

One of the trends in current country house research is the growing interest in the landscape context of country houses.<sup>1</sup> The previously unquestioned emphasis on the main house and the garden is increasingly making way for an approach in which the wider surroundings (village, nature, town, infrastructure, farms, churches, other country houses) are included in the research or are themselves the subject of study.<sup>2</sup>



Register

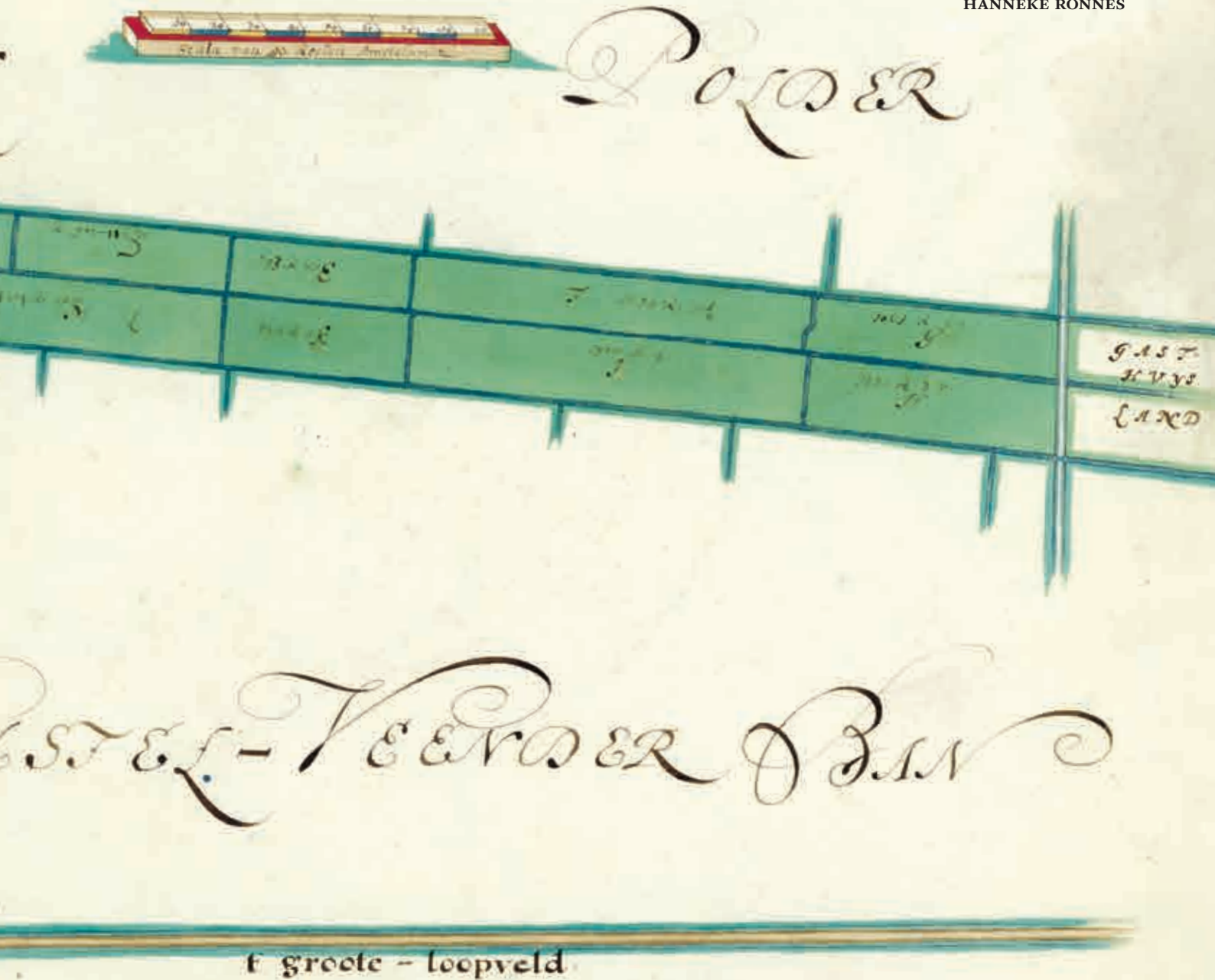
Alley	Road	Foot
1	1	301
1	2	201
2	2	204
3	2	201
4	2	201
5	2	201
6	2	201
7	2	201
8	2	201
9	2	201
10	2	201
11	2	201
12	2	201
13	2	201
14	2	201
15	2	201
16	2	201
17	2	201
18	2	201
19	2	201
20	2	201
21	2	201
22	2	201
23	2	201
24	2	201
25	2	201
26	2	201
27	2	201
28	2	201
29	2	201
30	2	201

