

# THE SOCIAL GEOGRAPHY OF THE ESTATE LANDSCAPE IN GELDERS ARCADIA

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▲ 1. View of the front of Zypendaal country house, artist unknown, 1736 (Brantsen van de Zyp Stichting, Arnhem)

## INTRODUCTION

The southern edge of the Veluwe around Arnhem (Veluwezoom) boasts a great many landed and country house estates that together form a landscape known as Gelders Arcadia.<sup>1</sup> The well-known landed and country house estates in this zone are Rosendaal,



2. The Sonsbeek estate lies in the valley of the Jansbeek, a short distance from the city of Arnhem (photo MVOTV, 2021)

Middachten, Sonsbeek, Doorwerth, Zypendaal, Laag-Wolfheze, Oranje Nassau's Oord and Mariëndaal. Geometrical networks of allées, large-scale landscape parks, farmsteads, stately homes, fields, pastures and woodlands are all part of this landscape (fig. 1).

The name Gelders Arcadia was inspired by an 1820 publication by the Arnhem writer Isaac Anne Nijhoff (1795-1863), *Geldersch Arkadia of Wandeling over Biljoen en Beekhuizen*. Of Baron van Spaen, the owner of Biljoen and Beekhuizen, he wrote: 'He wanted them to discover, in his valleys, surrounded by wooded hills, watered by fast-flowing brooks – in his Gelders Arcadia – a distant imitation of the ancients' Vale of Tempe.' Widening his view, Nijhoff remarked that: 'The surroundings of the city of Arnhem [are] more than any other part of our Fatherland, filled with large and distinguished landed estates and country houses which, in expanse and fine grounds, surpass all others in this kingdom.'<sup>2</sup>

Unlike country house landscapes elsewhere in the country, which were mostly created during the seven-

teenth and eighteenth centuries, the country and landed estates of Gelders Arcadia could boast a long ancestry in feudal landscape management. In this we also have one of the unique aspects of this particular estate landscape: almost the entire chronology of Dutch country house and estate development is visible here. The construction of castles and manors (c. 500-1600), the construction of 'pleasure houses' in the countryside for town regents (c. 1600-1800), and the creation of villa-like country houses for a new elite of returning Dutch East India colonists and bankers, industrialists and lawyers from the west of the country (c. 1800-1940) have all left their mark here.<sup>3</sup> All in all, from the Middle Ages into the twentieth century, some one hundred country house and landed estates were established and laid out (fig. 2). Each development phase is distinguished by a shift in the kind of owners, landownership, functions, societal significance, architecture and landscape architecture, and location. This article adopts a social, historical and geographical perspective in examining the reasons why

medieval castellans, seventeenth- and eighteenth-century townsmen, nineteenth-century artists and twentieth-century parvenus persistently chose this area in which to realize their wide-ranging ambitions.

**DIFFERENT TIMES, DIFFERENT OWNERS,  
DIFFERENT MOTIVES**

Over the centuries, the Veluwezoom, on the edge of the glacial ridge landscape of the Veluwe and the rivers Rhine and IJssel, held a special attraction for the well-to-do. Landed estates were established here when circumstances were favourable: in times of economic prosperity and peace, coupled with the presence or emergence of a powerful elite and the availability of land. The creation of a new landed estate and the construction of a castle or manor house was a major undertaking, usually attended by lavish use of natural resources such as timber and stone. The choice of location must accordingly be seen as a key consideration.

Any analysis that explained the choice of location primarily on the basis of physical and geographical factors, such as which type of landscape offered the best defences or had the best substratum for the construction of a stone house, would fall short. For while these certainly played a role, it was alongside a great variety of landscape, economic, political and societal motives. In addition, the researcher must always ask themselves what motivated the owner to invest in the construction of such an edifice and in the creation of a very large landholding. In his seminal *Life in the English Country House*, Mark Girouard wrote that we should see castles and manor houses as ‘power houses’, as the houses of the ruling class. And that ‘when a new man bought an estate and built on it, the kind of house which he built showed exactly what level of power he was aiming at’.<sup>4</sup> Likewise, the kind of

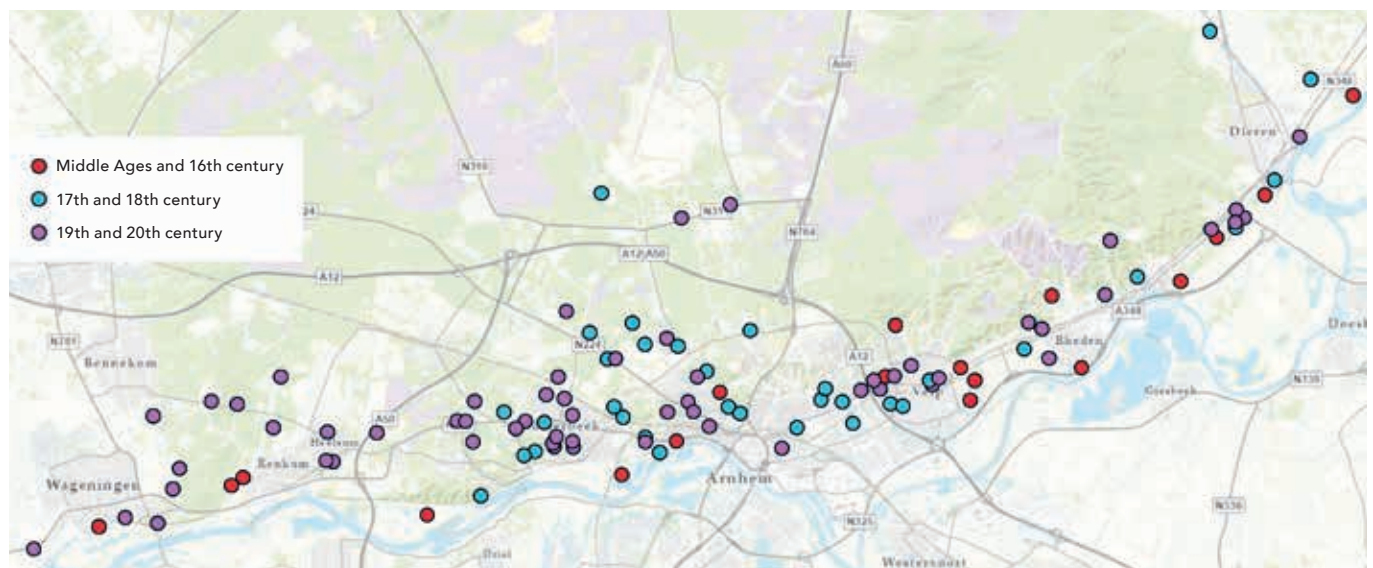
landed estate he created and its location reflected his motives, ambitions and means. Every function imposed its own demands on the location. We therefore need to ask ourselves for what purpose the building and accompanying land were used. This pertains specifically to landed and country estates as coherent ensembles, in which the political, social, economic and societal context plays a major role. This geographical analysis is consequently also a socio-historical analysis. The considerations of a nobleman building a castle in the fourteenth century differed from those of an ex-colonist contemplating the construction of a new country house at the end of the nineteenth century. One apparent constant was that new landed and country estates were generally built by the newly rich – by new elites – whereas the old elite kept investing in ancestral property. The chronological distribution patterns of new country houses are consequently often in part related to the rise of the newly wealthy (often referred to as ‘nouveaux riches’).

