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Smithuis, J.

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**Author:** Smithuis, J.

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## Chapter 3

### Urban historiography and politics

#### Abstract

Although the chronicle commonly referred to as the ‘Dutch Beke’ (*Nederlandse Beke*) is constructed as a regional history of Utrecht and Holland, it is possible to see in its narrative the beginnings of urban history-writing in the Northern Low Countries before 1400. This article sets out to analyse the urban character of the chronicle, building on Antheun Janse’s argument that it was written in Utrecht city government circles and aimed at an audience of the city’s elite families. Textual analysis shows that the author voiced a civic discourse in which the city and burghers of Utrecht were indispensable in defending the bishop’s territory. He can also be shown to engage in the construction of a collective memory of local party strife, in which he supported the city council’s discourse around 1393. This provides an argument for its function and strengthens Janse’s hypothesis that the town clerk Jan Tolnaer Jr († *ca.* 1403) was the author of the chronicle.

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## Urban historiography and politics in fourteenth-century Utrecht. New findings on the Dutch Beke (ca. 1393)\*

### Introduction

*On Tuesday after Easter thereafter [31 March 1304], [when] the people of Utrecht learned that bishop Guy was captured in Zealand, two families in the city agreed and swore that they would keep their city in law and honour until the bishop would return. This promise was broken very quickly by one of the parties, namely, Sir Lambrecht die Vriese [...]. These men and their collaborators slayed Sir Gherijt Vrencken in front of his own house and then captured Sir Jacob van Lichtenberch and took him with them from his house to Vriesenberch. And then they captured Sir Willam van Rodenborch, who was Sir Jacob's brother, and his son, and Sir Wernaer, and took them all to Sir Jacob in Vriesenberch. They led them out of the back door to St. Catherine's Field during the night and slayed Sir Jacob and Sir Wernaer there. And because of this, many disasters came to the city of Utrecht.<sup>1</sup>*

This salient account of the murder of three aldermen in Utrecht in 1304 by Lambert de Vries and his collaborators is taken from the *Croniken van den Stichte van Utrecht ende van Hollant* ('Chronicle of the Sticht of Utrecht and of Holland'), a Middle Dutch chronicle that was finished around 1393 and is presently known as the Dutch Beke (*Nederlandse Beke*). The account has had an important impact on modern historiography. It is followed by at least two authoritative accounts on Utrecht history in this period.<sup>2</sup> Its

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- 1 *Des dinxdaghes na paesschen die daer naest quam, vernamen die van Utrecht, dat die bisscop Ghie in Zeelant [ghevaen] was, waren ii gheslachte binnen der stat ende overdroeghen ende zwoeren dat si hoor stat houden wouden in rechte ende in eren ter tijt toe dat die bisscop wederquame. Wilke beloefte harde schiere ghebroken wart van der eenre partye, die aldus ghenoeft waren: haer Lambrecht die Vriese, (...). Dese voerscreven mit horen helpers sloeghen heren Gherijt Vrencken doot voer sijns selves huus, ende doe venghen si haren Jacob van Lichtenberch ende leidene van sinen huse in Vriesenberch. Ende doe vengen si heren Willem van Rodenborch, die heren Jacobs broeder was, ende sinen sone ende heren Wernaer ende brochten se bi heren Jacob in Vriesenberch. Die leiden si in der nacht achteruut op Sunte-Katrinenvelt ende sloeghen aldaer doot heren Jacob ende heren Wernaer. Ende hieraf is der stat van Utrecht menighe plaghe ghecome. (...) Bruch, *Croniken*, 164-165 (cap. LXXV, ll. 68-85). The names of fifteen men besides Lambert de Vries are mentioned. 'Vriesenberch' or Fresenburg was the name of Lambert's town castle in Utrecht. See also <http://www.narrative-sources.be>, NL0551.*
- 2 Van den Hoven van Genderen, 'Op het toppunt', 113; Burgers, 'Tussen burgerij en adel', 20-21.

reliability was defended, in particular, by Lambert de Vries' biographer Jan Burgers. He noted that the anonymous chronicler must have had access to judicial documents regarding this event, notably a verdict by the bishop of Utrecht dated 24 June 1310, from which he took the exact names of the perpetrators. This fact, as well as the 'unusual insidiousness and violence' of the event, made the account especially trustworthy in Burgers' eyes, because it could have ensured continuous knowledge of it in the city almost a century later.<sup>3</sup>

This treatment of the Dutch Beke is quite exemplary for how the chronicle has come to be viewed in general. Being immensely popular in its own time, judging from the high number of copies, continuations, and adaptations extant in the Northern Low Countries, the Dutch Beke's popularity has continued into recent times. The chronicle has been praised for its language, as well as for its relative reliability with regard to historical facts. A recent analysis by Antheun Janse showed that the author indeed had access to Utrecht charters and other archival documents, and was in general able to creatively use these and other sources for the composition of his work.<sup>4</sup>

In spite of its popularity and influence, however, research on the Dutch Beke has not been as extensive as one might wish. This may be due to the fact that there were so many copies and variants that it did not receive a full, critical edition until the early 1980s, when Hettel Bruch took up the challenge. So far, Janse has been one of the few to continue the work left by Bruch. In a notable contribution, Janse analysed the Dutch Beke from a historical point of view, focusing on the person of the author, his intended audience, and in general the historical context in which the chronicle was written. In this context, Janse also paid some attention to political messages in the chronicle.<sup>5</sup> His conclusions were, in short, that the author was a well-informed and capable late fourteenth-century writer who must have worked in or near Utrecht government circles and probably wrote for an audience of the city's ruling elite. He even identified a potential author: the Utrecht town clerk Jan Tolnaer Jr († c. 1403).

The research presented here is based on the solid foundations laid by Janse and Bruch. Thanks to their work, the Utrecht origin of the Dutch Beke seems safely

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3 Ibidem.

4 Bruch, *Croniken*, xxvi-xxvii and ff.; A. Janse, 'De Nederlandse Beke opnieuw bekeken', *Jaarboek voor middeleeuwse geschiedenis* 9 (2006) 116-149.

5 Janse, 'De Nederlandse Beke'; Idem, 'Beke, Johannes de', in: G. Dunphy (ed.), *Encyclopedia of the medieval chronicle*, 2 vols. (Leiden 2010) I, 163. See also his work on the most important continuation of the Dutch Beke, the *Nederlandse Beke-Vervolg*: Idem, 'Van Utrechts naar Hollands. Het Nederlandse Beke-Vervolg (ca. 1432) en zijn bewerking', in: E. Dijkhof and M. van Gent (eds.), *Uit diverse bronnen gelicht. Opstellen aangeboden aan Hans Smit ter gelegenheid van zijn vijftenzestigste verjaardag* (The Hague 2007) 183-202.

established. It is necessary, however, to take the analysis further. It is worthwhile to examine, in particular, the urban character of the chronicle. To what degree can it be characterized as urban historiography? The question is particularly relevant in light of the recent discussion on the existence of urban literature and historiography in the cities of the Low Countries before 1400.<sup>6</sup> In general, it is thought that the cities of the Low Countries, despite a high degree of urbanisation, did not produce a proper, ‘civic’ historiography in the vernacular before the fifteenth century. The Dutch *Beke* was, and still is, regarded as a regional chronicle of Utrecht and Holland, in the tradition established by the cleric Johannes de Beke. Janse also, even though he stresses the urban, lay context of origin of the Dutch *Beke*, states that it cannot be counted as a ‘town chronicle in the full sense of the word’.<sup>7</sup> Indeed, according to the conventional definition of town chronicles as chronicles focused on the history of one town and its principal inhabitants,<sup>8</sup> the Dutch *Beke* cannot be counted as such, as its content is dedicated in the first place to the deeds of the bishops of Utrecht and the counts of Holland.

However, a more encompassing view on urban historiography has recently been put forward. In the 2010 *Encyclopedia of the medieval chronicle*, Regula Schmid still defined town chronicles as “‘histories’ of events and deeds of urban communities [...]”, but she also allowed for considerably more leeway by characterising the intended audience as the ‘main defining element’ of the genre, rather than content or form.<sup>9</sup> By defining ‘urban historiography’ above all as historiography aiming at an urban audience, and originating in an urban context, it is possible to analyse the experiences and memories shared by these audiences in a wider range of narrative sources than before. Widening the definition also allows for more consideration of the different cultural traditions and socio-political contexts in which historiographical works developed and functioned. In the case of episcopal cities, for instance, it has been noted that town chronicles typically developed from episcopal, regional history-writing, and that historiography in these cities therefore tended to intertwine episcopal and local history for a longer time and to a larger degree than in other cities.<sup>10</sup> The episcopal city of Utrecht

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6 A.-L. van Bruaene, *Om beters wille. Rederijkerskamers en de stedelijke cultuur in de Zuidelijke Nederlanden (1400-1650)* (Amsterdam 2008) 27-28; U. Peters, *Literatur in der Stadt. Studien zu den sozialen Voraussetzungen und kulturellen Organisationsformen städtischer Literatur im 13. und 14. Jahrhundert* (Tübingen 1983) 7-16.

7 Janse, ‘De Nederlandse *Beke*’, 140.

8 R. Schmid, ‘Town chronicles’, in: G. Dunphy (ed.), *Encyclopedia of the medieval chronicle*, 2 vols. (Leiden 2010) II, 1432-1438, at 1432.

9 Ibidem. A similar approach in: L. Demets and J. Dumolyn, ‘Urban chronicle writing in late medieval Flanders: the case of Bruges during the Flemish Revolt of 1482-1490’, *Urban history* 43 (2016) 28-45.

10 Isenmann, *Die deutsche Stadt*, 443-444; W. Ehbrecht, ‘*Uppe dat sulck grot vorderffnisse jo nicht*

may well have been no exception to this rule. The Dutch Beke, therefore, may have more in common with contemporary ‘town chronicles’ elsewhere, such as the chronicle by Jacob Twinger von Königshofen from Strasbourg or Detmar’s chronicle of Lübeck, than previously thought.

While it is not the aim of this article to compare the Dutch Beke to historiographical traditions in other cities, it is my aim to place the Dutch Beke more firmly within the context of late medieval urban historiography, so that its content and intentions can be understood better. As a part of this endeavour, I will analyse whether the Dutch Beke voices a specific urban political or civic discourse, and whether it engages with shaping a collective memory of the city of Utrecht, or of its ruling group. In this context, I will particularly focus on political and factional conflict in the city as a subject and even inspiration for local historiography.