PAGES 24-32

# DUTCH RESEARCH INTO THE COUNTRY HOUSE AND ITS LANDSCAPE

CURRENT STATE OF SCHOLARSHIP  
AND FUTURE PERSPECTIVES

HANNEKE RONNES



1. 'Groot Kostverloren aan de Amstel' country estate in Amstelveen. Below, fourteen parcels of hospice land and above, the inn Het Kalfje and the Grote Loopveld. Drawing by Johannes Leupenius. Orientation: south at top. Map book of Amsterdam hospices, 1676 (Stadsarchief Amsterdam)

Groot Kostverloren aan de Amstel



It is one of the signs – together with the wider range of periods and topics being studied and the growing number of PhD theses – that country house research has come of age. Although this wider focus is not new, it is clearly gaining momentum. The University of Groningen, Delft University of Technology and the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam regularly publish books on the country house landscape; added to this are publications from various foundations and associations, such as In Arcadië and the Gelders Genootschap, that conduct research into the country house and the landscape.

#### ANTECEDENTS

Henri van der Wyck, writing with an eye to the future protection of historical country house estates, was one of the first to focus explicitly on the (disappearing) landscape around this type of heritage. From the 1970s onward he promoted the study of the ‘ensemble’ of architecture, interior and park, which expanded to include the nature areas of which the country house was an ‘extension’. It was Van der Wyck who coined the term (in Dutch) ‘country house landscape’, which he regarded as the landscape ‘defined by a number of country houses’, but also as ‘the decor against which the country houses stand out and in which they appeared to best advantage’.<sup>3</sup> An early (1976) article by Pim van Tent focusing on the landscape examined which factors had influenced the emergence of clusters of country houses, such as those along the river Vecht.<sup>4</sup> This geographical approach attracted few followers until after the 1996 publication of a much-cited article by Hans Renes about the interrelatedness of the country house and the surrounding landscape.<sup>5</sup> This and other articles by Renes on the subject, as well as his research into the concept of ‘landscape biography’ introduced by Jan Kolen, have contributed greatly to the current popularity of the landscape-focused approach to the country house.<sup>6</sup>

The popularity of the landscape perspective in country house research cannot be explained solely from a (historical) geographical perspective. The discipline of archaeology, where landscape studies gained in importance from the 1980s onwards, also played a role. In the Netherlands, the Dutch archaeologist Hans Janssen was an early proponent of an ‘integrated approach’ focusing on the interdisciplinary study of the castle, including its economic, social and political history, and researching not just the main fortress but also the immediate surroundings of the castle.<sup>7</sup> In England the archaeologists David Austin, Oliver Creighton and Matthew Johnson encouraged research into the ‘elite landscape’. Austin set the tone with two lectures in the 1980s and ‘90s. In the first he stressed the symbiosis between castles and their immediate

(social, economic, landscape) surroundings, and the influence of a pre-existing landscape on the choice of location for a castle.<sup>8</sup> The second lecture was even more groundbreaking. In it Austin expounded his thesis that different actors – farmer, servant or owner – perceived and experienced the physical landscape differently.<sup>9</sup> Almost twenty years later, Creighton elaborated on Austin’s first lecture in particular, in *Castles and landscapes. Power, community and fortification in medieval England* and *Designs upon the land. Elite landscapes of the Middle Ages* and in a historiographical article.<sup>10</sup> But it was primarily Matthew Johnson who, with his book *Behind the Castle Gate*, pushed Dutch castle studies for a while beyond the ‘gatehouse’ and into the landscape.<sup>11</sup>

