 1515, however.

47 NAN, GR I, nr. 3, fol. 136 r-v, nr. 630, fol. 37v-38r and GR II, nr. 310, fol. 82r. For the inheritance arrangements, see NAN, GR I, nr. 2, fol. 188v-189r.

48 SAL, vroedschapsboek 1484, fol. 157r, vroedschapsboek 1485, fol. 168r-169r, vroedschapsboek 1486, fol. 202v, 205v; tresoriersrekening 1486, fol. 111r-111v, 113r-114r, 121r-121v.

49 BOONE, Lanchals (as in n. 6), *passim*.

Secondly, it becomes clear that the attempt to obtain the office of sheriff was not the work of a recalcitrant individual who wanted to antagonise his colleagues of the Leyden city council. Willem van Boschuyzen the Younger was supported in his undertaking by his brother and by relatives by marriage or friends such as Gerrit van Abbenbroek and Gijsbrecht van Raaphorst. The Van Boschuyzen family had been greatly successful since 1400 thanks to intense political cooperation between several, often distant, relatives. Willem and Jacob van Boschuyzen had inherited a network of power around 1477, which they now tried to expand in their turn. If in 1487 the Van Boschuyzens had succeeded in adding the office of sheriff to their leading position in the electoral college and the city council, and their grip on the office of bailiff in the Rhine Country, this would have enabled them to call themselves the most powerful family in Leyden and its surroundings. The city council's firm resistance against Willem van Boschuyzen as sheriff was probably inspired by the threat of the Van Boschuyzen network that was getting stronger.

Around 1486 a group of family networks had surfaced to counter the Van Boschuyzens' claims. Especially the Van Zwieten and Van Poelgeest families will have mobilized all their influence in the Leyden city council. In 1486–1487 there was obviously bad blood between the Van Zwieters and the Van Boschuyzens. In 1468 and again in 1480–1482 the Van Zwieters had lost the position of Fief and Charter Holder at the Court of Holland to Brunink van Boschuyzen. Moreover, in 1482 Adriaan van Zwieten lost the office of bailiff of the Rhine Country to Willem van Boschuyzen, who, after Adriaan's death in August 1486, also tried to land the office of sheriff of Leyden. Possibly, this also awakened slumbering recollections of the confrontation between the two families in 1445.

The Van Zwieters and the Van Poelgeests had taken advantage of the weakening of the Van Boschuyzen family's position of power in 1445. From 1460 onwards, the Van Boschuyzen family gradually regained its old position, the other families inevitably losing power in the process. When the Van Boschuyzens did not hesitate to claim both the office of bailiff of the Rhine Country and that of sheriff of Leyden, the bombshell was dropped. It is likewise striking that Willem and Jacob van Boschuyzen had a heated argument with the Leyden politician Floris van Alcmade in December 1486. Although the reasons for this conflict are unknown, it is likely to also place the prominent family Van Alcmade in the alliance against the upcoming van Boschuyzen family. That the stadtholder of Holland himself intervened to reconcile both parties, in any case points in that direction⁵⁰.

Probably not the entire Leyden city council was part of the alliance against the Van Boschuyzens. The members of the city council who did not belong to one of the family networks in favour of or against the family, will mostly have felt that the appointment of Willem as sheriff would disturb the precarious balance of power between the different family networks to such an extent that violent confrontations would be inevitable. Although the affair was in no way coloured by the old rift between Hooks and Cods, everything points to the fact that the political elite of

50 SAL, tresoriersrekening 1487, fol. 142r, 148v–149r, vroedschapsboek 1481, fol. 106v, NAN, GR II, nr. 187, fol. 14r.

Leyden feared a new civil war between the most important groupings within its ranks when in September 1486 it decided to hinder Willem's ambitions *om ruste ende vrede binnen der stede onder den maechtalen ende gemeente te onderhouden* (»to keep the peace within the city among the families and in the community«)⁵¹.

