

MAGAZIJN VAN TUIN-SIERAADEN
OR STOREHOUSE OF GARDEN ORNAMENTS
COMMENTS ON THE TRANSLATION



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This translation into English of Gijsbert van Laar's *Magazijn van Tuin-sieraaden* or *Storehouse of Garden Ornaments*, first published in Amsterdam in 1802, closely follows the original Dutch text. The early nineteenth-century writing style, gardening terminology, and word usage have been respected in the English translation to retain the book's flavor as a period piece. The format of the original Dutch text is preserved as much as possible to facilitate comparison between the original and the translated text. This translation is based on the first edition of the *Magazijn*, published in 1802 in Amsterdam by Johannes Allart, which retains the lingering, late eighteenth-century convention of capitalizing all nouns in the running text. However, the Dutch text reproduced in the present digital publication is that of a later edition, published in 1819 or 1831 in Zaltbommel by Johannes Noman en Zoon.* It was reproduced from a copy in the collection of Elizabeth Barlow Rogers. The content is unchanged in this later edition, but the Dutch spelling is updated and standardized. The capitalization of nouns is omitted and the traditional double vowel system has been removed; the word *sieraaden*, for example, is now spelled with one letter "a" only, as in the title *Magazijn van Tuin-Sieraden*. Furthermore, this edition uses the word *Koninkrijk* or "kingdom" in the subtitle, rather than the original *Republiek* or "republic," as by the time of its publication Holland had become a kingdom.

Gijsbert van Laar's background was that of a practically schooled gardener-nurseryman, and the limits of his education are evident from his irregular grammar and awkward sentences. It was also necessary to take into account certain idiosyncrasies of the Dutch language, particularly the use of run-on sentences and the diminutive form. Overly long sentences have been streamlined or made into more than one sentence. Van Laar's excessive use of the diminutive form (by adding the suffix *-tje* or *-je*) is difficult to translate into English, requiring the endless repetition of the adjective "small." This was resolved by adding the words "small" or "little" in selected places only.

In keeping with the idiom of the period piece, the words "taste" and "manner" have been retained when speaking of a particular ornamental form ("Chinese or Turkish taste"), rather than employing the modern word "style," which was not generally used until later in the nineteenth century. For certain terms, there is no satisfactory English equivalent – most notably, *wandelaar*, meaning someone who walks briskly

through a landscape. The words “walker” or “stroller” would be close literal translations, yet the two words were seldom used that way in English nineteenth-century or modern literature. Moreover, they are awkward for the present-day reader, as they refer to devices for ambulation, either walkers for toddlers or the elderly, or, in American English, baby carriages. Instead, the noun *wandelaar* is replaced by the infinitive “to walk” or the gerund “walking,” or by alternative words, such as “visitor” or “passerby.” If the walking person has a specific observing role, he is referred to as “beholder,” or the equivalent term “spectator” – both found in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century English and American landscape-design literature. The other term that presented a challenge in translation was *liefhebber van tuinen*, or “lover of gardens,” which has been translated as “garden enthusiast” and describes a person who is fascinated by gardens but is not necessarily a garden designer. The word *kabinetje*, from the French *cabinet*, is retained as “cabinet” when referring to a small room in a building, but translated as “gazebo” when referring to a little, open garden pavilion.

Words indicating form and space in the landscape garden are not easy to translate precisely. For example there is no literal translation for Van Laar’s word *geboogen*, as in *geboogen eiland*: literally, “bent island.” Borrowing from contemporary English and American landscape-garden terminology, the word has been translated as “gently curving” or “undulating.” Similarly, when referring to footpaths, it is rendered as “meandering.” The Dutch word *plein* (literally translated in Italian as “piazza” and in English as “square”) describes an open area of any shape rather than an enclosed rectilinear space, as the English word implies. Here it has been construed as “open area” or “open space.” The Dutch *hoogte* is generally translated as “elevation” or, depending on the implied size, as “hill,” “hillock,” or in rare cases, “mountain,” keeping in mind that even the latter were not very high in Holland. The Dutch *graspartijen* or *grasvelden* are translated as “lawns” or “greenswards” (when extensive and manicured); “fields” or “meadows” (when natural). The Dutch word *water*, referring to a pond or little lake, has been translated as a “body of water”; however, “piece of water” was also used in those days. The term *Engelsche partij*, describing a section of land in the English landscape style, was here translated as “English layout,” while the term *water-partij*, or an area with a small expanse of water, is referred to as a “garden with a pond.”