How should we conceive the centuries-long social and spatial transformation process that eventually resulted in the estate zone of Gelders Arcadia?

**TRANSFORMATION OF CASTLES INTO  
COUNTRY RESIDENCES**

The earliest landed and country house estates in the Veluwezoom had their origins in medieval and sixteenth-century castles. The fifteen or so landed estates that emerged in the Middle Ages were spread across the transition between the Veluwe glacial ridge and the Rhine and IJssel rivers, with the heart of the estate, the castle, located close to a river. Examples of this are the castles Wageningen, Grunsfoort, Doorwerth, Biljoen, Middachten and Gelderse Toren. Particularly locations near older blind river arms were popular.

3. Chronological survey of the Gelders Arcadia estate based on the development periods (author)





fertilizing the fields. The manor also owned several watermills along with the castle village of Doorwerth (which vanished after the Second World War) and Heelsum Church, located in the Heelsum stream valley.<sup>6</sup> In short, this was a vast, multifunctional landholding with a variety of economic, social and recreational functions.

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the castles, which had lost their military function, were often radically remodelled. The surrounding landscape was embellished with networks of allées and geometrically laid out gardens with orangeries, ponds and garden ornaments. Hunting landscapes were also created, such as the famous Hof te Dieren game preserve and the king's roads owned by the Stadholder's family.<sup>7</sup> The presence of the Stadholder's family in the area would no doubt have encouraged families like Schellart van Obbendorf at Doorwerth, Van Spaen at Biljoen, Van Arnhem at Rosendael and Van Reede at Middachten to convert their castles into country houses.<sup>8</sup>

If we look at Rosendael, we find that the topographical prints and maps from around 1800 reveal large-scale geometrical gardens created by owner and garden enthusiast Jan van Arnhem. The castle was surrounded by over forty hectares of gardens, laid out with allées, parterres, fountains, grottos, garden rooms, waterfalls, fish ponds, springs, a watermill, a star wood and even a 'king's cottage' for when the king

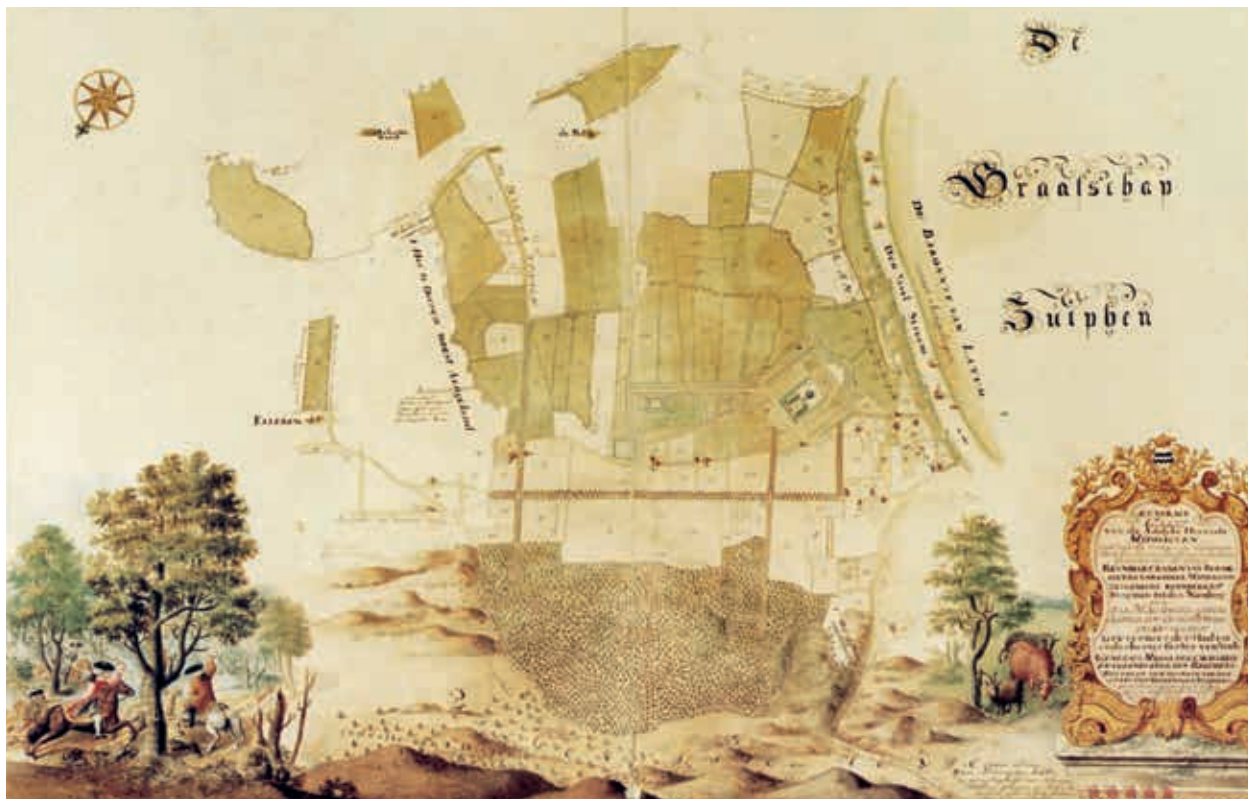
came to stay.<sup>9</sup> In the gardens beauty was consciously combined with practicality: the fish ponds, for example, were exquisitely incorporated into the formal design. At Middachten, too, formal gardens were laid out when the house belonged to Godard van Reede, Earl of Athlone and a friend of William III.<sup>10</sup> They can be seen on Barend Elshoff's 1729 manuscript map (fig. 4). The map shows the entire estate, from the IJssel to the Veluwe. The drawings in the bottom corners of the map underpin the importance of a multifunctional landscape with cattle on the river pastures on the right, and hunting on the Veluwe on the left.