#### TOPOGRAPHY AND LOCATION FACTORS

The topographical location of the country house had already been the key focus of Van der Wyck’s regional atlases of Overijssel and the Veluwe.<sup>12</sup> This type of research was subsequently followed up in a series of twenty-first century polder atlases containing reconstructions of the historical landscape, including country houses and country house clusters.<sup>13</sup> The strength of these publications lies in large part in the visual representation of the geographical distribution of country houses and their location in relation to one another and to other (cultural or natural) landscape elements (fig. 1).<sup>14</sup> These atlases are in some respects reminiscent of the traditional regional studies that inventoried and described the typical country house areas, such as two early and fine examples by Heimerick Tromp and Jacob Six: *De buitenplaatsen aan de Vecht van Remmet van Lutternvelt* and *De buitenplaatsen van 's-Graveland*.<sup>15</sup> In 2017 Ben Olde Meierink called these kinds of clusters ‘country house biotopes’, claiming that they were often deliberately created as utopian Gesamtkunstwerke, or total works of art, and discerning an affinity with the early ‘villa parks’.<sup>16</sup> Comparable with these country house biotopes are the various ‘landed estate zones’ currently being identified, such as the Stichtse Lustwarande, the Lustwarande in Friesland and Groningen, the Gelders Arcadia landed estate zone and those of Wassenaar-Voorschoten-Leidschendam-Voorburg. In Olde Meierink’s study of the country house biotope, historical research and conceptualization were key; with landed estate zones, however, the focus is on areas that function administratively and legally as a protected townscape (Wassenaar), are instrumental in the tourism sector (Friesland and Groningen) or are expected to ‘enhance’ the (re)development of the country houses and the country house zones (Gelders Arcadia).<sup>17</sup>

A second landscape approach that is currently proving popular, looks at what factors informed the choice



2. Bird's eye view of Soestdijk showing, in addition to 'het lusthuis' (country house) and the formal gardens, the 'boswagter's huys' (forester's house), the 'moestuijn' (kitchen garden), the 'weg na de kalk-ovens' (road to the lime kilns), several farms and the city of Utrecht. Bastiaen Stopendael, 1675-1693 (Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam)

of a specific location for a castle or country house. These 'location factors' recently received attention in the PhD theses of Diana Spiekhout, *Het middeleeuwse kastelenlandschap van het Oversticht*, and Gerdy Verschuure, *Welgelegen. Analyse van Hollandse buitenplaatsen in hun landschappen*.<sup>18</sup> These studies turned up a lot of new information and, in part thanks to them, the analysis of location factors already has a firm place at the beginning of monographs of individual castles and country houses. For the non-geographer, the results of this kind of research can seem fairly physical – and paradoxically enough also somewhat obvious (country houses are located on waterways). The danger with this approach is that it risks losing sight of the human being as actor (and so also of the mental, social and cultural landscape).

#### PRODUCTIVE LANDSCAPE AND INFRASTRUCTURE

One topic that is receiving significantly more attention in the present century is the study of farming enterprises on or near the country house estate. There is a certain inevitability to the way the art-historical approach to (the aesthetic quality of) house and garden has dominated country house research. But it ignores the significance of the productive landscape of (tenant) farms and coppice woodland, and of the agricultural landscape beyond the estate boundaries (fig. 2). One of the earliest publications on this topic was *Landgoederen en landschap in de Graafschap* by Piet van Cruyningen.<sup>19</sup> According to Van Cruyningen, country house owners in the Graafschap in Gelderland played a pioneering role in the modernization of farming in the nineteenth century: they experimented with



manure, planted coniferous forests and took the lead in moorland reclamation projects following the distribution of common wasteland. In the twentieth century, by contrast, they curbed modern agricultural practices like forest clearance, with the result that the landscape in the Graafschap still displays traces of the historical country house landscape. Martin van den Broeke's PhD thesis (2016) was innovative on two counts. Firstly, in presenting a typology of country houses on the island of Walcheren based on different levels of scale (small country houses on the urban periphery, medium complexes further away from the city, and large country houses in the most rural areas). Secondly, in emphasizing the ongoing importance of the productive landscape for the country house owner.<sup>20</sup> Van den Broeke convincingly rebuts the widely accepted notion that country house estates were purely for pleasure. The Zeeland country house also featured in a study of the de-urbanization of the Dutch Republic in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries by Paul Brusse and Wijnand Mijnhardt, who claimed that during this period countless country houses made way for agricultural businesses.<sup>21</sup> Yme Kuiper developed this idea in his contribution to the European collection *Estate landscapes* in which he outlined a cyclical pattern in Dutch country house estates: the country house with a significant agrarian component (until c. 1700), the country house estate focused purely on pleasure (until 1750) and country house estates in turn replaced by farms (after 1750).<sup>22</sup>