Conclusion: Family Networks in the Urban Elites of Holland

The »Van Boschuyzen affair« is of importance for our knowledge of social and political structure in late medieval Holland, an importance which lies in the fact that it sheds a rare light on the role of family networks in fifteenth-century urban patriciate. The lives of the different Van Boschuyzens at the Burgundian court, at the Court of Holland and in Leyden politics show a smooth mechanism for the division of power in a sizeable family. Family ties were crucial to the building of power of Leyden top families such as the Van Boschuyzens and the Van Zwietens. This conclusion is probably valid for the entire Leyden elite. There were no clans, only large »families«. Those family networks consisted of a conglomerate of nuclear families with the same last name, that rely on a shared ancestor for their collective identity.

In late fifteenth-century Leyden, a family could count on the support of relatives by marriage regularly. In his claim to the office of sheriff, Willem van Boschuyzen was supported by Gerrit van Abbenbroek, his uncle's brother-in-law. In the Leyden elite, marriage was clearly still a social-political means of binding families together, more than an individual choice. For example, the peace between the Van Boschuyzen and Van Zwieten families was sealed in 1445 with a marriage between Claas van Boschuyzen's only daughter and Hugo van Zwieten⁵².

The urban elites of Holland distinguished themselves by their elaborate and politically charged family ties vis-à-vis the rest of society. Several historians have pointed out the growing tendency towards individualization in fifteenth-century Holland. In a classic article, Peter Hoppenbrouwers demonstrated that in the fifteenth century the economical and judicial function of kinship weakened, thus laying the foundation for the nuclear family based on affection⁵³. On the basis of research into the judicial and economical independence of the conjugal family and especially into emotional investment patterns (memorial masses, sepulchral culture, naming, ...) in the political elite of Leyden, Hanno Brand came to the conclusion that the Leyden social, economical and judicial structures promoted the emancipation of the nuclear family. He was therefore inclined to speak of a »weakly developed family awareness« for the Leyden political elite⁵⁴.

That the »Van Boschuyzen affair« nevertheless shows that this trend towards individualization was not or less strongly felt among the Leyden elite need not be surprising. Peter Hoppenbrouwers already attributed a special position to the upper

51 SAL, vroedschapsboek 1486, fol. 203v.

52 BUYLAERT, Crisis en continuïteit (as in n. 26), p. 98–165 and the prosopographical overview.

53 Peter HOPPENBROUWERS, Maagschap en vriendschap: een beschouwing over de structuur en de functies van verwantschapsbetrekkingen in het laat-middeleeuwse Holland, in: Holland. Regionaal-historisch tijdschrift 17 (1985), p. 81–91, 93–95, 108.

54 BRAND, Over macht (as in n. 3), p. 273–301 (chapter nine: »Het belang van de familieband«).

middle classes and the nobility of Holland because elite families had many more shared interests. The management of acquired wealth, political power and social status needed a more intensive family supervision and cooperation⁵⁵. That the family as a political cooperative body was not echoed in patterns of affective behaviour does not detract from that. Family historians have found that forms of cohabitation in ›nuclear‹ or ›extended‹ households are of little relevance to a possible cooperation between the members of a family group⁵⁶. A case study of another Leyden elite family showed that the favouring of family members played an important role in the annual appointment of magistrates and even took precedence over demands of potential⁵⁷.

The judicial emancipation of the nuclear family at the expense of kinship ties was not necessarily disastrous to cooperation between often very distant relatives. The growing appropriation of criminal law and custody regulations by municipal authorities can generally be seen as one of the weakening factors for kinship ties. However, research for fifteenth-century Ghent (in the neighbouring county of Flanders) has shown that this government interference did not necessarily lead to an erosion of the wishes of the relatives of widows and orphans, but, on the contrary, often channelled them more effectively⁵⁸. The ›Van Boschuyzen affair‹ suggests that this was also the case in Leyden.

Last but not least, the noble status of many prominent Leyden families too was a prompting factor for joint power and property management. After all, wealth, lineage and political power were the cornerstone of their noble status. According to Hanno Brand, 54 per cent of the fifteenth-century Leyden city council would have belonged to the nobility. The Van Boschuyzens, Van Zwietens, and many other members of the city patriciate belonged to the knighthood of Holland. A recent study has

55 Myriam CARLIER, Solidariteit of sociale controle? De rol van vrienden en magen en buren in een middeleeuwse stad, in: Myriam CARLIER, Anke GREVE, Walter PREVENIER, Peter STABEL (eds.), *Hart en marge in de laat-middeleeuwse stedelijke maatschappij. Handelingen van het colloquium te Gent (22–23 augustus 1996)*. Leuven, Apeldoorn 1997, p. 71, 84–91 pointed out that elites were better able to protect themselves from government interference, demographic fluctuations and other possible threats to family ties, which often left huge gaps in the family structures of lower social groups.

