



What to do with Heritage

A Comparative Study of the Usage and Perception of Country Houses and Castles

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1

Introduction

*Round Tower,
Windsor Castle,
Windsor.
Great Britain.*





Castle Loevestein, Poederoijen, Gelderland. The Netherlands.

In an interview with the *National Trust Bulletin*, director Dame Helen Ghosh claimed that modern heritage professionals have to 'manage the process of change' instead of 'preserve things in aspic' (Grasby 2). This statement can be interpreted as an essential narrowing down of the dilemma that many practitioners are struggling with these days. Governmental support is increasingly hard to come by and the managers of heritage sites are forced to think in economical terms. For this essay, the discussion about these current challenges will focus on castles and country houses in the Netherlands. The following question will function as starting point for my research: How are castles and country houses perceived and represented in England, the Netherlands and Germany in terms of national identity? Inevitably, this will also include scrutinizing Dutch history and heritage awareness, in the hope of finding an explanation for the marginalized status of castles and country houses in the collective memory of the Netherlands. The practical aspect of this work will be to open up new possibilities of presenting the cultural heritage of castles and country houses, as well as positioning the issue more centrally in the national narrative of the Netherlands. Especially the potential of re-use in terms of tourism will be delineated. These possibilities could also be beneficial for the economic situation of castles and country houses by increasing awareness which can lead to increased visitor numbers and increased funding. However, the main focus should be to create a form of representation and marketing that is sustainable and has long-lasting effects on the public's understanding of Dutch cultural heritage. This study should not be seen as a pro and con list for the usage of heritage in the form of tourism, but as a study of factors that influence the perception and valorisation of historical objects in order to understand the situation of castles and country houses in the Netherlands and to hopefully improve their position.

2

The Basic Framework



*Muiderslot in Muiden,
Noord-Holland.
The Netherlands.
("Amsterdam Castle").*

2.1 The 'Matter' of Identity

Discussing the way people in three profoundly different countries think of castles and country houses is not an easy undertaking. It does not suffice to study the respective styles of architecture and their effect on people. The topic addresses several extensive theoretical ideas and approaches. For this essay, the themes of identity, heritage, and valorisation will be put into focus. In order to provide a basis for understanding the challenges that this array of complex theories pose, the following section will try to shed light on some of the central thoughts on identity and heritage.

What exactly is 'identity'? Just like any theory, it is a human construct and can refer either to individuals or groups of individuals, but it also has a spatial aspect in terms of identity on a national or regional level. On an individual level, every person tries to create an image of himself that fits the respective situation which can lead to the co-existence of several different identities. When individuals come together as a collective, a shared group identity is needed as connective tissue. This can happen on a small scale, as in a specific geographical region, or on a grander, national scale. A sense of regionalism, or regional identity, is most often drawn from aspects of the groups' material surroundings. Material markers of the landscape can serve as tools for answering the question of who are we and what makes us special. In this way, a landscape may be turned into a material expression of supposed qualities of a group that inhabits it. We then speak of 'place identity' (Davenport 627-628). This leads us to a subtle, but decisive rephrasing of the introducing question: what is the *matter* with identity?

As just mentioned, specific objects or aspects of a group's surrounding can be elemental in the construction of a collective identity. This comes even more into play on the national level. The idea of a community that forms a nation is founded in and expressed through a selection of symbols. Connected to these symbols are a set of cultural milestones which can be, but not necessarily are, of a material nature and help to differentiate one national group from another (Minnaard 16). In most cases, these differentiating characteristics are taken from and used to form a specific idea of heritage which forms the very 'matter' of a national identity: elements from the past are hand-picked to create an image of the cultural, economic, scientific and social achievements or experiences of this imagined community. In a way, you could say that what we term as heritage is the single most important, and most commonly functionalised, constituent of national identity.

But what is heritage then? An attempt to define this concept will never be more than an approximation to this highly selective and subjective idea, but generally you could say that heritage describes the usage of the past in the present that helps us to think about our future. Just like identity, the concept of heritage constitutes of several lay-



Schloß Bürresheim,
Mayen,
Rheinland-Pfalz.
Germany.

*Paleis het Loo,
Apeldoorn,
Gelderland.
The Netherlands.*



ers and tends to focus on materiality, at least in the cultural context (Harrisson et al. 3). Originally derived from the tradition of heirlooms, the concept has since then been gradually widened to encompass nearly anything that is deemed valuable by an individual or a collective. Especially during the twentieth century, people started thinking about the past through interpreting historical objects in order to make sense of their present situation (Ibid. 6-7). By interacting with the past in this way, material remains were used as tools to reconnect with a time long gone by and to revive connected emotions and values in the minds of people who were able to read the signs in the material (Schofield 17). As an extremely sensory creature, humans need something to grasp, touch and feel in order to relive memories and to understand their significance. And so heritage, as a way of thinking about the rather vague concept of time, heavily relies on materiality. Objects from a community's past can be used as a focal point around which its collective memory gravitates. However, this is only one side of the story. The discussion of the process of valorisation in chapter six will try to highlight the relevance of the intangible aspects of heritage.

For this essay's discussion of castles and country houses in the Netherlands, England, and Germany, it is crucial to keep the complexity of these concepts of heritage in mind. Neither of them is simply a phenomenon of nature which can be taken for granted. They need constant renegotiation and adapting to respective examples. Chapter three will try to analyse the parameters which have shaped the management and valorisation in England on a national level. However, in order to understand today's challenges for the heritage practitioners in the field of castles and country houses in the Netherlands, we will first need to take a look at the more general situation of the cultural sector.

2.2 Dealing with Dilemma: Heritage Management in the Netherlands

As in all countries, the Dutch cultural sector mainly depends on two factors: the support of the public and its willingness to engage with culture, and the existence of sufficient funds to provide the public with cultural offerings. In terms of general public interest, the general outlook seems reassuring. A governmental study found in 2012 that 80% of the population are generally interested in history and historical objects (Van der Broek and van Houwelingen 1). Also historic buildings rank high in the favour of the Dutch. In 2014, 59% of the population visited a historic building, making them the second most popular cultural attraction after the cinema and theatre ('Cultureel Knooppunt' 17). Moreover, the Dutch not only engage with culture in the role of the passive observer, they also show their support as members in cultural organisations and through donations. The amount of dona-



Leeds Castle,
Maidstone,
Kent.
Great Britain.

tions for the cultural sector has increased excessively in the period between 1995 and 2013 (Bekkers, Schuyt, and Gouwenberg 6). Also, membership of the biggest organisations has remained relatively stable over the past years.

But the details of this generally positive picture reveal crucial flaws for those working in the heritage field, and especially for built heritage. Compared to the almost 725.000 members of *Natuurmonumenten* in 2014, the just about 5.000 members of *Hendrick de Keyser* look almost puny (*'Leden Erfgoedverenigingen'*). The thought arises that the focus of the public in terms of Dutch heritage seem to lie on natural heritage. This could serve as a supporting fact for the idea that landscape and nature play an important role in establishing an identity, as mentioned in the previous chapter. And memberships can also give us valuable clues on the thematic focus of the Dutch when it comes to man-made cultural heritage. The 5.000 members of the built heritage organisation *Hendrick de Keyser* are complemented by about 5.000 members of *Heemschut* and the combined 2.000 members of the two biggest archaeological organisations. Taking all these numbers together, they just about rise above the 11.5000 members of *Vereniging Rembrandt* (*Ibid.*). So judging from the distribution of cultural interest and support by the public in the form of organisation membership, it appears that the Dutch highly value their native landscape and creative arts. Built heritage, which also includes castles and country houses, is marginalised.

Does this have an effect on the financial support for the cultural sector? What do the Dutch spend their money on in their leisure time? Visitor numbers could be one indicator of interest. In 2013, for example, the most popular museums in the Netherlands were the Rijksmuseum with 2.2 million visitors and the Van Gogh Museum with 1.4 million visitors (*'Musea'*). Both museums are located in the famous *burger* city of Amsterdam and tell the story of the art of the Golden Age and the second half of the nineteenth century, respectively, so it seems likely that this narrative is especially attractive and relevant for the visitors. However, these numbers obviously also include non-Dutch visitors. A study found in 2014 that 28% of the total amount of museum visitors are visiting from areas outside of the Netherlands (*'Museumcijfers 2014'* 16). For this study it would have been more beneficial for the discussion to analyse visitor numbers and origins for Dutch castles and country houses. Unfortunately, there are no comprehensive data collections available, which in itself could be seen as a clue of the relevance of castles and country houses in the Netherlands. In terms of donations, it is likely that people donate to the same institutions that they visit or support in the form of membership, which means a strong preference for natural heritage and creative arts. Donations may have increased, but they are also more needed than ever. Financial support from the government in the form of direct subsidies is decreasing since the financial crisis of 2008 (Van der Broek and van Houwelingen 9). To mention one specific example, the share of state subsidies for museums has shrunk from 62% to 55% in the period between 2011 and 2014 (*'Museumcijfers 2014'* 26).

As a consequence, institutions are forced to rely more on creating revenue through their own means. Far from being an easy process, this increased need of thinking in commercial ways involves an important decision for heritage practitioners: should heritage be marketed, or rather sold, in a more aggressive way in order to attract more visitors and investors, or should the practitioners continue on well-trodden paths and hope for the best? One way of trying to find a solution for this dilemma could be a critical look on how heritage, and especially castles and country houses, has been dealt with in other parts of Europe. What can the position of castles and country houses within the national identities in England and Germany tell us about the factors that influence people's valorisation of heritage? The following chapter will first try to elucidate the history of function and interpretation of country houses in England since the sixteenth century.

3

The English Case



Castle Howard,
York, North Yorkshire.
Great Britain.



The 'country's greatest contribution to Western civilisation', 'the quintessence of Englishness' (Mandler 1) – Country houses clearly represent one of the most celebrated constituents of English cultural heritage. How strong the 'brand' of the English country house is today can be seen, for example, in their dominance in the list of the most visited attractions. Between 2014 and 2015, seven out of the top ten listed tourist attractions in Great Britain were country houses, with 405.000 visitors to Stourhead, second only to the Giant's Causeway ('Year in Record' 71). But the question still arises how this country house brand was established and whether country houses have always been that popular with both the English and international visitors.

