



Huygens' Hofwijk

Huygens and Hofwijk

*The inventive world of Constantijn
& Christiaan Huygens*

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Kees van der Leer and Henk Boers



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Preface

Seen from outer space, Earth looks phenomenal. Whenever possible during my space missions, I floated in front of a window to enjoy the extraordinary view. A blue globe surrounded by a black universe: a world without boundaries. In the seventeenth century, the scientist Christiaan Huygens observed the universe from the garden of Hofwijck. There he stood peering into the night sky with his telescopes containing lenses ground by himself. Christiaan Huygens, physicist, mathematician, astronomer and Hofwijck resident, was fascinated by the universe. In 1656 he described for the first time that Saturn has rings. Later he worked on *Cosmotheoros*, his book on the discovery of the universe in which he even speculated on the existence of extraterrestrial life.

My interest in the universe and space travel started when, as a twelve year old boy, I began to read science fiction books I was given by my grandmother. Then I knew for sure that one day I would look at Earth from outer space. When Christiaan was that age, he was an observant and curious boy, fascinated by nature. During weekend visits to Hofwijck - in those days the country house of the Huygens family - he watched the ripples in the water of the Vliet canal and the reflection of the sunlight on the water. Christiaan grew up to be a versatile scientist. His Father Constantijn Huygens, architect of Hofwijck, supported him in this. Poet, musician and diplomat, Constantijn himself had a great interest in science and corresponded with leading international scientists.

I am a great admirer of Christiaan Huygens, not only because of his astronomical discoveries, but also because of his versatility as a scientist. It is almost inconceivable that anyone could make so many different inventions and discoveries. Christiaan was the first scientist in his time to use mathematics as the main tool in his scientific research. In addition, he tested many of his theoretical discoveries in practice, often with instruments designed and built by himself. It is wonderful that at Hofwijck children can now discover and experiment just as Christiaan did at the time.

I visited Hofwijck for the first time in 2012, together with my fellow astronauts Don Pettit and Oleg Kononenko. We had just returned from a 193-day stay in space. It was a special experience to be in the home of our world-famous countryman Christiaan. Don and Oleg also had this sense of historical perspective. The story, the inhabitants as well as the design of Hofwijck - the estate garden has the shape of the human body - are unique.

In 2013 Hofwijck was completely restored and renovated. Two new museum floors on Constantijn and Christiaan Huygens were added: 'The Golden Age of Constantijn' and 'Christiaan under the Stars'. In 2015 the ice cellar was uncovered and restored. Now there is a new entrance building with modern facilities, connecting the house and the garden. The important story of Hofwijck can thus be told even better to its visitors.

Hofwijck, Constantijn and Christiaan are close to my heart. I love space travel, science and history. My daughter's name is Sterre (Star in English), which was the pet name Constantijn Huygens gave to his beloved wife Suzanna van Baerle. My son is called Stijn, which is short for Constantijn. I am proud to be a Hofwijck ambassador and wish the Hofwijck estate a wonderful and prosperous existence in the near and distant future. The story of Hofwijck, Constantijn and Christiaan Huygens must live on in the hearts of future generations.

André Kuipers, *astronaut and Hofwijck ambassador*

Acknowledgments

Hofwijck is the creation of one man. Now 380 years ago, Constantijn Huygens acquired land along the Vliet in Voorburg and built the Hofwijck country estate there. What he had in mind was a place where he could now and then withdraw from his busy life in The Hague. A place where he could quietly devote himself to the important things in life, namely his family and friends, his poetry and music, and nature. The name is telling: at Hofwijck Constantijn left the court.

Hofwijck is a very personal creation. The man who was involved in the construction and laying out of royal residences and the associated gardens in and around The Hague for the stadholder couple Frederik Hendrik and Amalia van Solms, and who had seen gardens in all the styles common at the time on his travels abroad, opted for a unique concept for his own country estate. The floor plan is in the shape of a human body, an idea Constantijn borrowed from the Roman architect Vitruvius.

