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Goederenverwerving van het Duitse huis te Utrecht, 1218-1536

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SUMMARY

The aim of this thesis is to explain how the Teutonic House in Utrecht acquired its goods, from the first donation of goods in the Low Countries to the Teutonic Order in 1218 until around 1536. Reconstructions of the development of the possessions are an important component of this research, in order to be able to explain the acquisition of goods. This is reflected in the structure of this book in three parts. The first one concerns the formative period of the Utrecht Order settlement in 1218-1256 and starts with a chapter in which the creation of a starting property is central. Part two starts with a reconstruction of the property in 1365 (chapter 3). An inventory of the property around 1530 in chapter 6 forms the beginning of part 3. Thus, three measuring points are set in chronological order, between which the development of property acquisition is observed and subsequently explained.

SOURCES

The source material for the Teutonic House in Utrecht is rich, compared to other centres of the Teutonic Order in the Holy Roman Empire as well as other religious institutions in Utrecht. Therefore, the majority of the investigated sources originate from the so-called 'old archive' of the Teutonic House, which comprises tens of thousands of documents. The core of the corpus of sources consists of acquisition charters, such as donation charters and purchase deeds, administrative sources such as tenancy registers and – last but not least – a chronicle of the bailiwick written during the time of, and also partly by Johan van Dronghelen, who was land commander in 1469-1492. An accurate property inventory of the Teutonic House in 1531-1536 made it possible to reconstruct the possessions at the end of the period under investigation in detail. The landownership in the western part of the diocese of Utrecht (called *Nedersticht*), where the brethren had the majority of their land, could be mapped out almost completely at parcel level. The use of a Geographical Information System (GIS) was indispensable for the production of maps, the ordering of the property data and their embedding in a broader context of land ownership in late medieval Utrecht. Apart from the archive of the Teutonic House, sources from many different archives and charter books were used.

In spite of the favourable source situation, it appears that much material has been lost. It is clear, for instance, that few documents have been preserved concerning goods and money which the brethren possessed for a short time or which have been disposed of at some point. These were mainly annuities, for example from so-called 'cross land' (*kruis-*

land), to pay for crusades in the thirteenth century, and memorial annuities which were given to the Teutonic House until about 1440 but which then largely disappeared from the records. Apart from this, however, there are also missing acquisition documents and administrative sources concerning the management of land property, mainly from the earliest periods. In general, land was not alienated by the brethren. The administration of land lease was also fairly accurate from at least from 1365 onwards. However, with regard to the time before that, there are considerable gaps, both with regard to administrative sources as well as to property deeds. The further one goes back in time, the greater the number of such gaps become. A reconstruction of the property around 1365 based mainly on the oldest surviving lease registers and a confrontation of these with arrival titles from before 1365 led to the conclusion that a lot of thirteenth century material has been lost. At the same time, it appears that enough has been handed down to provide insight into trends in the acquisition of goods by the Teutonic House.

FORMATIVE PERIOD, 1218-1256

From the analysis of property developments in this book, a dynamic emerges in which a short period of radical events determined the subsequent acquisition of property until the next disruptive event. Chapter 1 shows that the first series of events – leading to the foundation and ‘take off’ of the Teutonic House – resulted from the participation of Utrecht knights in various crusades and other military expeditions, such as the one to Damietta in 1218-1221 and the Battle of Ane in the diocese of Utrecht in 1227, which turned out to be disastrous for many nobles from Utrecht and was followed by another regional expedition in 1231 that was sanctioned as crusade. In the latter year, Sweder II of Dingden and his wife Beatrix donated various goods in Utrecht to the Teutonic Order in redemption of their crusade vows. Among these goods was the piece of land just outside the city wall on which the settlement of the Teutonic Order was to be built. It seems that Sweder left his property in Utrecht behind with this action when he more or less fled the city in the context of a conflict in the eastern part of the bishopric.

