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The Netherlands

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Citation

Stein, R. (2022). The wilderness of Holland: from hunting ground to well-administered part of the domains. In C. V. Weeda & L. H. Sicking (Eds.), *CORN Publication Series* (pp. 147-176). Turnhout: Brepols. doi:10.1484/M.CORN-EB.5.129377

Version: Publisher's Version

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Downloaded from: <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/3505598>

Note: To cite this publication please use the final published version (if applicable).

The Wilderness of Holland

*From Hunting Ground to Well-Administered Part of the Domains**

Introduction

The place in Holland of most joy and pleasure (*meeste deduyt ende geneuchte*): that is how Duchess Maria of Burgundy (r. 1477-1482) and her husband Maximilian (r. 1477-1494, 1506-1515) in 1477 described an area with the ominous name Wilderness. It concerned an area, consisting of dunes, peat bogs and forests, that stretched along the coast of the county of Holland, which had been the favourite hunting ground of the Counts of Holland for centuries. Two decades later, their son Philip the Fair (r. 1482-1506) would specify that it was not just the place of most joy and pleasure, but in fact the only place of joy and pleasure in Holland (Merula, 1605: 4; Rendorp, 1777: 175). Decades later, their descendants Charles V and Philip II seem to confirm this picture. Both would go hunting in the Wilderness during their rare presence in Holland (Smit, 1995: 69-71; Desplanque – Dehaisnes – Finot, 1872-1906: VII, 254).

However, for several reasons there is also a nostalgic ring to the 1477 reference. One reason is that the county of Holland once was heavily forested. Only small parts of the extensive woods remained in the late Middle Ages. The towns, bailiwicks and village communities had nibbled away large parts. Place names with the ‘roode’ suffix, like Brederoode, Berkenrode and Tetrode, attest to the clearing movement (Huizinga, 1948: 391). The Haarlemmerhout, part of the Wilderness, was one of the few remaining forest areas. This appears to be in line with the general idea in historiography that forests were depleted during the late Middle Ages and Early Modern period due to heavy pressure from population growth and economic over-exploitation (Williams, 2006: 87-112; Hoffmann, 2014: 119-122; Charruadas – Deligne, 2019: 112-113). Peter Hoppenbrouwers has pointed out that it was only because of the princes’ lust for hunting, and their reliance on the *ius forestense* or wilderness law, that a number of forest areas

* I would like to express my warm thanks to Petra van Dam, Mario Damen, Elizabeth den Hartog, Roosje Peeters and Arie van Steensel who helped me with my research and the writing of this article.

remained uncultivated (Hoppenbrouwers, 2002: 94; Blockmans – Hoppenbrouwers, 2014: 133-134). Another reason for nostalgia might have been the fact that the Wilderness in the second half of the fifteenth century had lost its position of choice. In the fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries, the Counts of Holland had often resided in The Hague, and by then they gladly made use of the possibilities of the Wilderness as a hunting ground. From the 1430s onwards, when Holland had become part of the Burgundian composite monarchy, things had changed dramatically. The Burgundian dukes and their Habsburg successors, preferring the South to the North, rarely came to Holland, and pursued their favourite hobby mainly in the hunting grounds of Brabant, Hainaut and Flanders (Niedermann, 1995: 225-261). In this respect, the inauguration hunts by Charles V and Philip II were one-off events. A final reason is that since the Burgundian rise to power in Holland, the government had started to rationalise administration. In order to maximise revenue from the domains, financial administration was brought under the supervision of the *non plus ultra* of late medieval bureaucracy: the *Chambres des Comptes* or Audit Offices in Dijon, Lille, Brussels and The Hague (Stein, 2001; Stein, 2017: 197-216). This development was not limited to the domains of the county of Holland: everywhere in late-medieval Western Europe, princes and governments sought to cash in on the domains. The woodlands and hunting grounds did not escape their scrutiny. For the Wilderness, this meant that it was subjected to the strict rules of the Audit office in The Hague. Bureaucratic nit-picking increasingly replaced venatorial romanticism.

The administrative incorporation of the Wilderness in the Burgundian system was not a smooth process. Traditions, local and personal interests, and acquired rights clashed with financial rationality. This was not unique to the County of Holland – far from it. In all parts of the Burgundian composite monarchy, the domain forests, the *bailliages des bois*, *foresteries*, *gruyeries*, or whatever they were called, were gradually made accountable to the Audit Offices in Lille, Dijon and Brussels, the counterparts of the Office in The Hague (Gresser, 2014: 58-62; Richard, 1957-1962: I, 241-242; Verboven, 2000: 233; Augustyn, 1997: 570-571; Cullus, 2009: 159-166; Henin, 2013: 387-412, 295; compare: Buis, 1985: 295-296; for France: Lot – Fawtier, 1958: 252-254).

In this article I will follow the administrative vicissitudes of the Wilderness in the two centuries between c. 1330 and 1520, that is from the time when it was still the preferred hunting ground of the counts of Holland, until the time when this place of joy and pleasure was incorporated into the Burgundian administrative system, subjected to the Audit Office in The Hague, and issued with a comprehensive ordinance on the duties of the forester and his staff, and on his jurisdiction.

The Wilderness

The Wilderness that I will discuss here is the area that during the late Middle Ages was managed by the forester of Holland on behalf of the Count of Holland. It is often equated with the Haarlemmerhout but late medieval reality was far more complex, as can be shown by the titles carried by forester Anthony le Grand Bâtard (1420-1504), natural son of Philip the Good. In 1470, Anthony was appointed to both the 'office de houtvestre et garennier de tous noz bois, forestz, dunes et sauvaignies de nostre pais de Noerthollant'; later the castellany of Teylingen was added (NA, GRK, 490, fol. 104v; Merula, 1605: 4). In the 1470s, the Wilderness therefore consisted of three distinct units that were governed by the same officer, the *houtvester* (forester): the Haarlemmerhout, the North Holland dunes and Teylingen castle with the surrounding lands. It more or less coincided with the area designated by a commission that in around 1290 made an inventory of all the territories belonging to the domains of Count Floris V (r. 1256-1296). The commission determined that all the dunes situated between the River Maas and the Zijpe estuary (near Petten) and 'all the wildernesses adjacent to it' belonged to Floris' domains (Koch et al., 1970-2005: V, 540-545 no. 3031; Huizinga, 1948: 392-393).

The Haarlemmerhout central part of the Wilderness, mentioned among Anthony's titles, was the favorite hunting ground of the counts of Holland (Smit, 1995: 69-71; Bos-Rops, 1993: 49). The first mention dates from the years 1247-1256, in a grant of the pasture rights 'in den Houte tot Herlem' by Roman King William II, also Count of Holland (r. 1247-1256). And in 1261, William's sister, Countess Aleida of Holland (1228-1284), granted the abbess and the convent of Loosduinen permission to herd fifteen pigs 'in nemore nostro de Harlem' (Koch et al., 1970-2005: II, 771-772 no. 1074; idem: III, 268-269 no. 1261; Huizinga, 1948: 393). It was the remnant of an extensive wasteland area of peat bogs and woodlands in the old dune landscape between Velzen and Noordwijk (Dijkstra, 2011: 88). The size of the Haarlemmerhout during the late Middle Ages can only be approximated, concerning roughly the area between Voorhout and Velzen, bordered on the west side by the dunes and on the east side by the Haarlemmermeer. This is also the wooded area shown on Floris Balthazar's map of Rijnland of 1610 (Hamaker, 1875: I, 47; Rentenaar, 1977: 369-370; De Boer, 1978: 263-265).

Teylingen Castle and surroundings, situated on the south-eastern border of the Haarlemmerhout, is also often considered as an integral part of the Wilderness. This was only partly the case, however. Although both the castle and the surrounding lands and the Haarlemmerhout were regularly in the same hands, a permanent link only developed from 1445 onwards and was not formalised until 1477 (Den Hartog et al., 2004: 13-21). In the years 1335-1337, Simon van Benthem both owned the castle of Teylingen and acted as forester of the Haarlemmerhout. At that time, both capacities were closely linked; repairs to the castle were included in the forester's account. In the decades following the

death of Simon van Benthem, however, the two were separated. In 1445, Frank van Borssele (c. 1395-1470), who had been forester since 1434, was appointed as castellan (NA, AGH, 87, fol. 52r-53r). On 10 January 1471, Anthony, bastard of Burgundy, succeeded Frank on equal terms as forester of the Wilderness. There was a lot of confusion about his status: did this include the Castellany of Teylingen or not? In 1470, the Audit Office stated that that this was not the case, and that Forestry and Castellany were separate entities (NA, GRK, 304, fol. 98r). The problem was solved in 1474, when Duke Charles repeated the appointment of Anthony as Forester and explicitly stated that his remit also included the Castellany (NA, GRK, 305, fol. 105v-106v). It was not until 1477 that the castle became the nominal seat of the forester, or rather the deputy forester (Merula, 1605: 8).