It is said that conflict and strife typically formed the background for much urban history-writing, and sometimes formed its sole subject material: conflicts between the city and its lord, conflicts with other cities, the conquest of the *contado*, and/or conflicts within the city-walls. This is not so remarkable in itself, as it was mainly through conflict, and the restoration of peace and unity, that the community defined itself against others, started to express a local self-consciousness, and preserved or defended a certain type of urban government.<sup>11</sup> The function of local history-writing, via chronicles and other forms of ‘recordkeeping’, thus was to provide for a collective memory, to teach and explain, to legitimize as well as to provide a direction for future political action. Recent research shows that cities actually used historiographical texts, which integrated archival documents as an instrument in their political relations, such as the fifteenth-century city government of Ghent, which used the *Diary of Ghent* in its relations with the duke of Burgundy.<sup>12</sup>

Does the Dutch Beke fit into this general picture of the content and intentions of medieval urban historiography? Janse already found traces of urban self-consciousness in

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*meer enscheghe*. Konsens und Konflikt als eine Leitfrage städtischer Historiographie’, in: P. Johaneck (ed.), *Städtische Geschichtsschreibung im Spätmittelalter und in der frühen Neuzeit* (Cologne 2000) 51-109; Augusto Vasina, ‘Medieval urban historiography in Western Europe (1100-1500)’, in: D.M. Deliyannis (ed.), *Historiography in the Middle Ages* (Leiden 2003) 317-352, at 318.

11 E.g. Schmid, ‘Town chronicles’, 1435-1436; J. Dumolyn, J. Oosterman, T. Snijders and S. Villerius, ‘Rewriting chronicles in an urban environment. The Middle Dutch “Excellent Chronicle of Flanders” tradition’, *Lias* 41 (2014) 85-116, at 95.

12 H. Lowagie, ‘The political implications of urban archival documents in the late medieval Flemish cities: The example of the *Diary of Ghent*’, in: M. Mostert and A. Adamska (eds.), *Writing and the administration of medieval towns* (Turnhout 2014) 209-218. More in general on the link between conflict and urban history-writing, and the types of historiographical sources that developed out of this relation: Ehbrecht, ‘Konsens und Konflikt’.

the description of military campaigns and sieges of the city. I will argue that the author also showed a particular interest in intramural political conflict, as exemplified by the description of the conflict between two elite families in 1304 cited at the beginning. Through the narration of these and other episodes of conflict, I will argue that the Dutch Beke consciously created a form of collective memory, and transferred a set of messages about the urban community, the city government, and its ruling elite. The central questions therefore are: In what ways did the Dutch Beke engage with the history of the city of Utrecht? What social and political interests did the author represent? Did he voice an ‘official’ image of ruling power relations in the city around 1393, which would provide further evidence for the hypothesis that the author was indeed closely involved in local government, e.g. as a town clerk? How reliable is his work for the factual history of Utrecht? To this end, I will be focusing not only on the sections in the Dutch Beke that are concerned with local conflict, but also on what the author chose *not* to tell about them.<sup>13</sup>

### *The Dutch Beke and the Beke tradition*

The *Croniken van den Stichte van Utrecht ende van Hollant*, or Dutch Beke, was not the work of an Utrecht author only, but started from a Latin chronicle that was written almost a half century earlier by a cleric named Johannes de Beke at the Benedictine abbey of Egmond in the county of Holland.<sup>14</sup> The translation into Middle Dutch of Johannes de Beke’s *Chronographia* forms the core of the chronicle. It covers nearly 80% of the total work and presents an overall faithful translation of the Latin text, interpolated occasionally with explanatory details and some new items, to which I will turn shortly as they concern urban history. The *Chronographia* was written as a history of the counts of Holland and the bishops of Utrecht. In the prologue, Johannes de Beke expressed his intention to reinforce peace and friendship between the two neighbouring territories by relating their common origin and history. His work covered the period from Roman times until 1346, following the history of the county and diocese by alternating paragraphs

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13 See D. Schoenaers, “‘United we stand?’ Representing revolt in the historiography of Brabant and Holland (fourteenth to fifteenth centuries)”, in: J. Firnhaber-Baker with D. Schoenaers (eds.), *The Routledge history handbook of medieval revolt* (London/New York 2017) 104-129.

14 Bruch, *Chronographia*. It was not uncommon for late medieval urban historiography to start from existing regional chronicles, see the examples in Ehbrecht, ‘Konsens und Konflikt’, 69; and cf. the late fifteenth-century Flemish tradition of the ‘Excellent Chronicle of Flanders’, that likewise developed as translations, adaptations and continuations of the Latin *Flandria Generosa*: Dumolyn, Oosterman, Snijders and Villerius, ‘Rewriting chronicles’; Demets and Dumolyn, ‘Urban chronicle writing’, 40.



about ruling counts and bishops. Beke dedicated the *Chronographia* to the count and bishop living in 1346. Interestingly, both the dedication and intention in the prologue were taken over without change in the Dutch Beke half a century later.<sup>15</sup> Apart from presenting a slightly augmented Dutch translation, the Dutch Beke also continued the narrative until the year 1393.<sup>16</sup> Textual analysis by the editor has shown that the anonymous translator and continuator must have been one and the same person, who can be called the author.<sup>17</sup>

The Dutch Beke was not the only adaptation of the *Chronographia* in its time. Four anonymous Latin continuations were already produced before 1400.<sup>18</sup> Both the Dutch Beke and the *Chronographia* were very influential on later history-writing in the Northern Low Countries. Copies of the Dutch Beke alone are extant today in over 20 manuscripts. Some of these contain a further continuation until 1432, the *Nederlandse Beke-Vervolg*. In addition, the Dutch Beke was an important impetus in the ‘boom’ in historiography in the vernacular from about 1400. It was adapted and used extensively by historiographers in Holland and elsewhere in the Northern Low Countries from as early as about 1400 onwards by, among others, Heraut Beyeren, who worked in the service of count Willem VI of Holland (1404-1417).<sup>19</sup>

The pre-1400 Latin and Middle Dutch continuations of the *Chronographia* were all written by anonymous authors who were at least partly contemporaries of the events they described after 1346. They all followed the *Chronographia*’s dual set-up of Holland and Utrecht history, albeit with different focuses and preferences.<sup>20</sup> In general, one can state that the focus of the Beke-tradition shifted from Holland (the abbey of Egmond) to Utrecht, and, via some early fifteenth-century adaptations connected to the court of the count, partly back to Holland again.<sup>21</sup> A shift to Utrecht is certainly obvious in the Dutch Beke, as well as in the most important Latin Continuation, numbered V in Bruch’s edition. Both were finished in or around 1393. Continuation V will be of some interest later on, but it suffices here to say that it shows a distinct focus on Utrecht episcopal and

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15 Bruch, *Croniken*, 1-3 (cap. I).

16 For a discussion on the date of conclusion, which was also set on 1395 in the past, see Janse, ‘De *Nederlandse Beke*’, 118-119.

17 Bruch, *Croniken*, xxxi-xxxii; Janse, ‘De *Nederlandse Beke*’, 122-123.

18 Five Latin continuations are edited in Bruch, *Chronographia*, 320-352. Continuation III runs to about 1430 and was thus added later than the other four.

19 F. van Oostrom, *Het woord van eer. Literatuur aan het Hollandse hof omstreeks 1400* (Amsterdam 1987) 155-167 and *passim*.

20 With the exception of the short Latin Continuation I: Bruch, *Chronographia*, 321-323; see also Janse, ‘De *Nederlandse Beke*’, 117; Janse, ‘Van Utrechts naar Hollands’.

21 Janse, ‘Van Utrechts naar Hollands’.

territorial history, leading Bruch and Janse to believe that it was written, like the Dutch Beke, in Utrecht.<sup>22</sup>

The focus on Utrecht in the Dutch Beke was observed and documented by both the editor and Janse. Bruch noted that the text covering the period 1346-1393 was ‘very Utrecht-focused’, without specifying whether he meant the diocese or the city. He conjectured that its core was formed by a ‘Utrecht annalistic work’, to which reports on events in Holland were later added. The author was clearly familiar with local toponyms and names in the city of Utrecht, which he translated or explained accordingly. This, plus the author’s qualities as a translator, made Bruch assume that the author of the Dutch Beke was a cleric originating from Utrecht.<sup>23</sup>

Janse’s analysis yielded additional and somewhat different results. He specified, first of all, the ‘Utrecht focus’ of the Dutch Beke and found that it was mostly concerned with the military and financial aspects of the bishop’s rule in the territory of Utrecht on the one hand, and with the history of the city of Utrecht on the other.<sup>24</sup> The clear preference of the author for the ‘lay’ aspects of episcopal and urban government did not point in the direction of a cleric. Secondly, Janse questioned Bruch’s hypothesis about the ‘Utrecht annals’ that would have formed the core of the continuation. He found evidence instead that the author used various written sources for his work, not only narrative, but also charters that the author probably found in Utrecht city government archives. One specific Utrecht cartulary, from which several charters could have informed the author, was kept by the town clerk Jan Tolnaer Jr, who also personally inserted a translation of a Latin charter.

Janse surmised that Jan Tolnaer might have been the author himself. After all, town clerks were writers of historiographical works in many cities and known to be capable of translating Latin texts to the vernacular.<sup>25</sup> Moreover, Tolnaer was closely involved with the city government for decades, covering most of the years of the continuation. He started his career as a public notary, serving the city government occasionally as a writer from 1351 onwards, and he became the town clerk in 1368 until his death in or around 1403.<sup>26</sup> He could have written the chronicle as a commission by the city government, or in his own time. According to Janse, the ruling elite of the city

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22 See p. 99-100 below. Bruch, *Chronographia*, 320-322 and 332-352; see also Janse, ‘De Nederlandse Beke’, 122-123 and 132. Up to 80% of the subject material in Continuation V deals with Utrecht, mainly territorial history.

23 Bruch, *Croniken*, ix-xliii, esp. ix-x, xviii-xxiv, xxxii and xl-xliii.

24 Janse, ‘De Nederlandse Beke’, 119-123.

25 Janse, ‘De Nederlandse Beke’, 137; Schmid, ‘Town chronicles’, 1434; Peters, *Literatur*, 227-240.

26 Janse, ‘De Nederlandse Beke’, 137-139; F. Ketner, ‘De Tolnaers als stadsclerken van Utrecht’, in: Idem, *Stichtse studiën* (Utrecht 1974) 52-62.

formed the logical audience for the Middle Dutch chronicle. They could be expected to be interested in the historical events that were politically important for their city, not only those concerning their own city, but also those connected to the diocese and the wider region. Here, Janse's hypothesis about the Dutch Beke's author and audience forms the lead that is further tested.

