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The baron, the collector, the hunter

W.A.A.J. Schimmelpenninck van der Oye, Duivenvoorde and his family collection (1912-1957)

‘I bequest to my great-nephew Willem Anne Assuerus Jacob baron Schimmelpenninck van der Oye Castle Duivenvoorde in Voorschoten with all household effects (...) and all its buildings, lands, lordships and other rights’, Hendricus Adolphus Steengracht (1836-1912) stated in his will.¹ And so it happened: in 1912, when he was only 23 years old, Willem (1889-1957) inherited Duivenvoorde from his great-uncle Steengracht. This inheritance consisted of more than 750 acres of land and farms, over twenty monuments, various rights and in the centre of it all a castle with a large family collection and a history of almost seven hundred years of uninterrupted family ownership – an enormous responsibility for a man his age.

In the 45 years that followed, Willem took it upon himself not only to preserve the possession he had inherited, but also to start recollecting parts of the old Duivenvoorde collection. Numerous pieces of paper with genealogical scribbles and notes in the archive of the baron are proof of his great interest in the history of his family and his ancestry. His ledgers, piles of bills of restorers, auction catalogues and correspondence with art historians, genealogists, and art collectors, all in the archives of the baron, are a testimony of how and to what extent he was involved with the collection at Duivenvoorde. The baron felt the duty of preserving the family property

1 Archive Stichting Duivenvoorde, Voorschoten (ASD), Archive Hendricus Adolphus Steengracht (AHAS), inv.nr. III.86, 22 May 1908, will of Hendricus Adolphus Steengracht.

for posterity, a task he took most seriously, but with varying degrees of success.² The questions that lay before us are: who was this collector, what was the focus of his collection, how did that differ from that of his ancestors in general and his great-uncle, the generation before him, in particular, and, most important of all, why did the baron collect the objects he did?

Duivenvoorde has been researched as a centre of collecting, particularly from the early nineteenth century onwards. The collecting practices of Hendricus Adolphus Steengracht have been researched extensively by art historian and curator of Duivenvoorde Annette de Vries in 2012.³ In her research she creates the image of Steengracht as an aristocrat financially supporting artists and with a passion for art in the form of mostly paintings, porcelain and interior designs. She states that his love for collecting was deeply rooted in his family DNA as the Steengrachts were a family of well-known *collectionneurs* with high-quality art collections.⁴ Schimmelpenninck van der Oye, on the other hand, has a place in the context of the family history and the history of ownership of the estate, but he has never been given a detailed portrait of his own. In the monologues on Duivenvoorde, he, together with his sister Ludolphine Henriette, has a role as one of the two capstones of the history of Duivenvoorde and as a part of the generation that ensured the future of the castle and the estate by establishing the Foundation Duivenvoorde in the early 1960s.⁵ In one of the overviews of Duivenvoorde, De Vries firstly labelled baron Schimmelpenninck van der Oye a ‘treasure keeper’, guarding the family collection.⁶ This label is an interesting starting point for our research.

This article is a case study on the history of aristocratic collecting practices, a subject of which the historiography is broadly discussed in the introduction to this special issue. Within this context, there is a rich historiography on the ways in which aristocrats in various ages used the past as a motive in for instance politics, relationships and social status, and their ancestors and lineage, mostly dating back centuries, as ways to define identity. In times of crises, as is stated within the research of memory studies, experiences of plundering and war, acts of heroism and victory, heroes and enemies were used to create identities.⁷ Karl Enekel and Koen Ottenheym de-

2 S. Craft-Giepmans, H. Gilissen and A. de Vries, *Adellijke familieportretten op Duivenvoorde* (Zwolle, 2015), 88-9.

3 A. de Vries and Q. Buvelot, *Passie voor schilderijen. De verzameling Steengracht van Duivenvoorde* (Leiden, 2012).

4 Idem, *passim*.

5 See for example: E.A. Canneman and L.J. van der Klooster, *De geschiedenis van het kasteel Duivenvoorde en zijn bewoners* (The Hague, 1967), *passim*; De Vries, ed., *Duivenvoorde. Bewoners, landgoed, kasteel, interieur en collectie* (Zwolle, 2010), *passim*; and A. van Dorssen et al., *Duivenvoorde in vogelvlucht* (Voorschoten, 2020), *passim*.

6 Craft-Giepmans, Gilissen and De Vries, *Adellijke familieportretten op Duivenvoorde*, 88-9.

7 See for example: J. Assmann en J. Czaplicka, ‘Collective memory and cultural identity’, *New German Critique* 65 (1995), 125-33; J. Pollmann, *Het oorlogsverleden van de Gouden Eeuw*, inaugural speech (Leiden, 2008), 5, and H.M.E.P. Kuijpers, ‘Between storytelling and patriotic scripture. The memory brokers

scribe this within a noble scope and analyse how in early modern times the past was constructed to fit the motives of new generations and was used to legitimize a mostly noble identity.⁸ In their studies, they state that an extensive lineage was a privilege of nobility and a way to underline formal authority.⁹ This theory does not solely apply to the period the research of Enenkel and Ottenheim covers. In the nineteenth century, for example, we see the rise of a new focus on history as a way to define identity, this time mostly to construct national identities.¹⁰ With this in mind, can we define the tendency of the baron to collect and reconstruct his family history as a way to underline his noble identity?

The baron has left a rich and only recently inventoried private archive. This archive is being kept at Duivenvoorde and consists of metres of correspondence, diaries, membership cards, ledgers and other personal documents with which we can trace back the paths the baron took to construct his collection. Moreover, the collection of Schimmelpenninck van der Oye is still largely intact and together with the archives it allows us to dive into what the baron was and was not able to collect. Building on the research of De Vries, and using the broad private archive of the baron and the collection at Duivenvoorde, this article will analyse the practices and motives of collecting of Schimmelpenninck van der Oye, comparing it to the motives of Steengracht. The first part of this article consists of a biography of the baron and the collection he had inherited from his great-uncle. In the second part, the article dives into the ways the baron went on where Steengracht had stopped, analysing how he used his family history, lineage and the reconstruction of the old family collection as a motive for collecting and thereby as a means to define his noble identity. In this way, this article will add to our knowledge on how the baron as a 'collectionneur noble' acted as a collector in his own right in the forty years that he owned the estate, the castle and the family collection.

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W.A.A.J.: his character and changing place in society

Willem was born in Rome in 1889 as the son of the Dutch envoy Dr. Alexander Willem Schimmelpenninck van der Oye (1859-1914) and Cornelia Elisabeth van Heemstra (1867-1901). He and his sister Ludolphine Henriette (1891-1965) spent a large part of their childhood abroad under the wings of their status-conscious and well-to-do parents and governess Jeanne Françoise Chassagnard (1876-1959).

of the Dutch Revolt', in: Idem et al., eds, *Memory before modernity. Practices of memory in Early Modern Europe* (Leiden, 2013) 183-202 and.

⁸ K. Enenkel and K. Ottenheim, *Oudheid als ambitie. De zoektocht naar een passend verleden, 1400-1700* (Nijmegen, 2017).