Finally, the dune strip of North Holland¹, stretching from the river Maas up to the Kennemerbeek near Haarlem, belonged to the Wilderness. Later, the dunes further to the north were included as well. The dunes formed a crucial link in the Dutch coastal defences and were therefore indispensable to all inhabitants (Van Dam, 1999: 224-232). We come across dune wardens in the middle of the fourteenth century. Then, these were minor officers, subordinated to the forester, and their task was of a policing nature, maintaining order and arresting offenders. In addition to the ordinary dune wardens, a senior dune warden (*overste duynwairder*) was mentioned from the 1390s onwards, who was in charge of the dunes in the whole of North Holland. Presumably, he was one of the higher judicial officers, whose responsibility essentially consisted of maintaining the count's power in the dune area and protecting the surrounding villages from drifting sand by organising the planting of marram grass. In exchange for this task, the senior dune warden received all income and revenues from leasing and renting out dunes, peat bogs and other land in his district (NA, HvH, 461, fol. 70r-71v). The positions of chief dune warden and that of forester were often combined in one person, but from 1418 onwards they were separated, only to be reunited in 1433, when Countess Jacqueline of Bavaria (r. 1417-1433) was installed as forester and chief dune warden of North Holland. In 1477, the title changed from "Chief dune warden of North Holland" to "Chief dune warden of Holland". It seems that at the same time the forester's domain expanded to include the dune areas around The Hague and the dunes in the north, up to and including Texel (Merula, 1605: 7; NA, GRK, 2072; NA, GRK, 2075). However, further research is necessary here.

The merging of the Wilderness with the Castellany of Teylingen seems to be a coincidence, but this is probably not the case. Elsewhere in the Burgundian Union, in the Duchy of Burgundy and the County of Franche Comté, the castellanies were also the medium for administrative control of the wastelands, forests and hunting grounds (Richard, 1957: 242; Gresser, 2004: 221-222).

1 The medieval North Holland mainly consisted of the area covered today by the province of South Holland and has almost nothing in common with the modern province of North Holland.

The use of the name Wilderness (*Wildernis*) suggests that this is a desolate, abandoned land, but in fact it is very questionable whether it concerned real wasteland. Richard Hoffmann's remark that 'a medieval forest was no woodland, but a legally protected area managed for game' appears to be confirmed by the Wilderness (Hoffmann, 2014: 190-192; Aberth, 2013: 111-118; Renes, 2005). Large parts of the area were enclosed to keep the cattle out and the big game in. There was a meadow near Haarlem, where supplementary food for the big game was grown. In around 1500, some members of the Audit Office, together with the deputy forester and clerk Jan van Beveren, travelled through the area, among other things to set up 'a mountain where the wild animals and the cattle may be given to eat in the winter, as in old times' – presumably this referred to a haystack (NA, GRK, 2073, fol. 25r). Noblemen were forbidden to hunt in certain periods of the year in order not to cause too much harm to the game. In the late sixteenth century, deer were imported from the Palatinate to restore the game population (Den Hartog 2005: 48-50). As for the dunes, these were leased on a massive scale to the highest bidders, who subsequently used them in an almost industrial way for rabbit breeding (Van Dam, 2010: 297-298). Time and again we observe that alder or beech trees were bought from elsewhere, to bring the planting up to standard.

The forester and his servants

In 1456, the Court of Holland gave judgment in a dispute between the forester, and Lord Rainald of Brederode (1415-1473), one of the most powerful noblemen in Holland. Lord Rainald had laid claim to the use of parts of the Haarlemmerhout, but the Court ruled against him, referring to a letter by Duke Philip the Good (r. 1419-1467, 1433-1467 in Holland), who summarised the tasks and status of the forester by pointing to his own sovereignty over the Wilderness:

... that to us as sovereign and lord, because of our highness and glory, and also to our predecessors, counts and countesses of Holland belong, and have belonged, all wildernesses, forests, dunes, hunting grounds with large and small game, like deer, hinds, boars, rabbits and more, the catching of noble birds, the renting out of pastures, the allowing of cattle in summer as well as in winter, the digging of the peat outside our wilderness, the windfall of the trees in the woods. This applies everywhere, but especially in our woods, forests, dunes and wildernesses of our Haarlemmerhout and what belongs to it. These items and articles were preserved for our ancestors and for us, and the administration was carried out by our foresters (NA, AGH, 87, fol. 132r, compare Rendorp, 1777: 168-171).

The Court's ruling is a clear example of the use of the *ius forestense* by the prince to legitimise the wasteland forming part of his domains. At the same time it gives a nice overview of the tasks attributed to the forester.

Although the size of the resort varied, the forester's tasks can be divided into three clearly distinctive parts. Firstly, he had to administer the domain of the Wilderness. His role as an administrator came close to that of the receivers of the domains, who appear in the sources from the early fourteenth century onwards. He was in charge of collecting the money for the grazing rights that inhabitants of the neighbouring villages could buy, and for the sale of fuels like peat and wood. In the fifteenth century, the leasing of parts of the dunes for rabbit breeding became more and more important. The forester's task included keeping his resort in good condition. There were two aspects to this. On the one hand, the game population within the hunting area had to be preserved. On the other hand, he had to care for the planting of marram grass, to protect the inhabitants of the neighbouring villages, who were troubled by the drifting dune sand. The importance of the dunes for coastal defence may also have played a role (Rentenaar, 1977: 369; Van Marrewijk, 1994: 16).

Secondly, the forester acted as president of the judicial court of the Wilderness, a function close to that of the bailiffs, who appear in sources from Holland from the middle of the thirteenth century onwards (Bos-Rops, 1993: 22). The forester presided over a small court, consisting of three judges (*meesterknappen*), which met four times a year. Its jurisdiction covered all criminal and civil offences and crimes committed within the territory of Wilderness. Most often the offenders were poachers and inhabitants of the surrounding villages who grazed their cattle illegally (Merula, 1605: 24-26, 58). Only Jacqueline of Bavaria, who acted as a forester for one year in 1433-1434 after she was deposed as countess of Holland, was denied the trial of criminal cases, presumably because of her involvement in the faction struggle in Holland (NA, Nass. dom., 1194.776).

Thirdly, the forester was the chief huntsman of the Wilderness. From the viewpoint of the counts of Holland and their Burgundian and Habsburg successors – and without any doubt from the viewpoint of the foresters themselves as well – this was the most important part of his task. It had its origin in the count's exclusive hunting rights (*jachtregaal*), the right to hunt trotting game, such as deer, roe deer and boars, that was very much alive at the time when Holland was still ruled by its own dynasty (De Monté Verloren – Spruit, 1982: 129-131). In Burgundian and Habsburg times, when the prince was rarely in Holland, several elements of this function were still perceptible. It was used both as an argument to spare the Wilderness from over-hunting and as a legitimization of the princely predominance over the Wilderness. Further, in the unlikely case that the prince were to come to Holland again, the foresters had to be prepared to deliver game and rabbit to the court. We can see how the hunting part of the function was still exercised with great fervour from 1477 onwards, but now by the stadtholders cum foresters. On several occasions the foresters invited members of the town council of Haarlem to hunt, entertain themselves and dine in the Haarlemmerhout (Huizinga, 1948: 399-400). The prince, of course, had priority, but noblemen were also allowed to hunt. It is obvious that the forester had a hard time maintaining discipline among the nobles. In 1503, the Court of Holland issued an ordinance, mentioning the

problems caused by both nobles and non-nobles: hunting without keeping any rules, indulging in off-season hunting wild boars, using large packs of hounds, disturbing nests of partridges, pheasants, cranes, swans, herons, quacks, cormorants, spoonbills, shelducks etc. (Merula, 1605: 53).

In the middle of the fourteenth century, Simon van Benthem and his successors received an annual salary of 50 pounds, in the 1420s this had risen to 140 pounds (Van Marrewijk, 1994: 15; NA, AGH, 1834, fol. 39r). The salary was probably supplemented to a large extent by various private revenues from the leasing of parts of the dunes. During the early sixteenth century, the forester was a well-paid officer, in large part due to the generous salary he earned as castellan of Teylingen. In 1515 he received 300 pounds a year. As a comparison, a master of the Audit Office and a master of the Court of Holland each received c. 200 pounds, the receiver of North Holland as the most important financial officer 400 pounds. Yet one may wonder whether finance was the main argument for nobles to aspire to a position as forester. In all principalities of the Low Countries, the office of forester was highly valued, especially because of the honour it represented (Buis, 1985: 295). In Holland, too, the office was performed by members of the most powerful noble families, such as the Brederodes, the Borsseles and the Wassenaers.