His position as a prominent *ministerialis* (a legally unfree knight in service of the bishop of Utrecht) had become incompatible with the family connections he had in the eastern border area of the diocese where the rebels came from. Although he and his wife thus made an essential piece of land available, the founding of the Teutonic House was an operation in which several stakeholders collaborated to compose an estate in the immediate vicinity of the Order house to be established. Among them, Utrecht knights formed the most important support group. However, the project could not have succeeded without the cooperation of the bishop, because the initial endowment as a whole consisted largely of episcopal fiefs. Furthermore, the foundation took place in connection with other building projects on the outskirts of the city, including the transfer of several former courts of the Utrecht church to new clerical institutions. This research made it plausible that the property where the Teutonic House could start with, mainly consisted of parts of a disintegrated former episcopal agricultural domain.

Chapter 2 focuses on the first property expansion after the foundation of the Order settlement in Utrecht. In the 1240's a patronage relationship developed between the Teutonic House and the House of Holland, the dynasty of the counts of Holland at the time. It started with donations for the salvation of the count's soul, his close relatives and their ancestors. Spiritual motives seem to have played a major role in the gift of the patronage rights of the churches in Valkenburg and Maasland by William II of Holland in 1241. Since William's bid for the position of German king in 1247, he also wanted to support the military activities of the Teutonic Order. Although I have not been able to ascertain whether and how exactly the Teutonic Knights took part in William's crusade to Aachen, it has become clear that the Utrecht commandry made a contribution there, and thus helped to make William's coronation as German king possible.

EXPANSION, 1257-1365

After 1256, the property increased mainly due to waves of donations, which decreased in size during the remainder of the 13th century, as is shown in chapter 3. It also appears that land ownership remained by far the largest asset of the Teutonic House. Another more or less stable factor was the patronage relationship with the counts of Holland. In chapter 5 I analysed the acquisition of goods from this perspective of politics and patronage. Count Floris V was particularly favourable to the Utrecht brethren. He gave them the right of patronage of St. Peter's Church (Pieterskerk) in Leiden. I have also expressed the suspicion that he had a hand in the foundation of the commandry at the Hofdijk near Maasland; this contrary to the prevailing view in historiography that this settlement originated entirely from the donation of the Holland knight Dirk van Coudenhove in 1242 or 1243. Meanwhile, Utrecht knights continued to support the Teutonic House in Utrecht with donations. They did so in waves which were connected with mobilisation activities for new crusades. The acquisition of goods in relation to crusades is the subject of Chapter 4. The result of such waves of donations was a substantial expansion of the properties of the Teutonic House until the end of the thirteenth century, especially in the 1240s and the 1260s. This growth certainly contributed to the transformation of the Utrecht commandry into a provincial headquarter, with a commander traceable in the sources from 1248 onwards, and with a circle of Order settlements in the Utrecht diocese.

Chapters 3 to 5 show that a turning point occurred around 1300. Count Floris V was murdered in 1296 and three years later the dynasty of the House of Holland died out in direct line. As a result, the patronage of the counts of Holland to the Teutonic House came to an end. At this time, however, Dirk of Holland, an illegitimate son of William II, was commander of the Teutonic House. Under his authority, the commandry developed further to become the central convent within its own Utrecht administrative district. After the fall of Akko in 1291, the last crusader stronghold in the Levant, where the general headquarters of the Teutonic Order had been located, it gradually became clear that no new crusade to the Holy Land would be undertaken and that the military orders could no longer gain a foothold there. The Teutonic Order – which had initially chosen Venice as its intermedi-

ate station – therefore moved its headquarters in 1309 to the Marienburg in Prussia, in the middle of a vast territory on the edge of Christendom where the Order had already been active in a struggle against pagan peoples for several decades. The Teutonic House in Utrecht had not played a significant role in the early expeditions to Prussia and Livonia. Its brethren were more likely to be found in Apulia, Sicily and the Holy Land. Also after 1309 it was not strongly involved in the recruitment of brethren in the Baltic area. New waves of donations by Utrecht knights were therefore absent. Instead, as was shown in this study, there was an increase of donations of urban possessions from the Utrecht bourgeoisie. This contributed to the Order's completion of existing property, which brought the commandry materially in peaceful waters, without radical changes. Much of the accumulated reserve capital was invested in the purchase of goods from the secular canons in Tiel in 1328, so that the Ophemert commandry could be moved to that town and the number of brethren there could be increased.