⁹ Idem, 30-4.

¹⁰ See for example: E. Hobsbawm and T. Ranger, eds, *The invention of tradition* (Cambridge, 1983); S. Berger and Ch. Conrad, *The past as history. National identity and historical consciousness in modern Europe* (Basingstoke, 2014) and A.-M. Thiesse, *The creation of national identities. Europe, 18th-20th centuries* (Leiden, 2021).



Fig. 1. Willem Anne Assuerus Jacob baron Schimmelpenninck van der Oye, 1932
(photo coll. Stichting der Heerlijkheden Oosterland, Sirjansland en Oosterstein)

In 1901, just before the tragic death of his mother, the baron was sent to Noorthey, a boarding school for upper class boys near Duivenvoorde. It was the place where his father and great-uncles had also been educated, and in line with family tradition, the place where he would spend six years of his early adolescence. Noorthey was where one became part of the ‘young boys network’, and also a place of discipline and order. In a pamphlet dating from the mid-nineteenth-century headmaster, founder and pedagogue Petrus de Raadt stated that the goal of the school was to develop ‘a sense of duty and a necessary firmness of religious and moral principles’.¹¹ At Noorth-

¹¹ P. de Raadt, *Noorthey. Huis van opvoeding en onderwijs* (Amsterdam, 1849), 95..

ey the baron was educated in history, geography, Latin and Greek, civics and sports. He was also actively involved in different clubs, amongst others the hunting and bicycle clubs (the *Schietclub* and the *Velocipede club*). Pictures and yearbooks from his Noorthey years show a thoughtful boy with an active social life, surrounded by lots of friends. We can conclude the same from the numerous letters he wrote to his sister in this period, describing his whereabouts and adventures.¹² His earliest pocket diaries show how very fond he was of the written word, from an early age on.¹³ Throughout his diaries one can find numerous poems, and they continue to appear up until the 1950s, showing his lifelong love for poetry.

The baron grew up to be a devoted and dutiful man. In his working life he was appointed as the Queen's Honorary Chamberlain and Master of the Hunt, chairman (*dijkgraaf*) of the *Hoogheemraadschap* of Rijnland and chairman and board member of various foundations, amongst others the *Nederlandse Kastelen Stichting*. His social life consisted of memberships to numerous societies mirroring his broad interests, like the Royal Dutch Association of Genealogy and Heraldry and the Society for the Protection of Birds. In his private life, he was a kind and loving uncle. From 1917 onwards he and his sister lived together at Duivenvoorde. When his nieces and nephews would visit, their uncle would be waiting for them in the Front Hall and he would let the grand neo-gothic musical clock play its tunes to welcome them. The music would fill the castle and the children would dance to the music. The large number of caricatures picturing the baron, photographs of tea parties and social gatherings with friends and family, and his collection of comical books in the collection of Duivenvoorde underline his character.¹⁴

At the same time, the baron needed to find a way to cope with the vast changes that took place in the social and cultural position of the Dutch nobility in the first half of the twentieth century. From the Russian Revolution and the last years of the First World War onwards, the rights, privileges, and economical and social standing of the noble classes diminished all over Europe.¹⁵ From the bourgeois classes a new elite fought its way up the social ladder. Being of aristocratic descent no longer equated to power, influence, and status, and this was also the case in the Netherlands. A class of 'nouveau riche' arose and whereas in the 1850s almost half of the richest in society were noble families, in the 1900s this amount was less than a quarter.¹⁶ Where traditionally aristocrats were ensured of political and administrative positions, these

12 ASD, Archive L.H. Schimmelpenninck van der Oye (ALHSO), inv.nr. III.35, 1905-1913, series of letters of W.A.A.J. Schimmelpenninck van der Oye to his sister.

13 ASD, Archive W.A.A.J. Schimmelpenninck van der Oye (AWSO), inv.nr. III.99, 1905-1957, pocket diaries.

14 See for example: Collection Stichting Duivenvoorde (CSD), Voorschoten, DV10190, DV50106 and DV50986, pictures and caricatures of W.A.A.J. Schimmelpenninck van der Oye.

15 I. Montijn, *Hoog geboren. 250 jaar adellijk leven in Nederland* (Amsterdam, 2012), 53.

16 N. Wilterdink, *Vermogensverhoudingen in Nederland. Ontwikkelingen sinds de negentiende eeuw* (Amsterdam, 1984, 72-3 and 256).

positions were now being given to members of the bourgeois and labour classes as well.¹⁷ Not to mention the evolution of the ‘little man’ in large social developments like the universal suffrage and the rise of socialism and the working class.¹⁸ It was a time in which nobility and patriciate were able to leave their marks on society to a far lesser extent than before. The baron, in a lot of ways an example of the traditional nobleman, was all too well aware of these changes. Society around him ‘denobilized’ and the nobility had to look for strategies of adaptation and survival.

A history of a family collection: a Steengracht inheritance

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When Willem inherited Duivenvoorde from his great-uncle Steengracht in 1912, he was a leaf on a large tree of almost seven hundred years of family history. His ancestors had possessed Duivenvoorde from the early thirteenth century and during all this time the estate had never been sold. It was first mentioned in 1226, when it was the property of the Van Wassenaers, one of the oldest noble families of the Netherlands.¹⁹ In that year Dirk van Wassenaer gave Duivenvoorde to his younger brother Philips under immortal fief, meaning the property could be inherited by both male and female descendants. This was a way to preserve the property for centuries to come. The estate and the collection remained in the hands of the Van Wassenaers for five hundred years until Arent IX (1669-1721) died with no male heirs. The family possessions in Voorschoten were eventually passed on through the female line to the Steengracht family, rich patricians from Zeeland that were ennobled by king William I in 1814. After two generations Duivenvoorde was once again inherited through the female line when through his grandmother – the sister of Hendricus Adolphus Steengracht who had married into the Schimmelpenninck van der Oye family – Willem inherited Duivenvoorde.

All twenty-seven generations of owners left their mark on *their* Duivenvoorde and its collection in their own way. The collection the baron inherited in 1912, however, mainly consisted of objects Hendricus Adolphus had collected. This is because, when in the eighteenth century the estate was inherited by the three daughters of Arent IX, the family collection of the Van Wassenaers got scattered throughout the country. The ladies, who married the lords of the estates of Amerongen and Rosendaal, went to live with their spouses and took the family collection with them. From the early nineteenth century, the two generations Steengracht, and Hendricus Adolphus in particular, had a clean slate – so to speak – and the chance to reform and modernize the collection at Duivenvoorde in their own way, and they did so to the fullest.