### *City politics in fourteenth-century Utrecht*

The contribution of the Dutch Beke to Utrecht and Holland history-writing mainly concerns the second half of the fourteenth century. It is covered almost completely by the author's continuation of the *Chronographia* (1346-1393). In addition, the most important interpolations in the translation of the *Chronographia* deal with the period immediately preceding that, notably the years 1304-1305 and 1345-1346. The fourteenth century was a period of great change for the city of Utrecht. The city's population increased from about 6,000 in the beginning of the century to an estimated 13,000 in 1400. During this century, the city reached its height in autonomy and power in the region. It attained complete self-government vis-à-vis the bishop, won judicial and administrative control of the countryside surrounding the city, built permanent city walls and fought successful wars against neighbouring lords (among them the count of Holland) in order to protect its waterways and trading routes.<sup>27</sup>

The fourteenth century was also characterized throughout by social and political conflict within the city. The century was ushered in by the political advance of the craft guilds. On 8 May 1304, the elders of the guilds put forth an ordinance that gave them, amongst others, the sole right to choose city councillors. The ordinance was confirmed by the sitting patrician aldermen, who also ceded their primacy in local government to the council and were to be elected by the city council from then onwards. More than one year later, the bishop confirmed the guild ordinance and thereby abandoned his right to appoint aldermen himself. The advance of the craft guilds was directly influenced by the guild revolution in Flemish cities, but Utrecht would remain the only city in the Northern Low Countries radically affected by these events.<sup>28</sup> The changes seem to have been put into practice immediately, but there is reason to believe that the new arrangements were fought fiercely by a patrician and noble alliance for at least a year. As in the neighbouring

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27 Van den Hoven van Genderen, 'Op het toppunt'; Muller, *Rechtsbronnen* IV; Van den Hoven van Genderen and Rommes, 'Rijk en talrijk'; Immink, 'De stadsvrijheid'.

28 On 'guild revolutions' in the Low Countries as a whole: Prak, 'Corporate politics'.

Southern cities, the revolution in Utrecht was accompanied by protracted war and faction strife in and outside the city. The killing of Jacob van Lichtenberg and two other aldermen in the early spring of 1304, described by the Dutch Beke, was one, and perhaps the most violent, incident in the city in this context. The party of Lambert de Vries represented the ‘Flemish’ party in the city that was also supportive of the guilds’ demands, while Jacob van Lichtenberg represented the party of the Avesnes dynasty, ruling in Holland and Utrecht. He probably also backed patrician interests in the city, as his son led the alliance against the city in the war of 1305.<sup>29</sup>

The confrontation of 1304 initiated a long-lasting hatred between the families of Lichtenberg and Gunter. The latter was the name of one of the patrician allies of Lambert de Vries: *grote Ghise* (‘great Ghise’) alias Gijsbert Gunter, who was banished together with Lambert de Vries in 1310. His descendants would take over the lead in the feud and power strife against the family of Lichtenberg and their allies. Open or half-open conflict resurfaced in the 1330s and 1340s, in the 1360s, and again in the 1370s, until the Gunterlingen were finally banished for good in 1380. At that point, the two parties in the city, called ‘Lichtenbergers’ and ‘Gunterlingen’, represented more than elite factions alone. They were connected to two sides within the urban community, who were in conflict about matters of public interest, such as the constitutional position of the city council and the craft guilds, election rules, issues of war and peace, and the financial management of the city, to name some issues that can be traced in the city’s archival records.<sup>30</sup>

Besides 1304, important dates marking political unrest or popular revolt in the city, are the years 1322, 1340-1341, 1346, and 1379-1380. Conflicts often coincided with changes in episcopal rule, which were sometimes accompanied by protracted periods of vacancy of the episcopal see or outright conflict between two candidates (as in 1322, 1340-1343, and 1378-1380).<sup>31</sup> They also often coincided with regional wars, faction strife, and with unrest in neighbouring cities and regions (as in 1304, 1346, and 1379-1380). At no time in the fourteenth century, except around 1304-1305, was craft guild dominance in local government to have been at stake as such. Rather, conflict issues probably concerned power relations between the different guilds or within the guilds, or

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29 Burgers, ‘Tussen burgerij en adel’; Berkelbach van der Sprenkel, *Geschiedenis* (partly outdated); Sabbe, ‘De vijandelijkheden’; Trio, Heirbaut and Van den Auweele, *Omtrent 1302*; Haverkamp, “‘Innerstädtische Auseinandersetzungen’”.

30 See, e.g., Muller, *Rechtsbronnen* I, 66-68 (in 1379); Smithuis, ‘Popular movements’; J. Smithuis, ‘1346: bloedige burgertwisten in het centrum van Utrecht’, *Tijdschrift Oud-Utrecht* 88 (2015) 136-139.

31 See also Post, *Utrechtse bisschopsverkiezingen*, 83-126.

conflicts between the city council (as representing acknowledged elite and guild interests) and divergent ‘popular’ voices within the urban community.<sup>32</sup> What the names *Gunterlingen* and *Lichtenbergers* represented precisely in these subsequent conflicts is hard to discern. Compared to the period after 1400, there are relatively few sources.

In the following, I will analyse what messages the author of the Dutch Beke conveyed about the city of Utrecht and its political conflicts. The main focus will lie on the author’s personal contribution to the *Chronographia*, that is to say his interpolations in the narrative before 1346 and his continuation after 1346. First, I will look into the author’s treatment of the position of the city and its burghers in relation to the territory, and then consider his treatment of urban history, with an emphasis on politics and conflict. I will analyse whether he voiced a specific social and political discourse through his narration, and whether this was congruent with the ‘official’ discourse of Utrecht city government around 1393, when the chronicle was completed. To this end, the discursive strategies used in the Dutch Beke will be analysed and confronted with what is known from other narrative and archival sources.

#### *City and territory in the Dutch Beke*

As was observed before by Janse, the Utrecht focus of the Dutch Beke is, for a large degree, due to the interest which the author showed in the bishop’s rule of the territory of Utrecht (being made up of the Sticht and Oversticht). These items take up about 55% of the content material of the author’s continuation to the *Chronographia*, compared to little more than 16% for Holland (the remaining 29% being concerned with other events).<sup>33</sup> The items dealing specifically with the city of Utrecht and its burghers are integrated within these sections on episcopal history, in accordance with the *Chronographia*’s original set-up. Taking into account, however, that about 80% of the Dutch Beke is a direct translation of Johannes de Beke’s *Chronographia*, and that this work shows a balanced treatment of Holland and Utrecht (territorial) events, then, at first sight, the Dutch Beke is overwhelmingly focused on territorial history, with a growing emphasis on the bishop’s territory towards the period in which the author lived and worked.

The precedence of territorial and episcopal history over local history, however, may easily conceal the importance which the author of the Dutch Beke assigns to the city

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32 See esp. Smithuis, ‘Gildevertegenwoordiging’; Van den Hoven van Genderen, ‘Op het toppunt’.

33 Janse, ‘De Nederlandse Beke’, 119. In the *Chronographia*, the ratio is about 50-50%.

of Utrecht and its burghers. First of all, the city or community of Utrecht (*stat van Utrecht, die van Utrecht, ghemeente*) is mentioned much more frequently in the interpolations and continuation than in the translation of the *Chronographia* – by about 2/3 to 1/3. More important is how they are mentioned. In the *Chronographia*, the role of the city of Utrecht is mostly limited to the city being the residence of the bishop and its burghers doing military service in the bishop's army, next to knights and countrymen of the territory. A typical phrase denoting the burghers' function is that the bishop enlisted his knights, burghers, and countrymen.<sup>34</sup>

In the narration from the fourteenth century onwards, when the author of the Dutch Beke starts to take over from Johannes de Beke with more substantial interpolations, the role of the city becomes more pronounced. From about 1345 on, the bishop typically goes on campaign 'with the city of Utrecht' (*mitter stat*), denoting the city's self-employed army.<sup>35</sup> The community and its burghers, moreover, take the initiative to wage war themselves, as in 1305, when the burghers of Utrecht (*burghers, borghers*) are mentioned six times in connection to the victories they won over the army of Jacob van Lichtenberg and his allies.<sup>36</sup> In this context, also, the need of the burghers to escort their provisions and merchandise is mentioned. From a military point of view, the burghers are described as valuable fighters, much as the military class of knights, or even more valuable. For instance, when invited to take part in a campaign against the Frisians by the count of Guelders in 1336, the Dutch Beke mentions that the burghers of Utrecht were the first to arrive and pitch their tents, showing their eagerness to engage in battle.<sup>37</sup> Statements like these, on the value of the city's army and the burghers' 'knightly' behaviour, are the ones in which Janse first traced an Utrecht 'chauvinism' or local self-consciousness. They become more frequent as the chronicle proceeds.<sup>38</sup>

Moreover, the favourable judgment of the military worth of burghers is not limited to Utrecht citizens only. The author shows his appreciation likewise for burghers of other towns, such as Amersfoort or Zwolle. In 1356, the nobleman Gijsbrecht van Nijenrode attacked the north of the Sticht with a knightly army from Holland. The burghers of Amersfoort, however, fought 'bravely' against him, together with the bishop's marshal, and killed Gijsbrecht.<sup>39</sup> The author also values the share in warfare of citizens by

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34 E.g. Bruch, *Croniken*, 130 (cap. LXVIII, ll. 15-16) and 181 (cap. LXXIX, ll. 130-131).

35 See, e.g., for the period from 1345 onwards: *Ibidem*, 191, 194-196, 198, 201-202 and ff.

36 *Ibidem*, 168-169 (cap. LXXV, ll. 187-200).

