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## Elites and country house culture in nineteenth-century Limburg\*

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In the south of Limburg near the city of Maastricht lies Vaeshartelt estate.<sup>1</sup> This house and park are a creation of the Maastricht industrialist Petrus Regout (1801-1878), one of the richest men in the province of Limburg. He started out as an assistant in his mother's ceramics shop, but lived to build a string of factories and became the biggest employer in the south of the Netherlands. In the second half of his life he invested much time and resources to Vaeshartelt, an imposing seventy-room country house. A house is an important expression of status.<sup>2</sup> His mercantile success did not lead to acceptance into the ranks of the local nobility. This seems to be paralleled by the careers of industrialists and merchants in other parts of the Netherlands.<sup>3</sup>

In the nineteenth century the traditional Dutch elites of nobility and what is called the 'patriciate' (*patriciaat*) lost much political power due to constitutional changes.<sup>4</sup> Patriciate is a term used for the merchants who gained enormous fortunes in the seventeenth century and adopted a luxurious way of life that resembled that of the nobility in many ways. Both these groups tried to adapt to the new reality and

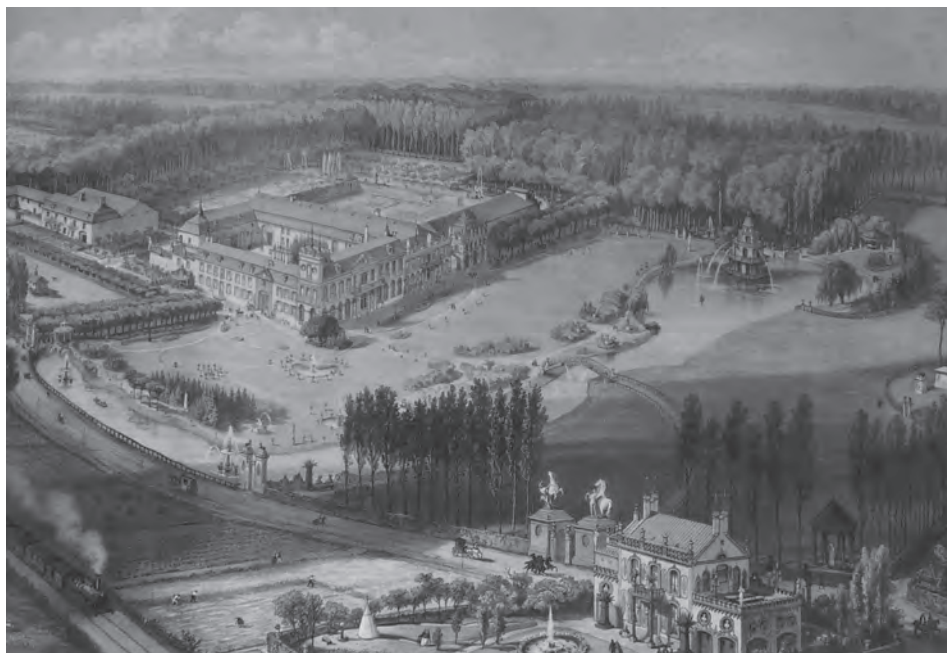
\* I wish to thank dr. James Taylor and drs. Marianne Blaauboer for their kind help with the English translation.

1 F. Vogelzang, 'Vaeshartelt en de Oranjes', *Kasteelkatern*, XI (2013) 12-14.

2 E. de Wijs-Mulkens, *Wonen op stand. Lifestyles en landschappen van de culturele en economische elite* (Amsterdam, 1990) 219-220.

3 E. Smeets, 'De landelijke elite in negentiende-eeuws Twente. Textielindustriëlen als landgoedeigenaren en hun relatie met de lokale adel', *Virtus*, XIII (2006) 114-131.

4 See: J.C. Boogman, *Rondom 1848* (Haarlem, 1983). The effects on the nobility are introduced by, for example: I. Montijn, *Hoog geboren. 250 jaar adellijk leven in Nederland* (Amsterdam, 2012) 41.



The country estate of Vaeshartelt near Maastricht, the property of manufacturer Petrus Regout (*from the picture album 'Album dédié a mes amis et mes enfants'; private collection*)

strengthen their social position by accentuating their historical high status, their 'noble' ancestry and their civilized way of life. Newcomers like Regout were despised as impostors, upstarts, *nouveau riches*<sup>5</sup> and parvenus, who did not possess the necessary civilised manners, polite language and deeply rooted culture to be part of the elite.

Did the newcomers really want to emulate the old aristocratic way of life or did they form their own separate culture by choosing elements from other social habitats? Did they exclusively aim to be part of the elite, or were they focused on different goals? In this study I want to explore the formation of a Limburg political and economic elite in the nineteenth century and the role of old and new families therein. In Limburg in the nineteenth century there existed some three hundred castles and country houses. Country houses were typically a symbol of power and social success in the Netherlands, as many studies have shown.<sup>6</sup> What role did a country house play in the lives of the old and the new Limburg elite families? Did both groups own

5 The term came into existence in Napoleonic France: J. Mordaunt Crook, *The rise of the nouveaux riches. Style and status in Victorian and Edwardian architecture* (London, 1999) 7.

6 See, for example: R. van der Laarse and Y. Kuiper, eds, *Beelden van de buitenplaats. Elitevorming en notabelencultuur in Nederland in de negentiende eeuw* (Hilversum, 2005).

country houses and for what reasons? What was their social function? Can this be used to differentiate between the social image of old and new elites? How does Limburg in this respect compare to the rest of the Netherlands? The paper particularly draws on the vast amount of available data in the period 1840-1860.

In Dutch historiography noble and elite studies have had a renaissance in the past thirty years. The rise of new elites has been studied for the cities of Amsterdam, Rotterdam, The Hague and Maastricht, the main city in Limburg.<sup>7</sup> Other research concentrated on regions, like Twente and eastern Brabant.<sup>8</sup> Many studies focus on the eighteenth century, because of the radical changes in society in the second half of that epoch, but the nineteenth century has also been a focal point of research. Most of these studies use historical or sociological theories about social mobility, open and closed societies and social consciousness. I will apply some of these theories to try to explain some of the phenomena in Limburg. On a provincial scale such phenomena have as yet not been subject of an elite or social mobility study.

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The article starts with a short outline of the case of Vaeshartelt and a concise history of Limburg from 1815 onwards, including its political and economic elite. For this, a selection has been made: the members of the newly constituted provincial parliament, the Estates, complemented with a group of some fifteen industrialists. I will outline the background of these people and research if and how many of them owned a country house in the nineteenth century. My sources are a database of regional politicians, studies about Limburg country houses and biographies of individuals, mostly from a Dutch serial publication in vernacular called the 'Red' (for noble families) and 'Blue' books (for the patriciate).<sup>9</sup>

### King William II and Petrus Regout

In 1841 king William II visited the province of Limburg. He was the second king of the new kingdom of the Netherlands, which in effect was the product of the Congress of Vienna. After Napoleon's defeat Europe wanted France to be surround-

7 B. de Vries, *Electoraat en elite. Sociale structuur en sociale mobiliteit in Amsterdam 1850-1895* (Amsterdam, 1986); K. Bruin, *Een herenwereld ontleed. Over Amsterdamse oude en nieuwe elites in de tweede helft van de negentiende eeuw* (Amsterdam, 1980); B.M.M. van Vonderen, *Deftig en ondernemend. Amsterdam 1870-1910* (Amsterdam, 2013); H. van Dijk, *Rotterdam 1810-1880. Aspecten van een stedelijke samenleving* (Rotterdam, 1976); N. Bos, *Notabele ingezetenen. Historische studies over Nederlandse elites in de negentiende eeuw* (Utrecht, 1995); M. Callahan, *The harbor barons. Political and commercial elites and the development of the port of Rotterdam, 1824-1892* (Ann Arbor, 1986).

