The Dutch Republic's City-State Culture (17th-18th Centuries)

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Introduction

The Dutch Republic (1579-1795) was not a city-state. No one has ever suggested that it was, and it is not the purpose of this contribution to argue otherwise.[1] Nonetheless, the Dutch Republic deserves a place in a book about city-states. First and foremost, because of the role of towns in Dutch political, economic, social and cultural life. As the following pages will demonstrate, Dutch towns were of overwhelming importance to Dutch society during its Golden Age (the seventeenth century) and beyond. They were also autonomous to a degree that was unusual when compared to many other states in Europe, like England, France, or Prussia, but fits a pattern found in Germany, Switzerland and Italy, as discussed elsewhere in this volume. By implication, a discussion of the Dutch Republic helps us to understand the variety of city-state cultures in early modern Europe, as defined in the introduction (*supra* 16-19).

Given the fact that the Dutch Republic was not a city-state in the strict sense of the word, but at best a confederation of city-state type of polities, this paper focusses on urban, i.e. local structures and processes, much more than on the Republic as a whole. At the same time, the fact that individual towns in the Netherlands were incorporated into a larger state structure, implies that we cannot ignore the Republic itself altogether. At each stage of the argument we will try to bring out the city-state elements in the life of Dutch towns under the Republic, but also discuss those elements that limited, or even undermined local autonomy.

Urbanization in the Low Countries

City-states and city-state culture pre-suppose the existence of towns and cities, some sort of urban landscape. To what extent was this precondition met in the Low Countries in general, and more specifically in the territory of the Dutch Republic?[2] The precision of the answer is predicated on the definition of "city". For the period at hand, two possible angles suggest themselves. Cities can be defined in a historically concrete way as settlements endowed with urban privileges. They can also be defined in more abstract fashion as settlements of a minimum size.[3]

At present, the latter approach is the better documented. It allows us to establish two facts. First, that if we take 10,000 inhabitants as a minimum size, the Netherlands in 1500 harboured 11 cities, a number that had increased to 19 in 1800. For the Southern Netherlands (present Belgium), the numbers are 12 and 20 respectively. By relating the number of urbanites to total population figures, we can then establish the impact of these towns on society as a whole. In 1500 15.8 percent of all Dutchmen and women lived in cities, in 1800 almost twice as much. At 21.1 percent, the South started out with a higher percentage in 1500, but lost some ground in the following centuries. In 1800 its rate of urbanization had declined to 18.9 percent. In fact, in both North and South the 1800 figure was a step back from the even higher percentages – 33.6 and 23.9 respectively – in 1700. Nonetheless, the Low Countries in 1800 were still the most urbanized area of Europe in terms of percentages. In absolute numbers only France, with a population at least five times as big as that of the Low Countries, had more cities at any point in time.[4] Thus, the Low Countries in general and also the Netherlands more particularly, demonstrated a high level of urbanization, as well as a remarkably broad distribution of that urban population across a substantial number of cities.

These medium and large-size towns were merely the tip of an urban iceberg. Even though we do not have equally precise figures about the number of communities with urban privileges, the 11-19 cities with a population larger than 10,000 does by no means cover the Dutch urban landscape.[5] Take for example the towns represented on the regional States assemblies. In the seventeenth and eighteenth century, the Dutch

Republic was a federation of seven provinces, each with their own provincial States. Altogether, the States of the seven provinces included the representatives of 57 different towns. Many of these fell substantially short of the 10,000 mark. In the northern province of Friesland only one of the eleven enfranchised towns made the grade. In fact, before 1800 none of the other ten managed 5,000 inhabitants and two could not even muster 1,000 (Faber [1973] 415 [table II.13]). And the 57 enfranchised towns still do not exhaust the roll-call of Dutch urbanization. In the province of Overijssel, for instance, only three towns were represented in the States assembly. During the 1780s, however, when a broad reform movement swept the country, several so-called minor towns (or *kleine steden)* in Overijssel also clamored for representation. None of these towns had more than 2,000 inhabitants, but all were able to point at institutional features that definitely made them urban. In the north of Holland, where the enfranchised towns were thick on the ground anyway, another fourteen places had received urban charters during the Middle Ages, even though by 1600 they would strike the uninformed observer as definitely rural.[6] Nonetheless, many of these villages built themselves strikingly urban "town"-halls during the seventeenth century, testimonies to their prosperity no doubt, but at the same time underscoring that even villages in the Netherlands could be to some extent urban (Boschma-Aarnoudse [1992] 9).

Urban Political Representation in the Middle Ages

In the Netherlands, and more generally the Low Countries, urbanization came early and was widespread.[7] Initially, the more important urban centres were located in the southern parts, notably Flanders and Brabant. Cities like Bruges and Ghent, later Antwerp, were in many ways the northern equivalent of the Italian cities of the Renaissance. But contrary to the Italians, the urban elites of the Low Countries never established independent states in their own right. Instead, their towns were integrated into a feudal structure of representation, and had to share power with regional lords (the Dukes of Brabant, the Counts of Flanders and Holland, and so on), as well as the ecclesiastical and aristocratic estates. From the early thirteenth century on varying, and temporary, coalitions of towns would attempt to promote urban interests, but it was only during the fourteenth century that urban representation in the regional States assemblies became slowly institutionalized.[8]

The urbanization of the Northern Netherlands got underway much later than in Flanders and Brabant, and for a long time remained more modest as well. As a result, towns took longer to make an impact on political life (Kokken [1991] 20). In Holland, during the fifteenth century, irregular groups of towns, both great and small, would participate in the States' discussions. Only by the end of the century it did become clear that six towns, which happened to be the largest, could claim permanent membership, as well as the right to vote (Tracy [1990] 14-15). During the sixteenth century, the towns became key players in provincial politics, basically because they wielded substantial financial power (Tracy [1985]). Although suggesting that they had in effect taken power in Holland would be stretching the argument too far, by mid-century they were impossible to ignore. What is more, the administration of Holland's public finances had created procedures and common experiences, that taught the towns how to run a state-like structure (Tracy [1990]). This would prove very important during the Dutch Revolt and its aftermath.

The Republican Constitution after the Revolt

The Revolt, that broke out in 1566-8, had a paradoxical impact on the position of towns in Dutch society: on the one hand very little changed, and at the same time everything had changed. Constitutional continuity was one of the professed goals of the Dutch rebels. The Union of Utrecht of 1579, in which the rebel provinces promised each other assistance in their fight against Habsburg Spain, explicitly stated both aspects in its very first article.[9] On the one hand, it said,

> the aforesaid provinces will form an alliance, confederation, and union among themselves ... in order to remain joined together for all time, in every form and manner as if they constituted only a single province.

