



COUNTRY ESTATE LANDSCAPES

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If we consider country estates as the jewels of the Dutch countryside, we can regard the series of adjacent country estates as a necklace, the purpose of which is to beautify our countryside.

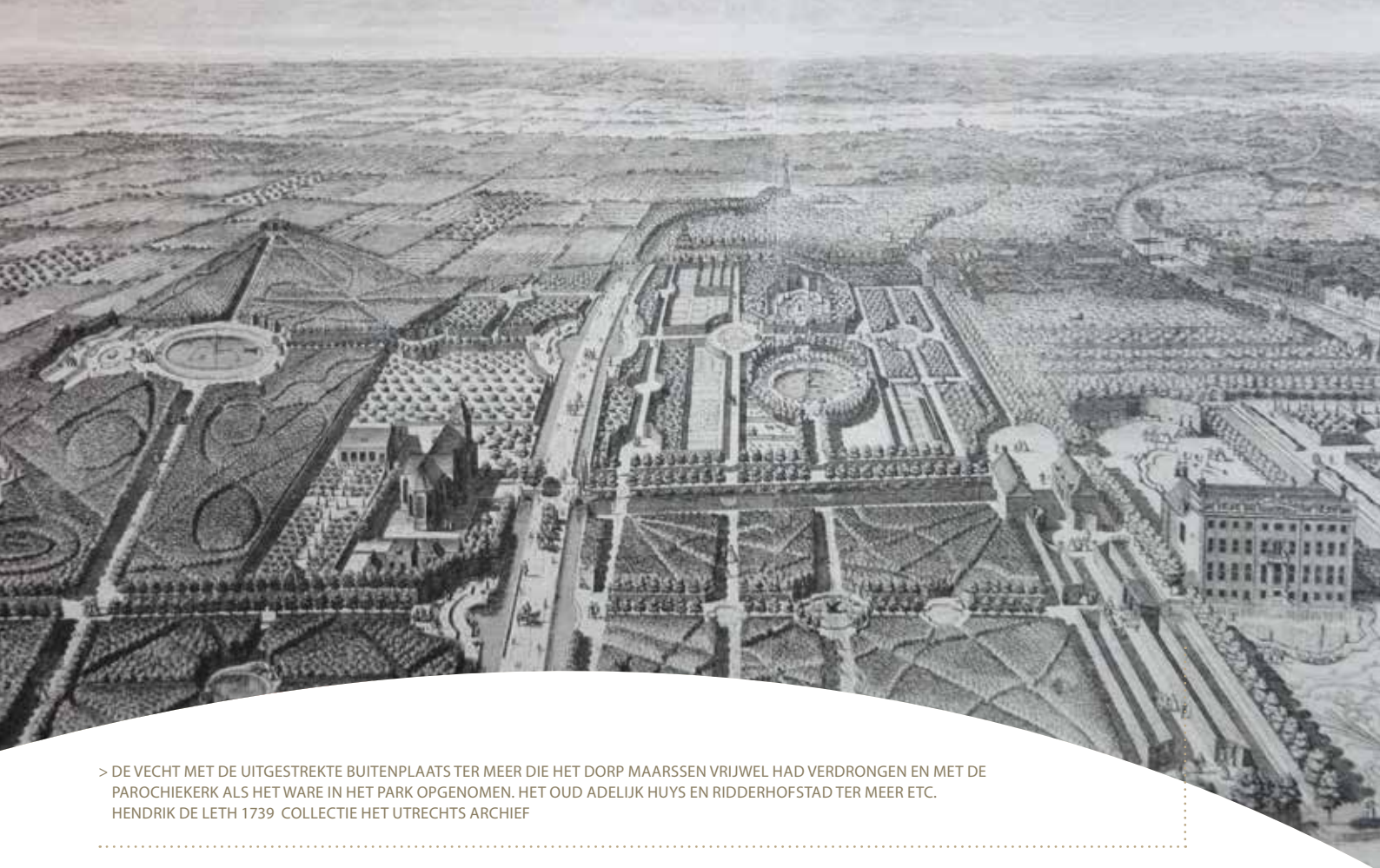
In the case of the country estate we have to take into consideration the 'integral experience', which is created by combining the experiences of the different senses. Every country estate was to its founder and inhabitant a microcosm, to him or her like an 'heaven on earth'. We can assume that this integral experience was even more pronounced when adjacent manors and parks formed a string of country estates. An utopian landscape then emerges, as it were, and can be referred to as Arcadia, named after the Classical rural paradise.

CONCENTRATION OF COUNTRY ESTATES IN TRATIES

DA concentration of adjacent country estates we could name 'country estate ribbons', 'country estate landscapes' or 'country estate biotopes'. Such concentrations appear at various locations in the Netherlands. They were appreciated so much in the past that they were given names such as Guelders Arcadia and

> DE WATERGRAAFSMEER BIJ AMSTERDAM TELDE IN 1719 VEEL BUITENPLAATSEN, WAARVAN ALLEEN FRANKENDAEL BEHOUDEN BLEEF. KAART VAN DE WAGERGRAAFS-DIEMERMEER, PIETER VAN DEN BERGE 1719 COLLECTIE UB AMSTERDAM, ATLAS DER NEEDERLANDEN

Stichtse Lustwarande. The meaning of Arcadia is clear, a 'lustwarande' means something like a pleasure landscape. Recently, new concentrations such as 'Leidse lustwarande' and 'northern lustwarande' have been added to these historical ribbons. Where and when originated these concentrations of country estates and why they were constructed in that location? Another interesting question is whether they were planned or developed spontaneously, as well as why some landscapes have been preserved while others have disappeared. Why did they survive on the Vecht and in the east of Utrecht but disappeared completely in polders like Beemster and Purner?