From the middle of the fourteenth century onwards, a deputy forester (*onderhoutvester*) is mentioned repeatedly. As the forester was often busy with other concerns, he could delegate his tasks to a trustworthy person. In some cases, the deputy was nominated by the forester himself, in others by the count (Van Marrewijk, 1986: 31; Van Mieris, 1753-1756: III, 474). At first, the deputy forester's position seems to be occasional, but in the fifteenth century the office became more structural in nature. In the account of 1456, Jan van Rietvelt and his late father Adriaan are referred to as 'foresters', but in reality were accountable to Frank van Borssele, who held the title of forester (NA, GRK, 2071, fol. 15v-16r). Since his turbulent life hardly offered any time for active participation in the administration of the forestry, Frank's successor Anthony appointed a deputy forester in the person of the high-ranking nobleman Philip van Wassenaer, lord of Voorburg (+1493) (Damen, 2000: 495; Ter Braake, 2007: 413). This situation was formalised in 1477, when Maria and Maximilian combined the office of forester with that of stadtholder – the most important officer of Holland and Zeeland, who replaced them in their capacity of count. However, as the work could not be combined with the stadtholder's busy duties in The Hague and elsewhere, a deputy forester was appointed at the same time:

A good, reasonable person, useful and capable, who will regularly go through the dunes and wilderness in person in order to preserve our highness and glory.

Cornelis Croesinck (or Cruesinc) (c. 1453-1520) was appointed. He took up residence in Teylingen Castle and acted as deputy forester until his death (Breesnee, 1924: 22; Merula, 1605: 16-18). From now on, the appointment of the deputy

was a privilege of the count. Comparable developments took place in other parts of the Burgundian land, for instance in the Duchy of Burgundy, Franche-Comté, Brabant, and Hainaut, where the important offices were distributed as honorary jobs among the descendants of the great noble families, and the real work was done by 'lieutenants' (Smolar – Meynart, 1991: 103-107; Gresser, 2004: 217-226; Cullus, 2009: 161).

The forester, or his deputy, was assisted by several persons. Apart from the judges I just mentioned, these were people who were involved in practical matters relating to hunting, forest maintenance and the management of the Wilderness. The most important officer for us is the clerk-secretary or receiver. Already in the first forester account, a certain Willaem Jansoen is mentioned, who drew up the accounts. In later periods, clerks were mentioned: in 1428 Hughe Gherijtssoen, in 1430 Jan Partant, in 1451 Hugo van der Berg and in the early months of 1477 Jan van Naerden (Smit, 1929: 120; NA, GRK, 2065, fol. 17v; 2066, fol. 18v; 286, fol. 52r; 2072, fol. 11v). In the early fifteenth century, his salary amounted to 18 pounds a year, and an allowance for livery and a saddle (NA, GRK, 2072, fol. 11v). In the sixteenth century, he received a part of the lease payments. The right of appointment of the clerk lay with the forester and in the sixteenth century with the deputy forester (NA, GRK Reg., 490, fol. 104v). From the early sixteenth century onwards, but probably already in 1477, the clerk had to take a sworn oath in the Audit Office (NA, GRK Reg, 5, fol. 194v).

The clerk's job was wide-ranging. He had to keep the financial records, arrange the leasing of parts of the Wilderness, check the repairs carried out and keep a record of the forester's court cases. This was not an easy task, for he had to bring order to the multitude of rights and obligations that were spread among many scattered people. In the course of the fifteenth century, the role of the clerk was professionalised. Instead of a personal assistant to the forester, he became something like an administrative liaison officer, interacting between the forester and the Audit Office. Philip Saey was the first 'professional' clerk of the Wilderness, who was appointed on 30 November 1477, and dismissed a few months later. This professionalisation not only took place in Holland, but also in Franche-Comté in the early fifteenth century; in Brabant and elsewhere in the second half of the fifteenth century (Gresser, 2004: 227-234; Smolar – Meynart, 1991: 115-117; Buis, 1985: 298; compare: Jean, 1992: 74).

The administration

Three phases can be distinguished in the administrative development of the Wilderness, from a hunting ground of the counts to an integrated part of the princely domains: The period until 1433-1434, when the forester manifested himself as an accountable officer, the period between 1434 and 1504, when the Wilderness was leased out, and the period from 1504 onwards, when it became an integrated part of the princely domains.

1. Until 1433/1434. The forester as an accountable officer

In the period before *c.* 1335 there were several foresters active in the area of the Wilderness. In 1330, for instance, Countess Joanne recommended all her foresters together ‘ju ghemeenliken onzen houtvorsters’ not to allow anyone to graze his cattle or cut wood in the Haarlemmerhout (Burgers et al: KE 159, compare WL 417). From *c.* 1335 onwards, the plural changed into singular, probably as a consequence of the policy of Count William III of Holland (r. 1304-1337) to change the Forestry into an office. He appointed Simon van Benthem, lord of the castle of Teylingen, as a forester. We do not have a complete list of foresters for the first century, but the impression is that until *c.* 1400, there was a rapid succession, whereby the office was only rarely held by the same person for more than three years. From the early fifteenth century onwards, a greater stability came about under the foresters Nicolaas van Ruiven (serving 1407-1417), Adriaan van der Woerd (1421-1429) and Hendrik van Borssele (1429-1433).

Simon van Benthem’s appointment in the 1330s coincided with two important developments. Firstly, the forester became an officer, who no longer held the forestry as a fief, but received a salary and was disposable by the count. Closely connected to this, Simon and many of his successors became accountable to the count – or perhaps it is better to say that an ‘accountability of office’ was introduced in the Wilderness (compare Bisson, 2009: 328-339). Usually once a year, the foresters were summoned to the count’s council in The Hague or elsewhere for an audit of their financial administration.

The oldest surviving account dates back to 1337-1338. A cover of an older account, audited in 1334, has survived, but the account itself has been lost. For the period between 1337 and 1434, a total of forty-four accounts have been handed down (Table VII.1).

Table VII.1 Surviving accounts of the Wilderness, 1337-1434

YEARS	SHELF NUMBER
1334 (only the cover)	NA AGH 1797
1337-1338	NA AGH 1798
1342-1359	NA AGH 1799-1813
1399-1418	NA AGH 1815-1833
1421-1422	NA AGH 1834
1427-1434	NA GRK 2054-2070

There are three major gaps in the series: between 1338 and 1342, between 1360 and 1399 and between 1422 and 1427 (Table VII.1).² As the duty to render an account is often mentioned in the documentation of the forestry, the lacunae are probably related to unfortunate loss (see for instance: Huizinga, 1948: 397 (1339); NA, AGH, 87, fol. 99v-100v (1393); Van Mieris, 1753-1756: IV, 814 (1425)).

All surviving accounts are of the simple charge-discharge type that was common in the administration of the Counties of Holland and Zeeland until the end of the *Ancien Régime* – and in virtually all other princely administrations in Western Europe. The accounts were intended, on the one hand, to determine the reliability of the receiver, but also to establish the financial balance between him, as administrator, and the count as owner of a part of the domains. The *summa summarum*, calculated at the end of the account, determined the amount of money that the receiver owed the count, or vice versa. The accounts show that most of the income came from grazing rights, and the sale of fuel – beech, alder and other trees, and chip wood. The expenses were mainly related to the maintenance of the forest, operational costs such as the organisation of court hearings and the maintenance of the Wilderness. In some cases, the maintenance of Teylingen Castle is included as well – but only if the forester served as chatelain at the same time, in that case we find long lists of daily wages of roofers, bricklayers, glaziers and the materials they used. The revenues and expenses are explained in short entries. As a random example, dating from 1410-1411:

Item, given to a young man who brought a greyhound to my dear Lord of Holland when he was last in Teylingen: 10 s (NA, AGH, 1827, fol. 19r).

Until the account of the year 1417-1418, which was audited by the Count's Council on 4 January 1419, the composition of the auditing council had a feudal character. The council consisted of a changing group of people, most often including members of the Count's household, a number of financial experts, the treasurer and a few high noblemen. In a few cases the major towns of Holland were involved and sometimes, the Count himself was present. The account of 1338, for instance, was audited by Count William IV (1337-1345) and his Common Council in The Hague on 25 September 1338 (Hamaker, 1875: I, 47; Smit, 1929: 79-120; Van Marrewijk, 1986: 32; idem, 1994: 15). The councillors based their evaluation on existing customs, a comparison with the accounts of the previous years and the verbal confirmation by the forester. The thoroughness of this procedure is doubtful, for the accounts audited by the Count's Council hardly ever show signs of correction or of rejection of entries. (Jansma, 1932: 21; Smit, 1939: 213-231; Bos-Rops, 1993: 53-55; Brokken – De Schepper, 1989: 31-38; Stein 2017: 197-200).

² NA, AGH, 1814, account over the year 1363, appears to be a different type of document (Van Marrewijk, 1986: 1 and n. 4).