Such a move from a rural commandry to a nearby city was by no means unique in a time in which the Order found support among city dwellers. A short time later, the main house itself was relocated. After the Teutonic House in Utrecht had been set on fire in 1345 due to the imminent siege of the city by Count Willem IV of Holland, the bishop and the city council ensured that the brethren would get a site within the walls at their disposal on which they could build a completely new convent. The Order put a lot of energy into this, with a newly built spacious church and a large convent building complex as a result. The convent received a material boost in 1365 when it received part of the Order's property in Maasland. This happened at the expense of the existing settlement in Maasland at the Hofdijk. The housing there was demolished, while the brethren moved into a new small house near the village church of Maasland, of which the land commander had the right of patronage and where an priest of the Order took care of the pastoral care. These events form the dividing line between the second and third part of this book.

CRISES AND REFORM, 1366-1536

After this reorganisation in 1365, there are increasingly clear signs within the Utrecht bailiwick of a leadership that was making efforts to ensure that the Order's statutes – the enforcement of which seemed to have slackened elsewhere – were strictly observed again. In chapter 6, I came to the observation that the years 1366-1419 were a period of renewed property growth. The link between religious reform and property acquisition is the central theme of chapter 7. In the second half of the fourteenth century, a broad reform movement emerged in religious institutions. It advocated strict observance of the monastic rules and is therefore referred to in the literature as a period of monastic observance. In the Low Countries it resulted in the piety movement known as Modern Devotion, of which Geert Grote was the great inspirer. The observance movement seems to have developed in the bailiwick of Utrecht as well, and this already in the 1370s, which in the context of the Low Countries is remarkably early. The land commanders Gerrit Splinter van der Enghe and Johan van de Zande were the most important forerunners. With a correspondingly

strict reformation regime, they managed to effectuate a material growth of the Teutonic House in the period 1382-1419. Devout severity and capital increase went hand in hand. Donations, notably from wealthy men who entered the Order, like dean Lubbert Bol of Utrecht's cathedral chapter in 1396, provided sufficient funds to buy land and establish rents. Johan van de Zande in particular pursued an active purchasing policy. This was exceptional within the Teutonic Order; elsewhere in the Holy Roman Empire the Order was confronted with crises, both economic and religious. The material prosperity of the Teutonic House in Utrecht also contrasted with the economic decline that could be observed simultaneously in other relatively old monastic institutions in and around Utrecht.

The eighth and final chapter of this book starts with the gradual end of prosperity around 1420, primarily due to external developments. There was agricultural misery due to high mortality rates caused by plague outbreaks. In addition, a series of bad harvests temporarily led to a drastic drop in real lease income. Under land commander Herman van Keppel (1421-1442), these losses could still be compensated to a certain extent by practising austerity, in connection with maintaining the ideals of the observance movement. For a while, the convent could count on the sympathy and generosity of some wealthy citizens of Utrecht. Goods could still be bought and the land commandry even managed reserve a huge sum of money for the purchase of the commandry of Dieren in 1434. Savings were made mainly by reducing the number of brother knights. In addition to this, the economic difficulties were deepened by the party struggles that arose from the Utrecht Schism in the years 1423-1449. The accompanying tensions and disputes also put pressure on the internal relations in the bailiwick. After the death of Herman van Keppel it led to a long lasting dispute about who should be the new land commander. The land commandry became the scene of a series of power changes. The chaos was complete when in the 1450's brothers from Prussia, who had had to leave their Order houses there because of the war with Poland, showed up in Utrecht and each claimed a place and a vote in the bailiwick. This cluster of overlapping and successive crises brought the Teutonic House morally to the brink of collapse.