The study of roads and railways connecting country houses with one another or with towns and villages, or running through them, is another fruitful and relatively new landscape perspective. Jaap Evert Abrahamse's *Wegh der Weegen*, considers the eponymous, perfectly straight seventeenth-century road between Amersfoort and Utrecht and the country house estates that were intended to line it, but few of which were ever realized.<sup>23</sup> Unlike the studies of well-known country house zones like the Beemster or Watergraafsmeer, here it is the *failure* of a reclamation-cum-country house development project that is of interest. Peter Bijster and Theo Spek researched the (equally straight) king's roads built or planned in the Veluwe under Stadholder-King William III. These roads, which were intended to connect his own current and future landed estates, also facilitated his frequent hunting parties.<sup>24</sup> Bijster and Spek's study raises the wider question of the precise extent of the Stadholder-King's ambitions in the Veluwe where he owned a great deal of land. Was William III planning to create a royal landscape comparable to that of Louis XIV around Paris?<sup>25</sup> Frans Krabbendam's study of the impact of the development of the Dutch railway network on country houses has yielded the most detailed picture to date of the clash

between the old and modern worlds.<sup>26</sup> While some country house owners hoped to profit from the development of the railways based on increasing tourism and the construction of the famous private stations, others were worried about a disrupted view or the location of the line. Country house owners regularly attempted to influence the exact route of the railway track in order to ensure that it would not run through their estate. This did sometimes occur and led to expropriation proceedings and the break-up of the estate into smaller parcels of land that were subsequently used for villa developments (fig. 3).

#### MINDSCAPES AND LANDSCAPES OF MEMORY

A very different type of research reconstructs the political-ideological country house landscape.<sup>27</sup> Mark Claudemans argues in his PhD thesis that the country houses around Amsterdam bear the traces of classical ideas of the ideal city and an encircling Arcadia.<sup>28</sup> Responding to studies by Johan Huizinga and Peter Burke of the typical urban country house found in the province of Holland, Rob van der Laarse and Yme Kuiper analysed mental landscapes rather than the physical environment.<sup>29</sup> Both discerned a divide between urban, bourgeois country houses (around Amsterdam) – possibly the result of the gradual 'aristocratization' of the regent class – and noble and stadholder landscapes (in The Hague and in the east of the country).

The decline of the bourgeois-urban country house began earlier than that of the noble landed estate, but by the beginning of the twentieth century both were experiencing hard times. Several landscape-focused studies discuss attempts to preserve landed estates at the beginning of that century and the *Nachleben* of the country house: what happened to this heritage when the owner was forced to sell the estate or large parts of it? Wybren Verstegen researched the 1928 *Natuurschoonwet* (Nature Conservation Act), whose objective was not so much the preservation of the landed estates themselves as the natural values they represented. The Act played a role in the opening of landed estates to the public – one of the conditions for securing a grant – and gave a vital impetus to the conservation of parts of the country house landscape, especially in the east of the country.<sup>30</sup> In his study of the Eerde estate, Michiel Purmer describes the complexity of the democratization of the landscape: is it possible to continue to honour the wishes of the former owner, as expressed at the handover of the estate to *Natuurmonumenten*, decades later?<sup>31</sup> What function should a landed estate have today, who gets to decide that, and what are the consequences of the almost inevitable financial stringency when it is managed by an association?

In the twentieth century many landed estates were



3. The railway line in Arnhem with view of Sonsbeek. Album Staats Evers, 1865 (Gelders Archief)

swallowed up by creeping suburban development or infrastructure while others became municipal parks, as Sandra den Dulk shows in her PhD thesis *Verlangen naar groene wandelingen*.<sup>32</sup> Elyze Storm-Smeets describes this process in detail with respect to Arnhem in her article 'From elite to public landscapes'. The Arnhem city council bought up several landed estates, including Klarenbeek, transforming a former nobleman's private property into a public space in one of the finest municipal parks in the Netherlands.<sup>33</sup> What the country house estate and the municipal park have in common are walks, a subject on which Erik de Jong has written extensively.<sup>34</sup> The main focus of these publications is not on the physical landscape, but on the interpretation and experience of the landscape under the influence of Romanticism, the scientific revolution, aesthetics, and treatises on health and hygiene. While contemporary landscape studies often promise to consider the mental landscape or mind-landscape, they rarely deliver. By contrast, in De Jong's

writings the interaction between the (natural and cultural) physical landscape and the ideological landscape occupies centre stage.<sup>35</sup> In his analysis of the eighteenth-century enthusiasm for 'Arcadias' (descriptions and topographical representations of the landscape, including castles, ruins and country houses), he demonstrates that the physical landscape carried both religious and enlightened connotations and aroused a feeling of pride in one's own country that foreshadowed the formation of the nation state in the nineteenth century.<sup>36</sup> In two recent interesting articles, David Koren drew attention to the still recognizable plantation landscape complete with country houses on Curaçao and to the future of this cultural heritage. Koren believes that the mental landscape should take precedence in the process of awarding World or local heritage status: instead of the architectural history of the houses it is the cultural or memory landscape that should be prioritized.<sup>37</sup> In Delft Steffen Nijhuis argues for a spatial design approach, loosely

based on Fernand Braudel, with attention to both the physical and the mental landscape.<sup>38</sup> Nijhuis distinguishes several layers in the historical landscape – sometimes with the aid of GIS technology – that lay bare the estate landscape and its evolution: the physical environment, human activities and cultural, institutional and conceptual ideas. The concept of layers and their interrelationships forms the basis for an area-based, landscape[*-focused*] approach to the design and protection of estate landscapes.