37 This is an interpolation. *Ibidem*, 182 (cap. LXXIX, ll. 171-174); Janse, 'De *Nederlandse Beke*', 140.

38 More examples in Janse, 'De *Nederlandse Beke*', 140-142.

39 Bruch, *Croniken*, 205 (cap. LXXXIII, ll. 189-196): (...) *die stoutelike tieghen hem streden ende*

mentioning explicitly on different occasions how many of them were captured or fell in battle.<sup>40</sup> The author hereby takes the standpoint of a burgher, and shows a civic identity rather than an aristocratic or clerical one, even if this civic identity is partly defined by the appropriation of knightly values. This civic community of burghers is also defined against the lower classes of peasants, as in the (translated) episode on the revolt of the North-Holland Kennemers in 1274, who are described instead as ‘the savage community’ (*die wrede ghemeente*).<sup>41</sup>

Throughout the chronicle, the importance of the city of Utrecht in the Dutch Beke is largely determined by its value for the territory and the rule of the bishop. Above all, the city is presented as a loyal supporter of episcopal rule within the territory and against external enemies, and their interests are supposed to coincide. Within this framework, however, the city’s role is increasingly presented as crucial from a political and military point of view, as well as financially. One recurring theme in the continuation are the finances of the bishop and the problems due to territorial offices and castles used as sureties.<sup>42</sup> The interest that the author shows in these affairs might be explained by the important role that the city of Utrecht played in saving the bishop from bankruptcy and the territory from dependency on neighbouring counts and lesser noblemen. When, for example, bishop Jan van Arkel (1342-1364) lost nearly all of his territory and income to six powerful fiduciaries, the city of Utrecht and the Utrecht chapters came to his rescue and mediated so that five of the six gave up their positions to the bishop. In 1352, the sixth also was expelled from his last stronghold with the help of the cities of Utrecht and Amersfoort. From then on, the Dutch Beke adds, a Utrecht burgher would always be appointed on the castle, in order to prevent more harm to be done from it (*opdatter niement gheen hinder of en schiede*).<sup>43</sup> Again, in the 1370s, the city of Utrecht was deeply involved in the repayment of a pledge on the castle of Vreeland, which was a bone of contention between the territories of Utrecht and Holland for years.<sup>44</sup> In the protracted conflict that followed, the Dutch Beke nearly forgets about the bishop and relates extensively about the city’s war with Holland that evolved around a stronghold near the Rhine, called *Ghildenborch*, that was built defiantly by the city to protect its interests

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*wonden heren Ghisebrecht van Nyenrode ter doot (...).*

40 E.g. Bruch, *Croniken*, 195 (cap. LXXXII, ll. 101-103), 205 (cap. LXXXIII, ll. 195-196), 211 (cap. LXXXV, ll. 29-30), 225 (cap. LXXXVII, l. 191).

41 Ibidem, 142 (cap. LXX, ll. 8-9; episode translated from the *Chronographia*). See also p. 105-106 below.

42 See also Janse, ‘De Nederlandse Beke’, 120.

43 Bruch, *Croniken*, 200-202 (cap. LXXXIII, ll. 54-111), citation at p. 202 (ll. 109-111). See also Van den Hoven van Genderen, ‘Op het toppunt’.

44 Bruch, *Croniken*, 216-217 (cap. LXXXVI, ll. 65-92) and 223 (cap. LXXXVII, ll. 126-133). The control of the castle of Vreeland (*Vredelant*) is a recurring theme in the Dutch Beke.

against its enemies.<sup>45</sup> In this episode, for the first time, the author sometimes uses the phrase ‘council of Utrecht’ (*raet/rade van Utrecht*) instead of the city, reflecting the growing power of the city council within the city and as an outward representative of the city and of its burghers.<sup>46</sup>

To summarize, the author of the Dutch Beke stressed the value of the city of Utrecht and its burghers within the territory of Utrecht. They are crucial, loyal supporters of episcopal rule, and they are also prepared to take action independently when the city’s or territory’s interests are at stake. Especially in the narrative from 1346 onwards, the role of the city becomes more pronounced. Through the narration of military deeds especially, the author expressed a local and civic self-consciousness, which is partly attained by the attribution of knightly behaviour to burghers. His local identity is defined mainly by a supposed harmony of interests between city and territory and not by a local or urban ‘patriotism’. The Dutch Beke shares this outlook with many German town chronicles in the late Middle Ages.<sup>47</sup> Interestingly, in this set-up the count of Holland is often assigned the role of common enemy, despite the professed wish of harmony between the two territories that was essential to the original set-up of the *Chronographia*.

#### *Urban history and politics in the Dutch Beke*

In addition to describing the role of the city within the territory, the Dutch Beke also narrates about the history of the city itself. Part of this story is derived directly from Johannes de Beke’s *Chronographia*, e.g., in episodes on the foundation of Utrecht as the bishop’s see by Saint Willibrord and Saint Bonifatius, the tribulations of Danish rule, or the embellishment of the city with churches and convents.<sup>48</sup> Johannes de Beke also wrote about popular revolts or protests in the city in 1274 and in 1322, to which I will return later. Besides such episodes, the author of the Dutch Beke added new elements to the translation: a note on how party strife in the city began during the rule of bishop Herman van Horn (1151-1156); the integration of a charter containing privileges for the city in 1252; a city fire in 1279; the clash between elite families in 1304; the banishment of

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45 Ibidem, 222-227 (cap. LXXXVII, ll. 113-254). On this stronghold, see also below, p. 107.

46 The Utrecht city council is mentioned eight times in total, see ibidem, 144, 217, 223, 226, 227 and 233. On the development of the city council in Utrecht: Muller, *Rechtsbronnen* IV; Smithuis, ‘Gildevertegenwoordiging’; Camphuijsen, *Scripting justice*, 20-26.

47 H. Schmidt, ‘Bürgerliches Selbstverständnis und städtische Geschichtsschreibung im deutschen Spätmittelalter’, in: P. Johanek (ed.), *Städtische Geschichtsschreibung im Spätmittelalter und in der frühen Neuzeit* (Cologne 2000) 1-17, at 17.

48 E.g. Bruch, *Croniken*, 19-21, 49-51, 77.



Jacob van Lichtenberg and the subsequent war in 1305; the foundation of the cathedral tower in 1320 and its completion in 1382; a tournament held on St. Catherine's Field in 1332; or a lengthy story about the siege of Utrecht by count William IV of Holland in 1345.<sup>49</sup> This list is not exhaustive. These interpolations show that the author consciously strived to complement the chronicle with more local history. Within the chronicle as a whole, these additions may not be extensive, but they become more frequent and more extensive as the chronicle proceeds. The author's interest in local history is carried on in the continuation after 1346.

In his personal contribution to local history-writing, the author shows a particular interest in political discord. No less than three interpolations are concerned with political strife between Utrecht citizens. It starts with a short addition to the narration about the reign of bishop Herman van Horn (1151-1156). Adding to Johannes de Beke's opinion that Herman's administration was weak because he could not control his nobles, the author of the Dutch Beke stated: *Onder desen bisscop Hereman begonsten die ierste partiën binnen der stat van Utrecht, also ict naest ghevinden can* ('Under this bishop Herman, the first parties arose within the city of Utrecht, as I have been able to find').<sup>50</sup> The personal note at the end suggests that the author strived to present a historical account of party strife within his city, and it is this narrative that interests us here.<sup>51</sup> The subject surfaces again when the author adds two extensive paragraphs about the heated conflict between two families (*geslachten*) in 1304 and the war between the banished burgher Jacob van Lichtenberg and the city in 1305.<sup>52</sup>

Despite what one might have expected, the author only returns to the subject of party strife summarily and in a vague way in his own narrative after 1346. In an annalistic manner, he mentions the expulsion of 'the Gunterlingen' (*die Gunterlinghe*) from Utrecht in 1346, without explaining who they are. Their return to the city is related as a corollary of a peace treaty with Holland in 1356, in which the names of some prominent representants of the Gunterlingen are included. The author also described the murder of Alfer van Lichtenberg by Hendrik Gunter and four other men in 1363, and further on the banishment of Gijsbert Gunter around 1370 and its consequences for the burghers of Utrecht, the latter in a somewhat more extensive paragraph. Finally, the expulsion of 'the Gunterlingen' from Utrecht in the year 1380 is narrated in one sentence only.<sup>53</sup>

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49 The list here taken from Janse, 'De Nederlandse Beke', 119.

50 Bruch, *Croniken*, 79.

51 No archival sources have been preserved on this issue, however, so that it is impossible to verify this note.

52 Bruch, *Croniken*, 164-165 (ll. 68-86) and 168-169 (ll. 187-200).

53 Ibidem, 193 (ll. 29-32), 205 (ll. 213-220), 212 (ll. 55-58), 215-216 (ll. 53-64), 217 (ll. 85-92) and

There are three interrelated copies of the Dutch Beke, the so-called ‘P-manuscripts’, all dating from about 1425, that contain a much more extensive account of the conflict preceding the expulsion of the Gunterlingen in 1346. This episode must have been added later by an unknown author and is therefore not part of the original Dutch Beke.<sup>54</sup> It is interesting nonetheless. The original version narrates succinctly that, on the day of Saint Cecily (22 November) in 1346, the bishop fought with three of his ministerials against the Gunterlingen in the city centre and expelled about 300 of them from the city.<sup>55</sup> The P-manuscripts, however, introduce this clash as a major conflict between two groups of citizens, in which the bishop’s initial role was that of an arbitrator:

*The bishop [...] heard that they were thus restless among each other, as among the burghers the father against the child, the brother against the brother, the cousin against the cousin, one friend against the other, so that the city was in great agitation, which is why the bishop went to them on both sides and took control of the matter, in order to bring peace.*<sup>56</sup>

This is followed by a detailed and lively account of the ensuing battle between the parties of the Lichtenbergers and Gunterlingen, involving also the bishop’s troops on the side of the Lichtenbergers. It mentions several prominent burghers by name who were engaged or killed in the fighting. The guild of the furriers is described fighting alongside the Lichtenbergers with their guild’s banner. It reads as an eyewitness report. The Gunterlingen lost, and the account tells that some of them were captured and beheaded, while ‘many others of the Gunterlingen party’ (*veel van der Gunterlinghe pertye*) were expelled. On the whole, the rendition in the P-manuscripts stands much closer to the

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232 (ll. 53-55).

54 Preserved in The Hague, KB 71 F 30, f. 86v-87r; HUA, Bibliotheek VI B 9 (formerly nr. 43), f. 91r-91v; Wolfenbüttel, Herzog August Bibliothek, Cod. Extrav. 114-2, f. 114v-115r. For the ‘P-manuscripts’, see: Bruch, *Croniken*, xlvii-xlviii; Janse, ‘Van Utrechts naar Hollands’. I would like to thank Thijs Porck for drawing my attention to this unedited episode. In this version, the event is dated in 1348, but it is clear that it concerns the clash in 1346.