Unlike Rosendael and Middachten, many of the country estates with medieval origins did not withstand the ravages of time. The aforementioned Gulden Spijcker, located on an island in the Jansbeek near Arnhem, was in a dilapidated state at the end of the eighteenth century. The house was demolished, and the land sold to the mayor of Arnhem, G. Pronck, who added it to the grounds of the Sonsbeek estate in 1779.<sup>11</sup>

#### REGENT COUNTRY HOUSE ESTATES

Pronck was one of the many city residents who chose to invest in land outside the city. Just as castles were being turned into country houses in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, so Arnhem's city regents were also busy establishing new landed and country estates. The purchase of land and the construction of a

5. Overview map of the Middachten estate, B. Elshof, 1729 (Collectie Kasteel Middachten)



country house was seen as a good investment. It was also a way of showing off their newly acquired status, wealth and taste as well as offering an escape from their busy city life. Initially the new country houses served as a summer retreat – the first house on Zypendaal was called a ‘speelhuysken’ (lit. ‘play house’). The distance from the city needed to be short and easy to traverse, which was why many country houses stood along the main thoroughfares around Arnhem. The roads leading to Utrecht and Zutphen were especially popular, with both the upper route on higher land and the lower route at the foot of the glacial ridge ensuring Arnhem’s elite of an expeditious journey back to the city. Examples of this kind of new country house are Hartenstein and Hemelse Berg along the highway in Oosterbeek, and De Brink (Ruyven), Klingelbeek and Hoogstede along the Utrechtseweg in Arnhem.<sup>12</sup>

Distance from the city was not the only criterion for the location of a country house; equally crucial was the question of whether there was land for sale for the construction of new country houses. Together these factors resulted in a semicircular pattern of distribution around the city of Arnhem, with a few outliers along the roads to the west and to the east. Sometimes a regent was able to take advantage of the sale of existing private land, as in the case of Pronck. However, regent families also bought up former monastic properties around Arnhem in order to turn them into new country house estates. Following the confiscation of many monastic properties in this region around 1580 as a result of the Reformation, they were placed under the administration of the States of the Veluwe. From 1640 onwards some of this land was sold, a process that played out in other parts of the country as well. Many former monastic lands were bought by wealthy individuals, including members of the city elite, such as the families Everwijn, Brantsen and Tulleken. The former Mariënborn monastic property to the west of Arnhem spawned five private estates: Warnsborn (1640), Boschveld (1651), Lichtenbeek (1651), Den Brink (Ruyven, c. 1693) and Mariëndaal (1735). Compared with uncultivated land, the former monastic lands were highly attractive: they were well situated, close to a stream and a short distance from the city, and they were for the most part cultivated, with farmland, ponds, watermills and roads.<sup>13</sup> Their location and cultivated state consequently made monastic lands suitable for the next stage of the cultivation process and were the basis for the formation of an estate landscape.

Regent country house estates often covered a few hundred hectares. The new owners built a luxurious summer residence on their estate, together with outbuildings like coach houses, orangeries for exotic

plants, gardeners’ dwellings and gazebos. They had parks laid out with geometrical gardens and oak and beech avenues leading onto the heathlands. Existing spring-fed streams, originally used to power watermills, were dug out and used to create ponds, fountains and cascades.

A fine example of a regent country house is Zypendaal (figs. 5 and 6). The agrarian estate ‘De Syp’, which certainly existed already in the sixteenth century, was sold in 1649 to the then mayor of Arnhem, Abraham Tulleken (?-1651), and his wife Gerhardina Everwijn (1608-?).<sup>14</sup> In 1650 the couple built a new *spijker* or small country house, which they used as their country residence.<sup>15</sup> The house stood at the foot of the Bickberg hill, in the valley of the Jansbeek. The grounds were at that stage still very modest. Then, in 1743, via a combination of sale and inheritance, the property ended up in the hands of Hendrik Willem Brantsen (1704-1786) and his wife Johanna Elisabeth de Vree. She and her sister Hester Henriëtte, married to Hendrik Willem’s brother Johan, brought with them a substantial amount of money: their inheritance from their father included shares in two Surinam sugar plantations ‘of which one is called Wayampibo, and the other Vossenburch, as well as the timber plantation Onverwacht in Tempati *creecq*’.<sup>16</sup>

