

The usability of an engraving of Stoopendaal for the restoration of the kitchen garden at Zuylestein / Thea Dengerink 22-02-2023

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At the country estate of the Dutch elite of stadholders in the 17th century, one recognises elements of Italian Renaissance inspired gardens connected as a whole with the country house, the 'villa suburbana'. To restore these gardens is not an easy process, there are only a few reliable drawings available. A useful source for the image of these country estates is the 18th century engraver Daniel Stoopendaal (1672-1726), he depicted many of these gardens in detail.

About the reliability of these engravings different opinions are found in the literature. In this article will be described to which extent Daniel Stoopendaal displayed the kitchen garden of Zuylestein near Amerongen reliable and useful for this purpose. As far as we know is Zuylestein the only garden of Frederik Hendrik, Prince of Orange (1584-1647) with a still recognizable 17th century renaissance structure according the (classic) ideal proportions (Vitruvian-Albertian).



The gardens of the stadholder- influence of the Italian renaissance and classic proportions

In a short period Frederik Hendrik built new estates or renovated them in different styles depending of the situation and goal (palaces Honselaarsdijk, Nieuborgh and castles Buren, Zuylestein and IJsselstein) His garden at Honselaarsdijk (Dutch-classicism) with a rectangular form, canals and central symmetry received an international following (due to Andre Mollets book *Le Jardin de plaisir*).

There are, Zuylestein excluded, no estates of Frederik Hendrik left with a recognizable renaissance structure. Nowadays most gardens (of F.H.) got another goal or plan. The gardens of stadholders have been examples for Orange-minded courtiers like Constantijn Huygens (1586-1687 secretary, Hofwijck), Jacob Cats (1577-1660, poet, Zorgvliet) but also wealthy citizens.

A new style, based on classic proportions, the Dutch classicism, a unity of house and garden, influenced Europe and New York (as New Amsterdam was later called). Frederik Hendrik, and his nephew Johan Maurits van Nassau-Siegen were stadholders, diplomats but also art collectors and initiators of country estates with gardens. The kitchen garden was according to Vanessa Bezemer-Sellers a not unimportant part of the gardens of Fredrik Hendrik. Due to their function and status Frederik Hendrik and Johan Maurits got a broad education: arts, (military) science, geometry, engineering and languages. They knew their classics and owned translations of Italian architecture treaties (Serlio 22, Vitruvius, and Pythagoras). They used them for their buildings and garden designs because they were interested in the ideal proportions. Thanks to the research of Simon Stevin (engineer) and Constantijn Huygens and the Dutch culture of Calvinism and humanism these gardens became popular as calming places of utility and pleasure.