The accounts from the period 1418-1427 are lost or were not drawn up, but those of 1427-1434 show a clear deviation from the older ones. This has not so much to do with the content – which is comparable – but mainly with the method of auditing, or perhaps more likely, with the institution that carried out the audit. The accounts of the years 1427-1429 by Adriaan van der Woerd (NA, GRK, 2064-2065) were audited by three men, who wrote in the margin of the last page:

Ce present compte fu oy et cloz a La Haye en Hollande le XI^e jour de juing mil IIII^e XXXVI, par maistres Berthel Alatrue, Josse de Stelant et moy Jehan de la Tanerie (This account was audited and closed 9 June 1436 by masters Bartelomeus a la Truye, Joost van Steeland and me, Jan van de Tanerie) (NA, GRK, 2064, fol. 43r, compare NA, GRK, 2065, fol. 22v).

A comparable annotation, but now sometimes in Middle Dutch, was made in the accounts of Hendrik van Borssele covering the years 1428-1434, which all were audited in three days' time: 15-17 March 1434 (NA, GRK, 2066, fol. 19v; 2067, fol. 18v; 2068, fol. 23r; 2069, fol. 22r; 2070, fol. 14r).

It is obvious that these accounts were no longer audited by members of the Count's feudal Council, but by a small group of professional accountants, institutionally connected to the audit offices of Lille and Brussels. During the period 1432 to 1446, they came over to Holland for several months every year to audit the accounts of the officers. Over the years, the composition of the group changed somewhat, but Master Bartelomeus a la Truye (+1446) was the constant factor. Bartelomeus was, to put it mildly, an experienced auditor. He started his career in 1411 at the Audit Office of Lille, and from 1430 onwards he was also involved in the auditing of the Brabant accounts in Brussels and the Hainaut accounts in Mons. For more than fifteen years the ubiquitous master travelled tirelessly back and forth between The Hague, Lille, Brussels and Mons in Hainaut to audit the accounts of the receivers. His death in 1446 was one of the reasons for setting up a separate Audit Office in The Hague (Damen, 2001: 132-136; Stein, 2017: 208).

In practice, the difference between the 'feudal' and the 'professional' audit was far more pronounced than one might suspect. In all principalities of the Low Countries, the Burgundian government introduced a style of auditing that was derived from the French *Chambre des Comptes*. This meant that the correct formulation, composition and especially the reliability of the accounts was checked according to clear procedures. The most important aspect was a close inspection to make sure that the receiver had not received more and spent less than the amounts he claimed – a healthy concern, as evidenced by the many interventions of the auditors. It amounted essentially to the receiver having to provide the underlying letters of appointment, receipts and other documentation for each entry. Sometimes a reference to an older account was sufficient (Jansma, 1932: 163-166). A page of the account of Hendrik van Borssele over 1432 can serve as an example (Illustration VII.1). The auditors have discarded three entries and have made several remarks in the left-hand margin. In the annotation they state

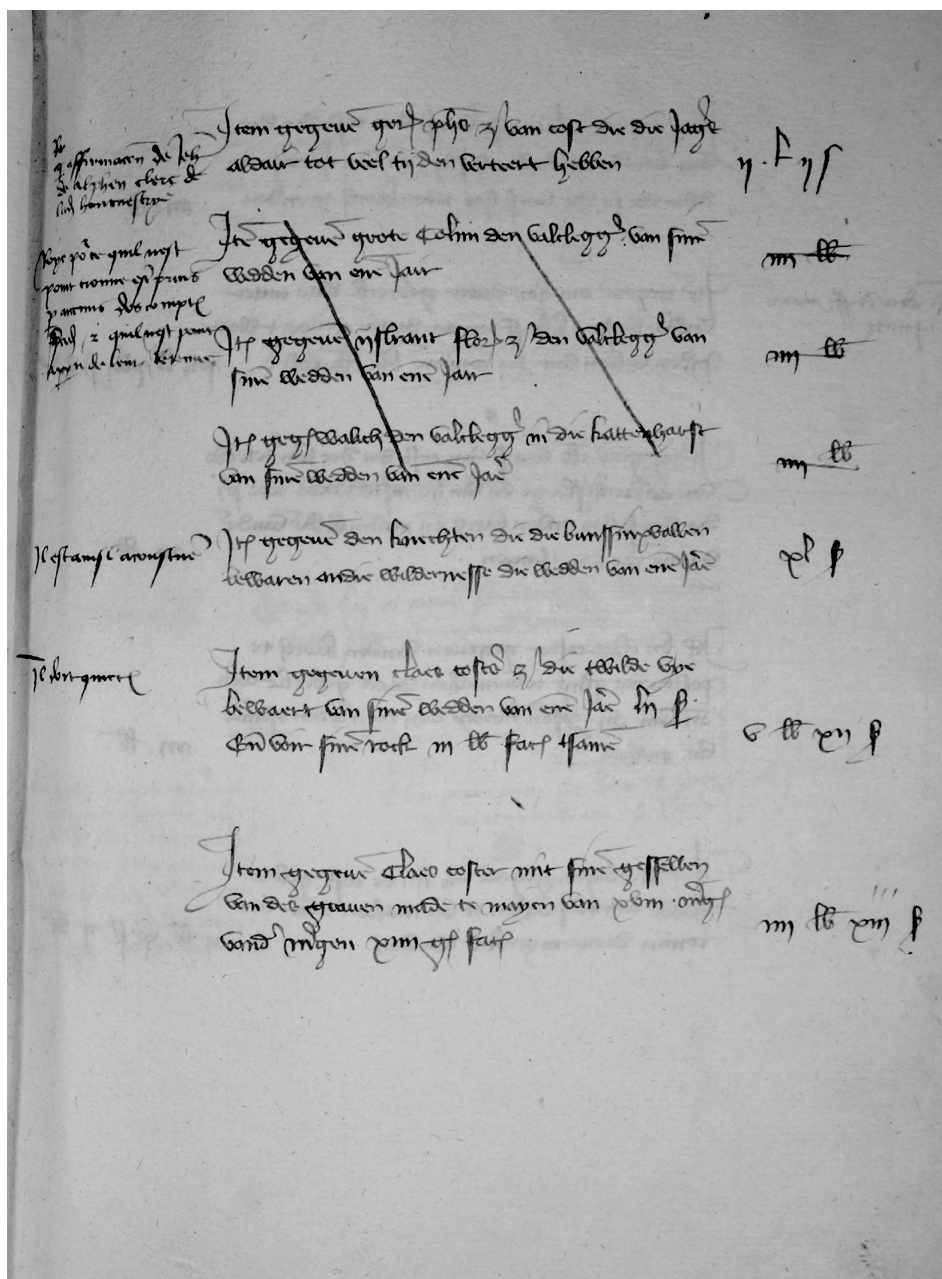


Illustration VII.1 Annotations by the auditors in the account of Hendrik van Borssele over 1432
Source: NA, GRK, 2069, fol. 21r.

their considerations: the entries are discarded because they were not traced in the older accounts, another entry is accepted because 'il est ainsi acoustumé' and the obstinate 'Il doit quittance' – receipt required – which we find in nearly every account audited by the Burgundian Audit Offices.

The auditing of the older accounts of the foresters in 1434 and 1436 was undoubtedly undertaken to determine the financial balance between the prince – in this case Philip the Good as count of Holland – and the former foresters. However, the auditors did not just determine the reliability of the accounts and the outstanding amounts. In a kind of Pavlovian reaction of hyper-criticism, they went through the accounts with a fine tooth comb, item by item, making detailed – perhaps even nit-picking – adjustments related to the wording of account items: The accounts had to begin with the phrase 'Account of lord ...' and not with 'This is the account and the revenue of lord ...'; longer account items were not to be preceded by the word 'Item', etc. To what avail? The audit took place at a time when the forester concerned had not been employed for some time.

The intervention of Bartelomeus a la Truye *cum suis* in 1434-1436 was completely in line with the general developments in the accountability of the receiverships in other parts of the Burgundian countries, where the intervention of the Audit Office became a routine administrative exercise. For the Wilderness, however, it was a false dawn, and it would take another seventy years before the Audit Office could roll out its format definitively there as well. Actually, it proved to be a prelude to a new phase in the exploitation of the Wilderness, which was mainly characterised by alienation and leasing, and which would last until 1504.

2. 1433/1434-1504. Leasing out the Wilderness

During the period stretching from 1433/1434 until 1504, the Wilderness was most of the time no longer administered by a salaried forester, but was leased out for longer periods of time. As a consequence, the rapid change of officers that occurred especially during the fourteenth century was replaced by greater stability (Table VII.2).