To this end, the provinces would have a common army and common taxation to finance that army. Equally important, several institutions were reorganized, to sustain the newly established state structures. A rebel States-General was convened in Holland in 1581, to supplant a similar assembly for all the Low Countries. In due course, the States-General of the

Republic would comprise representatives of seven provinces, that each had one vote, irrespective of size or population. Moreover, the presidency of the States-General rotated among the provinces, with each province chairing meetings for one week at a time. In the Council of State, basically the executive of the States-General, the one-province-one-vote rule was less rigidly applied. Still, the province of Holland, where half the Republic's population lived and which contributed 60 percent of the Republic's annual budget, was notably under-represented.[10]

This delicate structure was further complicated by the position of the so-called stadholders. Under Habsburg rule, the stadholders were provincial governors, representing the authority of the sovereign. However one such stadholder, William of Orange, once the confidant of Charles V, had evolved into the leader of the Dutch Revolt. When the Revolt proved successful, it seemed ungracious to drop the office. After William's assassination in 1584, his son Maurice was appointed as successor and proved a crucial leader of the army and navy of the Republic. Henceforth, the stadholders came to be seen as informal heads of state. Constitutionally, however, they remained servants of the individual provinces, which technically made the appointments. In fact, the northern provinces in the seventeenth century preferred to have their own stadholders, who had to work together with their more powerful cousins in The Hague (Rowen [1988]; Mörke [1997]).

While the first article of the Union of Utrecht bound its members to cooperation, that very same article nonetheless also stated that

> each province and the individual cities, members, and inhabitants thereof shall each retain undiminished its special and particular privileges, franchises, exemptions, rights, statutes, laudable and long-practiced customs, usages and all its rights, and each shall not only do the others no damage, harm, or vexation, but shall help to maintain, strengthen, confirm and indeed protect the others in these by all proper and possible means... (quoted after Rowen [1972] 70).

Thus, the constitutive members were pledged to uphold the ancient constitution, in all its particular details, "if need be with life and goods", within the context of the newly formed Dutch Republic. The implications of this became clear during the power struggles of the 1580s (Parker [1979] ch. 5). Initially, the Dutch rebels felt their enterprise could only succeed under the protection of one of the Great Powers in the region, and by the appointment of a princely head of state. Therefore, the Duke of Anjou, brother of the French King, and after his death in 1584 Elizabeth I of England, were offered the position. The offer, however, was circumscribed with conditions that would make the new sovereign little more than a puppet of the republican States. When the Earl of Leicester, who had come to the Netherlands as governor representing the English Crown, tried to break through the limitations imposed on his powers, the States of Holland retaliated with a declaration, in October 1587, claiming full sovereignty for the provinces, and reaffirming that

> the magistrates and councilors of the cities, along with the assembly of the nobles, undoubtedly represent the entire state and the whole body of the inhabitants... (quoted after Rowen [1972] 108).

The declaration thus based the claim for provincial sovereignty on the representative character of the States assembly. As was discussed in the previous section, towns were routinely represented in these assemblies.[11] As the Revolt was at the same time a political and religious conflict, one implication of the rebels' success was the removal of the clerical estate from the States, insofar as they were represented in the first place. This had been the case in Utrecht, where the bishop until 1528 had been the worldly = territorial lord as well. Although the clerics disappeared, their seats were not removed. After prolonged struggles the so-called Member of the Elected was divided between the nobles and the city of Utrecht. As a consequence, the States of Utrecht remained divided into three parts: the nobility, the four small towns plus the city of Utrecht as the third estate, and the Member of the Elected. The division the parties ultimately arrived at, thus assured a balance between urban and rural interests, but at the same time gave the city of Utrecht a clear advantage over its minor rivals (Aalbers [1988] 77-80).

In several other provinces, an equal balance was struck. In Stad en Lande there was only one urban centre, the city of Groningen, and it was locked in fierce struggles with the province's gentry. In Overijssel the former Hansa towns of Kampen, Zwolle and Deventer were together the urban member, while the nobles from four rural districts together represented the countryside. Overijssel politics were poisoned by endless debates about the States' voting procedures: technically the two members voted as single blocs,

but in practice unanimity within each party was not always assured. What if one nobleman voted with the towns against his fellow aristocrats? Would that constitute a majority? And the other way around, could one defective town swing the balance towards the nobles, against the other towns? It was a problem that would plague Overijssel politics until the end of the Republic (Jong [1921]).

Friesland was the only province where the towns definitely occupied a minority position. The province's constitution was remarkable for the democratic procedures applying in the three rural districts that each constituted a quarter of the States assembly. Friesland's eleven towns together made up the fourth member.[12] Although the number of Frisian towns was impressive, their population was not. Between them, the eleven towns had a population of 40-45,000 (Faber [1973] 415 [table II.13]), less than Rotterdam for instance, even though Rotterdam was only the third largest town in Holland. The minority position of the Frisian towns had serious consequences for their political autonomy. The towns of Friesland were submitted to extensive provincial legislation, regulating for example their poor relief arrangements and the local guild system.[13] In other provinces such matters were left almost completely to the local authorities to look after.

In two provinces the towns cut a clear majority. In Zeeland the nobility had one vote, but six towns also cast a vote each.[14] In fact, however, the urban position was undermined by their feudal submission to aristocratic, and more specifically Orange domination. The nobles in Zeeland were not collectively present in the States, as their vote had been concentrated in the hands of a single family. In 1559 the right to send a representative to the Zeeland States meetings had been acquired by William of Orange. The same Orange dynasty also happened to own the lordships of the towns of Vlissingen (Flushing) and Veere. They thus directly controlled three out of the States' seven votes (Gabriëls [1990] 64). Even though the "independent" towns still had a majority, they might always face the unified front of the three Orangist votes.

Not so in Holland, where the towns' majority was overwhelming. Particularly during the early stages, Holland was absolutely vital to the survival of the Revolt. Within Holland, the towns shouldered most of the financial burden of the war effort. To broaden the political and fiscal basis of the Revolt, the number of enfranchised towns was slowly extended after 1572. Several towns were invited to participate in the States assembly meetings, and by 1580 the number of towns represented in the States had gone up from six to eighteen. At first the presence of the new members was said to be temporary but as time went on it became ever more difficult to undo this expansion of the States (Koopmans [1990] 18-38). Thus, the States of Holland remained heavily biased towards the interests of the towns, which commanded eighteen votes against the single vote of the nobles. Significantly, each town carried one vote, whether it was Amsterdam, the metropolis with over 200,000 inhabitants, or Edam with a mere 4,000. The principle of one member one vote, irrespective of size, was identical to that applied by the States-General, and it strongly suggests that the towns were in effect considered to be each other's equals, as semi-sovereign members in their own right, in the same way that the provinces saw each other as quasi-states.[15]

Obviously, the towns and their interests were far from identical and it would be wrong to suggest that in one way or another Holland was united politically (Price [1994] 172-82). On the contrary, there were constant rivalries threatening to pull the province apart. Amsterdam was sometimes able to impose its policies on the States, but its designs were just as easily opposed by leagues of smaller towns, which between them commanded a sizeable share of the votes in the States (Aalbers [1980] 66-127; Groenveld [1990]). As the delegates of Amsterdam observed, quite realistically, it was "a republicq of persuasion", where protracted negotiations were needed to come to a decision (quoted in Aalbers [1977] 117).

