

## **Bird eye's views, their aim and use - Thea Dengerink 22-2-223**

*A view from one supposed higher point as with the eye of a flying bird depicting a city or a country estate without any help of hills, towers or aeroplanes.*

The earliest version of such a view mentioned is a large fresco (10m2) in the [Baths of Trajan - Wikipedia](#) in the 1<sup>st</sup> century a bird eye's view of a walled port city (discovered during archaeological excavations in 1997). In medieval times bird eye's views formed the background of biblical scenes. But in the 16<sup>th</sup>- 18<sup>th</sup> century many copper engravings and etchings were made of cities and real estates. At the same time Pythagoras and Vitruvius treatise on ideal proportions and perspective was translated and researched by Italian architects in the Renaissance. Alberti's treatises and drawings were published and translated, distributed under the elite of west and north Europe. See the perspective and ideal proportions involved in the bird-eye views of Salomon de Cause ([palatine gardens, Heidelberg, 1620](#); LePaultres or [Versailles, A.Perelle 1680's](#) or etcher Israël Silvestre, [Kip's after Knyff view of Hampton Court](#) (*in the Illustrate Britannica*). In the Netherlands draftsmen and engravers next to publishers gathered in the city of Amsterdam near port and bourse. Daniel Stoopendaal was one of them, he was able to draw, to etch and to engrave maps, views of cities, buildings, country estates of the court and wealthy citizens. He made a bird eye's view of Zuylestein as a whole in the wide environment but also in detailed views from different angles. It was ordered by the great-grandson of Frederik Hendrik the Stadholder in 1710 (see presentation 23-2-23)

### **How were they used?**

For the owner and the ones that he wanted to award with a nice view of his property. The original is coloured by specialists at hand in Amsterdam but other versions are in black and white. With or without the detail views (the originally amount of 20 or less) depending on the status or aim of the receiver. To read the floor plan there was a Dutch and French table of content on the complete engraving with a numbering on the right places in the engraving. With the detail views you could imagine to walk around. There are only a view other examples of such detailed and combined information. In general only (part of) the estate is displayed as such with the accent on the house and guests arriving. The precious gift was framed and displayed on a central place as it is now in the castle of Amerongen as the gardens of the family at other houses.

But the question is are these bird eye's views a topographically correct presentation provided that they were made for the benefit of the clients. In that case could the draftsmen allowed themselves some liberties to show the property even more beautiful than in reality. Think huge well grown hedges next to extra small visitors as in Stoopendaal's Zeist. Or extra statues. (see the film: The Draughtsman's Contract/ Peter Greenaway)

At Zuylestein, where we are able to compare it with the actual structure, we see the entrance lane on the left side, ending at the grand canal, disappearing in the woods with a slight bend (as part of an area of drained wet lands). For the image he hides the road into the wood because it was not in a straight line as was standard in than fashionable Baroque style gardens. On the other hand walls were built to strengthen the perspective, to let the garden seem larger.

Prints and even series of prints were made after these engravings by other artists, some less accurate or for another public of readers. Or bird eye's views were combined with a description of a (poet)'visitor' or by the owner and designer himself (C. Huygens Hofwijck) to describe the experience of the garden, to honour the owner or to explain the aim of the garden.

So to experience Zuylestein you could read the engraving of Stoopendaal as a preparation for a visit in the future. Good to know: the castle was bombed in 1945, a new historicising main house was built in the 'parterre de broderie' But you can still use the structure as a visitors map!