What Zypendaal looked like in around 1750, under Willem Brantsen’s ownership, can be seen in Willem Leenen’s cartographic survey. It shows the old ‘speelhuysken’ of 1650, surrounded by geometrically laid out gardens, ponds, allées and orchards (fig. 6). The Brantsen family even had three hundred-metre long terraces constructed, parallel to the baroque ponds, for walks in the park.<sup>17</sup>

Over the centuries, the Brantsens, like other regents, owned various country houses in the area for varying lengths of time, in addition to their main residence in Arnhem. Around Arnhem these were (apart from Zypendaal): Hulkestein, Gulden Bodem, Mariëndaal, Den Brink (Klein Mariëndaal) and Lichtenbeek. Near Rheden, the Rhederoord and Rhederhof estates, and on the other side of the IJssel the Wielbergen estate (Angerlo). Although the recreational aspect dominated, the Arnhem regents’ estates had economic functions as well, such as farming and forestry. The regents bought up surrounding uncultivated land (heath) and had it planted with woods. As such, they were also preparing the land for future users of this region and contributing to the attractiveness and gradual formation of the estate landscape that would later be called Gelders Arcadia.

Before describing the next step in the development of this area, I will briefly summarize the characteristics of the regent country house estates. They were located in the vicinity of the city, close to thorough-



6. Map of Zypendaal estate, W. Leenen, 1753 (Gelders Archief, Arnhem)

fares. The estates often had their origins in the purchase of former agricultural or monastic properties and in some cases in the development of uncultivated lands (heath). The owners were Arnhem city regents who also owned a house in the city. The new country estates were between fifty and two hundred hectares in size. In their capacity as country residences the focus was on the aesthetic landscape, but all such properties also supported economic activities like farming, pasturage and forestry.

#### NEW RICHES, NEW COUNTRY HOUSES

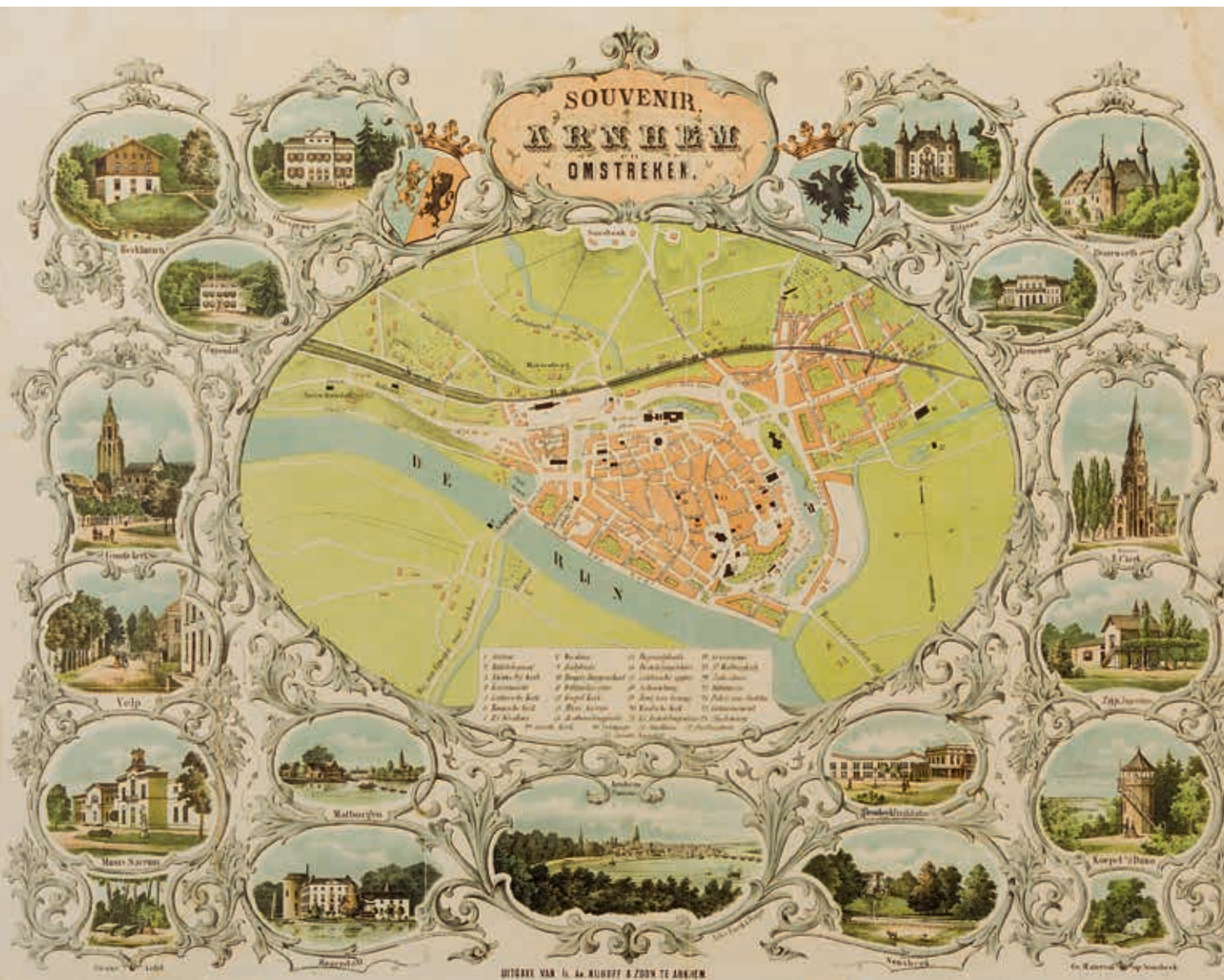
At the beginning of the nineteenth century the Veluwezoom boasted some sixty country houses and landed estates. In the nineteenth century interest in this much-loved landscape grew, thanks in part to the artists who settled around the village Oosterbeek.