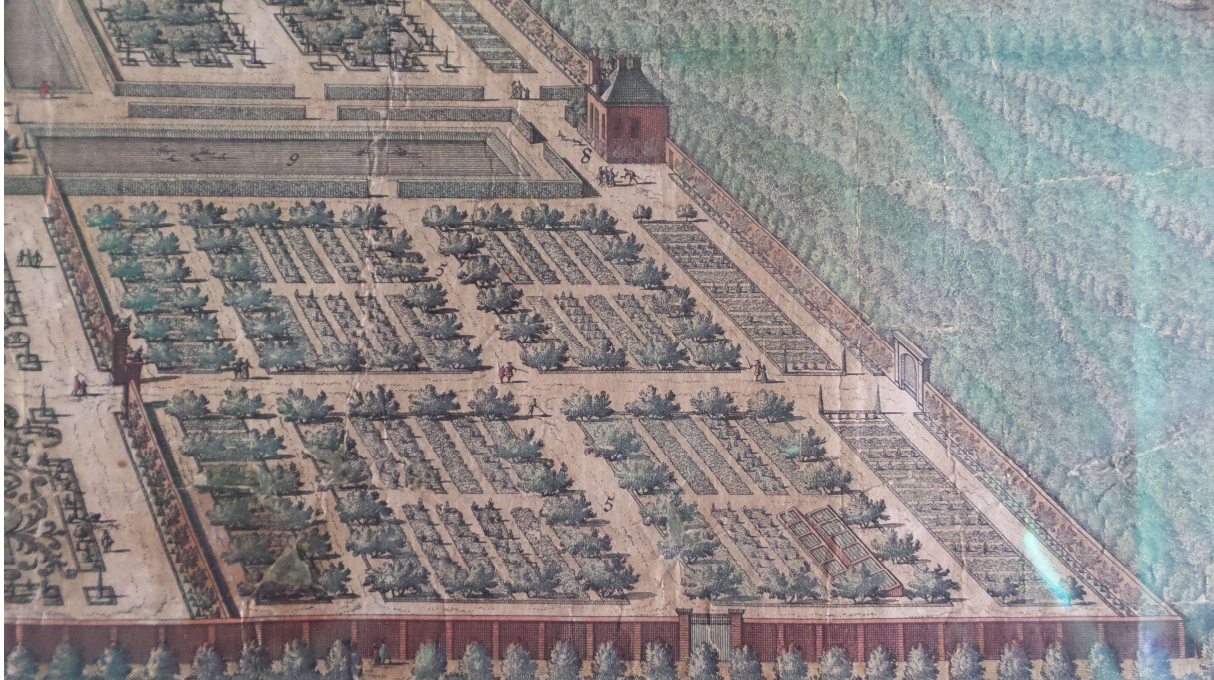
With investments in science, polytechnics and trade in the Republic of the Netherlands and abroad, money and status was gained. These sources enabled the stadholder, as Plinius the Younger and the Italian renaissance elite to build their country estates with a royal allure, far away from work and battlefields. The ideal of the country life was related to the Calvinist and humanistic culture: the classic ideal proportions in combination with the production of the kitchen garden, orchards, plantations and farming was the paradise and ought to be well-maintained. Remarkable are the 'naantjes' (buissons or arbres naines- low grafted fruit trees) used by Frederik Hendrik for structure and production, as can be seen at Zuylestein.

The country estate of Zuylestein

Frederik Hendrik bought the 'ridderhofstad' (a medieval stone house of vassals of the bishop of Utrecht 14th century with canals and drawbridge) in 1630 as a hunting lodge for battue hunt? On the Utrechtse Heuvelrug. And because it had medieval and military status. The plain stone house with a large tower, drawbridge and several outer buildings got a renaissance design, with a by canals isolated parterre de broderie, kitchen garden and orchards. He had built nurseries for the woods and avenue trees and several woods for production, hunting and star forests. The project (till 1646) is depicted in many plans and drawings (also bird eye's views of winter and summer presentations) by land surveyor Jan van Diepenen (/m) around 1640. The renaissance structure with short sightlines, enclosed geometric gardens and a non-symmetric position of the country house can still be seen. The driveway to the entrance forms the only long sightline with the Utrechtse Heuvelrug on one end and on the other the production woods with a slight bend on the bird eye's view of Stoopendaal. The estate was surrounded by canals and earth walls, hidden from the main road by forest plots.

The natural son of Frederik Hendrik inherited Zuylestein and was called Frederik Nassau Zuylestein (1608-1672) and added more comfort to the castle, later the canals were ditched and he or his son doubled and walled the garden on three sides with a grand canal on the west side, with the gatehouse, seating alcoves and orangery as part of the wall. Maybe inspired by the visits of his nephew and king Willem III the castle and garden were decorated. The seating alcoves enabled the visitor a view at the sightlines in the length and width of the walled garden. Fishponds, hedges and paths strengthened the structure. The 'naantjes' were placed in the kitchen .and circle garden. The designer is unknown. Daniel Marot (1661-1752) decorated the castle in the period of the extension of the garden, maybe he gave some advice (as earlier André Mollet did for the parterre de broderie).

His influence could be identified by the structure of the panelling of the seating alcoves, in accordance with the proportions of the compartments of the walled kitchen garden with their unusual width of the paths between them. The garden looked now more like an ornamental garden than a garden for production.