> DE VECHT MET DE UITGESTREKTE BUITENPLAATS TER MEER DIE HET DORP MAARSSSEN VRIJWEL HAD VERDRONGEN EN MET DE PAROCHIEKERK ALS HET WARE IN HET PARK OPGENOMEN. HET OUD ADELIJK HUYS EN RIDDERHOFSTAD TER MEER ETC. HENDRIK DE LETH 1739 COLLECTIE HET UTRECHTS ARCHIEF

GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION

In the Netherlands there are striking concentrations of country estates, for example along the river Vecht, the Holland dunes of Kennemerland, the southern edge of the Utrecht hills, the Veluwezoom, 's-Graveland, Beetsterzwaag¹ and Haren-Eelde in the north, around the city of Den Haag-Wassenaar and in the eastern part of Twente. The construction date of these concentrations of country estates differ, due to the wishes and options available to the developers at the time. Sometimes a concentration appeared in large scale land reclamations such as the polders like Beemster, Purmer and Watergraafsmeer or in sand extraction areas ('s-Graveland, Lisse). There is often a link between the location and nearby (busy) shipping routes and interregional country roads. Because of the 18th century rise in popularity of the English garden style, uncultivated and barren lands like the Utrecht hills, the Veluwezoom and eastern Twente became much more attractive, because the natural landscape fitted the requirements much better than the circumstances in Holland.

The distance to the city where the owners of the manors lived was a major influence on the choice of location, due to the importance of the country estate's reachability. Whether and why wealthy city dwellers 'huddled together' in rural areas is an interesting question that has yet to be answered by anthropologists and sociologists. In any case, we owe the 18th century term Mennistenhemel (Mennonite's heaven, concentrations of Mennonite owners, located at the villages of Maarssen and Almelo) to this phenomenon..

WHY A COUNTRY ESTATE?

Country estates derive their value not only from the sum of the various components, but also from the unity of those components. Together they form a work of art. The reasons why concentrations of country estates occur are not sufficiently clear. It could be connected to the location of the owner's place of residence and the distance he/she was willing to travel between the house in the city and the country estate.

Besides this there were probably economic reasons. The choice of location of the country house was sometimes influenced by the owner's pre-existing property, for example one or more farms, a country house with forests or hunting grounds. There were also other economic motives, such as the owner's interest in industries tied specifically to the countryside (natural bleaching, brick and pane yards, watermills).² On occasion an owner would establish a country estate as the centre of an acquired fiefdom, giving the house the status of 'powerhouse'.