55 Bruch, *Croniken*, 193 (ll. 29-32): *In denselven jare [1346] op sunte Ceciliën dach vacht bisscop Jan, haer Hubrecht van Culenborch, haer Robrecht van Arkel, haer Jacob van Nyevelt tUtrecht optie Plaetse tieghen die Gunterlinghe, die si verwonnen ende verdreven uter stat, ende dier was omtrent driehondert.*

56 *Die bisscop Jan van Arkel, bisscop tUtrecht, die vernam dat si aldus onrustelic waren onderlinghe, als van den burghers die vader tegen dat kint, die broeder tegen den broeder, die neve tegen den neve, deen vriend tegen den anderen, also dattie stat in groten onrusten was, wairom dattie bisscop ghinc tot hem luyden an beyden zijden ende nam den zake in die hant, om te vreden te brengen. (...)* (The Hague, KB 71 F 30, f. 86v)

archival sources than the original version of the Dutch Beke, which puts the bishop as the sole opponent against the Gunterlingen.<sup>57</sup>

In this context, it is interesting to notice that the Dutch Beke uses the word ‘parties’ in relation to local political conflict only twice: in the ‘rise of the first parties’ around 1150, and in the narration of the killing of the aldermen in 1304, where they are to be identified with the families of Lambert de Vries and Jacob van Lichtenberg. In the continuation, ‘the Gunterlingen’ are mentioned a few times, but without calling them a party or providing for a context. The opposing group of ‘the Lichtenbergers’ are not to be found in the chronicle at all. This vagueness contrasts with the author’s account of the rise of the largely contemporary parties of Hooks and Cods in Holland or Hekerens and Bronkhorsten in the duchy of Guelders to the east, on which he relates with much more clarity.<sup>58</sup> It is also in sharp contrast with the fifth Latin Continuation to the *Chronographia*, which was probably conceived around the same year (1393) in Utrecht. In its rendition of the conflict in 1380, the Dutch Beke mentions only:

*In the same year of the Lord, 1380, on the day of Saint Benedict translatio, the Gunterlingen were expelled from the city of Utrecht and they were about 90 men except wives and children.*<sup>59</sup>

Continuation V narrates about the same event as follows:

*In that year [1380], a bad sedition took place in the city of Utrecht. Because the burghers of this city are since a long time and until the present day divided in two parties, [this] caused a deep-rooted sedition among them, in which one party, popularly called ‘Gunterling’, was expelled and banished from the city by the opposing party, popularly called ‘Lichtenbergenses’, with the help of armed fugitives.*<sup>60</sup>

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57 The sources: Muller, *Rechtsbronnen* I, 57-65 (nrs. 114-120).

58 Bruch, *Croniken*, 198-199 (cap. LXXXIII, ll. 1-9, on Holland) and 210 (cap. LXXXV, ll. 1-5, on Guelders). E.g. cap. LXXXIII, ll. 1-5: (...) *resen ii partiën in Hollant, daer den lande groot ongeval of quam. Die ene partie noemden hem cabeljaus (...) Die ander partie noemden hem hoeke (...).*

59 *In dienzelven jare ons Heren m cc lxxx (sic) op sinte Benedictus dach translacio worden die gunterlinghe verdreven uter stad van Utrecht ende dier was omtrent xc manne behalven den wiven ende kijnderen.* Ibidem, 232 (cap. LXXXVIII, ll. 53-55).

60 *Quedam mala sedicio eodem anno prefato accidit in civitate Traiectensi. Nam burgenses civitatis predictae a longis temporibus usque in hodiernum diem bipartiti, inveteratam contra se invicem suscitavere sedicionem, in qua una parciū, Gunterling vulgariter nuncupata, ab earum contraparte Lichtenbergenses vulgariter nuncupata, armata manu fugitiva a civitate prefata repulsa et proscripta est.* Bruch, *Chronographia*, 344 (§ 11, ll. 1-6).

To be sure, the party names of Gunterlingen and Lichtenbergers can be found in Utrecht archival sources from the last decades of the fourteenth century. This proves their popular use in the city around that time, in accordance with Continuation V. One of these sources is an account of the bishop of 1378-1379, dealing with the run-up of the confrontation in 1380. The other are judicial records of the city council. These speak of ‘parties’ in the direct aftermath of 1380, while the parties’ names are mentioned for the first time in a verdict dating from 1397.<sup>61</sup>

The conclusion must therefore be that the author of the Dutch Beke voiced a specific opinion about these conflicts. On the one hand, he admitted the existence of political parties in Utrecht, and of the Gunterlingen in particular. On the other hand, he ignored their opponents, the Lichtenbergers. This lack of definition, as well as the scarcity of reports from 1346 onwards, could be explained by the discomfort that he and his intended audience may have felt to admit that the city was the scene of internal discord and conflict. Like most of his contemporaries, the author of the Dutch Beke considered fighting (*vechten*) and partisanship as the root cause of unrest and disaster.<sup>62</sup> Throughout his narrative he explicitly and implicitly stressed the need of a strong bishop who was able to curb or prevent conflict and fighting amongst his subjects, including Utrecht citizens. In his rendition of events, it was essentially the absence or weakness of episcopal rule that made possible the rise of ‘parties’ in the city around 1150 as well as the killings in 1304, which took place during the captivity of bishop Gwijde van Avesnes. Likewise, the expulsion of the Gunterlingen in 1346 is ascribed to the military intervention of bishop Jan van Arkel alone.<sup>63</sup> The discursive strategy used in this respect, reminds of what Dirk Schoenaers called ‘camouflaging’ of political and social unrest at home, in the interest of the discourse of unity and harmony that was central to late medieval

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61 K. Heeringa (ed.), *Rekeningen van het bisdom Utrecht 1378-1573*, 3 vols. (Utrecht 1926-1932) I, 107 and 109, e.g. at 109: *Des manendaghes, doe die toecomende was ter nacht, doe was die gaderinge van den partijen des nachts, die Lichtenbergher op die Roedenborgher brug, die Ghunterlinge op die Plaetse (...)*; HUA, SA 227, f. 86v-87v and, at f. 116v: *Item opten zelve dach [27 Nov 1397] wilcoorde Beernt Stael voer den raet out ende nywe waert dat hi hem ummermeer meer onderwonde mit runen ofte mit raden, de Lichtenberghers te trecken aen die Gunterlinghers partie, ofte hem enighe onredelike partye onderwonde ende ‘t de raet ter waerheyt vonde, dat men ‘t rechten zoude aen zijn lijf*; Muller, *Rechtsbronnen* I, 133-134 (*Liber hirsutus minor* nr. 93).

62 E.g. Bruch, *Croniken*, 165 (ll. 84-85), 198 (ll. 1-2), 210 (l. 5), 212 (l. 58). See also J.K. Hyde, ‘Contemporary views on faction and civil strife in thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Italy’, in: L. Martines (ed.), *Violence and civil disorder in Italian cities, 1200-1500* (Berkeley, LA 1972) 273-307.

63 See Bruch, *Croniken*, 78 (ll. 15-18): *Dese Heerman [van Horn] was saeft van sinne ende goedertiere, sodat in sijnre jeghenwordicheit dootslaghe gheschieden, want hi en mochte den burghers haer vechten van binnen niet verbieden, noch en conde sine ondersaten buten niet bedwinghen, dat si hem onderdanich wesen wouden*. See also Janse, ‘De Nederlandse Beke’, 119-122.

governments and ruling elites. This strategy would also explain why the author did not have to be as cautious when describing unrest caused by political parties in neighbouring territories.<sup>64</sup>

The author of the Dutch Beke did not only condemn the phenomenon of political discord and parties in general, but seems to condemn the Gunterlingen especially, as he mentions them preferably in relation to their expulsion from the city. It is worthwhile to take a closer look at his position towards the Utrecht parties and further analyse his discursive strategies. The best known and most extensive episode in the Dutch Beke on Utrecht party strife is that on the events of 1304, cited at the beginning of this article. It narrates how the aldermen Jacob van Lichtenberg, Gerrit Vrenke, and Werner [Frederiksz] were captured and executed treacherously and grimly by Lambert de Vries and his collaborators, among whom *grote Ghise* or Gijsbert Gunter. Almost every element in this detailed account is aimed at depicting these deeds as the counterpart of honest, open feud: the breaking of a solemn oath of truce, the trespassing when Jacob van Lichtenberg is taken prisoner, the murder in the dark on the St. Catharine's Field.<sup>65</sup> It reads, in other words, like a juridical plea against the group of Lambert de Vries. As was noticed by Burgers, the story could be linked directly to the verdict of murder that was given in 1310. Still, the Dutch Beke and the verdict only correspond to the extent that both mention the same names of Lambert's collaborators; the verdict does not mention any specific circumstances of the killings.<sup>66</sup>

When looking more closely at this verdict and other contemporary sources, the bias in the account of the Dutch Beke becomes more obvious. Shortly after Lambert de Vries had come to power, the new city government – which included the elders of the craft guilds for the first time – established a truce between the two parties (26 April 1304).<sup>67</sup> This truce stated that it was reached in response to the 'accidents' (*ongevalle*) and other 'strife' (*twist*) in the city, in particular the deaths of the aldermen Jacob van Lichtenberg, Werner Frederiksz, and Gerrit Vrenck on the one side, and of Arnoud van den Veen and Peter van den Zwane (relatives of Lambert de Vries) on the other. This indicates that the violence inflicted between the two parties was at least reciprocal and that it involved more fighting. Also, the confrontations were obviously treated by the city

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64 Schoenaers, "United we stand?".

65 See, e.g., on the matters of trespassing and secret manslaughter that prevented a case from being judged as a feud, C. Glaudemans, *Om die wrake wille. Eigenrichting, veten en verzoening in laat-middeleeuws Holland en Zeeland* (Hilversum 2004), 27 and 162-163.