One might argue that it was ultimately the autonomy of the Holland towns which underpinned urban autonomy in the rest of the country. As long as Holland was insisting on its provincial sovereignty, and by implication on the specific constitution embedded within that sovereignty, the delicate balance between urban and aristocratic interests in the other provinces would be difficult to upset altogether. As will be discussed in more detail in the next section, during the second half of the eighteenth century the Orange court was able to impose an informal centralization in most of the provinces, but not in Holland. Consequently, the formalization of this position, which would require a major constitutional reform, was not on the cards.

As a matter of fact, even in the period of Orange domination the urban participation in regional, and hence in national politics, was left largely intact. The provinces, as the constitutive parts of the Dutch state, were entitled to send delegates to all national institutions, carefully composed as they were to give every province a stake in the running of these institutions

('t Hart [1994] 203-6). But instead of sending *provincial* representatives to each of these bodies of the state, the provinces had cut the spoils between their own constitutive parts. Thus, the town of Deventer, in Overijssel, could expect to send a delegate to the Admiralty Board in Amsterdam in 1747-9, one to the Admiralty Boards of Rotterdam and Harlingen during the next three-year period, and so on. For Overijssel's permanent seat on the Council of State, it was Deventer's turn in 1753-8, and would be again from 1789 onward. The rural district of Salland was next in line for the same offices, then it was the town of Kampen's turn. And so on, and so forth. The rotation at each office was often planned long in advance (Gabriëls [1990] 43-54, 449). The implication, of course, was that individual towns had a large, and to an important extent direct influence, on the deliberations of "their" office, while at the same time they would be involved in the discussions in the provincial States about national politics. As a result, the records of local institutions are brimming with discussions of national foreign policy and other state issues.[16] At the same time, local councils had enormous discretions when it came to local "police".

Urban Autonomy in the Dutch Republic

This local autonomy was exactly the point of Sir William Temple's description, in 1673, of the Dutch Republic's political structures. After observing that the Republic was not a single state, but a confederacy of seven independent provinces, Sir William, who had been England's Ambassador to The Hague, went on to explain that "to discover the nature of their Government from the first springs and motions, it must be taken yet into smaller pieces, by which it will appear, that each of these Provinces is likewise composed of many little States or Cities, which have several marks of Soveraign Power within themselves, and are not subject to the Soveraignty of their Province" (Temple [1673] 52).

To explain the Dutch constitution to his English audience, Sir William felt it would be necessary to discuss a specific example, and for obvious reasons he chose Amsterdam: "The Soveraign Authority of the City of Amsterdam, consists in the Decrees or Results of their Senate". It is possible that Sir William was specific for didactic purposes, but he may also have been too impressed by the numerous differences between urban constitutions to feel that he should not generalize, when details were really the crux of the matter. This, in any case, was the opinion of the town-council – or "senate" in Temple's words – of Den Bosch (Bois-le-Duc), when in 1788 it stated as its opinion that, with "every town having its own specific bylaws and ordinances", it would be very dangerous to copy even single items of legislation from other towns, that could easily corrupt the "coherence of the political system of any specific town" (quoted in Prak [1999] 34). It was not so much the details in themselves that mattered here, but the fact that each town was as it were individualized by these differences, that made them significant. Being different from the others again underlined the autonomy of each town vis-à-vis the others (Walker [1971] 18-20).

The town-council, as Sir William Temple was correct to point out, was the linchpin of urban independence in the Dutch Republic. First, because the council was at the heart of the legislative, executive and judiciary powers of local government. And secondly, because the people on those councils were usually committed to a policy of urban independence.

Even though no urban government in the Republic was an exact copy of any other, two broad patterns can be distinguished.[17] In the towns of the west, i.e. in Holland, Zeeland, Friesland, and in the city of Utrecht, a permanent council, or *vroedschap*, constituted the core of local government. The council was cooptive and its members had an appointment for life. Major policy decisions were discussed in the council, that was convened regularly. From the ranks of the councillors the aldermen and mayors were recruited. The seven, nine, or eleven aldermen were the local court of justice. The mayors, two or four of whom were always serving simultaneously, were the executive. Together, the aldermen and mayors constituted the magistracy, that acted as the legislative authority, in its own right or in conjunction with the council.

Whereas the members of the council, whose number in Holland varied between fourteen and forty, sat for life, appointment to the aldermen's bench and the mayoral offices was temporary, and limited to two or three years at a stretch. After standing down for a specified number of years, one might expect to be reelected in due time. While awaiting another turn as alderman or mayor, former magistrates would become ordinary councillors again, taking up other offices in the meantime.[18]

In the landlocked provinces of Overijssel and Gelderland, as well as in Stad en Lande and in the smaller towns of Utrecht, there was a magistracy, likewise composed of aldermen and mayors, but no permanent council. Magistrates who lost their seat, were politically side-tracked. Moreover, the magistrates in

many eastern towns were elected through a procedure that involved the local community. Particularly in Gelderland and Overijssel, the towns had Common Councils, representing the local guilds or the town's districts, and these would appoint the members of the magistracy in an annual ceremony.[19] Technically, therefore, the magistrates stood down every year, "so as to make them remember with Agatho", as the town secretary of Deventer explained, "that they rule according to the laws for a short time only, and should not think themselves too much above their fellow-citizens".[20] In practice, however, magistrates in the eastern towns were usually returned to office year after year, and the government institutions were almost as permanent as they were in the west.

Towns were not always completely free to appoint the individuals of their choice in all municipal offices. Traditionally, the sheriff, whose office was part judicial, part political, was the lord's local representative. Actual appointments were usually made by the stadholder, and this situation had continued after the Revolt. In the periods without a stadholder (1650-72, and again 1702-47) this right had devolved on the States, and many towns used the opportunity to buy the right for themselves (Prak [1986] 100). Similarly, in some towns the stadholder, or else the States, was entitled to appoint aldermen, and even the mayors. The fact that in Amsterdam the mayors were elected by a very small group of former mayors, without interference from the court, or even the *vroedschap*, was said to add to their political independence (Gelder & Kistemaker [1982] 107-8). In 1674-5 rights of appointment were formally transferred to the stadholder for all towns in the provinces of Gelderland, Overijssel, and Utrecht, in 1748 in all other provinces as well, except Holland. Technically, the towns were entitled to propose candidates on a so-called double list, that restricted the choice for the stadholder and allowed the towns to manipulate the process. To prevent this from happening, the stadholder picked one or two local confidants, who would make sure the right people were on the list (Gabriëls [1990] 61-76).

