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Van Gilde tot ROC. Geschiedenis van het vakonderwijs in de stad Leiden
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Summary

From guilds to regional education and training centres: The history of vocational education and training in the city of Leiden

This thesis addresses the history of vocational education and training in the city of Leiden. It focuses on the question of who has been assuming responsibility for vocational education and training through the ages: a public body, or social initiatives - whether or not originating in the professional fields? This is associated with the question of whether the educational objectives differ according to the body responsible. Is a more comprehensive education the concern of governments alone, and are social initiatives limited to narrow-based practical training?

The point of departure for the analysis is a study by Wolf-Dietrich Greinert. This German historical educationalist states that the Industrial Revolution put an end to the single guild training model that had been practiced in the same format throughout Europe since the Middle Ages. Consequently, my first question is whether the city of Leiden had adopted the apprenticeship system – as an essential element of the guild system – as the single training model for all trades.

Furthermore, Greinert distinguishes three classic vocational education and training models in response to industrialisation. In his view, the structure of vocational education and training programmes does not reflect a conscious and isolated choice; rather, it is closely related to a nation's labour culture. Thus, he has identified the market model, as the liberal response (predominant in England), the rational state-bureaucratic model (typical of France), and the dual corporative model (Germany).

In each of these models, a different body takes the initiative to set up and maintain a vocational education and training programme. All the models found in other European states would have been developed on the basis of one of these three models. My second question is which body in the city of Leiden was responsible for the range of vocational education and training programmes, and whether the distinction between the three models is relevant here.

The history of vocational education and training is divisible into three sections, each featuring a turning point in the substantiation of the key question in this study. The first turning point occurs around 1800, when the guilds – which, up to that time, were responsible for the apprenticeship system – were disbanded. Although several craftsmen continued to accept apprentices, the dissolution created a shortage of skilled workers. Socially initiated vocational schools attempted to fill such shortages. The second turning point occurred around 1920, when the central government assumed responsibility for vocational education and training. A three-tiered occupational education system was set up, which social initiatives could join.

This study is divided into six periods, each of which is covered by an individual chapter. In each chapter, the story of Leiden is preceded by a sketch of the national developments in the vocational education and training field. Furthermore, the Leiden vocational education and training system is placed in a contemporary urban context.

The first period covers the Middle Ages and early modern times, in which guilds constituted the main organisational framework for vocational education and training programmes. A guild primarily involved a partnership between practitioners of the same trade, which vested responsibility for the training of successors with the professional field, in other words, the workers themselves. Unlike cities such as Utrecht, the Leiden city council set down statutes and ordinances in order to restrict the supremacy of the guilds. Many masters used to take their apprentices into their homes; in addition to teaching the skills of their craft, the masters would also raise their apprentices to be good citizens.

In 1700, Leiden boasted no fewer than 85 guilds. Yet not every child was brought up within the apprentice system; the workshops of the export-oriented textile industry, for example, did not operate according to the guild and apprenticeship tradition. In this sector, young children were put to work to perform routine jobs without learning a trade that would enable them to make a living.

During this period, the craftsmen themselves were responsible for providing vocational training, albeit within the boundaries that the Leiden city council had imposed on the authority of the guilds. The craftsmen widened the scope of their responsibility: they pursued both vocational training and the broader general education of their apprentices, many of whom lodged with their masters.

The second period occurred towards the end of the eighteenth century. The French Revolution was making itself felt in Leiden as well: economic liberalism ran rampant. The guild system was regarded as being too restrictive; everyone had to be free to embark on a trade or to set up shop, while the quality of their work would be assessed by their customers. The debate on abolition took a long time, as many municipalities preferred to retain the guilds and collectively turned against the central government. The indispensability of the apprentice system – vocational education and training within the guild context – was the recurring main argument. The city of Leiden kept its end up – along with its guilds – in this political debate between governments. Its efforts were to no avail: the Leiden city council was also forced to disband the guilds.