The immediate cause for this change was the transfer, on 12 April 1433, of the counties of Hainaut, Holland and Zeeland by Jacqueline of Bavaria to Philip the Good, Duke of Burgundy. On 25 April, two weeks after the transmission of power in Holland, Philip appointed Jacqueline as forester and chief dune warden. According to the charter, he did so because of his fondness and love for Jacqueline. This may be true, but presumably the high status of the office was an attempt to gild the pill of Jacqueline's loss of her counties. As a forester, she was allowed to carry out – or have carried out – all the tasks that belonged to this officer, and she was obliged to render an annual account to the Burgundian government. In exchange, she would receive the usual salary (NA, Nass. dom., 1194.776). However, regarding the actual administration of the Wilderness, nothing changed. Lord Hendrik van Borssele (c. 1404-1474), who had been Jacqueline's predeces-

Table VII.2 Administration of the Wilderness, 1433-1522

PERIOD	TYPE OF ADMINISTRATION	FORESTER
1433-1434	On account	Jacqueline of Bavaria
1434-1436	On account	Frank van Borssele
1436-1470	Lease	
1471-1477	Lease	Anthony the Great Bastard of Burgundy
1477-1478	On account	Wolfert van Borssele
1478-1484	Lease	
1484-1504	Lease	Jan van Egmond
1504-1515	On account	
1515-1522	On account	Hendrik III van Nassau

sor as a forester since 1428, drew up the account for one year, ending 8 November 1433 and subsequently an account ending 20 March 1434 (NA, GRK 2069 and 2070 resp.). On 23 March 1434, Philip the Good transferred the Forestry from Jacqueline to Lord Frank van Borssele (*c.* 1395-1470), second cousin of Hendrik van Borssele and soon to be husband of Jacqueline, with the obligation to render account (NA, GRK, 87, fol. 102v-103v; De Win, 1985; Janse, 2009: 326). Frank never did so. On 24 April 1436, Philip the Good renewed the cession of the Wilderness to Frank, but now for life, and without the obligation to account for it. He did not receive a salary, but he was allowed to keep all revenues for himself (NA, AGH, 87, fol. 103v-106r).

Of course, Frank was not constantly active as a forester. He was a high-profile nobleman, became a member of the Order of the Golden Fleece in 1445, was extensively involved in the national administration and maintained a dynamic court life in Zeeland. He was happy to leave the hard work to a deputy forester to take the honours and the main earnings himself. There was also a clerk who took care of the financial administration of the castle of Teylingen, and possibly of the Wilderness (see for instance Jan van Naerden in 1462-1463: NA, GRK, 295, fol. 54v).

Frank van Borssele died without legitimate children in 1470 and this left the Forestry vacant. It passed to Charles the Bold (*r.* 1467-1477) in his capacity of Count of Holland, who awarded it to his half-brother and brother in arms, the dissolute Anthony of Burgundy 'Le Grand Bâtard' (Commies, 1979; Cools, 2001: 165-166 no. 025), on the same terms on which Frank van Borssele had served: Anthony received the usufruct of the Forestry for life, without having to account for it (NA, GRK reg., 490, fol. 104v). As we have seen before, he delegated the actual administration of the Wilderness to the important nobleman Philip of Wassenae. In 1477, Maria and Maximilian referred to their administration as

a misrule. They had considered the Forestry primarily as a source of revenue, without realising the obligations attached to it. The Wilderness had deteriorated, the dunes had been eroded and Teylingen Castle had been plundered. The following quotation, taken from an ordinance issued by Maria and Maximilian, is illustrating:

[The servants appointed by Anthony] have allowed the inhabitants of the villages located near the Wilderness, who are obliged to plant marram grass to prevent the dunes from being drifted, to be relieved of this duty ... in exchange for hard cash. As a result, not only has our Wilderness been attenuated, but also the estates and farmlands surrounding it, which are now so attenuated that the damage is irreparable. And the Wilderness ... is in danger of soon being destroyed altogether (Merula, 1605: 4).

The sad state of the Wilderness in itself need not have been the reason for intervention – the personal vendetta between Wolfert van Borssele as new forester and the former deputy Philips van Wassenaeer may have caused the negative appreciation (Van Gent, 1994: 207-208, 221-224). The dramatic political changes, however, did. On January 5th, 1477, Charles the Bold fell at the Battle of Nancy. For ten years, he had ruled his lands with terror, and his death led to chaos and turmoil throughout the Netherlands. The crisis-like atmosphere was also evident in the Wilderness. The receiver notes that after the death of Duke Charles, the lands were very disturbed, and that he was therefore lenient in handing out fines (NA, GRK, 2072, fol. 9r-9v). However, it was not only the fear of political instability that sparked change. The subjects had observed with great regret that during the past decades many lucrative jobs as receiver, castellan and treasurer had been taken by foreigners. In the Great Privilege for the Counties of Holland and Zeeland, issued on 11 February 1477 under pressure from her subjects, Mary promises that henceforth only native Hollanders and Zeelanders would be appointed to such offices, and that old appointments would be abolished. This, of course, also concerned the position of forester. It is difficult to attach a nationality to Anthony the Great Bastard – he was born in Tournehem, near Calais – but he was certainly not a Hollander or Zeelander. What is more, the Great Privilege also stipulates that in the future, all such offices should be served on account and were no longer allowed to be leased out (Jongkees, 1985: 181-182, 219 art. 4, 222-223 art. 16).

As a result of the crisis of 1477, Maria and Maximilian took back the Wilderness into their own hands (*weder in hueren handen genomen*). They bought off Anthony by allowing him an annual stipend of 700 pounds, and had a new administration developed for the Haarlemmerhout, the dunes and the castellany of Teylingen (NA, GRK, 311, fol. 63r-64v). On 20 September they issued the ordinance that would eventually prove to be the blueprint for the administrative organisation of the Wilderness, although it would take more than 25 years for it to be fully implemented. The intention of the 1477 ordinance was to restore the Wilderness to its former glory, and to do so its administration would be

divided among three persons: a forester, a deputy forester and a sworn clerk. The stadtholder, the highest officer in Holland, would become the principal mandate holder of the forestry. Stadtholder Wolfert van Borssele (c. 1430-1486), Lord of Veere, received the explicit assignment to restore the Wilderness to a good state,

which, because of the sober regime, that has been exercised by those who were in charge, has become very harmed and damaged (Merula, 1605: 19).

Cornelis Croesinck was appointed as deputy forester. He was to take residence in Teylingen Castle and the actual performance of the function would be in his hands. He would act as judge in criminal and civil cases, and regularly traverse the territory of the Wilderness to maintain order and peace there. In exchange he would receive a salary of 300 pounds and an expense allowance for his servants, family, horses and hunting dogs. Croesinck was a military man, receiving his accolade in 1486, and an active member of the Nobility in the States of Holland. Above all, he was the son of Jacob Croesinck (+1493), Master at the Audit Office in The Hague, a circumstance that is explicitly mentioned in his letter of appointment (Merula, 1605: 14-15). As such, he was well-versed in the politics and administration of the County of Holland. Eventually he would fulfil the function of deputy forester until his death in 1520 (Ward, 2001: 112; Boone – Brand, 1992: 11 and n. 50; Bos-Rops, 2001: 53-60).

Finally, a sworn clerk was to be nominated, who would be mainly responsible for the registration of the Wilderness' income and expenditure, and who would also act as the registrar of the court (Merula, 1605: 3-7, 14, 34-35). On 30 November 1477, Wolfert van Borssele appointed Philip Saey (c. 1439-1495) as such. Just like deputy forester Croesinck, Saey was well-versed in Holland's politics and administration. He was the son of the shady Bengaert Saey, who during his life had held numerous offices as castellan, bailiff, procurator general and tax collector. A not unimportant point is that Philip Saey belonged to the clientele of Stadtholder and head forester Wolfert van Borssele – among other things, he organised his wedding. His career as secretary-treasurer of the wilderness lasted only a short while. Already after six months he was dismissed. This was partly the result of the new lease construction of the Wilderness that started on this date, partly because he became at odds with the deputy stadtholder. In September 1479, the attorney general of Holland had to intervene in a scuffle between them. This was not the last time the attorney was involved with Philip Saey. He was convicted and executed for sodomy in 1495 (Kuijk – Valens-Nip; 1981).

The regulations of the 1477 ordinance proved to be only a very short-term success. In less than half a year it had already become obsolete. The underlying reason for this was what is called in French *importunité des requerrans* (in Middle Dutch 'importune vervolghe'): Noblemen and officers asked the prince for a favour, a request he could, as a patron to his clients, not reasonably refuse (NA, GRK, 312, fol. 73v-74v; Merula, 1605: 11; Paravicini, 2002: 364-365). In this case, the noblemen had asked the duke to give them large parts of the dunes in fief, to exploit them and use them for hunting and the lucrative cultivation of rabbits.

