

**THE ROMANTIC LANDSCAPE GARDEN IN HOLLAND:  
GIJSBERT VAN LAAR (1767–1820)**  
AND THE *MAGAZIJN VAN TUIN-SIERAADEN*  
OR STOREHOUSE OF GARDEN ORNAMENTS



## INTRODUCTION

**G**ijsbert van Laar's *Magazijn van Tuin-sieraaden or Storehouse of Garden Ornaments* is a unique document for those seeking a deeper understanding of the development of the landscape garden in the Netherlands around the year 1800. No other work of this kind was published at the time in Holland, and no publication gives a better visual overview of what was a crucial and complex transitional moment in Dutch garden history.

It was precisely at this moment that Dutch gardens underwent major changes, with traditional formal gardens being replaced gradually by informal landscape gardens.<sup>1</sup> Gardens laid out in this period – from roughly 1760 to 1820 – belong to what is defined as the Early Landscape Garden period in the Netherlands. Irregular features characteristic of the English landscape garden – undulating grounds with artificial hills and valleys; winding paths; curvilinear bodies of water; ponds with little rounded islands; and wooded areas densely planted with a combination of trees, shrubs, and exotic flowers – were adopted only hesitatingly in Holland; as a result, the Early Landscape Garden is a transitional style drawing from both the formal and informal garden-design traditions. Initially, only basic landscape-garden elements were introduced, such as winding paths and rounded ponds. These were applied to the geometrical grid of formal, seventeenth-century layouts, with most gardens retaining their rectilinear framework of canals and their symmetrical inner arrangements. In the first decade of the nineteenth century, as the principles of landscape gardening came to be more widely understood, a reaction against the partial rigidity of the Early Landscape Garden is noticeable. Landowners begin to embrace a more spatially conceived, all-encompassing approach to landscape design, resulting in the development of the Mature Landscape Garden style. Characteristic features of landscape gardens, including undulating ground parcels, randomly grouped trees, and curvilinear bodies of water, were applied more boldly and throughout the entire layout of an estate. The publication of Van Laar's *Storehouse of Garden Ornaments* greatly stimulated the development of landscape gardening in Holland. For us today, it provides a visual encyclopedia of the Early Landscape Garden style from one of its most noteworthy contemporary practitioners.

The aesthetic changes in the arena of garden design documented in Van Laar's work occurred in a sociopolitical period in post-Revolutionary Europe that was also a time of great transition. During the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, Holland suffered serious economic hardships, the destruction and abandonment of many estates, and general neglect under ever-changing governments. These shifts are directly articulated by Van Laar.<sup>2</sup> Permutations of the title of his work reflect the changing *historical* landscape. The first edition referred to Holland as a *Republiek* in

the subtitle (referring to the Batavian republic existing at the time); later editions use the term empire (*Keizerrijk*) or kingdom (*Koningrijk*), reflecting the period when Holland was annexed to France under Louis Bonaparte (1806–10), before achieving independence as a kingdom under civilian rule (1814).<sup>3</sup>

Culturally, this period is known as the Age of Romanticism, and that era's tenets affected art, literature, and garden design in Holland, just as they did in the larger European countries (fig. 1).<sup>4</sup> In this period, government-led efforts toward improving public welfare directly influenced developments in garden architecture. To relieve widespread unemployment and create areas for outdoor exercise, the old and obsolete town ramparts of many cities were razed to make space for public parks and gardens.<sup>5</sup> This eased the extension of overcrowded cities and stimulated a modern, country-house culture. Rapid population expansion led to passage of a law of 1827 forbidding burial within town limits for health reasons. This in turn accelerated the creation of large burial grounds outside of towns, now incorporating extensive, shaded walking areas. In the Romantic fashion of the day, these places became ideal sites for melancholic contemplation, amorous encounters, and poetry readings.

There was even a fashionable new genre of Romantic landscape-garden literature, which was eagerly read from the mid-eighteenth century onward. Nature and man's role in it took pride of place.<sup>6</sup> The Romantic movement's poetic narratives, which depicted heroines of melancholic mood walking through unspoiled nature filled with picturesque buildings – primitive huts and hermitages, rustic cottages, and awe-inspiring ruins – both informed and explained the development of the landscape garden in Europe and its role in contemporary society.

Van Laar's book is an excellent showcase for examining Holland's response to specifically Romantic notions of nature, landscape, and gardening. In England, France, and Germany, and in Holland somewhat later, the Romantic movement helped fuel a new sense of cultural unity and national identity, and the landscape garden played a central role in this development. The idea that a country's resurgence goes hand in hand with the revival of gardening and country life was central to the philosophical and political debates on garden design and aesthetics around the year 1800. In his *Storehouse of Garden Ornaments* Van Laar proudly predicts that within two decades – providing peace and prosperity hold – Holland will possess no fewer estates than it had before the upheavals of the late eighteenth century. This time, he says, the gardens will be laid out in better taste: namely, in the latest landscape fashion. “For indeed,” the author asks his readers, “what can be more appropriate for the collected, hard-working, and diligent Dutchman searching for repose from his labors than to devote a few days a week to the quiet tranquility of country living?”<sup>7</sup>

## ENDNOTES

1 For a concise overview of the development of the landscape-garden style and gardening in the Romantic period in Holland, see Carla S. Oldenburger-Ebbers, Anne Mieke Backer, and Eric Blok, *Gids voor Nederlandse Tuin- en Landschapsarchitectuur: Deel West: Noord-Holland, Zuid-Holland* (Rotterdam: De Hef Publishers, 1995), pp. 36–45. For the Picturesque garden in Europe overall, see John Dixon Hunt, *The Picturesque Garden in Europe* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 2002).

2 Gijsbert van Laar, preface, p. II. Referring to the resurgence of the art of building after a period of economic difficulties and sociopolitical unrest, Van Laar writes that “though numerous old estates were destroyed, many others were built in the new taste.” In the text accompanying plate XLV (45), he mentions how the French Revolution affected the estate of Romainville and its owner, the Marquis de Segur. In Holland the destruction of many estates during this period is exemplified by the total neglect of the well-known palace and gardens of Het Loo at Apeldoorn. See Monique Mosser and Georges Teyssot, eds., *The Architecture of Western Gardens* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1991), p. 180.

3 In this period Holland was known as the Bataafse Republiek (1795–1801) and the Bataafs Gemenebest (1801–06). On the Dutch Republic, the Napoleonic era and the Kingdom of the Netherlands, see R. R. Palmer and Joel Colton, *A History of the Modern World* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1971), pp. 421, 455.

4 For an overview of Dutch culture and society in the early nineteenth century, see Joost Kloek and Wijnand Mijnhardt, *Dutch Culture in European Perspective: 1800. Blueprints for a National Community* (Assen: Royal van Gorcum, 2004). For the Dutch landscape garden as it appears in late-eighteenth century literature, see *Nederlandse Tuinen in de Achttiende Eeuw*, Handelingen van het symposium georganiseerd door de werkgroep Achttiende eeuw in het Rijksmuseum “Paleis het Loo”, 1985 (Amsterdam and Maarssen: APA-Holland University Press, 1987).

5 For the layout of parks and promenades on former bulwarks throughout Holland, see Pien Lammertse-Tjalma, “Hendrik van Lunteren (1780–1848): vermaarde aanlegger van landgoederen en wat tot verfraaijing in het bouwkundig vak daarbij behoort,” in *Tuinkunst: Nederlands Jaarboek voor de Geschiedenis van Tuin- en Landschapsarchitectuur*, vol. 3 (Amsterdam: Architectura et Natura, 1997), pp. 55, 63–65, and M. van den Broeke, “Een plantsoen op de wallen van Tholen. Een onbekend werk van Pieter Schuppens,” *Cascade Bulletin voor Tuinhistorie*, vol. 8, nr. 1 (1999), pp. 37–45.

6 See P. van Zonneveld, “‘Majestic, Wild or Charming’: The Romantic Landscape and Dutch Literature, 1750–1850,” in *On Country Roads and Fields: The Depiction of 18th- and 19th-century Landscape*, ed. W. Loos et al. (Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum; Inmerc, Blaricum: V+K Publ., [1997]), pp. 95–106.

7 Van Laar, *Magazijn*, “Preface,” pp. II–III: “En inderdaad wat is er geschikter voor den bedaarden, werkzaam en nijveren Nederlander om hem te verpoezen van zijnen arbeid dan enige dagen der week aan de stille rust van het buitenleven toetewijen.”



**FIG. 1.** A picturesque scene in an English Landscape Garden at Berg en Daal, The Hague. P.J. Lutgers, *Gezigten in de omstreken van 'sGravenhage en Leyden* (1855). Leiden University Library, Leiden.

## PUBLICATION OF THE STOREHOUSE OF GARDEN ORNAMENTS

The publication of *Storehouse of Garden Ornaments* (fig. 2) is a manifestation of the fascination with the landscape garden characteristic of the period and showcases contemporary taste in its layout and ornamentation. The author of the text, Gijsbert van Laar (1767–1820),<sup>8</sup> was active as a nurseryman, gardener, and designer of landscape gardens, yet is remembered today primarily for this quintessential, early nineteenth-century pattern or model book for gardens. The work was first published by Johannes Allart in Amsterdam between 1802 and 1809, and was released in twenty-four separate fascicles, with a preface and general index. Each issue consisted of a quire of eight prints and four to eight accompanying text pages, totaling 190 plates of illustrations and 120 pages of text in its completed form. The whole series could be ordered by subscription from Allart in Amsterdam, Van Cleef in The Hague, or one's favored bookseller. An expensive hand-colored edition cost 3 guilders, or a cheaper, uncolored version 1 guilder 16 stuivers.<sup>9</sup> Due to its great popularity, Van Laar's work was republished in 1819, 1831, and 1867.<sup>10</sup> These later versions were bound differently and the last one published in shortened form. The edition used for this digital publication, reproduced from a copy in Elizabeth Barlow Rogers's collection – was published in Zaltbommel by Johannes Noman en Zoon in 1819 or, more likely, 1831.<sup>11</sup>

Van Laar's book discusses some important theories of garden architecture, but basically it is a richly illustrated pattern or model book. Interestingly, it forms part of a long-standing tradition in Holland of do-it-yourself garden books published regularly since the mid-seventeenth century, from Jan van der Groen, *Nederlandtsen Hovenier*, or *Dutch Gardener* (1669) to Simon Schijnvoet, *Voorbeelden van Lusthofsieraden*, or *Samples of Country House Ornaments* (1700).<sup>12</sup> Van Laar's work, however, was the first publication specifically directed toward common citizens, rather than wealthy aristocrats. The subtitle stresses Van Laar's objective, which was to focus on gardens that could be made at little cost ("met weinig kosten te maaken"). The body of the work is directed to middle-class property owners whose boundless dreams and enthusiasm for gardens were tempered only by financial considerations. Van Laar's compendium distinguishes itself also from this group of earlier Dutch works by an unusual request to its readers in the preface to take part in the information-gathering and design process. Each reader is invited to send his own designs of garden plans and ornaments for discussion and publication so that an open exchange of ideas on garden art might develop to the benefit of all.

## ENDNOTES

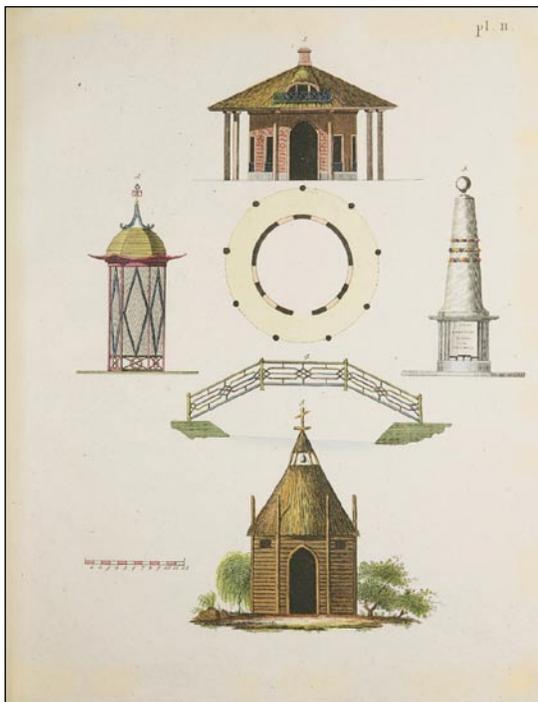
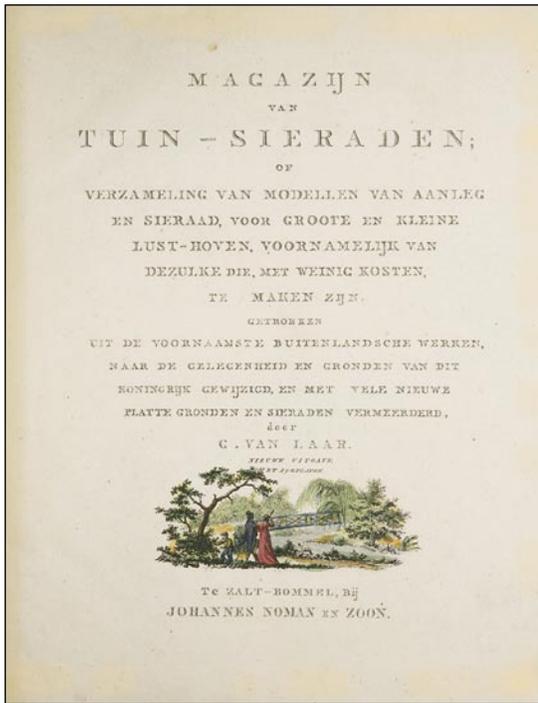
8 See the following publications with biographical information on Van Laar: Carla S. Oldenburger-Ebbers, "Gijsbert van Laar, nieuwe biografische gegevens," *Cascade Bulletin voor Tuinhistorie*, vol. 3, nrs. 1–2 (1994), pp. 24–26; M. van den Broeke and Wim G. J. M. Meulenkaamp, "Gijsbert van Laar (1767–1829), Tuinarchitect. Het *Magazijn van Tuinsieraaden*, de Nederlandse landschapstuin en de Vanlaarologie," *Cascade Bulletin voor Tuinhistorie* 12, nr.1 (2003), pp. 5–47; and Arinda van der Does, "Gijsbert van Laar (1767–15 December 1820)," *Cascade Bulletin voor Tuinhistorie* 17, nr. 1 (2008), pp. 7–16. In Van den Broeke and Meulenkaamp's article, the date of Van Laar's death is put at 1829 rather than 1820. The correct date of 1820 was published by Carla S. Oldenburger-Ebbers and is confirmed in the recent article by Arinda van der Does. Van der Does also points out that Van Laar's death certificate states he was 52 years and seven months old, implying that he was born in May 1768, whereas the date of 19 April 1767 given in the register of baptism would make him 53 at the time of his death. Most likely an error was made in calculating his age for the death certificate.

9 Wim G. J. M. Meulenkaamp, "Nieuwe gegevens over de uitgave van Gijsbert van Laar's *Magazijn van Tuinsieraaden*," *Cascade Bulletin voor Tuinhistorie* 16, nr. 2 (2007), pp. 14–17.

10 Later editions are the 1819 publication by Jacobus de Ruyter in Amsterdam, the 1831 edition by Johannes Noman en Zoon in Zaltbommel, and the 1867 shortened edition by G. B. van Goor in Gouda. For further reading, see Wim G. J. M. Meulenkaamp, "G. van Laar's *Magazijn van Tuin-sieraaden* als een voorbeeldenboek voor Nederlandse tuingebouwen," *Bulletin KNOB*, vol. 82, nrs. 3–4 (1983), pp. 124–69, esp. 126–27. See also Carla S. Oldenburger-Ebbers and J. Stehouwer, "Bibliografie van achttiende-eeuwse boeken op het gebied van tuinarchitectuur en beplanting," *Documentatieblad Werkgroep Achttiende Eeuw*, no. 40 (Sep. 1978), pp. 1–16. For latest findings on the various editions of Van Laar's work, see Jan Holwerda, "Uitgaven en datering van *Magazijn van Tuin-sieraaden*," *Cascade Bulletin voor Tuinhistorie* 19, nr. 2 (2010), pp. 39–50.

11 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 1819 or 1831, most likely the latter, given the updated spelling. The later date is also supported by the latest research; see Holwerda, "Uitgaven en datering," *Cascade Bulletin voor Tuinhistorie*, pp. 44–45.

12 Jan van der Groen, *Den Nederlandtsen Hovenier* (Amsterdam: Marcus Doornick, 1669; augmented ed. 1683); Simon Schijnvoet, *Voorbeelden van Lusthofsieraden or Samples of Country House Ornaments* (Amsterdam: H. de Wit, 1700).



**FIG. 2.** Garden buildings and ornaments. Gijsbert van Laar's *Magazijn van Tuin-sieraaden* (*Storehouse of Garden Ornaments*), title page and plate II. Collection Elizabeth Barlow Rogers, New York.

## INSIDE THE STOREHOUSE: CONTENTS AND SOURCES

Van Laar's work comprises an encyclopedic array of garden buildings and garden ornaments – including garden furniture, columns, pedestals, urns, and vases – plus a series of forty plans for landscape gardens. Each quire of eight prints contains six plates of randomly assorted ornaments and structures and, usually, two plates with garden plans.<sup>13</sup> The many structures depicted include temples, pavilions, and cottages; chapels, hermitages, and mosques; huts, ruins, grottoes, tombs and memorials; bridges, fountains, dovecotes, gates, and fences; hidden privies or conveniences; and, notably, early examples of playground equipment. These constructions, as well as smaller decorative elements such as furnishings, are designed in an eclectic range of styles – Chinese, Gothic, Asian, Doric, classical, Russian, Turkish, Swiss, rustic, or rural – or in a combination of them, as Van Laar himself explains. Each print describes in detail the most efficient and least expensive method of construction and decoration, thus encouraging the dilettante gardener to easily and cheaply execute the design on his own grounds.

By leafing through the *Storehouse of Garden Ornaments*, the property owner could select a garden plan and features to ornament it. Today's mid-price townhouse developments – where one chooses a plan, one's favored finishes, and even furniture – roughly parallel this model.<sup>14</sup> As Van Laar expressed in his preface, his work was to be used as a manual for furthering the improvement of every country seat; the pleasant occupation of making such improvements would offer the hardworking Dutchman a welcome reprieve from daily duties and an enjoyable way to spend leisure time.<sup>15</sup>

Although Van Laar included garden layouts that broadly indicate the placement of various plants and trees, for detailed botanical information about the planting of native and exotic vegetation, he would have advised his readers to consult his friend and colleague Johan Carl Krauss (1759–1826), a well-known physician and plant specialist.<sup>16</sup> Krauss's richly illustrated work (fig. 3), *Afbeeldingen der fraaiste, meest uitheemsche Boomen en Heesters: Die tot versiering van Engelsche bosschen en tuinen, op onzen grond, kunnen geplant en gekweekt worden*, or *Illustrations of beautiful, mainly exotic trees and shrubs suitable for adorning English forests and gardens and to be planted and grown on our ground* (Amsterdam, 1802–08),<sup>17</sup> described indigenous species as well as foreign exotics to be planted in the Dutch landscape garden and was published by Johannes Allart, Van Laar's publisher in Amsterdam. Krauss's work was meant as a convenient companion publication to Van Laar's, and in fact Krauss acknowledges Van Laar as “a most deserving garden architect,” who had contributed to changing the course of garden art in Holland so that Dutch designers were “now increasingly following the footsteps of Nature.”<sup>18</sup>

Van Laar's *Storehouse* exemplifies the popular, late eighteenth-century tradition of producing encyclopedic illustrated works in fascicle form. Documenting the current state of the art in the sciences and humanities, these periodically appearing sets of plates with accompanying explanations or annotations functioned as international forums. They invited open debate and the formation of a new consensus on a great variety of learned topics, especially relating to aesthetics, architecture, and garden architecture.<sup>19</sup> An overview of these compendiums reveals the multinational nature of the conversation on gardens and landscape design and the international scope of print-collecting networks, with tentacles stretching throughout Northern Europe, westward into England, and eastward into Russia.