It is absolutely crucial to discuss and theorize the issue of how to interpret the historical estate landscape and how we want to use it, interpret it or transform it in future. *Kasteel en landschap in Limburg*, one of the early landscape publications, reveals just how wide a gulf there is between research and design.<sup>39</sup> The solid research in the first part of this collection is followed by a final chapter featuring concrete designs by a variety of practices, which have little or nothing to do with the historical-geographical knowledge of the previous chapters, let alone with the mental landscape.

#### OUTLOOK

The main task for future researchers of the estate landscape is to find a methodological and theoretical foundation, and to venture beyond a description of the landscape based on form and function. It is remarkable, given its success in the Netherlands, that the landscape biography approach has found few adherents in the field of country house landscape research; the examples can be counted on the fingers of one hand.<sup>40</sup> The emphasis that this approach puts on the nature-culture relationship (a defining feature of the country house estate), on the individuals who have shaped the landscape (owner, architect, staff and gardeners, walkers), on the mental landscape (based on

classic ideals, biblical connotations or the specific link between an actor and the country house), on forgotten or overwritten phases or layers (such as periods between construction phases), and on a critical analysis of the current design task (restoration or new interpretations), make the landscape biography an pressing or at least useful addition to country house studies.

Equally curious is the almost total absence of leading theoreticians in the fields of geography and archaeology in studies of the country house landscape. Nor is there any trace of the pivotal geographical debates about ‘space’, whether it be Henri Lefebvre’s groundbreaking publications on social space or Anthony Giddens’ structuration theory and Bruno Latour’s elaboration of that theory. Even the less theoretically top-heavy scholars are absent from current landscape studies. Denis Cosgrove’s influential perspective on landscape as text, for example, appears to have no followers at all. Nor has the subsequent, more performative approach to landscape found an audience. Twenty years ago Matthew Johnson was already transposing this last approach into the study of ‘the elite landscape’, which he regards as a place where the ‘identities of men and women were “played out”’.<sup>41</sup> Operating in-between the disciplines of geography, landscape architecture, archaeology, history and art history, the country house study in general, and that of the country house landscape in particular, cuts a somewhat methodologically and theoretically isolated figure, and perhaps that explains the lack of method and theory in many studies. The country house research field is maturing, not least thanks to the growing interest in the wider (physical, political, cultural and social) landscape of which any given country house is or once was a part. But there is enough room, and perhaps also need, for further development.

#### NOTES

- 1 With thanks to Steffen Nijhuis and Michiel Purmer.
- 2 Although it is sometimes difficult to draw a line between research into the country house landscape and research into gardens, in this article I am primarily interested in the landscape, and so I do not consider research into the country house garden.
- 3 H. van der Wyck, *De Nederlandse buitenplaats. Aspecten van ontwikkeling, bescherming en herstel*, Alphen aan den Rijn 1983, 519, 531 (based on his 1974 PhD thesis).
- 4 W.J. van Tent, ‘De buitenplaatsen historisch-geografisch gezien’, in: *Jaarboekje Nederlandse Kastelenstichting*, n.p. 1976, 41-54.
- 5 H. Renes, ‘Kastelen in het landschap’, in: W.M.H. Hupperetz et al. (eds.), *Middeleeuwse kastelen in Limburg. Verschijningsvormen van het kasteel, zijn adellijke bewoners en hun personeel*, Venlo 1996, 61-76.
- 6 J. Kolen, *De biografie van het landschap. Drie essays over landschap, geschiedenis en erfgoed*, PhD thesis, Vrije Universiteit 2005; J. Kolen, H. Renes and R. Hermans (eds.), *Landscape biographies. Geographical, historical and archaeological perspectives on the production and transmission of landscapes*, Amsterdam 2015.
- 7 He did this quite explicitly in: H.L. Janssen, ‘Archaeology of the medieval castle in the Netherlands. Results and prospects for future research’, in: J.C. Besteman et al. (eds.), *Medieval archaeology in the Netherlands*, Assen 1989, 219-264 (paraphrased here 256-259). See also: H.L. Janssen, *Het kasteel centraal. Een integrale benadering van een materieel object*, Utrecht 1992, 20-21.
- 8 D. Austin, ‘The castle and the landscape. Annual lecture to the Society for Landscape Studies, May 1984’, *Landscape History* 6 (1984) 1, 69-81.
- 9 D. Austin, ‘Private and public. An archaeological consideration of things’,