3.1 Country Houses: A History of Function

Compared to the country houses in other parts of Europe like France or Germany, the English specimens did not develop out of fortified structures, but were most often designed from scratch (Strong 168). With the end of the War of the Roses and the emergence of a more peaceful era, castles lost their significance for the nobility as fortification. The aristocracy searched for a more comfortable way of living. Despite this, the so-called 'power houses' of the sixteenth century were still ruled by the idea of serving as a centre of the local community. The bond between the gentry and their subordinates was specially close, because the owner's focus lay clearly on local issues and the system of tenancy allowed connections with the area over generations (Ibid., 12). So as part of their social responsibility, the local lords admitted members of the local community inside their halls to offer them moral support and advice. Beyond the public parts of the house were the private quarters. The layout of the 'power house' followed strict hierarchical rules of who was allowed to enjoy which part of the building (Skelton 496-497). In the sixteenth century the relationship between the country house owner and the community changed profoundly. Political power and social influence were more and more defined by wealth rather than agriculture (Aris 2). Rich merchants and influential lawyers formed a new elitist class and the focus of power now clearly shifted to London (Aris 9, Tinniswood 16).

Being wealthy was not enough in this new system, it needed to be seen. As an expression of financial prowess and taste for luxury, a vast number of country houses, now called 'prodigy houses', were constructed. An impressive architecture attracted the interest and envy of visitors, preferably noblemen, and confirmed the owner's position on the social ladder (Aris 1-2, Tinniswood 16-20). As the seventeenth century progressed, the attention of the country house owners shifted more and more away from their tenants and other members of the local commu-



*Stourhead near
Stourton, Wiltshire.
Top 10 tourist attrac-
tion in Great Britain.*

Strawberry Hill,
Twickenham, Middle-
sex. Built by Horace
Walpole.



nity to the members of their own social class. An especially desirable feat to achieve was gaining the Sovereign's favour and impressing the courtiers with treasures and curiosities behind the impressive facade (Ronces 28). It is fair to say that this could be described as an early form of tourism, especially when considering the fact that the signal power of the country house was even then strong enough to attract visitors from without the English kingdom. Travellers, from noble and wealthy backgrounds, making their way through Europe (the so-called Grand Tour) constituted an important share of visitors to the prodigy houses (Tinniswood 27-29). A system of interpreters, phrase books and guides developed around them in order to help them find their way around in the kingdom and make sure that none of the most important country houses remained unseen and un-appreciated (Ibid., 31-32). Throughout the years this system gradually became more elaborate and helpful descriptions of the exhibited paintings and statues were provided, so that the elitist visitor could use his experience of English taste as inspiration for his own noble dwelling (Ronces 28). With the turn of the seventeenth century, travelling conditions improved noticeably and, consequently, the numbers of those willing and able to move through the kingdom and visit country houses grew (Ibid.). In some sort of a give and take mechanism, country house owners were still dependant on admitting visitors within their domestic realm to show off their wealth, while the 'polite tourist' used his visit as an opportunity to prove his cultivated taste and, thus, confirming his own elitist status (Tinniswood 112). Even though interest and visitor numbers were booming by then, the selection and admission of visitors still functioned as in the previous centuries through anterior inquiries or just a simple knock at the door (Ibid. 102).

The country house tourism of the early modern period was surely an elitist phenomenon with clear hierarchical structures and ideas of benefits and duties on both sides. However, it put a process into motion that could not be reverted: the concept of the 'power house' or 'prodigy house' gradually developed into the concept of the 'mansions of England'. In the collective memory, country houses would soon no longer serve as a symbol of elitist power, but as a symbol for a shared identity and pride in cultural achievements (Mandler 4). Over the following two centuries the tension between the country house as a symbol of power that is only decipherable by the elite and the idea of shared, national symbols further developed and eventually led to its destruction and reconstruction, or its 'fall and rise' as described by Peter Mandler.

3.2 Country Houses: An English Invention

The early days of the nineteenth century brought an unlikely phenomenon: while the public continued to appropriate the country houses both physically as visitors and mentally as national symbols, their owners experienced



*Highclere Castle,
Newbury, Hampshire.
Great Britain.*

their very personal heritage as a burden. Driven by a deeply felt anxiety about emerging industrialisation and a fascination with the past, an ever growing number of people poured into the halls and gardens of the aristocracy. Other than their predecessors, the visitors of the Romantic period no longer focussed on the artistic tastefulness and architectural details of a country house, but on the effect it had on their emotions (Tinniswood 118-120). Additional to this Romantic sensitivity for the old and dramatic, the valorisation of the country house was also influenced by a new national self-image. In the Empire of the Victorian era with a rising working class, Britons in a quickly changing society looked at the 'Olden Times' of the Stuarts and Tudors for identification. Country houses which fit into the imagery of the 'Olden Times' played an influential part in this quest for orientation and were heavily promoted in the media as touristic attractions (Mandler 31-32, 90). All this presented house owners with a difficult situation. Struggling with the financial upkeep of their noble lodgings, they were more than ever dependant on their houses to be seen and appreciated, but they also started to feel the negative impact increased tourism had on their everyday life.

There was no coherent answer to this dilemma. By extending opening hours to include Sundays in order to enable visits from the working class and providing political and scientific associations to hold meetings on their premises, country houses owners supported the concept of the country house as common properties. However, some also decided to take control over visitors and their behaviour on location. Horace Walpole had already initiated a catalogue of regulations for his Strawberry Hill estate in the previous century. With the continuing rise of public interest those rules were elaborated during the nineteenth century in order to channel the flow of visitors, for example by selling limited tickets and professionally guided tours. One of the main motivations of the elite to do so was the concern that the admission of the common classes would open the gates for unruly behaviour and crime (Ronne 28-29, Mandler 83).

So as the century progressed, country house owners were clearly in a defensive position, trying to juggle financial necessity and the preservation of their traditional powers. Until the First World War all seemed under control, even under ever increasing number of visitors because of new ways of transport like trains, bikes and automobiles. Measures included defining entry prices and strict behavioural regulations. Some owners even decided to shut their gates completely (Tinniswood 159-164). At least it showed how much the public really valued the country houses. As a continuation of the Romantic era, they were seen as an idyll of stability, counterbalancing the hectic industrialised cities. The public not only showed its appreciation in the form of buying entry tickets, but also by actively supporting their protection. Associations were founded to safeguard certain buildings from the dangers of excessive spatial planning and development (Ibid., 168, 172). Although country houses repre-

sented a threatened, non-industrialised side of national heritage, they still emitted an aura of political power in the eyes of the public. Then the shock of the First World War hit the British Empire. Together with already existing financial problems and societal changes like democratisation, this strongly undermined the political and economic power of the noble elite (Worsley 'Powerhouse' 427). To make matters worse, public opinion changed dramatically. With the rise of democracy and a stronger sense of social equity, country houses and their inhabitants came to symbolise an outlived, oppressive system. The aristocracy lost its influential role in the collective mind of the public (Mandler 4). The aura of the country house as centre of power was broken and during the years between the two World Wars many owners decided to abandon their properties, or even destroy them (Ibid., 323).

During Britain's involvement in the Second World War a great number of country houses were, more or less voluntarily, used as hospitals, safe-keeps, or imprisonment facilities. The noble estates of the 1940s could not have been farther away from their traditional glamorous image. After the allied victory the era of destruction continued, leading up to a loss of about 1,000 houses (Inglis 1511). Neither the general public nor the government, nor preservation organisations like the National Trust believed in the benefits of protecting country houses at all costs. They had clearly lost their financial and symbolic value not only for their original owners, but also to the majority of society (Mandler 323-324). In total, probably about 1,200 country houses have been lost over the course of the twentieth century (Worsley 'Lost Houses' 1).

How did they regain their powerful role in the national narrative of England? This essay claims the answer is decades of reconstruction and canonisation through several stakeholders and public access. On a national level, the first step was made by the academic world. Over the last years of the 1940s pressure on the government to accept country houses again as valuable cultural achievements and markers of the past grew steadily, leading to the publication of the so-called Gowers Report in 1950. Calling for the return of the owners to their abandoned houses, the paper highlighted the significance that the government assigned to the issues of traditional ownership and inhabitation. Enabling the public to access played only a subordinate role (Mandler 334-336, 343). The next two decades saw a mix of reinforced institutional efforts to establish country houses as national heritage that was in need of protection and owners who struggled to make their properties financially sound again. Members of the social elite organized exhibitions and officiated laws in order to create public awareness for the necessity of protection. For example, the Town and Country Planning Act from 1968 prohibited the tearing down of buildings



*Woburn Abbey,
Woburn, Bedfordshire.
Great Britain.*

without a previous assessment by local government. And in 1974, an exhibition called 'The Destruction of the Country House' warned the public in a dramatic way of the, supposed, threat that this part of the nation's heritage was facing (Worsley 'Powerhouse' 423-424). Patrick Cormack, a Member of Parliament during the 1970s, summarised the value of the country house for England as follows:

'These houses are a special public possession for it is in them and in our churches that we perhaps come closest to the soul and spirit of England [...] Set in their spacious parklands and often containing priceless collections, our country houses are part of the very fabric of our civilisation.'

(Ingليس 1514)

This notion was further promoted by the increasingly professional marketing of country houses. From the 1960s onwards, owners exploited the potential of their properties more professionally and thought of new ways to attract the public's attention and appreciation (Mandler 396-397). Besides enlisting external expertise, those new strategies involved tailoring to the needs of the targeted audiences. Especially the local population and those living within reasonable distance created a high demand for attractive leisure and recreation possibilities. Together with a new sensitivity for the importance of a healthy environment, this led to the establishment of country parks, centred around a country house and its demesne, with additional nature-experience orientated offers like camping grounds. Whether this was a decision being made out of an honest desire to give country houses a social function again, similar to their role in the sixteenth century, and out of a strong sense of duty, or whether marketing considerations were the driving forces, varied from case to case (Strong 140). Anyhow, the work definitely paid off, at least in terms of reinstalling the country house in the collective memory.