The sources of Van Laar's designs for structures and ornaments are varied. As he explains in his subtitle and preface, many of his illustrations come from "the principal foreign works," albeit altered to fit Holland's geography and culture and augmented with many new designs by the author himself.<sup>20</sup> Even though he does not credit any specific author or printmaker in his compilation, various designs in Van Laar's work can be identified as coming from French and English publications. However, as demonstrated in this study and confirmed by a recently published concordance,<sup>21</sup> Van Laar did not take them directly from their original sources, but rather copied them from a German publication by Johann Gottfried Grohmann (1763–1805), entitled *Ideenmagazin für Liebhaber von Gärten und englischen Anlagen* and published in Leipzig between 1796 and 1806.<sup>22</sup>

Both Van Laar's and Grohmann's publications epitomize the lucrative practice of copying whole series of foreign prints without clearly specifying their sources. To thus plagiarize by reissuing fashionable works without naming the original author or publisher was common practice in the unregulated book world of late eighteenth-century Europe, certainly when republishing in a different language and across borders.<sup>23</sup> For example, Grohmann, for his extensive – and at 80 Taler very expensive – five-volume work containing 550 prints (fig. 4),<sup>24</sup> borrowed heavily from a myriad of sources, especially English architectural pattern or model books. Indeed, many prints in Grohmann's work represent buildings and garden structures of the sort found in mid-eighteenth-century England, without clear reference to author or source. Some have been found to be taken from works by William Chambers; others are directly based on Humphry Repton's and George Mason's latest publications, which helped introduce new landscape-gardening principles into Germany.<sup>25</sup> Many are borrowed from illustrated works by lesser-known architects and designers, among others Batty Langley, Joseph Gandy, and John Plaw.<sup>26</sup> In addition to copying English designs, Grohmann published the latest German designs for country houses and garden monuments, including innovative projects designed for his book by young architects.<sup>27</sup> Some of these subsequently found their way into Van Laar's book.

Grohmann alludes to some of his sources, referring to “originals received from London,”<sup>28</sup> and when it comes to German designs, adds the architect’s name, with the signatures of printmakers appearing under the illustrations. All of this Van Laar – and his publisher Allart – conveniently omitted. What mattered most was that Van Laar’s work was affordable and easily available to the general public, selling quickly and in quantity. It thus ensured the introduction of new French, English, and German landscape-garden designs to both well-to-do and more modest Dutch households. Moreover, while Van Laar was much indebted to Grohmann’s work – even using a similar title and expressing the same purpose of furthering garden art for the common citizen – his personal contributions make his publication unique. He incorporates an extensive selection of his own garden plans, described as “Engelsche Partijen,” or English layouts, as mentioned in the subtitle of his work.<sup>29</sup> They represent both existing and fictional layouts. By contrast, Grohmann did not focus on ground plans and the only two he included were designs for ideal (imaginary) landscape gardens.<sup>30</sup>

Besides garden plans, Van Laar includes illustrations of what appear to be actual Dutch buildings, including a country house and various garden pavilions – some constructed out of an unusual building material, namely, whalebone – that must have stood on a specific estate.<sup>31</sup> Most remarkably, he presents an unusual array of uniquely Dutch models for trompe l’oeil garden decorations. The designs, representing picturesque Dutch cottages and farmyard scenes, are to be painted on flat boards or wooden panels supported by poles at the rear.

Even when he copies from Grohmann’s *Ideenmagazin*, Van Laar frequently changed and combined borrowed elements. For example, he mixed and matched specimens of rough huts and shacks with other buildings and ornaments to compose new prints for his *Storehouse*.<sup>32</sup> Also, Van Laar’s choice to incorporate some prints and eliminate others is significant in itself. For example, his garden plans and the features he proposed were selected and modified to accommodate a geographical situation consisting of a low-lying, windswept estuary covered with damp clay soil. Notably, the flatness of the land and the paucity of stone in the local soil for the most part precluded architectural and ornamental features requiring differences in height, including waterfalls and extensive rock formations. A map of the Netherlands makes the situation clear, showing its water-bound land masses, which are below sea level as far inland as Utrecht. To the north and west, the country is bordered by the North Sea; to the east by Germany; and to the south by Belgium (fig. 5).

Whether original or borrowed, the prints selected and published in *Storehouse of Garden Ornaments* not only reveal Van Laar’s predilections for particular stylistic forms, but also testify in their diversity and scope to the international dissemination of architectural styles and ornamental forms throughout Europe.

## ENDNOTES

13 There are a few exceptions in this paired arrangement of plates – for example, plate CXXXV (135), which instead of a garden plan illustrates a seesaw and garden benches.

14 I would like to thank Dr. Nora Laos for this observation.

15 Van Laar, *Magazijn*, “Preface,” p. III: “. . . een handleiding . . . om hun plekjes grond te verfraaien en te veraangenaamen.”

16 Johan Carl Krauss was a German-born physician who worked in Amsterdam and later Leiden, where he was professor of medicine at the university. For more information, see the recent publication by Jan Holwerda, “*Afbeeldingen der fraaiste, meest Uitheemsche Boomen en Heesters en Johan Carl Krauss.*” *Cascade Bulletin voor Tuinhistorie* 19, nr. 2 (2010), pp. 51–81.

17 Johan Carl Krauss, *Afbeeldingen der fraaiste, meest uitheemsche Boomen en Heesters: Die tot versiering van Engelsche bosschen en tuinen, op onzen grond, kunnen geplant en gekweekt worden; benevens de beschrijving van derzelver kenmerken, voortkweeking, nuttigheden en andere bijzonderheden, ingericht om aan de liefhebbers van zodanige bosschen of tuinen de kennis van dezelve zo aangenaam als nuttig te maken* (Amsterdam: Johannes Allart, 1802–[1808]). Krauss dedicated the book to Martinus van Marum and signed himself “J. C. Kraus [sic] Med. Doct. te Amsterdam.” The work contains 126 hand-colored plates with descriptions and was published in twenty-one separate issues of six prints each.

18 Krauss, *Afbeeldingen der fraaiste, meest uitheemsche Boomen*, “Preface” (voorrede), p. III: “. . . de smaak in de Nederlandsche Tuinkunst sinds enige tijd volgens een verhevener doel werkende, een geheel andere wending heeft genomen, en daar door meer en meer de voetsporen der Natuur heeft opgevolgd. . .” and “Preface,” p. IV: “De verdienstelijke *Tuin-Architect* G. van Laar te Alkmaar, heeft dienaangaande reeds een begin gemaakt, door eene uitgave van fraaie *Tuinsieraaden.*” See also Heimerick Tromp, “Symbolisme in achttiende-eeuwse tuinen. Symposium over de invloed van intellectuele en esoterische stromingen zoals de Vrijmetselarij,” *Cascade Bulletin voor Tuinhistorie* 15, nr. 2 (2006), pp. 7–13, esp. 12.

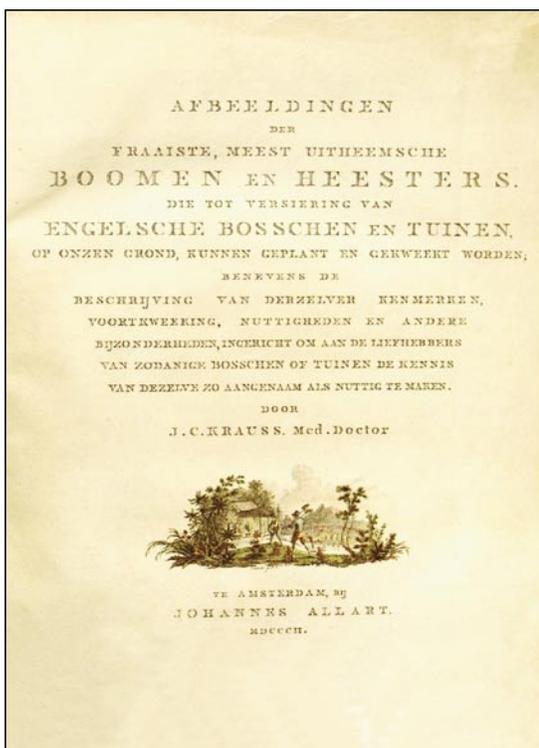
19 Philipp, *Um 1800*, pp. 35 ff.

20 In the title of *Magazijn*, Van Laar says: “uit de voornaamste buitenlandsche werken naar de gelegenheid en gronden deezer Republiek [later editions: *Koninkrijk*] gewijzigd.” See also p. III of the preface.

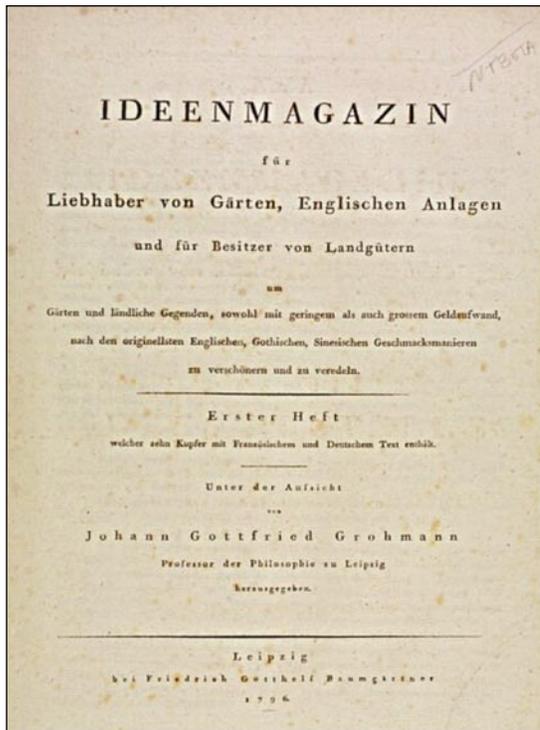
21 Arinda van der Does and Jan Holwerda, *Concordantie: Van Laar's “Magazijn van Tuin-sieraaden”– Grohmann's “Ideenmagazin”* (Gendringen/Elst, 2010), <http://edepot.wur.nl/144883>.

22 Johann Gottfried Grohmann, *Ideenmagazin für Liebhaber von Gärten, englischen Anlagen, und für Besitzer von Landgütern, um Gärten und ländliche Gegenden sowohl mit geringen als auch grossem Geldaufwand, nach den originellesten Englischen, Gothischen, Sinesischen Geschmacksmanieren (in englischen u.s.w. Geschmack) zu verschönern und zu veredeln* (Leipzig: F. G. Baumgärtner, 1796–1806). This publication was so well received that from 1799 onward a cheaper version was also made available, entitled *Kleines Ideen-magazin für Gartenliebhaber, oder Sammlung von Ideen, die mit wenig Kosten auszuführen sind. Enthaltend kleine Lust- und Gartenhäuser, Tempel, Einsiedeleyen, Brücken, Hütten, Gartensitze, Ruinen, Portale, Monumente, Prachtkegel, Winzerwohnungen, Weinbergshäuschen, Vermachungen, Ha Ha's, Volieren, Thüren, Höhlen, Gondeln, Bänke, Pavillon, Brunnen, Verzierungen usw., besonders für solche liebhaber bestimmt, die ohne grossen Kostenaufwand etwas Geschmackvolles und Neues in ihren Gärten zu besitzen wünschen* (Leipzig: F. G. Baumgärtner 1799–1806). For more on Grohmann's publications, see Klaus Jan Philipp, *Um 1800: Architekturtheorie und Architekturkritik in Deutschland zwischen 1790 und 1810* (Stuttgart: Axel Menges, [1997]), pp. 106–20. Volume 3 of Grohmann's *Ideenmagazin*, dated 1799, provides a list of the European booksellers that publish and sell his work, among them Van Cleef in The Hague: “à La Haye chez Van Cleef.”

- 23 For further information on the late eighteenth-century book trade, see *Bibliopolis. History of the printed book in The Netherlands*, compiled by Marieke van Delft et al. and edited by J.A.H.G.M. Bots et al. (The Hague: Koninklijke Bibliotheek, 2003–). [www.kb.nl/pr/publ/bibliopolis-en.html](http://www.kb.nl/pr/publ/bibliopolis-en.html)
- 24 Philipp, *Um 1800*, pp. 106–20, 240, nn. 911, 912. It was published in sixty installments containing eight to ten prints each. A subscription to Grohmann's series was very expensive, and only one complete copy exists in Holland today, that compiled by the avid collector R. J. C. Torck, owner of the estate of Roosendaal from 1793 till 1810. See J. C. Bierens de Haan, *Meer om Cieraat als Gebruijck. Tuingeschiedenis van Gelderse buitenplaatsen. Kunstbezit uit Gelderse kastelen* (Arnhem: Stichtingen Vrienden der Gelderse Kasteelen and Het Geldersch Landschap, 1990), p. 58.
- 25 Philipp, *Um 1800*, p. 121. The English books that had the greatest impact on theories of garden architecture in Germany were Humphry Repton's *Sketches and Hints on Landscape Gardening* (London, 1795) and George Mason's *Essay on Design in Gardening* (London, 1768).
- 26 Philipp, *Um 1800*, pp. 116–21. See R. Reid, *The Georgian House and Its Details* (London: Bishopgate, 1986), pp. 69–71, on English architectural pattern books. Meulenkaamp, "G. van Laar's *Magazijn*," *Bulletin KNOB*, p. 126, discusses William and John Halfpenny and T. C. Overton. For further information, see J. Dobai, *Die Kunstliteratur des Klassizismus und der Romantik in England* (Bern: Benteli, 1974–84), vols. 1 and 2.
- 27 Philipp, *Um 1800*, pp. 106–20, esp. 107–9. Young architects from Berlin, Leipzig, and Dresden, in particular, contributed to Grohmann's *Ideenmagazin*.
- 28 Grohmann, *Ideenmagazin*, writes in his Introduction: "Da wir die Originale aus London erhalten, so haben wir auch den *Englischen Massstab* beibehalten, der leicht auf den unsrigen zurück gebracht werden kann." ("Since we received the originals [prints] from London, we also kept the English measurements, which can be easily reduced to ours.")
- 29 "English layouts" (*Engelse partijen*) refers to the quintessential English landscape gardens or parks, in their basic form consisting of undulating green lawns punctuated by carefully placed belts of trees and serpentine ponds surrounded by meandering walks. The term is used in an advertisement for Van Laar's forthcoming publication printed on the back cover of Hendrik van Wyn, *Huiszittend leven* (Amsterdam: J. Allart, 1802), as noted in Meulenkaamp, "Nieuwe gegevens," *Cascade Bulletin voor Tuin historie*, p. 16. The reference to English layouts accords with Van Laar's remark in his preface (p. II) that the Dutch learned about landscape gardening especially from the English.
- 30 Grohmann, *Ideenmagazin*, cah. 7, plate 10, and cah. 8, plate 7, illustrating two garden layouts "im Englischen Geschmack/Gôut Anglais" (in the English taste). One represents a large-scale landscape park with a formal layout near the house, and the other a smaller garden with a dairy farm.
- 31 Plates XCIII (93) and CXIV (114), illustrate garden pavilions in the neoclassical style; plate CLXXIV (174), a typically Dutch country house with a white stucco finish, and plates CXL (140) and CXLI (141), a "surprise" (a thatched garden cottage held up by two whalebones), and a *Priee* (open arbor) constructed from whalebones and decorated with shells.
- 32 For example, compare Van Laar's plates XXXIV and XLIV (34 and 44) with Grohmann, *Ideenmagazin*, cah. 3, plate 4.



**FIG. 3.** Illustrations of exotic trees and shrubs, suitable for adorning English-style forests and gardens. Johan Carl Krauss, *Afbeeldingen der fraaiste, meest uitheemsche boomen en heesters* (Amsterdam, 1802–08), title page and plate 34 (depicting the *Rhododendron ponticum*). The LuEsther T. Mertz Library of The New York Botanical Garden, Bronx, New York.



**FIG. 4.** Title page of Johann Gottfried Grohmann, *Ideenmagazin für Liebhaber von Gärten und englischen Anlagen* (Leipzig, 1796-1806), which contains 550 hand-colored prints relating to garden design and ornamentation. New York Public Library (NYPL Digital Gallery).



**FIG. 5.** Modern map of the Netherlands and its main cities. Most of the country is below sea level, the exceptions being the eastern area bordering Germany and the southeastern region bordering Belgium. [www.worldatlas.com/country-maps/Europe/Netherlands](http://www.worldatlas.com/country-maps/Europe/Netherlands).

## VAN LAAR'S CAREER: ALKMAAR, BROEK IN WATERLAND, KENNEMERLAND, AND ALPHEN AAN DEN RIJN

New research on Gijsbert van Laar, initially occasioned by the bicentennial of his *Storehouse*, has made possible a reassessment of his life and work.<sup>33</sup> The map of Holland reproduced here (fig. 6) shows the places he lived and worked and those mentioned in his book. Born in 1767 in Harmelen, and raised in nearby Utrecht after 1771, Van Laar received his training by working with his father, gardener Evert van Laar, on the grounds of the old botanical garden of Utrecht University, the Hortus Medicus Trajectinus.<sup>34</sup> There he gathered all the horticultural knowledge and practical skills needed for his career; apparently he did not receive any further formal education as a landscape architect. Given that specialized schooling was not yet commonly available, and that most landscape architects were self-taught, Van Laar's educational background is neither unusual nor surprising. Some gardeners and landscape architects-to-be had the opportunity to travel abroad to widen their horizons. A good example is the Utrecht-born and trained nurseryman Hendrik van Lunteren (1780–1848), who spent a year in England to study and gather landscape-gardening experience and refine his drafting technique, experience that greatly enhanced his subsequent career as a garden architect.

Van Laar did not have the means to travel abroad, nor did he have the advantage of a high-quality education that included drawing lessons. He therefore was limited in developing the draftsmanship necessary for a landscape architect of national stature. Unlike his contemporary colleague van Lunteren and the more widely known, German-born Jan David Zocher the Elder (1763–1817), both of whom were better educated and considered “professional” garden architects, Van Laar is not included in Christiaan Kramm's *De levens en werken der Hollandsche en Vlaamsche Kunstschilders en Bouwmeesters*, the standard compilation of Dutch artists and architects of the period.<sup>35</sup> Nevertheless, Van Laar worked as a practicing landscape designer and was doing so from a very early date. Indeed, newspaper advertisements indicate that he was already active as a landscape designer during his early years in Utrecht, and certainly before his move, around the year 1800, to Alkmaar, a city about twenty miles north of Amsterdam.

In Alkmaar, Van Laar collaborated with one Arie van de Wetering to run a tree and plant nursery, while continuing work as garden designer. Their advertisement in the *Alkmaarsche Courant* and *Oprechte Haerlemmer Courant* in the year 1799 announces the sale of trees, flowers, and bulbs. The advertisement also offers landscaping, stating that Van Laar is “*continuing* his activities in laying out gardens and country seats.”<sup>36</sup>

Some further insight into Van Laar's character and personal convictions is afforded by the documentary evidence that in Alkmaar he became member of the local Freemason lodge "De Noordstar," founded in 1800 (and still existing today).<sup>37</sup> Freemasonry attracted increasing interest in the late eighteenth century and the number of Freemasons' lodges in Dutch cities was expanding.<sup>38</sup> Van Laar's friend, the plant specialist Johan Carl Krauss, was also a Freemason, and founded a lodge in Arnhem.<sup>39</sup> As will be discussed later in this essay, there has been some speculation about the possible influence of Masonic theory on the development of the landscape garden.<sup>40</sup>

It was from this period onward that Van Laar was involved both as a plant purveyor and landscape architect with several estates in the area between Alkmaar and Amsterdam. In the town of Broek in Waterland, located in the region, he was most likely involved in layout of the estate and park of the Klaas Bakker family, of which he published the plan in his book. He devotes two plates to it, which are meant to fit together into one large plan (fig. 7).<sup>41</sup> Although it is not clear whether Van Laar designed the Bakker garden from scratch or collaborated in further extending the grounds, his depiction of the garden and its topographical setting is remarkably accurate. The garden's rectilinear outline and the curvilinear forms of its inner layout as rendered by Van Laar correspond exactly with details visible on contemporary cadastral maps (fig. 8).<sup>42</sup> While nothing remains of this famous park, its original outline is recognizable in modern aerial views.