Such practices became particularly widespread during the second half of the eighteenth century, when for reasons to be discussed below the towns' position was weakened and the Orange court exploited this by systematically developing its networks of political patronage (Gabriëls [1990] 167-297). After the Republic's disastrous defeat in the Fourth Anglo-Dutch War (1780-4) this meddling in local affairs became the focus of widespread discontent among both the urban ruling elites and the population at large.

One of the side-effects of the protest against the Orange court, was a revival of urban republicanism. In Dordrecht (Holland) it was claimed in 1784 that "the land of freedom, the never sufficiently praised America, does not have any freedom comparable to yours, if only your Rights and Privileges would be maintained".[21] In Zwolle (Overijssel), in 1787, a draft-constitution for the town's government proudly declared: "The city of Zwol is a free, and completely independent town, which convicts in all cases, civic as well as criminal, without appeal or revision".[22] Earlier in the century, a similar outbreak of protest against Orange interference in local politics provoked similar claims of local sovereignty. In the east of the country the influence of German examples was much stronger than in the west. Several towns claimed the same status as was enjoyed by Imperial Free Towns across the border (Pethegem [1988] 115-37). Arnhem, a town of 6,000 in the province of Gelderland, was said to be such a "free City", with full sovereign rights. A reading of the Guelders constitution (*Groot Gelders Placcaet Boeck*) made clear, according to the authors of an elaborate justification of the popular point of view, "that the town of Arnhem has always enjoyed her particular freedom, special and particular Privileges, Freedoms, exemptions, Rights, Statutes, laudable traditions and uses". The town was entitled to pass bylaws without reference to the provincial Estates, the local court could pass judgement without the defendant having the right to appeal against it, new taxation could only be introduced "with the consent of the Sworn Council". Arnhem's urban community, in other words, was equal to "an independent Prince and sovereign ... and the Citizens and Inhabitants of the city of Arnhem have therefore remained under the government of the princes [Guelders was a duchy] a free people under their lawful Magistrate, as they were first created and born".[23]

Even though such claims were usually voiced by popular movements, they were often supported by local elites as well. This was, however, not necessarily the result of the popular character of Dutch local government. On the contrary, in both west and east there was a marked tendency towards oligarchy as time went on. During the eighteenth century it was not uncommon for two-thirds of the members of either council or magistracy to be a relative of other members or former members.[24] Originally, members of the Holland town councils were leading businessmen. During the first half of the seventeenth century a majority of the Amsterdam councillors was involved in long-distance

trade (Burke [1974] 58-60). The influential mayor Cornelis Pietersz. Hooft, for instance, divided his time between his public duties at town hall, and his financial preoccupations as grain merchant at the Amsterdam exchange (Gelder [1982]). From the second half of the seventeenth century onwards, however, the number of rentiers was rising rapidly and by the early eighteenth century most councillors were professional administrators and politicians.[25] In the eastern towns, the merchants were never very prominent. Instead, the regional nobility, only rarely found on a council in the west, was well-represented. Particularly in the smaller towns, one might also expect shopkeepers and successful artisan entrepreneurs to make their way into the magistracy.[26]

The presence of so many councillors involved in trade obviously had an impact on local policies. According to Hooft "our power and prosperity exists in the *Imperium maris* and international commerce" (Hooft [1871] 236). And indeed, this was never far from the minds of the Amsterdam ruling class. But other towns were equally protective of their economic interests. The prospects of profit for some towns and potential losses for others delayed the peace negotiations with Spain for many years. Towns would seek to attract new skills by offering attractive conditions of settlement for immigrant artisans (Hart [1993b] 115-19; Davids [1995] 167-83). The settled artisans were equally offered protection by an elaborate guild system. During the seventeenth century the number of guilds in the Netherlands rose more rapidly than ever before or after (Lourens & Lucassen [1994] 46 [table 3]).

Such attempts to protect local economic interests were underpinned by the economic structures of the Dutch Republic. The great dynamic that made the seventeenth century a Golden Age for the Dutch, was concentrated primarily in the western parts of the country, especially in Holland. The Holland towns were to some extent each specialists in a specific trade or industry. Amsterdam, most obviously, was the city of international commerce. Its interests may have been concentrated in Europe, but the Amsterdam branch of the Dutch East India Company, for example, ensured important links with the Far East as well.[27] Rotterdam, on the other hand, was home to an important community of English traders (Klein [1984]), an interest it shared with Middelburg in Zeeland, where the Dutch office of the Merchant Adventurers was located. Dordrecht, close to Rotterdam, was strongly committed to the river trade along the rivers Rhine and Meuse, with the German and Waloon hinterlands of the Republic (Nusteling [1998] 149-69). In the North of Holland, enfranchised towns like Hoorn, Medemblik and Edam were concentrating on Scandinavia and the Baltic; shipping figures suggest that in the seventeenth century trade with these areas constituted from 64 to 86 percent of their overall foreign trade (Lesger [1993] 212 [table 4]).

The inland towns, on the other hand, were dominated by industry.[28] Haarlem was the centre of Holland's linen industry, and renowned throughout Europe for its bleaching (Regtdoorzee Greup-Roldanus [1936]). In the course of the seventeenth century Leiden became, together with Lyon in France, one of Europe's leading industrial communities, thanks to its wool industry (Posthumus [1908-1939]). Gouda was famous for its long clay pipes, visible in many a picture from the Dutch school of painting.[29] Even in the arts, it has been observed, many medium and large-sized towns produced distinctive schools of painting, and some experts can determine the provenance of unsigned paintings by looking at the size of the canvas, which was specific to individual towns as well (Haak [1984]; Bijl [1996] 83-4). During the protracted negotiations between the Dutch and Spain, that went on for most of the 1630s and '40s, the Holland towns clashed bitterly over the economic conditions of a peace treaty. Every town tried to ensure that its economic interests would not be jeopardized.[30] Similarly, an overhaul of Holland's tax system, necessary after the province became overburdened with debt during the wars against Louis XIV, foundered on the diverging economic interests of the towns.[31]