By the 1980s at the latest the notion of country houses as national symbols was widely spread again, thanks to institutional intervention and skilful narrative manipulation of heritage practitioners. The often problematic relationship between country houses and their owners to society and the changing values that were attached to them, was overlaid by the story of a steady ascent of British civilisation with country houses as its material expression (Mandler 401, 414). This powerful image of an imposing ancestral home situated within a tastefully designed garden radiates its attractive aura far beyond Britain's borders. A survey implemented by the tourist board VisitBritain asked participants in fifty countries which themes and touristic attractions they most likely associated with other countries. In the category of historic buildings England, together with the other constituents of the United



*Blenheim Palace,
Woodstock,
Oxfordshire.
Great Britain.*

Longleat House,
Warminster,
Wiltshire
Great Britain.



Kingdom, was ranked fifth place, which also includes country houses but not exclusively ('Culture and Heritage'). However, supported by the findings of a 2011 study of attractions visited by international tourists which claimed that 48% went to see a historic building, it is definitely safe to say that country houses are perceived as a significant part of Britain's built heritage (Visit Britain 'Activities').

Taking all these considerations into account, the study of the English case clearly exemplifies the combined power of several factors on the perception of historical objects like country houses: institutionalisation and canonisation by the ruling elites, general developments in the world of arts and society, and the level of public access permitted by country house owners. Starting off as a centre of local influence until the seventeenth century, the powerhouse was opened for common people in order to fulfil a sense of public responsibility. However, even then access was limited by a strict hierarchical system. Over the following centuries the connection of the country house to the local community loosened continuously, while the focus shifted to elite visitors in an early form of tourism. Through the growing numbers of noble and influential individuals entering, assessing and writing about the estates, country houses were firmly embedded in the collective memory of the kingdom on a national level.

However, when changes in society lead to the loss of aristocratic power and financial means, the appreciation of the country houses deteriorated. A more independent and self-confident middle and working class challenged the status of nobility and the values attached to their properties. Country house owners had to rethink their strategies and role in society as a whole. By allowing the public access on an almost unconditional scale and with the support of the government and academic world, country houses were revived as national symbols with a new function.

The English example shows how national identities are constructed and constantly renegotiated. Naturally, those in charge of policies and academic expertise are most often the leading players in this process, but protective policies and alerting research reports do not suffice. After all, national symbols cannot be successful without one important parameter: they need to be seen and acknowledged. This enables the public to cast their vote on what makes their country unique by making their voice heard through the sound of money and printing entry tickets. On a national level, tourism can function as a powerful tool for the common people to exercise influence on the constituents of national identity.

4

The German Case

*Marksburg,
Braubach,
Rheinland-Pfalz.
Germany.*



The conclusion of the previous chapter listed artistic movements as an influential factor in the perception of historical objects. And indeed, the Romantic era with its notions of the picturesque and the fascination with the mythical, shaped the way Grand Tour travellers and other knowledgeable visitors assessed the value and impact of country houses. The paintings they brought home, their travel reports and diary entries clearly had an impact on today's image of the country house. But the power of arts and folklore becomes even more obvious when studying the valorisation of castles in Germany. This chapter will try to delineate the close intertwining of castles as historical structure with artistic themes and the special connection of culture with German national identity.

4.1 Castles: A History of Function

Nowadays, the typical picture of a (German) castle that arises in front of people's imaginary eye most often features a defensive, imposing structure that serves as a setting for dramatic tales of courtly love and knightly battles (Schmidt 139). This is most commonly seen as result of a long-standing tradition of using castles as an analogy or metaphor in folklore and arts as early as the twelfth century. So-called *Minnelieder* were recited by travelling singers in front of a noble audience and told stories about mythical treasures like the Holy Grail or tales about brave knights defending a young maiden's honour. Some of the more popular songs provided the basis for folk tales like *Tristan* or *Parsifal*, which have been deeply ingrained in the collective memory of Western European civilisation over centuries (Großmann 237-238, Taylor 52). Castles were a common theme in this tradition in order to indirectly address the issue of courting a fair maiden by singing songs about castle walls that had to be conquered and defended. Far from a medieval invention, this comparative tool had already been introduced by the Greek philosopher Platon who used buildings as metaphors for the human body (Dinzelbacher 93-95).

But can these rather general European narratives provide us with a sufficient explanation for the status of German castles? The following analysis of the history of function and perception of these historical structures will hopefully help to answer this question. After all, the moment of truth when their traditional function was no longer applicable arrived already in the eighteenth century and, thus, way earlier than it did for English country houses. Consequently, the case of German castles is a fruitful area of study because it enables us to take a closer look at how they were re-valued and re-used for more than two centuries. But first we need to define this essay's notion of what a castle is. Throughout the centuries of castle research in Germany there have constantly been rewritings of the castle concept. While the focus clearly lay on its defensive characteristics as definitive markers in the sixteenth century, the notion was gradually defined in a more narrow way. Modern academics centred the issue around noble ownership and inhabitation, which denied many medieval structures the status of a castle.



Right:
Neuschwanstein,
Bavaria. Germany.

Left:
Reichsburg Cochem
in Cochem,
Rheinland-Pfalz.
Germany.



Today's most commonly used definition describes a castle as a defensive and residential structure of elite origin, but without giving a detailed time frame. Also, the German language differentiates between 'Burgen', meaning castles, and 'Schlösser', meaning palaces. The latter describes buildings of a younger age which were built not to serve as a fortification, but as an expression of wealth and imagination (Großmann 16-18). And even though Großmann argues for an inclusion of objects which were built by other members of society, this text will work with the contemporary definition of 'Burgen' as it comes closest to the national image of a German castle and can already give us a hint on the dominant discourse on this matter.

As already mentioned, the decisive time period for castles in Germany was most likely the eighteenth century. No longer needed for their thick walls and high towers as useful tools of deterrence, their value for their owners had to be re-assessed. Thankfully, the rest of society, both regionally and internationally, had less problems with the loss of traditional functions. This mix of internal and external appreciation would prove to be their salvation and ensured future valorisation. Throughout the eighteenth century, this positive valorisation was closely connected to the steadily growing phenomenon of tourism. Especially supposedly authentic medieval castles along the rivers Rhine and Mosel ranked high in the favour of travellers (Großmann 225-227). This included also structures in a state of deterioration, which had been mostly neglected and put in a negative light by the public in the preceding centuries (Taylor 52). Similar to country house visitors in England, European, well-educated tourists valued these castles for their mythical aura and the Romantic sentiment that they evoked in their hearts and minds (Ibid. 59). Local folklore and legends specifically connected to certain castles or castle ruins played an extremely important role in this process. Through their tragic stories of unrequited love, grim murders and eerie ghost sightings, they provided the Romantic travellers with the perfect inspiration for paintings or writings and facilitated the emotional connection with a place that Romanticism longed for. One of those stories called 'The Spectre Wedding' tells the audience about a knight who spends a night with a beautiful lady in the ruined castle of Dattenberg. When he wakes up in the morning, the woman has disappeared and he realises that he had been in love with a ghost (Guerber 140-141). This is just one of many examples for tales that are connected to certain castles, but potentially the most famous of these stories is the *Nibelungensaga*. Centred around the ruin of Drachenfels and other landmarks in the area like the viewpoint of Rolandseck, the legend narrates the fight of a knight called Siegfried against a ghastly dragon and then bathing in the beast's pool of blood (Ibid. 123-127). Besides featuring



*Burg Hornberg,
Neckarzimmern,
Baden-Württemberg,
Germany.*

several tropes and themes that were likely to please the Romantic sentiment of the late eighteenth century, the *Nibelungensaga* stands out of the vast amount of similar stories because of its unique relationship with the German national identity and a concept called *Kulturnation*, which will be discussed in detail in the next chapter.

4.2 Castles: A National Myth

Why a certain song, story, or person takes on a central part in a community's identity and national narrative is hard to pin down. As has already been stated in chapter three, there seems to be a correlation between tourism and national identity. The example of the *Nibelungensaga* and folklore in general raises the question if arts could have a similar impact on the way specific historical objects are valued and interpreted on a national level.

The previous chapter discussed the appreciation of the castles along the Rhine and Mosel by educated travellers and artists during the eighteenth century. But these dramatically set and partly romantically decaying historical structures also had an effect on the domestic artistic world. Again, the fact that almost every castle had its own folk tale represented one of the main sources of inspiration, and also pride. For those who knew about these legends and their heroic characters like Siegfried or Henry IV, reading or reciting the stories on location was not only a way to immerse themselves in the plot and identify with the protagonists, but also a way to connect themselves to the landscape. Pride in the skilfully created folk tales and the brave deeds of the characters turned also into a sense of pride in the castles and the surrounding Romantic scenery (Taylor 25). Over the nineteenth century this identification with the landscape gradually evolved into an identification with a *German* landscape. The first decades of the century saw the development of the idea that the scattered and isolated German states constituted in fact one single community with a shared German culture and language (Müller 621). This emerging idea took on an artistic as well as a political dimension. All centred on the notion that the Middle Ages and its society represented an era of truly German values and lifestyle. German nationalism saw the medieval castles of the Rhineland and the Mosel valley as symbols of a better, unified German past. Yet again, the close connection between folklore and castles played an influential part in their valorisation and establishment as national symbols. The way contemporary artists thought about the Middle Ages was not inspired by history books, but by the mythical tales of folklore.

