



CAG

Centrum Agrarische Geschiedenis



Valverde

Valleien vertellen, duurzaamheid en erfgoed

Prof. Yves Segers, KU Leuven



VALVERDE = 2-jarig bovenlokaal cultuurproject*

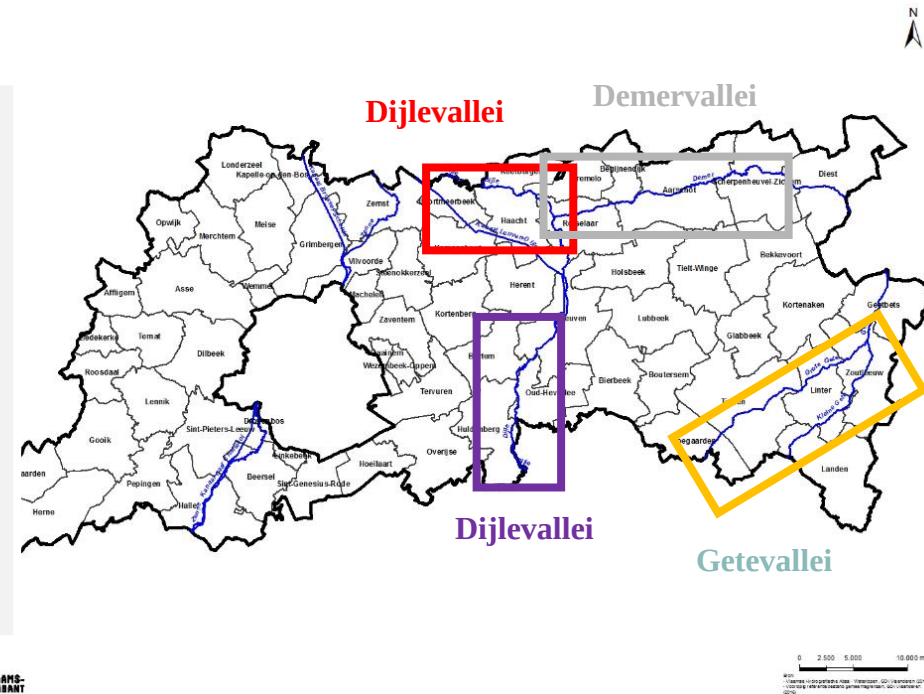
- ☐ Juni 2024 – juni 2026
- ☐ valorisatie van kennis over valleien ~ breed publiek
- ☐ coördinatie door CAG
- ☐ i.s.m. diverse partners
- ☐ Domeinoverschrijdend: erfgoed, cultuur, waterbeheer, natuur, platteland...





Werkinggebied

- cf. Floodplainscapes (2019-2023)
- Onderzoek Dijlevallei opwaarts Leuven
- CAG expertise, bijv. project Water en Land



Floodplainscapes - KU Leuven

ees.kuleuven.be/nld/floodplainscapes/

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Floodplainscapes

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Floodplainscapes

Een biografie van valleilandschappen:
Gete, Demer & Dijle



Doel

Het Floodplainscapes-project beoogt fundamenteel inzicht te verschaffen in de lange termijn ontwikkeling van mens-milieu interacties in de valleilandschappen van Gete, Demer en Dijle, en is een samenwerking tussen drie onderzoeksgroepen van KU Leuven.

In de kijker

December 2023
Een Romeins vlootstation te Rijenam?

November 2023
Twee publicaties

Type here to search

17:43 11/11/2024

Nieuw C2-project: River systems in the Anthropocene, Boven-Dijle en Grote Nete (2025-2028), Yves Segers en Gert Verstraeten



Rural History (2024), 1–16
doi:10.1017/S0950763324000177



RESEARCH ARTICLE

‘Par mesure de prudence’. Flood prevention and river regulation in Demer-Dijle confluence area (NE Belgium), 1840s–1880s

Eline Lathouwers¹, Yves Segers¹ and Gert Verstraeten²

¹Interfaculty Centre for Agrarian History, KU Leuven, Leuven, Belgium and ²Division of Geography and Tourism, KU Leuven, Leuven, Belgium
Corresponding author: Eline Lathouwers; Email: eline.lathouwers@kuleuven.be

Abstract
This article analyses the views of experts and political discourse on river regulation, its objectives, and flood prevention in the rural Demer-Dijle catchment areas, the 1840s–1880s – a period marked by climatological extremes and agricultural transition. Via a close read of state archives and parliamentary discussions, we unravel different opinions and interests and find that not all flooding was unwanted. While the Ministry of Public Works, at first, aimed to better regulate water discharge and to improve watercourses for navigational purposes, it later prioritised agricultural interests. However, managing rivers coherently and efficiently was challenging because river powers were dispersed over ministerial departments, provinces, and municipalities that made coordinating upstream and downstream river works difficult. Floods often resulted in the drawing up of new plans, but their implementation often failed to materialise because the government had other worries and insufficient resources available while parliamentarians prioritised the interests of their constituencies.