A NEW TERM: COUNTRY ESTATE LANDSCAPE

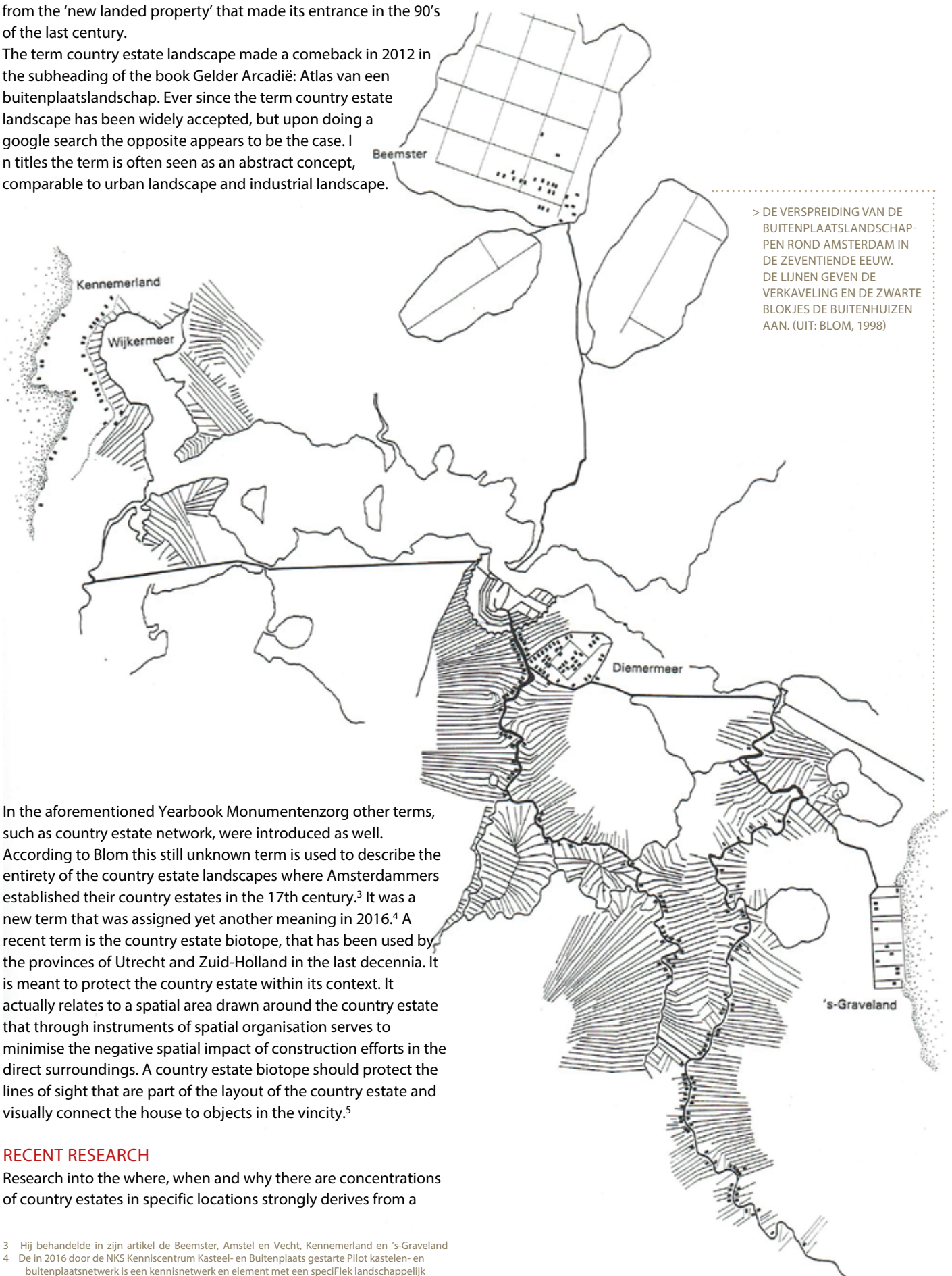
The word 'buitenplaatslandschap' (country estate landscape) is not that old. As far as we know it was introduced in 1982 by Henri van der Wijck in the commercial edition of his 1974 dissertation *De Nederlandse Buitenplaats*, in the added chapter 'The historical Landscape' to be precise. It was as if it were an introduction to his large projected publication of an 'Atlas of Historical Country Estates', of which only the sections on Overijssel and Veluwe were published. Sixteen years later, in 1998, the term 'country estate landscape' was being used by multiple authors in the special issue of the *Monumentenzorg Yearbook* named *Country Estates*. For instance, the art historian Carla Scheffer titled her contribution (in English translation) 'The urban development of the country estate landscape into an afforested affluent neighbourhood. The appreciation of the conduct with historical country estates in Wassenaar after 1900.'. In that same yearbook landscape architect Dominique Blom published an article titled: 'Outdoors in an urban landscape', in which he introduced the term 'new country estate' and 'country estate network'.

¹ R. van Immerseel en P. Verhoeff, *Stadig Beetsterzwaag; parklandschap rond een Fries dorp* (Utrecht 2016)

² Vergelijk het lemma buitenplaats in: E.J. Haslinghuis en H. Janse, *Bouwkundige Termen, Verklarend woordenboek van de westerse architectuur- en bouwhistorie* (Leiden 1997), p. 109 en B. Olde Meierink, 'De Buitenplaats', in E. Gelderman en J. Hagendoorn (red.) *Een aardsch paradijs* (Zwolle 1994), p.13-15

According to him the 'new country estate' had to be separated from the 'new landed property' that made its entrance in the 90's of the last century.

The term country estate landscape made a comeback in 2012 in the subheading of the book Gelder Arcadië: Atlas van een buitenplaatslandschap. Ever since the term country estate landscape has been widely accepted, but upon doing a google search the opposite appears to be the case. In titles the term is often seen as an abstract concept, comparable to urban landscape and industrial landscape.



> DE VERSPREIDING VAN DE BUITENPLAATSLANDSCHAPPEN ROND AMSTERDAM IN DE ZEVENTIENDE EEUW. DE LIJNEN GEVEN DE VERKAVELING EN DE ZWARTE BLOKJES DE BUITENHUIZEN AAN. (UIT: BLOM, 1998)

In the aforementioned Yearbook Monumentenzorg other terms, such as country estate network, were introduced as well. According to Blom this still unknown term is used to describe the entirety of the country estate landscapes where Amsterdammers established their country estates in the 17th century.³ It was a new term that was assigned yet another meaning in 2016.⁴ A recent term is the country estate biotope, that has been used by the provinces of Utrecht and Zuid-Holland in the last decennia. It is meant to protect the country estate within its context. It actually relates to a spatial area drawn around the country estate that through instruments of spatial organisation serves to minimise the negative spatial impact of construction efforts in the direct surroundings. A country estate biotope should protect the lines of sight that are part of the layout of the country estate and visually connect the house to objects in the vicinity.⁵

RECENT RESEARCH

Research into the where, when and why there are concentrations of country estates in specific locations strongly derives from a