8 B. Willink, *De textielbaronnen. Twents Gelders familisme en de eerste grootindustrie van Nederland 1800-1980* (Zutphen, 2010); M. Duijvendak, *Rooms, rijk of regentesk. Elitevorming en machtsverhoudingen in oostelijk Noord-Brabant circa 1810-1914* (Utrecht, 1990); E.A.C. Smeets, *Landscape and society in Twente and Utrecht: a geography of Dutch country estates, circa 1800-1950* (Leeds, 2005).

9 'Repertorium ambtsdragers', <http://resources.huygens.knaw.nl/repertoriumambtsdragersambtenaren> 1428-1861 (accessed between Sep. 2013 and Mar. 2014); for the country houses mostly W. Hupperetz, B. Olde Meierink and R. Rommes, *Kastelen in Limburg. Burchten en landhuizen 1000-1800* (Utrecht, 2005); *Nederland's Adelsboek* (1903-); *Nederlands Patriciaat* (1910-); see, also: L. Heynen, *Adel in 'Limburg' of de Limburgse adel. Geschiedenis en repertorium 1590-1990* (Maastricht, 2008).



ed by strong countries that would halt possible future aggression. In the north the old Dutch Republic, the duchy of Luxembourg and the Austrian Netherlands were merged into a new United Dutch Kingdom. William I of Orange, from a long line of Dutch stadtholders, became its first king.

The South was mostly Catholic, the North a Protestant state. The king was a Protestant and the Constitution prescribed a Protestant king. The South was one of the most industrialized parts of Europe; the North was focused on commerce and agriculture. The two parts of the kingdom did not fit. Not long after its inception, forces in the southern part of the Dutch Kingdom clamoured for separation. The conflict erupted into a full blown war of Belgian independence. Although the Northern army beat the Southerners, Limburg was occupied by the Belgians. They appealed successfully to the international community and an uneasy peace process was started. King William refused to participate. In the end William had to bow to external pressure, 150  
extenuated by the fact that he started, after the death of his wife, a liaison with a Belgian noblewoman of Catholic decent. Within the year, his son William II succeeded him and made a journey through his new kingdom. William II loved the south and asked Petrus Regout to look out for a suitable house to live in while visiting Limburg. That he asked Regout, the richest man in Limburg, was not unexpected. The kings had been patrons of industry and no one had used their patronage better than Petrus Regout.

Regout started as the son of a Maastricht shopkeeper in ceramics and household appliances. His bright future was cut short by the untimely death of his father. The thirteen-year old had to quit his education and help in the family business. He soon expanded into glass and built an extensive network of contacts with factories in neighbouring Liege, where industrialization was much further developed. When war broke out in 1830, his lines of supply were cut and Regout was forced to start producing his own glass. Soon he also opened an ironworks and a ceramics factory.<sup>10</sup> Royal support smoothed the way and Regout's business flourished. Because of his good relations with the royal family it was to him that William II turned when he wanted an estate in the south of Limburg. Petrus bought Vaeshartelt near Maastricht for the king in 1841, a castle recently modernized by its former noble owner. Two years after William died in 1849, Regout, who had also become a member of parliament in The Hague, bought the seventy-room country house. It became his pet project. He added new wings and a tower to the building, constructed a big park and beautiful gardens, with fountains, statues and other *objets d'art*. Vaeshartelt became an impressive residence.

Regout's success did not endear him to his fellow citizens. In the liberal city of Maastricht, a conservative Catholic like Regout was politically isolated. Moreover, to many of the old powerful Maastricht families Regout was a *nouveau riche*, a parvenu,

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10 H.W. Lintsen et al., eds, *Geschiedenis van de techniek in Nederland. De wording van een moderne samenleving, 1800-1890* (6 vols; 1992-1995), VI.

Petrus Dominicus Regout  
(1801-1878), industrial  
entrepreneur and owner of  
Vaeshartelt estate near  
Maastricht (*painting,*  
*anonymus; private*  
*collection, photo by*  
*Rijksdienst voor*  
*Kunsthistorische*  
*Documentatie, The Hague*)



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who in a tasteless manner flaunted his wealth, especially at Vaeshartelt. This view of Regout is long-lived as a Limburg newspaper of 2006 still attests.<sup>11</sup> This seems to fit in with the general image of the old Dutch elite trying to ward off the threat of newcomers that emulated their lifestyle and undermined their social position, by denouncing them as uncivilized parvenus.

On the other hand, other 'upstarts' with similar careers to Regout found their way into the higher echelons without problems. For example, in 1822, a Petrus de Liedell de Well was created baron. His noble roots did not run deep. His father William had been only a son of a lowly Prussian civil servant. William set sail to the Dutch East Indies as a ship's surgeon but rose to become a merchant for the Dutch East India Company. In that capacity he made a lot of money and returned to Europe a rich man. There he bought the title of chevalier. Again luck smiled on him: he discovered to be a very distant relative of a noble woman and could add 'count De Pas' to his name. William consequently married a rich Antwerp alderman's daughter and lived of the

<sup>11</sup> *Limburgs Dagblad*, 22 Sep. 2006.

proceeds from the seigneuries of Well and Bergen in Limburg. Petrus, the son of this adventurer, experienced no barriers becoming part of the Dutch nobility and married an Austrian baroness.<sup>12</sup> He had 'the noble blood' although it ran very thin in his veins.

### New and old elites

The relations between the old and new elite in the nineteenth century have recently been studied by the Dutch historian Jaap Moes. 'Noblesse oblige' was one of the most important noble themes. To be aristocratic was to present an aristocratic way of life to the world. In behaviour, language,<sup>13</sup> clothing, possessions and, of course, a country house, preferably one that had been in the family for ages. To show such an aristocratic image to the world you needed wealth. The danger was of course, that people with image could emulate this lifestyle without belonging to the right 'caste'. This is very much true of the possession of a country estate. This threat was exacerbated by the loss of political power in 1848.