‘Les uns veulent de l’eau, les autres n’en veulent pas’

Liberal politician Charles Sainctelette hit the nail on the head, in his capacity as Belgian Minister of Public Works (1878–1882), when he explained to his fellow parliamentarians how conflicting river interests problematised river management in nineteenth-century Belgium. Some want water; others do not. The agricultural sector, different branches of industry (breweries, water mills), and commercial river transport needed water for their operations, but preferred timing and volumes varied. Meanwhile, too much water could cause harm. Since the law of 18 February 1840 granted state governments full (management) control over all navigable rivers flowing on Belgian territory, the Ministry of Public Works was subsequently put in charge of directing flood prevention measures. Case studies about historical water management teach us that the making of a well-coordinated policy between river functions – that in an ideal world co-existed – largely depended on how successful policymakers were in balancing conflicting river interests.¹ Similar to elsewhere in Europe, nineteenth-century river governance in Belgium was imbued with belief in the malleability of nature, advised by hydraulic engineers.² This article addresses historical flood problems (causes and effects) between 1840 and 1880 in the confluence area of the rivers Demer and Dijle (NE Belgium), and this in the context of (planned) river regulations. It wants to analyse

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The White Horse Press

Changing Course: Water Management in the Demer Valley, 1950s–1990s

ELINE LATHOUWERS

KU Leuven

Centre for Agrarian History, Naamsestraat 63, B-3000, Leuven, Belgium

Email: eline.lathouwers@kuleuven.be

YVES SEGERS

KU Leuven

Centre for Agrarian History

Email: yves.segers@kuleuven.be

<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4897-945X>

GERT VERSTRAETEN

KU Leuven

Division of Geography and Tourism

Email: gert.verstraeten@kuleuven.be

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6529-7381>

ABSTRACT

Transformations in river management that manifest diverse forms of (increas

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Reconstructing valley landscapes. GIS-analyses of past land use changes in three Flemish river valleys since the late 18th century

Eline Lathouwers^{a,*}, Yves Segers^a, Gert Verstraeten^b

^a KU Leuven, Interfaculty Centre for Agrarian History, Naamsestraat 63, B-3000 Leuven, Belgium
^b KU Leuven, Division of Geography and Tourism, Celestijnenlaan 200E, B-3001 Leuven, Belgium

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Floodplain management
Historical maps
Rural history

ABSTRACT

The restoration of riverine ecosystems and floodplain landscapes has become an important tool in climate mitigation, however, it is often unclear what landscape a restoration is (or should be) referring to. Little is known, moreover, about long-term transitions in historic valley land use or how they echo in contemporary perceptions of floodplain landscapes. Also in densely populated Flanders (in the north of Belgium), where floodplains are quickly losing their natural functions, policymakers are actively in pursuit of climate change adaptation strategies and sustainable valley management. We present the results of a GIS-based reconstruction of historical land use in three Flemish river valleys from 1771 to 2002 and compare them to changes in regional land use. We find that while grasslands initially and to a vast extent covered our selected floodplains, the latter were by the mid-19th century cultivated for agricultural production, in line with a global expansion of arable land and regional demographic growth. Also forest cover in the studied river valleys grew exponentially from the late 19th century, unassisted by regional forest cover. After the Second World War, a denser road network, more areas that are built-up and forest plantations visually contributed to valley compartmentalisation and the perception of a closed landscape. Varying soil textures and drainage levels or the (in)ability to manage them properly accounted for differently (timed) land use changes between the studied floodplain areas. Regional changes in historic land use were of lesser importance.