Nowadays Hofwijck is no longer the rural oasis of peace it used to be for Constantijn. The modern and hectic life has enclosed Hofwijck. The train literally drives through the garden, the highway is audible, a residential area and Stationsplein embrace Hofwijck on the other side. Only on the banks of the Vliet little seems to have changed, you can still imagine how the barges slowly passed by. On his jetty on the Vliet Constantijn received his guests who arrived by ship from The Hague. That tradition has been preserved, because many of the current visitors also enter Hofwijck via that jetty.

It can safely be called a miracle that the core of Hofwijck has been preserved in its original state. After an eventful history, the low point was reached in 1913. In that year the house and garden were put up for sale. The danger that the house would be demolished after it was sold for the construction of luxury villas was not inconceivable. The establishment of the Hofwijck Association, successful fundraising and the Association's purchase of the country estate in 1914 prevented this disaster scenario. The survival of Hofwijck was thus assured.

In this book, Kees van der Leer and Henk Boers describe the history of Hofwijck and its inhabitants, from the very beginning until the reconstruction of the garden in 2004. We are very grateful to them for taking on this project. For the realization of this English edition, a crowdfunding was organized by Huygens' Hofwijck volunteers Bob Commerell, Ellen van Hasselt and Hans Dikker Hupkes. Many good donors made this edition possible. A special word of thanks is due here to designer Ronald Meekel of same-d and to Jane Choy-Thurlow, who took care of the translation with the assistance of Rachel van der Wilden.

Since the transformation that was realized in the years 2001-2016, Hofwijck has again become the country house of Constantijn Huygens's son Christiaan, the scientist. Since then, Hofwijck has been looking at the Golden Age through the eyes of both Huygens. This results in a wide range of subjects, from literature, visual arts, music and the House of Orange-Nassau to history and science.

We sincerely hope that the public will be able to enjoy the beautiful Huygens' Hofwijck for many years to come.

Voorburg, 2022

Peter van der Ploeg
Director Huygens' Hofwijck

The two main characters in this book
Constantijn Huygens, the builder of Hofwijck
and his son Christiaan, the famous scientist.

In the background the Hofwijck country
estate, drawn by Constantijn's eldest son, also
called Constantijn







Ithaka Prize

Ithaka

This book won the sKBL-Ithaka Prize in 2016. In a laudatio, pronounced by jury chairman Paul Schnabel, the clear contents of this well-crafted publication were praised. With this, this smallest historical country estate in the Netherlands, called Hofwijck, obtained a beautiful publication. The name Hofwijck, coined by designer/owner Huygens himself, explains the reason for its creation: it served as a refugium for Huygens, who worked as secretary to Stadholder Frederik Hendrik of Orange. While Huygens often longed for the peace and tranquility of his deliberately small home, many leading Amsterdam merchants and regents built beautiful country houses in our regions. In this way, they could escape the crowded, noisy and very polluted Dutch cities during the long summers. Some even claim that the provinces of Holland and Utrecht had thousands of these beautiful places.

The Netherlands is still rich in castles, historic country estates and country houses. Of the still existing historic estates, the Dutch state protects no less than 551 ensembles where the inextricable link between the designed entity of the house and the surrounding greenery has been more or less perfectly preserved. Within that group, Hofwijck is exceptional because of its layout, which is based on pure classical-Italian style. It does give this special estate an extra unique character.

Immediately after winning the sKBL-Ithaka Prize the authors declared that they would use the € 5,000 that the prize provided for an English edition. That intention came true and the members of the jury of the sKBL-Ithaka Prize and the board of the Foundation Castles, Historic Country Houses & Estates (sKBL) are very grateful to them for that. Not only does the erudite Constantijn Huygens and his son Christiaan deserve international attention, but his Hofwijck, with its classic architectural design, is a unique European monument. While many associate England, Germany and France with arcadian country living, this is somewhat unjustified because the Netherlands still has many castles and old country houses with breathtaking landscapes. It is exceptional that our historical country house culture is based on civilian roots, unlike all our surrounding countries where land ownership was predominantly a noble privilege. The provinces of North and South Holland, Utrecht, Gelderland and Overijssel still have a lot of green/red monumental heritage. There ancient architecture unites intimately with beautiful parks often with avenues and ancient trees and shrubs amidst stunningly beautiful landscapes.