Artists like Johannes and Gerard Bilders, Frederik

Hendrik Hendriks and Anton Mauve came to the Veluwezoom to capture the natural scenery and fine vistas on canvas.<sup>18</sup> Their paintings depicted the romantic landscapes of landed estates and the unspoilt landscape of still uncultivated 'wastelands'.

An artists' colony sprang up in Oosterbeek, generating a rich cultural life that was especially vibrant between 1840 and 1900. Supported by wealthy patrons and members of the landed gentry like C.P. van Eeghen, C.P.E. Robidé van der Aa and J. Knepplhout, the work of these painters of the Veluwezoom contributed to the region's fame (fig. 7).<sup>19</sup>

In this way the owners of landed estates and the artists worked together to advertise the attractions of Gelders Arcadia, which in turn led to other wealthy individuals becoming interested in settling in the region. This interest was further stimulated by the many tourist maps, walking guides and odes lauding



7. 'Souvenir Arnhem en Omstreken', street plan of the city of Arnhem with eighteen pictures in cartouches. Many of these depict country estates, such as Biljoen, Bronbeek, De Oorsprong, Zypendaal, Rosendaal and Sonsbeek. By Van Emrik & Binger, published by I.A. Nijhoff & Zoon, 1868 (Gelders Archief, Arnhem)

the beauty of the Veluwezoom. The end result of all this 'marketing' was the construction of villa districts and the creation of new country houses and landed estates. The first was often at the expense of the older landed estates like those of Klarenbeek and Sonsbeek.<sup>20</sup> The subdivision into smaller parcels of land coincided with the rise of a new elite in the nineteenth century. Generally speaking, the new country house builders were no longer local nobility or regents, but newly wealthy people like lawyers, bankers, architects and developers from the western part of the country and returning colonists. For this group the land was not their primary source of income. Almost forty new country houses and landed estates, spread across the entire zone, were created, including Belmonte, Villa Sanoer, Hinkeloord, De Dorschkamp, Quaden-

oord, Bato's Wijk, Pietersberg, Rosorum, Bronbeek, Hofstetten and Rhederhof.

Looking at Gelders Arcadia as a whole, the new estates were located in areas that had previously had very few country houses. Places like Wageningen, Oosterbeek and Ellecom saw a strong increase in country estates. An important factor in the expansion of Gelders Arcadia was the expansion of the Dutch railway network, including the new railway connection between Utrecht and Arnhem in 1843-1845. The improved transport options facilitated the construction of country houses (whether or not permanently occupied) in park-like settings further away from the city of Arnhem. This greater distance between country house and city was also related to the increasing scarcity of land close to





8. Bronbeek estate resulted from the sale of part of an older landed estate, 't Lange Water (Gelders Archief, Arnhem)

Arnhem. Many new country estates were established on previously uncultivated lands. Examples include 't Heuvelink and Vrijland on Koningsweg to the north of the city. So in addition to better infrastructure, the availability of land was another reason why Gelders Arcadia expanded to cover an ever greater area.

But even in the historical core of Gelders Arcadia, time did not stand still. Here new country houses arose as a result of the sale of some or all of their land by impoverished noble families or regents.<sup>21</sup>

A few new country houses, like Heidestein in Heelsum, originated from the sale of grounds belonging to the Doorwerth manor in the nineteenth century. The fragmentation and sale of an existing estate was also the genesis of Bronbeek, between Arnhem and Velp (fig. 8). Around 1820 the 't Lange Water estate was sold

off in sections. The northern section was bought by the Amsterdam rentier Hermen Steijgerwalt, who built a new country house on a slope of the Paasberg as well as a park with ornamental plants and a kitchen garden. An excavated spring-fed stream was dammed to create waterfalls, ponds and a fountain.

After 1900 very few new country houses were established. Those that were, like De Kamp, the Leemkuil, Huize Eekland and Laag-Wolfheze, were built on the remaining available sites, often on previously uncultivated land on the glacial ridge massif. New country houses were generally smaller than existing ones and very rarely did they amount to a landed estate. For these owners the country houses functioned as semi-permanent residences in the countryside. Interestingly, 'nature', such as Wolfheze Heath, was



9. Manor house in Gooi manor house style on the Langenberg estate, Heelsum. Picture postcard, 1950-1960 (Gelders Archief, Arnhem)

TABLE 1. Typology of country and landed estates in the Gelders Arcadia estate landscape. The description reflects the situation at the time of creation and at the first transformation. Each country house/landed estate underwent successive changes in the style of house and park, use, et cetera. As a result, today's landscape is highly layered with structures and elements from many periods and styles.

DEVELOPMENT PERIOD	MAIN CLIENTS	LOCATION
Middle Ages and sixteenth century	High and low nobility, counts/dukes	Close to river or stream, spread along the edge of the Veluwe.
1600-1800	Regent families from Arnhem	Close to Arnhem, along roads out of the city (Amsterdamseweg, Utrechtseweg, Rijksstraatweg).
1800-1940	Returning colonials, new elite like bankers and industrialists (mainly from the western part of country), occasionally nobility.	Spread out along the Veluwezoom, close to new rail and tram lines, but also existing roads, as in Oosterbeek, Wageningen and Ellecom. From 1900: located higher on the glacial ridge.

expressly incorporated as an aesthetic element. On the De Kamp or Langenberg estate, an area that was originally part of the domains of Doorwerth castle, a country house in the Gooi country house style was built in around 1920, surrounded by a then-fashionable heather garden with conifers and a pond (fig. 9).<sup>22</sup>

During the Second World War the construction of new country houses came to an abrupt end. The period from 1940 to 1945 accordingly marks a break in Dutch country house and estate history. Indeed, in the Veluwezoom the war even spelt the end for several country houses and landed estates. In September 1944, as part of Operation Market Garden, the allied forces launched the Battle of Arnhem. For two months there was heavy fighting in and around the city. The impact on the once so Arcadian landscape of landed estates and castles was devastating. De Duno, Belmonte, Hemelse Berg, Bato's Wijk and De Oorsprong were completely destroyed.<sup>23</sup> Other estates suffered significant damage.