Of course, the arrangements made mainly benefited the noblemen, not the prince who disposed of part of his domains. After the death of Charles the Bold in 1477, Wolfert van Borssele, Philip van Wassenauer (again!), Jan Oem van Wijngaarden and others were not willing to give up their privileges, and started proceedings before the Court of Holland (Van Gent, 1994: 208; Merula, 1605: 8, 20). At the same time, the government was in urgent need of money because of the ongoing warfare with King Louis XI of France. The original intention of restoring the Wilderness to its former glory therefore disappeared from view. Effectively 15 May 1478, the Wilderness was leased again, for a period of twenty years, to the same stadtholder Wolfert van Borssele. In 1484, Jan van Egmond (1438-1516), Wolfert's successor as stadtholder, took over the lease of the Forestry, and it was extended to 1504 at the same time (Cools, 2001: 205-207 no. 073; NA, GRK reg., 5, fol. 80v-82r; Merula, 1605: 3-7, 14).

The eventful history of the Wilderness during the 1433-1504 period obviously had an impact on the accountability of the foresters and therefore on the transmission of accounts (Table VII.3). As we have seen before, the last ordinary account was that over the year 1433-1434, drawn up by, or at least under the responsibility of Hendrik van Borssele, and audited by Bartelomeus a la Truye cs. (NA, GRK, 2070). Even though the 1434 ordinance determined that Frank van Borssele should account for his administration of the Wilderness, he never did so. The obligation was no longer included in the new lease-contract for Frank van Borssele in 1436.

It was only in 1477 that things changed, with the issuing of the ordinance by Mary and Maximilian and the subsequent appointment of Philip Saey as clerk and receiver. The ordinance was written with the close involvement of the Audit Office, and it shows. Saey was obliged to submit an account every year, substantiated by adequate receipts 'behoorlijkke quijtancien' for the purpose of verification by the Audit Office (Merula, 1605: 7).³ This was an important change, conforming the method of administration to that used in of the other domains in Holland and everywhere else in the Burgundian composite monarchy. The effectiveness of this provision is confirmed by the first and only account submitted by Philip Saey, as clerk and receiver of the Forestry (NA, GRK, 2072, fol. 1r). The expenses section in particular is full of marginal remarks made by the Audit Office, asking, among other things, for receipts, '*doit quittance*' (see Illustration VII.2) (Jansma, 1932: 163-166; Aerts, 1996: 366-367).

However, the conformation to the general administrative standard was only short-lived. Clerk Philip Saey was dismissed by 15 May 1478, having served less than half a year, and having submitted only one account. Despite the regulations

³ NA, GRK, 2071 has been deliberately omitted from the overview in table 3. This concerns an account drawn up by secretary Jan van Rietveld for the treasurer of forester Frank van Borssele, covering the year 1457. It was audited by the councillors of Frank in Den Briel, among whom were the dean of Sint-Maartensdijk and Borssele's treasurer (fol. 16r). It is unclear why this account was transferred to the archives of the Holland Audit Office.

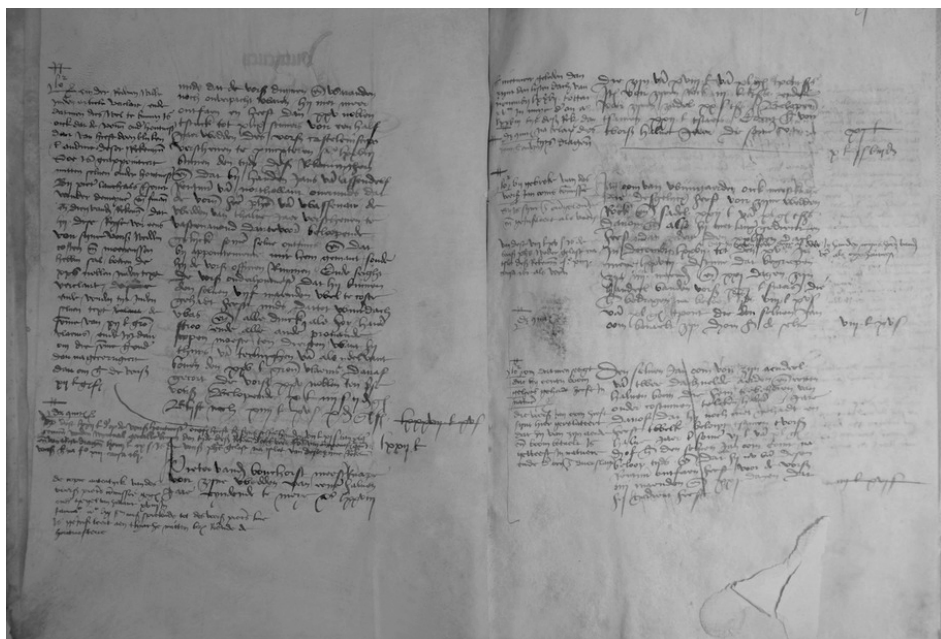


Illustration VII.2 Expenses section of the account of the Wilderness 1477-1478

Source: NA, GRK, 2072, fol. 10v-11r.

of the Great Privilege, the Wilderness was leased out again in May 1478 and subsequently the forester was no longer accountable to the Audit Office. Wolfert van Borssele and later Jan van Egmond were free to manage it at their own discretion, without being held accountable. In the lease contract a separate arrangement was mentioned, however, which led to an irregular contact with the Audit Office being maintained. Annually, barren trees were sold by auction. After deducting the costs, the proceeds were divided equally between Borssele as leaseholder and the Count of Holland as owner of the Wilderness. It concerned small amounts, usually referred to as extraordinary revenues (*extraordinarijse penningen*). The money was earmarked for the recovery of the Wilderness, by purchasing and planting new trees. The registration was, at least in 1482, kept by the clerk of the Forestry, a certain Master Jan van Beveren. The complex nature of his office is phrased in the heading of his first extraordinary account:

Account and proof by Jan van Beveren, keeper of the clerk's office of the forestry in Holland, commissioned by the Audit Office of Holland, and representing deputy forester of Holland, Lord Cornelis Cruesinc (NA, GRK, 2073, fol. 1r; compare the account by Dirk Potter over 1503-1505: NA, GRK, 2083, fol. 1r).

Jan van Beveren reported the extraordinary revenues and expenses to the Audit Office, but not on a yearly basis. The surviving three accounts of the extraordinary revenues from 1495 until 1509 all cover several years (Table VII.3).

Table VII.3 Accounts of the Wilderness, 1477-1505

SHELF NUMBERS	YEARS	PRESENTED IN AUDIT OFFICE DD.	REMARKS
NA GRK 2072	1477-1478	15 May 1479	Drawn up by Philip Saey
Lost	1478-1481?	5 March 1482	Extraordinary account drawn up by Jan van Beveren
NA GRK 2073	1494-1503	1 April 1504	Extraordinary account drawn up by Jan van Beveren
NA GRK 2083	1503-1505	3 March 1509	Extraordinary account drawn up by Dirk Potter

On a completely different level of abstraction, the crisis of the year 1477 represented a breaking point as well. From then on, the sources show a much stronger awareness of the dangers of disintegration of the Wilderness and the intention to restore the Wilderness to its former glory. It is emphasised repeatedly that both nobles and non-nobles cause great damage. The 1477 ordinance by Mary and Maximilian quoted above, is one example. In 1499, Philip the Fair issued an ordinance to 'prevent the abuses and excesses that were perpetrated in the forests and dunes of our land of Holland on a daily basis' (Rendorp, 1777: 33, 172-178). In 1503, the Court of Holland ruled:

It has come to our knowledge, how in the Wilderness of the Haarlemmerhout and all over the dunes of North Holland several large excesses happen daily by many and various persons, noble and non-noble, who seek more their own benefit and profit, hunting indecently out of season, keeping no rule, hunting with nets, ferrets, a great multitude of dogs, shooting an excess of rabbits and hares, and robbing their nests and their young, as well as flying game such as partridges, pheasants, bitterns ... which they catch with nets and with shooting bows, and also destroy their eggs and take their food. And some others are hunting with bird dogs, to chase away the swans from their nests ... without the consent of our Stadtholder as chief forester ... which we will now no longer tolerate, but with all precautionary measures take care of, and want to protect the above-mentioned Wilderness from danger (Merula, 1605: 53).

The forester should play a central role in this, as is mentioned explicitly in the commission letter of Wolfert van Borssele (Merula, 1605: 4, 19-20; NA, GRK, 311, fol. 63r). Viewed from this angle, the crisis of 1477 resulted, at least in theory, in the strengthening of the government's power against the customary rights of commoners and nobles (compare Hoppenbrouwers, 2002: 93-95).

3. 1504-1520. Administrative integration

Circumstances helped the government to intervene and to continue its efforts to bring the Wilderness in line with the other domains. On 5 May 1504, Anthony the Bastard of Burgundy died, and only ten days later Jan van Egmond's lease expired. This meant that two heavy obligations weighing on the Wilderness were removed, both the annual payment of 700 pounds to Anthony and the lease contract. The Audit Office responded quickly. In anticipation of the termination of the lease, it had already prepared to take up the lucrative lease of the dunes for rabbit breeding at a candle auction. The procedure is carefully explained in the account (NA, GRK, 338, fol. 79v-81v). On two days, 7 February and 14 February 1504, parts of the dunes were auctioned off.