It is remarkable that during all these crises and troubles, land ownership was moved around a lot and some properties were mortgaged as well, but overall, hardly any property was alienated. This contributed to the fact that recovery could eventually occur. This happened under the leadership of Johan van Drongelen (land commander in 1469-1492). He carried out a broad programme of organisational reforms, which can be understood in part as restoration, but which also had a renewing side. Van Drongelen had a chronicle written on the history of the Teutonic Order and the Utrecht bailiwick, with which he wanted to underline and legitimise the long tradition and ongoing relevance of the Order. He invested in the construction of a new chapel and he took care of the pastoral care in the parish churches entrusted to the Order, the domain of the Order's priests. He further reduced the number of knights, but at the same time raised the standard of care for the remaining ones. Finally, he increased the representative appearance of the Teutonic House in Utrecht by adding a new large and luxurious building. With this, the Utrecht bailiwick joined the development towards a more status appropriate life that had started in other bailiwicks of the Order.

This revival and restoration under Van Drongelen already suffered an enormous setback due to the horrors of a civil war in Utrecht, which in the years 1481-1483 particularly ravaged the Utrecht countryside. One of the consequences was that the land lease revenues fell sharply and the land commandry had to incur large debts again. Nevertheless, the brethren did not get into such a dire situation that they had to sell their land. As for the time after Van Drongelen, it can be established that his successors were less concerned with maintaining religious life in Utrecht itself and in the dependent commandries. They do, however, appear to have continued Van Drongelen's policy of transforming the Teutonic House into a 'hospital', in the sense of a care home suitable for noblemen below the level of the high nobility. In that respect, Van Drongelen's efforts had a lasting effect. Under Steven van Zuylen van Nijvelt (land commander in 1496-1527), the investments made by the Teutonic House revolved around further improving the land commander's own prominent position in the Utrecht knighthood. He used the goods that could be bought under his rule in relatively prosperous years, both rights to land and real estate, to build a castle-like new land commanders' house in Maarssen in order to underline the prestige of the Teutonic Order as a whole.

CRUSADES

The above described tipping points and fault lines indicate discontinuities in the development of property, with periods of growth and prosperity followed by periods of decline. On the whole, the circumstances and developments that could explain the successes in the acquisition of property appear to have been much less tied to specific time periods. If we try to draw conclusions from the research in all chapters together, five factors seem to emerge that could explain the dynamics of property expansion outlined above.

The first and most obvious factor concerns the appreciation for the military operations of the Teutonic Order and in particular the crusades, both to the Levant and elsewhere, that was expressed in donations. Thus, the foundation of the Teutonic House in Utrecht came from donations related to the fifth crusade and the regional crusading expedition to Drenthe in 1231. The brethren of the Teutonic House in Utrecht also owed the strong growth of their convent in the subsequent phase largely to waves of donations prior to, during, and in the aftermath of crusading expeditions. The donations in 1247-1248, for example, were related to the crusade to Aachen organised by William II of Holland. Furthermore, during the mobilisation campaign for the crusade to the Holy Land in 1267-1269 that eventually led to Tunis, the Teutonic House received a large number of donations. Donating to the Teutonic Order *in subsidium Terre Sancte* was a common motive at the time.

Later on in the thirteenth century, the brethren received less and less of such gifts. In 1277, there were still some donations in the run-up to a crusade to the Holy Land that never started. In the 1280's one comes across a few separate donations, such as the one from John and Lisa Leder in 1287, which was given *ad subsidium Terre Sancte*, but cannot be linked with certainty to a particular expedition. From the 1290s there are several examples of annuities from so-called 'cross lands' which the Teutonic House levied as contribu-

tions for crusades to the Holy Land. After the fall of Akko in 1291, the Teutonic Order was no longer able to undertake any military activities of significance in the Mediterranean, nor could it count on being favoured by a home crowd for that purpose.