We are grateful to Kees van der Leer and Henk Boers but above all to Constantijn Huygens for being, through this book, the ambassador of an extensive but internationally not well known Dutch heritage.

Huis Landfort, Megchelen, January 2022

René W.Chr. Dessing, chairman sKBL/secretary sKBL-Ithaka Prize (www.skbl.nl)

I

Constantijn Huygens in The Hague

a courtier in the capital

A long time ago I had intended to look for places in The Hague that once played a role in the life of Constantijn Huygens, the famous seventeenth-century secretary of various House of Orange Stadholders, who was so versatile that his qualities and activities can hardly be condensed in one line. He was born at the end of the sixteenth century and reached an advanced age. As a result, his many letters, poems and notes form a valuable source for our knowledge of the years that went into our history as the Golden Age.

The birthplace in the Nobelstraat ⁽¹⁵⁹⁶⁻¹⁵⁹⁹⁾

Current location: Nobelstraat 16

My walk had started in the early morning twilight, a quiet Sunday morning in September. On arriving in the old center of The Hague, I see how the light of dawn hesitates in the dense morning haze that, like a misty autumn shroud, makes the narrow alleys of the old city center seem even narrower. I am standing at the old 'Koningspoort' (King's Gate) in the Molenstraat, next to the garden at the rear of the Noordeinde Palace. In that palace garden Constantijn Huygens often strolled as a child with Louise de Coligny, the widow of William of Orange, murdered in 1584, whose Father Christiaan Huygens served as secretary.¹ This 'Koningspoort' with its old black ceiling beams forms a fitting frame for the winding Oude Molstraat whose tranquil medieval contours become increasingly blurred in the misty distance and finally disappear altogether. But with every step I take, the mist changes a bit, so that all those beautiful little houses of the Oude Molstraat appear one by one, only to fade away behind me again immediately afterwards. The pale, yellow shrouded streetlights look like real gas lanterns. Such a fog always reminds me of a Sherlock Holmes tale, and so does this journey. After all, my walk is also a scavenger hunt, a search for the exact place where Constantijn Huygens was born on Wednesday September 4, 1596 at 10 o'clock in the evening, as the second son of Christiaan Huygens, secretary to the Council of State, and Susanna Hoefnagel.²

The Nobelstraat

It has long been known that his birth place had to be near here, somewhere in the Nobelstraat.³ But where exactly had been forgotten, until a few years ago when the yearbook of the Historical Society Die Haghe revealed that Nobelstraat number 16 must have been the birthplace of Constantijn.⁴ The second street on the right is the Nobelstraat. The dense mist can barely disguise how devastatingly the ravages of time have taken their toll. On the left there are now only new buildings. However, on the right the old houses have remained, such as the beautiful Venduehuis

on the square and the espaliers in front of it. It turns out that the Nobelstraat is not very long, but I still haven't found number 16.

Suddenly, shortly after the crossing over the Prinsestraat, the Nobelstraat splits in two and I find myself completely unexpectedly confronted by a picturesque group of ancient houses, that stands like a medieval square in the middle of the Nobelstraat. The houses lean against each other in a triangle, like inseparable brothers-in-arms, together defending the ancient atmosphere against the advancing high-rise buildings behind and next to them. While I look with amazement, a second surprise awaits me. A few meters before this little square I suddenly see Nobelstraat number 16 on the left. This is the sought-after birthplace of the famous Constantijn Huygens. Constantijn, the witty multilingual poet, who meticulously recorded what he saw, did and thought, throughout his life. Constantijn, the gifted composer of 800 pieces of music, who played the lute, theorbo, guitar, viola da gamba and harpsichord excellently. He also contributed a great deal to the organ being allowed in the church service to support congregational singing. Constantijn, the perceptive art connoisseur who was one of the first to discover Rembrandt's talent. Constantijn, the diligent secretary, the advisor and estate manager of several Princes of Orange, who as 'Constanter' faithfully served the fatherland and the House of Orange for more than 60 years. Constantijn, the competent diplomat who personally knew and corresponded with many leading contemporaries in Holland and elsewhere in Europe. Constantijn, the progressive educator and Father of the equally famous Christiaan, the renowned physicist, mathematician, astronomer and inventor. Constantijn, the versatile Calvinist and humanist,⁵ connoisseur of classical antiquity, the 'homo universalis', a protagonist in the culture of our fascinating Golden Age. Constantijn, the lover of botany and architecture. Constantijn, the creator of a special country estate in Voorburg in which house and garden portray a hymn of praise for the harmony between man and the cosmos, but in which the awareness of transience is also deeply anchored. Constantijn, the courtier who became an inspired gardener.