Castles became the expression of a past that was filled with bravery, wonders and an essentially German sentiment. Politically, this had the effect that activists decided to hold their rallies in the courtyards of well-known castles like the Marksburg or Wartburg. By serving as the setting for passionate calls for unification and independence from the Prussians, these specific objects and castles in general were permanently joined to the

movement of German nationalism in the collective memory (Ibid. 39-40, 62-63). In the German context, this phenomenon of unique interaction between arts, nationalism and built heritage is known as the *Kulturnation*. This concept combines the idea that the Germans are an united people, bonded by a set of cultural achievements, linguistic characteristics and historical events, with the notion that this community should live together in one, unified stately compound (Edler 318). Since the early nineteenth century, this concept has been institutionalised through education. Castles are a recurrent theme in the canon of German culture. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries this was mainly effected through the so-called *Heimat* movement. Due to a combination of national pride with still prevalent Romantic patterns of thought, as well as a modern sense of loss, many Germans turned to their local landscapes to find markers of continuity and stability. And they found them in the surrounding castles. As a consequence, *Heimatmuseums* were installed in a great number of castles in order to educate the public about their German heritage (Taylor 75-78).

The tradition of *Minnelieder*, which has already been mentioned at the beginning of the previous chapter, constitutes one of the central topics of today's high school curriculum in most German states. Especially the persona of the German poet Walther von der Vogelweide plays an important role in teaching the youth about German language and culture during the Middle Ages (Büsse 1-7). And there are numerous other examples of how the theme of castles is implemented in the German collective memory through its connection to specific historical figures, which are considered to be part of the national canon of culture. Composer Richard Wagner and reformer Martin Luther are only two of the vast number of individuals who can be related to medieval poetry, and thus to the trope of castles. Wagner used it as inspiration for his popular *Faust* opera and Luther compared God to a castle in his writings because of its characteristics of greatness and fortitude (Dinzelbacher 93, Großmann 237). Wagner's work also had an impact on the canonisation of castle-related folklore, especially the story of the *Nibelungensaga*, which he turned into the musical epos of *Der Ring der Nibelungen* (Taylor 58-59).

However, there are also examples of local identification, which is based on the symbolic value of castles. The population of the Rhine valley considers themselves as extremely relaxed and positive about life in general. And to them, this sense of *Gemütlichkeit* finds expression in the picturesque castles and castle ruins as well as the magical stories that are connected to them ('Rast' 56). Another example for the reciprocity of local folklore, castles, and important historical events is Burg Hornberg. In 1517, a well-known knight called Götz von Berlichingen acquired the castle and supported the surrounding community in their struggles during the Peasant's War. As a punishment for his actions, he was apprehended and spent twelve years locked away in Burg Hornberg by Karl V before he went to fight in the Ottoman Wars. Centuries later, his memoirs were used by Johann Wolfgang von



Wartburg in Eisenach,
Thüringen.
Germany.

Goethe as an inspiration for his play *Der Götz von Berlichingen* (Ibid. 63). In this way, Burg Hornberg became a part of the German canon of the *Kulturnation*, which is clearly a source of pride and identification for the local community. This can be seen in the fact that Goethe's play of the local hero Götz von Berlichingen is performed and celebrated in a festival up until this day ('Götz von Berlichingen').

This chapter has tried to show how strongly castles are interweaved with the fabric of German history and identity. From the Middle Ages on they have been a recurrent theme in literature, poetry or music, and folklore has played an extremely important role in this development. Thanks to the Romantic period with its sensitivity for the mythical and picturesque, these legends played a crucial role in supporting the efficacy of castles on travellers and their minds. Without this close relationship with the world of arts, castles would have probably never taken on the symbolic significance which caused German nationalists to use them as focal points and inspiration for their political aspirations. Without the part they played in the process of German unification and nationalism, the *Heimat* movement would have most likely picked another location for their educative efforts about German heritage. And so centuries of canonisation have 'Germanified' and transformed castles into a national myth that inspires a sense of community and pride on a national and local level.

5

The Dutch Case



*Ruin of Brederode.
Santpoort,
Noord-Holland.
The Netherlands.*

So far this paper has discussed issues like identities, artistic aesthetics, folklore, as well as tourism. For each selected national case these factors had their unique effect on how country houses and castles have been used, perceived and valued over time. But what does all of this mean for the situation of these historical objects in the Netherlands? Chapter two ended with the question if strategies of management and interpretation could provide suggestions for the solution of the dilemma that Dutch heritage practitioners are facing at the moment; having to decide between sticking to old patterns or trying to adapt their work to changes in society and policy. A clear answer to this profound question cannot be reached within the limited framework of this work, but it may be possible to apply the previously discussed themes and issues and test them on the Dutch case. Hopefully, this will help to make sense of the struggles that country houses and castles are confronted with in the Netherlands and use the knowledge about the English and the German case as inspirations during the solution-finding process.

5.1 Aesthetics: Beauty and the Eye of the Beholder

In chapter two it was stated that the Dutch tourist data and an analysis of memberships in cultural organisations suggest a strong focus on natural narrative or on cultural heritage with a Golden Age connection. Both the general public and the institutions seem to concentrate on these topics, thus marginalise the built heritage of country houses and castles. This impression is strengthened by the study of the so-called Dutch Canon, which was initiated by a report calling for stronger education in history in 2005. As a result, a group of experts defined fifty themes which were supposed to give a comprehensive, inclusive image of the Dutch past and present (Van der Vaart 349, Doppen 137). Presenting a curious exemplification of how national identities can be wilfully constructed and imagined, these fifty ‘windows’ represented a quite literal canonisation of a selected group of historical events, people and social developments. A look at this collection reveals a great variety of themes, like the development of the Dutch language, overseas trade, or agriculture (Committee 126-127, 130-131, 146-147). The Dutch Canon also includes the era of country houses during the seventeenth and eighteenth century, because of its connection to the narrative of the Golden Age and their specific Dutch style of gardening (Ibid. 164-165). Castles, as a contrast, are not given this kind of accentuation; indeed, they are notably absent. However, a completely different picture presents itself when looking at the contents of the so-called Regiocanons. On a website especially designed for these local and regional canons, members of the public were able to send in their own suggestions for what makes their specific region unique and ‘Dutch’. And surprisingly, not only country houses feature heavily in these local canons, but also castles. For example, the canon of Vollenhove lists an Episcopal fortress and denotes a whole ‘window’ to the theme of knighthood and another one to the renaissance castle of Toutenburg



Right:
Castle Hoensbroek,
Limburg.
The Netherlands.

Left:
Castle Rosendaal.
Gelderland.
The Netherlands.



(‘Canon Vollenhove’). This suggests that there is a profoundly different perception and valorisation of castles on the local, compared to the national, level. The following paragraph will try to elucidate whether the aspect of aesthetics could provide us with an explanation.

As has been mentioned before, the appearance of a castle was considered to be an essential constituent of its perception by travellers in England and Germany. For the Romantic visitor of the early nineteenth century the architecture and setting of a castle had to visually fit to the legends circulating around it. A castle like the Marksburg, which served as a setting for a tale featuring a lord murdering his own wife and founding a nunnery as an act of remorse, was expected to be located in a dramatic scenery and have an imposing aura (Guerber 177-178). Walking up the hills through dark forests and exploring the halls of a castle like this, while keeping mystic tales on their minds, presented the Romantic tourists with the tender feeling of horror and awe that they were searching for. The Dutch castles, however, with their modest appearance and flat surroundings clearly cannot fulfil such expectations.

A similar development can be seen in the way the English country houses have been perceived by the tourists throughout time. As soon as the idea of the powerhouse and prodigy house emerged during the sixteenth century, the noblemen were quick to adapt their homes to their new destiny. From now on the facade had to be impressive rather than defensive. The interior had to exude eclectic taste and wealth instead of functionality. Only by keeping their houses up to date to contemporary style ideas and developments in design, they were able to show off their position in society and attract the interest of potential visitors (Aris 2-9). The owners of country houses were definitely aware of the effect their properties would have on the audience they allowed to enter the demesne. But while visitors of the sixteenth century did not attach much value to aspects like architecture, the Grand Tour travellers focussed more on such details, because their journey was a means of self-improvement and self-cultivation. Being able to identify traits of specific architectural styles or works by famous artists was one of their main concerns (Tinniswood 40, 67-68).

The appearance of Dutch country houses originating from this period did not quite satisfy the high standards of the Grand Tour. More focussed on a luxurious interior rather than exterior, the country houses which had been



House Doorn.
Doorn, Utrecht.
The Netherlands.

built by the merchants and *burgers* during the era of the Golden Age did not live up to the grandeur of English or Italian specimens (Schama 311, De Vries 81).

Nevertheless, the fact that some travellers did indeed acknowledge the splendour of the interior of Dutch country houses seems to suggest that the argument of aesthetics is not strong enough to serve as the only explanation for the marginalised status of country houses and castles in the Netherlands (De Vries 81-82). After all, beauty lies in the eye of the beholder and is too relative of a concept in order to provide a solution for such a complex issue.

5.2 Identity: Dutch Modesty, Luxury and Nobility

Every identity is based upon the notion that a certain set of characteristics and values set a group of people apart from other communities. The previous chapter has argued that in the Dutch case, these characteristics and values mostly centre around the era of the Golden Age.

We will have to take a more detailed look at what this entails in order to make a judgement over the position of country houses and castles within this framework. Generally, Dutch national identity is based on the assumption of a shared cultural heritage and a fixed stately compound instead of shared ethnicity or other markers of cohesiveness. Part of this heritage are achievements in terms of international trade, artistic masterpieces and progressive research (Frijhoff 35, 42). All of these celebrated values can be directly or indirectly related to the *burgers* of the Golden Age and the societal system which they spearheaded. Strangely enough, the estates that were constructed by these wealthy citizens do not seem to play a significant role in the Dutch collective memory. Why is that so?