Also at Broek, sometime around 1800, Van Laar must have come in contact with one of the town's most respected burghers, the town council member and mayor Dirk Wijnandsz Ditmarsch (1759–1830),<sup>43</sup> the "devotee and learned patron of the arts and sciences" to whom Van Laar's *Storehouse of Garden Ornaments* is dedicated. Van Laar may have designed the grounds of Ditmarsch's estate, which were being extended in the early 1800s after major land acquisitions. If not, he certainly advised Ditmarsch on how to improve the layout.<sup>44</sup> Designed in the English landscape style and richly decorated with pavilions and garden furniture, Ditmarsch's estate was one of Broek in Waterland's most famous properties (fig. 9). It was hailed by geographer A. J. van der Aa in *Aardrijkskundig Woordenboek der Nederlanden* (1840) as the most beautiful country seat in the region<sup>45</sup> and was celebrated by contemporary travelers.<sup>46</sup> The outline of the Ditmarsch garden and the pattern of its meandering ponds can still be recognized on satellite pictures of the area.

Given the fact that Van Laar dedicated his book to Ditmarsch, who had an extensive library<sup>47</sup> and contacts with the foremost artists, architects, and booksellers of the day, it is plausible that the plan to publish an illustrated work was conceived in the intellectual circle surrounding Ditmarsch.

It is difficult to construct an exact timeline of Van Laar's life and career. However, given the proximity, it is likely that during his sojourn at Broek in Waterland Van Laar also traveled to estates in the Kennemerland, an area southwest of Amsterdam along the sea border. Here he gathered further knowledge and firsthand experience of new landscape gardens at the country seats of Velserbeek (Velsen)<sup>48</sup> and Elswout (Overveen).<sup>49</sup> Buildings and ornaments from both are illustrated in his book. Velserbeek especially is well represented in the *Storehouse* with no fewer than ten different buildings and structures.<sup>50</sup> Some of the latter structures – including an old stone bridge shown in plate CXL (140) – were already standing in the Velserbeek estate by 1797, when illustrations of them appeared in a book by Hermanus Numan (fig. 10).<sup>51</sup>

Aside from recording the gardens of Velserbeek and Elswout, it is probable that Van Laar assisted with the latest landscaping improvements at these sites. Exact details about his degree of involvement are scarce, but it is significant that Van Laar personally knew and mentioned in his work the owner of Velserbeek, Johann Goll van Franckenstein the Younger (1756–1821),<sup>52</sup> who was one of the first enlightened property owners to initiate the transformation of an old formal estate into a modern landscape park.<sup>53</sup>

In 1803, after the nursery in Alkmaar had closed,<sup>54</sup> Van Laar moved southward to the area of Alphen aan den Rijn, near Leiden.<sup>55</sup> He settled first in the village of Oudshoorn, and from 1807 in Zwammerdam, continuing to practice as a garden designer.<sup>56</sup> He designed and laid out estates in Alphen aan den Rijn and the surrounding area.<sup>57</sup> He continued to work as a landscape designer and tree purveyor<sup>58</sup> until his death in December 1820, at the relatively young age of fifty-two or fifty-three.<sup>59</sup> On his death certificate he was described accurately as an “aanlegger van plantsoenen,” literally, a “person who lays out parks.”<sup>60</sup>

## ENDNOTES

33 This research was undertaken by Martin van den Broeke, Arinda van der Does, Jan Holwerda, Ulbe Mehrstens, Wim G. J. M. Meulenkaamp, and Carla S. Oldenburger-Ebbers. See esp. Van den Broeke and Meulenkaamp, "Gijsbert van Laar," *Cascade Bulletin voor Tuinhistorie*, pp. 5–47. See also Oldenburger-Ebbers, "Gijsbert van Laar, nieuwe biografische gegevens," *Tuinjournaal van de Nederlandse Tuinenstichting* (1994), pp. 31–33 and "Gijsbert van Laar," *Cascade Bulletin voor Tuinhistorie*, pp. 24–26. For the most recent studies, see the special issue dedicated to Van Laar in *Cascade Bulletin voor Tuinhistorie* 19, nr. 2 (2010), containing: Arinda van der Does and Jan Holwerda, "'Getrokken uit de voornaamste Buitenlandsche Werken.' Concordantie: Van Laar's *Magazijn* – Grohmann's *Ideenmagazin*," pp. 9–24; Martin van den Broeke, "De abonnees van Gijsbert van Laar. Middelburgse kopers van het *Magazijn van Tuin-sieraaden*," pp. 25–38; Jan Holwerda, "Uitgaven en datering van *Magazijn van Tuin-sieraaden*," pp. 39–50; and Holwerda, "Afbeeldingen der fraaiste, meest Uitheemsche Boomen en Heesters en Johan Carl Krauss," pp. 51–81.

34 Oldenburger-Ebbers, "Gijsbert van Laar," *Cascade Bulletin voor Tuinhistorie* (1994), p. 25. See Van den Broeke and Meulenkaamp, "Gijsbert van Laar," *Cascade Bulletin voor Tuinhistorie*, p. 6.

35 Christiaan Kramm, *De levens en werken der Hollandsche en Vlaamsche Kunstschilders, Beeldhouwers, Graveurs en Bouwmeesters van den vroegsten tot op onzen tijd* (Amsterdam: Gebroeders Diederichs, 1857–64).

36 Van den Broeke and Meulenkaamp, "Gijsbert van Laar," *Cascade Bulletin voor Tuinhistorie*, p. 7.

37 Tromp, "Symbolisme," *Cascade Bulletin voor Tuinhistorie*, pp. 7–13, esp. 12.

38 Andrea A. Kroon, "The Material Culture of Freemasonry in the Netherlands: History, Destruction, Conservation." *Publication of the Stichting OVN Nederland* (Amsterdam, 2005), pp. 163–79, esp. 166.

39 Tromp, "Symbolisme," *Cascade Bulletin voor Tuinhistorie*, p. 12.

40 For further details, see James Stevens Curl, "Symbolism in Eighteenth-Century Gardens: Some Observations," in *Symbolism in 18th-century Gardens: The Influence of Intellectual and Esoteric Currents Such as Freemasonry*, ed. Jan A.M. Snoek, Monika Scholl, and Andrea A. Kroon (The Hague: OVN, Foundation for the Advancement of Academic Research into the History of Freemasonry in the Netherlands, 2006), pp. 25–67, esp. 30–31, 53–55; and also Curl's *The Art and Architecture of Freemasonry: An Introductory Study* (London: B. T. Batsford, 1991), esp. pp. 169–218.

41 Van Laar, *Magazijn*, plates CXXVII and CXXVIII (127 and 128).

42 See J. W. Niemeyer, "Nieuwe gegevens over oude tuinen in Broek in Waterland," *Noordholland*, nr. 10 (1965), pp. 1–8, with an appendix containing cadastral maps, illustrating the gradual extension of the Bakker estate during the early nineteenth century. For a further description of the decoration of house and garden, see also J.W. Niemeyer, "Een ontwerptekening voor een huis aan De Erven," *Broeker Bijdragen* 24 (1983), pp. 160–65.

43 Ditmarsch was born in Utrecht and studied theology there, landing a job as assistant to the minister of Broek in Waterland before marrying an independently wealthy widow, Trijntje Kok, in 1788, and becoming primarily active in local government. For further biographical information and details about the Ditmarsch estate in Broek in Waterland, see A. P. Bruigom, "Het schoonste gebouw benoorden het Ij," *Broeker Bijdragen* 14 (1977), pp. 78–89, esp. 82–85. See also J. W. Niemeyer, "Het interieur van het 'Ditmarsch' Huis," *Broeker Bijdragen* 15 (1978), pp. 90–95, esp. 94.

44 Bruigom, “Het schoonste gebouw,” *Broeker Bijdragen*, pp. 82–84.

45 A. J. van der Aa, *Aardrijkskundig Woordenboek der Nederlanden* (Groningen, 1840), p. 766: “. . . het schoonste gebouw benoorden het Ij.” See also Bruigom, “Het schoonste gebouw,” *Broeker Bijdragen*, p. 78.

46 Bruigom, “Het schoonste gebouw,” *Broeker Bijdragen*, p. 88, states that in 1849 the grounds were sold to the municipality for the layout of a cemetery that still exists today. Cf. also Niemeyer, “Nieuwe gegevens,” *Noordholland*, pp. 6–7, quoting from Theodoor Fliedner’s travel journal, *Collektenreise nach Holland und England* (Essen, 1831), vol. 1, p. 118. Cf. also Van den Broeke and Meulenkamp, “Gijsbert van Laar,” *Cascade Bulletin voor Tuinhistorie*, p. 23.

47 J. W. Niemeyer, “Het ‘Ditmarsch’ Huis,” *Broeker Bijdragen* (1978), p. 93; the library contained publications on plants by Linnaeus.

48 On Van Laar and Velserbeek, see Meulenkamp, “G. van Laar’s *Magazijn*,” *Bulletin KNOB*, pp. 124–41, esp. 128–35, and Van den Broeke and Meulenkamp, “Gijsbert van Laar,” *Cascade Bulletin voor Tuinhistorie*, pp. 17–22. For general reading and illustrations, see H. W. M. van der Wijck, *De Nederlandse Buitenplaats: Aspecten van ontwikkeling, bescherming en herstel* (Alphen aan den Rijn: Canaletto, 1982), pp. 293–98. For an illustrated history of Velserbeek, see Siebe Rolle, *De Buitenplaats Velserbeek, de werkelijkheid en het sprookje of de legende* (Velsen: Museum Beeckestein, 1995), <http://www.dorpsfeestdriehuis.nl/artikel%20buitenplaats%20velserbeek.pdf>.

49 Van Laar, *Magazijn*, plate XXIX (29), shows a model for a Swiss bridge that is similar to the one still standing on the Elswout estate today. For general background, see Van der Wijck, *Nederlandse Buitenplaats*, pp. 234–43.

50 Structures depicted by Van Laar that stood in the Velserbeek garden in the late eighteenth century included a Swiss Bridge (plate XXIX [29]), an Old Bridge (plate CXL [140]), a Chinese Pavilion (plate CXLII [142]), a painted Gothic Ruin (plate CL [150]), a farmer’s inn called the Jeneverhuisje (plates CLVII [157] and CLVIII [158]), a Hermitage (plates CLXXXI and CLXXXII [181 and 182]), and a Hunter’s Lodge (plates CXXXIX and CXC [189 and 190]).

51 Hermanus Numan, *Vierentwintig Printtekeningen met Couleuren, Verbeeldende Hollandsche Buitenplaatsen, met dezelve beschrijvingen. Na het leven getekent en in plaat gebracht door H. Numan* (Amsterdam, 1797–98). For the drawings of Numan, see *Beeldbank Noord-Hollands Archief*, [ranh.pictura-dp.nl](http://ranh.pictura-dp.nl), assembled by Jan Holwerda.

52 Van Laar, *Magazijn*, plate CLXXXIX (189), referring to a house for a laborer or hunter: “Op het Buiten van den Wel. Ed. Heer Goll, te Velsen, kan men zulk een beschouwen” (On the Country Estate of the Honorable Mr. Goll, at Velsen, one can find such a structure).

53 Part of this pioneering layout can still be recognized in what is now a much-frequented public park at the center of Velsen. The nearby estate of Elswout, its picturesque character admirably depicted in several late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century drawings, also still exists and functions as a park open to the general public.

54 Apparently friction had arisen among the partners and legal action was undertaken in 1809 by Van Laar against his former colleague Arie van de Wetering. See Van der Does, “Gijsbert van Laar,” *Cascade Bulletin voor Tuinhistorie*, p. 8.

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55 Oldenburger-Ebbers, "Gijsbert van Laar," *Cascade Bulletin voor Tuinhistorie*, pp. 25–26; Van den Broeke and Meulenkamp, "Gijsbert van Laar," *Cascade Bulletin voor Tuinhistorie*, pp. 7–8, and Van der Does, "Gijsbert van Laar," *Cascade Bulletin voor Tuinhistorie*, pp. 7–8.

56 Van der Does, "Gijsbert van Laar," *Cascade Bulletin voor Tuinhistorie*, p. 7.

57 In and around Alphen Van Laar worked at the estates of Brittenrust, Rijnoord, and Raadwijk. He also worked at Withenlust, in Zwammerdam in the greater Alphen area.

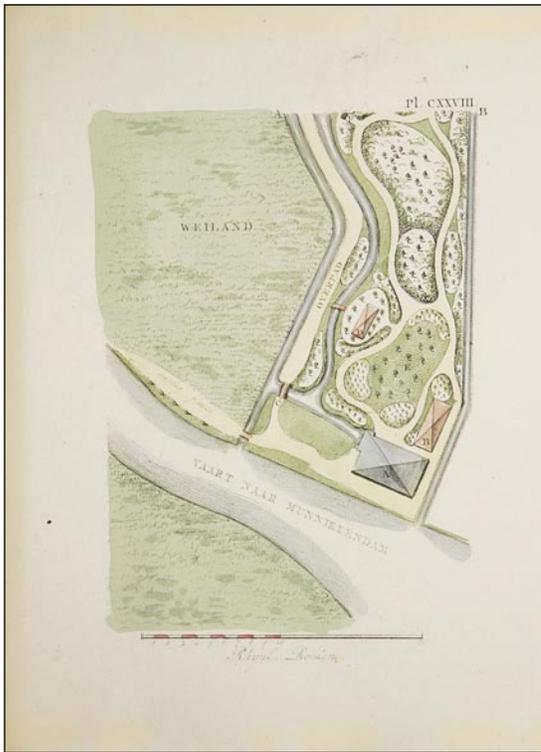
58 His responsibilities as a tree purveyor included clearing wood, acquiring, and selling trees at the Withenlust estate in Zwammerdam (Van der Does, "Gijsbert van Laar," *Cascade Bulletin voor Tuinhistorie*, pp. 10–11).

59 See note 8 above.

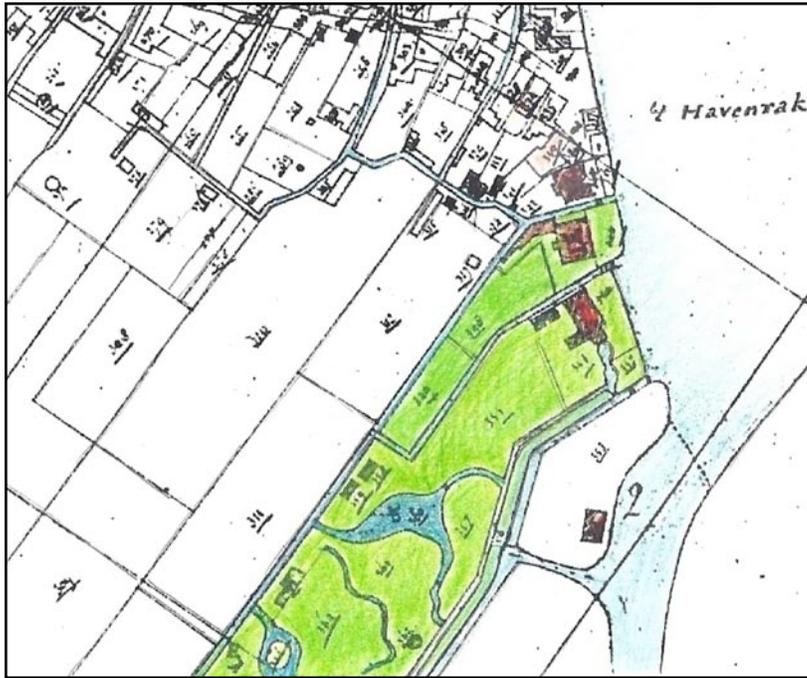
60 Oldenburger-Ebbers, "Gijsbert van Laar," *Cascade Bulletin voor Tuinhistorie*, p. 26, n. 15.



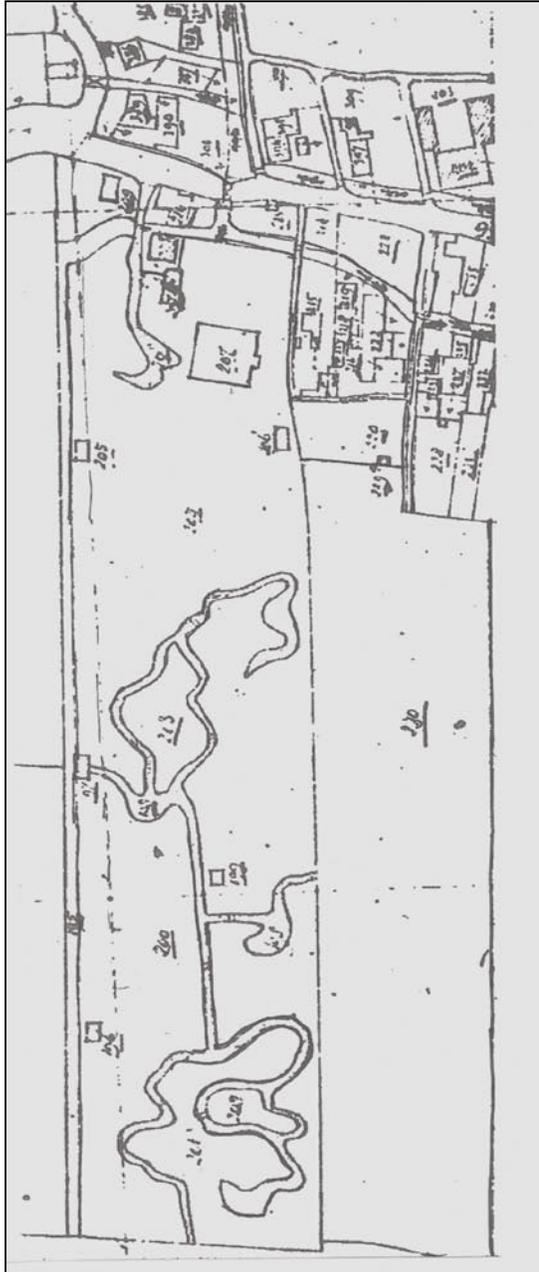
**FIG. 6.** Map of Holland. Gijsbert van Laar was born in Utrecht and worked in Alkmaar, Broek in Waterland, the Kennemerland area west of Amsterdam, and Alphen aan den Rijn. [Edhelper.com/geography/Netherlands](https://edHelper.com/geography/Netherlands) [names of cities added by author].



**FIG. 7.** Klaas Bakker's garden in Broek in Waterland, along the waterway to Monnikendam. G. van Laar, *Magazijn*, plates CXXVII and CXXXVIII. Compare with the outline of the garden visible in fig. 8. Collection Elizabeth Barlow Rogers, New York.



**FIG. 8.** Cadastral map of Broek in Waterland (town is at top left), showing Klaas Bakker's property in 1832. The sharp outline of the polder parcels contrast with curvilinear forms in the garden's interior. Enhanced and colored by author, following J. W. Niemeijer, "Nieuwe gegevens over oude tuinen in Broek in Waterland" *Noordholland* 10 (1965), appendix.



**FIG. 9.** Detail of the Ditmarsch property as depicted on the 1832 cadastral map of Broek in Waterland (the town is at the top), showing the typical elongated form of the early Dutch landscape garden. Enhanced by author, following A. P. Bruigom, “Het mooiste gebouw benoorden het Ij,” *Broeker Bijdragen* (1977), p. 84; also at [www.oudbroek.nl](http://www.oudbroek.nl).



**FIG. 10.** Scenes of the early landscape garden of Velserbeek, showing undulating lawns and serpentine ponds with the church of Velsen in the background. From H. Numan, *Vierentwintig printtekeningen verbeeldende Hollandsche Buitenplaatsen* (1797). Beeldbank Noord-Hollands Archief, Haarlem.