#### LANDSCAPE IN A STATE OF FLUX

If we look at Gelders Arcadia through the ages we find similar patterns of creation, use and design of country house and landed estates in different periods (Table 1). Our analysis then allows us to consider Gelders Arcadia – at a higher level of abstraction – as a country house estate landscape. As far as the similar patterns are concerned, new country houses were generally built by new elites, each with different desires, prospects and ambitions. That was reflected in the characteristic structure, design and layout of the new properties. Conversely, the motives of the respective elites in designing their country life in the Veluwezoom differ from one period to another.

With respect to economic exploitation, it is noticeable that the scale of the landholdings decreased in successive periods: land continued to be a good investment, but its importance as a source of income for the owner steadily decreased. Originally medieval landed estates like Doorwerth and Middachten were characterized by landholdings ranging from 500 to 1500 hectares and comprising different types of landscape (from

ARCHITECTURE	LANDSCAPE	EXAMPLES
Defensible castles (inc. Gothic and Renaissance). From c. 1600 converted into country houses.	Very large estate reaching from river (washlands) via farming lands and location of main house and outbuildings, to higher land with heath, forest, sheep drifts and hunting grounds. Geometric park (Renaissance), ponds and networks of allées. Watermills (mainly grain). along spring-fed streams.	Biljoen (1067), Middachten (1190), Gelderse Toren (twelfth century?), Doorwerth (1260), Rosendael (1314)
Baroque, Dutch classicism, French Louis styles.	Large estates with profitable farmland and at their core a temporary country home. Often arising from former monastic property. Geometric park (Baroque and Rococo), ponds, networks of allées and hunting grounds. From late eighteenth century landscape park with cascades. Watermills (mainly grain and paper) along spring-fed streams (often dismantled in nineteenth century and replaced by cascades).	Klarenbeek (1615), Zypendaal (1649), Boschveld (c. 1650), Warnsborn (1650), Lichtenbeek (1651), Rhederoord (1657; 1743), Hemelse Berg (1735), Sonsbeek (1742), Hartenstein (1779), Duno (1794)
Neoclassicism, neo-renaissance, neo-Gothic, eclecticism, chalet style. From 1900: new historicizing style, cottage style, English country house style and Gooi country house style.	Relatively small properties, geared to recreational use and enjoyment of nature. Mixture of utility and beauty. Principally (romantic) landscape style and mixed garden style.	Sterrenberg (1801), Bronbeek (1820), Keijenberg (c. 1820), Valkenberg (1834), Pietersberg (1836), Belmonte (1843), Bato's Wijk (1845), Rhederhof (1850), Hinkeloord (1855), Villa Sanoer (1887), Dorskamp (1906), De Leemkuil (1909), The Hillock (1918), Laag-Wolfheze (1919), Varenheuvel (1938).

wet land in the floodplains of rivers Rhine and IJssel to dry land on the edge of the Veluwe) and a variety of functions. This differs markedly from early twentieth-century country house estates like De Kamp and Laag-Wolfheze, where the heath was no longer a vital part of an agrarian system. So although the country house and landed estates were established for both economic and aesthetic purposes in every period, the imperative to 'live from the land' diminished; the practical aspect was less obviously apparent. On the other hand one could also say that the joys of country life and domestic amenity acquired a greater significance in the choice of location and the design of country house and landed estates.

Another factor that influenced when and where new country house and landed estates were built was the availability of land. The actual moment when individual country houses were resold will often have been a matter of chance. But here, too, there are sometimes commonalities to be found between various country houses: the release of monastic lands or the sale of large landed estates and their subsequent division into smaller units could be a common starting point for the next generation of country houses.

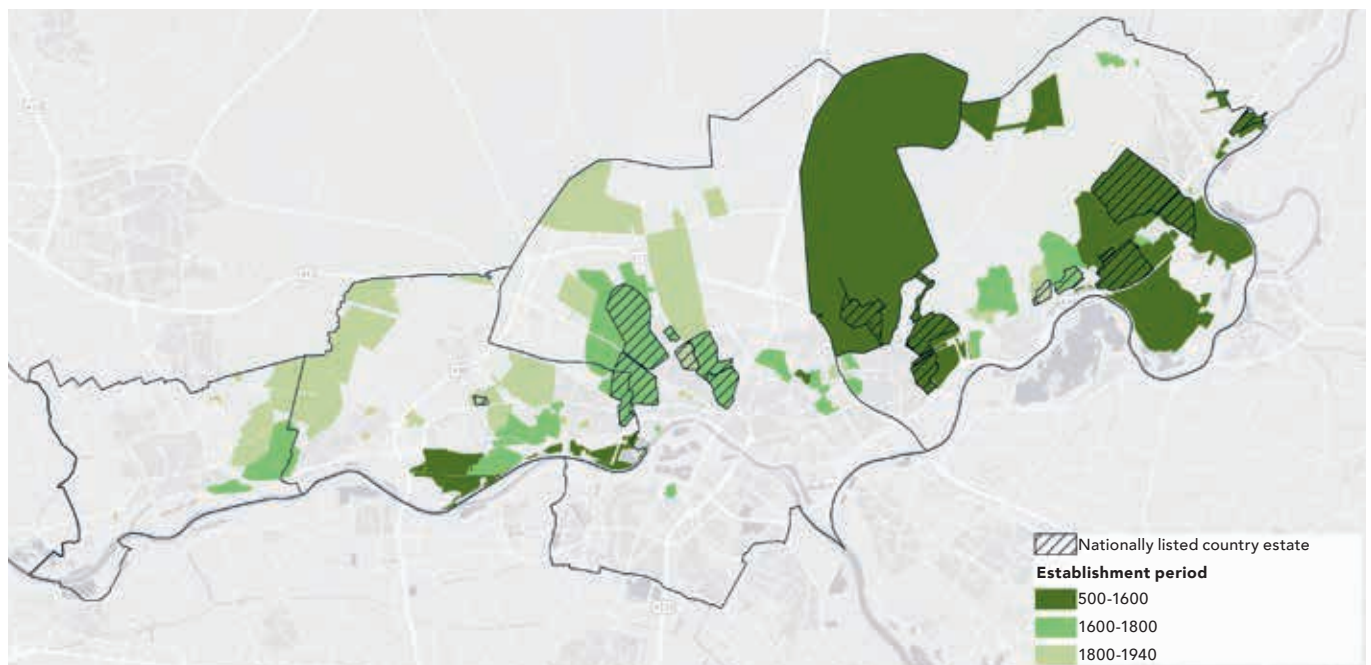
Finally, a third aspect cannot go unmentioned: the influence of transport routes on the location of country houses and landed estates. In the nineteenth century the railway network was of particular importance. In the second half of the nineteenth and first half of the twentieth century it was along these lines that the historical country house nucleus around Arnhem expanded dramatically. At a somewhat more abstract level you could say that for the estate landscape of