17 Montijn, *Hoog geboren*, 48.

18 Idem, 48-56.

19 H.M. Brokken, ed., *Heren van Stand. Achthonderd jaar Nederlandse Adelsgeschiedenis* (Zoetermeer, 2001), 2-12.



Fig. 2. Castle Duivenvoorde, circa 1930 (coll. *Foundation Duivenvoorde, Voorschoten*)

Hendricus Adolphus, the twenty-fifth owner of Duivenvoorde, had been a notorious collector. Collecting was part of his family DNA, and he grew up amidst old and modern masters.²⁰ After the death of his grandfather, collector and first director of the Royal Cabinet of Paintings Johan Steengracht van Oostcapelle (1782-1846), and his uncle Hendrik Steengracht van Oosterland (1808-1875), he inherited the *Galerie Steengracht*, a publicly accessible art collection in The Hague with an international reputation and a vast number of paintings. The collection consisted of a broad range of styles and painters from various periods: from Jan Steen to Andreas Schelfhout and from Rembrandt van Rijn to Wouter Verschuur, from portraits to cityscapes and from still life paintings to historical pieces. Under auspices of Hendricus Adolphus the number of visitors of the gallery grew and it became a hotspot for national and international tourists, among them a broad selection of artists and fellow collectors.²¹

²⁰ De Vries en Buvelot, *Passie voor schilderijen*, 13 and 30-5.

²¹ Idem, 28.

For his own collection at Duivenvoorde, Steengracht regularly employed modern artists to create new pieces to line the walls of his castle. In 1874, he met the painter Maria Vos (1824-1906). Vos was renowned for her still life paintings and that was exactly what Hendricus Adolphus wanted for the small dining room at Duivenvoorde. The correspondence in his archive shows how they cooperated to create four pieces in the panelling above the doors and a large mantelpiece. ‘To properly relate five such great pieces is not an easy task, but I would like to follow your idea of a representation of the seasons, as that brings unity to the ensemble’, were the words Vos used.²² Every still life represented one of the four seasons and was complemented by a living animal that fitted the season it resembled, a unique phenomenon in the oeuvre of Vos. For the mantelpiece they chose a hunting scene, one of the squire’s other passions. A year later, the paintings were finished and from that moment on adorned the walls of the small dining room as conversation pieces during many family dinners.

70 Hendricus Adolphus developed a passion for art that was not limited to paintings. Every month he contacted art dealers such as the Gallery Goupil, Salomon Sarluis, Van Gelder and Teunissen, and bought new pieces for his collection. Various clocks, for example, one of which was a late eighteenth century pendule with Boulle marquetry which he bought at Sarluis on 3 February 1873.²³ In 1869 Steengracht paid for the transport of ‘a chest of porcelain from Dresden’, most likely the 26 pieces of the late eighteenth-century Stadtholder Willem V’s porcelain from the Meissen factory, which he had bought at auction the year before.²⁴ The squire did not limit himself to the Dutch art market either. He travelled through Europe to buy various kinds of weaponry, books, and porcelain, mostly Chinese and Japanese Imari. Six bowls from the Chinese Kangxi-period for example, were added to the collection and hung in the Front Hall at Duivenvoorde.²⁵

From his ledgers we can conclude he spent much of his time in Paris and Nice. There, he encountered the fine fleurs of European aristocracy and he always returned to Voorschoten with souvenirs, novelties, and new interior designs. In 1870 he visited Paris and this time he brought back a chest of wallpaper and special fabric decorated with a pattern of white and blue bamboo shoots, birds, insects, and flowers. The pattern had been exhibited by Japan at the World’s Fair in the French capital a few years earlier and had become known as *l’honorable bamboo*.²⁶ Steengracht wrote in his expenditure book that he had bought ‘paper and cretonne fabric, enough for two rooms’ for the price of f. 1750.²⁷ He used it to decorate his spare bedroom, which from then

22 ASD, AHAS, inv.nr. II.279, 20 Apr. 1874, letter of Maria Vos to Hendricus Adolphus Steengracht.

23 ASD, AHAS, inv.nr. II.60, 1873, receipts and expenditure book 1867-1874; CSD, DV4081, console clock, c.1740.

24 J. Pijzel-Dommissie, ‘Aan tafel’, in: De Vries, ed., *Duivenvoorde*, 196-207, there 197-8.

25 J. van Campen, ‘Exotisch pronken’, in: De Vries, ed., *Duivenvoorde*, 184-95, there 193.

26 E. Hartkamp-Jonxis, ‘Een bezoek aan “toen”’, in: De Vries, ed., *Duivenvoorde*, 88-117, there 114.

27 ASD, AHAS, inv.nr. II.60, receipts and expenditure book 1867-1874.

on became known as the blue spare bedroom. During the 1870s, Steengracht spent a little over f. 26.000 on paintings, porcelain, and other collectibles.²⁸ This enormous amount of money supports the image of the squire as a noble and above all wealthy collector who collected all kinds of objects of his liking.²⁹

Hendricus Adolphus was also a generous man when it came to art. His father, Nicolaas Johan Steengracht (1806-1866), had hung a selection of thirty family portraits at Duivenvoorde in the mid-nineteenth century.³⁰ They depicted the families Berck and Van der Poort, ancestors of the Steengrachts, and were painted by a variety of painters, one of whom was the famous Jan Daemen Cool (1589-1660). Some of the older portraits at that time depicted unknown family members, and as the Berck family was an aristocratic family from Dordrecht, they caught the attention of the collector Simon van Gijn (1836-1922), who was also from Dordrecht and a friend and former fellow Noorthey student of Hendricus Adolphus.³¹ ‘You know I am fond of rummaging through old things’, Van Gijn wrote to Steengracht enthusiastically after a visit to Duivenvoorde in the summer of 1898, ‘and that is why I was interested in the anonymous portraits’.³² ‘Perhaps even more so than the owner himself’, he added ironically. What followed was a genealogical argument as to why one of the portraits was that of Agneta van Druijsseldorp, a member of the Berck family, and therefore was no direct ancestor of Steengracht. Van Gijn alludes to how she ended up at Duivenvoorde, ‘but most likely you do not care so much about this question’, he concludes. Possibly he was right, for in 1911 Steengracht gave Van Gijn four of these anonymous portraits. Van Gijn thanked the squire for his generosity and stated that the portraits ‘now return to their cradle for good’.³³ For good, however, would only last four years, as they soon found their way back to Voorschoten thanks to the perseverance of baron Schimmelpenninck van der Oye.

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Tradition and the new ways of the baron: genealogy and the family collection

Immediately following the death of Hendricus Adolphus in 1912, the baron needed to get acquainted with the collection he had inherited. In his will, the squire had stated that a whole list of nieces and nephews would inherit sums of up to f. 50.000 or f. 100.000 each, adding up to a total of over f. 600.000.³⁴ Personnel and various

²⁸ ASD, AHAS, inv.nr. II.60-61, receipts and expenditure book 1867-1874 and 1874-1885. Based on the data of the International Institute of Social History (IISG) this equals a purchasing power of over € 300.000 in 2021; Waarde van de gulden versus de euro, 2019, <https://iisg.amsterdam/nl/onderzoek/projecten/hpw/calculate.php> (accessed on: 29 September 2022).

²⁹ De Vries en Buvelot, *Passie voor schilderijen*, 30-3.

³⁰ Craft-Giepmans, Gilissen and De Vries, *Adellijke familieportretten*, 50.