## VAN LAAR'S GARDEN PLANS: REAL AND IDEAL

Careful study of Van Laar's garden plans and comparison with contemporary maps and aerial photographs of the areas where he worked along Holland's western seacoast has revealed important new information about his designs. In *Storehouse of Garden Ornaments*, Van Laar publishes no fewer than forty garden plans which he describes in his preface as being "all of original invention." This does not mean that he personally designed and executed all of the gardens, but that, at the very least, he collected the details necessary to draw their outlines and had prints made to publish in his book. Some of the designs can be identified as actual layouts of gardens then in existence, while others are ideal (fictional) garden plans. In drawing up his plans, Van Laar used the *Rijnlandse Roede* and the *Rijnlandse Voet* (foot),<sup>61</sup> regional Dutch units of land measurement employed in the water-board district of Rijnland, encompassing Leiden and its surroundings (Alphen, Delft, The Hague). Grohmann, by comparison, employed the English foot as measurement for his garden structures, claiming that it converted easily into then-current, regional German *Rute* or *Fuss*.<sup>62</sup>

Dutch gardens were small in comparison with their German and English counterparts, as Van Laar acknowledged himself in his preface:

Though we cannot emulate the English in the grandness of their estates, quite fortunately their manner of laying out gardens can be adapted to smaller country seats as well. Indeed it is suitable precisely for making a stretch of land look larger than it actually is, and for displaying within a small area the largest possible variety.<sup>63</sup>

The large, ideal, landscape-garden designs in Van Laar's plates VII and VIII (7 and 8) extend over areas measuring 4 to 8 hectares, or 10 to 20 acres. The smaller gardens illustrated in Van Laar's book do not exceed 2 hectares (5 acres). Proportionally viewed, these Dutch layouts are best compared with some of the more modestly sized suburban gardens bordering northern European cities, for example the contemporary gardens laid out in and around Paris for the new bourgeoisie, which measured anywhere between 1 and 25 hectares (1 to 60 acres).<sup>64</sup> In comparison, famous park landscapes of England that were far removed from the city – such as the grand estate of Stowe, the quintessential and most elaborate landscape garden of the eighteenth century – extended over areas as large as 162 hectares (400 acres). On the Continent, meanwhile, the early landscape garden at Wörlitz in Germany encompassed an area of 112 hectares (276 acres),<sup>65</sup> dimensions that were outside the scope of Van Laar's work, his design experience, and traditions of land ownership in the Netherlands.

Two types of garden plans can be distinguished in Van Laar's oeuvre: a group of "fictional" or ideal garden designs and a group of actual garden plans designed for a specific location. The fictional designs (for example, Van Laar's plates VII, XXIV,

XXXII, and XXXXVII [7, 24, 32, and 47]), prepared as aesthetic models for study, do not show precise boundaries or exact divisions of the grounds. There are no clear references to surrounding structural limits or existing buildings and no definite indications of perspective lines or vistas through the garden into the surrounding landscape. The landscapes depicted, unusually large, combine all possible features of an English landscape garden together with agricultural elements that recall the *ferme ornée*: meandering paths and ponds are set among irregular parcels of ground planted with clumps of trees; extensive meadows are interspersed with arable lands, farmsteads, and orchards. These ideal landscapes are filled with ornate structures, including ruins, temples, tents, pavilions, and pyramids, as well as bridges and boats (fig. 11).<sup>66</sup>

By contrast, designs belonging to the second type of garden plan – representations of actual gardens – depict current or proposed layouts on specific pieces of land. The ground parcels are precisely defined and each garden's outline is clearly drawn. The contour is formed by an existing road, dike, river, or meadow that strictly encloses the terrain.<sup>67</sup> Use of such a strict boundary was a feature that continued to be widely adopted in early Dutch landscape gardens.

Several estates are recognizable from Van Laar's plans. The first to be identified was the property of Klaas Bakker in Broek in Waterland, (see fig. 7).<sup>68</sup> Plates CXX and CLII (120 and 152) may represent the Ditmarsch estate as comparison with contemporary maps of the area showed (see fig. 9). A number of estates in the Alphen aan den Rijn area have also been identified. The estate of Nieuw Brittenrust,<sup>69</sup> the landscape garden of Raadwijk with its little farm (fig. 12),<sup>70</sup> and the estate of Rijnoord (fig. 13)<sup>71</sup> can be recognized. Situated along the Rhine (Oude Rijn), these estates afforded a wide prospect over the river, a location Van Laar warmly recommended for the extensive vistas and opportunity to observe boat traffic. The depiction of these layouts in the bend of the river (Raadwijk on the Alphen side, Rijnoord on the opposite bank in Oudshoorn) matches geographical details seen on mid-nineteenth-century maps of the area. A good example is a map by Jacob Kuyper, showing the square outline of Rijnoord where it abuts the village of Oudshoorn (fig. 14).<sup>72</sup>

Some of the roads marked on Van Laar's plans appear on nineteenth-century cadastral maps of the Alphen area as well.<sup>73</sup> For example, a major road which cuts right through the Raadwijk property (see fig. 12), leaving a narrow slice of land along the river, is shown on the cadastral maps just as it is indicated on Van Laar's plan. A further topographical reference point, namely, the Heerenweg – the main thoroughfare which ran along the estate of Rijnoord in Oudshoorn – is clearly indicated on Van Laar's prints (see fig. 13). One estate Van Laar illustrated that also was located

along the Heerenweg was divided in two parts by this road, a distinctive topographical detail.<sup>74</sup> It may represent the estate of Buitenzorg in Oudshoorn, where Van Laar lived and worked for a while. Not far from Buitenzorg, in the neighboring village of Zwammerdam, stood the Withenlust estate, the remaining contour of which has been recognized as a possible design from the hand of Van Laar, although it was not illustrated in his book.<sup>75</sup>

The last two garden plans in Van Laar's compilation, meant to be joined and seen together (fig. 15) – depict the grounds of Castle Ter Hooge in Middelburg (Province of Zeeland).<sup>76</sup> Dating from between 1806 and 1809, this estate was designed not by Van Laar, but by a well-known regional landscape architect from Middelburg called Pieter Schuppens (1769–1850).<sup>77</sup> The plan was surely sent to Van Laar in response to the invitation in the preface to contribute new designs for publication.<sup>78</sup>

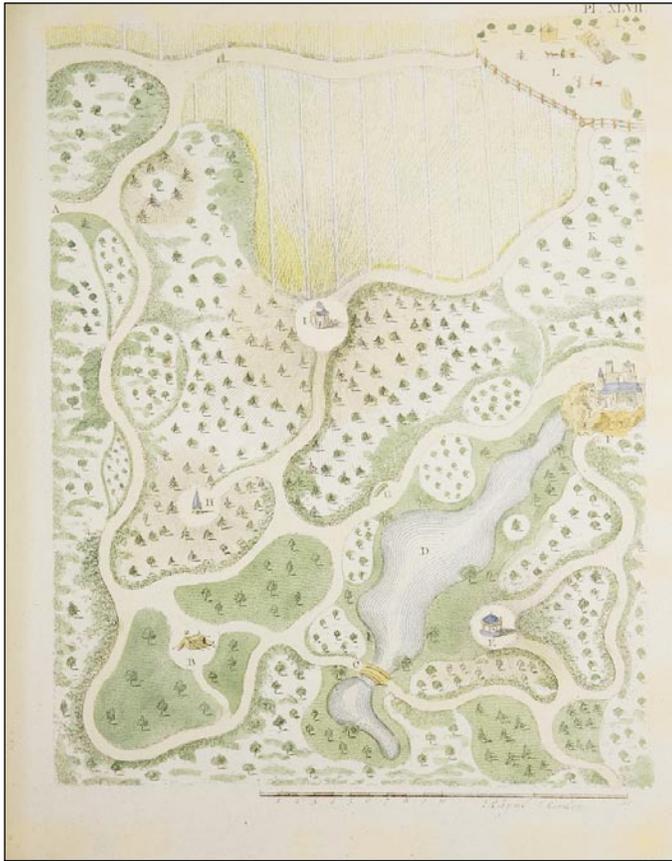
Other images cannot be precisely identified with particular gardens, but clearly fall into the realm of the real rather than the ideal. One plate (fig. 16)<sup>79</sup> illustrates two small estates that exactly match the kind of layout proper for the Dutch urban environment: narrow, enclosed, and elongated. Such plans display all the main features of the landscape garden, but in miniature form. An entire garden with its meandering paths, ponds, and tree clumps is set in a strict framework of high walls. A mid-nineteenth-century map of the city of Rotterdam, showing a ribbon of garden parcels stretching along the outer city ring,<sup>80</sup> exactly reflects such miniature urban landscapes.

Several other estates have been attributed to Van Laar by researchers. They include the garden layouts of Akerendam at Beverwijk and Ter Coulster at Heiloo (both near Alkmaar),<sup>81</sup> as well as Terra Nova at Loenen aan de Vecht (near Utrecht).<sup>82</sup> Specific connections between these garden designs and those published by Van Laar in his *Storehouse* await further investigation.

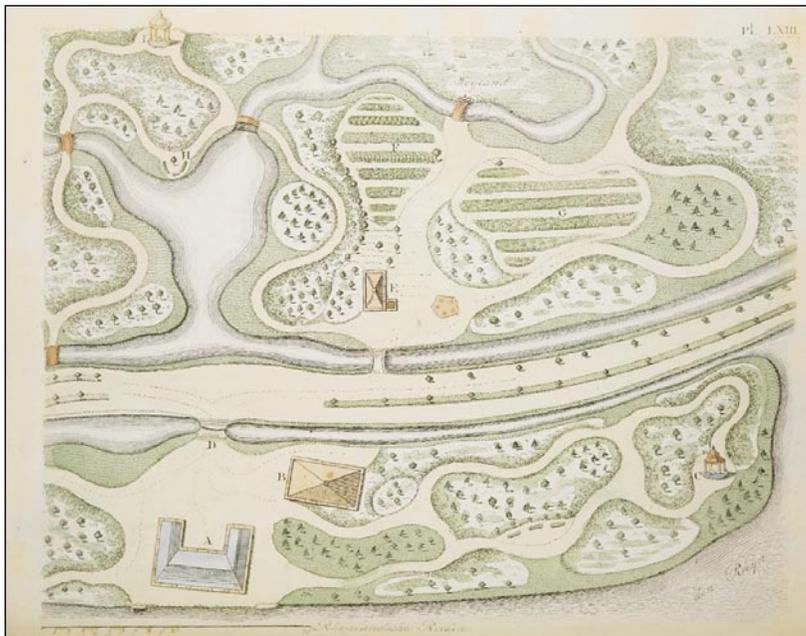
## ENDNOTES

- 61 One Rijnlandse Roede (3.76 meters) contained twelve Rijnlandse Voet (about 31 cm, close to the seventeenth-century English foot of about 30 centimeters).
- 62 Grohmann, *Ideenmagazin*, Introduction: “. . . we also kept the English measurements, which can be easily reduced to ours.” In Germany measurements varied from area to area, but Grohmann must have followed the Rheinländische system, whereby 12 *Fuss* equal one *Rute* (measuring 3.76 meters), which is the same as the Rijnland measurement system Van Laar used. Both systems were similar to the English one, following the counting method (12 units) rather than the metric system (based on units of 10), which was introduced in Holland in 1816 and in Germany not until 1875.
- 63 Van Laar, *Magazijn*, “Preface,” p. II: “. . . konden wij de Engelsen wel niet navolgen in hunne groote plans; dan hunne wijze van aanleggen voegt zig gelukkig ook naar kleine landgoederen en is juist geschikt om een stuk gronds grooter te doen voorkoomen dan het indedaad is en om in eenen kleinen omtrek de grootst mogelijke verscheidenheid daar te stellen.”
- 64 Michel Conan, “The Coming of Age of the Bourgeois Garden,” in John Dixon Hunt and Michel Conan, eds., *Tradition and Innovation in French Garden Art. Chapters of a New History* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002), pp. 160–83. Gabriel Thouin’s plan for a “Jardin Champêtre” would have occupied an area of roughly 6 hectare or 15 acres.
- 65 F. A. Bechtoldt and T. Weiss, *Weltbild Wörlitz: Entwurf einer Kulturlandschaft* (Stuttgart: Hatje Ganz Verlag, 1996), p. 361, illustrates this plan, which was designed by G. Schoch and dated 1794. It was described as being “in the English taste.”
- 66 Several examples of this garden type can be found in Van Laar’s *Magazijn* in plates CLI (151) and CLXXV (175), Plate CXXXVI (136) and its variant, Plate CLX (160).
- 67 See, for example, Van Laar, *Magazijn*, plates CLI, CLXXV, CXXXVI, and CLX (151, 175, 136, and 160).
- 68 Van Laar, *Magazijn*, plates CXXVII and CXXVIII (127 and 128).
- 69 Van Laar, *Magazijn*, plate LV (55).
- 70 Van Laar, *Magazijn*, plate LXIII (63).
- 71 Van Laar, *Magazijn*, plate LXXXVII and LXXXVIII (87 and 88).
- 72 Nationaal Archief, Beeldbank Kaarten Zuid Holland, s.v. Oudshoorn. Map by J. Kuyper, published in *Gemeente-Atlas van Nederland naar officiele bronnen bewerkt* (Leeuwarden: H. Suringar, 1865–69).
- 73 Nationaal Archief, The Hague, Department of Maps, s.v. Kadastrale minuutplannen van de Gemeente Alphen aan den Rijn, Oudshoorn en Leiderdorp. See M. van den Broeke, “Nieuwe gegevens over de tuinplattegronden van Gijsbert van Laar: Nieuw Brittenrust, Raadwijk en Rijnlust te Alphen aan den Rijn,” *Cascade Bulletin voor Tuinhistorie* 4, nrs. 1–2 (1995), pp. 34–40, esp. 36–37.
- 74 Van Laar, *Magazijn*, plate LVI (56).

- 75 The meandering outline of the pond system of the Withenlust estate in Zwammerdam is pointed out as a characteristic feature of Van Laar's work by Arinda van der Does, "Gijsbert van Laar," *Cascade Bulletin voor Tuinhistorie*, pp. 10–12.
- 76 Van Laar, *Magazijn*, plates CLXXXIII and CLXXXIV (183 and 184).
- 77 Martin van den Broeke, "Pieter Schuppens (1769–1850), een Middelburgs tuinarchitect en zijn werken," *Cascade Bulletin voor Tuinhistorie* 6, nr. 1 (1997), pp. 9–35, esp. 15–20. See also Constance D. H. Moes, *L.A. Springer. Tuinarchitect, dendroloog, 1855–1940* (Rotterdam: Uitgeverij de Hef Publishers, 2002), p. 120.
- 78 This is also the opinion of Van den Broeke and Meulenkamp, "Gijsbert van Laar," *Cascade Bulletin voor Tuinhistorie*, p. 33.
- 79 Van Laar, *Magazijn*, plate CXLIV (144).
- 80 A detail of a map by L.F. Temminck of Het Nieuwe Werk in Rotterdam around 1850 shows these elongated, enclosed urban layouts (Oldenburger-Ebbers et al., *Gids voor Nederlandse Tuin- en Landschapsarchitectuur*, p. 401).
- 81 The situation and division of the grounds point at the possibility of Van Laar's involvement (Oldenburger-Ebbers, *De Tuinengids van Nederland: Bezoekersgids en vademecum voor tuinen en tuinarchitectuur in Nederland* [Rotterdam: De Hef, 1989], p. 45).
- 82 Bierens de Haan, *Meer om Cieraat als Gebruijck*, p. 60.



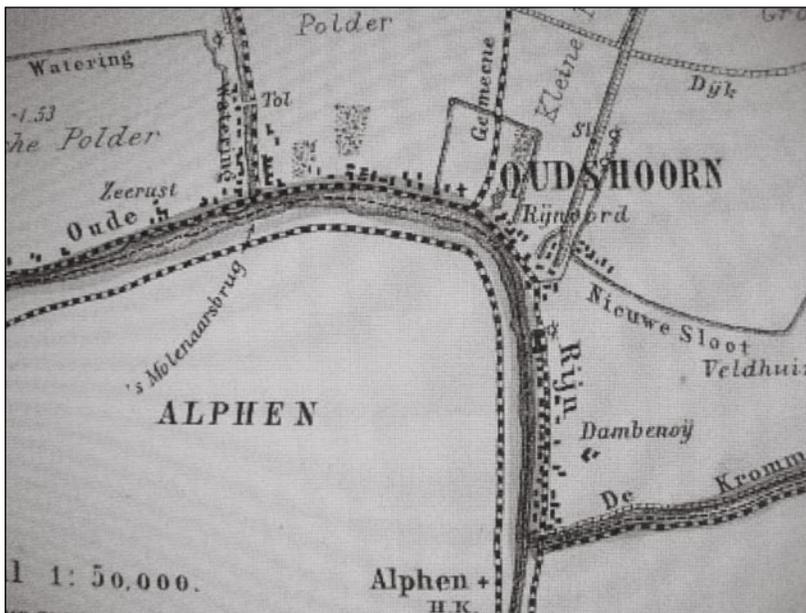
**FIG. 11.** Large, ideal landscape garden designed as a *ferme ornée*, combining pavilions, temples, a tent, and a ruin with agricultural areas and a farmyard (upper right corner). G. van Laar, *Magazijn*, plate XLVII. Collection Elizabeth Barlow Rogers, New York.



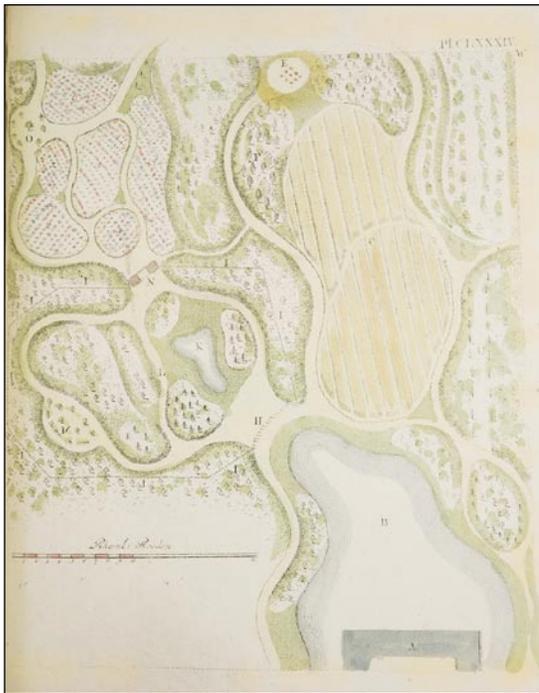
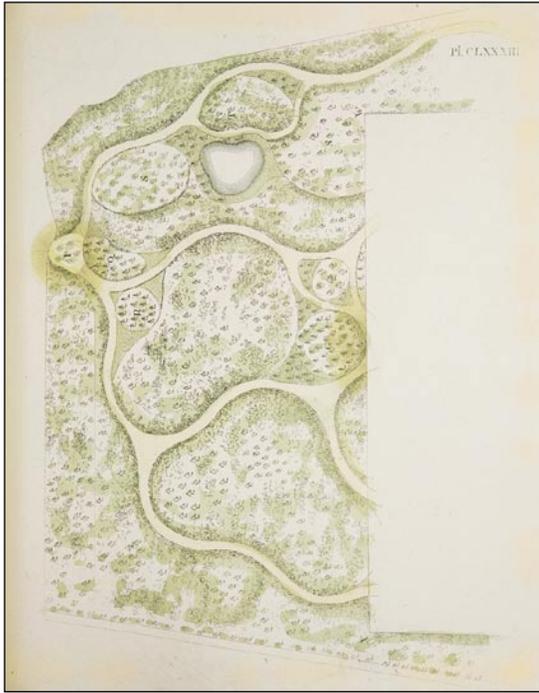
**FIG. 12.** The plan of the landscape garden at Raadwijk in Alphen aan den Rijn, the layout of which is attributed to Van Laar. The property is cut in two by the main road running along the Rhine River. The house overlooks the river; a farm with haystack stands in the middle of the garden across the road. G. van Laar, *Magazijn*, plate LXIII. Collection Elizabeth Barlow Rogers, New York.