Because in the second half of the nineteenth century a substantial number of the newly enriched surpassed the old families in riches, a battle for status ensued. By 'conspicuous consumption' the nobility tried to keep its position, but wealth was not sufficient. Moes introduces 'habitus' from the social theories of the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu. Habitus is a way of life, for which a certain 'capital' is needed. This capital was not only measured in money, but also in social capital, like respect and honour. This was needed to stay on top, 'oben zu bleiben'.<sup>14</sup>

There was another threat: for the first time in centuries, new Dutch nobles were created. In the Dutch Republic, because of the absence of a sovereign king, no persons had been ennobled for centuries, unlike the neighbouring countries like France or the Austrian Netherlands. The Dutch nobility was therefore 'frozen' in time. Some rich Dutch merchants had obtained foreign titles, but these were very much looked down upon by the old families. This is satirized by the Dutch novelist Godfried Bomans, who lets the aristocratic wasp in his novel *Erik of het klein insectenboek* (1941) make an emphatic difference between the 'old branch' of the family and younger branches. It is all 'in the blood' and only the old aristocrats possess 'the blood'.

For the nobility the link with the land was very important and transcended economic considerations. As local lords they were rooted in the local community, owned ancestral castles and played an important part in local cultural life. They tried to strengthen their position by ancestral portraits, coats of arms and membership of

12 *Nieuw Nederlandsch Biografisch Woordenboek* (NNBW) (10 vols.; The Hague, 1911-1937), VIII, 1042-1043.

13 Norbert Elias had emphasized the importance of these aspects; new research shows that this is still the case. See: N. Elias, *Het civilisatieproces. Sociogenetische en psychogenetische onderzoekingen* (2 vols, Utrecht, 1939; Utrecht, 1989), II, 162; K. Fox, *Watching the English. The hidden rules of English behaviour* (London, 2004) 393.

14 J. Moes, *Onder aristocraten. Over hegemonie, welstand en aanzien van adel, patriciaat en andere notabelen in Nederland, 1848-1914* (Hilversum, 2012) 99.

exclusive noble societies.<sup>15</sup> In this way they distinguished themselves from the *nouveaux riches*, whose fathers or grandfathers had been simple artisans or farmers, whose new-fangled double names were invented and whose country houses were newly bought.<sup>16</sup> It was not surprising that marriages between scions of the new and the old elite were rare.<sup>17</sup>

Limburg does not fit into this mould easily. It, for example, did not possess a group of seventeenth century rich merchants from the Dutch East India Company, nor a patriciate as it existed in Amsterdam, Utrecht or The Hague. Only the city of Maastricht had a town-based elite and that was a military and administrative elite. Until 1795 the larger part of the later province of Limburg belonged to the bishopric of Liege or German states, and as a result commoners were constantly raised to the nobility. Many Limburg families were ennobled during the seventeenth or eighteenth century. So a clear distinction between old and new nobility did not exist and with it no odium towards upstart nobility. More than one Limburg baronial title was based on the merits of an eighteenth-century Liege merchant or Aachen manufacturer.

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The connections between the south of Limburg and these two adjacent regions, Liege and Aachen, were strong. For example, the Aachen apothecary J.P.J. Monheim built up a grocery imperium and then turned, like Regout, to the manufacturing of ceramics. He bought the estate of Diepenbenden, where he started a factory. He diversified into textile dyes. One of his sons married Antoinette Merckelbach from the Limburg village of Wittem and turned to chocolate production.<sup>18</sup> Another example is the famous Liege industrial dynasty of Cockerill. Like Regout, William Cockerill had built an manufacturing imperium with royal support.<sup>19</sup> His sons James and John inherited the factory near Verviers. John and James subsequently bought the Liege country estate of Seraing, where they opened up new blast furnaces. In 1820 James also bought the Aachen 'Schloss' Berenberg of its owner Leonard von Pelser Berensberg<sup>20</sup> and started a factory. The Belgian castle of Klein Ternaaien was bought in 1821 by the Maastricht banker W. Visschers and another nearby castle, the Emmaburg, was inhabited by Nellisen Theodor, an Aachen textile merchant. From this examples it becomes clear that the industrial and commercial dynasties of South Limburg, Aachen and Liege were interwoven, geographically and socially.<sup>21</sup>

What do social theories tell us about social mobility and changing elites? For ex-

15 Moes, *Onder aristocraten*, 146, 231; Montijn, *Hoog geboren*, 76-85.

16 Moes, *Onder aristocraten*, 226-228.

17 Ibidem, 302-304.

18 F. Monheim, *Johann Peter Joseph Monheim 1786-1855. Apotheker und Chemiker, sozial engagierter Bürger und Politiker zu Aachen* (Aachen, 1981) 15-20.

19 J.L. van Zanden and A. van Riel, *Nederland 1780-1914. Staat, instituties en economische ontwikkeling* (Amsterdam, 2000) 168-169.

20 Von Pelser Berenberg also had connections to Dutch Limburg: some members of this family lived in Vaals and Valkenburg, where they were mayors and owned castles. See: Heynens, *Adel in 'Limburg'*, 273.

21 K.E. Krämer, *Burgen in und um Aachen* (Duisburg, 1984).



ample, F.M.L. Thompson writes about wealth, social status and the influence wealth has on the entrepreneurial ethos. He deals critically with theories that the pursuit of wealth is at the root no more than the pursuit of social status. An early adherent of this theory was the eighteenth-century economist Adam Smith, who saw wealth as only a means, not an end. Money was a prerequisite to emulate the style and status of the aristocratic-gentry elite. The new rich basically wanted to become part of the country's ruling elite.<sup>22</sup> A modern supporter is the American historian Martin Wiener. As entrepreneurs become landed gentlemen, they distance themselves from the business world. Society loses the talents and impetus of the innovative businessmen. This conviction he shares with the English nineteenth-century manufacturer Richard Cobden, who was also disappointed in entrepreneurs who attained riches and status. Instead of changing society, they adopt a fawning and snobbish attitude towards the nobility and forget their origins and values.<sup>23</sup> If this were true, Thompson wonders, there would be no business culture. Industrialists are just gentry-in-waiting. He doubts that very much. Individual tastes and wishes differ greatly and not all entrepreneurs wholeheartedly adopt aristocratic values. Also, some aristocrats became active in business, which is impossible according to this theory. Thompson turns the argument around: as many aristocrats used the natural resources on their estates to start mines and factories or participated in businesses, maybe they inspired artisans to emulate their 'betters' and start their own businesses.<sup>24</sup> Also, captains of industry have their own goals and choose their own way of life. It was not just about emulation.

Furthermore, elites are not homogeneous, as the Dutch historian Nick Bos shows. There are social, political, cultural or economical elites and every elite has different tiers. For example within the Dutch nobility the top layer is formed by the members of the *Ridderschap*, a noble society.<sup>25</sup> Based on Vilfredo Pareto and Gaetano Mosca, Bos poses two visions of social mobility: the rise or fall of individuals, and the replacement of one elite group by another. Pareto alleges that persons who have 'arrived' at the top, can become complacent which offers opportunities for younger and dynamic individuals. This is along the lines of the theory of Wiener and Cobden. Mosca proposes the existence of open and closed elites. An open elite offers room to newcomers, a closed one invites struggle between in- and outsiders. Status was long transferred from father to son, but this changed during the nineteenth century. Sociologist R.L. Zijdeman sees a change to transference by education and cultural capital. Occupations and careers give social status. New industries give social opportuni-

22 F.M.L. Thompson, *Gentrification and the enterprise culture. Britain 1780-1980* (Oxford, 2001) 6-8.

23 Thompson, *Gentrification*, 12-13; in the middle of the twentieth century a comparable discussion was waged on the 'treason of the bourgeoisie' in the sixteenth century. According to many historians, the middle classes in that period also turned their back on their traditional life style to adopt a more aristocratic way of life. See, for example: H. Soly, 'Het "verraad" der 16de-eeuwse burgerij: een mythe?', *Tijdschrift voor Geschiedenis*, LXXXVI (1973) 262-280.