These auctions by candle must have been spectacular events. Even if they were new in the context of the Wilderness, they had often been used in Holland since the middle of the fifteenth century as an effective policy to maximise revenues of judicial offices like bailiwicks etc. (Stein, 2001: 16-24; Boone – Brand, 1992: 12-14; Van Dam, 1998: 202-204). During a meeting in a pub or in the Court of Holland, a small candle was lit, and the bidding would continue until the candle had expired. The outcome was written down and served as the starting point for a second session a week later. To increase the yield and the excitement, bidders were reimbursed half of their bid by the government. Clerk and receiver Jan van Beveren bid on several dunes with the intention of raising the rent (NA, GRK, 338, fol. 245v-248r).

The year 1504 would prove to be a watershed moment in the administrative history of the Wilderness. At first sight, very little changed regarding the staff. Jan van Egmond, who had leased the Wilderness from 1485-1504, had succeeded as stadtholder in 1483, and in that capacity, he remained keeper of the Forestry. Cornelis Croesinck remained in charge as deputy forester as well and Jan van Beveren continued to serve as clerk. However, the administrative status of the Wilderness, and therefore of both the deputy forester and the clerk, changed. On 21 August 1504, both Cornelis Croesinck and Jan van Beveren were appointed formally by Philip the Fair. Jan's function was labelled as 'Clerc and receiver of the Forestry', the function Philip Saey had been appointed to in 1477 (NA, GRK Reg, 5, fol. 193v-194v; compare NA, GRK, 2072, fol. 1r; NA, GRK, 2075, fol. 1r; Merula, 1605: 34-35).

With Jan van Beveren, a new type of officer entered the world of the Wilderness, marked by tradition and status. He was no longer the personal assistant to the forester for handling tedious administrative chores, but a delegate from the Audit Office, tasked with keeping the Forestry in good order and to manage its finances. And with a master's degree, he was fit for the job. Jan van Beveren was born in 1452 or 1453, presumably as a descendant of a patrician family from The Hague. In 1465 he enrolled in a study of *artes* in Cologne (Keussen – Schmitz, 1892: 551). In 1473 he appears for the first time in the accounts of the county of Holland as a substitute procurator general (Damen, 2000: 445; NA, GRK,

307, fol. 131v, 133v). During the years 1478-1487, he worked as controller of the Count's officers (Damen, 2000: 104-105 and n. 324; NA, GRK, 2074, fol. 50r). In 1482, he is mentioned for the first time in a direct relation to the Wilderness, when he is referred to as 'clerc van den houtvesterie' in a marginal note (NA, GRK, 2072, fol. 14v). At that time, he acted as a simple administrative assistant to deputy forester Cornelis Cruesinck. Since 1491, he leased a piece of moorland in the vicinity of the Wilderness, and in 1497 acted as one of the forester's judges (meesterknappen) (NA, GRK Charters 59.17). As we have seen, he was appointed as clerk and receiver of the Wilderness in 1504. He exercised this function until 1519, when he was succeeded by Vincent van Teylingen; in March 1520 he was still strong enough to submit his last account in person to the Audit Office (NA, GRK, 2082, fol. 1r). A last mention concerns the payment of arrears on 10 March 1521. By then he was nearly seventy years old (NA, GRK, 2082, fol. 53v). He died before 1525 and was buried in St. Peters church in Leiden. He must have been a wealthy man. At least, when his widow Lijsbeth Dirckdr. wrote her will in 1525, she donated considerable sums of money to her four sons (ELO, Leiden Rechterlijk archief, 76a, fol. 149r-150r). Presumably Jan held office in Teylingen Castle, but he himself lived in nearby Sassenheim. As one of the residents of this village, he addressed an enquiry committee of the Audit Office in 1515 (Fruin, 1866: 291).

The reading of Jan's accounts of the Wilderness is interesting, sometimes hilarious. Always speaking of himself in the third person, he often addresses the masters of the Audit Office personally. He shows himself to be a plaintive type, for instance with regard to his efforts to register the income and expenditure of the administration of justice:

With which the receiver has more problems and burdens than with any extraordinary revenue from the Wilderness, because he must direct all the compositions, set the sentence to writing, and execute the explanations by order of the forester and to charge and collect the resulting income (NA, GRK, 2072, fol. 40r).

Talking about the necessary control he exercised over the workmen at Teylingen Castle, he writes that in return he received 'nothing but ingratitude'. The twenty pounds that he himself considered to be a reasonable compensation for his efforts was ruthlessly cancelled by the Audit Office (NA, GRK, 2077, fol. 77v-78r).

Jan thought he was shamefully underpaid. Year in and year out, his accounts contain a complaint about the heavy work and the meagre salary:

Although the aforementioned receiver has always complained and is still complaining that it is too small a salary to serve the aforementioned office, it has not pleased you [Masters of the Audit office] to increase this up to now, my Lords.

The complaint fell on deaf ears. The masters responded by dismissing the complaint with the message that Jan should stop complaining: 'And do not include this in the account anymore' (NA, GRK, 2082, fol. 34r-34v).

In the autumn of his career, Jan was discredited. Contrary to the prince's order, he had attempted to publicly rent out parts of the Wilderness to the villagers of Katwijk and Noordwijkerhout. He was imprisoned in The Hague and questioned by the Procurator-General. To avoid further persecution, he submitted to arbitration by the President of the Court of Holland and by one of the masters of the Audit Office and was sentenced to a fine of 100 pounds. Later, he tried to recover this fine from the account of the Wilderness. He added that he was an old man and very moved by 'the scandal and shame he suffered at being imprisoned and being heard under oath'. He argued that he had committed the wrongdoing at the behest of the Audit Office itself, and demanded a refund of the 100 pounds. In vain. The Audit Office was ruthless and cancelled the post because of the absence of any written evidence (*bij gebreke van enich beθοen*) (NA, GRK, 2080, fol. 39r-40r; NA, GRK, 4439, fol. 32v).

Jan van Beveren may have been prone to complain, but he was also a professional, aware of the way accounts were drawn up in the Burgundian administration. This becomes clear from the ten surviving accounts. As an example, the account of the period 15 May 1511-1515 May 1512 can serve, the oldest surviving 'ordinary' account. Throughout the year Jan had kept several registers of income and expenditure. The account mentions payment orders from the duke, a voluminous book, consisting of nearly 100 sheets, in which he kept track of the lease of pastures and a 'contrerolle'. On 27 May 1513, Jan personally handed over this account in twofold, with all the accompanying documentation to the Audit Office in The Hague. One of these copies was written on paper, which he would take home as evidence – and would use as an example when drawing up his next account. The other copy was written on parchment and was intended for the Office's archives, where it would also serve as evidence and for verification of future accounts. After a thorough audit, the account was closed on 4 November 1513, again in the presence of Jan. It was established that his revenues amounted to 1338 pounds and his expenses to 544 pounds. The difference would be settled in the following year's account (NA, GRK, 2075; NA, GRK, 2081, fol. 46r).

Regarding the administration, the blueprint of 1477 was revived. For the period 15 May 1504 until 15 May 1509, two parallel series of accounts were drawn up, one consisting of two extraordinary accounts which have survived, and one consisting of five ordinary accounts that now are lost.⁴ From 1509 onwards, both series were joined together (Table VII.4).⁵

4 The oldest surviving 'ordinary' account over 1511-1512, is labelled as the 'eighth account of Jan van Beveren ...' (NA, GRK, 2075, fol. 1r). The seven previous accounts, starting with the one for the year 1504-1505, have therefore not been preserved.

5 In the account over 1511-1512, the heading still mentions that it concerns 'both the ordinary and the extraordinary' finances. This is crossed out by the masters of the Audit Office (NA, GRK, 2075,

Table VII.4 Accounts of the Wilderness, 1504-1520

YEARS	ORDINARY ACCOUNTS (SHELF NUMBERS)	EXTRAORDINARY ACCOUNTS (SHELF NUMBERS)
1503-1504	Not drafted	NA GRK 2083
1504-1505	Lost	
1505-1506	Lost	NA GRK 2074
1506-1507	Lost	
1507-1508	Lost	
1508-1509	Lost	
1509-1510	Lost	Integrated into the ordinary accounts
1510-1511	Lost	
1511-1512	NA GRK 2075	
1512-1513	NA GRK 2076	
1513-1514	NA GRK 2077	
1514-1515	NA GRK 2078	
1515-1516	NA GRK 2079	
1516-1517	NA GRK 2080	
1517-1518	NA GRK 2081	
1518-1519	NA GRK 2082	
1519-1520	NA GRK 2084	

Clerk-receiver Jan van Beveren was the central person in this administrative construction. Like his predecessors a century earlier, he recorded the income from coppice, dead trees sold, grazing rights and fines. He spent money on the wages of forest workers, the collection of fines, the maintenance of the forest and especially the maintenance of Teylingen castle. The wages of the deputy forester Cornelis Cruesinck and two master craftsmen (in 1511 respectively 300 and 44 pounds) were paid by the receiver of North Holland.