In the fourteenth century, the crusades were followed by expeditions by European noblemen against heathen Lithuanians between roughly 1320 and 1420, with the main focus in the second half of the fourteenth century. Many princes and prominent noblemen from the Low Countries took part in these Prussian crusades organised by the Teutonic Order. Unlike the crusades to the Levant, the Teutonic House in Utrecht did not play an important role in recruiting for these expeditions. Hence, there were no waves of donations by men upon entering the Order as knights. However, some wealthy travellers to Prussia did make a large donation. For example, the Order received patronage rights to the chapel of Sint Marie in Katwijk and the church of Schoonhoven from respectively Dirk van Wassenaar and his sons in 1388 and Count Guy II of Blois in 1395. These donations made it possible for the commandry of Valkenburg to move to Katwijk and to found a new commandry in Schoonhoven.

DEVOTION

The donated goods in Katwijk and Schoonhoven reflect the religious inspiration that had led the travellers to Prussia to participate in what they saw as the defence of Christendom. This brings me to devotion as the second perspective from which the acquisition of goods can be explained. The early patronage of the counts of Holland, starting with the donation of the patronage rights of the churches in Valkenburg and Maasland in 1241, was first and foremost intended to make the brethren of the Teutonic Order pray for the salvation of the donors and their ancestors in their convent in Utrecht. Such prayers were also asked for by other donors who contributed to the substantial property expansion in the thirteenth century.

It is noteworthy that the priestly task of the Order once again became central during the renewed period of property increase that occurred between about 1370 and 1440. The observant life in the Teutonic House, specifically the strict adherence to the rule and the investments in the chapel, increased the attractiveness of the convent for wealthy inhabitants of the city of Utrecht. Their memorial and entrance gifts allowed the Teutonic House to experience a period of prosperity.

POLITICS AND PATRONAGE

A third line behind the rise and fall of property acquisition is that of politically motivated patronage relations. An important finding is that many prominent donors and brethren in the founding phase appear to have been prominent Utrecht knightly *ministeriales* and lords of relatively small territories in the periphery of larger principalities. Their donations to the only religious order in the diocese that was militarily active seem to have reinforced

the amalgamation of these two groups. The bishop had to build the secular exercise of power in his territory on them. In this constellation, the prelate of course had an interest in facilitating the Teutonic House. This research thus revealed that Bishop Otto II of Lippe (†1227) in all likelihood participated in the foundation of the Teutonic House. His successor Wilbrand of Oldenburg certainly contributed to its realisation.

Subsequently, Bishop Otto III, a descendent of the House of Holland, contributed to establishing patronage ties between the dynasty of the counts of Holland and the Teutonic Order in his diocese by making donations and confirming donated property as feudal lord. In this context, it is understandable that the Utrecht commandry contributed to the kingship of William II of Holland as a *quid pro quo*. As an extension of this, I argued that the controversial donation of Utrecht's St. Nicholas Church (Nicolaïkerk) by Bishop Henry of Vianden and Cathedral Provost Gobert of Perweis in 1250 was a reward for the support the brethren from Utrecht had given to Henry, as the Holland candidate, in the turbulent election of bishops after the death of Bishop Otto III.

A clear expression of deliberate patronage is also the – in the historiography of the Teutonic Order somewhat overlooked – strengthening of ties between William II of Holland as German king and the highest echelons of the Order, among other things through the granting of generous toll privileges. This favour was short-lived due to William's death in 1256. However, it must have contributed to the fact that from 1248 onwards, brethren from the Utrecht circle of the Order's settlements ended up in important positions of the Order in the Mediterranean. The fact that the patronage ties between the House of Holland and the Teutonic House in Utrecht continued under Count Floris V may have played a role in this. Thanks to donations from his side, commandries could be founded in Leiden and Middelburg. The foundation of a commandry at the Hofdijk near Maasland was probably also mainly due to the efforts of this count. The favouring by Utrecht ministerials in the same period was mainly the work of supporters of the Amstel clan, who had allied themselves with the count of Holland.