Gelders Arcadia, each successive act of cultivation increased the attractiveness of an estate for the next transformation. The progressive cultivation of the surroundings of Arnhem accelerated in the late eighteenth, early nineteenth century thanks to the re-evaluation of the hilly and lushly vegetated area in landscape garden design. The appeal of the old core of Gelders Arcadia close to Arnhem was so great that more distant areas were able to profit from it as soon as they became more accessible.

#### PRESERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF AN ESTATE LANDSCAPE: THE GELDERS ARCADIA PROJECT

The socio-geographic analysis of Gelders Arcadia and the resulting area- and ensemble-oriented approach formed the basis for the Gelders Arcadia project, launched in 2007. It entails a collaboration between heritage organisation Gelders Genootschap, the municipalities of Arnhem, Renkum, Rheden, Rozendaal and Wageningen, the province of Gelderland and the private and institutional estate owners. Greatly anticipating the introduction of the Environmental Act (scheduled for 2023), the project has provided insight into both the individual ensembles of country house and accompanying grounds, and the overarching regional characteristics and qualities of the estate landscape as a whole (fig. 10). A mere fifteen of the over one hundred estates that make up Gelders Arcadia are listed as national monuments, although it should be noted that many structures of high cultural-historical value, such as king's roads and distinct areas like old forests, arable fields and wastelands, do not qualify for protection. This is why it was important to survey and

10. Establishment period of country estates, with present-day nationally listed estates (author)



analyse structures like avenues, king's highways, springs and sight lines that extend beyond estate and municipal boundaries.

The results of the geographical analysis of Gelders Arcadia produced, among other things, the following three approaches: awareness of the entire collection of over 100 country houses and landed estates (and not just the nationally listed estates as in the past); a focus on country houses and landed estates as coherent heritage ensembles, including understanding of the societal, economic, landscape and political factors that contributed to their development and design; and the realization that country estates, thanks to their large number and individual size and values, are fundamental to the character of the living environment, in the past as well as in the present and the future.

These three approaches acquired concrete form in

a cartographic survey of the entire estate landscape of Gelders Arcadia including all the wholly and partially surviving heritage ensembles, and in their embedding in municipal and provincial policy. The twofold analysis of individual country houses on the one hand, and the country house landscape at regional level on the other, has formed the basis for discussions with government authorities, owners and other stakeholders aimed at formulating possible solutions to contemporary challenges and problems. Thinking on two levels of scale led to an improvement in municipal and provincial policy and formed the basis for better cooperation at local and regional levels. 'Gelders Arcadia' is now a 'learning case' within the international Inno-castle project, a collaboration between partners from the Netherlands, Belgium, Romania, the United Kingdom and Spain.<sup>24</sup>