66 Immink and Maris, *Registrum Guidonis*, 183-185.

67 Muller, 'Stukken', 51-53, where it is erroneously dated 12 February 1304. Cf., for the dating of events: Burgers, 'Tussen burgerij en adel', 20-23, Berkelbach van der Sprenkel, *Geschiedenis*, 37; Immink and Maris, *Registrum Guidonis*, 15-16.

government as a case of feuding in which a truce needed to be mediated.<sup>68</sup> It was only much later, after the return of the bishop and the Lichtenbergers party to the city, that the case came to be judged as murder. Even then, the verdict of murder in 1310 by which Lambert de Vries and his allies were banished for eternity and the remaining relatives of both families reconciled, was motivated foremost by the fact that the bishop and the city government had not succeeded in persuading Lambert's party to submit to their arbitration and not because of their conduct in 1304.<sup>69</sup> Thus, whichever way the killings happened, the Dutch Beke rendered the events in a manner that was not meant in the first place to tell the historical 'truth' but to convey a message. This message, or narrative strategy, was to depict the group of Lambert de Vries as treacherous, dishonest and disrespectable.

That the author was actually employing a narrative strategy to incriminate Lambert de Vries can also be shown by how he treated later events. He consciously strived to delegitimize the actions of Lambert's political heirs, the Gunterlingen, by using the same discursive strategy as in the case of 1304, which was to utilize the difference between rightful violence or feud and illegitimate violence such as murder. As stated before, fighting (*vechten*) and partisanship were in general considered as bad and harmful for society. However, unruly fighting was not to be confused with feuds and wars that were waged according to the prevailing norms of the day. To the author of the Dutch Beke and most of his contemporaries the notions of friendship and enmity were self-evident principles in everyday political relations.<sup>70</sup> It was precisely through the distinction between justifiable feuding and wars, and unjustifiable violence or 'fighting', that the Dutch Beke conveyed its message about political conflict in the city. The author accomplished this by framing actions of members of the Lichtenberg family (as there is no mention of their forming a party) invariably within the vocabulary of accepted feuding and normal political relations, while framing those of their opponents within that of partisanship and illegal violence. A result of this treatment is that the Lichtenbergers are either depicted as victims of unjustified (and incomprehensible) violence or as men of high status who are involved in the city's and territory's high politics and warfare.

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68 The aldermen were killed first, as Arnoud van den Veen was considered as one of those who killed them, see Immink and Maris, *Registrum Guidonis*, 171 (arbitration dated 24 June 1307).

69 (...) *om dien moirt, dien si* [Lambert de Vries c.s.] *ghedaen hebben; want si an ons ende an der stat niet bliven en wilden, alse weder in te soenen, also alset met hem ghesproken was ende si gheseghet hadden, eer si uter stat voeren* (...). Ibidem, 184. Cf. Burgers, 'Tussen burgerij en adel', 26.

70 J.B. Netterstrøm, 'Introduction. The story of feud in medieval and early modern history', in: J.B. Netterstrøm and B. Poulsen (eds.), *Feud in medieval and early modern Europe* (Aarhus 2007) 9-67, and further references there.

An example of their role as victims is, besides the events of 1304, the confrontation between members of the Gunter and Lichtenberg families that took place in early 1363. On this event, the Dutch Beke relates that Alfer van Lichtenberg was slaughtered by five men, named Heyneken de Moelnaer, Hendrik Gunter, Proys and Peter Herdebol, and Jacob Haes, and that this caused much ‘unrest and grief’ for the city of Utrecht.<sup>71</sup> The city judicial records of this year indeed mention the conviction of these five men for the death of Alfer van Lichtenberg – indicating, as a matter of fact, that the author probably had access to these records. But the same register also contains a conviction of Alfer’s son Lambert almost two years later, in response to continued strife between the families. This time, the city council acted as an arbitrator between the feuding families and announced a reconciliation, thereby convicting Lambert van Lichtenberg to a pilgrimage for deeds that remain unspecified.<sup>72</sup>

The author’s strategy in the Dutch Beke is therefore not only apparent in what he chose to tell about historical events, but also in what he omitted from his narrative. The fact, for instance, that there were official and recorded reconciliations between the families or parties of Lichtenberg and Gunter in the fourteenth century, mediated by the city government or the bishop, is persistently ignored by the author.<sup>73</sup> The only occasion in which a report about the Gunterlingen is neutral, is when they are allowed to return to the city in 1356 as part of a peace treaty between the territories of Utrecht and Holland. The Dutch Beke explains this treaty item by item.<sup>74</sup>

Alternatively, members of the Lichtenberg family are presented in the Dutch Beke as knightly men accustomed to feuding and war. As was mentioned earlier, the son of Jacob van Lichtenberg, also called Jacob, was banished from the city after the confrontations of 1304 and led a military alliance against the city in 1305. The Dutch Beke relates this war in an interpolation on the *Chronographia*, and the author apparently chose the standpoint of the victorious burghers. Nevertheless, he was also cautious to treat Jacob van Lichtenberg as an equal party to the city, who was fighting ‘together with his

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71 *In den jaer ons Heren m ccc lxiij optie iij kalende in february wert Alfer van Lichtenberch dootgheslegghen, ende dat deden Heyneken die Moelnaer, Henric Gunter, Proys Herdebol, (Peter Herdebol), ende Jacob Haes, daer der stat van Utrecht veel onrusten ende verdriets ofquam.* Bruch, *Croniken*, 212 (cap. LXXXV, ll. 55-58).

72 HUA, SA 227, f. 27 and 38 (dated 8 February 1363 and 5 December 1364).

73 These reconciliations date from 5 December 1364 (see previous note) and 1379 (Muller, *Rechtsbronnen* I, 66-68, dated 16 July 1379). A reconciliation between the parties of Lambert de Vries and Jacob van Lichtenberg, dating from about 1301 and mentioned in the contemporary *Rijmkroniek* by Melis Stoke, was not included in the *Nederlandse Beke* either, although it has been shown that the *Rijmkroniek* was used at several instances by the author. Cf. J.W.J. Burgers (ed.), *Rijmkroniek van Holland (366-1305)*, 2 vols. (The Hague 2004), 422, verses 1030-1034; Janse, ‘De *Nederlandse Beke*’, 127-128.

74 Bruch, *Croniken*, 205-206 (cap. LXXXIII, ll. 213-220).

relatives of Vianen and other friends' (*mit sinen maghen van Vyanen ende mit anders sinen vrienden*) and simply lost the war.<sup>75</sup> This episode contrasts sharply with the account on Gijsbert Gunter's war with the city around 1370. Like Jacob van Lichtenberg before, Gijsbert decided to wage war against his city after being banished in 1369. In the case of Gijsbert Gunter, however, the Dutch Beke stresses the fact that he infringed his banishment by coming too near the city walls. Moreover, he is denoted as 'a certain man' (*enen man*), without apparent status or network.<sup>76</sup> Next, Gijsbert got permission from Utrecht's enemy, the count of Holland, to take goods from Utrecht citizens travelling outside the land of Utrecht, 'wherever he could get them'. He received support from a certain 'viscount Lodekijn' and other associates (*ghesellen*); there is no mention of friends. Even official arbitration did not stop Gunter taking goods from Utrecht burghers. One should not be surprised that these acts spawned much 'unrest and war', in the words of the Dutch Beke.<sup>77</sup>

Archival sources make it clear that both the Gunter and Lichtenberg families were of high patrician and knightly status, whose members knew how to wage war and receive protection and support of neighbouring lords such as the count of Holland. There was a big difference, however, in the way that these events were treated by the Dutch Beke. At certain instances, perhaps, the author decided consciously to leave out events that were difficult to legitimate or explain. One of these instances was the war that Jan van Lichtenberg started against the city in 1329 under the protection of the count of Holland, after another banishment from the city. It is entirely missing from the narration, even though the subsequent war between the city of Utrecht and the count of Holland does get the author's attention.<sup>78</sup>

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75 Ibidem, 168-169 (cap. LXXV, ll. 187-200).

76 Ibidem, 215-217 (cap. LXXXVI, ll. 53-64 and 85-92). *Daerna in den jaer ons Heren m ccc lxxix wart enen man die stat van Utrecht verboden, hiet Ghisebrecht Gunter, xxv jaer bi eenre mile na niet te comen. Dat hi verbrac. Waerom men hem die stat verboet c jaer lang (...)* (ll. 53-55). This episode is another indication that the author had access to the city's judicial records, see HUA, SA 227, f. 51v and 67r (dated 7 August 1369 and 5 January 1370).

77 Bruch, *Croniken*, 215-216 (cap. LXXXVI, ll. 56-62): *Dese Ghisebrecht vercreech gracie bi den grave van Hollant also dat hi ghehengahede, dat dese Ghisebrecht voerseit nam der borgher goet van Utrecht in Hollant ende in Zeelant, waer hijt ghecrighen conde, daer namaels der stat vele onrusten ende oorlochs ofquam. Daerna in den jaer ons Heren m ccc lxx quam dese Ghisebrecht Gunter ende hadde in sijn hulpe borchgrave Lodekijn mit anders ghesellen ende namen den burghers van Utrecht hoer goet (...)*. For the late medieval notion on 'friends' and its defamatory pendant 'associates' (*complices*): K. Oschema, *Freundschaft und Nähe im spätmittelalterlichen Burgund. Studien zur Spannungsfeld von Emotion und Institution* (Cologne 2006) 268-269.

78 Cf. Van Mieris, *Groot charterboek* II, 481; Van den Hoven van Genderen, 'Op het toppunt', 126; Bruch, *Croniken*, 180-182 (cap. LXXIX).



Historical events in which different interests clashed, as between the city government and some of its burghers, are especially interesting because they reveal the position and narrative strategies of the author more clearly. So far, my analysis of the Dutch Beke mainly concerned party strife and feuding among the Utrecht city elite, that is to say among families with a ministerial status and knightly lifestyle, who made up a powerful portion of the fourteenth-century Utrecht elite.<sup>79</sup> In general, the chronicle focuses almost exclusively on elite families and their conflicts. If the Utrecht ‘parties’ or ‘the Gunterlingen’ represented other groups and interests within the Utrecht community as well, the Dutch Beke does not attempt to explain this larger context. This contrasts with other narrative accounts of the clashes of 1346 and 1380, notably the aforementioned extension of the Dutch Beke in the P-manuscripts and the Latin Continuation V that speak of deep-rooted conflicts in which large portions of the urban population were involved. Of these accounts, the inserted version of events in 1346 in the P-manuscripts is particularly interesting, because it presents a ‘middle class’ perspective. In this rendition of the battle on 22 November 1346, the guild’s banner of the furriers is mentioned explicitly on the side of the Lichtenbergers. It also tells of a man named Herman Nyesenzoon, who was first to attack the bishop’s general, exclaiming *An den besten is die beste cope* (‘The best gets the best deal’). This Herman was almost certainly a member of the butchers’ guild, of which several members were active on the side of the Gunterlingen.<sup>80</sup> As explained before, the original version of these events in the Dutch Beke relate solely about bishop Jan van Arkel expelling the Gunterlingen from the city, thus revealing a rather one-sided standpoint of the author.