If one compares the accounts drawn up by Adriaan van der Woerd and Hendrik van Borssele in the years 1427-1434 with those drawn up by Jan van Beveren, one can observe several differences in terms of appearance and content. The newer accounts are written on parchment, while the older ones were on paper, the number of pages has doubled, a foliation has been added to the sheets of the accounts. Most importantly, however, masses of notes are made in the

fol. 1r). In 1504, a new accountable officer was appointed in the person of IJsbrand van Schoten as keeper of the park-like Forest of Haarlem (*Bewaerscip van mijns genadichs heeren bosch gelegen an de stede van Haerlem*), just south of the city (Temminck, 1984: 9-10). His accounts are not considered in this article.

margins of the accounts by the Audit Office, asking time and again for proofs and documentation. The consequences can be illustrated by the registration of the salary of simple officers like a dune warden and a woodsman. In 1421-1422, it reads:

Item, Voscgen the dune warden for his salary for one year: 18 pounds.
Item, for his livery: 3 pounds (NA, AGH, 1834, fol. 38v).⁶

In the account over the year 1514-1515:

Paid Steven Stevenz. woodsman, with whom you, my lords, have agreed that he will guard the wood of Duynschoten on his own, starting 1 May 1514 which is the time covered by this account. And he will have an amount of 18 pounds Holland's payment, 30 groats per pound. This amount was paid to him by the receiver, as evidenced by the receipt supplied. Makes in pounds of this account 13 pounds, 10 shillings (NA GRK, 2078, fol. 31v-32r).⁷

By chance, the receipt referred to has been handed down loose at the back of the account, in which Steven Stevenz admits having received 13 pounds and 10 shillings in two tranches (see Illustration VII.3). Originally, there must have been thousands and thousands comparable receipts, now being lost.

The administrative changes went hand in hand with a series of measures and initiatives to restore the Wilderness, badly damaged in recent decades, to its former glory – the account of the year 1520 phrases aptly the intention to 'repair the Wilderness' (*Reparacien van der Wildernissen*, NA, GRK, 2084, fol. 48r). This started already in the fifteenth century, when a small part of the revenues was earmarked for the purchase of new trees and recorded by Jan van Beveren in the extraordinary accounts. In 1499 Philip the Fair issued an ordinance 'to provide for the excesses and abuses that occur in the forests and dunes of Holland on a daily basis' (Rendorp, 1777: 33, 172-178). In 1503, the Court of Holland established for the first time regulations for the hunt, in particular to prevent over-hunting and the consequent deterioration of the Wilderness (Merula, 1605: 53-56). Eventually, this would result in 'the very famous ordinance' (*wijdt-beroemt placet*) of 1517, which limits the number of people allowed to hunt, regulates the access to the forests, explains the procedure of the forester's court, and determines the level of fines etc. (Merula, 1605: 56-64). The Audit Office of The Hague played a central role in the formulation of these initiatives.

6 Item, gegeven Voscgen die duynwaerder van zinen wedden van een jaer: XVIII lb. Item van zinen rock: III lb.

7 Betaelt Steven Stevenz, boschwaerder mit wijen van nyewen overcomen is bij u mijn heeren omme den bosschen van Duynschoten alleen te bewaren, beginnende ende ingaende van meyedage anno XVc XIII binnen tijde deser rekenijngen. Ende sal daer voeren hebben, ende die hem bij den rentmeester betaelt sijn blickende bij den quitantie hier overgelevert: XVIII lb. Hollands payments, XXX gr. Vlaemisch grote tpont facit, in ponden deser rekenijngen: XIII lb. X s.

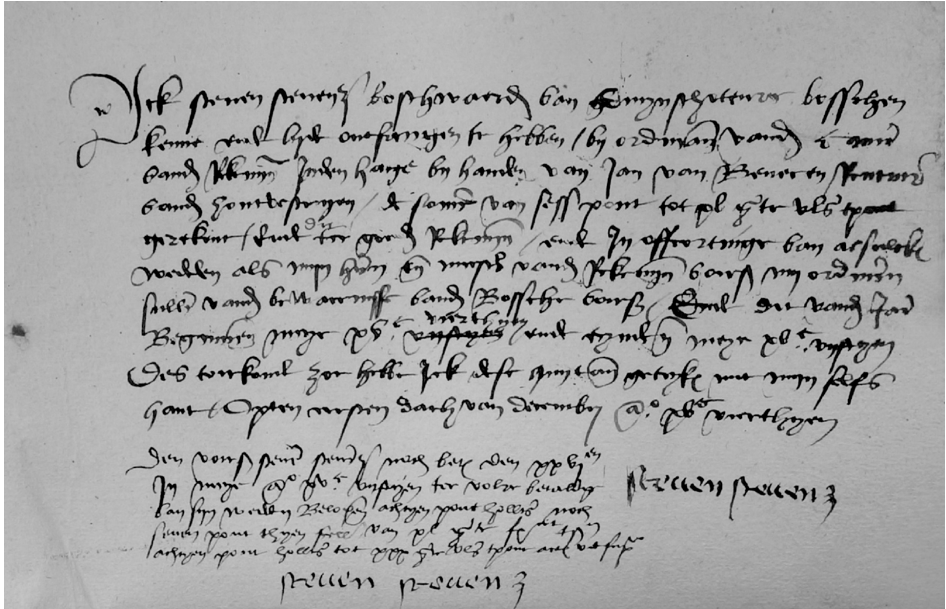


Illustration VII.3 Receipt by woodsman Steven Stevenz with which he confirms to have received from Jan van Beveren 13 pounds 10 shillings, in two tranches, on 1 December 1514, and 26 May 1515 (NA, GRK: 2078, inserted after fol. 42)

Conclusion

The place of most joy and pleasure of Holland, that is how Mary and Maximilian described the Wilderness in 1477. Traveling home from The Hague in 1513, Jan van Beveren must have had mixed feelings about this. Admittedly, the masters of the Audit Office had closed his accounts and that was always a relief, but they had scribbled all kinds of notes on the accounts, repeatedly adjusting his revenues upwards and his expenses downwards. When he had charged 6 pounds for making two neat copies of his accounts, they ruled that the usual fee of 4 groats per sheet resulted in an amount of only 5 pounds 2 shillings. When he had claimed an excessive ten days to travel the 25 kilometres from Sassenheim to The Hague and back to have his accounts audited, the auditors had noted that six days should have been sufficient (NA, GRK, 2075, fol. 50v-51r).

Jan van Beveren's journey and the many remarks made by the Audit Office are *petite histoire*, of course, but they are exemplary of a much more extensive and far-reaching development that had taken place during the previous century. In the early 1330s, William III had appointed Simon van Benthem as his first salaried and accountable forester. Simon would prove to be the first of a long series of officers who managed the Wilderness during the following century. Their

accounts were audited by the feudal council of the Counts of Holland, that based its judgment on a combination of reasonableness, trust and existing customs. In this respect, the management of the Wilderness did not differ greatly from that of the other princely domains – or of the domains in the other principalities of the Netherlands. However, for the Wilderness, the Burgundian takeover in 1433 was a breaking point. For decades, it became the vehicle for the ambitions of high noblemen such as Frank van Borssele, Anthony the Bastard of Burgundy, Wolfert van Borssele and Cornelis Croesinck. A new and now definitive integration into the domains did not occur until 1504.

The nomination of Jan van Beveren and Cornelis Croesinck signalled that professional exploration of the Wilderness was envisaged. Both were familiar with the administrative structures in and around The Hague. This is confirmed by the central role played by the Audit Office in The Hague in the drafting of ordinances, the implementation of the regulations and the control of the practical implementation of financial reporting. From 1504 onwards, the items in the accounts, both revenues and expenses, were supported systematically by some form of evidence – most often in written form. Professional accountants checked whether the legal basis and the amounts stated were in accordance with this documentation. In this respect, the small receipt, signed by the humble woodsman Steven Stevenz., symbolises the change the Wilderness underwent.

The Wilderness, for centuries the playground – pleasure garden, Mary and Maximilian would say – of the Counts of Holland and the nobility, was now broadly integrated into the financial administration of the Burgundian-Habsburg government. Income and expenditure were thoroughly controlled, conservation of the area was an important issue and extensive legislation shielded the Wilderness from the customs enjoyed by noblemen and local residents.

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