- in: H. Hundsbichler et al. (eds.), *Die Vielfalt der Dinge. Neue Wege zur Analyse mittelalterlicher Sachkultur. Internationaler Kongress, Krems an der Donau, 4. bis 7. Oktober 1994. Gedenkschrift in memoriam Harry Kühnel*, Vienna 1998, 163-206. Tadhg O'Keefe argued in a similar vein that there are as many country houses or castles as there are observers ('Concepts of "castle" and the construction of identity in medieval and post-medieval Ireland', 34 (2001) 1, 69-88.
- 10 O.H. Creighton, *Castles and landscapes. Power, community and fortification in medieval England*, London-Oakville 2002; O.H. Creighton and R.A. Higham, 'Castle studies and the "landscape" agenda', *Landscape History* 26 (2004) 1, 5-18; O.H. Creighton, *Designs upon the land. Elite landscapes of the Middle Ages*, Woodbridge 2009.
  - 11 M. Johnson, *Behind the Castle Gate. From Medieval to Renaissance*, London 2002.
  - 12 H. van der Wyck, *Overijsselse buitenplaatsen*, Alphen aan den Rijn 1983, and *Atlas Gelderse buitenplaatsen. De Veluwe*, Alphen aan den Rijn 1988.
  - 13 See for example C.M. Steenbergen et al., *De Polderatlas van Nederland. Pantheon der Lage Landen*, Bussum 2009; W. Reh, C.M. Steenbergen and D. Aten, *Zee van land. De droogmakerij als atlas van de Hollandse landschaps-architectuur*, Wormer 2007.
  - 14 Another example is Annerie van Daatselaar's dissertation in which she meticulously reconstructs the manor house landscape attached to Doorwerth castle as it existed in different periods (A. van Daatselaar, *Getekend. Perspectief op de beleving van de kasteelnederzetting op basis van landschapsbiografisch onderzoek naar de heerlijkheid Doorwerth in de periode 1601-1965*, Master's dissertation Groningen University 2020).
  - 15 R. van Luttermvelt, *De buitenplaatsen aan de Vecht*, De Bilt 1943 and Heimerick Tromp and Jacob Six, *De Buitenplaatsen van 's-Graveland: Een verkenning*, Zeist 1975. Van Luttermvelt's PhD thesis deviates somewhat from the other publications in this genre: by comparing country house architecture with the urban architecture in Amsterdam, this study clearly goes further than simple description. The inventories of castles and country houses in different provinces, such as those by B. Olde Meierink (ed.), *Kastelen en ridderhofsteden in Utrecht*, Utrecht 1995; W. Hupperetz, B. Olde Meierink and R. Rommes, *Kastelen in Limburg. Burchten en landhuizen (1000-1800)*, Utrecht 2005, also take a regional approach, albeit one based on current provincial boundaries rather than historical country house zones.
  - 16 B. Olde Meierink, 'Buitenplaatslandschappen', *Kasteel & Buitenplaats* 19 (2017) 58, 22-29.
  - 17 E. Storm-Smeets, 'Het ontstaan van Gelders Arcadië. Landgoederenzone van de Veluwezoom', *Gelders Erfgoed* (2012) 1, 14-17 (quoted here 17).
  - 18 D. Spiekhout, *Het middeleeuwse kastelenlandschap van het Oversticht. De ontwikkeling van bisschoppelijke burchten, adellijke huizen en versterkingen in relatie tot het landschap en de samenleving in Noordoost-Nederland tussen 1050 en 1450*, PhD thesis, Groningen University 2020; G. Verschuure, *Welgelegen, Analyse van Hollandse buitenplaatsen in hun landschappen (1630-1730)*, PhD thesis, TU Delft 2019.
  - 19 P. van Cruyningen, *Landgoederen en landschap in de Graafschap*, Utrecht 2005.
  - 20 M. van den Broeke, *Het pryeeel van Zeeland. Buitenplaatsen op Walcheren 1600-1820*, Hilversum 2016. See also other studies by Van den Broeke.
  - 21 P. Brusse and W. Mijnhardt (eds.), *Towards a new template for Dutch history. De-urbanization and the balance between town and countryside*, Zwolle 2011.
  - 22 Y. Kuiper, 'Country houses and estates in Dutch urban and rural history, 1600-1900', in: J. Finch, K. Dyrmann and M. Frausing (eds.), *Estate landscapes in northern Europe*, Aarhus 2019, 193-230. See also Gerrit van Oosterom's forthcoming PhD thesis (*Boerderij en buitenplaats in Amstellands Arcadia. De relatie tussen landbouw en vermaak op de Hollandse buitenplaats in de lange achttiende eeuw (1670-1830)*, Groningen University) on this phase during which country house estates around Amsterdam reverted to agricultural use.