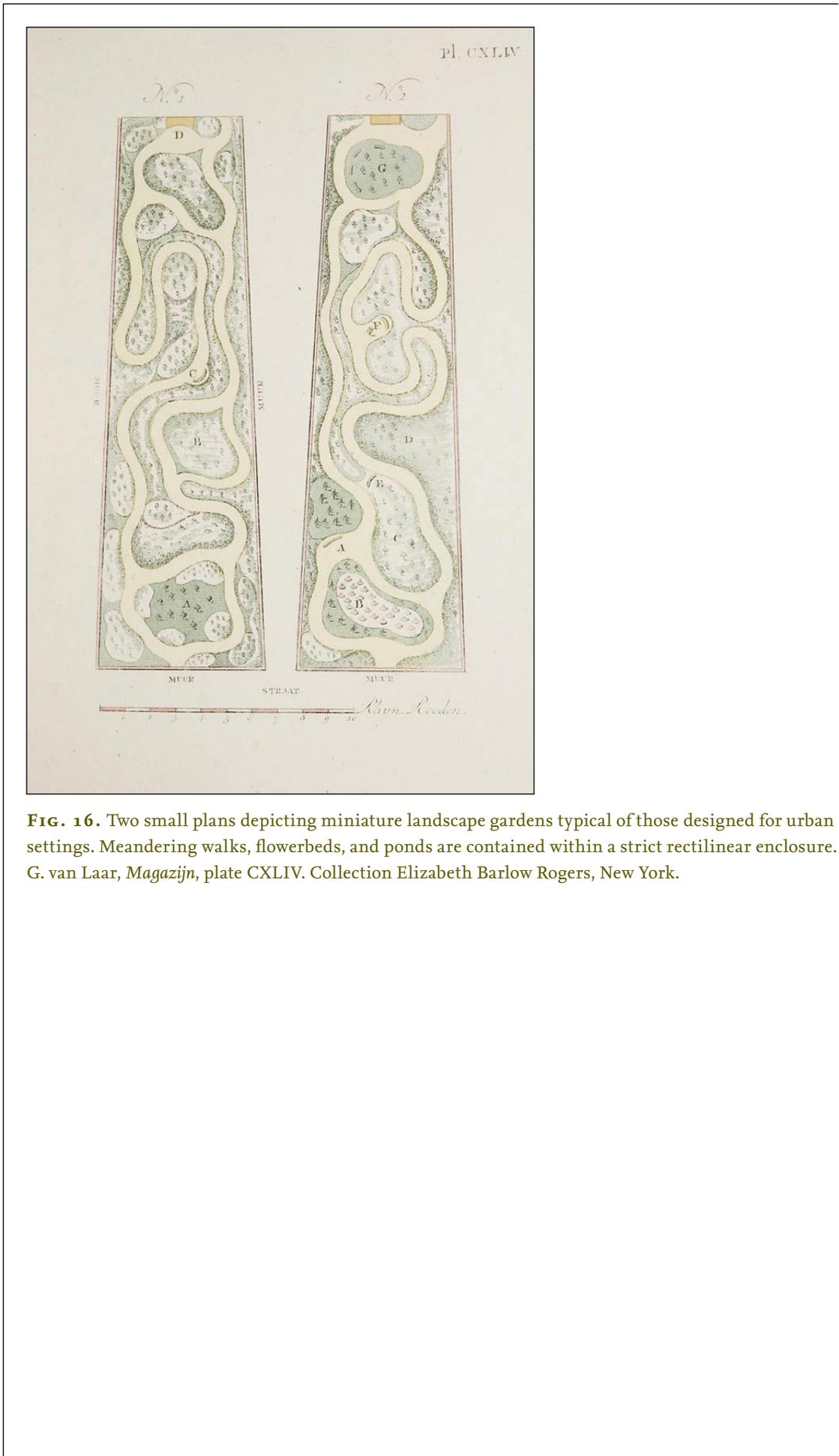
**FIG. 13.** The front part of the Rijnoord estate in Oudshoorn, situated along the Rhine River across from Alphen aan den Rijn. This was one of a group of landscape gardens in the immediate area attributed to Van Laar. G. van Laar, *Magazijn*, plate XXXVII. Collection Elizabeth Barlow Rogers, New York.



**FIG. 14.** The Alphen and Oudshoorn polder area situated along a bend of the Rhine River. Detail of map by J. Kuiper, published in *Gemeente Atlas van Nederland* (Leeuwarden, 1865–69). Nationaal Archief, Beeldbank Kaarten Zuid Holland/Oudshoorn; also at [www.atlasandmap.com/nederlands](http://www.atlasandmap.com/nederlands).



**FIG. 15.** Plan for the garden of Ter Hooghe in Middelburg, designed by the landscape architect Pieter Schuppens, who sent it to Van Laar for publication. G. van Laar, *Magazijn*, plates CLXXXIII and CLXXXIV. Collection Elizabeth Barlow Rogers, New York.



**FIG. 16.** Two small plans depicting miniature landscape gardens typical of those designed for urban settings. Meandering walks, flowerbeds, and ponds are contained within a strict rectilinear enclosure. G. van Laar, *Magazijn*, plate CXLIV. Collection Elizabeth Barlow Rogers, New York.

## VAN LAAR'S GARDENS AND THE EARLY LANDSCAPE STYLE

The English landscape-garden style was not deeply influential in the Netherlands until well into the second half of the eighteenth century. Gardens laid out between around 1750 and 1800 belong to the Early Landscape Garden style, and the gardens published in Van Laar's *Storehouse* fit this category. Most of his gardens are relatively small and self-contained; they have an enclosed character strictly separated from the surrounding countryside. The English "golden rule" of landscape design – the obliteration of spatial confines and the opening of visual boundaries between garden and natural surroundings – was not adhered to in Holland. Until the turn of the century, landowners remained conservative when modernizing ancestral country seats and often simply superimposed irregular features on the original geometric layout of their estates. A clever solution for creating the immediate effect of a landscape garden in a preexisting formal layout was to fill in and partly dig up the old square moats and ponds and make them into meandering bodies of water. For example, in one design he shows two ponds that were originally square, but have been redug to give them a "new, serpentine form."<sup>83</sup>

While many of Van Laar's layouts introduced curvilinear features, he tended to hold on to familiar geometrical forms, and most of his gardens have strict, rectilinear contours. In Holland, this was not simply an aesthetic choice but partly a necessity, since excess water needed to be drained. Land was traditionally divided into long, narrow, rectangular polder parcels, often bordered by drainage canals (see figs. 7 and 8). In describing some of his designs, Van Laar explains in detail how to drain the water properly and construct sluices and weirs.<sup>84</sup> It should be pointed out that the role and relationship of the natural versus the man-made environment was inverted in Holland compared with other European countries: artificially created through land reclamation, the country's straight, mathematical grid of polder lands and canals contrasted with the natural-looking, irregularly shaped landscape garden. Thus, ironically, geometrical garden layouts conformed better to the normal, natural Dutch countryside than did informal landscape-garden layouts. As if to reinforce this point, by tradition Holland was admired for the regularity and neatness of its gardens, and the switch to the form and tradition of irregular landscape gardening disappointed late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century foreign visitors. The informal landscape garden layouts did not fit their image of a neatly organized country with equally composed, rational inhabitants.<sup>85</sup>

At the time Van Laar's book was published, professional landscape gardeners and dilettantes alike often lacked the detailed expertise, as well as the courage, to completely overhaul their old properties and forsake the formal gardening style for one in the latest fashion. For historical and sentimental reasons, landowners refused to uproot large, existing plantations – the wooded areas and monumental entry avenues framed by heavy trees – even if that was absolutely necessary to conceive a truly transformed landscaped park. In making such decisions, these owners took part in the larger international debate about how to balance the old and the new in garden designing. The discussion about whether to eliminate extensive, preexisting tracts of cultivated land and cut venerable trees was of special interest to the Romantic era, with its appreciation of ancient history and primordial forests.<sup>86</sup> Old trees came to be especially valued for their historical association and picturesque quality. Their size underscored their age and importance, and by extension the importance of the whole estate and its ancestral line. The well-known German garden theorist Christian C. L. Hirschfeld, in his *Theorie der Gartenkunst* (1779–85), stresses the need for careful reflection before cutting certain “revered old trees and [to] not blindly sweep away whole woods or tear down allées out of slavish emulation.”<sup>87</sup> Van Laar himself stresses the timeless significance of trees, and indicates on various prints the exact spot where solitary trees or old clusters of oaks have been saved from being felled.<sup>88</sup> On the other hand, he encourages his reader to remove extended planted areas judiciously if that is required to attain the right aesthetic effect.<sup>89</sup> Van Laar also admonishes his colleagues – for the first time in Dutch history using the term “garden architects” – to use their newly acquired know-how more boldly when improving properties:

“Garden Architects! May I be so bold as to tell you the truth: a few good ones excluded, many of you are not well versed in the Art of Drawing. When are you going to stop offering your own stiff and awkward concepts and brainchildren instead of true and artless Nature? When it comes to your geometrical alleys, you barely dare to place even one little Tree out of line or in a slightly oblique position to delight the eye, let alone highlight the fortuitous beauty in Hillocks and Brooks. Indeed, something needs to be done, as you must sense yourselves.”<sup>90</sup>

Van Laar criticizes the design and drafting style of fellow garden architects here, and also the rigidity and lack of naturalness in their visual concepts. He trusts that the models in his *Storehouse* will guide them henceforth. However, Van Laar does not seem to be entirely objective in his critique. Many of his own garden plans reveal a transitional style, combining old and new features and incorporating stiffly executed details that look more artificial than natural. Moreover, if his suggestions to decorate the garden “and display within a small area the largest possible variety”<sup>91</sup> were

literally followed, the sheer number of objects would fill the place completely, leaving no room for pristine nature. His German contemporary Hirschfeld had already sternly warned the garden architect and property owner not to overdo the ornamental details in the garden and “succumb to excess”; they should spread such details judiciously. Hirschfeld also cautioned his readers not to make their gardens look too artificial, filled with a random combination of buildings in various foreign styles.<sup>92</sup> Apparently the tendency to overdecorate one’s property and to do so in a tasteless manner was widespread, as evidenced by a remark in popular contemporary English book, namely Edward Bulwer-Lyton’s *Pelham; or the Adventures of a Gentleman*.<sup>93</sup> This book offered a witty description of an overly decorated landscape garden criticized for the blatant juxtaposition of all possible foreign styles: “a pretty parterre here, and a Chinese pagoda there . . . it is the four quarters of the globe in a mole-hill!”<sup>94</sup>

To do him justice, Van Laar, following Hirschfeld, admonishes his readers never to mix and match different “tastes,” such as the Gothic and Chinese:

They [the structures in the garden] should form a complete unity in themselves; in other words, if there are other ornaments situated nearby, these have to be executed in more or less the same taste. To perceive a small building in the Gothic taste in the immediate vicinity of a brightly colored Chinese Bridge or house will disturb the discerning spectator passing by. Indeed, all transitions in the garden need to be gradual and not make any sudden leaps, unless it is done consciously to create the effect of surprise.<sup>95</sup>

Still, although Krauss claimed that, thanks to Van Laar, the Dutch landscape garden was now much more natural in appearance, in reality it would take another generation before a convincingly natural appearance was achieved. Only in the second decade of the nineteenth century would this art form begin to reach its maturity in Holland.

## ENDNOTES

- 83 Van Laar, *Magazijn*, explanation of plate CIV (104): “Op hetzelfde [terrein] zijn laager twee groote Vierkanten Vijvers . . . welke Vijvers, door een gedeelte te dempen, en wat bijtegraaven, herschapen zijn in de hier voorgestelde gebogen vorm.”
- 84 For example, in the description of plates LXXXVII and LXXXVIII (87 and 88).
- 85 For further reading on associations drawn between nature, landscape, and national character in foreign travel journals of the eighteenth and early nineteenth century, see C. Bertram, “Natuur en Volkskarakter: Met buitenlanders op stap in de Hollandse tuin,” *De Achttiende Eeuw* 36, nr. 2 (2004), pp. 101–11.
- 86 Elizabeth Barlow Rogers, Elizabeth S. Eustis, and John Bidwell, *Romantic Gardens. Nature, Art, and Landscape Design* (New York: The Morgan Library and Museum and the Foundation for Landscape Studies; Jaffrey, NH: David R. Godine, 2010), pp. 11–14.
- 87 Christian C. L. Hirschfeld, *Theory of Garden Art*, ed. and trans. Linda B. Parshall (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001), pp. 136–37.
- 88 Van Laar, *Magazijn*, plate CIV (104).
- 89 Hirschfeld, *Theory of Garden Art*, pp. 136–37. For further reading on Hirschfeld and his judicious middle road between old and new gardening traditions, see Rogers et al., *Romantic Gardens*, pp. 42–44.
- 90 Van Laar, *Magazijn*, text accompanying plate CLXXXVIII (188).
- 91 Van Laar, *Magazijn*, “Preface,” p. II.
- 92 Hirschfeld, *Theory of Garden Art*, p. 107, on ornamental excess, and pp. 136–37, on artificiality and the inappropriate mixing of foreign styles. See also Rogers et al., *Romantic Garden*, pp. 42–44.
- 93 Edward Bulwer-Lytton, *Pelham; or Adventures of a Gentleman* (London, [1828]).
- 94 Bulwer-Lytton, *Pelham*, p. 61. Quoted in Meulenkamp, “G. van Laar’s *Magazijn*,” *Bulletin KNOB*, p. 131, n. 27.
- 95 Van Laar, *Magazijn*, description of plate III (3).

## VAN LAAR'S CONTEMPORARIES: SCHONK, MICHAËL, POSTH, VAN LUNTEREN, ZOCHER, AND ROODBAARD

In coming to a general stylistic assessment of the forty garden plans gathered in Van Laar's *Storehouse of Garden Ornaments* and defining their place within these transitional years of landscape gardening, it is useful to compare them to those made by Van Laar's contemporaries. Important landscape designers in Holland in the mid-eighteenth to early nineteenth century included the court architect Philip Willem Schonck (1735–1807), the German-born Johann Georg Michaël (1738–1800), his German son-in-law Jan David Zocher the Elder (1763–1817), Jan David Zocher the Younger (1791–1870), Johan Philip Posth (1763–1831), Hendrik van Lunteren (1780–1848),<sup>96</sup> and Lucas Pieterszoon Roodbaard (1782–1851). Among them, the Zochers – a family dynasty of garden designers – are best known today to the general public because some of their greatest landscapes are now public parks.

A clear point of departure for illustrating the early approach to landscape-garden designing is the work done by the court architect Philip Willem Schonck.<sup>97</sup> His proposal for a landscape layout replacing the well-known, formal gardens of William and Mary at Het Loo shows how strange the result of commingling old and new stylistic features could be. The traditional stepped framework of the seventeenth-century layout and its octagonal water basin are retained and only the baroque parterres are changed into irregularly shaped ground parcels with narrow, twisted paths.

Johann Georg Michaël, considered to be among the first to introduce the landscape-garden style in Holland, would take the next step in the development of landscape gardening, even though his gardens retained their original straight framework and their new curvilinear lines (the S-curve and simple circle), were still based on geometrical form. Michaël first worked in the region of the Kennemerland, where he was involved in the redesign of several major estates, including Velserbeek, Elswout and Beeckesteyn. Interrupting his work here in the late 1770s, and sponsored by his patron Jacob Boreel, then ambassador to England,<sup>98</sup> Michaël made a tour of the grand English estates. He studied the layouts and ornamentation of Kew Gardens and Stowe, arguably the most famous landscape gardens of the second half of the eighteenth century. Kew, landscaped from 1757 onward by William Chambers, was decorated with ornate buildings, including the well-known Chinese pagoda. Stowe, designed in several stages by Charles Bridgeman, William Kent, and Capability Brown,<sup>99</sup> featured extensive vistas over lakes and valleys, and was filled with more than thirty temples and monuments. Although these gardens were far larger than those Michaël would lay out in Holland, their designers faced similar challenges: deciding how to incorporate elements of earlier garden structures and whether to fell existing tree plantations.

On returning from England, Michaël was commissioned to landscape the gardens of Biljoen (Velp)<sup>100</sup> and the nearby estate of Doorwerth near Arnhem (fig. 17),<sup>101</sup> in the province of Gelderland. These layouts would benefit not only from the knowledge Michaël had acquired in England, but also from the property's natural situation. It was ideally located in undulating meadows and heather fields alternating with valleys and dense woods. These geographic features were typical of Gelderland, the province to which Biljoen and Doorwerth belonged. Landscape gardens laid out in this eastern region of the Netherlands had a completely different character from those in the flat polder lands along the western coast, where striking elements such as Biljoen's dramatic cascade (fig. 18)<sup>102</sup> were difficult if not impossible to imitate. Differences in height "provide endless opportunities" for the garden architect, as Van Laar commented in supplying his readers with a particularly grand waterfall (fig. 19).<sup>103</sup>

Another important landscape architect working in Gelderland at the time was Johan Philip Posth. Just as Michaël did, Posth improved old estates by transforming geometrical layouts into landscaped parks through the introduction of curvilinear forms: meandering paths, rounded ponds, and irregular plantations. However, his layouts also contain details that seem contrived. His plan for the park at Rhederoord, Rheden, near De Steeg (fig. 20),<sup>104</sup> for example, shows him struggling to transform a geometrically shaped wooded area into a convincingly modern landscape garden. The new layout, superimposed on the old grid of radiating allées, consists of an artificial-looking network of serpentine paths meandering through woods and heather fields.

Posth's plan for Rhederoord incorporates a small enclosed section, separated from the rest of the garden, containing a hermitage surrounded by densely planted firs. Van Laar might have borrowed from Posth this idea of setting apart garden areas that carry specific functions. In Van Laar's design for the garden of Rijnoord at Alphen aan den Rijn, a fenced-in section of the grounds holds a menagerie and kitchen garden (see fig. 13), although his plan is more freely drawn than Posth's.<sup>105</sup>

Hendrik van Lunteren, whose career would span part of the Mature Landscape Garden period (from c.1820 onwards), gave the landscape park a more convincingly natural appearance. Van Lunteren worked in eastern and central Holland, in Gelderland and Utrecht. He added some meadows into his designs and incorporated views of the surrounding farmlands. Most notably, he treated the landscape garden and surrounding countryside as a single visual entity.

It is interesting to compare Van Laar's plans for landscape gardens with some of the designs made by the architects described above. He would have been most familiar with the work of Michaël as he knew, and probably even worked in, the estates designed by Michaël in the Kennemerland. His *Storehouse* contains numerous prints pertaining to the layout and decoration of Elswout and Velserbeek. But the designs in the *Storehouse* are most comparable stylistically to those made by Hendrik van Lunteren (fig. 21), sharing the same basic principles of composition. Their plans contain carefully arranged belts of trees and shrubs. These surround a central greensward dotted here and there with large solitary trees, enclosed by more densely wooded plots, and cut through by meandering rivulets and ponds with kidney-shaped islands.

In several important points, however, the layouts Van Laar offers in his *Storehouse* clearly differ from those by Van Lunteren. Van Laar brings actual cornfields and paddocks *into* the garden, and does so on a much larger scale, combining pleasure and profit. Many of his plans contain extensive areas designed for agricultural purposes, such as orchards and pastures filled with "old Dutch" farmyards, haystacks, and cattle (fig. 22).<sup>106</sup> Earlier French and English concepts of the *ferme orneé* and principles of rural gardening described by Stephen Switzer,<sup>107</sup> Batty Langley,<sup>108</sup> and John Plaw<sup>109</sup> form the basis of such rural compositions. The influence of Humphry Repton, who called for a renewed use of flower beds near the house to add variety and color, can also be recognized in Van Laar's garden plans, which include parcels with semicircular plots for flowers.