³¹ Idem, 51

³² ASD, AWSO, inv.nr. II.353, 15 Aug. 1898, letter of Simon van Gijn to Hendricus Adolphus Steengracht.

³³ ASD, AWSO, inv.nr. II.353, 11 May 1911, letter of Simon van Gijn to Hendricus Adolphus Steengracht.

³⁴ ASD, AHAS, inv.nr. III.86, 22 May 1908, will of Hendricus Adolphus Steengracht.

charities would also receive a generous amount of money. To pay for these legacies, Steengracht decided that the *Galerie Steengracht* – including the inventory and the collection of paintings – was to be sold.³⁵ To manage this properly, Alexander Willem Schimmelpenninck van der Oye, the father of Willem, had been appointed executor of the will.³⁶ Although he first attempted to sell the complete collection to a private individual, the collection was sold in lots at two public auctions in Paris in 1913.³⁷ The sale of the Steengracht Collection received lots of international attention. Willem followed these auctions and the public opinion closely. ‘Big art sales coming’, was a headline in the *New York Times* only days before the event and the total estimated value of the collection was several million francs, as he noted in his auction documents.³⁸ Numerous clippings from newspapers and magazines with comments and amounts in the margins in his handwriting show exactly how involved the young baron was.³⁹ In the end, the collection was sold for the enormous amount of over four million francs and was looked back upon as ‘one of the biggest sensations in the annals of the auction room’.⁴⁰

Not long after the dust around the auctions had settled, Schimmelpenninck van der Oye started to get involved with his inheritance in Voorschoten and the old traditions of Steengracht. After the death of his great-uncle the baron remained in contact with Van Gijn, maintaining the manners of Steengracht. Like Steengracht, he sent him game every year, something his uncle’s old friend greatly appreciated, ‘the more because you do not know me personally’, he wrote.⁴¹ This, however, was about to change.

Unlike Steengracht, but to the liking of Van Gijn, the baron was a heraldist and genealogist at heart. From an early age Willem started to delve into the history of his family. He filled the smallest pieces of paper, used envelopes and the backs of birth announcements and funeral cards with scribbles and elaborate genealogical tables and pedigree charts.⁴² In his *Duivenvoorde* years, Willem received numerous letters from researchers asking him for his thoughts on their subjects of interest and research. In 1932 he received a letter from W.A. Gevers Deynoot – a distant relative of Schimmelpenninck van der Oye – who asked him about the family lineage of the Steengrachts. ‘As you are in the possession of the archive, and interested in the ancestors of the Steengracht family, I wanted to let you know that I stumbled upon some-

35 Ibid.

36 De Vries en Buvelot, *Passie voor schilderijen*, 33.

37 Idem, 35.

38 ASD, AWSO, inv.nr. III.87, s.d. 1912, note from W.A.A.J. Schimmelpenninck van der Oye.

39 ASD, AWSO, inv.nr. III.87, 1912-1913, documents on the auction of the Steengracht Collection.

40 De Vries en Buvelot, *Passie voor schilderijen*, 35 and ASD, AWSO, inv.nr. III.87, 10 Jun. 1913, clipping of the *New York Herald*.

41 ASD, AWSO, inv.nr. II.353, 5 Nov. 1914, letter of Simon van Gijn to W.A.A.J. Schimmelpenninck van der Oye.

42 ASD, AWSO, inv.nr. II.90, III.112 and III.118, c.1911-1957, notes on genealogy.

thing most peculiar'.⁴³ What followed was a long exchange of views on the ancestral line. In this same way Pieter Beelaerts van Blokland sent him a photograph of a painting with the Van Wassenaer coat of arms and the question whether he could identify the portrayed person.⁴⁴ The genealogical notes the baron scribbled on the letter show his dedication in the matter, identifying her as the daughter of Jan van Duvenvoorde van Warmond (1469-1542) and Maria van Matenesse (1486-1558) and answering the letter within a day.

The baron was seen as an authority in the world of Dutch heraldry and genealogy. He regularly pointed out errors to the editors of the *Nederland's Adelsboek*, a book that has been published since 1903 with the genealogies of Dutch noble families. 'I am very grateful for your letter, wherein you state that madame Van Pallandt-Steen-gracht inherited the Keukenhof from her father, who bought it in 1809 and in that regard, I would love to hear if you find any more inaccuracies', chief-editor Van Valkenburg responded after the baron had pointed out yet another flaw.⁴⁵ And these were not the only examples of Willem's interest in and broad knowledge of his family history: between 1912 and 1957 the baron corresponded with over twenty heraldists, genealogists and amateurs on the subject.

This genealogical interest carried over into his interest in art and his family collection. Not long after Schimmelpenninck van der Oye inherited Duivenvoorde, he devoted himself to identifying the unknown figures in the portraits that were now in Van Gijn's possession. He argued that one of them did not represent Lucretia van Jeuckeren (c.1525-?), the wife of Hendrick Berck (c.1520-?), as Van Gijn had thought. The baron identified the portrait as a portrayal of Emmerentia Bisschop (c.1535-?), who had been married to Jan van Berckenrode (1528-?) and whose portrait was still part of the ancestral gallery in Voorschoten.⁴⁶ Undoubtedly, his perseverance in this case appealed to Van Gijn, as in 1918 he wrote the following to the young baron:

When I heard from my good friend Adolph Staring that you had managed to identify the woman on the portrait – that I received from your uncle Steengracht at the time as image of one of the ladies Berck, but whom I could not identify as such – as the wife of the lord of Berckenrode, whose portrait is among the portraits at Duivenvoorde. I am very willing to correct my mistake and to send the lady back to you, so that she can once again re-take her place at the side of her husband. (...) If you should come across the portrait that forms a pair with my Berck portrait, please think of me.⁴⁷

⁴³ ASD, AWSO, inv.nr. III.112, 23 Feb. 1932, letter of W.A. Gevers Deynoot to W.A.A.J. Schimmelpenninck van der Oye.

⁴⁴ ASD, AWSO, inv.nr. III.28, 22 Apr. 1943, letter of Pieter Beelaerts van Blokland to W.A.A.J. Schimmelpenninck van der Oye.

⁴⁵ ASD, AWSO, inv.nr. II.12, 12 Apr. 1949, letter of C.C. van Valkenburg to W.A.A.J. Schimmelpenninck van der Oye.

⁴⁶ Craft-Giepmans, Gilissen and De Vries, *Adellijke familieportretten*, 51.

⁴⁷ ASD, AWSO, inv.nr. II.353, s.d. 1918, letter of Simon van Gijn to W.A.A.J. Schimmelpenninck van der Oye.

Upon arrival at the castle, the baron labelled the painting, gave it a number in his inventory and reunited Emmerentia with her husband. He kept in touch with Van Gijn and continued to send him game every October until the death of the collector in 1922.