1. Introduction

Human actions have altered the global floodplain land use significantly, resulting in a much faster rate of wetland loss in the 20th and 21st century, and this for inland rivers in particular (Garrison, 2013; Smith et al., 2023, p. 2) who measured recent (from 1992 to 2019) global floodplain alterations caused by humans, moreover delivered evidence that floodplains have experienced greater human disturbance ‘relative to non-floodplain portions of the landscape’. As a consequence of the swift rate with which floodplains lose their natural functions, river rewilding and valley re-naturalisation schemes are ambitiously set up worldwide. Their objectives are generally to free rivers from their historical encroachment, to protect endangered floodplain environments and to restore a natural dynamic between a stream flow and its valley. In what river scientists have called the ‘age of river restoration’, many public authorities as well as regional nature organisations (with to have a say in repairing or rehabilitating our river valleys (Newson, 2021). For those policy makers, guided - as is the norm today - by ‘room for the

river’ principles while searching for sustainable management practices, it is indispensable to have access to knowledge on past river systems and valley land uses (Gossett et al., 2011; Moalim, 2016). While environmental historians and river scientists extensively research European rivers such as for example the Danube in Austria (Hobden et al., 2013) or the Rhine in western Germany (Wiel et al., 2021), European wetlands and their past land use trajectories seem overlooked.

Whilst various aspects, such as water quality, fish migration and river course correction - to name a few - come with valley-rehabilitation, this study wants to focus on its past land use. It thereby adheres to research on land use and land cover changes (LU/LC) that uncovers past (human-induced) land use trajectories and aims to clarify why those took place (Blanc et al., 2007; Pedotti et al., 2007; Astrop et al., 2017). LU/LC are typically analysed through the use of aerial photographs and/or historical topographical and cadastral maps, that are further analysed in a GIS (Fritz and Losch, 2002; Katsouraki et al., 2014; Törler et al., 2013). The resulting reconstructed LU/LC maps are ultimately ‘snapshots’ that offer glimpses of what once was. Their quality depends

* Corresponding author.
E-mail address: eline.lathouwers@kuleuven.be (E. Lathouwers).

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Vier eindproducten

Landschapsbiografie

Lange-termijn evolutie van
valleilandschappen en rol van mens daarin

Rondreizende expo

Mondelinge geschiedenis

Evenementen

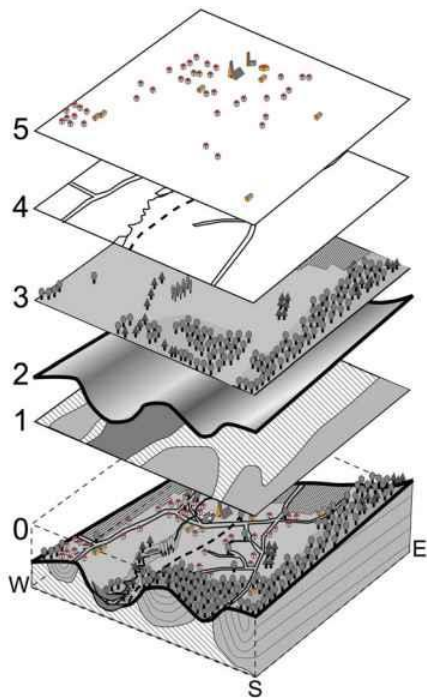
Vlaamse Waterdagen, Erfgoeddag,
Archeologiedagen, ...
Lezingen, wandelingen en fietstochten



Landschapsbiografie

- Naar een synthetiserende wetenschappelijke biografie
- Timing en structuur





Landschapsbiografie: structuur

- ✓ Inleiding met doelstellingen boek en verduidelijking bij keuze gebiedsafbakening
- ✓ 6 (chronologische) delen, vervolgens opgedeeld in thematische hoofdstukken
- ✓ Doorlooptekst schets voorname evoluties
- ✓ Afgewisseld met **kaderteksten**: in de diepte en meer details











Rondreizende expo



Demertrefplaats in Zichem
begin aug – half sept 2025



Kamsalamander hut in Linter
half sept – okt 2025



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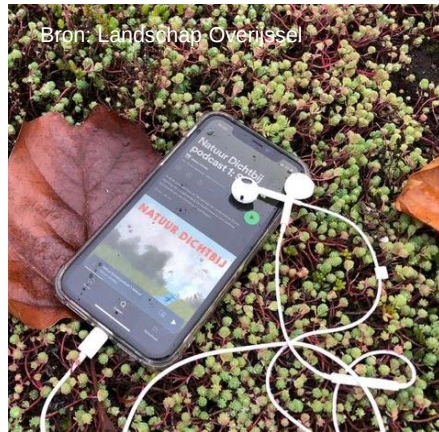


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Participatie, cultureel-artistiek luik



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greet.draye@cagnet.be

eline.lathouwers@cagnet.be

gert.verstraeten@kuleuven.be

yves.segers@kuleuven.be