This specialisation, however, was predicated on intensive cooperation. In their recent survey of the Dutch economy in the early modern period, Jan de Vries and Ad van der Woude observe how the "numerous cities formed a complex of interdependence". They go on to claim that Dutch economic success and indeed its modernity were to an important extent the result of "its diversified structure and advanced division of labor".[32] These simultaneous, and of course closely related, phenomena of specialization and integration found concrete spatial expression during the first half of the seventeenth century, when a dense network of specially dug canals was created, connecting the towns of the west, and allowing for the establishment of regular boat services. Although the towing boats crossed substantial stretches of countryside, by far the most common journey went from one town to another. In the second half of the seventeenth century the system was

capable of producing 374,000 passenger-kilometers *every day*. During the 1660s, the service between Haarlem and Leiden, towns with a combined population of about 100,000, carried on average 136,000 passengers annually.[33]

In spite of the economic integration, the outward appearance of each individual town in Holland was still that of a self-contained world. The boundary between rural and urban areas was clearly visible, and towns could only be entered through a limited number of guarded gates, that would be locked at nightfall. As most early modern European towns, of course, those of the Dutch Republic were fortified. The main exception was the country's seat of government, The Hague, that could claim to be a town given the number of its inhabitants, but lacked formal urban status (Wagenaar [1998] 215-18).

Urban defences were first developed during the Middle Ages, but were renovated at regular intervals. The *trace italienne*, the earthen defence works that began to replace medieval walls from the late fifteenth century onwards, was first introduced in the Netherlands in the city of Utrecht during the 1530s (Bruijn & Reinders [1967] 8-9). Other towns followed suit. Moreover, whenever towns extended their territory during the growth spurt of the seventeenth century, they made sure to build new defences.[34] Whereas metropoles like Paris and London allowed their suburbs to expand beyond the walls,[35] Amsterdam made sure its defensive ring was expanded at regular intervals.[36] This was not done with an exclusively military purpose in mind, because extending the ramparts also allowed the city government of Amsterdam to incorporate the population growth, new industries, and so on, that were springing up in the suburbs. Hence, the rise of a rival "counter-town" outside the walls was prevented.[37]

In the Middle Ages, urban fortifications had to a large extent kept pace with the capacities of the urban population to defend itself. Warfare was still only semi-professional, with the princes relying on temporary levies of peasants and guildsmen to make up the numbers. In many towns, guilds were relied upon to deliver the men. Special shooting guilds provided training for the well-to-do, who would commnand the urban units. The introduction of fire-arms was going to change all that. Not only were the medieval straight walls useless against canon – hence their replacement by in-depth earthen rings – but it also entailed a complete professionalization of the military themselves, and a sharp rise in taxation to pay for this. The Military Revolution changed the face of warfare in Europe, and indeed the world, forever.[38] During the early stages of the Dutch Revolt, however, urban militias were still important as defence forces. When Leiden was besieged by Spanish forces in 1573-4, during what turned out to be one of the longest sieges of the entire war, the backbone of the defence was provided by the civic militias (Israel [1995] 181). The Union of Utrecht in 1579 assumed that the army might be built around the militia forces (Spits [1979] 184-98). The urban militias were actually reorganized in those years to extend their recruitment base to all the male population (Knevel [1994] 92-111). But the Dutch were not to escape the overwhelming pressure to professionalize. Soon Dutch commanders were making a name for themselves as the innovators of drill, tactics, and so on, all based on the availability of professional, i.e. mercenary, troops.[39]

As a consequence, civic militias were reduced to auxiliary troops. As such they were called upon in times of crisis. However, during the 1672 invasion, they performed less than impressively. Many towns simply opened their gates to the advancing French armies, often without firing a shot. Civic militias made themselves more useful as police forces during the night, when they patrolled the town. Riots were often put down by militia forces. Perhaps most important, the civic militias helped sustain a sense of community among the urban middle classes in many Dutch towns. Significantly, the same word (*burger*, or burgher) was used to denote both citizens and militiamen. On ceremonial occasions the militias represented the urban community. In times of political crisis the militias became a political platform for the middle classes, to organize opposition to the regent regime, draw up a programme of demands to be put before the council, and if necessary force this upon the authorities. In 1672, and again in 1748, the council in many a town was dismissed by the militias. During the prolonged turmoil of the 1780s the militias were again prominent elements in the popular revolt.[40]

The civic militias were no longer a match for the professionals who had come to dominate European warfare. Urban defences defined urban against rural territory. However, the urban ramparts were no longer the expression of an independent military capacity. Dutch towns at the time of the Republic would not have their own professional troops.[41] Militarily, as much as economically, Dutch towns had been integrated into a broader framework.

The Decline of Dutch Urban Autonomy

Like every state, the Dutch Republic had to face certain difficulties that might, at some point, cause serious disruption. From the point of view of state-making, the Republic was liable to at least three potential problems. First of all, it was a relatively small country. Although this was not unusual in early modern Europe, during the Age of Absolutism the trend was definitely in the direction of larger units. Moreover, several of the Republic's neighbours were large, consolidated states. In terms of population England was about five times as big as the Dutch Republic, and had a tradition of centralized government. Spain, firmly established in the Southern Netherlands until the early eighteenth century, was a global power that gave up its claims on Dutch territory only in 1648. Further south, France was about ten times as populous as the Republic, and bent on territorial expansion.

The second problem was that the Dutch economy was to an uncomfortable extent dependent on export markets, precisely in those powerful neighbouring countries. A third problem was the potential ineffectiveness of the Dutch constitution. As described above, the Dutch state was built on a delicate balance of cooperation and urban autonomy. As long as the component parts of the state, i.e. provinces and towns, would work together for a common cause, the state machinery could function properly. But if the component parts worked at crosspurposes, as during the protracted peace negotiations with Spain, there was really no power within the Dutch state capable of breaking the deadlock.

During the Republic's heyday, however, i.e. most of the seventeenth century, these problems, for various reasons, did not become immediately acute. Other states were locked in international or domestic struggles, or a combination of both. The Thirty Years' War (1618-48) in Germany absorbed the energies of Habsburg Austria, Sweden, France and Spain, whereas the Dutch managed to become only marginally involved. France had gone through a period of prolonged turmoil during the Wars of Religion (1559-98), and then had to come to terms with a succession crisis and major rebellion (the Fronde) during the minority of Louis XIV (1643-61). England was plunged into a Civil War (1641-60) when King and Parliament came to blows over taxation, religion and their respective authorities in general.[42]