One possible approach to an answer could be the Dutch struggle with the concept of nobility. The example of the complicated relationship between country house owners and the general public in England during the first half of the twentieth century has shown that the valorisation of a historical building relies heavily on how its inhabitants are perceived. In the Dutch collective mind, Golden Age citizens were successful entrepreneurs and politically influential, but would not express their status in an extravagant way. The term *burger* simply describes a person who has a paid occupation and would live a life in accordance with the rules of Christianity (Tilmans 83, Schama 83). Following this moral compass involved clear notions of luxury and its merits and dangers. While being a useful tool for displaying one's status, an exaggerated accumulation of riches represented a sinful deed in the Dutch Calvinist world view. It was expected to keep longings for the pretty things in life under control in order

to live an honest and upright life (De Vries 73, 77). However, Simon Schama has claimed that the Dutch in the seventeenth century were just as luxury-loving as the rest of Early Modern Europe. As one example he presents the great public interest in raffles with valuable prizes, despite the Calvinist call for modesty. And so it seems that there was a crucial difference between theory and practice in terms of the lifestyles of the common people as well as of the wealthy *burgers* (Schama 298, 306-310).

So if research suggests that the citizens of the Golden Age did indeed lead a luxurious existence, then why are they celebrated as forefathers of the egalitarian Dutch identity of the present day? This egalitarian myth sees the Netherlands as a haven of tolerance in a world of war and discrimination (Frijhoff 19). A narrative of the past that features well-off entrepreneurs wallowing in luxury and showing off their riches would question this heritage of a people of civility and equality. It suggests that the issue of materialism has been ‘forgotten’ in the national discourse of identity, which has its parallels in the ‘forgetting’ of the complex history of country house perception in England. But this still does not answer the question of why the country houses of the *burgers* have not been implemented in national identity, along with their owners. This paper would like to argue that Dutch scepticism about the general concept of nobility could serve as an explanation. A study of the history of what we now call the Netherlands reveals a long-standing tradition of struggling with the idea of foreign domination and the divine right of the nobility to rule. This will for independence and agency can be detected in the popularity of the so-called ‘Batavian myth’. In the early sixteenth century the myth was born that the Dutch originated from the Batavian people and their heroic leader Bato, who fought against Roman occupation. This notion of an inherited will to combat oppression and to self-rule proved to be fruitful ground for civic humanism, which had great influence in the Netherlands during the sixteenth and seventeenth century. By using the Batavian myth as example of a supposedly Dutch history of independence, claims for the self-government of city states could be legitimised (Woud 10-12, Tilmans 81-82). Which leads us to the issue of the power of arts and folklore again.

This paper’s study of German castles has tried to highlight the strong impact that legends had on their valorisation over time. And there are hints that a similar mechanism helped to shape the public perception of country houses and castles in the Netherlands.

If we look at Dutch folklore, most collections do feature one or two stories of castles, knights and other topics that could be related to the theme of castles. However, their numbers are far lower than in collections of German folklore and are most often of a general origin and not connected to one specific location (Merder 129). So for the case of Dutch castles the argument of arts and folklore admittedly does not really apply. Explanations have to be found in the dominance of the Golden Age narrative and the significance of aesthetics. For the country houses, on the other hand, folklore could indeed provide us at least with part of the answer. It has already been claimed that Dutch national identity seems to struggle with the idea of nobility and luxury.

The Milkmaid by Johannes Vermeer, c. 1660.



Legends like ‘The Lady of Stavoren’ seem to support this. The tale tells the story of a prosperous city called Stavoren, surrounded by protective dykes. When a wealthy lady living in this city sent a captain out to find the world’s greatest treasure and refused to accept wheat as his offer, she was punished to live in poverty. The other citizens of Stavoren did not learn from her mistake and maintained their haughty behaviour and, eventually, the whole city perished when the dykes broke (Guerber 1-4). This story of a greedy upper-class that brought divine judgement over themselves seems to correlate with the elite-critical interpretation of the Batavian myth by Dutch humanists. Also, there are two well-known folk sayings which further highlight the status of modesty and civility in the self-image of the Netherlands. Both ‘Wie het kleine niet eert, is het grote niet weert’ or ‘Who disdains the small does not deserve the great’, and ‘Hoogmoed komt voor de val’ or ‘Arrogance comes before the plunge’ support the notion that Dutch collective memory is sceptical of everything that can be connected to boasting and pride (Merder 122). As one final argument for the relevance of this egalitarian self-image and the relevance of arts and folklore in this process, some of the most celebrated Dutch paintings are presented. Apposite to the two mentioned sayings and ‘The Lady of Stavoren’, popular paintings like ‘The Milkmaid’ by Johannes Vermeer could be interpreted as further exemplification for the valorisation of simple, domestic life in Dutch consciousness.

Several mechanisms and developments have led to the position that the *burgers* of the Dutch Golden Age hold in today’s Dutch identity. In the national narrative they take on the role of symbols for a Dutch heritage of humility, egalitarianism and agency. Research findings that seem to suggest a different, less modest, version of the past are marginalised. All this leaves no space for country houses which have been erected by *burgers*, as they could be interpreted as proofs for love of luxury and display. Also, the often excessively decorated dwellings could serve as an unwelcome reminder of noble or patrician dominance and the threat it posed to the freedom of the common people (Schama 65-66). Dutch castles do not seem to be under a similarly strong impact of folklore or arts, which could be a hint at their position in Dutch national identity in itself. The next chapter will try to elucidate whether tourism could potentially help to work against the dominant narrative of the Golden Age or to implement country houses and castles into the narrative in order to increase awareness for them in Dutch collective memory.

6

Tourism: A Question of 'Selling' or 'Using'?

*White Tower,
the centre of the
Tower of London.
Great Britain.*



6.1 Thinking about Heritage

In the preceding chapters, this paper has analysed the impact of several factors on the function, interpretation and valorisation of castles and country houses in England, Germany and the Netherlands over the past five centuries. This study has shown how the characteristics of national identities are constructed and renegotiated by stakeholders from the elite, but also from the public, and how certain historical objects can lose or gain identity-establishing values during this process. Especially the cases of English country houses and castles in Germany suggest that there is an intrinsic connection between an object's usage, or function, and the way it is perceived and valued on a local, national and international level. This combination of internal appreciation, i.e. national identity, regionalism, or visitor numbers, and external appreciation, meaning tourist numbers or artistic inspiration, decides the level of protection and preservation of historical objects (Schofield 28). Besides serving as another example for the highly constructed character of national identities, the German case has also revealed how important it can be that specific objects, buildings or locations are interwoven with historical developments and events. Over centuries, German castles have featured as inspiration and settings for vital steps towards a unified German nation and identity. This is an achievement that takes time and can't be done retroactively.

What does this mean for the marginalised position of castles and country houses in the Netherlands? Could tourism potentially fit them into the dominant narrative of the Golden Age and into the egalitarian self-image of the Dutch? First, the issue of tourism will have to be discussed on a more theoretical level. On several instances in this paper the terms of usage and value have been mentioned. The question at this point is whether tourism could and should be a way of making use of heritage, and for the more critical among us, the question is whether tourism is actually a way of *selling* heritage. This differentiation is crucial for this paper's argumentation about the potential of tourism for heritage and for Dutch castles and country houses in particular. However, this difference is one of interpretation and ideology, rather than of an either-or decision based on hard facts. Once again, the definition of heritage proves to be decisive. Chapter two has already argued that the concept of heritage is a way of thinking about the past and, consequently, a product of the human mind and not a tangible, historical fact. The constituents of what heritage is and how these constituents are valued by an individual, a local community or a nation is highly subjective and ever-changing.

In this way, it is not only a product of the human mind, but also a product *in itself*. As a product, it can - and is destined to - be sold. Interpretations, however, which see heritage as a set of historical artefacts that should remain largely untouched because of their intrinsic value, would naturally see tourism as a threat and an act of selling out



Schloss Stolzenfels,
Coblenz,
Rheinland-Pfalz.
Germany.

*Schloß Drachenburg,
Königswinter,
Nordrhein-Westfalen.
Germany.*



and, thus, losing heritage. But this interpretation does apply more to history than to of heritage. Historical objects are indeed vulnerable to the effects of tourism and physical exploitation and will, eventually, vanish (Ash-worth 82). Those who are active in the so-called heritage sector should be aware of this theoretical distinction. They should answer the question for themselves whether they are working for the protection and preservation of heritage, meaning their way of interpreting the past, or whether they are working for the protection and preservation of history, meaning a set of defined historical artefacts. However, it is also important to note that even those historical artefacts are products as well, just like heritage. As man-made objects they were created to serve a specific function. Country houses and castles are no different. As it has been mentioned in the previous chapters, they were built to serve several functions like fortification, residence, community centre or status symbol. For most of their existence, their value mainly lay in the use they had for the people who created or inhabited them. With the rise of the heritage concept, however, the definition of value changed. Status or the physical usability took a back seat and made way for a more metaphorical interpretation of value for these man-made objects. For those practitioners who see heritage as a limited historical resource, the value of the material lies in the material itself and the stories that are connected to it. This 'cultural significance' decides which buildings are deemed worthy of protection and in which way they can and should be used. Within this framework, losing the tangible object through lack of protection or excessive physical use signifies not only the loss of the object, but also of its value in terms of 'cultural significance'. This interpretation of an object's use and, thus, its value, leaves no room for alternating interpretations or a renegotiation of existing interpretations (Stanzl 9, Mason 99-101). It also sees historical objects as a static entity that carries an internal value which has to be protected at all costs.

But changes in the original function of an object does not necessarily have to lead to a denial of any further usage and conservation of the status quo. As previously mentioned, some heritage practitioners see the value of a historical object in its material itself. This value is independent from human interference. But if human concepts like national identity and heritage are indeed a result of a highly subjective and constructive process then the definition of value cannot be taken for granted, either.

Value is not inherent in any cultural items or properties received from the past, at least not in the same as size or colour or hardness. Value is learned about or discovered by humans, and thus depends on the particular cultural, intellectual, historical, and psychological frames of reference held by the particular individuals or groups involved.

(Schofield 23)



*The Drachenfels Ruin
with Facility Building,
ca. 2010.
Germany.*

So if the value of an object lies in its use to people, what does this mean for castles and country houses in the Netherlands? Due to changes in society, less of the half of the castles and country houses are used as residences for the elite and as an expression of status. Nevertheless, in order to be preserved, a new function must be found. That is where the potential of tourism comes in. If value is merely a question of contemporary interpretation of benefit and usage, the option of tourism cannot be eliminated.