The close ties with the counts of Holland not only ensured expansion of goods, but also made the Teutonic House dependent on the count. This became apparent when in 1278 Floris V turned his back on the Amstel clan and sided with the rivaling Zuylen clan, and subsequently when in 1284 he determined that the commandry of Middelburg should become the administrative centre of the Order's goods in Holland and Zeeland. In 1285, Floris V and the Amstel clan reconciled again, with the result that in the end the formation of a Holland-Zeeland bailiwick did not occur. The appointment of Dirk of Holland – an illegitimate son of William II of Holland and thus a half-brother of Floris V – as commander of the Teutonic House in Utrecht in no later than 1287 will also have led to a restoration of relations. This could not prevent that in 1285 the dispute about the legitimacy of the rights that the Teutonic House had obtained in 1250 on the St. Nicholas Church flared up again, without any result for the brethren. Even before 1297 they had to take a loss here.

In the early fourteenth century, this policy of patronage no longer played a significant role. After about 1365, though, some decades of similar developments can be observed, in relation to the new material prosperity in that period. The priest-brother Gerrit van Vliederhoven from Schoonhoven, who had entered the Order a few years earlier, became a

driving force in the spread of observance ideals in the Utrecht bailiwick. As the procurator (financial head) of the land commandry, he concluded a series of favourable property transactions with mainly relatives. Some of them were successively offered jobs as stewards for the Order. Under land commander Johan van de Zande the property of the Teutonic House was further expanded by the purchase of land. Detailed research showed that a number of vendors were related to leading Order officials. Prominent sellers included the brothers Herman, Gijsbert and Jacob van Lokhorst. Herman was dean of Utrecht's cathedral chapter and a prominent supporter of the observance movement in Utrecht. He was a successor of Lubbert Bol, who resigned his position in 1396 to join the Teutonic House. An important patron was also Bishop Frederick of Blankenheim, promoter of the Modern Devotion movement and animator of observant monasteries and communities in his diocese more generally. He supported in various ways the houses of the Teutonic Order in Utrecht and Tiel.

The acquisition of property by the Teutonic House at this time was therefore largely the result of donations and entry gifts from a network of Utrecht religious people. However, this network slowly fell apart in the first decades of the 15th century under the pressure of a long-running feud between the families Lokhorst and Lichtenberg and their followers, who dragged the city of Utrecht and the surrounding region into their disputes. The political climate became very polarised and also led to discord within the Utrecht bailiwick of the Teutonic Order. The party struggles were intensified by the Utrecht Schism that arose after the death of Bishop Frederik van Blankenheim in 1423. Land commander Herman van Keppel supported the bishop's candidate Rudolf van Diepholt, as did the Lichtenberg faction. A group of brethren led by Sweder Cobbing, on the other hand, sided with Zweder van Culemborg as bishop, just as the Lokhorst faction and the count of Gelre had done.

When Van Keppel died in 1442, a struggle for succession erupted between his former procurators Dirk van Enghuizen and Sweder Cobbing and their respective supporters. Chaos was complete when a group of seven brother knights returned from Prussia in 1454 and rebelled against Van Enghuizen. Goods were hardly acquired in this period. The alienations and pledges could later be largely reversed. The party struggle was settled by a series of arbitrations and reconciliations in the 1450s. Peace only really returned after Johan van Drongelen was appointed land commander in 1469.