3 Hij behandelde in zijn artikel de Beemster, Amstel en Vecht, Kennemerland en 's-Graveland
 4 De in 2016 door de NKS Kenniscentrum Kasteel- en Buitenplaats gestarte Pilot kastelen- en buitenplaatsennetwerk is een kennisnetwerk en element met een speciFlek landschappelijk component
 5 Om die reden heeft de provincie Utrecht rond 2006 door het bureau SB4 onder leiding van de auteur een onderzoek laten doen naar de aanwezigheid van deze zichtlijnen buiten de begrenzing van de buitenplaatsen

geographical perspective. As early as 1972 Pim van Tent wrote a historic-geographical study on the country estates along the Vecht. He wondered where, when and why exactly country estates have developed here.⁶ Later this approach was also adopted by others. In my own publication on the Twentse entrepreneurial country estates I focused on the spatial spreading of the country estate.⁷ The art historian Henk Rijken wrote in 2005 his dissertation on country estates and gardens around the city of Leiden titled *De Leidse Lustwarande*, in which he used a general division of concentrated areas, for instance along the canals. In 2009 the term *Leidse Lustwarande* was used once more for the title of an Utrechts art historical study. It discussed the country estates north and west of the city while also considering their choice of location.⁸ Lastly, the landscape architect Gerrit van Oosterom concerned himself with the country estates along the Oude Rijn river between Leiden and Utrecht for his Master's degree in 2015.⁹ He considered the choice of location for country estates within a landscape context. The country estates were not distributed evenly along the river. The eastern part (in Utrecht) saw relatively few country estates, despite the proximity of the city of Utrecht.

Martin van den Broeke researched the concentration of country estates in Schouwen-Duivenland.¹⁰ Primarily his in 2016 published dissertation *Het pryel van Zeeland, Buitenplaatsen op Walcheren 1600-1800* is interesting within this context. Van den Broeke investigated the motivations and functions that formed the basis for country estate development on the island of Walcheren. De Walcheren country estates concentrated mainly around Middelburg, Vlissingen and further along the inner rim of the dunes.

He created geographical subdivisions named 'leisure time zones', a first zone ran along the city's outer canals, a second along the outskirts of town which measured several kilometres across and the last zone included the remainder of Walcheren's country side.

CONTEMPORARY INTEREST IN COUNTRY ESTATE LANDSCAPES

The public interest shown in country estates landscapes is not recent and dates back to the second and third decennium of the 18th century. The Amsterdam publishers Leonard Schenck and the widow of Nicolaas Visscher released beautiful collections of prints of the Amstel, Vecht, Kennemerland regions and the surroundings of Leiden. They appeared in Dutch, and French as to further promote the works outside the Republic. In 1719 *De Zegepraalende Vecht* was published. Its subheading read: showing several sights of pleasure resorts, mansions and villages from Utrecht to Muiden. Ten years later *Hollands Arcadia of de vermaarde rivier den Amstel* (1730), *Verheelijkt Kennemerlandt* (1729) and *Rhynlands Fraaiste Gezichten* (1732) were released.

6 De tekst van een lezing op de 20e kastelendag in Breukelen in 1976. Over dit historisch-geografische onderzoek is door de NKS gepubliceerd in haar *Jaarboekje*. Zie W.J. van Tent, 'De buitenplaatsen historisch-geografisch gezien', in: *Jaarboekje Nederlandse Kastelenstichting* 1976, p. 41-54

7 Zie B. Olde Meierink, 'De Twentse Fabrikantenbuitenplaatsen' in: H. Meindersma en K. de Jong, *Jongere Bouwkunst in Overijssel 1840-1940* (Utrecht 1986), p. 59-76

8 W.[Helm] Hillebrand, 'De Leidse Lustwarande: de locatiekeuze van buitenplaatsen ten noorden en westen van Leiden in de periode 1600-1850'. Thesis Architectuurgeschiedenis en monumentenzorg, Universiteit Utrecht 2009

9 G. van Oosterom, 'Gronden van vermaak, Het buitenplaatslandschap langs de Oude Rijn tussen Leiden en Utrecht (1600-1900)' masterscriptie RU Groningen, Landschapsgeschiedenis 2015

10 M. van den Broeke, *Buitenplaatsen in Noordgouwe, Hofsteden, luthoven en landhuizen*, (Hilversum 2014)

> DE BUITENPLAATSEN AAN DE VECHT BIJ LOENEN EN NIEUWERSLUIJ VORMEN IN HET TWEDE KWART VAN DE ACHTTIENDE EEUW EEN VRIJWEL AANEENGESLOTEN BUITENPLAATSEN LINT. NIEUWE KAART VAN LOENEN DOOR C.C. VAN BLOEMSWAERD 1726-1737 COLLECTIE UB AMSTERDAM, ATLAS DER NEDERLANDEN