With time, the baron started to rearrange, care for and supplement the collection at Duivenvoorde. In all these examples the history or heraldry of the family sounded through, either through his focus on preserving the collection of his ancestors or supplementing it with objects linked to his history. At Duivenvoorde he found numerous old and decaying boxes of shells. It was a collection that had been carefully compiled by his great-grandmother H.J.C. baroness Van Neukirchen genaamd Nyvenheim, the twenty-fourth owner of Duivenvoorde, over a hundred years earlier.⁴⁸ At that time the collection consisted of eleven boxes filled with small and large sea creatures – from shells to starfish and corals. As part of the education of the young ladies of her standing, from an early age she had been expected to engage herself with art, poetry and nature, and this had paid off.⁴⁹ The young baroness developed a passion for nature, founded a herbarium and a collection of shells and minerals.⁵⁰ She kept her collection ‘alive’ by studying, drawing and identifying the objects.⁵¹

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In this tradition the baron took it upon himself to care for the collection of his great-grandmother. In the early 1940s, Schimmelpenninck van der Oye brought the collection to the Museum of Natural History to be thoroughly examined, rearranged, supplemented with new labels and stored in new boxes. The museum was enthusiastic about the extended collection and above all its provenance, a subject on which the baron was an expert. ‘I thank you very much for your information on its previous owner and the name of your great-grandmother’, director Hilbrand Boschma (1893-1976) wrote to the baron.⁵² ‘The collection seems to cover 479 species, with a lot of beautiful specimens’, he followed. There were shells from all over the world: from the North Sea to the Caribbean and from the Mediterranean to the Indian Ocean. Up until this day the collection of shells is still a curated collection with nineteenth-century boxes and labels with French names of the shells in the handwriting of Henriette, and twentieth-century boxes with the division of the museum and labels in the handwriting of Schimmelpenninck van der Oye. It proves that the baron actively started to engage himself in the collection of his ancestors.

The shells were not the only collection the baron was occupied with and interested in. In the early 1930s, he focussed on Duivenvoorde’s collection of antique pistols, guns, and weaponry. Hendricus Adolphus had already brought together a vast amount of eighteenth-century weaponry, and the baron continued where his uncle

⁴⁸ Craft-Giepmans, Gilissen and De Vries, *Adellijke familieportretten*, 47.

⁴⁹ H. Klarenbeek, *Penseelprinsessen en broodschilderessen. Vrouwen in de beeldende kunst, 1808-1913* (Bussum, 2012), 22.

⁵⁰ CSD, DV11337 and DV11338, c.1826-1943, collection of shells.

⁵¹ CSD, DV12238, c.1835, diverse drawings of shells and other sea creatures.

⁵² Idem.

had stopped. A handwritten note from the baron found in one of his auction catalogues: 'In April 1930, I bought a collection of powder horns at the sale of Wenzel Koeller from Dortmund', followed by a list of the prices he had paid for each object.⁵³ He had carefully noted 'for me' next to objects in the catalogue that had his special interest. He succeeded in securing a great number of weapons and accessories, among others two powder horns made from deer antler with images of a noble man and noble women, three annular powder horns and an iron powder holder with a floral pattern.⁵⁴ At the top of the list was a powder horn with the coat of arms of the Schimmelpenninck van der Oye family. This object is one of many that characterise the mark the baron himself left on the castle's collection: a mark with a strong focus on objects that were related to his family or to the old family collection.

The Van Wasseaer relics

The collection at Duivenvoorde included the family archives. In 1914 Willem decided to hand over the part of the Van Wasseaers, the oldest part of the archives, to the National Archives in The Hague to be inventoried and stored properly.⁵⁵ Vast numbers of centuries-old letters, covenants, deeds and ledgers passed through the hands of archivist D.P.M. Graswinckel (1888-1960), who kept the baron informed on the progress. Occasionally, he sent documents back to Voorschoten, as was the case with a portrait drawing of Johanna Suzanna van der Mandere (1714-1793). Graswinckel wrote that the portrait was out of place as part of the archive, but he also noted something even more interesting: 'I send it to you, since you would probably like to add this drawing to your collection'.⁵⁶ At first, this comment does not seem that significant. However, when we compare it to other letters in his archive and the pedigree of objects in the collection at Duivenvoorde from 1912 onwards, this case does not stand on its own. Although the baron was not always successful, he was on a quest or hunt to obtain objects related to his ancestral history.

Over a quarter of a century later, we see another example. 'Dear Willy', was the salutation in a letter to the baron from his good acquaintance Willem Th. Zimmerman (1892-1964).⁵⁷ Zimmerman recalls a conversation where Schimmelpenninck van der Oye had suggested to give him two candlesticks from Duivenvoorde. The baron,

53 ASD, no inventory, 1930, auction catalogue auction house Frederik Müller & Co.

54 Ibid.; CSD, DV10002, DV10007, DV10011, DV10013, DV10014, DV10016, DV10026, collection of antique powder horns.

55 *Verslagen omtrent 's Rijks oude archieven* (1914), 18-19. Three other transfers would follow in 1919, 1948 and 1959, the last one under auspices of Ludolphine Henriette; idem (1920), 231-454; idem (1949), 29; and idem (1959), 44.

56 ASD, AWSO, inv.nr. II.11, 27 Apr. 1921, letter of P.D.M. Graswinckel to W.A.A.J. Schimmelpenninck van der Oye.

57 ASD, AWSO, inv.nr. II.12, 15 Sep. 1954, letter of W.Th.C. Zimmerman to W.A.A.J. Schimmelpenninck van der Oye.

like his great-uncle, was a generous man, but when he could, he looked for something specific in return: ‘You then spoke of trading the candlesticks for something of the Van Wassenaers’, Zimmerman continued.⁵⁸ ‘Unfortunately, I do not have anything to trade in this regard. (...) So I would therefore like to suggest you buy something with the money yourself, when you come across “Wassenaer”-affairs.’⁵⁹

Schimmelpenninck van der Oye had a few friends and acquaintances with whom he shared a passion for genealogy, art and a curiosity about the Van Wassenaer history, and who were on the lookout for objects of his liking. Two of these people were former Noorthey student W.J.J.C. Bijleveld (1878-1952) and art historian Adolph Staring (1890-1980) – who was also a friend of the collector Van Gijn. They knew about the baron’s hunt for relics dating from the Van Wassenaer period and regularly pointed out objects to him, either to share findings or thoughts on the history or location of various objects, or with a more ‘collectionneur-minded’ point of interest, whether there was a chance that the baron could try to buy them or not.

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Bijleveld notes in one of his letters: ‘Yesterday I consulted a booklet written by the late professor G. Kalff (...). He mentions an album amicorum of Theodora van Wassenaer, wherein the first annotations date from 1595 in the collection of the Bodleian Library in Oxford. That, of course, is nonsense, as in that year no Th. V. W. existed’.⁶⁰ Bijleveld was a purist, as in the following paragraph of the letter, he broadly explains how the wife of Arent VII van Wassenaer (1528-1599), Theodora van Scherpenzeel (1554-1622), would have signed an album like this with a different name, and how other options or suggestions for other family members as owners of the album would not hold up either. Although he does not dwell a lot more on the booklet or the album, the letter shows how both he and Schimmelpenninck van der Oye were interested in the issue and how deeply rooted their knowledge of the matter was.