It is not that the Dutch Beke does not pay any attention to popular politics in the city of Utrecht at all. Johannes de Beke’s *Chronographia* deals with two revolts or protests in the city, in 1274-1276 and in 1322, which are translated in the Dutch Beke. The episode on the revolt of 1274-1276, especially, takes up several pages and is quite

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79 On the composition and development of the city’s ruling elite, see Smithuis, ‘Gildeverteenwoordiging’.

80 *Doe wasser een van den Gunterlingher partyen, die geheten was Hermen Nyesen zoen, die seide ‘an den besten is die beste cope’ ende sloech heer Jacob van Zuylen dat hy neer boech ende nae gevallen was, ende die Lichtenbergers worden een stuc afterwairts gedreven, ter Plaetsen wart* (The Hague, KB 71 F 30, f. 87r). A group of butchers, among whom a certain Diederik Willem Nyesenz, probably a relative of Herman, started the revolt on 3 October 1346 by occupying the city hall and was among those convicted to banishment by default after 22 November. See Muller, *Rechtsbronnen* I, 57-65 (nrs. 114-120); Smithuis, ‘1346’; Smithuis, ‘Popular movements’. See also, for different social perspectives in urban historiography, Demets and Dumolyn, ‘Urban chronicle writing’, 33.

detailed.<sup>81</sup> It relates how the common people of Kennemerland, in the north of Holland, rose against their lords, destroying castles and other signs of noble dominance, and spread their mission quickly to neighbouring towns and regions. Coming to Utrecht as well, they persuaded the burghers to expel all the nobles (*edelinghe*) who oppressed the common people (*meente*) and give their goods to the poor. As a result, the burghers of Utrecht expelled all of the city's patrician magistrates and instead 'made aldermen and councillors of the elders of all guilds', who began to rule the city 'for the common good'.<sup>82</sup> The remainder of the episode deals with the way in which the revolt of the Kennemers was crushed, and the patrician government of Utrecht restored by an alliance of bishop, patricians, and nobles. While the opinion of Johannes de Beke and his Middle Dutch translator on the common people of Kennemerland is very negative, calling them 'cruel' and 'savage' and the like, they take on a neutral position towards the burghers who claimed the city's government in the common interest. The only time that popular protest is mentioned again is when conflict broke out, in 1322, about the election of a new bishop. The *Chronographia* and the Dutch Beke relate in this context that there came noise (*rumoer*) in the city of Utrecht because of the election. A protesting crowd assembled, frightening the count of Holland, who had hoped to have his candidate elected.<sup>83</sup>

Considering the detailed narrative about the election of the guilds' elders in 1274, it is remarkable that the Beke-tradition is completely silent about the craft guilds' successful take-over of Utrecht city government three decades later, in 1304. As explained before, the Dutch Beke only relates in two interpolations about the elite conflict in 1304 and the war in 1305 in which the exiled Jacob van Lichtenberg and his ministerial allies fought against the 'burghers of Utrecht'. However, by this phrase the author may well have implied the city's new, more popular regime. In fact, there are several indications that the sense of local pride conveyed in the Dutch Beke is partly based on the fact that the craft guilds formed part of the city government. A well-known episode on the siege of nearby Tiel in 1372 relates that the duke of Guelders, when he laid eyes on Utrecht's army from Tiel in the morning, declared to his men: *Ghi segt mi, dattet al*

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81 Bruch, *Croniken*, 142-146 (cap. LXX, ll. 6-126); cf. Idem, *Chronographia*, 219-225 (cap. 74b).

82 *Ende makeden scepene ende rade van den oudermans van elken ambochte, die recht ende oordel deden in der stat ende der stat recht oordinierden tot den ghemenen orbaer*. Bruch, *Croniken*, 144 (cap. LXX, ll. 53-55). See also Van Vliet, 'De stad van de burgers', 107-109; D.P. Blok, 'Beke's bron voor de Kennemer opstand', in: G.N.M. Vis (ed.), *Egmond tussen kerk en wereld* (Hilversum 1993) 225-228.

83 *Ende van deser twidracht [about the election] wart een rumoer binnen der stat, ende vermids den onversienen gaderloep des ghemenen volcs so wart grave Willam een luttel ghevreest*. Bruch, *Croniken*, 176 (cap. LXXVIII, ll. 1-10, at 5-7); cf. Idem, *Chronographia*, 283-285 (cap. 83, ll. 1-9). This popular protest is unknown from other sources.

*pelsers ende scoemakers sijn, mer het duncken mi alle goede riddere ende knechte wesen* ('You tell me that they are all furriers and shoemakers, but they all seem to me to be good knights and esquires'). The duke wisely avoided going to battle against them.<sup>84</sup> Likewise, the Dutch Beke narrates extensively about the strategic stronghold that the city of Utrecht built on the outer dyke of the Rhine in 1373. It was called *Ghildenborch* ('Guilds' Tower'), the author explained, 'because the guilds of Utrecht had it built'.<sup>85</sup> It is clear, therefore, that the author of the Dutch Beke accepted and was positive about the integration of the craft guilds in local government.

In doing so, he followed the official discourse of Utrecht city government that was formulated from 1340 onwards, when the city's recordkeeping began to develop. The register that voiced the foundations of late medieval Utrecht city government most clearly was the *Stadsboek* or City Book that was first compiled in 1340-1341. It contained the most important resolutions of the city (*koren*) and functioned as a kind of constitution for the city.<sup>86</sup> It was expressly forbidden to write or cancel anything in this book unless it was decided by the old and new city council, meaning the city council of the previous and running year (a body of 156 burghers, consisting of aldermen, councillors and elders of the 21 craft guilds), as well as the joint assembly of all the guilds, which included all the guild members with burgher rights.<sup>87</sup> It was this body also whose unity was supposed to bring 'rest and peace' for the city.<sup>88</sup> In 1346, for instance, the peace that was restored after the political crisis was the professed result of co-operation between bishop Jan van Arkel, the old and new city council, and the joint assembly of the guilds.<sup>89</sup> The principle that put the highest authority in the city in the joint hands of the city council and the assembly of all guild members was in fact to remain unchanged for almost two centuries, until 1528.

The Dutch Beke is therefore in accordance with official city government discourse regarding the position of the craft guilds in local government, even though he does not stress the fact. In this light, it is interesting to notice that the events by which the

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84 Bruch, *Croniken*, 222 (cap. LXXXVII, ll. 92-94); see also Janse, 'De Nederlandse Beke', 140-141.

85 *In den jaer ons Heren m ccc lxxiii groef die stat van Utrecht een diepe van der Nyervaert totter groter Wade toe (...) ende timmerden enen toorn op den uterdijc (...) ende noement Ghildenborch, wantet die ghilden van Utrecht deden tymmeren.* Bruch, *Croniken*, 222-223 (cap. LXXXVII, ll. 114-118).

86 Edition: Muller, *Rechtsbronnen* I, 1-68; on the City Book or *Liber Albus*: Ibidem, IV, 353-362.

87 *Int iaer ons Heren dusent dreihondert ende tue ende viertich des ander daghes na Kersdach doe droech oud raet ende nywe over een bi ghemeenre morghensprake van allen ghilden, datmen in desen drien der stat boeken nyet scriven en sel noch wt doen en sel, ten si biden ouden rade ende biden nywen ende bi ghemeenre morghensprake van allen ghilden.* Ibidem, I, 68.

88 (...) *om ons ende onse stat in rusten ende in payse te houden eendrachtelike (...).* Ibidem, I, 34-36 (citation at p. 34). See also on the discourse of unity of the city council, Camphuijsen, *Scripting justice*, 154-155.

89 Muller, *Rechtsbronnen* I, 64-65 (dated 31 January 1347).

elders of the guilds appropriated the city government and laid the foundations of the new regime in 1304 is missing not only from the Dutch Beke, but also from the city's constitution as laid down in the City Book. This book does not contain the guild ordinance of 1304, but only the complimentary agreement on election procedures, dated 20 January 1341. If the omission of the original guild ordinance was purposeful, it may be a further sign of correspondence between the Dutch Beke and official city recordkeeping. An explanation for the omission might be that the guild ordinance was confirmed and sealed in 1304 by seven aldermen of the city, among whom were Lambert de Vries and two of his allies who were later banished with him. Possibly, the fact that these exiles were thus inextricably linked to the introduction of the craft guilds in local politics caused such inconvenience to later city rulers that they rather ignored it and used the agreement of 1341 as the main reference for the arrangement of city government.<sup>90</sup>

This brings me to the official discourse of the city government with regard to 'party strife' and the parties of Gunterlingen and Lichtenbergers. In general, the city government – represented usually by the city council – naturally preferred to keep an outlook of unity to the community and the outer world.<sup>91</sup> This powerful discourse of unity corresponds with the vagueness that could be noticed in the Dutch Beke's reports about these conflicts. However, the council also had to deal with the resolution of conflicts within the community and within its own ranks. Whatever groups or interests the Gunterlingen and Lichtenbergers represented at different instances in the fourteenth century, the official records do not openly mention their names or speak of 'parties' until the final decades of the fourteenth century. In 1346, the protest of butchers and other guildsmen, who worked together with foremen of the Gunter family during the battle of 22 November, was framed as unlawful resistance against the city council. In the reconciliation of 1379 that bishop Arend van Horn managed to negotiate with the city government, the party names are not mentioned either, even though they are known from an unofficial report in the episcopal administration. The reconciliation does mention two 'sides' within the community, between which the seats in the city council were henceforth to be distributed evenly.<sup>92</sup>

From 1380 onwards, the city council's judicial records do use the notion of 'parties' a few times. In a verdict of 1381, 69 burghers lost their citizen rights because

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90 Edition: Overvoorde and Joosting, *Gilden* I, 53-55. The guild ordinance was preserved in two Utrecht cartularies.