  - 23 J.E. Abrahamse, *Wegh der Weegen. Ontwerp, aanleg en ontwikkeling van de Amersfoortseweg 1647-2010*, Amsterdam 2011.
  - 24 P. Bijster and T. Spek, 'Snelwegen voor de koning. Onderzoek naar koningswegen op de Veluwe voor Willem III (1650-1702)', *Het Nederlands landschap. Tijdschrift voor landschapsgechiedenis* (2019) 3, 35-45.
  - 25 H. Ronnes and M. Haverman, 'A reappraisal of the architectural legacy of King-Stadholder William III and Queen Mary II. Taste, passion and frenzy', *The Court Historian* 25 (2020) 2, 158-177.
  - 26 F.A.J. Krabbendam, *Sporen door landgoederen. Een nieuwe realiteit. Spoorwegen, landgoederen en landgoedeigenaren in Midden- en Oost-Nederland (1832-1917)*, Master's dissertation University of Groningen 2020.
  - 27 The PhD thesis of Willemieke Ottens (still to be published), attempts to combine these two approaches. In her study of the Leuvenus and Bannink landed estates she looks at both political-social developments and the physical country house landscape (W. Ottens, *Leuvenum en de Bannink. Landgoederen in de twintigste eeuw*, PhD thesis University of Groningen).
  - 28 M.K.T.M. Glaudemans, *Amsterdam arcadia. De ontdekking van het achterland*, Nijmegen 2000.
  - 29 J. Huizinga, *Nederland's beschaving in de zeventiende eeuw*, Haarlem 1941; P. Burke, *Venice and Amsterdam. A Study of seventeenth-century Elites*, London 1974; R. van der Laarse, 'Amsterdam en Oranje. De politieke cultuur van kasteel en buitenplaats in Hollands Gouden Eeuw', in: Y. Kuiper, B. Olde Meierink and E. Storms-Smeets (eds.), *Buitenplaatsen in de Gouden Eeuw. De rijkdom van het buitenleven in de Republiek*, Hilversum 2015, 66-95. Y. Kuiper, 'The rise of the country house in the Dutch Republic. Beyond Johan Huizinga's narrative of Dutch civilisation in the 17th century', in: J. Stobart and A. Hann (eds.), *Material culture and consumption*, Swindon 2016, 11-23; Y. Kuiper, 'Onderzoek naar de buitenplaats in de Gouden Eeuw. Een vogelvluchtperspectief', in: Kuiper, Olde Meierink and Storms-Smeets 2015, 12-41.
  - 30 W. Verstegen, *Vrije wandeling. Het parlement, de fiscus en de bescherming van het particuliere Nederlandse Natuurschoon. De Natuurschoonwet tussen 1924 en 1995*, Groningen 2017, 129.
  - 31 M. Purmer, *Het landschap bewaard. Landschap en erfgoed bij Natuurmonumenten*, Hilversum 2018; M. Purmer, 'Valbijl of vangnet? Natuurmonumenten, de adel en de verwerving van landgoederen en buitenplaatsen, 1905-1980', *Virtus* 27 (2020), 9-32. See also: E. van der Laan-Meijer and M. Purmer, *Landgoed De Braak. Twee eeuwen cultuur- en natuurbeleving*, Gorredijk, 2020.
  - 32 S. den Dulk, *Verlangen naar groene wandelingen. De wording van het stadspark in Nederland 1600-1940*, PhD thesis, University of Amsterdam 2021. In his master's dissertation, *Het museale buiten. Over de zoektocht naar authenticiteit in het arcadische landschap rond Kasteel Groeneveld in de twintigste eeuw*, University of Groningen 2020, Martijn Noordermeer reveals the gradual process that saw Groeneveld largely swallowed up Baarn, Master's dissertation University of Groningen 2020.
  - 33 E. Storm-Smeets, 'From elite to public landscapes. The case of the Klarenbeek estate in Arnhem, 1880-1950', *Virtus* 23 (2016), 147-168.
  - 34 E.A. de Jong, 'Taking Fresh Air, 1600-1750. Walking in Holland in the Early Modern Period', in: M. Conan (eds.), *Performance and appropriation. Profane rituals in gardens and landscapes*, Washington 2007, 19-40. De Jong also made an important contribution to the analysis of the restoration and design history of country house estate landscapes. For example, together with Christian Bertram, *Landscapes of the imagination. Designing the European*.