24 Mordaunt Crook, *The rise of the nouveaux riches*, 9.

25 Bos, *Notabele ingezetenen*, 14.

ties: engineers from the middle class can rise to manager of the factory and marry the daughter of the owner.<sup>26</sup> Marriage can be a fast way to rise socially.<sup>27</sup>

### Limburg, history and government

Before focusing on the elite, I first offer a short historical exposé. Limburg as a province did not exist before 1815. Except the fortress cities of Venlo and Maastricht and Opper Gelre, most of it had never been part of the Dutch Republic but belonged to German principalities and the bishopric of Liege. When in 1815 the new Dutch Kingdom was formed, all these parts and a big part of eastern Belgium were amalgamated into a new province, governed by a governor and Provincial Estates. This was a new political elite, appointed by the King, so the theory of a replacement of an old elite by a new can be discarded for early nineteenth century Limburg.

Of the inhabitants of this new province, sixty per cent had never before been citizens of the Netherlands and not everybody was happy to become Dutch. Even the name of Limburg was artificial. First it was proposed to call the province Maastricht, after its capital, but under pressure from king William I it was changed into Limburg. He wanted to continue this medieval name, although the old Duchy of Limburg was situated more to the south. Limburg was almost homogeneously Catholic. In the Protestant north of the Netherlands, Catholics were still treated as second rate citizens and new tax- and educational laws made the catholic inhabitants fear for their position.<sup>28</sup> In 1830 the discontent in the South erupted into revolution which led to war. Although the northern Dutch army beat the Southerners, international pressure forced William to a ceasefire. Limburg was occupied by the Southern forces. It took the king almost ten years to concede defeat. Only in 1839 a treaty was signed and was a truncated Limburg returned to the North.<sup>29</sup>

From 1840 onwards there was a new provincial parliament that also sent delegates to the national parliament in The Hague. In the North the return of Limburg was not greeted with enthusiasm. Many Protestants were afraid the Catholics in the North would be strengthened by the influx of so many fellow believers. Limburgers moreover were seen as traitors, because many of them supported the new kingdom of Belgium. It would take many years for the Limburgers to accept their incorporation in the Dutch kingdom. And Limburg was, as part of the 1839 treaty, a member of the *Duitse Bond*, a federation of German states, which made for a problematic judicial status.<sup>30</sup>

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26 R.L. Zijdemans, *Status attainment in the Netherlands 1811-1941. Spatial and temporal variation before and during industrialization* (Utrecht, 2010) 119.

27 Zijdemans, *Status attainment*, 2-4.

28 J. Koch, *Koning Willem I, 1772-1843* (Amsterdam, 2013) 413-430.

29 E. Lemmens, *Aan Vorst en Vaderland gehecht, doch tevreden zijn zij niet. Limburgse politici in Den Haag 1839-1918* (Amsterdam, 2004) 25-31.

30 Lemmens, *Aan Vorst en Vaderland*, 53-59.

National and international pressures forced King William II in 1848 to ask the liberal member of parliament Thorbecke to write a new constitution. This had implications for Limburg and its political elite. Under the old constitution, the provincial parliament was divided into three categories: the nobles, the cities and the country. Every category had twenty seats until 1840; after that this was limited to thirteen each. The nobles were chosen by the *Ridderschap*, of which in 1842 only 51 aristocrats from 43 families held membership.<sup>31</sup> The cities mostly delegated their mayors to the provincial estates and in the country the big landowners were powerful players. A lot of these landowners were also nobles, so the aristocracy had a great say in provincial affairs. The new constitution changed all this: Limburg was divided into territorial units with approximately the same number of inhabitants each. Every district chose representatives to the provincial parliament with no differentiation between nobles and commoners, and also to the 'Second Chamber', the Dutch House of Commons. The Limburg Estates were expanded to 45 seats, distributed over nine electoral districts. Delegates were chosen for six years but could be reappointed immediately. No more than ten per cent of male adult inhabitants had the vote: you needed a certain amount of wealth.<sup>32</sup>

### The elite: nobles and non-nobles

The new province was rather heterogeneous. The north, around Venlo and Roermond, had a different history and a different mentality than the south, around Maastricht. The elites of these two parts did not really mix. Most nobles lived in the southern part, hardly any in the north. In the south many spoke French, on the east bank of the Meuse on the other hand, the dialect was close to German. Economically there were great differences too.<sup>33</sup> Around Maastricht, close to Liege, industry was important. Not only the factories of Regout were situated there. Textile factories of Clermont, weapons production of Stevens, the paper works of Tielens and Schrammen and another of Lhoëst and Weustenraadt, the chemical factory of P. Hahmes, the potteries of Paulus Teeuwen in Tegelen, soap and salt works and wine merchants like Hermans and Coenegracht were also active in Maastricht. In Roermond, in the centre of the province, there were only a few factories, and in Blerick near Venlo in the north, some ironworks and potteries existed.

Industrialists were at least as rich as the nobility. The richest man in Limburg in 1870 was Petrus Regout, with an annual income of about eighty thousand guilders. Two sons of his earned respectively fifteen thousand and ten thousand guilders a year. The second richest man in Limburg was the nobleman C.A. baron de Bieberstein Rogalla Zawadsky, an officer from an originally Polish noble family, and a member of

31 *Reglementen voor de Ridderschap in het Hertogdom Limburg* (The Hague, 1842).

32 N. Wilterdink, *Vermogensverhoudingen in Nederland. Ontwikkelingen sinds 1850* (Amsterdam, 1984) 71.

33 Lemmens, *Aan Vorst en Vaderland*, 90-100.

parliament like Regout. He earned ‘only’ twenty thousand guilders yearly.<sup>34</sup> Most other powerful men in Limburg earned about ten thousand guilders, like the governor, who was politically the most powerful man in the province.<sup>35</sup>

After 1840 Limburg started with a new political system and a new political elite. The members of the first Provincial Estates were appointed by the king. Subsequently there would be elections at regular intervals. Local people with a certain amount of wealth chose these representatives. Of course the different parts that formed the province of Limburg had their own existing elite families, but now they had to form a new provincial elite. Some noble families, with their international roots, may have known some of their new colleagues, but there were probably a lot of unknown faces. For the years between 1840 and 1860 there is a database available with all members that have had a seat in the Provincial Estates, of which 32 were nobles and 94 were non-noble.<sup>36</sup>

In total 126 persons sat in the Estates during this time, although the database might not be complete. I am also aware that this is not the complete elite. Only those with the Dutch nationality or those who had lived long enough within the borders could be chosen. Some did not run for office or held posts within the national government, which excluded membership of the Provincial Estates. But even with these caveats, quite a lot of the richest and most powerful men can be found in the Estates.