During this period, residents of Leiden set up a vocational school which – albeit after many metamorphoses – is still operating. In 1785, the *Genootschap der beschouwende en werkdaadige wiskunde* [Association for Reflective and Practical Mathematics] initiated the foundation of a technical vocational education and training programme which it named *Mathesis Scientiarum Genetrix*. Initially, the programme was intended for sailors in order to boost the Dutch Republic's maritime power, after the British example; yet it soon evolved into a general technical programme.

The third period roughly covers the first half of the nineteenth century. In 1818, the guilds were finally abolished, which officially terminated the apprentice system. However, craftsmen continued to accept apprentices on an unofficial basis. In the first half of the nineteenth century, all attention was focused on primary education; at the national level, the incorporation of secondary education and vocational education and training into the education system was shelved.

The central government ordered the universities to make their scientific expertise available to manufacturers and their workers. Such new insights could improve existing production processes and inspire the development of new ones. In Leiden, an *Industriecollege* [Industrial College] and an *Industrieschool* [Industrial School] were founded to this end. The *Industriecollege* and, in particular, the personal efforts expended by professors such as Van der Boon Mesch and Van Gelder helped many manufacturers to brush up their knowledge, whereas the *Industrieschool* for the working class of Leiden failed to bear fruit.

By mid-century, social initiatives emerged such as the knitting and sewing schools operated by the *Maatschappij tot Nut van 't Algemeen* [Society for the Promotion of General Welfare]. However, such schools quickly fell into desuetude. More sustainable were the initiatives originating from individual residents, such as Reverend Abraham Rutgers van der Loeff, who in 1855 founded the *Kweekschool voor Zeevaart* [Nautical Training College]. His primary intention was to give lawless young men the opportunity to live a respectable life; the added benefit of his school was to provide the Dutch maritime service with well-trained sailors.

The fourth period concerns the second half of the nineteenth century. Although at this time the central government proceeded to expand the education system with secondary schools, its responsibility was confined to general secondary education. A shortage of properly trained craftsmen and the poor living conditions of the lower social classes did not, however, constitute sufficient reasons to instigate effective vocational education and training. Thus, the *Hogere Burgerschool* [high school for children aged 12-18] was a success, whereas the *Burgerdagschool*, day schools for working class children, failed to get off the ground because these children were required to work during the day in order to supplement the family income.

Yet citizens and businesses did initiate vocational education and training programmes, not for the very poorest, but for the children of craftsmen. In 1883, construction companies based in Leiden founded the *Practische Ambachtsschool* [Practical Technical College] in order to be able to recruit construction workers who commanded the latest techniques. In 1885, professor Kamerlingh Onnes started to train instrument makers in the purview of his physics research, which sowed the seeds of the current *Leidse Instrumentmakerschool* [Leiden School of Instrument Makers]. And in 1892, Marie Sparnaaij founded the *Leidsche Fabrieksschool* [Leiden Factory School], enabling both boys and girls to take classes after a day's work in the factory.

This period is dominated by a social initiative in assuming responsibility for vocational education and training, whereas the central government remained relatively uninvolved. The educational objectives of the vocational schools set up by citizens and businesses were not restricted to professional training; the schools were also tasked with installing good citizenship in the children.

The fifth period comprises the first half of the twentieth century. In 1920, the *Nijverheidsonderwijswet* [Occupational Education Act] came into force, under which vocational schools were regulated and funded. Existing schools, set up and funded by private parties, joined this system and new schools were established. Under the Act, the apprentice system was reinstated. Classroom education saw a particularly sharp increase in school rolls. The occupational education opportunities for girls were expanded, with a dual goal: preparation for an existence as a housewife, with training for an occupation as seamstress or servant as a secondary objective.