- Tradition of garden and landscape architecture/Landschappen van verbeelding. Ontwerpen aan de traditie van de West-Europese tuin- en landschapsarchitectuur*, Rotterdam 2008, and his overviews (also with Christian Bertram) of the work of Michael van Gessel, e.g.: *Michael van Gessel. Landscape architect*, Rotterdam 2008, and 'Natuurlijke Verwantschap. Over tuin- en landschapsarchitectuur', in: I. Baan et al. (eds.), *Perspectief. Maakbare geschiedenis*, Rotterdam 2007, 18-46.
- 35 In De Jong's work Donna Haraway's criticism of the supposed binary opposition between nature and culture never seems far away.
- 36 De Jong 2007 (note 34), 34-36. Ben Olde Meierink, too, points to eighteenth-century interest in country house estate biotopes as reflected in prints, engravings and Arcadias: Olde Meierink 2017 (note 16), 26-27.
- 37 D. Koren, 'Een eeuwenlange strijd tegen droogte en teloorgang. Uiteenlopende waarden en betekenissen van het Curaçaose plantagelandschap', *Tijdschrift voor Historische Geografie* 5 (2020) 3, 131-151; D. Koren, 'Slavernijverleden werpt schaduw vooruit. Werelderfgoedstatus voor plantagesysteem West-Curaçao?', *Tijdschrift voor Historische Geografie* 5 (2020) 3, 152-168.
- 38 S. Nijhuis, 'Landschappelijke authenticiteit. Het landschap als levend systeem, geschiedenis en ruimtelijke beleving', *Bulletin KNOB* 119 (2020) 4, 32-37; S. Nijhuis, 'GIS-based landscape design research. Stourhead landscape garden as a case study', *Architecture and the built environment* (2015) 13; S. Nijhuis, P. Thissen, E. Storms-Smeets, *Resilient estate landscapes Gelderland. Past – present – future* (to be published Autumn 2022).
- 39 F. Hoebens and T. Oberndorff (eds.), *Kasteel en landschap in Limburg*, Utrecht 2013.
- 40 For example: R. van Immerseel and P. Verhoeff, *Stutig Beetsterzwaag. Parklandschap rond een Fries dorp*, Utrecht 2016; Y. Kuiper, *Dekema State Jelsum. Biografie van een landgoed*, Gorredijk 2020; H. Ronnes, 'The quiet authors of an early modern palatial landscape. Transformation without reconstruction at King William's Het Loo', in: Kolen, Renes and Hermans 2015 (note 6), 205-233.
- 41 Johnson 2002 (note 11), 3.

PROF. H. RONNES is an historian, archaeologist and anthropologist and works in the department of Cultural Sciences at the University of Amsterdam. She is an endowed professor (Van der Wyck-de Kempnaer

Chair) in Art History and Landscape History at the University of Groningen. (h.ronnes@uva.nl / h.ronnes@rug.nl)

## DUTCH RESEARCH INTO THE COUNTRY HOUSE AND ITS LANDSCAPE CURRENT STATE OF SCHOLARSHIP AND OUTLOOK

HANNEKE RONNES

One of the unmistakable trends in current country house research is the growing interest in the landscape context of country houses. The unquestioned emphasis on the main house and the garden is increasingly giving way to an approach that includes or focuses on the wider setting: village, nature, town, infrastructure, farms, churches, and other country houses. This article sketches the rise of this approach and offers an overview of the various perspectives. Among the aspects covered by landscape studies are country house

regions, choice of location, the productive landscape, infrastructure, the political landscape and the mental landscape. Although this growing interest in the landscape setting is one of the most important recent developments in country house research, most of these studies are predominantly descriptive. This article calls for the establishment of a firmer methodological and theoretical underpinning – a task to which it is to be hoped that future researchers will devote themselves.