An important subject in the correspondence of Bijleveld and the baron were the connections between the collections of the estates Duivenvoorde and Rosendael. In 1732 Jacoba Maria van Wassenaer (1709-1771), the second daughter of Arent IX and Anna Margaretha Bentick (1683-1763), married Frederik Willem Torck (1691-1761). Jacoba Maria had already inherited the castle and a large part of its collection, and with this marriage her possessions went to the castle near Arnhem.⁶¹ Who wanted to collect ‘Van Wassenaer-affairs’ in the twentieth century, therefore, had to keep an eye on Rosendael. Schimmelpenninck van der Oye knew this all too well, judging also from his

⁵⁸ It is not peculiar the baron asked Zimmerman for ‘something of the Wassenaers’. In 1927 Zimmerman had married Cecilia Emilie Louise van Pallandt (1899-1994), sister of the owner of Rosendael Castle, an estate closely tied to the old Van Wassenaer-collection of Duivenvoorde.

⁵⁹ ASD, AWSO, inv.nr. II.12, 15 Sep. 1954, letter of W.Th.C. Zimmerman to W.A.A.J. Schimmelpenninck van der Oye.

⁶⁰ ASD, AWSO, inv.nr. II.12, 26 May 1946, letter of W.J.J.C. Bijleveld to W.A.A.J. Schimmelpenninck van der Oye.

⁶¹ J.C. Bierens de Haan, *Rosendael, groen hemeltjen op aerd. Kasteel, tuinen en bewoners sedert 1579* (Zutphen, 1994), 172.

correspondence with Zimmerman, but in 1941 Bijleveld felt the need to recall this once more:

Mrs. L.⁶² is now 82½, her mother lived until she was 90, but it is good to note for future reference that Rosendael is still in the possession of the bibles with valuable family data of Arent v. Wassenaer x A.M. van Scherpenzeel and his grandson Arent x Bentinck. From 1893, I participated in the evening hunting parties, where silver-plated chips were used with the arms of alliance of the couple Wassenaer x Bentinck.⁶³ Mrs. Ada called those things 'Les Louis de Duivenvoorde'. There is also a lot of silver and tin from Duivenvoorde.⁶⁴

During the last years of the Second World War Rosendael was gravely damaged by both enemy and friendly fire.⁶⁵ Large parts of the collection were lost and parts of the old castle had to be demolished. To finance the restoration of Rosendael, the remaining part of the old and renowned collection of books was auctioned in 1949 and 1950 at the antiquarian bookshop and auctioneer A.J. van Huffel in Utrecht. It is no surprise Schimmelpenninck van der Oye was present at the first auction on 14 and 15 June 1949. His auction catalogue is full of his notes in the margin of the lots that had his special interest, amongst these: a book dating from 1719 on the Treaty of Münster with a dedication to and notes from Arent IX, various Van Wassenaer-manuscripts, an eighteenth-century book of recipes from the 'lady of Voorschoten' – most likely Anna Margaretha Bentinck – and an atlas of the *Hoogheemraadschap Rijnland* with a dedication to Jacob van Wassenaer van Duivenvoorde (1649-1707) dating from 1687.⁶⁶ Most of these books had an undeniable and direct connection to Willem's quest as they were lost parts of the old Duivenvoorde library. He succeeded in buying a small amount of them, most of which were historical works like the series by Pieter Bor on the Dutch Revolt, but also a series of six romantic novels that had once belonged to his eighteenth century ancestor Henriette Torck (1764-1792), carrying her monogram on the cover. These books are still part of the collection at Duivenvoorde today. Other books that he was not able to lay his hands on, he bought in a different and mostly less costly edition at other auctions, like Adrianus Pars' *Catti aborigines Batavorum*, dating from 1745. A striking example of how the baron's motives of reconstructing the original family collection went beyond collecting only the original objects, but also ones that were in one way or another connected to it, directly or indirectly. And the library of Duivenvoorde is not the only example thereof.

In the early 1940s, Bijleveld and Schimmelpenninck van der Oye kept themselves busy not only with the Van Wassenaers, but with the history of the related Van Liere

⁶² Constantia Alexine Loudon (1859-1948), wife of Frederik Jacob Willem van Pallandt (1860-1932).

⁶³ Ada Catharina Torck (1835-1902), lady of Rosendael.

⁶⁴ ASD, AWSO, inv.nr. II.12, 1 Sep. 1941, letter of W.J.J.C. Bijleveld to W.A.A.J. Schimmelpenninck van der Oye.

⁶⁵ Bierens de Haan, *Rosendael*, 246-247.

⁶⁶ ASD, AWSO, inv.nr. II.516, Jun. 1949, auction catalogue of the Rosendael book auction, with notes.

Old	Pont	no
6	vrouw v Koorsch	0
15 13	Wassenaer	77
75 85	15 (2) Bor	98
40	18 -- Jancomoni	137 C
48	19 Wrooleboek	147 Bc
10	24 J. Wassenaer	217
25	33 Arnhem Steek	301 en b
22	35 gen. en proefsch.	319 en 20
1209	36 wapenb	330 nr
25	45 W. Duvern.	356
360	52 B. Laeu atlas	441
34	53 Kuypers atlas	454
	56 Zype	4770a
15	57 Nya Wassenaer	494
13	64 v. Arnhem	579 en
16	68 J. Wassenaer	647
145	82 Bloemwerk	830 2

Fig. 3. Notes of W.A.A.J. Schimmelpenninck van der Oye in the auction catalogue of the Rosendael-auction of 1949 (Archive Collection Duivenvoorde)

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family as well. 'Years ago, I already discovered that your beautiful foremother, who hangs in your Great Hall, Jacoba van Liere, was born in Amsterdam (...). Who would look for her there!', Bijleveld wrote to him proudly.⁶⁷ In the meantime, Schimmelpenninck van der Oye was offered a painting of the old Willem van Liere (1588-1649), grandfather of Jacoba (1651-1693), by Paulus Moreelse (1571-1638), a painting indi-

⁶⁷ Bijleveld speaks here of the portrait of Jacob van Wassenaer and Jacoba van Liere, painted by Theodorus Netscher in 1702. The portrait was and still is a part of the ancestral gallery in the Great Hall of Duivenvoorde build around 1717; ASD, AWSO, inv.nr. II.369, 17 Feb. 1944, letter of W.J.J.C. Bijleveld to W.A.A.J. Schimmelpenninck van der Oye.

rectly connected to the history of Duivenvoorde and with no ties to the original collection. If it was possible, he should buy it, was the advice Bijleveld gave him four days later.⁶⁸

Schimmelpenninck van der Oye did buy the painting and remained on the lookout for more. He did not have to wait long, because soon thereafter he received the offer to buy the 'Van Liere-group' from descendants of the Van Wassenaer family.⁶⁹ This portrait of Maria van Reygersberg (1632-1673), the wife of Willem van Liere, together with her two children Willem (1653-1706) and Jacoba, was painted in 1663 by Adriaen Hanneman (1603-1671) as a mantelpiece for the Van Wassenaer van Catwijk's.⁷⁰ Until it was offered for f. 3000 to the baron, it had been in the family for all those years. Of course, he was interested in purchasing the painting that was so connected to the Van Wassenaer history. However, he missed out on it when it was bought by art historian A.J. Rehorst for more than four times the amount Schimmelpenninck van der Oye was willing and able to pay.