The later 1820s were marked by the progressive broadening of vistas, encompassing both the garden and its surroundings, and compositions that facilitated movement through the entire garden along wide, open circuits. These features could be found in the work of landscape architects such as Van Lunteren and Jan David Zocher the Younger, whose beautifully executed watercolor drawings (fig. 23) are works of art in themselves. In comparison to Zocher's designs, Van Laar's plans appear small and decoratively rather than spatially envisioned. His draughtsmanship is less technically skilled and artistically refined. By the end of the eighteenth century, some garden architects had developed their own unique drawing styles, expressing a distinctly personal "touch" in their curvilinear lines, details of plant material, and tonal differences indicating shade or light. In contrast, Van Laar's garden plans seem to follow a standard formula, an impression that may be due in part to their translation into the print medium.

An important representative of the next generation of landscape architects, starting his career c.1820, and a particularly skillful draftsman, was Lucas Pieter Roodbaard.<sup>110</sup> He is remembered as the most popular landscape designer working in the early to mid-nineteenth-century northern provinces of Holland, comprising Friesland, Groningen, and Drenthe. His garden designs are easily recognizable, since each plan is conceived of as an organic whole, defined by the strongly accentuated, rounded shapes of ground parcels, ponds, and serpentine paths.<sup>111</sup> These gardens are filled with an varied array of buildings and decorations in eclectic styles. When choosing models for structures and ornaments, Roodbaard was directly inspired by Van Laar's plates. He literally copied certain features out of the *Storehouse* – for example, a Chinese bridge and a rustic Swiss bridge.<sup>112</sup> Roodbaard also copied Van Laar's design for a delicate wooden arbor (fig. 24).<sup>113</sup> The resulting structure is used to this day as a seating area in the garden of Oranjestein at Oranjewoud (fig. 25).<sup>114</sup> Just as Van Laar had foreseen, after his death the prints published in his *Storehouse of Garden Ornaments* would continue to influence the layout and decoration of landscape gardens in Holland.

On the whole, the designs of Van Laar and his contemporaries reflected a shared aesthetic during a transitional moment from early to mature landscape gardening. With some notable exceptions, these landscape architects designed relatively small-scale, self-enclosed, landscaped grounds that lacked a truly grand vision. Their gardens tended to be crowded with buildings and ornaments and conceived of as miniature landscapes.<sup>115</sup> Many of the gardens had – from the standpoint of the modern viewer – rather unnatural winding paths and overexaggerated serpentine ponds with little bridges and garden structures in an endless array of styles and forms. These were designs meant for small- to medium-sized plots of land of about 2 to 8 hectares (5 to 20 acres), situated in or near towns. Similar modestly sized, monument-filled gardens were illustrated in contemporary French books such as Jean Charles Krafft's *Plans des plus beaux jardins pittoresques de France, d'Angleterre et d'Allemagne* (Paris, 1809). For example, compare Krafft's "Plan of a picturesque garden" (fig. 26), which had an area of about 3 hectares (7 acres).<sup>116</sup> The French architect Gabriel Thouin (1754–1829) also offered small landscape gardens for the new bourgeois citizen in *Les Plans Raisonnés des toutes les espèces de jardins* (1819).<sup>117</sup> Such gardens meant for suburban settings accorded better with Holland's land-use patterns and topography than sweeping designs invented for rural locations such as the sites of some of the grand English landscape parks.

## ENDNOTES

96 Lammertse-Tjalma, "Hendrik van Lunteren," pp. 36–73, esp. 51.

97 For an illustration, see Bierens de Haan, *Meer om Cieraat als Gebruijck*, p. 45.

98 Carla S. Oldenburger-Ebbers, "De Tuinarchitectuur van Johann Georg Michaël (1738–1800)," in *Bulletin KNOB*, vol. 90, nr. 3 (1991), pp. 73–79, esp. 73–74.

99 Peter Willis, *Charles Bridgeman and the English Landscape Garden* (London: A. Zwemmer Ltd., 1977), fig. 156. There are other published versions; see Elizabeth Barlow Rogers, *Landscape Design: A Cultural and Architectural History* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 2001), pp. 240–43.

100 Van der Wijck, *Nederlandse Buitenplaats*, pp. 262–66.

101 For an illustration, see Bierens de Haan, *Meer om Cieraat als Gebruijck*, p. 56 and plate II. The plan, kept in the Rijksarchief, Gelderland in Arnhem (Archief Huis Doorwerth, Tekening I - Tekeningen Collectie 66), is attributed to J. G. Michaël, who worked at Doorwerth in 1783–84, but probably J. P. Posth was involved also.

102 Van der Wijck, *Nederlandse Buitenplaats*, p. 266. The prints were made by Christian Henning c. 1790.

103 Van Laar, *Magazijn*, explanation of plate CXIV (114): "A place where there is such a difference in the water level that one can let the water run through an artificial Canal, and thus create a Waterfall that will have a grand effect. In the Province of Gelderland there are such opportunities here and there."

104 Oldenburger-Ebbers et al., *Gids voor Tuin-en Landschapsarchitectuur*, pp. 102–3. For an illustration, see also Lammertse-Tjalma, "Hendrik van Lunteren," p. 50.

105 Van Laar, *Magazijn*, plate LXXXVII (87).

106 Van Laar, *Magazijn*, plate XXIV (24).

107 For a discussion of the influence of Stephen Switzer's *Ichnographia Rustica*, originally published in London in 1718, see John Dixon Hunt and Peter Willis, eds., *The Genius of the Place: The English Landscape Garden 1620–1820* (London: Paul Elek, 1975), pp. 151–63.

108 For a discussion of the influence of Batty Langley's *New Principles of Gardening*, first published in London in 1728, see Hunt and Willis, eds., *Genius of Place*, pp. 178–80.

109 Plaw, John. *Ferme Ornée; or rural improvements. A series of domestic and ornamental designs, suited to parks, plantations, rides, walks, rivers, farms, &c. Calculated for landscape and picturesque effects*. London, 1785; 2nd ed. London: I. and J. Taylor, 1796.

110 Rita L. P. Mulder-Radetzky, *L. P. Roodbaard (1782–1851): een tuinarchitect met schildersogen* (Rotterdam: Stichting Bonas, 1999).

111 For a comparison of Roodbaard's landscape-garden designs with Van Laar's, see Ulbe Mehrrens, "Lucas Pieter Roodbaard en Gijsbert van Laar: architecten van landschappen in miniatuur," *Antiek* 21, nr. 8 (1987), pp. 435–40.

112 For a drawing of the Swiss Bridge and Mount at Fraeylemaborg, dated 1835, see H. Tromp, *Fraeylemaborg te Slochteren*, Bijdragen tot het bronnenonderzoek naar de ontwikkelingen van Nederlandse Historische tuinen, parken en buitenplaatsen nr 5 (Zeist: Rijksdienst voor de Monumentenzorg, 1980), “Tekening uit gedachtenis aen Fraeylemaborg.” The Chinese bridge illustrated in Van Laar, plate III (3), fig. 7, was executed in the park at the Heremastate (Joure).

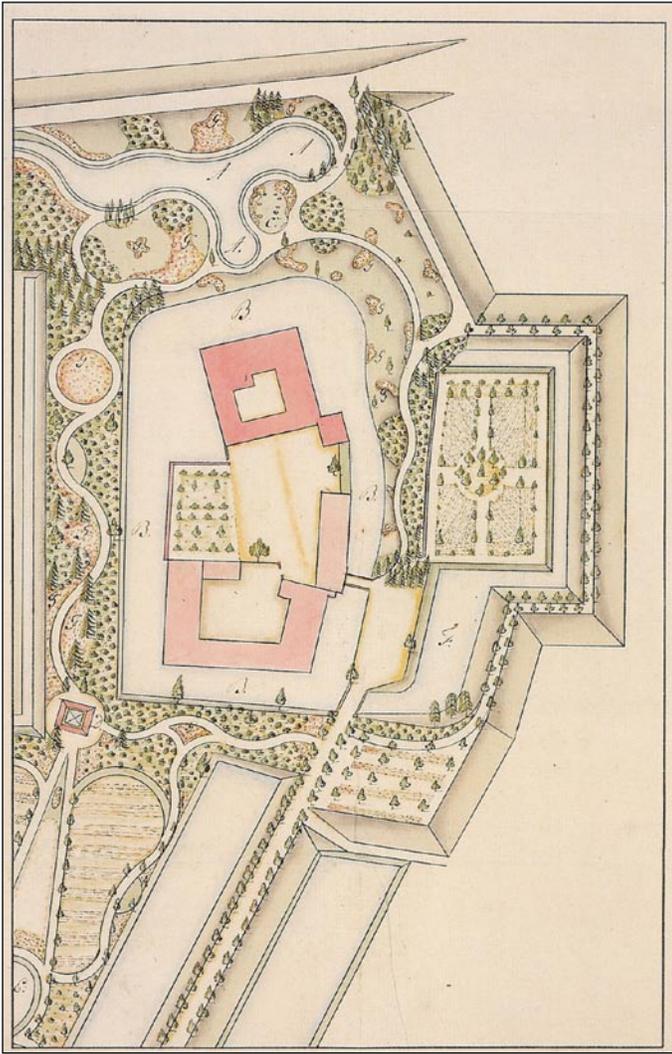
113 Van Laar, *Magazijn*, plate CLXXVIII (178), no. 3.

114 Mulder-Radetzky, *Roodbaard*, p. 43.

115 Mehrrens used the term “miniature landscapes” first, namely, in the title of his article in *Antiek*, describing Roodbaard and Van Laar as “architects of landscapes in miniature.”

116 Jean Charles Krafft, *Plans des plus beaux jardins pittoresques de France, d'Angleterre et d'Allemagne . . . Plans of the most beautiful picturesque gardens in France, England and Germany . . . Plæne der schoensten und malerischen gärten Franckreichs, Englands und Deutschlands* (Paris: Levrault, 1809), vol. 2, cah. 1, plate 1 (design for a garden in Picardi made by the architect Huvet in 1786).

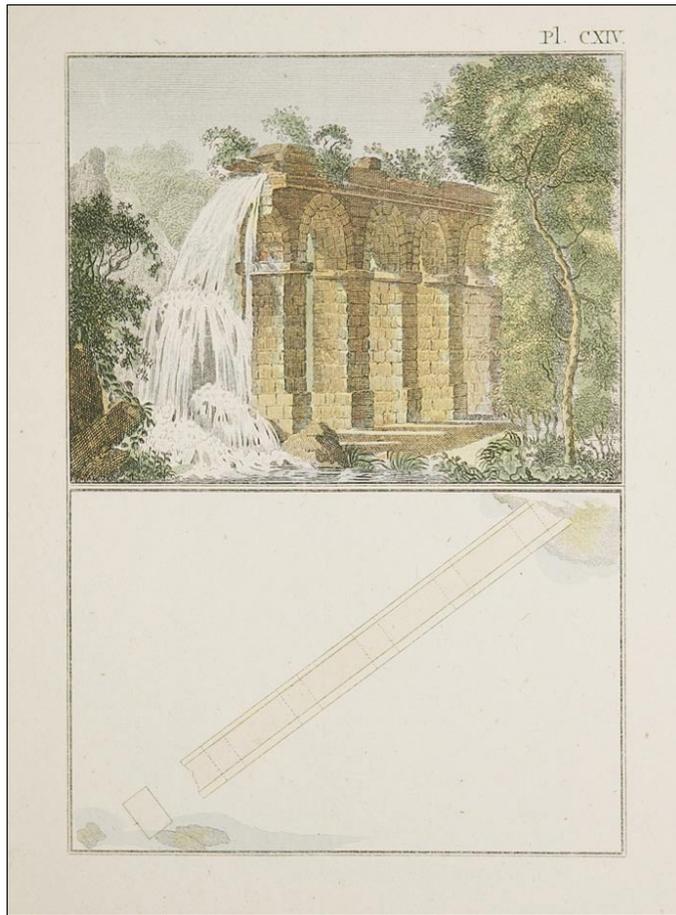
117 Gabriel Thouin, *Les Plans Raisonnés des toutes les espèces de jardins* (Paris, 1819). See also Conan, “The Coming of Age of the Bourgeois Garden,” p. 168.



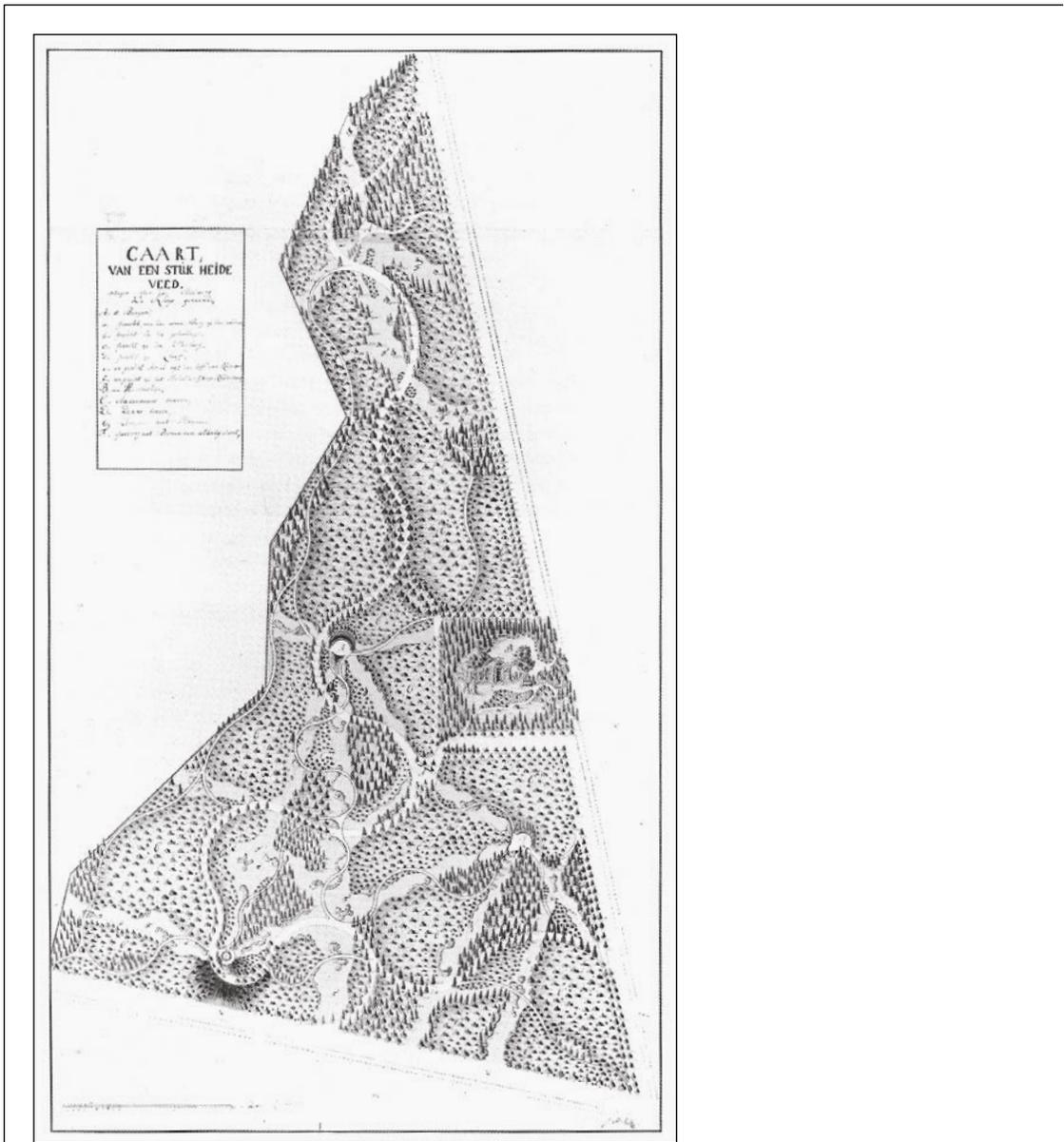
**FIG. 17.** An early landscape garden surrounding the old Doorwerth Castle in Arnhem. Attributed to J. G. Michaël, it shows meandering paths and ponds contained within a preexisting framework of ramparts and moats. Rijksarchief Gelderland, Arnhem. Archief Huis Doorwerth, tekening I. Coll. 66.



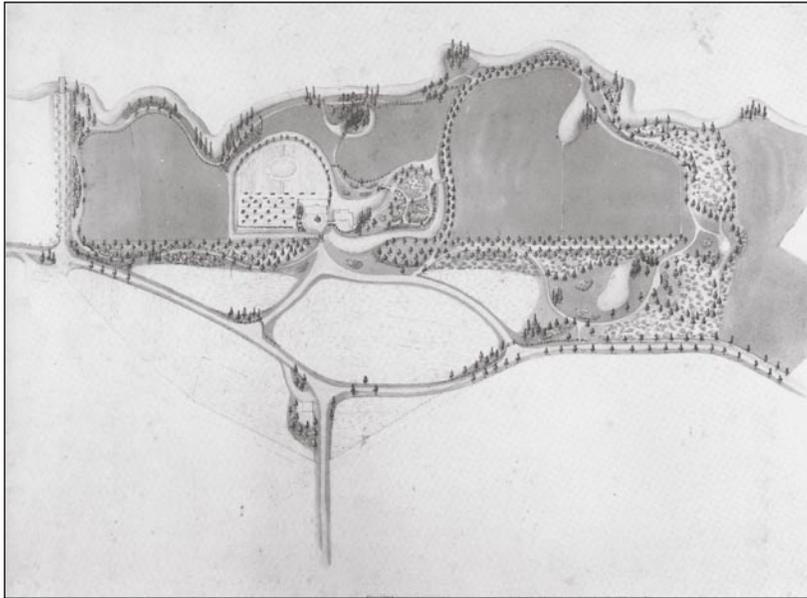
**FIG. 18.** Views of the grand cascades at Biljoen, in hilly Gelderland. Prints by Christian Henning, c. 1790, after designs attributed to J. G. Michael. From H. W. M. van der Wijck, *De Nederlandse Buitenplaats*, p. 266.



**FIG. 19.** Design for a waterfall to be made in a place where “there is such a difference in the water level that one can . . . create a Waterfall that will have a grand effect.” G. van Laar, *Magazijn*, plate CXIV. Collection Elizabeth Barlow Rogers, New York.



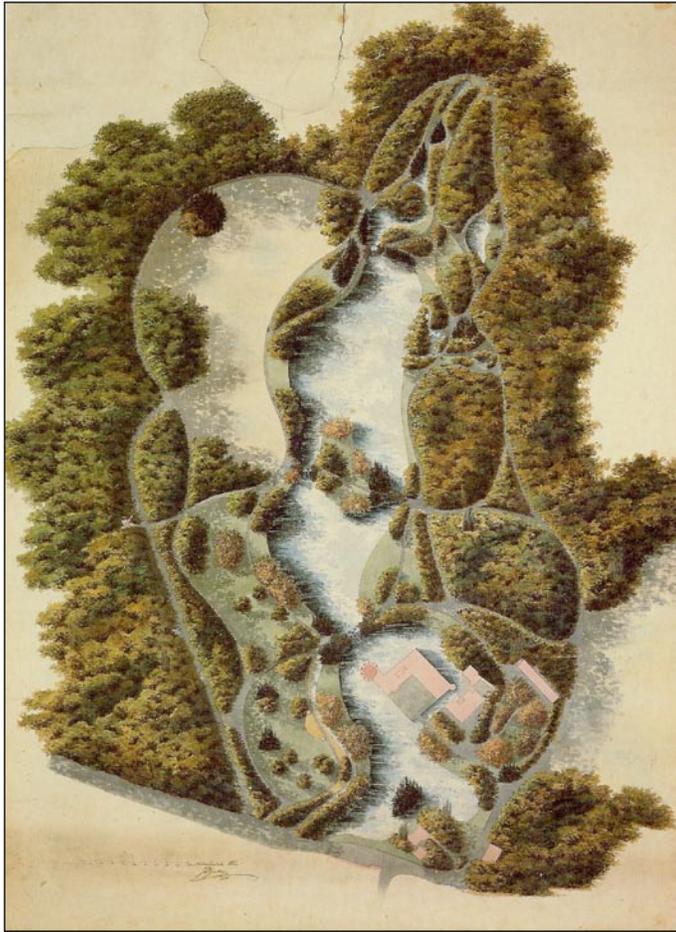
**FIG. 20.** Design by J. P. Posth, c. 1797, to transform the old, geometrically shaped heather fields of Rhederoord (Reden, Gelderland). The enclosure in the middle contains a wooded section with a hermitage. Rijksarchief Gelderland, Arnhem.