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TABLE 1 PLACE OF BIRTH OF 126 MEMBERS OF PROVINCIAL ESTATES IN LIMBURG, 1840-1860

	Limburg	Netherlands	Germany	Belgium	Unknown	Total
Provincial Estates 1840-1860	89	4	6	17	10	126

I have been able to collect a limited amount of biographical data of sixty individuals. For aristocrats this was easier than for non-nobles. Of some individuals no more than a name and place of birth could be found, others have been the subject of extensive biography. The preliminary findings are presented in Table 1 from which it becomes

<sup>34</sup> He was married to Henriette Bosch van Drakestein, member of a very rich Utrecht, newly ennobled Catholic family.

<sup>35</sup> Bos, *Notabele ingezetenen*, 259.

<sup>36</sup> See note 8; a comparable analysis for other provinces has not yet been done. The situation in for example North-Brabant differs in important ways. North-Brabant is also a predominant Catholic province, but because it was governed by the Estates-General from the seventeenth century, it had a Protestant elite. In the nineteenth century a new Catholic elite was formed, that slowly eclipsed the old Protestants. Some of these Catholic families were ennobled. See: M. Duijvendak, *Rooms, rijk of regentesk. Elitevorming en machtsverhoudingen in oostelijk Noord-Brabant circa 1810-1914* (Utrecht, 1990); F.G.G. Govers, *Het geslacht en de firma F. van Lanschot 1737-1901* (Tilburg, 1972). In Utrecht, the situation was more mainstream, as described in the study by Jaap Moes. An older elite, partially from bourgeois, partially from noble stock, was expanded with new families. Still, the noble families continued to play an important role in the provincial estates. See F. Vogelzang, ‘Vernieuwing of continuïteit? Provinciale Staten van Utrecht rond 1848’, *Jaarboek Oud Utrecht* (2011) 255-270.

clear that the majority of delegates were born in Limburg. The explanation is simple: local people choose local, especially in Limburg. There are examples of Limburg delegates who tried to run for office in the neighbouring district and lost because they were seen as ‘foreigners’. They only lived fifteen miles away. The four delegates from the Northern Netherlands were either appointed by the king or had a government appointment in Limburg. On the other hand, the 23 delegates from Germany and Belgium show the border transcending connections.

TABLE 2 THE OCCUPATION OF THE DELEGATES, 1840-1860

	Noble (100%) (n=32)	Non-noble (30%) (n=28)
Mayor	19%	35%
Military	13%	–
Law	22%	43%
Government	19%	4%
Entrepreneur	–	11%
Medical profession	–	2%
Unknown profession/none	27%	5%

Table 2 presents an analysis of the occupations of the 32 noble delegates and a selection of 28 non-noble delegates. The differences in occupation between nobles and non-nobles in the Provincial Estates are conspicuous, but because of the small amount of information on non-nobles (only 28 of the 94 non-nobles), this table has to be interpreted with great care. Nobles have, like non-nobles, careers in law and government, but rather less markedly. On the other hand, they are traditionally strongly involved in the army. The almost a third of nobles without an occupation appear mainly to be gentlemen living on private means.

Not many industrialists or merchants were members of the Estates. This is in accordance with findings for other provinces. Manufacturers who are still active in their companies mostly have no time for other occupations. Thus Petrus Regout concentrated much of his energy on Vaeshartelt after leaving the daily running of his factories into the hands of his sons. Often it was the sons who went for a career in politics. Some of the Limburg merchants and industrialists, as we have seen above, were from Liege or Aachen. The social connections with their homeland stayed strong, as many of them married women from Belgium or Germany and they bought landed estates there. We saw earlier that the recently constructed national borders did not constitute a social or economic barrier.



## Country house ownership

How many delegates owned a country house and what was their marriage pattern? Of the three hundred country houses in Limburg, little over two hundred were privately owned in the nineteenth century. Quite a number were uninhabitable, having fallen into ruin by disuse, wars or neglect. Some had been sold to the Catholic Church or religious orders, to be transformed into monasteries or presbyteries. A lot of families owned more than one house and a number of country houses were in the hands of nobles who were not members of the Provincial Estates. Non-noble families often also owned two or more houses.

It is safe to say that the possession of a country house was a typical part of elite life. Some ninety per cent of the noble delegates and 53 per cent of the studied non-noble delegates owned a country house. From this it becomes apparent that a country house was much more central to aristocratic life. There are several explanations why non-nobles were less often country house owners. First of all, a considerable number of non-noble members were based in the city of Maastricht. They owned a big house within the city walls and seem to have focused more on city life. This made the ownership of a country house less socially compulsory. On the other hand, we do not know how many of them rented a country house. Because of this, the use of country houses may be much bigger than appears from these tables. Of the fifteen industrialists who I researched, almost all possessed a country house. Furthermore, quite a lot of local magistrates (who were not active in provincial politics) were owners of a (smallish) country house near their town of residence. It is not clear what conclusions to draw from these data. Many industrialists used their country estate also as a factory.<sup>37</sup> Because of this, their motive for buying an estate can be just as likely be an pragmatic one (space, big buildings) as a social one (status). Also there seem to be a difference between the town-based elite of Maastricht and elite families outside of the city. Research should focus on personal documents to discover the differences in motive, if any, of these groups to acquire a country estate.

If marriage was a route to the top, as Zijderveld proposes, it was not taken very often. Some 53 per cent of the noble delegates had a noble spouse. The low percentage of mutual noble marriages can be explained by the fact that more than twenty per cent of the nobles did not marry. Some others married rich heiresses from bourgeois stock. Of the researched 28 non-noble delegates only fourteen per cent had a noble spouse. Bos has researched the elite of the city of Maastricht, the biggest and most important city of Limburg. That elite was relatively open. Newcomers were offered the opportunity to work in the city's government and institutions next to members of the 150 old families, which had been in power for a long time. It appears to have been a pragmatic solution, because socially they did not mix. It took generations for both groups to intermarry, following the well-known saying 'it takes three generations to

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<sup>37</sup> This was also apparent in the region of Twente, as shown by E. Storms-Smeets in her thesis.



The castle of Gronsveld, property of the banker A. Gadiot (*photo by D. Kransberg; coll. Nederlandse Kastelenstichting*)

make a gentleman'.<sup>38</sup> One of the few examples was W.M.F.X.Th. baron de Crassier, who married a daughter of the very rich banker A. Gadiot, who also happened to own a castle, Gronsveld. It appears that an aristocrat marrying a commoner happened in about 25 per cent of the cases. Some nobles married rich heiresses and these were mostly from the North of the kingdom, where a seventeenth-century patriciate had since the eighteenth century become 'reçu', but hardly any titled women married an industrialist. Only generations later, when the non-noble family had shed its manufacturing roots, family bonds were forged. But many non-nobles never married an aristocrat and seem not to have aspired to a noble marriage.

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<sup>38</sup> Mordaunt Crook, *The rise of the nouveaux riches*, 2; J. Lukowski, *The European nobility in the eighteenth century* (Basingstoke, 2003) 14.