THE INFLUENCE OF THE LAND COMMANDER

Van Drongelen also relates to the fourth explanatory factor, which is the influence that individual land commanders as good or bad managers had on property acquisition. Periods of commodity expansion, stability or the reforms leading to it, occurred largely under a select number of commanders and subsequently, from the formation to bailiwick, land commanders. Especially when land commanders with administrative qualities stayed in power for a long time, changes in direction were initiated which in retrospect were decisive for the property development. An example is the first commander Antonius van Printhaghen, who, according to the bailiwick's chronicle, was in charge of the house for 35 years.

I was able to trace him in the sources 'only' between 1248 and 1262, which is still a considerable time.

Nevertheless, this was a formative period. Under his leadership, the patronage ties with the House of Holland must have been forged and strengthened. The next commander with an exceptionally long period of administration was Dirk of Holland. He is mentioned, with interruptions, as commander in 1287-1311, possibly until 1321. During his time as commander, the Teutonic House became a central branch of the Order in the *Partes Inferiores* and took on more of the character of the headquarter of a separate bailiwick. Under his leadership, the Teutonic House became favoured more by distinguished citizens than by the Utrecht knighthood.

A later land commander who should not remain unmentioned in this context is Gerrit Splinter van der Enghe (certainly 1382-1404, according to the bailiwick's chronicle 1379-1405). Under his rule the brethren were, both in the Utrecht headquarters and in the dependent commandries, held to a strict and ascetic observance of the Order's rule, which contributed to a renewed property expansion. In spite of party struggles and economic malaise – external factors that made further expansion of property difficult – he succeeded in maintaining the administration of property at a high level and even expanding the possessions. On his death he left the Teutonic House prosperous. Finally, Johan van Drongele is considered the last medieval renovator and sanitizer of the bailiwick. He put an end to the bitter internal power struggle and stabilised the material and religious situation within the bailiwick and land commandry with a balanced reform programme. Under Steven van Zuylen van Nijeveld, the chivalrous profile of the Teutonic House was reinforced. The property acquisitions made during his time as land commander served this purpose.

ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

Economic developments constitute the fifth and last factor which determined the acquisition of goods. Due to the scarcity of sources, this topic could not be explicitly discussed for the period before 1365. There were too few data available to investigate a link between the general economic situation and the success of the property acquisition of the Teutonic House. There was, however, also little reason to assume that this connection could have been strong. After all, the thirteenth-century property acquisition came almost entirely from successive series of land donations. Many of these were entry gifts, consisting of land with a feudal origin. Of economic importance though, is the observation that the size of the donated land was higher in the thirteenth century than in later times.

During the fourteenth century, purchase became the most important form of property acquisition. The influence of the market was further increased around 1365 by the transition of the exploitation form of the large agricultural complex near the former Teutonic House, from direct exploitation by the brethren to lease. Falling lease incomes due to plague epidemics in the second half of the fourteenth century were compensated by donations of other types of property, such as annuities, by Utrecht patricians and prominent clergymen, who were attracted by the observance campaign in the Teutonic House.

Strongly declining real lease revenues from around 1420 onwards must have been an important cause of the decreasing number of brethren and must have limited the possibilities for the purchase of goods.

I have thus distinguished five factors which, in combination, have influenced the property acquisition of the Teutonic House in Utrecht in 1231-1536. Crusades, religious appreciation, politically motivated patronage, the influence of land commanders and economic circumstances were phenomena that, in varying proportions, determined the development of property. Crusades, for instance, were religious enterprises and had a strong political dimension. It was an interplay of these factors that contributed to the formation of the possessions of the Teutonic House in the Middle Ages. Of these factors, crusades and politics were most significant. The founding of the commandry for instance was connected with crusades in the Levant and in Drenthe, and the bishop lent a helping hand. The strong wave-like property expansion during the remainder of the thirteenth century was also related to crusading expeditions and the patronage of the counts of Holland. From around 1300 onwards, when it became clear that there would be no more crusades to the Holy Land and the House of Holland dynasty had died out, it was mainly a matter of keeping the established institution running by managing and possibly purchasing goods.