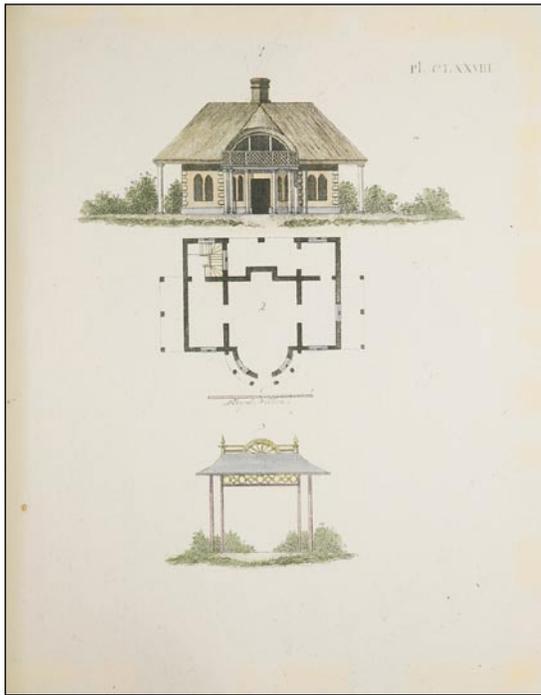
**FIG. 21.** A watercolor design attributed to H. van Lunteren, c. 1824, for the landscape park at Het Velde. This drawing shows a more mature stage in landscape design, expressed in the careful arrangement of belts of trees. Collection Het Geldersch Landschap, Arnhem.



**FIG. 22.** Gijsbert van Laar's model for a large landscape garden in the style of a *ferme ornée*. Decorative areas and extensive ponds are combined with useful agricultural areas, kitchen gardens, and farms. G. van Laar, *Magazijn*, plate XXIV. Collection Elizabeth Barlow Rogers, New York.



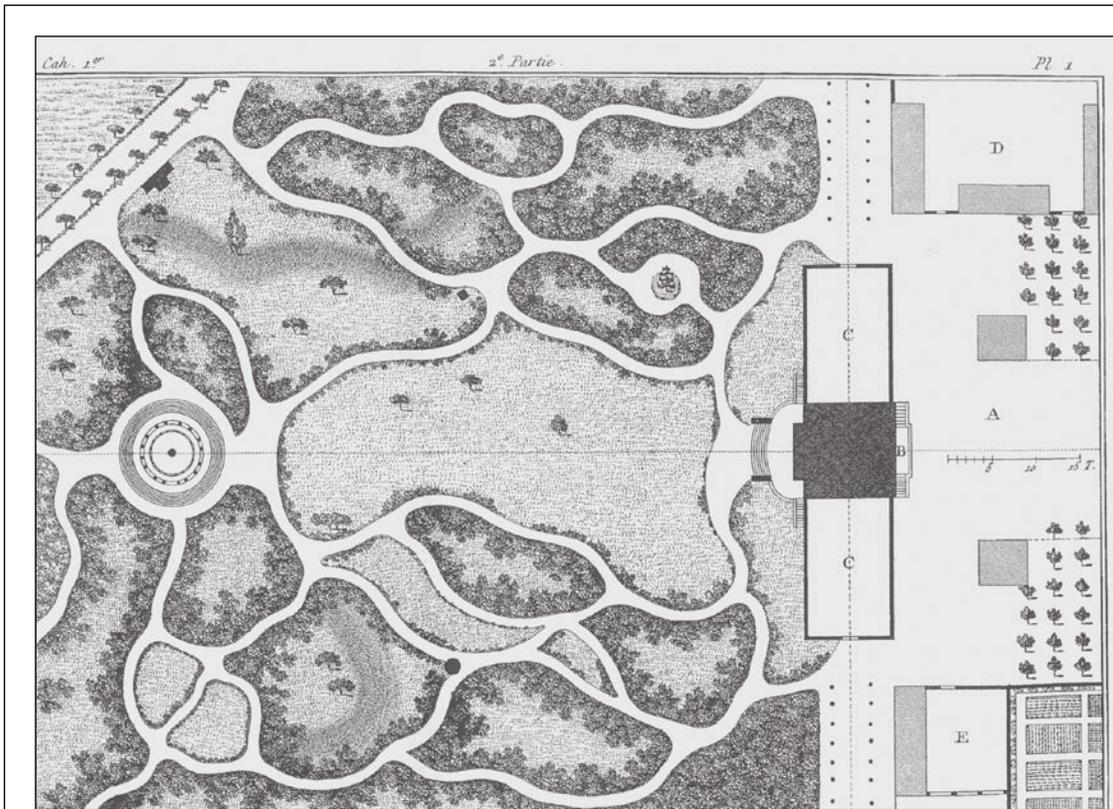
**FIG. 23.** A watercolor design by J. D. Zocher the Younger, dated 1836, for a landscape garden in the old park of Rosendael Castle near Arnhem. It shows a well-balanced, mature, landscape layout that was partly executed. Rijksarchief Gelderland, Arnhem. Archief Huis Rosendael, inv. 2135.



**FIG. 24.** A design for a little wooden arbor to be used as an ornamental structure in a garden. G. van Laar, *Magazijn*, plate CLXXVIII, no. 3. Collection Elizabeth Barlow Rogers, New York.



**FIG. 25.** Wooden arbor by the landscape architect L. P. Roodbaard standing in the garden of Oranjestein (Oranjewoud) today. Based on the design by Van Laar, shown in fig. 24. Photo by Jan Holwerda, summer 2007.



**FIG. 26.** A modest-sized “picturesque landscape garden,” of about seven acres, located in the Picardy region of France. Designed by Huvet in 1786 and published in Jean-Charles Krafft, *Plans des plus beaux jardins pittoresques de France*, vol. 2, cah. 1, plate 1. <http://digital.library.wisc.edu/1711.dl/DLDecArts>.

## “IN THE RUSTIC MANNER”: VAN LAAR AND THE PICTURESQUE

Van Laar offers designs for buildings and ornaments in a wide variety of styles. Every structure not only had to be strategically placed within the landscape garden to enhance its appearance, but also had to possess the right associative properties: it should evoke specific sentiments and bring meaning to the corner of the garden it ornamented. For example, rock formations and cascades, artificially created or not, produced sensations of “thrilling fear” or “horrified surprise,” whereas a colorful Chinese pavilion might arouse gaiety and joy. In describing the effects of diverse garden scenes on the onlooker, Van Laar demonstrates awareness of English landscape garden philosophy, from William Chambers’s “gardens of allusion” filled with buildings in different styles<sup>118</sup> to Edmund Burke’s theories on the Sublime.<sup>119</sup>

Van Laar was most deeply influenced by theories of the Picturesque. Indeed, in the history of the landscape garden, the Picturesque is perhaps the most important aesthetic concept. It is characterized by the attempt to create a perfect picture in the landscape by means of the judicious placement of trees, shrubs, and seemingly artless architectural structures. A garden designed in the Picturesque manner looks natural and rustic; its irregular layout is marked by pleasing variety.

Originated in eighteenth-century Britain by figures such as William Chambers,<sup>120</sup> Thomas Whately,<sup>121</sup> William Gilpin, and Humphry Repton, the ideals of the Picturesque were further developed by, among others, Georges-Louis Le Rouge,<sup>122</sup> Jean-Jacques Rousseau, and Claude-Henri Watelet in France; and by Johan Wolfgang von Goethe, Salomon Gessner, and Christian C. L. Hirschfeld in Germany and Switzerland.<sup>123</sup> A widely read French descriptive poem, Jacques Delille’s *Les Jardins* (1782), also played an important role in disseminating Picturesque theory,<sup>124</sup> as did the evolving literary genre of the picturesque walking tour – an early expression of polite tourism in one’s own country. Descriptions of walks (*wandelingen*) through scenic landscapes and grand estates were popularized in Holland by Adriaan Loosjes in *Hollandsch Arkadia of Wandelingen in de Omstreeken van Haarlem* (1804)<sup>125</sup> and Isaäk Nijhoff in *Geldersch Arkadia, of Wandeling over Biljoen en Beekhuizen* (1820),<sup>126</sup> celebrating the Kennemerland (where Elswout and Velserbeek are located), and the estates of Biljoen and Beekhuizen in Gelderland, respectively. These books helped increase understanding of the Picturesque and general interest in the art of the landscape garden.

“Picturesqueness” (*schilderachtigheid*) was a central theme in nineteenth-century Dutch art and architecture, and Van Laar’s *Storehouse* reflects this.<sup>127</sup> “Rough” and “picturesque” are the adjectives Van Laar employs most frequently, using them to describe structures constructed in an unfinished, natural style. This wording can be directly compared to the terminology found in eighteenth-century English theoretical works on landscape and the Picturesque, and even travel narratives such as Gilpin’s *Observations on the River Wye* (1782). For example, Gilpin’s analyses of ruggedness in nature, recognized in the outline of a tree or a summit,<sup>128</sup> are echoed by Van Laar, who defines nature itself or objects in it as “rough” and “rugged” or “rustic” and “rural.”

Old Dutch inns, small farms, weathered cottages, and primitive wooden huts with simple thatched roofs – all by Romantic standards “picturesque” – are by far the most common structures in Van Laar’s work. Along with hermitages, Swiss chalets, and wooden bridges (in particular the high “Swiss bridge,” built of long pieces of timber covered with bark), they symbolized honest rural living and were considered the most appropriate structures for rugged, rustic, or rural landscapes. Van Laar describes his designs for a pair of little huts (fig. 27), stressing the ease with which such primitive, crude structures can be made:

Artless Huts that can serve various purposes, the construction of which barely demands any costs. Made of rough tree trunks, some reed or straw for coverage is all that is required, except for the labour.<sup>129</sup>

These huts could even be made of wood painted to look like stone (fig. 28).<sup>130</sup> For the average property owner, such small rustic buildings were ideal; cabins, fishermen’s huts, and shacks were easily, quickly, and cheaply fabricated and gave an immediate sense of rural ruggedness to a particular section in the garden, lending an appropriate mood to the whole.

Van Laar also admired crude wooden bridges, especially those termed “Swiss” in recognition of the contemporary fascination with the pristine natural beauty of Switzerland. Switzerland’s awe-inspiring Alpine landscapes had captured the Romantic imagination, inviting a comparison with the unspoiled nature and society of a long-lost Golden Age. In Holland in particular, such wild, mountainous landscape scenes take on special meaning and dimension precisely because the Dutch countryside is radically unlike Switzerland’s, with the sole exceptions being the hills of Gelderland and a few areas of high dunes along the sea in the Kennemerland.

Bridges were functionally valuable as they could connect two pieces of land – often providing access to an island in a lake – and they were cheap and simple to construct. The earliest examples of Swiss bridges and chalets in Dutch gardens date from the late eighteenth century. In walking through the Velserbeek gardens, Van Laar doubtless appreciated what Numan described as “the English Section, with Swiss Bridge and Gothic Ruin.”<sup>131</sup> He himself depicted “a so-called Swiss or roughly hewn Bridge” (fig. 29)<sup>132</sup> that, he says, stood in the garden of Rijnoord.<sup>133</sup> It resembles a well-known Swiss bridge at Elswout that was depicted by a number of late-eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century artists (fig. 30),<sup>134</sup> who treated it as an icon of a rustic realm. A similar Swiss bridge made of heavy moss-covered boughs stands in the same wooded area of the Elswout park today.<sup>135</sup>

In addition to Swiss bridges, Van Laar illustrated some “Swiss Cottages” in the *Storehouse*. Such picturesque wooden structures – Swiss chalets, we might term them – became standard features in later nineteenth-century gardens.<sup>136</sup> Van Laar omitted some large Swiss chalets published by Grohmann,<sup>137</sup> preferring smaller models that looked more like small cottages.<sup>138</sup> Associated with such modest rustic dwellings was the quintessential Romantic vision of a simple, honest life enjoyed amid unspoiled nature.

The emotional effectiveness of buildings and structures could be heightened by emphasizing their age. Van Laar takes every opportunity to admonish the reader to add an artificially weathered appearance to structures, making them look as if they have stood at that very spot for centuries. In addition, one could add a fake date to the outer wall of a gate, house, or the like. Indeed, Van Laar seems obsessed by the need to stress the Dutch historical past, as evidenced by the dates he chiseled unto the façades of several of his structures. A building carries the date 1658 (fig. 31);<sup>139</sup> a wall around a church bears the year 1450; and a bridge that stood at Velserbeek and was drawn by Numan without a date carries the year 1507.<sup>140</sup>

Van Laar’s tendency to stress the historical age of objects is meaningful in the context of the international, Romantic yearning for an ideal and heroic past. In Holland, people looked back to the era of the Batavi a Germanic tribe mentioned in Tacitus’ *Historiae*. In ancient times the Batavi settled in the Rhine Delta; they came to be regarded as the ancestors of the Dutch people. Efforts to recapture the mythical Batavian past were part of the quest for a new national identity. It is fitting that the expression of these tendencies appears in a book on new landscapes published in uncertain sociopolitical times, when the “modern Batavians” were struggling under their own and foreign governments.

## ENDNOTES

- 118 See Hunt and Willis, eds., *Genius of the Place*, pp. 283–88 and pp. 318–25. See also Rogers, *Landscape Design*, p. 261–62, on the “sensational” effects of Chinese and other architectural styles.
- 119 Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (London: R. and J. Dodsley, 1759).
- 120 William Chambers, *Plans, Elevations, Sections, and Perspective Views of the Gardens and Buildings at Kew in Surrey* (London, 1763). Grohmann refers to Chambers’s work and illustrates the Temple of Aeolus in Kew Garden in his *Ideenmagazin*, cah. 4, plate 6.
- 121 Thomas Whately, *Observations on Modern Gardening* (London: [printed for] T. Payne, 1771).
- 122 Georges-Louis Le Rouge, *Détails de nouveaux jardins à la mode*, 21 cahiers (Paris, [1775]–88). This work is also known under variant titles, including *Recueil des jardins anglo-chinois* and *Jardins anglo-chinois*. Grohmann refers to Le Rouge’s work: in his *Ideenmagazin*, cah. 31, plate. 3, he describes a little Chinese house on a bridge that he says is borrowed from a French work entitled *Les Jardins Chinois* (“Ein Chinesisches Häuschen aus einem Französischen Werke, *Les Jardins Chinois* betitelt, entlehnt . . .”).
- 123 For an exploration of this topic, see Rogers et al., *Romantic Garden*, pp. 20–25.
- 124 Jacques Delille, *Les Jardins, ou l’art d’embellir les paysages, poème par M. l’Abbé Delille* (Paris, 1782). The work was available in English translation by 1798 and there were many other foreign editions. See Rogers et al., *Romantic Gardens*, p. 80.
- 125 Adriaan Loosjes, *Hollands Arkadia of Wandelingen in de Omstreken van Haarlem* (Haarlem: A. Loosjes Pz., 1804).
- 126 Isaäc Anne Nijhoff, *Geldersch Arkadia, of Wandeling over Biljoen en Beekhuizen* (Arnhem: P. Nijhoff, 1820).
- 127 Caroline van Eck, Jeroen van den Eynde, Wilfred van Leeuwen et al., eds., *Het schilderachtige: studies over het schilderachtige in de Nederlandse kunsttheorie en architectuur* (Amsterdam: Architectura and Natura Pers, 1994). On *schilderachtig* and the related words *pittoresk* and *romantisch*, see W-J. Pantus, “In schilderachtige schakering,” pp. 54–65.
- 128 On William Gilpin’s concepts of the Picturesque, see Hunt and Willis, eds., *Genius of the Place*, pp. 337–41. Compare also Rogers, *Landscape Design*, pp. 252–53. Gilpin’s description of his tour of famous country houses is stylistically similar to descriptions of Grand Tours.
- 129 Van Laar, *Magazijn*, plate LXXVIII (68).
- 130 Van Laar, *Magazijn*, plate XXXIV (34).
- 131 “Gezigt van de Engelsche party, op de Zwitserse brug en de Gotische burgt op de hofstee” (Numan, *Vierentwintig printtekeningen*, n.p.). For color illustrations, see *Beeldbank Noord-Hollands Archief* at [ranh.pictura-dp.nl](http://ranh.pictura-dp.nl)
- 132 Van Laar, *Magazijn*, plate XXIX (29), no. 3.
- 133 Van Laar, *Magazijn*, plate LXXXVIII, no. L, with reference back to plate XXIX (29).

- 134 For an overview of artists at Elswout, see H. Tromp, *Elswout te Overveen in Bijdragen tot het Bronnenonderzoek naar de ontwikkeling van Nederlandse Historische Tuinen, Parken en Buitenplaatsen*, nr. 12 (Zeist: Rijksdienst voor de Monumentenzorg, 1983). E. van Drielst made a series of drawings of the estate in 1795–96, including the Swiss bridge. See Van der Wijck, *Nederlandse Buitenplaats*, p. 238.
- 135 Van Laar, *Magazijn*, plate LXXXVIII (87), nr. L. Van Laar also points to this Swiss bridge as an appropriate model for a bridge to be constructed in the gardens of Rijn Noord at Alphen aan den Rijn.
- 136 Oldenburger-Ebbers et al., *Gids voor de Nederlandse Tuin-en Landschapsarchitectuur*, p. 244. The Swiss chalet, which still exists, was designed by J. D. Zocher around 1834 for the Spaarnberg estate at Santpoort (Velsen).
- 137 Grohmann, *Ideenmagazin*, cah. 15, plate 5, illustrates a design by the German architect J. G. Klinsky for a Swiss farmer's house. Cf. Philipp, *Um 1800*, p. 107. A similar wooden house is shown in Krafft, *Jardins pittoresques de France*, cah. 4, pl. 28.
- 138 Van Laar, *Magazijn*, plate XCI (91). This design resembles a cottage published by Krafft (*Jardins pittoresques de France*, cah. 3, pt. 2, pl. 24).
- 139 Van Laar, *Magazijn*, plate LXXIX (79).
- 140 Van Laar, *Magazijn*, plates CX (110) and CXL (140).



**FIG. 27.** Roughly made huts with thatched roofs were inexpensive and picturesque additions to landscape gardens. G. van Laar, *Magazijn*, plate LXVIII. Collection Elizabeth Barlow Rogers, New York.



**FIG. 28.** Designs for four “picturesque, rustic huts” made of wood painted to look like stone. They could be used for storage or as shelters against rain. G. van Laar, *Magazijn*, plate XXXIV. Collection Elizabeth Barlow Rogers, New York.



**FIG. 29.** A “Swiss roughly hewn bridge,” a picturesque feature of the Dutch landscape garden. G. van Laar, *Magazijn*, plate XXIX. Collection Elizabeth Barlow Rogers, New York.



**FIG. 30.** View of the Swiss bridge in Elswout Park (Overveen). Print by H. Schwegman, after a drawing by E. van Drielst, c.1796. From H. W. M. van der Wijck, *De Nederlandse Buitenplaats*, p. 238.



**FIG. 31.** Design for an old inn, to be painted on a flat wooden panel and placed at the end of a long avenue to give the illusion of an actual building. It has been given the date of 1658 to underscore the impression of age. G. van Laar, *Magazijn*, plate LXXIX. Collection Elizabeth Barlow Rogers, New York.