This, of course, is not to suggest that the Dutch were not facing any military threats. On the contrary, like most other European states in the seventeenth century the Dutch Republic was almost permanently at war. Before 1609, and again between 1621 and 1648, Spain still tried to recoup its loss of the Northern Low Countries. And although Dutch armies were able to win more territory from the Spanish Netherlands – notably in the Duchy of Brabant – than the other way around, Spanish troops at times managed to make dangerous inroads on Dutch territory (Israel [1982]). After peace was finally concluded with Spain, no less than three naval wars were fought between England and the Republic between 1651 and 1674 (Jones [1996]). From 1672 onwards the Dutch were Louis XIV's main opponent on the continent. For a long time, however, the Dutch body politic was able to cope with these pressures. Holland's public debt increased steadily during the first three quarters of the seventeenth century, but so did the tax revenue, due to real growth in the economy.[43]

Economic problems faced by other countries, partly as a result of the political crises, allowed the Dutch to penetrate foreign markets without much opposition.[44] This in turn enabled the Dutch to grow rich *and* finance a substantial army and fleet that allowed them to win independence from Spain, but also to intervene strategically when they felt their economic interests were at stake. Thus, struggles over the Sound straits between Denmark and Sweden, gateway to the vitally important Baltic, provoked Dutch military interventions in 1645 and 1656-59 (Israel [1989] 148-49, 219-21). And while the other powers were fighting each other, the Dutch amassed an overseas empire in the first half of the seventeenth century, establishing themselves in Asia, Africa, South and North America, and even in the Arctic (Boxer [1965]).

The combination of a growing economy and outside pressure as a consequence of war was very beneficial to the delicate balance of the Dutch political system. Economic prosperity implied that towns were capable of meeting their fiscal obligations, without foregoing their autonomy. The external pressures of the wars at the same time created a sense of urgency, forcing the towns and provinces to work together.

In the late seventeenth century, however, the system started to come apart at the seams.[45] Other countries were settling their internal differences and looking abroad for new challenges. In 1672 England and France, together with the Bishop of Münster in Germany, attacked the Republic from three sides. Almost half the country's territory was occupied by the summer. The lack of military resistance provoked a fierce crisis that brought back the Orange stadholders,

excluded from office since 1650.[46] Moreover, the stadholder gained substantial new powers, which allowed him to dominate provincial, and even local politics, in four out of the seven provinces.[47]

The wars against France, that would continue almost without interruption from 1672 until 1713, were highly expensive. To an important extent, the Dutch war effort had always been financed through the credit of the States of Holland, i.e. the Holland towns (Hart [1993a] ch. 6). In 1648 Holland owed 125 million guilders. By 1679 this had increased to 160 million, but by 1713 Holland was 214 million in debt, and in 1740 this had risen to 339 million. The interest burden per head doubled between the 1670s and 1720.[48] In the 1720s, more than half of Holland's revenue had to be spent on debt service (Liesker [1985] 155 [table 3]). The financial crisis was not limited to Holland alone. The Union had to suspend payment of interest for nine months in 1715, and then forced its creditors to accept a reduced interest rate (Aalbers [1980] 3). As a consequence, the Republic was unable to sustain the military establishment that helped protect its vital interests. Whereas the Dutch army had numbered 100,000 during the War of the Spanish Succession (1701-13), it was first reduced to 40,000 when peace was concluded, and then to little more than 30,000. Even though this number was later raised again, it was insufficient to continue the role of Great Power (Aalbers [1986] 8, 10-12).

These events took place against the backdrop of an economic climate that was changing from favourable to difficult. The reversal of the so-called secular trend in prices in the course of the 1660s proved a turning point in the economy. On top of domestic frictions, foreign countries were actively seeking to protect their markets against Dutch competition. In this situation of mounting economic problems, the public debt was providing an alternative for the capital that was still abundantly available in the Republic. But instead of opening new markets, and developing new technologies, Dutch capitalists were now turning into rentiers (Vries & Woude [1997] 673-83).

Such developments had a serious impact on the position of towns in Dutch society. Economically, many towns, especially in the west, were faced with declining shipping and industry, and hence with a reduction in the number of inhabitants. In some cases the drop was dramatic. Leiden's population was halved between 1672 and 1748, while at the same time Delft lost a third of its people (Israel [1995] 1007 [table 44]). Only Amsterdam, where many economic activities became concentrated, remained steady, at about 200,000 (Vries [1968] 40-1). Thus, Amsterdam's economic preponderance, always significant, became even more obvious.

Initially, this loss of economic power did not spill over into the political realm. As stadholder William III died without male issue, in 1702, leaving only a distant cousin as heir, many provinces, Holland included, felt no need to appoint a new stadholder. In the provinces where the court's heavy hand had been particularly oppressive, urban populations demanded a restoration of local independence.[49] This restoration was accompanied by problems in the political centre of the state. After the War of the Spanish Succession had seriously overstretched public finances, it was decided that the Republic could no longer afford to go to war. However, war had been one of the mainstays of the Dutch political machinery. The urgency of war could help the provinces overcome their differences. Now that this pressure was taken off, local particularism had free reign. Financial reforms, deemed necessary by everyone, could not be introduced because the provinces and towns were unable to divide the burden. Amsterdam in particular was intransigent. It got so bad that one of the Republic's leading politicians complained to a French diplomat, "that in order to get his financial projects accepted, he wished the Republic did not suppose that peace abroad was assured".[50]

In 1747 the Republic's borders were once again violated by French troops. In the emergency, all provinces decided to accept a new stadholder, who was inaugurated as William IV. He received the special powers that had been granted to his predecessor in 1674, and more on top of that. As a consequence, the Orange court was able to control political appointments in the towns of all provinces save Holland. On paper, local autonomy was retained, but in practice a well-organized network of patronage created informally the centralization that the Dutch Republic had so far lacked (Gabriëls [1990]).

The new system was severely shaken during the 1780s. Amsterdam and several other towns had expressed support for the American rebels in their War of Independence, against the official policy of the Dutch government. The English took revenge by declaring war on the Republic in 1780, and completely humiliating their opponents. Critics of the stadholder, by now William V, claimed that this demonstrated how the court's system of patronage was a corruption of the country's original constitution.[51] As one famous contemporary pamphlet described it, this constitution had "a certain degree of

soundness, of perfection, yes even clarity".[52] These wonderful qualities were embedded in three key elements of the republican constitution: its foundation upon the sovereignty of the people, the fact that all separate parts of society (i.e. the towns) could look after their own business, and because these constituencies were small, they provided the best guarantee for the maintenance of liberty (*Ibid*., 9-11). In the years 1785-7 towns throughout the country threw off the "Orange yoke", to restore their ancient liberties, that is to say local autonomy. Just when it seemed the revolution was going to succeed, the army under Orange leadership and with the help of his brother-in-law, the King of Prussia, restored the old order. Towns became once more subject to control from The Hague.