Rehorst did not want the painting to fall into the hands of the occupiers and decided to hold on to it during the war years.⁷¹ By the end of the war, he decided to give it another try. He knew Schimmelpenninck van der Oye had already presented himself interested, and was keen to accept his invitation to visit Duivenvoorde in December 1949. By then, Rehorst had decided to raise the price as he wrote to the baron: 'The artwork is worth significantly more than it costs now. We should not rely on the value in the national market, where there is no interest whatsoever in portraits right now. Internationally, this is completely different'.⁷² While Rehorst, being an art historian as he himself pointed out, wanted the painting to stay in Holland, he offered it to the baron for the price he had paid for it in 1941.

To the great distress of Schimmelpenninck van der Oye and also to the great surprise of even the director of the Netherlands Institute for Art History, Jan Gerrit van Gelder (1903-1980), the price went up to f. 50.000. 'For this amount no Dutch collector will be interested. It is a pity Van Wassenaer did not buy the piece at the time for f. 800, like he told me. Let us hope the painting will stay in the country', Van Gelder wrote to Schimmelpenninck van der Oye.⁷³ The baron himself was furious. The wealth of the family in the 1940s was not a glimpse of what it had been in the time of Steengracht, and the price of the painting rose way beyond what he could afford. In

68 ASD, AWSO, inv.nr. II.369, 26 Feb. 1942, note of W.A.A.J. Schimmelpenninck van der Oye.

69 ASD, AWSO, inv.nr. II.369, 21 Feb. 1944, letter of W.J.J.C. Bijleveld to W.A.A.J. Schimmelpenninck van der Oye.

70 Provenance RKD 48157, 2016, <https://rkd.nl/explore/images/144490> (accessed on: 29 September 2022).

71 ASD, AWSO, inv.nr. II.369, 7 Dec. 1949, letter of A.J. Rehorst to W.A.A.J. Schimmelpenninck van der Oye.

72 Idem.

73 ASD, AWSO, inv.nr. II.369, 5 Jun. 1944, letter of J.G. van Gelder to W.A.A.J. Schimmelpenninck van der Oye.



Fig. 4. Portrait of Maria van Reygersberg with her two children (oil on canvas, Adriaen Hanneman, 1663; coll. Foundation Duivenvoorde, Voorschoten)

his private notes he wrote, ending with an expressive exclamation mark: ‘f. 50.000, a price way too high!’.⁷⁴

As was the case with Bijleveld, Adolph Staring and Schimmelpenninck van der Oye corresponded frequently about the collection at Duivenvoorde. In 1924, Staring and the baron discussed the origin of a portrait picturing the family of Johan van Wassenaer (1576-1645) from 1643.⁷⁵ Johan, the thirteenth owner of Duivenvoorde, had commissioned Johannes Mijtens (1614-1670) to paint two group portraits, both to honour his lost loved ones.⁷⁶ One of the paintings was meant to be hung at Duivenvoorde and pictured Johan, his two wives, his parents and his sister. Apart from himself and his sister Theodora, the other family members were painted posthumously, and this caused some peculiarities as various previously painted portraits were used as examples. Staring and the baron shared their thoughts on Mijtens’ representation of the faces of Arent VII and Theodora van Scherpenzeel, Johan’s parents. Arent looked much younger, although he was in fact 26 years older than Theodora. ‘Arent van Duvenvoorde must have been painted after a different portrait, hence the less natural appearance of his face. After all, his much younger wife, who in fact was painted from life, is already old here’, Staring noted. He alludes to the fact that Mijtens used a portrait of Theodora that had been painted over twenty years earlier by Jan van Ravensteyn (1572-1657), a painter Staring was studying at the time.

⁷⁴ ASD, AWSO, inv.nr. II.369, s.d., note of W.A.A.J. Schimmelpenninck van der Oye.

⁷⁵ ASD, AWSO, inv.nr. II.11, 2 Feb. 1924, letter of Adolph Staring to W.A.A.J. Schimmelpenninck van der Oye.

⁷⁶ R. Ekkart and c. van den Donk, *Liefen leed. Realisme en fantasie in Nederlandse familiegroepen uit de zeventiende en achttiende eeuw* (Zwolle, 2018), 102-5.



Fig. 5. Group portrait of Johan van Wassenaer, Maria van Voorst van Doorwerth and Clara de Hinojosa (oil on panel, Johannes Mijtens, 1643; coll. Foundation Duivenvoorde, Voorschoten)

The Mijtens kept both of them busy. Two years later the baron received a postcard from Staring, noting that he had seen a photograph of a portrait depicting a group of Van Wassenaers, with Duivenvoorde in the background.⁷⁷ It was the second portrait Johan van Wassenaer had ordered from Mijtens in 1643 and the one that was meant to be hung at his winter residence at the Lange Voorhout in The Hague. Johan had modernized Duivenvoorde in 1631, by partially deconstructing the old medieval donjon and rebuilding a symmetrical country estate.⁷⁸ Mijtens added Duivenvoorde into the picture and this gave Johan the opportunity to point out his new summer residence to his guests in The Hague.

⁷⁷ ASD, AWSO, inv.nr. II.11, 7 Nov. 1926, letter of Adolph Staring to W.A.A.J. Schimmelpenninck van der Oye.

⁷⁸ A.W. Beelaerts van Blokland, 'Bewogen bezit', in: De Vries, ed., *Duivenvoorde*, 18-35, there 25.

The painting had hung in the winter residence as part of a mantelpiece until it was sold to an antique dealer following the death of Steengracht.⁷⁹ Not long after his first letter on the subject, coincidentally or not, Staring met the new owners of the painting – an Austrian couple who had seemingly no intention of selling it. However, he wrote Schimmelpenninck van der Oye the following:

This afternoon I was with Dr. Alfons Torsch to look at his painting. There is not the slightest chance that he will sell the piece. (...) Nevertheless, they are interested in seeing the house that is on the painting. He will send you a photograph. You could, as a thank you for this, invite him to come and visit Duivenvoorde. (...) Perhaps you will make it possible that he will sell it to you in due time.⁸⁰

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Schimmelpenninck van der Oye followed up the advice. Four months later he received a postcard from Torsch himself, thanking the baron for the pleasant welcome and mentioning how special he and his wife thought their visit to Duivenvoorde was.⁸¹ Nevertheless, Torsch never proceeded to sell the painting and through his children it ended up in North America.⁸² In 1950, Willem received a letter from the chairman of the Central Bureau of Genealogy stating that he had received an invitation to an exhibition in the Dominion Gallery in Canada where the Van Wassenaer group was exhibited.⁸³ The baron always kept the painting in mind although, unfortunately, he was not able to obtain it during his lifetime. Luckily, the painting did, however, together with the Hanneman, find its way back to the family collection in the end.