The drawing of Stoopendaal

Stoopendaal has drawn and engraved many views of cities, and of estates along the river the Vecht and elsewhere like Zeist and Zuylestein. The great grandson of Frederik Hendrik ordered an engraved bird eye's view of the recently inherited property of Zuylestein (and Waayestein) from Daniel Stoopendaal. In 1710 Stoopendaal signed the engraving with: 'drawn to life'- meaning that it was not the design but the situation in real life. He indeed delineated many human figures and animals, it is like he is indicating the various functions of (parts of) the estate. Was Stoopendaal indeed ordered to draw the estate as it was or meant to be? It is remarkable that the country house is drawn as the centre piece but outlined just to the right of the mid-line of the engraving: the sightline of the entrance lane is not centred to the house like in the baroque gardens, it is still in renaissance design with several shorter sightlines in the gardens and parcs...

The picture seems realistic with respect to the elements and structure of the estate. The kitchen garden structure is remarkable and not to be compared with other kitchen gardens. To which extent is it possible to get an accurate picture of contemporary practice of a kitchen garden as a basis for restoration and maintenance? Or do we need other sources and new research? To explore .the ideal proportions (measurements) zoomed in digital pictures were used, next to contemporary sources as the treaties of Jan van der Groen (gardener of Frederik Hendrik) and the archive documents like contracts, correspondence and account books how the estate was intended and used. For the edgings with tiles, the size of paths and beds (Gentil recorded paths of 12 and 15 feet), the shapes of the naantjes (the French vase form or the broader Dutch bowl or even fan form), we studied contemporary horticulture practice in the Netherlands and England (Susan Campbell described and illustrated among others the 17th century kitchen garden). Comparing the orders of (fruit) trees with

actual varieties helped as added sources and strengthened the idea and knowledge of the use of the 17th century kitchen garden practice.



The restoration, assumptions and choices

Is the engraving reliable compared to contemporary sources? The design of the structure is depending on the site, soil, form and function. But this engraving seems more detailed and comparable to the still displayed recognizable structure (even measuring the kitchen garden walls on both sites of the east wall, there was a comparable difference in the gravure and in reality). Also decoration of the wall sitting niches and the eagles on the piles of the porch are still defending the kitchen garden. The materials chosen for hedges, paths and pond banks were decided to be locally found. For the restoration of the kitchen garden Stoopendaal's engraving is used as a supplementary source. Assuming that the walls of the kitchen garden and orangery ('speelhuis') are still on their original position, measuring had been done calculating the right position of the central paths. For the working scheme extra research was done by Debie & Verkuyl.

By measuring the beds we discovered that at Stoopendaal's engraving the naantjes were sometimes depicted in a bed and sometimes next to them. In practice the width of the beds is twice armlength but here is chosen for wider beds of 1.80 m to create a comparable calmer total image. The width of the central paths is 18 Rhineland feet (one Rhineland foot is 32 cm), the smaller paths 15 Rh. feet (and 12 Rh. feet for the smallest paths near the walls), matching other paths and lanes on the estate. For the restoration wooden planks as edges instead of the more fragile and costly tiles. In the autumn of 2015 88 fruit trees were ordered and (low grafted apples and pears). For the planting list two-thirds were known as 17th century plants and one-third were from later modern sources. It seemed important to find a market for the production and follow still the image of Stoopendaal. Starting in 2015 to bring the kitchen garden in practice there were still some questions (by working in it we discovered the use of wide paths in the centre of parcels (passing wheelbarrows) and the ideal width of placing your feet between or in the beds). But the fruit trees were ordered in France and compared in variety with Dutch current practice because 17th century design and planting lists were not found in the archives of Zuylestein. The cold frames were relicts of 20th century practice but will be made after the engraving to display 17th century practice bringing to life the ideals of pleasure of growing healthy and local products for the visiting guests in an innovating environment.

Conclusion

_Stoopendaal's engraving 'after life' seems more reliable than generally has been adopted. And it worked out quite well for the original and recent owner and for the kitchen garden as part of a pleasant and productive country estate with allure. For the restoration the engraving turned out to be a useful addition to other sources.

Literature-shortlist:

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