In Leiden, a school for girls was established in 1908: the *Rooms-Katholieke Vakschool voor Meisjes* [Roman Catholic Vocational School for Girls], focusing on domestic and industrial skills. The number of schools rose as a result of the government funding provided under the Occupati-

onal Education Act. The number of apprentice systems remained limited to one, operated by the *Practische Ambachtsschool* [Practical Technical College].

During this period, the central government assumed responsibility for vocational education and training through regulations and funding; the establishment and maintenance of vocational schools was left to social initiatives. Occupational education was explicitly aimed at a combination of general and professional education.

The sixth period commences after World War II and extends into the present. Its most distinctive feature is the sharp increase in enrolment and thus in the number of vocational schools. Initially, the rising school rolls were prompted mainly by the need for post-war reconstruction; gradually, an additional need for higher levels of education arose, in the purview of being able to build a successful life in a more developed society. Currently, two years of secondary vocational education and training is considered the minimum level for entering the labour market.

Secondary education, which comprises initial vocational education and training, has been debated, modified, and changed back many times. Many attempts have been made to postpone the relatively early decision between general and vocation-oriented education until after a period of collective education. A curriculum comprising general as well as vocation-oriented components would provide students with a better basis for making well-founded choices. However, all such attempts have failed, and tests in combination with primary school recommendations still determine the type of secondary education in which eleven-year-old children may continue their academic development. As most parents prefer their children to enter secondary school at as 'high' a level as possible, in practice this tends to entail a negative choice for vocational education and training.

At the end of the twentieth century, a statutory framework was introduced for secondary vocational education and training: the *Wet educatie en beroepsonderwijs* [Adult Education and Vocational Education and Training Act]. Responsibilities have thus been re-divided: the central government funds, sets down regulations for schools and the professional field, and supervises. The schools and the professional field collectively set down the curricular content for the various professional programmes.

In the city of Leiden, the range of vocational programmes has also grown sharply during this period, so much so that a full overview would extend beyond the limitations of this study. The impact of the *Adult Education and Vocational Education and Training Act* is, however, manifest: many small-scale, narrow-based programmes have been amalgamated into larger units. This provides students with a clearer picture of their options for subsequent study programmes and facilitates liaison between programmes and the relevant professional field. In terms of responsibility for vocational education and training, the Act has shifted the emphasis to consultations between schools and the professional field. At the national level, these parties determine the qualifications to be satisfied by professionals. At the regional level, individual educational establishments and employers may supplement these with their own specific requirements.

In the final conclusions, the research questions are reviewed and substantiated, also in relation to the three Greinert models.

First of all, the study has shown that the guild model and its apprentice system were not as widespread in Leiden as Greinert suggests for most sections of pre-Industrial Revolution Europe. The export-oriented industry in Leiden featured far less of a guild structure and did not comprise

a formal apprentice system. The deployment of children in this sector tended to verge more on child labour rather than on work-based learning.

Neither has Leiden been dominated by a single model throughout the ages. Primary responsibility for the establishment and maintenance of vocational education and training has been borne consecutively by several bodies. In the Middle Ages and early modern times, craftsmen themselves were responsible for training a new generation of craftsmen, within the guild context and under supervision of the city council. At least, this was the case until around 1600; subsequently, this system was only practiced in workshops and shops producing for the local market. The prohibition of guilds created a vacuum in which citizens and their organisations initiated the foundation of vocational education and training programmes. In the early twentieth century, the central government assumed responsibility for the provision of a statutory and financial framework. However, by the end of this century, the professional field was once more put in a position to assume such responsibility, by formulating professional qualifications in consultation with the schools. The final situation thus resembles the initial one: the guilds in which craftsmen were largely responsible for vocational education and training programmes.

The connection that Greinert finds in his models, between the body responsible and the goals pursued, is not manifest in the history of vocational education and training in Leiden. The fact is that the goals set by public parties, such as local or national government authorities, extended beyond professional skills only. However, private initiatives, both citizens and businesses, also intended their vocational education and training programmes to teach not only professional skills but provide a broader social education as well.