The defeat of the revolution sent many of its advocates into exile in France. There they could ponder their own predicament and compare it to the success of the French Revolution. Many a Dutch revolutionary seems to have concluded that the "urban model" had failed.[53] When in the winter of 1794-5 French armies conquered the Dutch Republic and sent the stadholder into exile, provincial and urban autonomy was once again on the agenda. But among the revolutionary vanguard a substantial minority now favoured a strengthening of the centre. Holland moreover hoped to shift part of its burden of public debt onto the other provinces. Even before a revolutionary constitution was accepted, it was decided that public finances would be nationalized (Pfeil [1998] 166, 176). This proved to be a first step towards a complete overhaul of the Dutch state.

In January 1798, radicals seized power with the help of French army.[54] They immediately declared their government to be the only legal power in the state, while provincial and local institutions were reduced to "exclusively administrative bodies" (quoted in Prak (1999) 233). A centralizing constitution was swiftly accepted by an electorate thoroughly purged of political opponents of the new regime. Even though the radicals were already pushed aside by a moderate group in the summer, the centralizing constitution remained in force. One by one the old elements of urban autonomy were replaced by national institutions. Local civic militias were disbanded; their place was taken by a National Civic Guard. After a long struggle the guilds were dismantled. Town governments lost their judiciary capacities to newly established law courts that worked according to national, as opposed to local laws. Regional and local taxation was incorporated into a national tax system and henceforth the local authorities were accountable to the government in The Hague.[55]

It was not as if the towns did not put up a fight. Amsterdam fiercely resisted the abolition of the guilds.[56] In the city of Den Bosch, the municipal council in 1803 refused to submit for approval by the electorate a new regulation for local government, as it had been designed by the provincial authorities. Whereas an original draft, approved by the town's rulers, had contained numerous references to the traditions of local independence, maintained local justice as a preserve of the municipal council, and also included various kinds of local eccentricities to underline Den Bosch's independence, the provincial rewriting had scrapped all references to the past, referred local justice to a separate set of institutions no longer within the grasp of local elites, and brought Den Bosch's regulations into line with those of other communities, urban as well as rural. Two members of the provincial States came to address a specially convened meeting of the council, to inform the members that their protest was futile. These two men came from local families, and even hinted at their personal approval of the town's resistance. Nonetheless, they had to inform the council that if they persisted, all measures had been taken to ensure the referendum would take place, "but also that such measures have been taken, of which the sorry consequences will come down upon the heads of the members and relatives of this council – and which they will come to regret" (Prak [1999] 253-7, quote on 257). By 1814, when the French had been thrown out of the country and the Kingdom of the Netherlands established, Dutch local autonomy was, to all effects, forever terminated.

A Country of 57 City-States?

In the autumn of 1729, the French baron de la Brède toured the Dutch Republic. Unsurprisingly, given his interest in political institutions, the baron took notes on what he saw, and learned from conversations with the natives. Moreover, he took pains to read about the country, very likely in a recently published volume by his compatriot Janiçon, on the *Etat Présent de la République des Provinces Unies*. When baron de la Brède, who is better known under his family name Montesquieu, came round to writing the *Esprit des lois* (1748) that would make him famous, he evidently went back to his notes. From Janiçon, for example, he borrowed the idea of the Dutch Republic as a federation of "about fifty republics, all very different the one from the other".[57]

Fig. 1. The United Provinces in the Golden Age (Israel [1995] 592).

The preceding pages have made it clear that in important aspects this analysis came close to the Dutch reality. Dutch towns were fortified and should, on paper at least, have been capable of defending themselves. Dutch towns had strong economic identities. They were to a large extent self-governing. And last but not least, they saw themselves as independent political actors, accountable to no-one but themselves.

At the same time, we learned how all these statements are in need of serious qualification. The Military Revolution had raised the scale of warfare dramatically and Dutch towns could only hope to survive through close cooperation. Economic specialization implied dependence on other towns, both as customers and suppliers. Self-government was hardly ever complete: many towns were subject to interference by the higher authorities, be it stadholder or States assembly, and all towns had to reckon with the demands made on them by the federal structure of the Republic. Thus, the Dutch towns were certainly not independent city-states. Foreign policy was the prerogative of the federal institutions, and if Amsterdam allowed itself an independent position, this could only be executed with the silent approval of the other Holland towns. With some modifications, one might say that at least the enfranchised towns possessed internal sovereignty and could therefore be classified as city-state members of a federation, as defined in the introduction of this book (*supra* 17). On the other hand, the towns were not represented directly in the Republic's institutions, the federation was not one of independent towns, but of independent provinces. In the absence of a one-to-one relationship between "city" and "republic", as presupposed in the ideal-type city-state culture, we should perhaps consider the Dutch Republic as a borderline case.

The impact of towns on Dutch society, however, was such that one might claim it to be part of the city-state culture which also comprised large parts of Germany, Switzerland and Italy. In this whole area, levels of urbanization went hand in hand with political fragmentation.[58] States, and more specifically towns, in this "central urban belt" in Europe were looking at each other for examples and inspiration. Thus, Venice was an important role-model for Dutch republican theories, while the Swiss self-consciously tried to copy Dutch army reforms because they thought these were easily adaptable to their own confederacy.[59] In this European city belt, a variety of city-state types of polities survived into the Age of Absolutism.[60] There is no doubt that all the more or less independent towns in the area were struggling to come to terms with the increase in scale that took place in European society, particularly in warfare. The Dutch Republic's constitution was designed to meet this challenge, by combining local autonomy with a concerted foreign policy. The result was a delicate balance between particularism and coordination. During most of the seventeenth century this proved to be a potent mix, which allowed the Dutch to simultaneously mobilize capital and back up their economic expansion with military force.[61] In the eighteenth century the system became entangled in its own contradictions. When at the very end of the century a new round of state expansion was initiated by the French revolutionary armies, the Dutch urban model was finally abandoned.

Notes

1. Some have suggested that the Republic, or its main region Holland, was a confederation of city-states: Masterson (1975) 27-41; Aalbers (1980) 67.
2. I will use Dutch Republic, or the Netherlands, to indicate the territory, and state established on that territory, of what was to become the modern Kingdom of the Netherlands. In the south,

what is now Belgium, is referred to as the Spanish, and later Austrian Netherlands. Taken together, these two countries are called the Low Countries.