1.1



1.2

1.1 Christiaan Huygens (1551-1624), the Father of Constantijn. Anonymous master, undated

1.2 Susanna Hoefnagel (1561-1633), the mother of Constantijn. Michiel van Mierevelt, undated

1.3 The Hague at the beginning of the seventeenth century. In the circle on the left is the birthplace of Constantijn Huygens. Part map C. Bos and J. Faes, 1616



1.3

But what I see on this misty Sunday, instantly brings me back to the cold reality of this early morning. For number 16 turns out to be just a number plate on the twenty-first century red bricks of the façade of a newly built complex with shops and apartments. This modern façade has completely swallowed up and wiped out the birthplace of Constantijn. So no beautiful sixteenth-

century house as a monument to that memorable birth, not even an inscription. Just a small triangular monument of old cottages as a reminder of the atmosphere of centuries ago. A monument in stone that still captures the view that little Constantijn may have seen from his birthplace.

1.4 The house where Constantijn Huygens was born as of the mid-twentieth century in the Nobelstraat. The house of birth is immediately to the left of the building with the signboard. Photo, 1957. Shortly after this photo was taken, this house was demolished for new construction

1.5 De Vijverberg, late sixteenth century. Map J. II de Gheyn, 1598

Youthful memories

At the time, Father Christiaan had rented the house from the mayor of The Hague, squire Aernt Bol who owned three adjacent buildings in the Nobelstraat.

In his book, *Mijn jeugd (My Youth)* Constantijn later notes an amusing anecdote about the house of his birth and Bol. When his mother was still pregnant with him, one day she walked in the garden behind their house. She saw through the hedge how neighbour Bol was collecting honeycombs from his beehives. When she got a piece of honey from him and tasted it, she felt the unborn Constantijn move. 'No wonder I became such a sweet tooth later on,' concluded Constantijn. He also proudly mentioned that he, as the only one of all the children, was 'raised with the mother's milk.'⁶

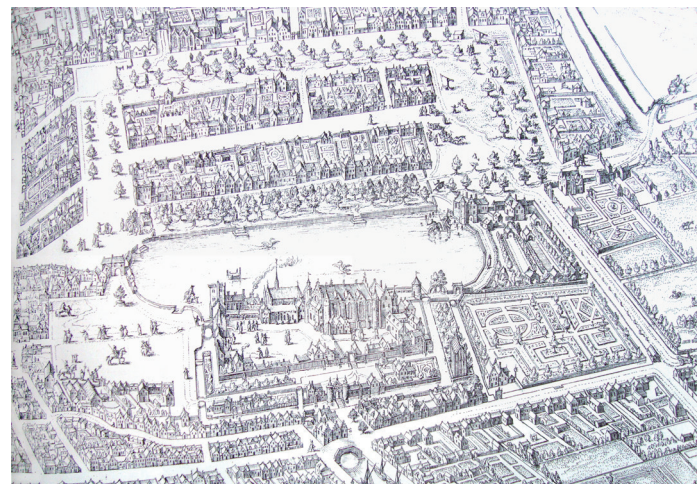
By the way, the house where he was born almost killed little Constantijn. In a recently found manuscript, Father Christiaan described how the one-and-a-half year old Constantijn was alone with his slightly older brother Maurits playing by the burning fire and *almost fell through the iron fire screen into the fire. Maurits who is now about two and six months, came to me, his father, in the room, where I was lying sick with rheumatism, crying, without being able to speak, that his little brother Constantijn was by the fire in distress.*⁷