TABLE 3 THE OWNERSHIP OF A COUNTRY HOUSE, INCLUDING FUNCTION AND LENGTH OF OWNERSHIP<sup>39</sup>

Owners / use	Residence	Religious house	Factory	Lease	Farm
Noble family, more than 2 generations	64	1	-	6	4
Noble family 1-2 generations	11	-	-	-	-
Non-noble family, more than 2 generations	45	3	3	3	7
Non-noble family 1-2 generations	36	1	-	7	15
Total	156	5	3	16	26

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In table 3, the uses of the Limburg country houses in the nineteenth century are analysed. In total noble families possessed 86 country houses, non-nobles 130 country houses. This is the sum total of all privately used country houses: not all of these owners are members of the Provincial Estates. A lot of owners had private means or were mayors or aldermen in the local government, lawyers, entrepreneurs or big farmers. Many Limburg castles are part of a complex of buildings, of which one of the important components is a farmhouse and stables. That explains the agricultural use. In the table above I have only assigned those buildings to the category 'farm' where the main house is also part of the farm: that means that some residences could be partially in use as a farm.<sup>39</sup>

In some cases, the use of the house stays unclear. For example, when the farm of the complex is in use, but the main house consists of a partially ruined medieval castle. Did the owners live in the farm building and was the castle only a status symbol or was a small part of the ruin still inhabitable and in use as, for example, a summer residence?

Still some striking differences appear from this summary. Noble families use their country house very often as a family home and keep it for many generations. The country house appears to be an important part of family identity.<sup>40</sup> The few houses that are leased out by nobles mostly concern second houses. Many noble families possess through marriage more than one big house in the country. The most convenient house is chosen as the main residence: sometimes other houses are used as hunting lodges or for special purposes. Sometimes they are let. Hardly any noble country house was in use as the centre of family life for consecutive decades. This was for two reasons. First, a lot of Limburg nobles were ennobled in the seventeenth

<sup>39</sup> The column 'lease' must be interpreted with care, as only long leases are found in the literature about country houses. Short term use as a rented home is rather less recorded.

<sup>40</sup> Montijn, *Hoog geboren*, 196-205. For an English comparison, see: M. Girouard, *Life in the English country house. A social and architectural history* (New Haven-London, 1978) 2.

or eighteenth century and so did not have a long enough past to possess a noble house for centuries. Secondly because of marriages many families move from house to house and new generations chose different houses to stay in.

Non-nobles also use their country house mainly as a family residence. 'Old' families that have deep roots in local government sometimes possess houses for many centuries, bought or built before 1700, but rather more often than aristocrats they use a house for a shorter period. They seem to regard a country house pragmatically: it is a financial or social asset to be used as long as it is profitable. But when it outlives its use, it is sold or gets another function. Often the farm building is important and the landownership is an investment. This seems part of more general patterns. In France also bourgeois owners of castles were more cost conscious.<sup>41</sup>

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Of about fifteen industrialists, commercial bankers and merchants that were not members of the Estates, I have collected biographical data. Most of these manufacturers and merchants did not marry into the nobility, but found their spouses in other mercantile families. A big majority owned a country house or a big villa, sometimes next to their factory. Sometimes the country house doubles as a factory. Often they can be found as aldermen of mayors in their town of residence. An example is the Maastricht family of merchant-bankers of Tielens. Many members of the family sat on the municipal council during the nineteenth century. Together with their fellow citizens of Schrammen they erected a paper mill in 1845. The Tielens family owned the Weerterhof, a country house next to the paper mill.<sup>42</sup>

Another Maastricht entrepreneur was Leon Joseph Lhoëst, who came from Liege. Backed with money of the Liege banker Fresart, he established a paper mill and built a monumental villa next to it. His grandson married a granddaughter of Petrus Regout. In Roermond the son of a German organ player also erected a paper factory, with money from the non-noble Magnée family, who owned the castle of Horn and came from Liege.<sup>43</sup> Sons and grandsons of Magnée were members of the Provincial Estates and local government and some married into the nobility. Not every entrepreneur aspired to a country estate. The biggest Maastricht brewer, Nicolaas Bosch, who also owned some factories, had none, and neither did his father-in-law, the industrialist Vlieckx.

Of course there is one fact that muddles the comparison. At the end of the nineteenth century country houses lose part of their appeal. This is because of economic factors: the profits from agriculture decline, the costs of keeping up these big buildings and the necessity of (increasingly expensive) staff make a big house very expensive. Also the fashion changed: modern villas take over the role of popular luxury homes and many estates are broken up to be sold for new housing developments. So the newly rich who bought a country house in the second half of the century, had less

41 See, for example: G. Chaussinand-Nogaret, 'De l'aristocratie aux élites', in: idem, ed., *Histoire des élites en France du XVIe au XXe siècle. L'honneur, le mérite, l'argent* (Paris, 1991) 217-319, 304.

42 *De Maaspost*, 5 Nov. 2008, 11.

43 A.M.J.A. Berkvens, H.J.J.M. Bruggen and I.M.L.M. Magnée, *Rechtspraak in Roermond. Van Soevereine Raad naar Rechtbank Limburg (1580-2012)* (Hilversum, 2013) 219-221.



The castle of Horn in 1893 (photo by G.L. Hasseleij Kirchner; coll. Nederlandse Kastelenstichting)

‘time’ to keep the house in the family. Many nobles too sold their estates, but they had owned these possessions for much longer. Still, other families kept their country house well into the twentieth century. In Limburg some owners, noble and non-noble alike, donated or sold their house to religious orders, which used them as monasteries, schools or hospitals.

Here we can apply the insights of Thompson. It is clear that the Limburg *nouveaux riches* (a social background that carried far less odium than in the Northern provinces) did not unreservedly copy the values of the noble country house owners. The newly enriched indeed bought country houses, but they used them in a different way. An aristocrat was part of the local community and had an important social and political role. The house was fundamental to that role. As a big landowner, the aristocrat had economic ties with the farmers and the people in the village. The entrepreneurs used their country house as a summer residence, a home away from home. Many of them did not invest in landed estates. In England, for example, the percentage of landed gentry in parliament declined sharply in the second half of the nineteenth century because of this.<sup>44</sup>

A possible explanation is the social background of the *nouveaux riches*. Most are middle class (and even higher middle class, rags-to-riches stories are few and far be-

44 D. Spring, ed., *European landed elites in the nineteenth century* (Baltimore-London, 1977) 24.



tween).<sup>45</sup> The middle-class values of hard work, education and thrift made it possible to become rich. The potential of upward mobility is rooted in that background but most middle-class people do not aim for the highest echelons of society. They work to have a better life than their parents. The wealth that is necessary to become part of the ruling elite is hardly their initial aim. Only when circumstances open up possibilities, some attain great wealth. Indeed, many did not make it and some even went under: there is also downward mobility.<sup>46</sup> More proof of this is the refusal by some wealthy newcomers to be part of the elite.<sup>47</sup> A big country house obviously was not necessary for their social identity.

### Country house fashions

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Did old and new elite families furnish their houses differently? Was there indeed a difference in taste (or even civilization) like nobles tend to emphasize? In the existing literature about Dutch country houses, little attention is paid to the interior of the house. Even in specialist studies of the interiors of Dutch castles and country houses few pages are focused on the nineteenth century.<sup>48</sup> This is not only because many interiors have been lost, as they are susceptible to change, but also because only limited sources can shed light on that aspect, like stock takings and ego-documents such as diaries and letters. Only then it is possible to discover how rooms were arranged, what furniture was used and how the interior was judged by contemporaries. Stock taking was only done in special circumstances, for example when a will was contested. Hardly any research into Limburg country house lay-out and decoration has been done.

