

Jan-M. GORIS with the collaboration of L.C. VAN DYCK and H. VAN DER HAEGEN (ed.), *Kaartboek van de abdij Tongerlo. 1655-1794*. Brussels: Algemeen Rijksarchief en Rijksarchief in de Provinciën 2001, 239 pp.

By the end of the Ancient Régime abbeys and convents had build up huge properties. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries many abbots in the ancient dukedom of Brabant decided to chart their rural estates. The edition of these drawings, often brought together in atlases, form the backbone of the *Cartografische en iconografische bronnen voor de geschiedenis van het landschap in België* (*Cartographic and Iconographic Sources for the History of the Landscape in Belgium*). This collection, established by the Belgian State Archives in close collaboration with several regional authorities, includes volumes on the Cistercian nunneries La Cambre and La Ramée, the atlases of the Benedictine abbey of Affligem and the Premonstratensian abbeys of Averbode, Park and Saint Michael's as well as the possessions of secular lords, such as the dukes of Aarschot.

The *Kaartboek van de abdij Tongerlo* or *Atlas of Tongerlo Abbey* is for several reasons somehow different from the preceding volumes. It is not the edition of a single manuscript as at Averbode abbey (1650-1680) or the Cistercian nunnery of La Cambre near Brussels (1716-1720). Nor did its editors bring together a selection of maps from different atlases, as was done with the maps abbot Libert de Pape of Park abbey ordered between 1650 and 1680. The abbey of Tongerlo possessed as many as two hundred ninety-five separate maps, drawn from 1655 up to 1794. Only a small atlas (1655-1718) contains a selection of maps, all copied on a smaller scale from separate originals. Some of the more significant and detailed drawings have been lost during this copying. Moreover this atlas does not include many of Tongerlo's estates and rural properties.

The editors make it acceptable that the mapping activity among the white canons in Brabant started near the end of the Eighty Years War (1568-1648) at the instance of Gerard Meyz, the judicial counsellor of the order of Prémontré in Rome. Meyz, himself a canon of Tongerlo, was in 1644 worried by the effects of the conflicts on Premonstratensian properties. Restitution edicts, he had learned in Germany, did often not guarantee that estates were retroceded, because the canons could not sufficiently prove their possessions with valid title deeds. Maps and atlases would help to avoid unnecessary lawsuits.

Abbot Augustine Wichmans (1644-1661) was the first to order maps and surveys. The bulk of the drawings were made by four surveyors, Joris Subil, Cornelis Henselmans, Peter Wijnricx and Albert Meulemans. These men were not professional cartographers, but they worked occasionally for different abbeys, such as Averbode, Park, Saint Michael's and Tongerlo. Albert Meulemans was still active on the eve of the French Revolution.

The maps were brought together, studied and edited by J.-M. Goris, the town archivist of Herentals, with the assistance of Tongerlo's archivist

L.C. Van Dijck and professor H. Vanderhaegen. More than the other atlases the *Kaartboek van de abdij Tongerlo* combines the elegant edition of coloured land maps with the broad study of the abbey's estates. The reasons therefore are the advanced knowledge and peculiar structure of Tongerlo's revenues.

Unlike most of the other monasteries in Brabant Tongerlo did not highly depend upon the revenues from its domains. The entries from farms, arable lands, meadows and pastures amounted for only 24,2%, while at Villers (O.Cist.) and Vlierbeek (O.S.B.) they counted for 76,3% and 72,4%. Measured by the surface of farmland the Tongerlo farms were by far the smallest compared to any other Premonstratensian abbey in Brabant.

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the abbey possessed as many as forty-one parishes. Eighteen of them were located in the Western and Central parts of Northern Brabant, at a considerable distance of about thirty to forty miles from Tongerlo. To the South, in the fertile Haspengouw area near Tienen, Tongerlo had huge estates. The centers there were the large farms of Outgaerden, Orp-le-Grand and Vissenaken. In both last villages the abbot of Tongerlo appointed the parish priest.

In 1186, only half a century after its foundation in 1130-1133, Tongerlo possessed already tithes in ten parishes. By 1779 the tithes made up 57,79% of the abbey's annual income. At that time the monastery possessed the whole tithes in Broechem, Diest, Molenstede, Oevel, Ravels, Schaffen and Tongerlo. It had also two thirds of the tithes in Essen, Kalmthout, Oelegem and Weelde. The parishes, tithes and farmland made Tongerlo one of the wealthiest abbeys in Brabant.

During the sixteenth and seventeenth century large portions of the abbey revenues and estates in Northern Brabant were lost. In 1590 the abbey agreed to donate twenty-four farms, two wind mills, two water mills and numerous strips of lands, tithes and rents in order to be detached from the *mensa episcopalis* of the bishopric of 's-Hertogenbosch (established in 1559). The annexation of the northern region of Brabant by the Dutch Republic in 1648 meant the loss of many more properties in that area.

The edition provides the reader with an excellent insight of a Premonstratensian abbey's geography and rural economy. Informative data, clear charts and lots of beautiful black and white photos add to the splendour of the edition. Moreover, the *Kaartboek van de abdij Tongerlo* offers an extremely well documented study of the abbey properties and revenues, based on the results of recent scholarship and new research. An unfortunately limited, thematical index to the maps contains the names of the cartographers and the surveyors and the references to the villages on the maps and to peculiar elements in the landscape, such as farms, chapels, churches, mills, entrenchments and city gates. The Tongerlo Atlas is a masterpiece within the select collection of *Cartographic and Iconographic Sources for the History of the Landscape in Belgium*.