6.2 Using Heritage

It has been established that the use of an object and its valorisation are inextricably connected. As a consequence, it could be claimed that only historical objects that are made available for and useful to the public are valued. Tourism can help to create awareness for the usability and benefits of an historical object like a country house or castle, as well as enable identification with it through the means of an affective presentation of the object and the value that is connected with it.

One way to achieve this can be found in the history of tourism in England and Germany. During the Romantic period, the visitors of historical sites were able to experience and to build up a relationship with the place by connecting with the artistic concepts of the picturesque or to the mythical legends that surrounded them. To these visitors it was not the authentic and untouched status of the material that was important but the emotions it evoked. According to some researchers, the same mechanisms still work for the majority of the twenty-first century visitors (Ashworth 80). Today's tourism could be interpreted as a modern form of creating and telling stories about a specific place or object which can ensure affect.

But why should it concern today's heritage experts whether the sites they manage create an emotional response in people? At the beginning of this chapter it was stated that objects have to be perceived as useful in order to be valued. This also works the other way around. Places or objects that people can identify with acquire a new meaning; an identity-establishing value. As this paper has tried to show, the development of perception of castles and country houses in other European countries can be seen as an exemplification of this process. Affect serves as a powerful tool to create identification in the way that it enables the visitor to make sense of the place or object. In the context of affect, however, one cannot talk of intellectual understanding but of emotional and sensual understanding. Only the combination of both forms of knowledge, one provided by the process of affective response

and the other by interpretation, create a personal identification. Leaving the emotional aspect out of heritage management would lead to the conservation of lifeless historical objects that visitors fail to connect with (Gregory 263, Schofield 23).

Tourism as a means of giving historical artefacts a new function as heritage objects can help to improve their valorisation, but it can also put them in severe danger. A great part of heritage experts rightfully highlight the threat that usage can have on the material and eventually could leave to its destruction or loss of authenticity. The European Council's Convention for the Protection of the Architectural Heritage of Europe stated already in 1968 that the decision whether a building should be given a new function or not has to be informed by considerations about the consequences for the material (Council of Europe 383). Besides this destructive potential, usage and the physical changes that are necessary in order to adapt it to its new function can have a negative impact on the immaterial value of heritage. The potential of an historical object to be identified as an individual's or community's heritage may get limited because the visual appearance of an object or its surroundings change too much (Stanzl 9, 11-13, Davenport 626). Thus, researchers like Stanzl and Bingenheimer, call for a strict ban on using historical object that are defined as heritage, or at least trying to avoid additions to the original structure, in order to preserve the material as well as its authenticity as an important marker of time (Stanzl 17, Bingenheimer 22). And indeed, there are examples of German castles that are used as touristic attractions and whose appearance has been changed through the addition of buildings.

About forty years ago, a facility building housing a restaurant and panorama terraces were built in close proximity of the castle ruin of Drachenfels, which is connected to the folklore legend of the *Nibelungensaga* and has been a touristic destination for centuries. From a today's perspective the architectural style would be considered at least disturbing to the overall impression of the area, if not offensive. A recent decision led to the destruction of this complex in order to make way for a more modern, and supposedly more pleasing, facility.

This example usefully visualises how the definition of aesthetics and the interpretation of appropriate heritage management can change over time. Especially when considering that the building from the middle of the last century was not the first addition that had been made to the heritage site. The house with the pitched roof and black roof tiling, which you can see in both the picture left and below, predates the now demolished structure. Even more interesting is the case of Schloss Drachenburg with stands just a couple of hundred metres below the old castle ruin.



The Drachenfels Ruin with New Facility Building, 2015.

Depicted on this contemporary painting from around 1900 (below), it signifies an early interpretation and appropriation of the castle ruin and its identity-establishing value. Even though it is one of the first modern physical additions to the area's appearance, today's taste would never allow its destruction. Consequently, protests against structural changes on historic buildings appear to be highly subjective and negotiable (Betonprisma Online). Within this framework it is more than likely that the appreciation of the twenty-first century facility building could improve with time. Also, Schloss Drachenburg poses the question whether additions made by elites like the government or the upper class are accepted more easily.

So far, this chapter has tried to establish that defining an historical object as heritage is already a way of giving it a new function and that deciding against any form of use would not only go against its nature as man-made object, but also prevent identification and, thus, valorisation. Still, heritage practitioners struggle with the clash between the fact that almost every historical object is in a way an utensil and has been used, sometimes for centuries, and the effect re-usage will have on its material and immaterial characteristics. In many cases, tourism is seen as the epitome of commoditisation and destruction. But as it has already been in chapter two, the problematic financial situation of the heritage sector and the marginalised status of country houses and castles in the Netherlands, force reconsideration of the traditional strategies of management and interpretation. Tourism is seen as a necessary evil because an increase in visitor numbers could potentially increase the government's willingness to subsidise the heritage site (Ashworth 79). Tourism as bogeyman, however, is not a modern invention but in fact already played a part long before the first stages of elite tourism in sixteenth-century England.

As with so many other aspects of the civilised world, the ancient Greeks can be considered to be one of the forerunners of tourism by establishing the concept of the Seven Wonders of the World (Fletcher 32-33). So why are so many heritage practitioners struggling with using heritage as tourist attractions? A possible explanation could be that an elitist group of decision-makers is concerned about public participation. This can be detected in the discussion of how to limit tourist numbers for the sake of sustainability. The underlying question in this process is which kind of tourist should be allowed to access and to experience the heritage object. One of the terms that play a part in this selection is social status, associated with the perceived capability of the tourists to behave correctly and their ability to understand heritage correctly.

Early signs for this potential discrimination could be detected in the reaction of the upper class, when, due to longer opening hours in the nineteenth century, common people were able to visit country houses. Also, every individual has different motivations for visiting heritage and uses different definitions of authenticity. A popular



*Drachenburg (left)
and Drachenfels,
Nordrhein-Westfalen.
Germany.*

heritage site that simply represents a relaxing break from everyday life for one visitor can signify a valuable and authentic artefact from the past for another (Ashworth 79-80, Cohen 378-379). Authenticity can also be a flexible concept in terms of the local community and does not always fit into the strict definitions of the academic and elitist world. In some cases, heritage does not necessarily lose its value by becoming a tourist attraction, but takes on a new meaning that forms an additional layer of authenticity (Cohen 382). The issue of financial benefit for the local community is often overlooked or dismissed by heritage experts, too. Some local stakeholders like restaurant or shop owners may see tourism as a source of income, just like the heritage experts do. Managing a heritage site should not only be about the interests of the owners or those in charge, but also of those who would also want to benefit from its re-use. Some studies show that at least ten percent of the money that a tourist spends during his visit goes directly to local enterprises (Fletcher 29, Nuryanti 256). Putting such considerations off as too mercenary or unimportant could be a source of frictions between different stakeholders. In a way, the financial benefits that locals can derive from heritage sites could, in the case of country houses or castles, be interpreted as a continuation of the historic give and take mechanism between estates and farmers.

Critics of a touristic use of heritage should be aware of what exactly they are sceptical about. Do they refuse any form of usage because only unutilised material can be preserved? Do they fear physical and metaphorical destruction of the object due to ignorant visitors?

These fears could be ungrounded. Non-discriminatory management strategies are able to channel the movement and behaviour of visitors without compromising their experience of the site or object (Biran et al. 280, Ashworth 82). The next chapter will focus further on these practical considerations about heritage management and discuss the potential of tourism for the specific case of castles and country houses in the Netherlands.

6.3 Creating Heritage

Everything that has been discussed so far strongly suggests that the use and creation of heritage are in fact parts of the same process. Heritage itself is a construct and every re-use and re-interpretation fabricate a new layer of definition. This insight provides us with yet another answer to the question whether heritage can and should be sold. Again, the answer has to be yes. Since every new form of use represents the production of a new form of heritage, there is no danger of selling out or erasing another person's interpretation of the past. With every visit, both the site manager and the tourist, convert local heritage into personal heritage (Ashworth 82). This productive potential of tourism could be crucial for castles and country houses in the Netherlands.

As the two previous chapters have tried to delineate, making an historical object usable and valuable for people helps to increase awareness and preparedness for protection. Identification is one way of using. The easy way out for Dutch castles and country houses would be to take advantage of the already institutionalised and canonised definition of Dutch national identity and its focus on the Golden Age. It has been stated in chapter 6.1 that the implementation of castles or country houses into the Dutch narrative similar to that of castles in the story of German nationalism cannot be achieved ad hoc. But heritage experts can take advantages of national myths of Dutch self-reliance and resourcefulness by connecting country houses and castles to these themes or specific historical personae.

An example for this strategy is the Muiderslot, situated just a few miles from Amsterdam. In its marketing communication and outward presentation the castle has recently been renamed as 'Amsterdam Castle', part of a new municipal policy that tries to divert tourists out of the city itself. By presenting itself as the epitome of *burger* life, the castle can benefit from the efficacy of the Golden Age narrative and pick up on the connected potential for identification. In the castle's display this is supported by presenting the building as residence of the famous poet P.C. Hooft, even though the history of the castle is much older (Boers). Another attempt to relate castles and country houses to the current Dutch identity can be found in the example of promotion of the Netherlands in the international market. For 2018, NBTC Holland Marketing is trying to develop a new touristic route with castles and country houses as overarching theme. Still in its early stages, the project is most likely to jump on the band-



*Burg Guttenberg,
Haßmersheim,
Baden-Württemberg.
Germany.*

wagon and try to find buildings that could potentially be constructed to tell the story of the Golden Age and the values that are connected to it (Ruis).

But do we really want to re-institutionalise and canonise a one-sided interpretation of Dutch national identity? And if not, what could be the alternative? Heritage practitioners could indeed decide to work against the dominant discourse on identity, but it will not be an easy task and definitely requires more flexible ways of thinking. If the pitfall of an easy and homogenous narrative is to be averted, then heritage sites have to make room for heterogeneous and diverting stories. This can either be done through means of display techniques or through an absence of on-site interpretation which leaves room for a more personal understanding.