### Noble houses

The seventeenth century Ghent banker and merchant Nicolaas Willems, an important retainer of the bishop of Liege, bought many castles and seigneuries in the South, among them Amstenrade. After the war of independence his family concentrated on their Belgian estates and Amstenrade stood empty. Only after 1850, when it was again a family home, it was modernized with stucco ceilings, marble mantelpieces, parquetry and family portraits. The gardens were laid out in classical style, and outbuildings like conservatory, stables and coach house were constructed.<sup>49</sup>

The medieval castle of Wolfrath was part of the possessions of the archbishop of Cologne. For centuries the owners were in the service of German princes. The last noble owner, Bentinck, who owned eleven castles in the Netherlands, had to sell Wolfrath. The buyer was the Maastricht mayor Guillaume Kerens, who was ennobled by

<sup>45</sup> F. Crouzet, *The first industrialists. The problems of origins* (Cambridge, 1985) 126.

<sup>46</sup> Thompson, *Gentrification*, 20-21.

<sup>47</sup> H. van Wijnen, *Grootvorst aan de Maas. D.G. van Beuningen (1877-1955)* (Amsterdam, 2004) 123.

<sup>48</sup> *Wonen in Arcadië. Het interieur van Nederlandse kastelen en buitenplaatsen* (Zwolle, 1998) 21.

<sup>49</sup> A.R. Orbons, *Amstenrade. Een adellijk woonhuis in Zuid-Limburg* (Utrecht, 2003).

king William I. He married into the family Ruys de Beerenbrouck, an also newly ennobled family from Limburg and he modernized Wolfrath according to the classical fashion of the moment.

The same happened to the old castle of Well. This was inherited by the upstart adventurer William de Liedel, mentioned above. His son was incorporated into the Dutch nobility, had been chamberlain of Emperor Napoleon and owned two castles in Limburg. He also changed the interior of Well, with new stucco ceilings, mantelpieces and beautiful classical inspired staircases. This interior was lost after the castle was bombed in World War II.<sup>50</sup> Baron de Crassier changed the front of his country estate Jerusalem into a neoclassical building. Like him, many noble families adopted the classical style to modernize their medieval castles.

### Houses of non-noble families

In 1852 the German stone manufacturer and ship-owner Gerard Johan de Rijk bought the castle of Holtmühle, demolished parts of it and built a new luxurious country house.<sup>51</sup> His son became mayor of the nearby town of Tegelen and member of the Provincial Estates. He was a champion for railroad development in the South. Holtmühle was arranged in classical style.

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The wine merchant Mathias Sleyden was the owner of Houthem. This was a thirteenth-century monastery that was radically transformed into a modern country house. Here also new panelling, stucco ceilings, marble mantelpieces, parquet and family portraits were used to decorate the interior. The big oval vestibule gave access to the grand salon, with neoclassical elements and empire style ceilings and mantelpieces.<sup>52</sup> The Sibberhuuske near Valkenburg was renovated in the same style.<sup>53</sup> The owners were the Schoenmaker family, important in local government and law.

A parallel can be drawn with the wine merchant Jean Gerard Hubert Hermans, who bought the castle of Heel. He became mayor of the village of the same name and started a sugar works in his castle to try to make it profitable. Heel castle had been modernized in the eighteenth century. Today it is a mental hospital. The neoclassical style was very much in fashion, as is also shown in the case of the Gronsvelt castle, which was renovated in 1827 by its then owner the banker and merchant Andreas Adolf Gadiot. The stone mansion was adorned with small towers, classical pilasters, and sandstone renaissance and marble classical mantelpieces. In the garden a new conservatory was built and family portraits from the seventeenth century onwards decorated the walls.<sup>54</sup>

<sup>50</sup> See for individual castle descriptions: Hupperetz, Olde Meierink and Rommes, *Kastelen in Limburg*.

<sup>51</sup> *NNBW*, X, 859.

<sup>52</sup> A.G. Schutte and A.A.M. Warffemius, *Landgoed Sint-Gerlach. Kruispunt van culturen in het Land van Valkenburg* (Zwolle, 1999) 91-97.

<sup>53</sup> J.G.M. Notten, *Het Sibberhuis. De geschiedenis van een gebouw en zijn bewoners* (Valkenburg, 1995) 94-112.

<sup>54</sup> W. Marres and J.J.F.W. van Agt, *De Nederlandse monumenten van geschiedenis en kunst. Deel V: De provincie Limburg. Derde stuk: Zuid-Limburg uitgezonderd Maastricht* (The Hague, 1962) 187.

Even more impressive was the castle of Horn. This castle was property of the bishop of Liege and his steward Marcel Gerard Magnée, a lawyer, lived there. After the French expelled the bishop in 1794, the Magnée family, who already owned a country house in Belgium, bought the rather dilapidated castle of Horn, and rebuilt it. The family also started a paper mill near Roermond. They used Horn as a summer house, but after Robert Marcel Magnée became the mayor of Horn, it was in use as the permanent family home. The Magnées had distanced themselves from manufacturing but became active as railway pioneers. The castle was extended with new farmhouses. The next generation of Magnées became landed gentlemen, with a focus on agricultural development and research. Members of the family were married to French nobility and owned different castles.<sup>55</sup>

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Of particular interest is the country house of Clermont near Vaals. This house was built in the second half of the eighteenth century by the textile manufacturer Johann Arnold von Clermont, a Protestant from Aachen. Part of the house was used as country seat for the family, but one of the wings was turned into a large textile factory. Von Clermont was a Lutheran and built a Lutheran church near the house. It was not unusual for a manufacturer to live near his factory. This also happened in Twente<sup>56</sup> and for example near Maastricht, where the paper manufacturer Lhoëst built his villa next to the mill.

Clermont was a luxurious house with its own water wells, gardens, stables, coach houses and two *bassecours*. Inside all luxuries were added, with wallpapers painted with pastoral scenes, which after demolition were sold into the United States. Pieces of the furniture are still in the palace of the Bishop of Roermond. Special also were the stucco ceilings and the family portraits. Many rooms had artful wainscoting and marble mantelpieces. The family also had paintings of old masters copied. Like other manufacturers, after a while the family also wanted a country house away from the factory. Around 1795 they built Blumenthal for that specific purpose. Under Carl Theodor von Clermont the factory went bust, because of the competition of the Belgian steam driven factories. House Clermont was bought by another textile manufacturer from Aachen, Frans Ignatius Joseph Tyrell, whose descendants lived in Clermont until 1924.<sup>57</sup>

More Aachen textile manufacturers bought castles in Limburg.<sup>58</sup> Another example is Gillis Leonard Thimus, who was made a baron by the Prussian king. He bought the castles of Genhoes and Goedenrade and modernized both, with the meanwhile well-

55 M. Graef et al., *Kasteel Horn en zijn bewoners* (Horn, 2013) 165-181.

56 Smeets, *Landscape and society*; Mascha van Damme, *Heren op het land. Buitenplaatsen van Twentse textielfabrikanten* (Zwolle, 2013).