Constantijn himself also pays attention to this life-threatening event in *Mijn jeugd*. He writes: *When I was eighteen months old, playing alone by the fire with my little brother Maurits, I accidentally stuck my neck through the iron bars around the fire in such a way that I couldn't pull it back. My life would have been in great danger if it had not been for my brother, deeply distraught by my distorted face and also by my wailing, who had rushed to the room next door, where my father, suffering from gout, was lying sick in bed [...] and had repeatedly mentioned my name in tears. [...] My father, without thinking of his illness, immediately sped out of his bed and rescued me from a danger that was by no means imaginary.*

It was here on the Nobelstraat that the 2-year-old Constantijn amazed his parents by repeating all 36 verses of the Ten Commandments completely, flawlessly and clearly articulated in French and by learning all 24 letters of the alphabet in one day and always pointing out the right sequence for each letter.⁸



1.4



1.5

My return walk runs naturally along all the other places in The Hague where Constantijn lived during the rest of his life. Across the Plaats to the beautiful Vijverberg with the attractive historic façades, along the Voorhout with the many tall trees in front of the impressive houses, via the Houtstraat, over the stately Plein, and so through the Poten to the Central Station. But here too I discover at each commemorative place that I am much too late. None of the houses in The Hague where Constantijn lived, played music, wrote poetry and worked has been preserved in its original form. The beautiful façades that later replaced the originals can hardly conceal the embarrassing lack of respect for the former occupant.

There is not much left to mark these sites. Just one simple commemorative stone in a façade, and above all some fleeting thoughts of all that took place here in the seventeenth century around Constantijn and his family.

Below is a short description and a retrospective anno 2000.



1.6



1.7



1.8

1.6 Marnix of St. Aldegonde (1538-1598). Engraving, seventeenth century

1.7 Louise de Coligny (1555-1620), the widow of the murdered William of Orange. Atelier Michiel van Mierevelt, circa 1604

1.8 The Vijverberg as seen from the Plaats with the scaffold known as The Green Sod, the public place of execution with grass where sand was sprinkled to soak up the blood. Dutch School, 1597

The rented house on the Vijverberg (1599-1613)

Current location: unknown

Around 1599 the Huygens family moved to the Vijverberg, Father Christiaan, Mother Susanna and their children Maurits, Constantijn and Elisabeth. Here, on the Vijverberg, in the exact house that we no longer know, Constantijn spent a large part of his youth, and his three sisters were born, Geertruyd in 1599, Catharina in 1601 and lastly, in 1602, Constantia or Constance.

A special upbringing

The special and very comprehensive upbringing that the two boys in particular receive takes place to a large extent in the house on the Vijverberg. This included education in various subjects and followed the principles of Marnix of St. Aldegonde, a family friend of their father. Physical strengthening exercise through swimming and fencing was important, but also the development of the mind through classical education, language skills and travel. The cultivation of piety, character and moral virtues is highly regarded.⁹ This education is given by their father, mother and by specially appointed private tutors at home. Father consciously chooses this method. He does not want to send his children to the ‘useless and incompetent schoolmasters’ of the public school, ‘triflers’ who give the youth unnecessary ballast and who, because of the large number of their pupils cannot possibly make an effort for each of them individually. Constantijn was eternally grateful to his Father for this conscious choice and the dedicated further education.