> LEES VERDER OP PAGINA 26

The engravings published in the Vecht collection of 1719 were reprinted in 1790 under a different name. Apparently the concept of a country estate landscape along the river Vecht was still appealing. The collection of prints from 1790 does not yet show the strong influence of the English landscape style on the parks along the Vecht. This new fashion in gardens doesn't appear until 1836, when P.J. Lutgers presents the transformed country estate landscape in his *Gezichten aan de Rivier de Vecht*, in which engravings were replaced by modern lithographs that were much better suited to the depiction of the new style of landscape architecture. It appears to have been a success, because in 1844 Lutgers released a similar collection about the southern part of Kennemerland. In 1855 this was followed by a *aLeveringen fraaie litho's van tekeningen van buitenplaatsen langs de Utrechtse Heuvelrug uit, Gezigten van buitenplaatsen en gebouwen gelegen tusschen de stad Utrecht en de Grebbe werd de titel. De Heuvelrug was in de jaren '20 van de negentiende eeuw blijkbaar als buitenplaats- landschap voor een breder publiek interessant geworden. version depicting 's-Gravenhage and Leiden and finally in 1869 yet another collection was published, this time focussed on Utrecht and its surroundings. This last publication mainly contained images of country estates in the south-eastern hilly part of Utrecht, which over time had become the primary example of Utrecht's country estate landscape. However, Lutgers was not the first to do this as lithographer Michel Mourot already printed in stages fine lithographies of the drawings of country estates along the Utrecht ridge, released between 1828-1830 titled *Gezigten van buitenplaatsen en gebouwen gelegen tusschen de stad Utrecht en de Grebbe*. In the first decades of the 19th century the ridge had clearly become an interesting country estate landscape to a broad audience.*