3. Still another approach consists in using the presence or absence of military defences as indicator for the urban character of a settlement: cf. Stoob (1988) 25-54. Or a city might be defined as a nucleated settlement in which the majority of the population is engaged in non-agricultural work. The latter definition requires a type of information that is, however, not consistently available for the period under discussion.
4. Particularly in de Vries (1984) 29 (table 3.1) and 39 (table 3.7). For the Netherlands de Vries' data (271) should be supplemented with Lourens & Lucassen (1997).
5. As *ibid.* 57 (table 4.3) shows, lowering the threshold to 5,000 would almost double the number of towns, but only raise the urban percentage in the Dutch population in 1795 from 28.8 to 35.
6. Pols (1888) xvii-xx; also van Deursen (1993) 391-403.
7. Post-Roman urbanization is discussed in Verhulst (1999), which deals almost exclusively with the Low Countries.
8. Blockmans (1980) 162. Although the Flemish towns displayed tendencies of city-state formation, they never actually reached that point, but remained "bargaining metropoles" within a system of princely rule: Blockmans (1994) 228-33.
9. Quoted after Herbert Rowen (1972) 70. See also Groenveld & Leeuwenberg (1979).
10. The Dutch Republic's institutions are discussed in Israel (1995) ch. 13.
11. The mechanisms of regional government are discussed in Bruin (1991) 151-200.
12. The Frisian constitution is explained in Faber (1970) 39-65.
13. For poor relief, see Spaans (1997). As far as guilds are concerned this point will be demonstrated in the PhD-thesis of R. Mud, to be expected in 2001.
14. For Zeeland's constitution, see Kluiver (1998) 15-34.
15. Significantly, the provinces talked of each other as "allies", thus emphasizing their own independence: Rowen (1972) 191ff.
16. Israel (1982), for instance, contains numerous references to the impact of towns on national politics.
17. Cf. Gabriëls (1985) 47; Gabriëls (1990) 15-16.
18. The practice of these local governments is described in detail in Jongste (1984) 68-83; Kooijmans (1985) 29-30; Jong (1986) 25-8; Prak (1986) 30-5; See also Price (1994) 19-31.
19. Descriptions of the urban constitutions of eastern Towns in: Brake (1989) 24-5; Duinkerken (1990) 25-31; Streng (1997) 95-119.
20. Quoted in Prak (1994) 61. Original from 1788.
21. *Voorstel aan Dordrechts burgery, en inzonderheid aan Dekenen van de onderscheiden Gilden aldaar, etc.* (Knuttel [1908-16] 20907).
22. *Rapport van de Commissie uit Raad en Gemeente tot de Burger Bezwaren, en Concept Reglement van Regeering voor de stad Zwol* (Zwolle 1787) (Knuttel [1908-16] 21732). Also Streng (1997) 402-28.
23. *Deductie van de regten ende privilegien der vrye Stadt Arnhem, het Collegie van de Geswoore Gemeente, Gildens, Borgerye ende Ingesetenen van dien competerende; ofte apologie van de wettige Regeringe, na de oude gronden van de vrye Stadt Arnhem* (Arnhem 1703) (Knuttel [1908-16] 15033) quotes on pp. 4, 8, and 9 respectively. See also Dixhoorn (1997). A summary of this thesis has been published as Dixhoorn (1999).
24. Prak (1994) 74-7, 82; Dijk & Roorda (1976) 76-102.
25. Kooijmans (1985) 97; Jong (1986) 98; Prak (1986) 112.
26. Streng (1997) 178-92; Duinkerken (1990) 100-101.
27. There is no modern economic history of Amsterdam and its fate was so inextricably intertwined with that of the Republic as a whole, that it is usually discussed within that context: see therefore such general works as Israel (1989) and Vries & Woude (1997). Compare Knotter (1995) 197-220.
28. Dutch industrial development is discussed in Noordegraaf (1993) 131-57; and Vries & Woude 1997, ch. 8.
29. On smoking: Schama (1987) 196-207.
30. Israel (1979); reprinted in Israel (1990).
31. Aalbers (1980) 2-19. Further evidence of inter-city rivalry is provided by Aten (1995).
32. Vries & Woude (1997) 696-7. Cf. also Israel (1989) 415.
33. Vries (1981) 67 (table 3.4), 86-7, 249 (table 9.4), 260 (table 9.6) and *passim.*
34. Urban planning in the early Republic was heavily dominated by military considerations: Taverne (1978) 49-109.
35. On Paris, Roche (1987) 11-14; on London Pearl (1990) 139-65; Boulton (1987).
36. See the map in Gelder & Kistemaker (1982) 66-7.
37. The impact of such a "counter-town" is discussed in Kaplan (1988) 353-78.
38. Parker (1988); also Hale (1985); Tallett (1992).
39. See the essays collected Hoeven (1998).
40. On the militias in general: Knevel (1994). About their role as opposition forces also Boone & Prak (1995) 113-24.
41. Exceptionally, during a serious crisis that brought the country to the brink of civil war in 1617-18, mercenary troops, so-called *waardgelders*, were raised by individual towns. Significantly, The Hague, which was not a town, raised *waardgelders* on other occasions as well: Wagenaar (1998).
42. For a survey of these developments: Bonney (1991) ch. 4. Also Rabb (1975).
43. Hart (1997) 21 (fig. 2.5), 32 (fig. 2.8).
44. The debate about the seventeenth-century crisis can be followed in the pages of Aston (1965) and Parker & Smith (1978). For the economic aspects in particular, also Vries (1976).
45. These issues are also discussed in Hart (1995) 76-85.
46. The crisis is described in detail in Roorda (1961), summarized in Roorda (1967).
47. In Guelders, Overijssel and Utrecht, these powers were newly introduced in 1674; in Zeeland the Orange dynasty traditionally controlled provincial politics: Roorda (1979) 85-109.
48. Fritschy (1988) 40 (table 1.3), 66 (table 2.3).
49. Wertheim & Wertheim-Gijse Weenink (1976); Bijl (1981).
50. Aalbers (1977) 92; also Aalbers (1980), chs. 1-3.
51. This so-called Patriot crisis is the subject of an extensive literature. For a survey in English, see Sas (1992) 91-119. Local developments are discussed in, for instance, Brake (1989); Prak (1991); Prak (1999).
52. *Ontwerp om de Republiek door eene heilzaame vereeniging van regent en burger van binnen gelukkig en van buiten gedugt te maaken* (Leyden 1785) 9.
53. As is evident in Sas (1989) 622-37.
54. The story is told by Schama (1977) chs. 5-7.
55. These developments are discussed more extensively in Prak (1999).
56. Boer (1932) 129-49, 225-45; also Wiskerke (1938).
57. Montesquieu (1951) book 9, ch. 1, note a, p. 370.
58. This idea is further discussed in Isaacs & Prak (1996) 207-34. The original observation of the coincidence of towns and polit-

ical fragmentation was made by Rokkan (1975) 567-77. It was further developed by Tilly (1990). See also Tilly & Blockmans (1994).
59. Haitsma Mulier (1980); Peyer (1978) 94-5.
60. An introduction is provided by Mackenney (1989) esp. 30-52.
61. This seems to me the real point of Israel (1989).

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