Various passages from *Mijn jeugd* bear witness to this. The fierce expressions of disgust for the schoolmasters come from this description. Incidentally, he also indicates the secret of the effectiveness of his father’s teaching method:

*So much is certain, that with little effort I have absorbed the things that usually took the youth years to learn with the foolish and narrow-minded schoolmasters. After all, we were given that task playfully and never with a stern face.*¹⁰

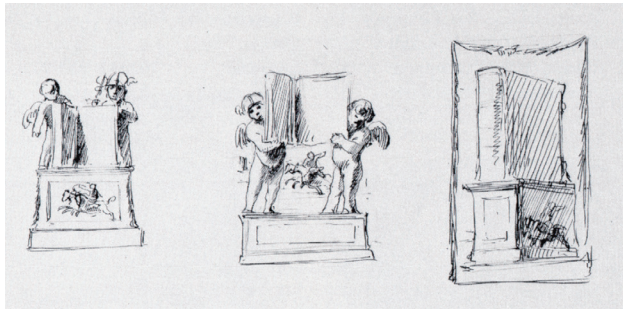
Constantijn gives a few entertaining examples of the ‘playful’ learning method used in the house on the Vijverberg. For instance, he explains how Father and Mother used all kinds of food as examples in difficult grammatical exercises. In doing so they deliberately saved the desserts, cakes and the children’s favorite sweets until the end. The music lesson is also a feast for the children: *It was winter and according to the custom of our*

country we were given winter jackets, of which the sleeves were decorated from the wrist to the shoulder with gilded velvet buttons in a single row. Father, who was as witty as he was wise, seized the opportunity and gave each button the name of a musical note so that we could recite the scale in order up and down without any effort.

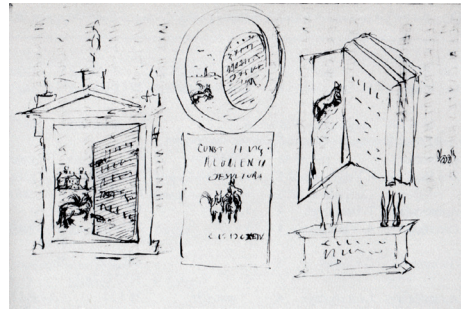
When Constantijn is 5 years old he received singing lessons from his Father and a year later on the viola da gamba. He learns to play the lute at the age of 7. His teacher for this instrument is Jeronimus van Someren, ‘a decent young man, who understood his art very well’. Later he is also taught harpsichord and organ by Pieter de Vois, the blind organist of the Grote Kerk in The Hague.¹¹ Constantijn turns out to be very musical and is making such good progress that he was soon allowed to play for companies of prominent persons. Meanwhile, lessons in French, the language of the court and diplomacy, have also started. To this end, in 1604, Joannes Brouart is appointed, a young man from Brussels who had been brought up at the court of a French nobleman and who was therefore a complete master of the language. Father took the young man into his home as a member of the household and, according to Constantijn: *pressed him with great insistence that he would not let any Dutch word escape him, no matter what, so that we silly boys would be firmly convinced that this strange man, with whom we constantly had to talk, play and walk, understood absolutely nothing of Dutch.*

In order to be able to move naturally and elegantly in the highest social circles, the boys are given dance lessons at an early age. Of course, this results in strong reprimands, but in vain, from the Calvinistic members of the family. Acting is also practiced, both to ‘learn to speak freely and to overcome shyness [...]’. Hereby unnaturalness should be avoided. Verses should be recited *with a calm face, with an appropriate inflection of the voice and a graceful hand gesture, not with an artificial gesticulation, which is the common mistake.* And so, at home, in the house on the Vijverberg, the boys performed two plays, in French. Among the spectators is, as guest of honor, Louise de Coligny, the widow of the murdered William of Orange. One evening a tragedy was performed, in which brother Maurits as Isaak stole the show and exceeded all expectations.

The next evening a piece with more cheerful content was played, and now it was Constantijn who gave a surprising twist to the whole thing:



1.9



1.9 Sketch designs by Constantijn Huygens for his collection of Latin poems: *Momenta Desultoria*, 1644

1.10 The Court with the stables of Prince Maurits in Rijswijk. Esaias van de Velde, 1625

I remember introducing Cupid with a zither in my hand and almost naked body, and the next incident, which made the large group laugh, turned out to be an omen. When, as my role entailed I fired my arrows out of my little tube, flying here and there in all directions, one of them struck the left side of the breast of a respectable young lady, whose name I keep quiet about here, but who then had a great reputation for her modesty. Afterwards, when she was a little older, she did not sparingly give proof that she had been wounded by Amor's bolt, truly not to her advantage.