56 F. W. KENT, Review essay. À la recherche du clan perdu. Jacques Heers and ›family clans‹ in the Middle Ages, in: *Journal of Family History* 1 (1977), p. 77–78. In the Burgundian Netherlands, the nuclear family was also the dominant, but not the only, model of society. Especially in elites, the nuclear family was often embedded in larger structures. Walter PREVENIER, *Middeleeuwse families en gezinnen*, in: Id. (ed.), *Prinsen en poorters. Beelden van de laat-middeleeuwse samenleving in de Bourgondische Nederlanden. 1384–1530*, Antwerpen 1998, p. 184–185.

57 Hanno BRAND, In politieke kringen: de familie Paedze van Sonnevelt en de verdeling van de macht in Leiden aan het einde van de Middeleeuwen, in: *Leidschrift* 3 (1987), p. 55–58. In fifteenth-century Arnhem, the division of magistrate positions was directly determined by the relationships between prominent families (*maechtalen*). C. L. VERKERK, *Coullissen 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 elitevorming*, Hilversum 1992 (Werken uitgegeven door Gelre, Vereniging tot beoefening van Geldersche geschiedenis, oudheidkunde en recht, 42), p. 84–94.

58 Marianne DANNEEL, *Weduwen en wezen in het laat-middeleeuwse Gent*, Leuven, Apeldoorn 1995 (*Studies in Urban, Social, Economic and Political History of the Medieval and Modern Low Countries*, 3), p. 419–424.

shown that noble families of late medieval Holland were not under the spell of their family history, but there unmistakably was, however, a noble family awareness⁵⁹.

Family connections not only proved important in acquiring and dividing political power, but also in political conflict. The question about the importance of family networks in the political culture of Holland is especially pressing for the Hook and Cod wars, which so often internally divided the local elites of this county. It has been suggested that family ties both in the nobility and in urban elites to a large extent determined the choice of faction in the Hook and Cod wars during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The Leyden patricians indeed appeared to take sides according to recognisable lines of consanguinity. However, the political colour of a family or of individuals could change quickly because of political opportunism. Family ties were important, but not binding⁶⁰.

The »Van Boschuyzen affair« shows that the alternation of mutual cooperation and opposition between leading families could also dictate the everyday political reality in a homogeneous Cod elite. This political crisis was a reaction against a threatening reshuffle of the division of power in the Leyden political elite by one of the leading family networks. This had become politically charged in a very intense way. The tensions between Leydens leading families were unconnected to the Hook and Cod wars, but were nevertheless seen as a considerable threat to the social order. The political elite of Leyden did not hesitate a moment to use a considerable part of urban and personal means to prevent a disturbance of the balance between some of the leading families. In this perspective, the political tensions in Leyden in 1486–1487 are very similar to a series of incidents in several German towns in the fourteenth and fifteenth century. The urban elites of Augsburg, Rothenburg and Greifswald did often resort to radical measures such as public humiliation, threats and murder to curb the ambitions of one of their members⁶¹. In Leyden, there was a similar field of tension between the aspirations of a leading family and the interests of the urban elite as a whole. The clan belonged to the past in fifteenth-century Holland, but the »family« as a social and political network was very much alive.

59 JANSE, *Ridderschap* (as in n. 15), p. 238–282; BRAND, *Over macht* (as in n. 3), p. 253–258.

60 VAN KAN, *Sleutels tot de macht* (as in n. 26), p. 104–105, 115–121, 167; BRAND, *Twistende Leidenaars* (as in n. 29), p. 94–98; ID., *Over macht* (as in n. 3), p. 102–103, 273–295, 299–301; JANSE, *Ridderschap* (as in n. 15), p. 403–413.

61 Hartmut BOOCKMANN, *Spätmittelalterliche deutsche Stadt-Tyrannen*, in: *Blätter für deutsche Landesgeschichte* 119 (1983), p. 88–91.