91 See also Camphuijsen, *Scripting justice*, 24-25, 154.

92 Muller, *Rechtsbronnen* I, 66-68 (dated 16 July 1379). This arrangement was probably never effectuated.

‘they held with the unreasonable party, which was highly harmful for the city’ (*dat si onredelike partye ghedraghen hebben dat groteliken tieghens der stat droech*). In the following years, the city council took additional measures against those who spoke in support of banished citizens or of the parties.<sup>93</sup> The city council was even set on removing all Gunterlingen from the city and from power. A resolution to this end was taken by the old and new city council in 1384. It stated, among other things, that supporters of the Gunterlingen never could be elected to the city council again and that those marrying into the exiles’ families would be punished with banishment themselves. In short, the city council strived to eradicate all remaining support for the party within the city, in the professed interest of ‘rest and peace’ (*opdat de stat tebet te rusten ende in vreden blive*). The resolution was even repeated in 1407.<sup>94</sup>

Of course, these radical measures did not prevent dissenting voices after 1384. In this light, the death of the bishop and the advent of a new one in 1393, the year in which the Dutch Beke was finished, probably was a threatening perspective for the city council. The election of a new bishop often brought temporary political instability in the diocese.<sup>95</sup> Apart from this, civil strife was in the air in the neighbouring county of Holland. To make things worse, a new bishop could traditionally pardon exiles on the occasion of his entry. It is known that the city of Utrecht negotiated about the possibility of pardon for political exiles before the entry of a new bishop in 1425.<sup>96</sup> There is no direct evidence about preventive measures taken before the entry of bishop Frederik van Blankenheim (1393-1423), but there was certainly talk and unrest in the city connected to the Utrecht parties a few years later. In 1397, the city council sentenced two men who had spoken favourably of the return of the exiles, or of ‘attracting the Lichtenbergers to the Gunterlingen party’ (*de Lichtenberghers te trecken aen die Gunterlinghers partie*). Another source mentions a fight in the city centre.<sup>97</sup> These events indicate that the power arrangements of the early 1380s did not remain undisputed and probably evoked controversy in the city for many years to come.

The Dutch Beke, therefore, fits in remarkably well with the official standpoint and intentions of the city council in the last two decades of the fourteenth century. By framing the party of the Gunterlingen within the vocabulary of unlawful actions and their expulsion from the city, the author conformed to and supported the ruling power balance

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93 HUA, SA 227, f. 80v-87v (dating from 1379-1381, citation from f. 86v), 94 and 97 (dating from 1383 and 1386).

94 Muller, *Rechtsbronnen* I, 133-134 (citation from p. 133) and 147-148.

95 See also Janse, ‘De Nederlandse Beke’, 142.

96 J. de Hullu, *Bijdrage tot de geschiedenis van het Utrechtsche schisma* (The Hague 1892) 27-28.

97 HUA, SA 227, f. 116v; HUA, Verzameling Van Buchel-Booth 170, f. 41.

in the city council, from which all Gunterlingen had been removed since about ten years. What is more, it is likely that the author consciously attempted to stimulate political consensus in the city by actively supporting and legitimising the position of the rulers (the Lichtenbergers) on one hand, and impeaching their political opponents (the Gunterlingen), as well as their historical legacy, on the other. This support was especially expedient around 1393, when a new bishop was about to enter the city. The author may have had more influence with his work on Utrecht city politics than we can imagine today. The ‘Gunterlingen’, as a party, actually disappeared from the scene of Utrecht city politics after the fourteenth century, never to return.

#### *Author and audience*

The findings presented here confirm and strengthen the hypothesis of Antheun Janse about the context of origin of the Dutch Beke. His arguments were based on the instances of local self-consciousness that he found in the narrative and on the evidence that the author used documents from Utrecht city archives. To these conclusions may now be added that the author of the Dutch Beke constructed his narrative in such a way that it supported the official viewpoints of the Utrecht city council. The finding that the Dutch Beke in this and other respects concurs with official city government discourse in the final decades of the fourteenth century also makes Janse’s hypothesis about the town clerk Jan Tolnaer Jr as the author of the Dutch Beke more plausible, even though it cannot be proven.

Jan Tolnaer is a suitable candidate for the authorship for several reasons. Apart from the arguments put forward so far, he was almost certainly a partisan of the Lichtenbergers too. During the long years of his service, Jan came to be closely involved in higher city politics. It is known that he personally participated in the city’s negotiations with Holland in the year 1372. Moreover, his private residence, the *Witte Haan* (the ‘White Rooster’) at the Ganzenmarkt, was a popular meeting place for the city’s mayors. During the years of crisis in 1380-1381, also, Jan’s house was a regular meeting place for the city rulers who were about to defeat and banish the Gunterlingen.<sup>98</sup> His successor as a town clerk, Henricus Pauli, was a partisan for sure. Henricus was town clerk from 1403

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<sup>98</sup> Ketner, ‘De Tolnaers’.

until 1440. He was banished from the city in 1425 by (new) opponents of the Lichtenbergers and restored in his function when the latter returned to power in 1426.<sup>99</sup>

It is also possible now to further characterize the primary audience of the Dutch Beke. Janse argued that the chronicle was aimed primarily at an audience of members of the local ruling elite, as they could be expected to have a personal and professional interest in the combination of urban and regional history that the Dutch Beke presented. The most wealthy might have ordered a luxurious copy of the Dutch Beke, such as were produced around 1400.<sup>100</sup> Considering the political and social interests of the Dutch Beke, however, I consider it likely that the primary or intended audience of the Dutch Beke was to be found among a smaller circle of civic families within Utrecht's ruling elite, namely, those with a ministerial status and knightly lifestyle. Among these, the old patrician family of Lichtenberg figures prominently. They may have been particularly interested to read about historical and contemporary events in which they played a considerable role themselves. They may also have been attracted by historical story-writing in which burghers displayed knightly behaviour. And they probably had appropriated by then the Utrecht civic discourse by which the craft guilds formed an essential part of the local political and military constitution.

It is known that Utrecht citizens with a ministerial status often led the guild army on their expeditions outside Utrecht. At some instances in the continuation, the author included practical military advice for the army leaders and mentioned the names of captains and other distinguished participants of military expeditions.<sup>101</sup> Ministerial citizens were also more closely connected to the government of the territory than most of their fellow citizens, as they or their relatives in the countryside were eligible for higher offices in the service of the bishop, as participants of State assemblies or for membership in one of the chapters.<sup>102</sup> In fact, part of the Dutch Beke's audience may have been found in the aristocratic networks that these families had in the countryside, not only in the Sticht of Utrecht, but also in the neighbouring territories of Holland and Guelders. This might also provide an explanation for the fact that the Dutch Beke found its way so quickly in Holland court circles, and was in general disseminated so widely.

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99 S. Muller Fz., *Catalogus van het archief, 1122-1813. Eerste afdeling: 1122-1577* (Utrecht 1893) x-xi. Taking the idea further, it would be possible to see in Tolnaer's successor Henricus Pauli the one who continued the chronicle until 1432. More research in this direction is desirable.

100 Janse, 'De Nederlandse Beke', 139, 143 and *passim*.

101 E.g. Bruch, *Croniken*, 195 (ll. 101-103), 221 (ll. 78-81) and 224 (ll. 162-163), at p. 195: (...) *Daer bleven doot borghers ende homans van Utrecht Jan van Risenborch, twee broedere van Lichtenberch, Jacob ende Jan, ende Evert van Driel ende anders vele goeder lude*. See also Janse, 'De Nederlandse Beke', 142.

102 Van den Hoven van Genderen, *Kapittel-generaal*, 42-48.

If one wished to look for a client of the Dutch Beke, a member of the Lichtenberg family would be a suitable candidate indeed. However, at this point there is no indication whatsoever that the chronicle was the result of commissioning, neither by the city council nor by a private client. Neither is it known to me whether the chronicle had a specific function for the city government, or that a copy was kept in the city archives. Only the fact that the Dutch Beke was continued in Utrecht a few decades later (*c.* 1432), would suggest that someone intended to build on the historiographical tradition that the Dutch Beke established.

### *Conclusion*

In the Dutch Beke, a beginning of urban history-writing in the Northern Low Countries in the years preceding 1400 may be traced. Until very recently, the late fourteenth-century chronicle was considered exclusively within the context of regional history-writing. Janse's as well as my research has shown convincingly, however, that the Dutch Beke's origin and audience can be localized within the circles of Utrecht city government.

The Dutch Beke does voice a specific urban political and civic discourse within the wider context of territorial and episcopal history. In the narrative of the continuation, especially, the city of Utrecht plays a crucial role as a loyal and assertive supporter of episcopal rule and territorial consolidation. Burghers, in general, stand out as valuable fighters and respectable political actors. The author of the Dutch Beke also set out to add more local history in his interpolations and continuation of the *Chronographia*. As a part of this endeavour, he paid particular attention to local political and elite conflicts. My analysis has made it likely that the narrative on these conflicts was written from a standpoint and with a strategy that echoed official government discourse at the end of the fourteenth century. Even if the author remained vague about party strife in his own city in the interest of the discourse of unity, he did not deny its existence and even set out to relate about its origins from about 1150. However, he was careful to link the phenomenon of political discord in Utrecht to one side only: the political group around Lambert de Vries in 1304 and their political descendants, the Gunterlingen, of whom he stressed their unlawful actions, violence and repeated expulsion from the city. The well-known description of the killing of three aldermen in 1304, for instance, was the result of a conscious narrative strategy and may not have had much relation to the historical facts. In



general, the Dutch Beke shows a rather one-sided and elitist standpoint, as it fails to narrate about the larger context of popular protest in conjunction with elite conflict.

In his local history-writing, the author of the Dutch Beke was in concordance with the official discourse of fourteenth-century Utrecht city government. He could be shown to agree with the specific interest of the city council since 1380 to keep the Gunterlingen out of the city and out of the city council. In fact, through his construction of local history and shaping of a collective memory regarding the Utrecht 'parties', the Dutch Beke actively strove to legitimize the ruling power balance in the city government around 1393 and support the shaky consensus about the removal of the Lichtenbergers' opponents from local power.

The authorship of the town clerk Jan Tolnaer Jr, which was argued for by Janse, has become more plausible thanks to these findings. The author probably aimed his work primarily at an audience of Utrecht elite families with a ministerial status and knightly lifestyle, among whom the Lichtenberg family figured prominently. These families, as well as their relatives and acquaintances in the countryside and at the courts of neighbouring territories, may have provided an important channel through which the Dutch Beke was disseminated in the Northern Low Countries.