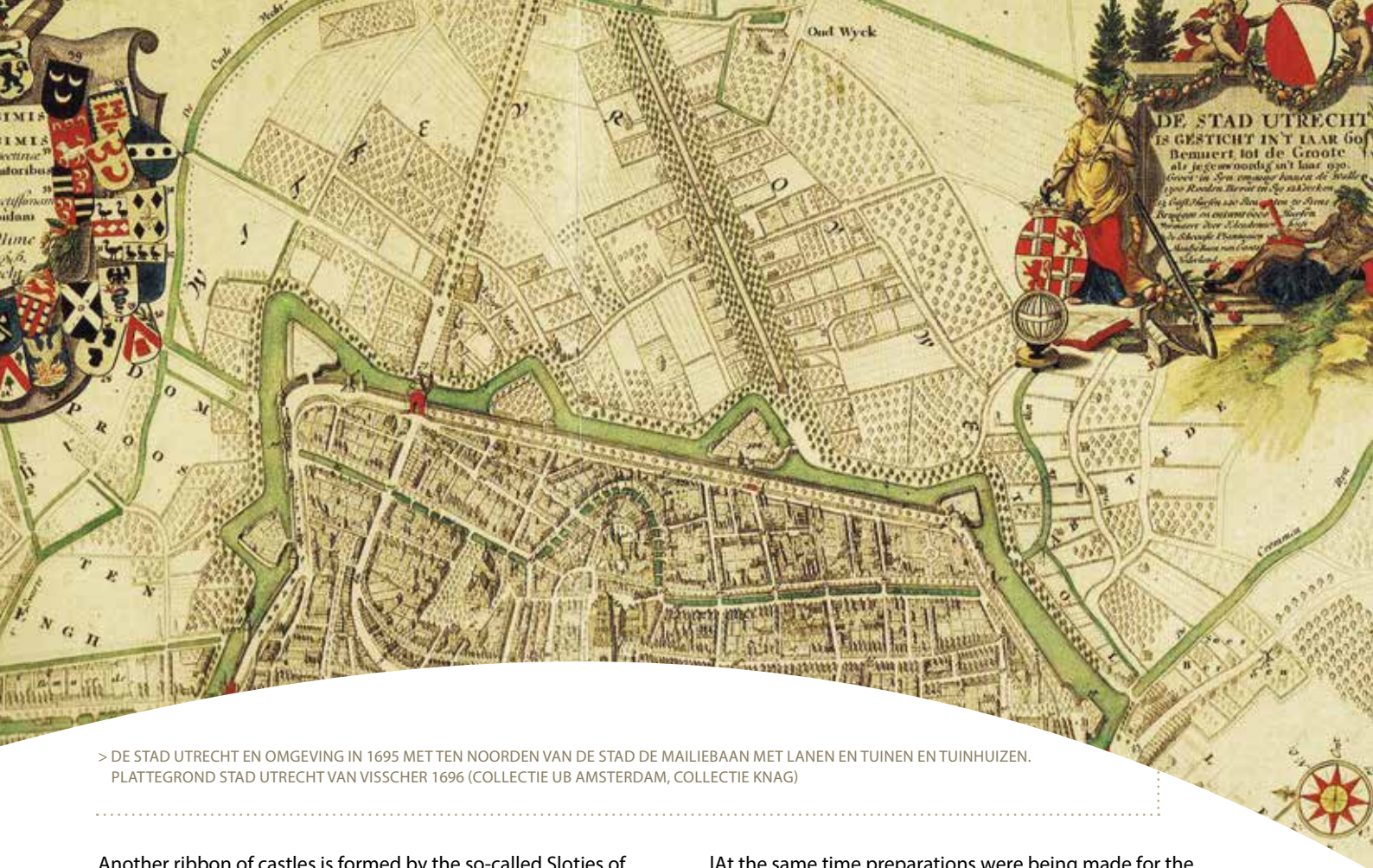
PAST HISTORY

We can wonder whether the origins of country estate landscapes, like the Vecht, in the 17th century were a new phenomenon or a transition from pre-existing castle landscapes. At the start of the 17th century there were a dozen castles along the Vecht, but without a real spatial concentration.¹¹ Did concentrations of castles occur in medieval times? It would be safe to assume that by definition castles stood solitary: around the moated castle a large amount of open space was preferred, enough space to accommodate the range of the castle's artillery. Over time this field of fire expanded due to improvements to the range of the artillery. When looking at the province of Utrecht we can see that as early as the 14th century a concentration of castles along the Langbroekerwetering can be observed. We could even speak of a 'ribbon' of castles. Why this concentration appeared here remains a much debated point. Another but lesser known concentration of castles was along the Jutfasewetering near the modern-day city of Nieuwegein, of which only two castles remain. In Langbroek as in Jutfaas the distance between objects vary greatly. Objects such as Walenburg and Sandenburg were basically opposite each other, while there was quite a distance between the castles of Rijsenburg and Sterkenburg. A recent investigation into castle De Haar shows that castles could be in remarkable proximity to one another. In De Haar's park there were two smaller castles, Kleine Haar and Ter Mey, located where there is now the parking area.¹² In response to the aforementioned observation we can wonder what was considered as defensible and clear field of fire in medieval times.

¹¹ Voor een uitgever als Hessel Gerrits was het aan het begin van de zeventiende eeuw al wel interessant een reeks van vier etsen van jaargetijden naar tekeningen van David Vinckeboons van in de Vechtstreek gelegen kastelen uit te brengen. (Loenersloot, Huis te Meer in Maarssen, Nijnerode en Zuilen)

> DE VECHT MET DE BUITENPLAATS GUNTERSTEIN, GRAVURE W. SWIDDE, CA. 1700. COLLECTIE HET UTRECHTS ARCHIEF





> DE STAD UTRECHT EN OMGEVING IN 1695 MET TEN NOORDEN VAN DE STAD DE MALIEBAAN MET LANEN EN TUIJNEN EN TUIJNHUIZEN. PLATTEGROND STAD UTRECHT VAN VISSCHER 1696 (COLLECTIE UB AMSTERDAM, COLLECTIE KNAG)

Another ribbon of castles is formed by the so-called Slotjes of Oosthout, a consecutive chain of five moated noble houses, of which four remain, on the southern edge of the village of Oosterhout. A few of which are mentioned at the start of the 15th century. The theory is that these were the country residences of the entourage or 'retinue' of the noblemen of Breda. In the case of the Oosterhout Ridderstreet we can question whether this was a planned or unintended development. Who could have initiated such a development remains yet to be uncovered.

PLANNED OUT CONSTRUCTION?

It is appealing to consider the development along the Vecht in a village such as Loenen, where country estates were woven together, as planned instead of accidental. Nevertheless, there are no indications for this. Elsewhere along the Vecht however, namely the east side of Maarsen in the former fiefdom of Maarsseveen, indications of planning are present. Here the Amsterdammer Joan Huydecoper acted as some sort of developer in the mid-seventeenth century. He targeted the upper segment of the market, rich Amsterdammers who were in need of their own country estate. Nearby his own country estate on the Vecht named Goudestein he, together with his architect Philips Vingboons developed a country estate landscape along the levees and peatlands, that could be considered an early type of residential neighbourhood. Huydecoper was extremely successful. On the by him commissioned map of fiefdom Maarsseveen land surveyor Colom could in 1660 already draw a dozen smaller and larger country estates. Huydecoper left nothing to chance. The design drawing of the country home was included with the plot of land. Demands that potential buyers had to meet were strict. But this had its upside: in 1657 the poet Jan Vos named Maarsseveen 'the harbour of the Gods', which surely Huydecoper would have agreed with.¹³

At the same time preparations were being made for the construction of another country estate landscape located between Amersfoort and Utrecht. In 1653 the City of Amersfoort and the Estates of Utrecht constructed an 11-kilometre-long straight road with quadruple row plantation designed by the famous architect Jacob van Campen. The road was aptly named Wegh der Weeghen (Road of Roads).¹⁴ On both sides of the road 24 square lots of 100 by 50 roeden (one roede is approximately 4 metres) were staked out. Each lot was separated by cross roads, walled off and distributed among private individuals for the construction of a country estate. The project was unsuccessful. Except for the still remaining country estates Soestbergen and Beukbergen virtually no other country estates were constructed. The arid heathland lots were not as popular as Joan Huydecoper's plots of land by the Vecht. Only over the course of the 19th century the Wegh der Weeghen was developed.¹⁵ Possibly the Maliebaan, built in 1637 just to the east of the city centre of Utrecht, served as an example. This broad lane, meant for playing the pall mall game, was on both sides lined with parallel roads separated by four rows of trees. The Maliebaan was commissioned by the municipality of Utrecht on the grounds of the former abbey Oudwijk and was already named Stichts Paradise in 1645. The small parcels along the borders were sold and designated pleasure gardens with garden houses and archways.