Of course, providing factual information about specific objects or locations is an essential part of heritage management. However, it should not be the only kind of knowledge that is presented. As mentioned earlier, there are other forms of understanding which are less based on data and historical facts, but on the visitor's affective response when confronted with the object or site. Due to the nature of the concept of value which has been discussed in chapter 6.1, this individual process of making sense is necessary in order for the visitor to appreciate the object or site, which does not carry an intrinsic value (Nuryanti 252-253). In this way, the chances of identification with the material are strengthened and new narratives and myths can be created. These stories become part of every individual's personal heritage. It will never be possible to present an object or a site in way that each visitor feels like it is part of his or her heritage, but by encouraging an open dialogue between the material and the visitor, he or she will probably leave with a new sense of understanding and identification (Selwyn 2, Biran et al. 281, 297).

Every case is different and so it is difficult to devise a uniform battle plan for castles and country houses in the Netherlands from this theoretical discussion. One strategy could be to use the dominating Golden Age narrative and its connected themes in order to attract visitors and then challenge these notions. By confronting the visitor with unexpected narratives or display techniques the object or site can enforce a critical rethinking and renegotiation of canonised myths about Dutch identity which has the potential to leave long lasting impressions and eventually lead to valorisation. Heritage practitioners who decide to give this strategy a try can find inspiration and experience in heritage sites in other parts of Europe.

The National Trust, for example, has tested new ways of presenting their properties for several years now. Traditional display techniques in historic houses used to present a static and nostalgic interpretation of the past, with interiors that seemed frozen in time. This narrative appealed to the traditionally-minded visitor, but less to a younger public or visitors with a different ideological framework. In recent years, the Trust has stepped away from this technique and provided room for alternative narratives – physically and metaphorically. Non-permanent exhibitions which put the history of the building into context with overarching themes and current developments in society, for example, interpret country houses more as a space where art can be presented and discussed rather than a lifeless conservation of a bygone past (Gregory 268-269, NT Bulletin 2014; 1-2). That this progressive and open minded style of management can also work when the building is still inhabited and owned by the original noble family, shows the case of Burg Guttenberg in the German state of Baden-Württemberg.

The family of Bernolp von Gemmingen has called the castle their home for sixteen generations and it embodies one of the most important tourist attractions in the area. Since 1949, when the decision was made to open the building to the public out of economic considerations, the castle has managed to survive independent from government subsidies. This has been possible thanks to conservative financial management and innovative presentations like a falconry centre and show. The owners are also open minded towards marketing. By working with the *Burgenstraße* tourist route, which runs from the German city of Mannheim to Prague, and presenting themselves on leisure and tourism fairs, the owners have put the castle within international and interdisciplinary context. Nevertheless, the owners have intermittently struggled with the touristic process and its consequences. Starting off with a small museum and catering facility, the growing tourist numbers quickly called for bathrooms and other accommodations. Also, the expansion of entertainment limited the family's living space. For example, the planted moat and a summer terrace had to make way for the facilities of the falconry. But still, allowing the public to access and experience the castle, its grounds and its history seems to be beneficial. Most interestingly, surveys have shown that 80% of the visitors travel to the castle from within a circuit of 100 kilometres and 20% have visited at least four or five times (von Gemmingen). Despite being just a singular example for a great number of historic buildings and their struggles to reconcile preservation with financing and re-usage, the case of Burg Guttenberg gives rise to the hope that traditions and local identification can be uphold in spite of tourism.

Both the example of Burg Guttenberg and the National Trust presentation techniques argue against the common conviction within the heritage sector that tourism is a necessary evil. This chapter has tried to explain how allowing the public to access and engage with historical objects can promote understanding, identification and eventually protection. Managing heritage is not a matter of merely protecting historical material, but allowing the public to get into contact with the object or site and to enable a renegotiation of canonised notions of heritage and identity. And while this process of interpretative reshaping almost inevitably requires a reshaping of the material, clever management can limit this effect.

7

Conclusions and New Questions

*Burg Eltz,
Wierschem,
Rheinland-Pfalz,
Germany.*



Why are historical objects perceived and valued differently in different countries and what can we learn from this for the future management of castles and country houses in the Netherlands? This pair of questions has been the underlying guideline for this paper. Due to the general nature of these questions, however, there cannot be such thing as a simple, universally applicable answer. Even if the field of study is narrowed down to just three countries, the discussed cases and correlating theoretical issues only provide us with hints and suggestions. The problem starts with the relativity of the concepts of heritage and identity. Both concepts play out on a personal and a collective, as well as on a regional and national level. Traditionally, they have been considered to be mainly based on the interpretation of material objects, but their definitions have widened.

In chapter three, the discussion of how country houses have been written in and out of the canon of England highlighted how deeply interwoven the two concepts are. From the sixteenth up to the nineteenth century, country houses were gradually incorporated in the national narrative of England, being an empire of civilised manners and tastes. So while national identity was introduced as the first potential factor which influences the perception of historical objects, chapter three has also given rise to the idea that contemporary notions of aesthetics and arts in general have an impact as well. Especially the era of Romanticism and its sensitivity for the picturesque and the affective helped to establish country houses as valuable objects of artistic inspiration and identification.

This set of influential factors was complemented by the study of castles in German mind and collective memory in chapter four. Again, it was revealed that heritage, as a way of making use of the past in the present, plays an essential role in the process of identity formation. Throughout German history, castles have served as sources of national pride and self-understanding. But this would have not been possible without the phenomenon of arts and folklore. Relating the castle to themes of strength and resilience was a well-known practice from the Middle Ages on. Not only the tradition of the *Minnelieder*, which is still being taught in German high schools, but also local legends and myths used the trope of the castle to tell popular stories of love, drama and struggle. Again, the Romantic period proved to be crucial when travelling German artists recited tales like the *Nibelungensaga* in order to enable an emotional connection to the castle and to let themselves inspired to write poems and novels. With the emergence of German nationalism this mechanism led to the implementation of castles and the values connected to them into the German canon of the *Kulturnation*. And so the list of influential factors on the perception of historical objects was further complemented by arts and folklore. The application of this analytical grid to Dutch castles and country houses revealed that the aesthetical aspect may have played a decisive part in the perception of country houses in England and castles in Germany, but is not sufficient for the explanation of the Dutch case. National identity, however, is potentially the strongest influence on the perception of historical objects in the Netherlands. The myth of the country as truly modest, tolerant and equal haven has been canonised through the celebration of Golden Age *burger* life, the values that they supposedly held dear and the art that has been created in this period. Country houses and castles, which are most likely associated with aristocracy and its elitist lifestyle, do not fit into this self-image.

The last two chapters of this essay tried to draw conclusions from these findings and considerations in order to paint a picture of future heritage management in the Netherlands. Since the goal of every practitioner is to create awareness of and willingness to protect heritage, it is important to understand how processes of valorisation work. Similar to the relationship of national identity and heritage, the two concepts of value and use cannot be separated. As objects created by man, country houses and castles were designed to serve a specific function. When this original function is lost due to changes in society, then a new form of usage has to be found. Of course one could argue that conserved, non-accessible historical objects serve as reminders of the past and, thus, do indeed have a function. But the prevention of physical and emotional access to the object or site also prevents identification. The English case has shown how identification on a national level increased with the level of accessibility, and vice versa. When managers of a heritage site or object want true valorisation and awareness now and in the future, they have to make sure that they create an interpretation of the past, meaning heritage, which enables an affective visitor to respond and have an open renegotiation with the canonised myths. In practice, this would demand a rethinking of strategies for Dutch castles and country houses. Heritage practitioners who are working with such objects can either try to include their fosterlings into the dominating and financially benefi-

cial myth of the egalitarian Golden Age, or opt for a more progressive and subversive strategy. Examples like the National Trust and Burg Guttenberg show that a willingness to break with traditional display and interpretation techniques can lead to the creation of more diverse narratives with which a greater number of people can identify with – also on a local level.

The underlying question that heritage practitioners have to ask themselves is why they do what they do. Only then their presentation of heritage can be effective. This involves an open minded confrontation with their own backgrounds and beliefs, just like they need to consider the different backgrounds and motivations of the visitors. Otherwise, they run the risk of slipping into an academic or elitist aloofness which disregards alternative needs and interpretations and why they so often equate tourism with destructive mass consumption.

This interpretation is too simplistic - tourism is not just 'good' or 'bad'. As long as heritage is 'sold', or rather 'used', in a sustainable way, it does not necessarily have to pose a threat to the historical material. If some heritage experts feel too uncomfortable about the concept of tourism, then maybe using other terms like public access, leisure and recreation could ease their struggles. This paragraph has proven that a discourse on the potential of tourism for heritage is possible without actually using the word. Another example for the significance of discourse is the differentiation between history and heritage. As chapter 6.1 has stated, heritage is already a product in itself and can be recreated. History, on the other hand, can be destroyed and, thus, must be protected. And so if heritage practitioners challenge their motives and ideological background, they also have to decide if they fight for the preservation of heritage or history. In the latter case, they should better call themselves historians instead of heritage practitioners.

The distinction is vital. History explores and explains pasts grown ever more opaque over time; heritage clarifies pasts so as to infuse them with present purposes (...) (H)eritage, no less than history, is essential to knowing and acting. Its many faults are inseparable from heritage's essential role in husbanding community, identity, continuity, indeed history itself.

(Inglis 1519)

Tourism definitely is not a *Allheilmittel* against receding financial means in the heritage conservation sector, but it does provide an opportunity for castles and country houses which should not be dismissed. It does not help to cling to old ways in times of dramatic change and hardship. Focussing on negative extremes will lead nowhere, only focussing on the potential that castles and country houses in the Netherlands provides can bring the sector forwards. The decisive question is: do we want to evolve or stand still, lingering over bygone times? Or do we even want to move backwards to the old system of a small group of wealthy tradesmen or noblemen hiding behind their walls, only admitting people that they deem worthy and civilised enough? This essay cannot present the answer to these question, but everyone of us has to do this on their own.