#### NOTES

- 1 This article refers to both landed estates and country houses. A country house is literally a house 'outside' the city, in the countryside. Here the owners were able to relax and to receive guests. Most country houses were used as a summer residence. A country house could be part of a larger landed estate: a very extensive landholding with economically important areas like woods, farmland and pasture.
- 2 I.A. Nijhoff, *Geldersch Arkadia, of wandeling over Biljoen en Beekhuizen*, Arnhem 1820, 1.
- 3 The Second World War signified a break in Dutch country house history. There was one final phase involving the creation of new 'Natuurschoonwet' estates after 1950, although they were mainly concentrated on the Veluwe Massif north of the Veluwezoom. This last phase is not dealt with here.
- 4 M. Girouard, *Life in the English Country House. A Social and Architectural History*, London 1978, 2.
- 5 J. Jas et al. (eds.), *Kastelen in Gelderland*, Utrecht 2013.
- 6 S. Zeefat and E. Storms-Smeets, *Landgoed Doorwerth. Cultuurhistorische analyse en waardstelling*, Gelders Genootschap report, Arnhem 2021.
- 7 Manorial rights, such as the hunting rights that were linked to noble landed estates dating from the Middle Ages, remained of great importance to the owners for a very long time. To learn more about hunting on Dutch landed estates: C. Gietman et al., *De jacht. Een cultuurgeschiedenis van jager, dier en landschap*, Hilversum 2021.
- 8 B. Olde Meierink and E. Storms-Smeets, 'Transformatie en nieuwbouw. Adellijke en burgerlijke buitenplaatsen in Gelderland (1609-1672)', in: Y. Kuiper and B. Olde Meierink (eds.), *Buitenplaatsen in de Gouden Eeuw. De rijkdom van het buitenleven in de Republiek*, Hilversum 2015, 180-207.
- 9 C. van der Genugten, 'De Koningsberg op Rosendaal, deel 1', *Ambt & Heerlijkheid* 62 (2016), 28-30.
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- 11 G.A. Kuyk, 'De geschiedenis van het landgoed Sonsbeek bij Arnhem', *Bijdragen en mededeelingen der Vereeniging Gelre*, vol. xvii, Arnhem 1906, 85-119.
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- 14 A. Markus, *Arnhem omstreeks het midden der vorige eeuw. Met geschiedkundige aantekeningen, platen en kaarten*, Arnhem 1907, 482. The name 'De Syp' was most probably related to natural water sources (in Dutch 'sijpelen' means to trickle). A 1667 map by I. van Geelkercken identifies the southern sources as De Sijp. GA, 0306 *Commanderij van St. Jan te Arnhem*, no. 207: Delineatie ofte landt carte en oik de specificatie van nieuwe aengemaekte landen in den Kattenpoel in 't jaar 1667, door I. van Geelkercken.
- 15 Olde Meierink and Storms-Smeets 2015 (note 8), 200; C.J.M. Schulte, "'De Soete Ruste van een aangenaam Buijtenleven'. De familie Brantsen en haar buitenplaats Zypendaal in Arnhem', *Arnhem de Genoeglijkste* 29, Arnhem 2009, 138-157.
- 16 GA 0452 *Familie Brantsen*, inv. no. 59, *Magescheid tussen de kinderen van Mr. Johan Brantsen en wijlen Hester Henriette de Vree. In duplo*, 1765. Wayampibo was sold in 1822, but Vossenburg and Onverwacht remained the property of a large number of shareholders and the Brantsen family (of Zypendaal and Rhederoord), certainly until the end of the nineteenth century. See also: H.E. Lamur, *The production of sugar and the reproduction of slaves at Vossenburg, Suriname, 1705-1863*, Amsterdam 1987; B. Koene, *De mensen van Vossenburg en Wayampibo. Twee Surinaamse plantages in de slaventijd*, Hilversum 2019.
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- 20 A.G. Schulte and C.J.M. Schulte-van Wersch, *Monumentaal groen. Kleine cultuurgeschiedenis van de Arnhemse parken*, Utrecht 1999; E. Storms-Smeets, 'From elite to public landscapes. The case of the Klarenbeek estate in Arnhem, 1880-1950', 7 (2016), 147-167.
- 21 Rising wages, the high cost of upkeep, declining incomes and inheritance taxes landed many country house estate owners in financial difficulties. Impoverished families sold off parts of their estate in order to keep their head above water. Although that usually proved to be no more than a postponement of the inevitable and eventually many private landed estates were sold to city councils, nature organizations,

- property developers and educational institutions.
- 22 Storms-Smeets 2011 (note 19) 146.
- 23 H. Timmerman, '1940-1945: oorlog aan de Veluwezoom', in: E. Storms-Smeets 2011 (note 19), 82-93; E. Storms-Smeets, 'Oorlog in Arcadië. Kastelen, buitenplaatsen en landgoederen in Gelderland, 1940-1945', in: T. Hermans et al. (eds.), *'Hier wonen wij! Is het niet prachtig!' Recent onderzoek op het gebied van kastelen en buitenplaatsen* (Nederlandse kastelenstudies vol. 2), Zwolle 2020, 199-207.
- 24 See also P. Thissen, 'Buitenplaatslandschappen in Gelderland. Interventies van overheden in verleden en heden', *Bulletin KNOB* 120 (2021) 4, 47-61.

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## THE SOCIAL GEOGRAPHY OF THE ESTATE LANDSCAPE IN GELDERS ARCADIA

ELYZE STORMS-SMEETS

For many centuries, the landscape and cultural history of the Netherlands have been influenced by the rural estates of large landowners. Their country houses with gardens, parks and farmland formed an important combination of practical aspects of economic management and aesthetic landscaping. Many castles or country houses were linked to large landholdings of several hundred, sometimes even thousands of hectares, as in the case of the Veluwezoom in the Province of Gelderland. Since the late Middle Ages this area, now known as Gelders Arcadia, has been popular with the landed elite, whose ranks have included noble families, stadtholders, city regents and bankers. The undulating landscape, the rivers and brooks and the fertile land was ideally suited to the creation of the desired combination of productive and aesthetic landscapes.

One of the special aspects of the Gelders Arcadia estate zone is that it represents nearly every stage in the development of the Dutch country estate, from the emergence of castles and lordships (c. 500-1600), to the foundation of small country retreats by town regents (c. 1600-1800), and the creation of villa-like country estates for a new elite of bankers, industrialists and lawyers (c. 1800-1940). The historic country houses and landed estates are manifestations of their time and therefore very diverse, ranging from transformed noble castles with large landholdings to the rural retreats of town regents to villa-like country houses for the newly wealthy. Not only the architecture of the house and park, but also the use, the anchoring in the cultural landscape and the social significance underwent development.

A historical-geographical approach was used to analyse location and distribution patterns and to investigate the size, character and functions of country estates in each period from an economic, political, societal and social perspective. It appears that the majority of new country houses and estates were created by a new elite of the newly rich, whereas the old elite continued to invest in their ancestral properties.

The motivation to invest in the establishment of a country seat differed per period. The landed and country estates featured both economic and aesthetic landscapes, although the former were less prominent in later periods.

This socio-historical-geographical approach has given us a better understanding of the various processes of estate creation, transformation and adaptation through time – knowledge that can also be used to reach well-founded decisions in the 21st century. The geographical approach for Gelders Arcadia has resulted in improved spatial policies through: 1. Attention to the entirety of country estates (rather than only those with listed status); 2. A focus on the country estate as a cohesive heritage ensemble, including an understanding of the social, economic, landscape and political factors that contributed to its development and design; 3. Recognition that the estates, thanks to their large number and individual sizes and qualities, have formed and will continue to form an important basis for the character of the living environment.