12 J. Huiting, 'Eigenaren en bewoners van het Kasteel tot circa 1890', in: J. Heijnenbroek, G. Steenmeijer en K. Timmers (red.), *Tien eeuwen Kasteel de Haar, Wat een weelde* (Zwolle 2013), p. 40-45, 60-61

13 K.A. Ottenheim, *Philips Vingboons (1607-1678)*, architect (Zutphen 1989). Idem, 'Philips Vingboons en Joan Huydecoper van Maarsseveen, projectontwikkelaars aan de Vecht', *Maandblad Oud Utrecht* 1991, p. 131-137

14 J.E. Abrahamse, 'Wegh der weegen: ontwerp en aanleg van de Amersfoortseweg. Een zeventiende-eeuwse landinrichtingsproject door Jacob van Campen', in *FleHITE. Historisch jaarboek voor Amersfoort en omstreken*, 2006, p. 72-98

15 J.E. Abrahamse en R. Blijdenstijn, *Wegh der weegen, de ontwikkeling van de Amersfoortseweg 1647-2010* (Amsterdam 2010)

These were mainly placed on the building-line. Over the course of the 19th century these gardens would be filled with mansions in which even 17th century archways had been incorporated. Do these gardens belong to a global concept from 1637 or were they a product of the attraction that the Maliebaan possessed as Stichts Paradise?

PLANNED OR UNPLANNED: 'S-GRAVELAND

In the second quarter of the 17th century on the transition from the Gooi's Pleistocene sand to Holland-Utrecht's moors, around the village of 's-Graveland a country estate landscape emerged that leaves us to wonder whether its development was planned or unintended. The location certainly is notable. It is not near interregional main roads by land or water but lies isolated. Or was it? Amsterdam's most important road to North-Germany ran a little bit further north, past the town of Naarder. As far as we know a direct link between 's-Graveland and the road did not exist. The town catered to the traffic on the Gravelandse Vaart that was connected to Amsterdam by the Vecht and the Nieuwe Vaart.

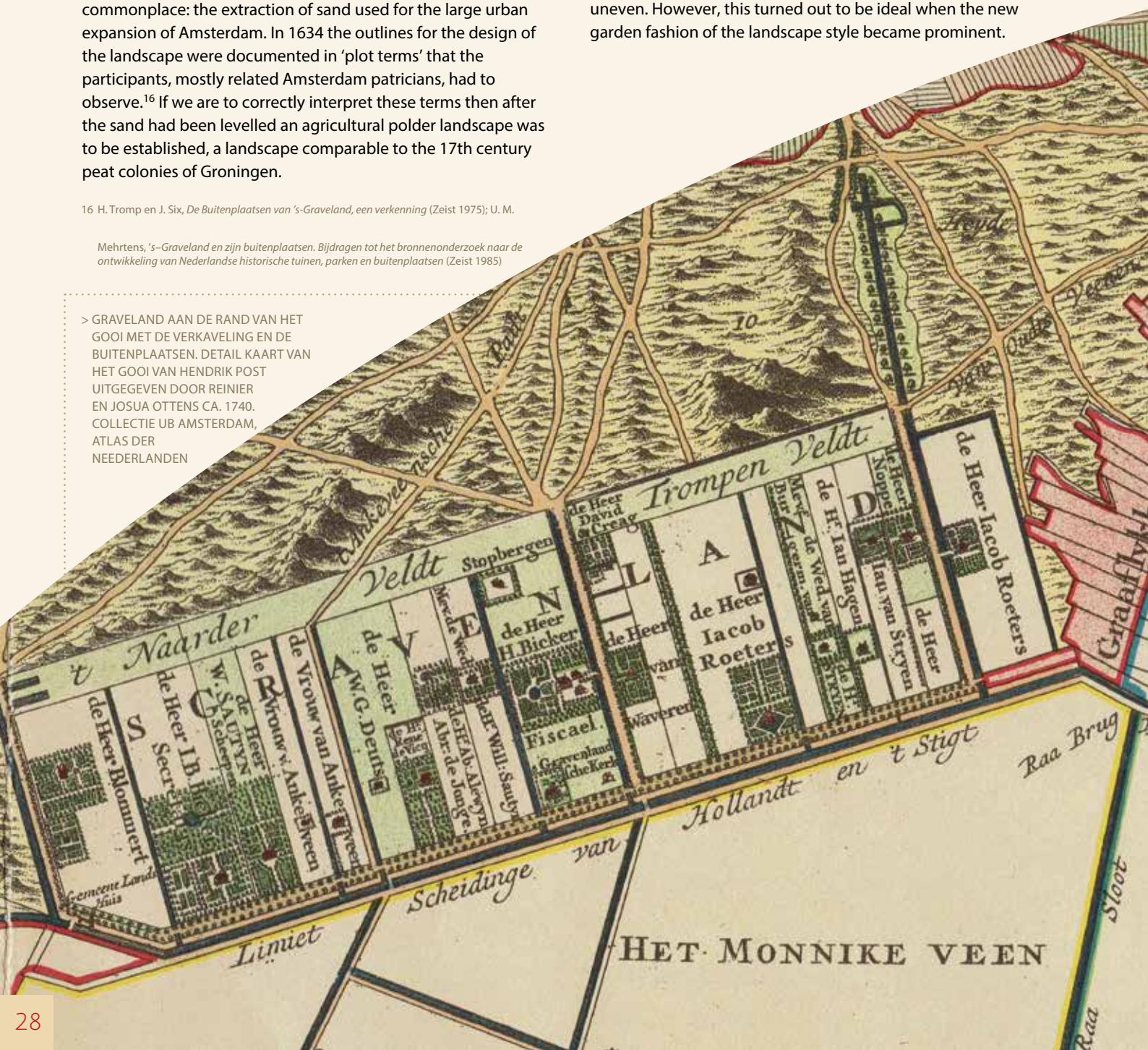
In any case, the origin of 's-Graveland is related to something commonplace: the extraction of sand used for the large urban expansion of Amsterdam. In 1634 the outlines for the design of the landscape were documented in 'plot terms' that the participants, mostly related Amsterdam patricians, had to observe.¹⁶ If we are to correctly interpret these terms then after the sand had been levelled an agricultural polder landscape was to be established, a landscape comparable to the 17th century peat colonies of Groningen.