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Castle De Haar,
Haarzuilens, Utrecht.
The Netherlands.



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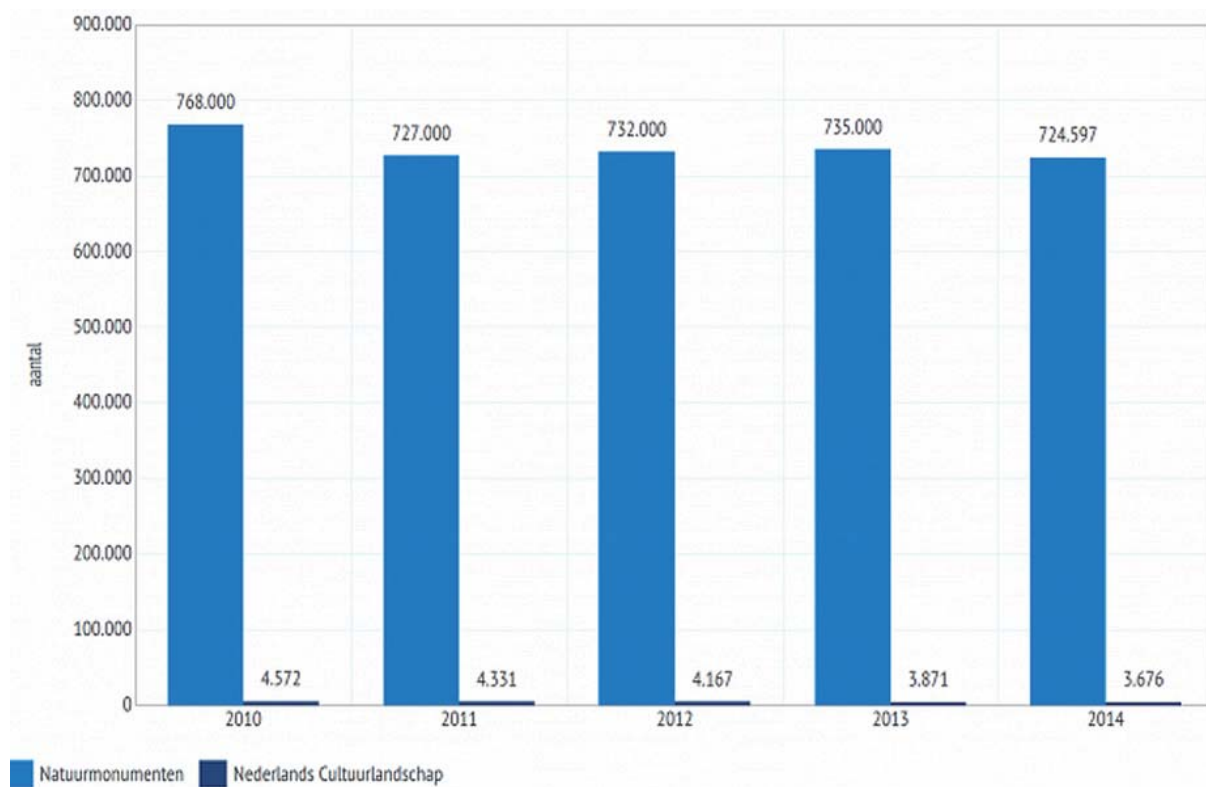
Appendix 1

Donations per sector in mio. €

	Religion	Health	International Aid	Environment /Nature/Animals	Education /Research	Culture
1995	587	411	361	204	58	83
1997	511	290	299	183	83	87
1999	490	640	542	309	232	165
2001	750	398	531	251	125	335
2003	938	580	480	309	301	610
2005	772	467	756	356	277	326
2007	1,001	468	561	376	295	386
2009	892	629	576	438	285	453
2011	806	471	564	378	150	293
2013	977	535	578	356	208	281

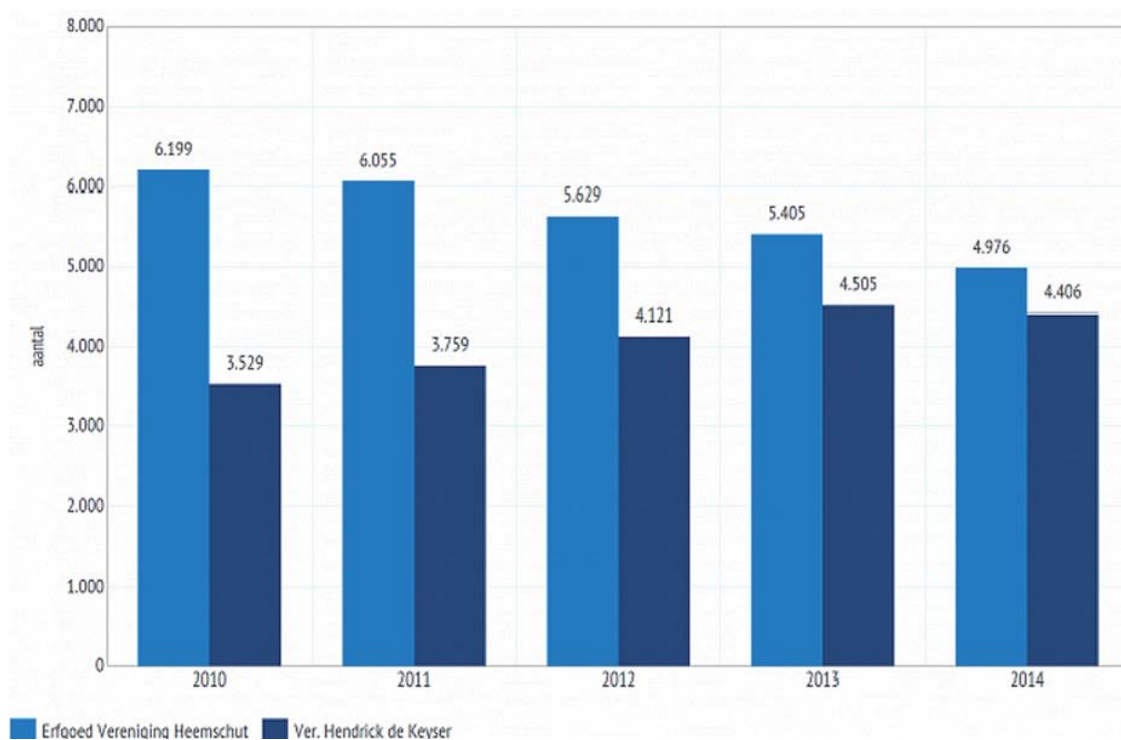
Appendix 2

Membership Development - Natuurmonumenten and Nederlands Cultuurlandschap



Appendix 3

Member Development - Heemschut and Hendrick de Keyser



Serie NKS-rapporten

Onder redactie van dr. F. Vogelzang.

In deze serie verschenen eerder:

- Deel 1 - Heden en verleden, *Religieuze herbestemming van kastelen en buitenplaatsen in Noord-Brabant*, Marloes Vrancken, juni 2009.
- Deel 2 - Beter beleven van erfgoed, *Een onderzoek naar de informatiebehoefte over kastelen*, Josephina Kuypers, Susanne Wiss, november 2009.
- Deel 3 - Een toekomst voor een verdwenen verleden, *Kasteelplaatsen in de Provincie Utrecht*, Ben Olde Meierink, Fred Vogelzang, april 2010.
- Deel 4 - Onbekend maakt onbemind, *Evaluatieonderzoek Meldpunt Bedreigde Kastelen*, Lisette Vos, april 2010.
- Deel 5 - 'Open de poort!', *De NKS als steunpunt voor provinciale kastelenstichtingen*, Joost Boomsma, Carmen Gierveld, Michiel Huisinga, Lienke Vendrik, april 2010.
- Deel 6 - Kastelen Herbestemd, *Kastelen en buitenplaatsen als instelling voor geestelijke gezondheidszorg*, Lisette Vos, oktober 2010.
- Deel 7 - Warning - Do (not) Enter, *De publieksontsluiting van kasteelruïnes in Nederland*, Vera Driessen, augustus 2010.
- Deel 8 - Vernietiging en wederopbouw, *Nederlandse kastelen en buitenplaatsen tijdens de tweede wereldoorlog*, Mariëlle Bakker, augustus 2011.
- Deel 9 - De beleving van kasteelruïnes in Nederland, *Hoe beleven bezoekers kasteelruïnes en wat zijn hun wensen voor de toekomst?*, Michiel van Ginkel, september 2011.
- Deel 10 - Een kasteelruïne om de hoek, *Wat betekenen kasteelruïnes voor omwonenden en hoe wensen zij de ruïne in de toekomst te beleven?*, Maaïke Feltmann, december 2011.
- Deel 11 - Een kastelen- en buitenplaatsencanon!?, *Adviesrapport over de mogelijke invulling van een canon over kastelen en buitenplaatsen*, Amra Sabhaz, 2012.
- Deel 12 - Het verhaal achter ons gemeentehuis..., *Onderzoek naar herbestemming van kastelen en buitenplaatsen als gemeentehuis*, Vera van der Zwan, 2014.
- Deel 13 - Locatiekeuze voor historische buitenplaatsen, *De invloed van het landschap*, Iris Koppert, 2015.
- Deel 14 - Van sprookjeskasteel to droomhotel, *De herbestemming van Limburgse kastelen vanaf 1930*, Maajke Teeuwen, 2015.
- Deel 15 - De betekenis van kasteelruïnes voor omwonenden: bezoek, verbondenheid en waardering, *Synthese van kwantitatief ruïne-onderzoek in Nederland*, Thijs Konijnendijk & Bouke van Gorp, 2016.
- Deel 16 - Sturing op de omgang met kasteelplaatsen door gemeenten, *Van A(mbitie) naar B(estemmings-plan)*, Eline van Rossum, 2016.