In place of a separate glossary, footnotes to the translation add further detailed information about specific words and their meanings. A case in point is the retention of the two distinct words *riet* and *stro*, or “reed” and “straw,” names for two different kinds of cane used to thatch roofs or cover walls. The two words could have been combined and translated as “thatched” were it not that Van Laar distinguishes between the two types of cane for their slightly different properties and aesthetic appearance. Most remarkable is the frequent recurrence of the term *geschilderd houten schot* or “painted wooden panel.” It refers to the then-popular Dutch tradition of placing painted, trompe l’oeil, ornamental garden structures – designed to trick the beholder by imitating real cottages, old ruins, or picturesque farmyard scenes – amidst the garden’s greenery.

The footnotes in the translation also provide further information about Van Laar’s text and illustrations. The original sources of most of the plates have been identified and the names of the authors and their works provided. Johann Gottfried Grohmann’s *Ideenmagazin für Liebhaber von Gärten und englischen Anlagen* (Leipzig, 1796–1806), from whom van Laar borrowed freely, is most often mentioned in the notes. A useful and complete concordance of Grohmann and Van Laar’s works was published recently by Jan Holwerda and Arinda van der Does and, while it could not be fully incorporated in this text, is referenced in some notes and the bibliography. Many of Van Laar’s own garden plans and buildings are identified, and readers are referred to plates that illustrate related subjects or styles. Thus designs for playground equipment, primitive huts, and grand Romantic landscape scenes, to name but a few, are all cross-referenced. The plants and trees Van Laar mentions in his book are identified in the footnotes as well.

The translation is preceded by an introductory essay entitled “The Romantic Landscape Garden in Holland: Gijsbert van Laar (1767–1820) and the *Magazijn van Tuinsieraaden* or *Storehouse of Garden Ornaments*.” This study places the book in its larger cultural and historical context and provides an overview of the development of the landscape garden in Holland in the early nineteenth century. In highlighting the life and work of Gijsbert van Laar and the larger circle of garden architects around him, the essay demonstrates that Holland had its own response to the Romantic landscape garden. It also explains how Van Laar developed his personal stylistic preferences in landscape design, centering on the *schilderachtig* and *ruw*, or “picturesque,” “rough,” and “rustic” – the adjectives used most frequently in his text.

Van Laar's book prescribes a particular, practical, Northern European solution to designing and ornamenting relatively small-scale gardens. His publication was meant as a manual or pattern book for the ordinary Dutch citizen. It offered models for garden ornamentation selected from a large, international body of eighteenth-century illustrated works, adapted to the specific Dutch "language": Holland's countryside, climate, and sociopolitical circumstances.

* Gijsbert van Laar, *Magazijn van Tuin-Sieraden; of Verzameling van Modellen van Aanleg en Sieraad, voor groote en kleine Lust-hoven, voornamelijk van dezulke die, met weinig Kosten, te maaken zijn. Getrokken uit de voornaamste buitenlandsche werken naar de gelegenheid en gronden van dit Koninkrijk gewijzigd, en met vele nieuwe platte gronden en sieraden vermeerderd door G. van Laar*, Nieuwe Uitgave met 190 platen, Te Zalt-Bommel, bij Johannes Noman en Zoon. The book is not dated, but was published in either 1819 or 1831, most likely the latter, given the modernized spelling. It is a quarto edition and has an engraved, hand-colored title vignette by Reinier Vinkeles. It contains a dedication page, a four-page preface, and 100 pages of text accompanying 190 hand-colored plates. It does not include the eight-page "Generaal Register van de Tuinsieraaden" (General Index of Garden Ornaments) that was part of the 1802 edition and that can be found in other copies of this later edition.

The text and plates of the 1802 edition were printed and published in installments. They were often bound by purchasers with the text and plates intermingled. Later editions were more commonly bound with either all the plates or all the text first. In the Rogers copy, the text appears first, followed by the complete set of plates.