A conclusion to the collection

Schimmelpenninck van der Oye passed away unexpectedly on 31 January 1957, leaving Duivenvoorde to his sister, Ludolphine Henriette. She, like her brother, was not married and did not have children. As their financial capacity had prevented both of them from doing major repairs to the castle, especially after it suffered great damage as a result of an explosion on the estate in 1945, the baroness was in possession of a castle that was badly in need of restoration. That, supplemented with high inheritance taxes being owed, the baroness made the difficult decision to entrust the estate, the castle and the collection that her ancestors had built up over 750 years to the new Foundation Duivenvoorde, of which she became the first chairwoman. The

⁷⁹ Craft-Giepmans, Gilissen and De Vries, *Adellijke familieportretten*, 25.

⁸⁰ ASD, AWSO, inv.nr. II.11, 26 Jun. 1927, letter of Adolph Staring to W.A.A.J. Schimmelpenninck van der Oye.

⁸¹ ASD, AWSO, inv.nr. II.11, 19 Oct. 1927, letter of Alfons Torsch to W.A.A.J. Schimmelpenninck van der Oye.

⁸² Provenance RKD 25199, 2018, <https://rkd.nl/explore/images/150302> (accessed on: 27 September 2022).

⁸³ ASD, AWSO, inv.nr. II.12, 9 May 1950, letter of W.Ph. Veeren to W.A.A.J. Schimmelpenninck van der Oye.

Foundation was given the task to care for and keep the ensemble for the generations to come.⁸⁴

This was a different way of caring for the collection, but in a way, it was in line with the strong family awareness and fondness of her brother. The baron was a treasure keeper, but the baroness made her decision with the same motives in mind. The baroness could have made the choice to sell parts of the collection or the estate – like what happened after the death of Steengracht – to cover the expenses needed and keep Duivenvoorde in the hands of the family. Nevertheless, this would mean the collection that was so carefully assembled was once again scattered. This was something that, according to the baroness and the family, had to be avoided at all costs.⁸⁵ The Foundation Duivenvoorde would be the solution to keep the ensemble together, but marked an end to a long history of uninterrupted family possession. ‘The most difficult part of all is that it has to leave the family’, as Ludolphine Henriette stated in a note months before her final decision.⁸⁶ As her way to ensure the future of the complete ensemble, the castle was restored and became a museum where, in the words of restoration architect Elias A. Canneman (1905-1987), ‘the visitor had to walk around, not as if he was in a museum, but in a house that has always been full of vibrant life’.⁸⁷

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Only months before the opening of the museum in September 1963, Canneman informed the board of the Foundation that he had located two paintings: the Haneman and the Mijten.⁸⁸ The board granted him the mandate to proceed with the purchase and with the support of the *Vereniging Rembrandt* and after generous personal financial support of the baroness, the Foundation had the means to acquire both paintings for the collection at Duivenvoorde.⁸⁹ Both of them fitted perfectly in the family ensemble, just as the baron had thought twenty years earlier, and the purchase created a lot of attention, as the architect noted and the baroness underlined.⁹⁰ To this day these paintings, as well as the other objects the baron collected, form integral focal points in the collection of Duivenvoorde and are displayed as part of the family collection, to be seen by the public in situ.

Amidst the enormous changes that took place in society on cultural, political, and financial levels in the first half of the twentieth century, and the identity crisis that

⁸⁴ ASD, Archive of the Foundation Duivenvoorde (AFD), no inventory, 12 Apr. 1960, Covenant of the establishment of the Foundation Duivenvoorde.

⁸⁵ ASD, ALHSO, inv.nr. III.353, 19 Jul. 1957, family memo by E.M. Prins-Schimmelpenninck van der Oye on the future of Duivenvoorde.

⁸⁶ ASD, ALHSO, inv.nr. III.353, s.d., handwritten note on the various options regarding the future of Duivenvoorde.

⁸⁷ Canneman and Van der Klooster, *De geschiedenis van het kasteel Duivenvoorde en zijn bewoners* (The Hague, 1967), 74.

⁸⁸ ASD, AFD, no inventory, 1 May 1963, minutes of the 21th board meeting of the Foundation Duivenvoorde.

⁸⁹ ASD, AFD, no inventory, 18 Jun. 1964, Financial Statements of 1963.

⁹⁰ ASD, AFD, no inventory, 21 Jun. 1963, minutes of the 22th board meeting of the Foundation Duivenvoorde.

followed the attacks on the old culture of nobility, baron Schimmelpenninck van der Oye had to find a new *modus operandi*. He found his answer in hunting down, collecting and trying to collect all sorts of objects that had a connection to Duivenvoorde or the history of its owners, his predecessors and ancestors, and thus finding his answer in the past. Whereas his great-uncle Hendricus Adolphus had collected with interest and a passion for art in general and as a way of satisfying his craving for modernity, the baron had different intentions. The stories presented above are mere examples of moments when the baron laid or tried to lay his hands on pieces that were part of the old family collection, like the books at the Rosendael-auction, all of which Schimmelpenninck van der Oye thought would supplement the collection, as they told the story of his ancestors. The piles of auction catalogues and correspondence of the baron include many more examples of his interest in objects of the Van Wassen-aer, Steengracht and Schimmelpenninck van der Oye families.

84 From here on, the question arises if the case of the baron is unique, or could be compared to other noblemen of his time in the Netherlands and abroad, like Godard van Aldenburg Bentinck (1857-1940) at the Dutch castle of Amerongen or the dukes of Arenberg, discussed in other parts of this issue. In a fast-changing world, the baron's practice of collecting the past was his strategy for cultural survival and defining his noble identity. He had made it his duty and mission to research his family history, to preserve Duivenvoorde the way he had received it from his ancestors and to reconstruct, expand and recollect the old inheritance as best he could. His focal points lay in the past. Adding objects to the collection with a dynastic motive and a focus on the past, his preference did not go out to buying the most beautiful porcelain, state-of-the-art interior decorations or modern masters, wanting an object not for its beauty or uniqueness, but for its ties to Duivenvoorde and to his family history.

Simone Nieuwenbroek is historicus en is werkzaam als conservator bij Kasteel Duivenvoorde in Voorschoten. Zij is bestuurslid van de Stichting Werkgroep Adelsgeschiedenis en het Koninklijk Nederlandsch Genootschap voor Geslacht- en Wapenkunde. Haar bijzondere interesse gaat uit naar de geschiedenis van de Nederlandse adel, hun netwerken, familiecollecties en de totstandkoming daarvan. Voor haar onderzoek naar W.A.A.J. baron Schimmelpenninck van der Oye (1889-1957) ontving zij het Ithakastipendium 2022 van de Stichting Kastelen, historische Buitenplaatsen en Landgoederen.

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Dossier Aristocratic collecting practices in Belgium and the Netherlands (ca. 1780-1950)

Aristocratic collecting practices in Belgium and the Netherlands (c. 1780-1950).

An introduction

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