When Constantijn is almost 9 years old, the lessons in Latin begin. Because Brouart had moved elsewhere, another tutor is appointed: Jacobus Anraet, 'a nobleman, who was already then extraordinarily experienced [...] in belles lettres'. His Father helps by writing himself an excellent summary of the grammatical rules, but also: *by enticing us boys through a small reward in jingling coins, so that when he returned from the court or sometimes from a longer journey, he would, as it were, pay a certain number of lines that we had advanced, with as many pennies, thus rewarding work that we do in our own interest.*

The making of epigrams in Latin is also encouraged.¹² With the new tutor, Johan Dedel, a Leiden student, the rules of verse are practiced.¹³ Sometime later lessons in Greek, arithmetic, geography, physics, painting and drawing follow.¹⁴ Constantijn is particularly fascinated by optics,¹⁵ a passion that his eldest sons would later inherit. In between, the 'sedentary' subjects are alternated with exercises that refresh body and mind: running, hunting, swimming, horseback riding, fencing and other weapon exercises. The latter is also useful if the fatherland should need to be defended.¹⁶ This also shows how the entire education focuses on what is useful for a preferably civil service career, at the service of people and the fatherland.

The boys regularly visit the stables of Prince Maurits in Rijswijk, where the boys have to complete a questionnaire drawn up by Father Christiaan.

May 1612 is a dramatic month. Elisabeth, Constantijn's eldest sister, dies suddenly of acute appendicitis. Everyone is deeply affected. Constantijn writes several epitaphs in different languages.¹⁷



1.10

A rented house on the Poten (1613-1614)

Current location: unknown

In 1613 the Huygens family moves to the Poten, probably because the rent for the house on the Vijverberg became too high.¹⁸ Constantijn devotes a few lines of poetry in Latin to saying goodbye to the old house. These are special verses from which his eye for flowers, trees, fruit and other natural beauty speaks. But not only that, Constantijn paints this nature as the entourage for human joy, conviviality and sorrow. This is a concept that will recur more often in his later poems and which he will concretely portray later in life in a garden he designed himself in Voorburg.

1.11 Glass pane from the house of the Leiden professor of Botany, in which Constantijn Huygens carved his name as a student in 1617.

1.12 Constantijn Huygens at a young age. Lithograph P. Blommers

1.13 Lange Voorhout with the rental house of the Huygens family circled.

Section of map C. Bos and J. Faes, 1616



1.11



1.12



1.13

Farewell to the house I am going to leave

Finally goodbye, dear house. Farewell flowering garden and you too, pleasant berceau (soon no more meant for our eyes), wrapped in the dense entanglement of hops, ensures that Phoebus's warmth does not become too hot; who, bathed in sunshine, has so often listened to our singing (with a light noise of leaves as a dissenting voice), and to the love affairs of Phyllis and Amaryllis. And you too, Thessalian Vale of Tempe, farewell now, I mean you, your pergola, surrounded on all sides by vines and sagging through the hanging fruits of green trees, witnessing a hundred thousand footsteps from me and as many a thousand (surely!) from others; from time to time wet from my tears, but also from time to time completely bubbling with pranks and

laughter - and you too, even finer row of lilies on the right, with the scent you spread a delight to the wanderer's wide open nostrils; and you, sweet apples, pears, plums, which I am now forced to leave behind, yet unripe; in short, garden, berceau, house, idyllic spots: all that you have to offer, I say goodbye with this one last word.¹⁹

It is not known to which house in the Poten the Huygens family moves. The family did not live there long. They move again in 1614. This time to the stately Voorhout.²⁰ It is also the year in which Constantijn writes his first lines of verse in Dutch, a hymn of praise where nature played a vital role.