's-Graveland was set up as a polder and governed as one. It had a special master structure with on the westside the Gravelandse Vaart, on the eastside a carriage way now known as Noorder- and Zuidereinde and perpendicular to this elongated plots of land separated by moats flowing into the Gravelandse Vaart. Interestingly the oldest farms are not at the front of the plot, like is usually the case in the Hollands-Utrecht low moor area, but rather at several hundred metres from the reclamation-axis. A few of these farms with 'herenkamers', such as Gooilust, developed into country houses. On the other parcels there are country houses at the front while the farms are located at the back (like Trompenburg). The question remains whether the remote location of these farms was because of agricultural reasons or because of owner's wishes to have the country house at the front of the parcel. In case of the latter we can speak of a planned ribbon of country estates in 's-Graveland. By the narrow road that ran between the canal and the plots (Noordereinde/Zuidereinde) a ribbon of traditional urban structures emerged, and commissioned by the polder board a church was built at the head of one of the parcels in 1658. The desludging was never completed, causing some of the plots, like the Gooilust, to be uneven. However, this turned out to be ideal when the new garden fashion of the landscape style became prominent.

16 H. Tromp en J. Six, *De Buitenplaatsen van 's-Graveland, een verkenning* (Zeist 1975); U. M.

Mehrrens, *'s-Graveland en zijn buitenplaatsen. Bijdragen tot het bronnenonderzoek naar de ontwikkeling van Nederlandse historische tuinen, parken en buitenplaatsen* (Zeist 1985)

> GRAVELAND AAN DE RAND VAN HET GOOI MET DE VERKAVELING EN DE BUITENPLAATSEN. DETAIL KAART VAN HET GOOI VAN HENDRIK POST UITGEGEVEN DOOR REINIER EN JOSUA OTTENS CA. 1740. COLLECTIE UB AMSTERDAM, ATLAS DER NEDERLANDEN



For this reason, 's-Graveland remained an appealing place for country living during the 19th century and was not fully transformed into agricultural land like the other polders from the 17th century were.

THE DISSAPEARANCE OF COUNTRY ESTATE LANDSCAPES

An interesting question is why the country estate landscapes along the Vecht and the Utrecht ridge remained while those in polders such as the Beemster and the Purmer disappeared. The 17th century ideal of a geometric country estate could be realised in polders like the Beemster, Purmer, Wormer and Watergraafsmeer. Square and rectangular plots, ideally designed following the classical rules, were hard to combine however, with the landscape park as the new nature fashion preferred height differences. Around 1850 many country estates in the polders Purmer and Wormer were transformed into livestock farms, that since the beginning had been characteristic of the image of the polder. In the Beemster, near the southeast corner of the polder close to Purmerend, the country estates would transform into vegetable-growing farms and eventually orchards and in the end become another urban border region of the city of Purmerend. In the Watergraafsmeer, located on the eastern edge of Amsterdam, we can observe the same phenomenon. The country estate that dictated the image of this polder in the 17th and 18th century disappeared in favour of horticulture, with the exception of country estate Frankendaal that lay alongside the Middelweg. This remained only because it functioned as the market garden of Amsterdam.

buitenplaats Frankendaal. Deze bleef behouden, omdat deze ging functioneren als stadskwekerij van Amsterdam.

CONCLUSION

Country estate landscapes became more and more a subject of public interest and scientific research over the past decade. But what characterises a country estate landscape? Concentrations of country estates, country estate landscapes or ribbons can be found in the Netherlands from the 17th century onward. Only a few were planned, most developed spontaneously due to estate owners' preference for living in proximity to one another. They were constructed along levees of the river such as the Vecht, Amstel, Vliet and the Wijkermeer: areas that were easily accessible to city dwellers by water. But they could also be found in more remote areas such as 's-Graveland, Beemster and Purmer. With the entry of the landscape style into the art of gardening, other regions, like the Utrecht ridge and the Veluwe came more demand, while polders that lacked the favoured rough terrain were reclaimed by agriculture. It is remarkable that the Vecht with its even levees retained its status as country estate landscape. The reasons for this are ambiguous, but its central location could have been a reason. Considering the 19th and early 20th century collections of prints and walking guides, country estates appealed to a larger audience that, while unable to afford their own country estates, loved to spend one or more weeks over the summer in hotels or guesthouses in these country estate areas to enjoy this 'arcadia'. ■

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