57 J.F. van Agt, *De Nederlandse monumenten van geschiedenis en kunst. Zuid-Limburg, Vaals, Wittem en Slenaken* (The Hague, 1983) 94-102.

58 This was part of an older tradition. Aachen was a Catholic city. Protestant industrialists established themselves in the region around Maastricht from the seventeenth century when it was part of the Dutch Republic and where they did not encounter problems because of their religion. Also the powerful guilds of Aachen could be circumvented in this way.



The castle of Amstenrade in 1893 (photo by G.L. Hasseleij Kirchner; coll. Nederlandse Kastelenstichting)

known elements of stucco ceilings and panelling. He chose Louis XV style for the interior the English style for the gardens. These French inspired styles were very much the hallmark of *nouveaux riches* taste in England.<sup>59</sup> Herman Lamberts was another German textile merchant who became baron Cortenbach, named after his Limburg residence, that was modernised by his descendants. The Maastricht weapons manufacturer Prosper Stevens chose to decorate his country house Severen near Amby in the regency style, with a garden with a grand plateau with sculpted vases and figures. To sum up, like in Great Britain the taste of the newly rich in Limburg was classical.<sup>60</sup>

Unlike old aristocratic families in England, France and Germany, who built in a quasi-medieval style or rebuilt ancestral castles in a historical style, in Limburg the aristocracy and non-nobles alike, often used the classical style when renovating their medieval castles.<sup>61</sup> Mostly this was done at the end of the eighteenth or the beginning of the nineteenth century. In some instances, a new house was built on the foundation of an older one and then usually a (neo)classical style was also adopted. So the architecture style of choice was classical, representing power, not only in country

<sup>59</sup> Mordaunt Crook, *The rise of the nouveaux riches*, 62-70.

<sup>60</sup> Ibidem, 42.

<sup>61</sup> B. Olde Meierink, 'De hercreatie van de voorvaderlijke burcht. De Haar in Europese context', *Kasteelkatern*, XVI (2014) 13-17; Mordaunt Crook, *The rise of the nouveaux riches*, 40-41.

houses, but also in government buildings like city halls or museums.<sup>62</sup> Introduced in the second half of the eighteenth century in the Netherlands, it was used long into the next century.

In the second half of the nineteenth century it was slowly replaced by neo-Renaissance and neo-Gothic. Examples of these styles are some modern country houses built by non-noble families in the north of Limburg, like Heysterum, Scheres, Oeverberg, Obbicht, Aerwinkel and Frymerson. Some aristocrats also adopted the neo-Gothic, like at the castles Schaesberg and Ter Worm. The castle of Eijsden, build in the seventeenth century and restored back to that style in the second half of the nineteenth century, was owned, like the neo-gothic Schaloen, by a noble family that was only distantly related to the original owners of the castle. The adoption of the gothic style can be influenced by the Catholic emancipation movement, that used the medieval inspired gothic style as a symbol of Catholic ascendancy. This process only got under way after 1860.<sup>63</sup>

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## Conclusions

Industrialists, merchants, noble and non-noble families. They all owned country houses in the Dutch province of Limburg. It was an important part of elite culture and lifestyle. Some of these houses were acquired in the seventeenth century, many in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries but hardly any were owned since time immemorial. Aristocrats and *nouveaux riches* alike bought or inherited medieval houses and changed them to their tastes and wishes. *Nouveaux riches* is a relative term, as many Limburg noble families had no deep roots. Before and after 1814 many new families were ennobled, some with mercantile or financial backgrounds.

Sometimes the medieval house was (partially) demolished to be replaced by a modern country house. Both old and new elite groups deferred to the reigning architectural fashion: styles like empire, regency or neoclassical were all used to aggrandize the country houses. It is possible they used the same architects and artisans. About the interior little is known, but here also there seem to be no big differences in taste. Like nobles, non-noble families had portraits on the walls, expensive furniture and luxurious decorating elements. Noble families often possessed more than one country house, but non-nobles also owned different houses. Both groups moreover had houses in the cities, like Maastricht, Venlo or Roermond and some even outside Limburg, in Brussels, Liege or Aachen.

There are some differences too. Only manufacturers combined a factory with a

<sup>62</sup> F. Vogelzang, 'De buitenplaats Broekhuizen: hoogtepunt van het Stichtse neoclassicisme. De rol van architect en opdrachtgever', *Mededelingen Stichting Utrechtse Kastelen*, CVI (2013) 2-42.

<sup>63</sup> A.J. Oxenaar, *P.J.H. Cuypers en het gotische rationalisme. Architectonisch denken, ontwerpen en uitgevoerde gebouwen 1845-1878* (Amsterdam, 2009). See, also: E. Crettaz-Stürzel, 'Adel und Wissenschaft – die europäische Burgenrenaissance um 1900', in: *Burgenrenaissance im Historismus* (Berlin, 2007) 9-24.



country house. Noblemen who were in some capacity involved in industry or commerce, did not live near their factories. And some manufacturers left their house near the mill and bought or built one in the country. Both groups used a country house as a family residence, but nobles owned their houses longer and used them mainly as a family residence. Non-nobles saw country houses in a more utilitarian way: a summer residence, often doubling as a working farm.

The purchase of Vaeshartelt by Petrus Regout and the way he turned the house into a luxurious mansion did not conflict with the accepted taste of the period. Other industrialists and merchants bought country houses and refurbished them in similar style as did noble families. The way Regout made his money also did not carry odium as nobles also participated in factories and merchant houses. His social isolation may have been something personal. His sons had no trouble marrying up, as did many paper, weapons or textile manufacturers that were part of the local business elite. Their – and Regout's – grandsons found noble spouses, so the old saying about three generations seems to be true. On the other hand, not many commoners sought a noble bride. Maybe the saying should be turned around: it takes a noble family three generations to accept that a self-made man is an acceptable family member.

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The theory that entrepreneurs lose their connection with their manufacturing roots as they turned into landed gentlemen with country houses, is only partially true in Limburg. Yes, sometimes sons or grandsons turned away from the family business, but sometimes they transformed into policymakers who stimulated business. Moreover, not always does the next generation possess the talent to continue the business, as the fortunes of the Clermont family show. Regout's sons and grandsons stayed in business and maybe not for the best: their callousness towards their workers has besmirched the name of the family.

Culturally there seems to be no great divide between the new elite and the old rich families, at least not when we look at the country house fashion. Taste and fashion do not stay the same: maybe the socializing process is not so much about acquiring good taste as knowing which new taste to follow.

Fred Vogelzang

## Elites and country house culture in nineteenth-century Limburg

The newly formed Dutch province of Limburg in the south of the country only was integrated in the Dutch Kingdom after the political and military upheavals of the first half of the nineteenth century. A new social, economic and political elite was formed in the same period, consisting of older Limburg, Belgian and German noble and non-noble families and *nouveaux riches* from industry, commerce and government. In this study I compare the lifestyles of the different groups that made up this new elite, concentrating on their possession and use of country houses.

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