## BEYOND THE RUSTIC: A TASTE FOR VARIETY

The “rustic manner” is, in effect, Van Laar’s default style; he uses the term throughout the book to describe any small structure, whether cottage, hut, shed, or bridge. On occasion, a rugged log cabin or cottage, often copied from Grohmann’s *Ideenmagazin*, might be more specifically defined as “Russian”<sup>141</sup> or “Muscovian.”<sup>142</sup> But by no means was every structure rude and rustic. Building should be matched to their settings and should evoke particular moods.<sup>143</sup> By selecting just the right kind of building, furniture, and ornament, one could make one’s garden into a place for melancholic contemplation or a setting for playful entertainment. Edifices were offered in an endless array of styles and even in hybrid forms. That said, Van Laar defines them as “done in a certain manner or taste,” rather than *style*, a word that was not generally used until later in the nineteenth century.<sup>144</sup>

Structures that combine two contrasting styles on opposite wall elevations, or Janus-structures, are warmly recommended. For example, a building on an island (fig. 32), is a hermitage on one side and, on the other, a “regularly ordered” or classically built pavilion topped by a statue of Diana.<sup>145</sup> Such buildings add necessary variety and the much-sought-after “element of surprise,” one of the key elements in the landscape garden envisioned by architects at the time and highlighted here by Van Laar. Indeed, following theoretical tradition, it is the contrast among various modes of expression that particularly fascinates Van Laar, and with the contrasts the element of surprise. He regularly advises the reader to consider making a “refreshing difference” between the unattractive outer appearance of a dilapidated building and the beautiful finish of its interior. Plate LIII (53) in the *Storehouse* illustrates such an approach, showing a plain wooden pavilion that, quite unexpectedly, is richly decorated on the inside, resulting in an effect that Van Laar finds “altogether pleasing and surprising.” To add further “pleasing surprises,” he admonishes property owners to guide their visitors through dark paths and underground tunnels to a beautifully decorated hall, with sudden views over a sunny greensward into wide landscapes. He adds descriptions of mechanical devices that open doors or move objects seemingly by magic, greatly “surprising” unsuspecting visitors.

Surprise and pleasing variety was also achieved by varying building types and ornamental styles. In the *Storehouse of Garden Ornaments*, after the rustic, the most frequently used building type was the “Chinese.” Colorful garden structures in the Chinese taste were particularly popular in Holland. Indeed, the predilection for this style and its overuse in Dutch garden decorations is evidenced by a remark in a contemporary French travel journal which described the Dutch as “les Chinois de l’Europe.”<sup>146</sup> Bridges, dovecotes, furniture, pagodas, and pavilions were frequently

shaped and decorated according in the Chinese taste. “Chinese” structures were considered most suitable for garden sections that were neither too artificial nor purely natural, and were well-kept and orderly.

Interesting examples of Chinese structures and ornaments depicted in the *Storehouse* include a series of bridges, pagodas, and, remarkably, Chinese boats and gondolas. An elegant pair of gondolas (fig. 33), illustrated in plate LII (52), are taken from Grohmann<sup>147</sup> and would appear in Jean Charles Krafft’s illustrated work some years later (fig. 34).<sup>148</sup> Van Laar completely changes the text used by Grohmann, stressing that such boats should be used more often in a country like Holland where the abundance of water invites such opportunities. Indeed, he may have thought of the boat or gondola his patron Dirk Ditmarsch displayed in his garden pond at Broek in Waterland.<sup>149</sup> Another charming example of a Chinese structure in the *Storehouse* is a “Chineesche tempel” (fig. 35), based on the Chinese pavilion at Velserbeek.<sup>150</sup> This was a structure Van Laar would have known personally and that still can be admired in the Velserbeek park today (fig. 36). Its graceful trelliswork structure and idyllic setting had also been recorded a few years earlier in Hermanus Numan’s *Vierentwintig printtekeningen* (fig. 37).

The many and varied designs in the Chinese taste published in Van Laar’s *Storehouse* served the insatiable demand for relatively cheap Chinese buildings in Dutch gardens. Apart from monumental pagodas that were too expensive to build,<sup>151</sup> all possible types of Chinese structures were executed in Dutch landscape gardens, some directly following Van Laar’s models.

Van Laar also offered buildings in the Gothic taste, designed to induce a somber, thoughtful mood.<sup>152</sup> He used the word “Gothic” in a derogatory sense in his preface, in reference to outmoded traditions: “the taste in gardening for a long time remained Gothic,” before “the new taste,” namely, that of landscape gardening, was introduced in Holland. But he approved of the Gothic style for old gates, churches, and ruins. It belonged to unkempt, wild places in the garden where, Van Laar writes, “nature speaks more powerfully than art.”<sup>153</sup> A Gothic ruin adds mystery to one of his large, ideal landscapes, and a Gothic bridge is revealed in another.<sup>154</sup>

Van Laar offers only a few samples of ornaments in the Egyptian manner, including an “Egyptian tomb painted on wood”<sup>155</sup> and an impressive “Arcadian landscape” filled with classical buildings and statues, including a sphinx on a tomb (fig. 38).<sup>156</sup> The latter Egyptian monument can be compared to the famous *Tomb with Sphinx* in Goethe’s garden at Weimar dating from the 1780s.<sup>157</sup> The relative scarcity of Egyptian models in Van Laar’s book may be connected to the fact that the taste for this style

was only just developing, and – while already the rage in Germany and England, as evidenced by the number of Egyptian designs in Grohmann’s book<sup>158</sup> – was not popular yet in Holland.

Close reading of the *Storehouse of Garden Ornaments* reveals Van Laar’s limited comprehension of stylistic terminology. The random use of descriptive words, whereby the “Chinese” taste is interchangeable with the “Indian,” “Asian,” or “Turkish,” is typical of early nineteenth-century literature in this field,<sup>159</sup> as is the use of the words “fine” and “elegant” by Van Laar when referring to either the neoclassical or more exotic Chinese style. Indeed, deeper understanding of stylistic elements and a linguistic consensus on their definitions would not be achieved until the second half of the nineteenth century.

For example, Van Laar seems unsure how to categorize a building topped by a crescent moon (fig. 39). He calls it “a Temple in the Chinese taste”<sup>160</sup> although it looks exactly like a Turkish pavilion. Grohmann, whose print Van Laar copied, defined this building as a Turkish tent (“Türkischen Zelt” or “Pavilion en forme de Tente Turque”) (fig. 40).<sup>161</sup>

To give another example, Grohmann defines a rather odd building topped by a sculpted pineapple and decorated with crescent-moon motifs as a “Maurischer Temple” or “Moresque Temple.”<sup>162</sup> Van Laar copies the same illustration (fig. 41),<sup>163</sup> while providing a different definition, calling the style of the building “Asiatisch” or “Asian” and combining it with little huts on either side, taken from different plates in Grohmann.<sup>164</sup> The original source for this print was the work of an early eighteenth-century English author, William Wrighte, who called this particular structure (quite aptly) a “Moresque Temple,”<sup>165</sup> the phrase also employed by Le Rouge when republishing the building.<sup>166</sup>

None of the authors is entirely consistent. Grohmann may at times correctly define a “Turkish Mosque” as such (“Türkischen Moschee” or “Mosque Turque”),<sup>167</sup> but oddly enough, structures that look almost identical, with crescent-moon motifs and Middle Eastern, geometrical, interlaced decorations, may be labeled “Gothic” instead. Similarly, in Krafft’s *Recueil d’architecture civile*<sup>168</sup> a Turkish-looking triangular pavilion topped by the crescent is called “Gothic,” as are three temples in Van Laar’s plate LXXVII (77) that look rather Moresque in style. Conversely, Van Laar’s menagerie in the guise of a “Turkish Mosque” looks indefinably plain rather than Middle Eastern.<sup>169</sup> In other instances, taking a safely conservative approach, no definitions at all are provided by these authors. A good example is a pavilion topped by the familiar crescent moon that Van Laar called “Temple” in his index but describes in the

text merely as a “bijzondere bouworde” or “special building type,” which, by the way, could be “painted on a wooden panel” if one did not want to build it.<sup>170</sup> This same pavilion, now closed by a door at its center, is illustrated in Krafft’s *Plans des plus beaux jardins pittoresques de France*,<sup>171</sup> and is defined simply as a “kiosk.”

It is clear from the examples shown above that Van Laar and his contemporaries knew and copied each other’s designs. They also drew on many works by English architects and designers: William Chambers, Joseph M. Gandy, William and John Halfpenny, David Laing, Batty Langley,<sup>172</sup> James Malton,<sup>173</sup> John Plaw,<sup>174</sup> John Soane,<sup>175</sup> and finally William Wrighte, whose work not only offered building designs, but also examples of rustic garden furniture.<sup>176</sup>

Van Laar’s image of a Chinese bridge with a temple on top is a telling example. Originally published in a late-eighteenth-century German treatise by Christian Ludwig Stieglitz (fig. 42),<sup>177</sup> who acknowledges the English origin of some of his designs, this print of a Chinese bridge was copied by Grohmann a few years later (fig. 43).<sup>178</sup> It subsequently entered Van Laar’s book (fig. 44)<sup>179</sup> and finally appeared in Krafft’s *Plans des plus beaux jardins pittoresques de France* (fig. 45).<sup>180</sup>

Similarly, Van Laar copied from Grohmann’s work another, smaller version of a Chinese bridge fitted with a little, covered bridge house (fig. 46).<sup>181</sup> The basic model for this bridge with covered pavilion can be compared to similar, though grander structures designed earlier by William Chambers.<sup>182</sup> In addition, the same architectural idea was published by Le Rouge,<sup>183</sup> and in a slightly different form by Krafft.<sup>184</sup> Ultimately, Van Laar’s version was copied by the landscape architect Lucas Pieter Roodbaard to build a bridge in the 1820s in the garden at the Heremastate in Joure (Friesland), where it stood until a few decades ago (fig. 47).<sup>185</sup>

- 141 Van Laar, *Magazijn*, plate LIX (59): “Landhuisje in den Russischen smaak” (cottage in the Russian taste). Taken from Grohmann, *Ideenmagazin*, cah. 35, plate 4.
- 142 Van Laar, *Magazijn*, plate LXXIII (73): “een ruuw onkostbaar Gebouwtje, in den Muscovischen smaak” (a roughly built, inexpensive Building in the Muscovian taste). Taken from Grohmann, *Ideenmagazin*, cah.. 27, plate 8.
- 143 Rogers, *Landscape Design*, pp. 237–39, 251–53.
- 144 Of Van Laar’s contemporaries, only Krafft used the word “style.”
- 145 Van Laar, *Magazijn*, plate V (5).
- 146 Ger Smook, *Een Parijse “Beau” onder Antwerpse “jolikes”: Roger de Beauvoir op doorreis in de winter van 1834-35*, Koninklijke Vlaamse Academie voor Taal-en Letterkunde, reeks 5 (Gent, 1959). Quoted in Meulenkamp, “G. van Laar’s *Magazijn*,” *Bulletin KNOB*, p. 132, n. 31.
- 147 Grohmann, *Ideenmagazin*, cah. 12, plate 95.
- 148 Krafft, *Jardins pittoresques de France*, cah. 12, pl. 96, combined with another little Chinese boat illustrated in Van Laar (CLV [155]).
- 149 Niemeyer, “Het ‘Ditmarsch’ Huis,” *Broeker Bijdragen*, p. 94 (“at the shore of the lake lies a gondel [gondola] with mast and sail . . .”).
- 150 Van Laar, *Magazijn*, plate CXLII (142).
- 151 Eleanor von Erdberg, *Chinese Influence on European Garden Structures* (Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 1936; New York: Hacker Art Books, 1985), p. 55. The page reference is to the Hacker edition. Erdberg suggests that Grohmann left out pagodas because they would be too expensive for his readers. However, in cah. 46, plate 1, Grohmann published designs for five different kinds of pagodas. The plates came from a seventeenth-century source (Joan Nieuhof, *Het Gezantschap der Neêrlandsche Oost-Indische Compagnie, aan den grooten Tartarischen Cham, den tegenwoordigen Keizer van China* [Amsterdam, 1669], fol. page 152).
- 152 See Hunt and Willis, eds., *Genius of the Place*, pp. 283–88.
- 153 Van Laar, *Magazijn*, explanation of plate III (3), no. 7.
- 154 Van Laar, *Magazijn*, plates LVIII (58) and CI (101).
- 155 Van Laar, *Magazijn*, plate CXI (111).
- 156 Van Laar, *Magazijn*, plate XLVI (46).
- 157 J. Jäger, “Goethe-Gärten in Weimar,” in A. von Buttler, K. Franz, H. Hamann, D. Hennebo et al., *Gärten der Goethe Zeit* (Leipzig: Ed. Leipzig, 1995), pp. 77–82; the grotto with sphinx is illustrated on p. 78.
- 158 Grohmann, *Ideenmagazin*, cah. 46, text accompanying plate 4: “In the third quarter of the last century the Chinese taste was the most beloved and prevalent . . . now the Egyptian taste is most esteemed in England . . .”

- 159 A building defined as “Indian or Chinese” is illustrated in Erdberg, *Chinese Influence*, fig. 62. This pavilion-cum-tent stood in the gardens at Bagatelle, Paris. It is also illustrated in Jean Charles Krafft, *Recueil d'architecture civile: contenant les plans, coupes et élévations des châteaux, maisons de campagne, et habitations rurales, jardins anglais, temples, chaumières, kiosques, ponts, etc. situés aux environs de Paris et dans les departemens voisins, avec les decorations interieurs, et le detail de ce qui concerne l'embellissement des jardins* (Paris: De Crapelet, 1812), cah. 20, pls. 119 and 120, no. 13, where it is described as a “tente Chinoise.”
- 160 Van Laar, *Magazijn*, plate LI (51): “Een Tempel in de Chinese smaak.”
- 161 Grohmann, *Ideenmagazin*, cah. 32, plate 9. For the popularity of the Turkish style and Turkish pavilions in Holland, see Hans Theunissen, Annelies Abelmann, and Wim G. J. M. Meulenkamp, eds., *Topkapi and Turkomanie: Turks-Nederlandse ontmoetingen sinds 1600* (Amsterdam: De Bataafsche Leeuw, 1989).
- 162 Grohmann, *Ideenmagazin*, cah. 7, plate 6.
- 163 Van Laar, *Magazijn*, plate XLIV (54), with rustic huts on either side.
- 164 The huts are taken from Grohmann, *Ideenmagazin*, cah. 3, plate 4, figs. c. and d.
- 165 William Wrighte, *Grotesque Architecture, or, Rural amusement . . .* (London, 1767), plate 26.
- 166 Le Rouge, *Détails de nouveaux jardins à la mode*, plate 30, described as a “Temple Moresque.”
- 167 Grohmann, *Ideenmagazin*, cah. 7, plate 6, indicating that the mosque is copied after an English example (“imitation Angloise d'un Temple Mauresque ou d'une Mosque Turque”).
- 168 Krafft, *Recueil d'architecture civile*, cah. 19, plate 113.
- 169 Van Laar, *Magazijn*, plate CLIV (154).
- 170 Van Laar, *Magazijn*, plate XC (90).
- 171 Krafft, *Jardins pittoresques de France*, cah. 1, plate 6. Grohmann illustrated this building in *Ideenmagazin*, cah. 37, plate 4.
- 172 David Laing, *Hints for dwellings, consisting of original designs for cottages, farm-houses, villas &c.* (London, 1800). See also Philipp, *Um 1800*, pp. 116–17.
- 173 James Malton's designs of Gothic buildings can be found in Grohmann's volumes and in other contemporary German publications, including F. Meinert's *Schöne Landbaukunst oder Ideen und Vorschriften zu Landhäusern* (Leipzig: F. A. Leo, 1798–1804), and W. G. Becker's *Neue Gärten- und Landschaftsgebäuden* (Leipzig: Voss und Compagnie, 1798–99). See also Philipp, *Um 1800*, pp. 64–65
- 174 Van Laar's “Temple” in plate CXXII (122), and “Cottage” in plate CVII (107) originally came from John Plaw, *Rural Architecture, or designs from the simple cottage to the decorated villa* (London: I. and J. Taylor, 1796); the cottage also appears in Grohmann, *Ideenmagazin*, cah. 1, plate 8, Van Laar's direct source. Likewise, Van Laar's plate CLXXVII (177), a “Bathhouse,” and his plate CLXXXV (185), an “Edifice representing a Gateway,” were taken from Grohmann (*Ideenmagazin*, cah. 6, plate 5 and cah. I, plate 6), but originally came from another work by John Plaw, *Ferme Ornée; or rural improvements: A series of domestic and ornamental designs . . .* (London, 1785). Another popular book by Plaw used as a source for prints was *Sketches for country houses, villas and rural dwellings* (London, 1800). Plate 32, illustrating a design for a triangular English country house was copied by Grohmann for his *Ideenmagazin*, cah. 41, plate 1, and republished by Van Laar in *Magazijn*, plate CLXII (162). See also Philipp, *Um 1800*, pp. 116–17.

175 See Philipp, *Um 1800*, p. 117.

176 William Wright, *Grotesque Architecture*. In addition, the rustic garden chairs and bench illustrated in Van Laar's plate CVIII (108), nos. 2, 3 and 4, were borrowed from Grohmann (cah. I, plates 3 and 4), who himself took them from Wright's *Ideas for Rustic Furniture, proper for garden seats, summer houses, hermitages, cottages, &c.* (London: I. and J. Taylor, 1790), plates 7 and 14 (designs for "chairs" and a "sofa," respectively).

177 Christian Ludwig Stieglitz, *Gemälde von Gärten im neuern Geschmack* (Leipzig, 1798), plate I, B and II, E. See also Erdberg, *Chinese Influence*, p. 57 and fig. 26.

178 Grohmann, *Ideenmagazin*, cah. 20, plate 4. Plate 5 is also a print copied from Stieglitz.

179 Van Laar, *Magazijn*, plate XXXVI (36).

180 Krafft, *Jardins pittoresques de France*, cah. 1, plate 8.

181 Van Laar, *Magazijn*, plate III (3), no. 7; Grohmann, *Kleines Ideen-Magazin*, cah. I, plate 3.

182 Chambers, *Designs of Chinese Buildings*, plate 7. Though Van Laar's building is smaller, details such as the vases with twigs of coral placed at either side of the bridge are exactly the same. For an illustration of Chambers's design, see Erdberg, *Chinese Influence*, fig. 10.

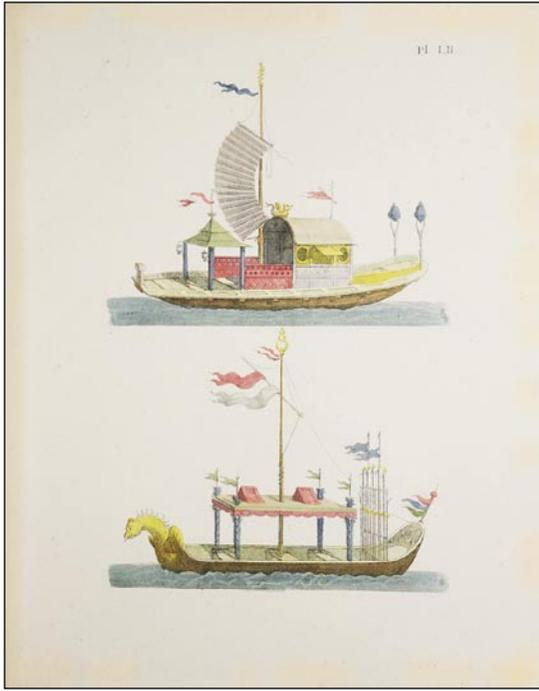
183 Le Rouge, *Détails de nouveaux jardins*, cah. 4, plate 15. See also Erdberg, *Chinese Influence*, fig. 73.

184 Krafft, *Jardins pittoresques de France*, cah. 1, pl. 3 and cah. 6, pl. I.

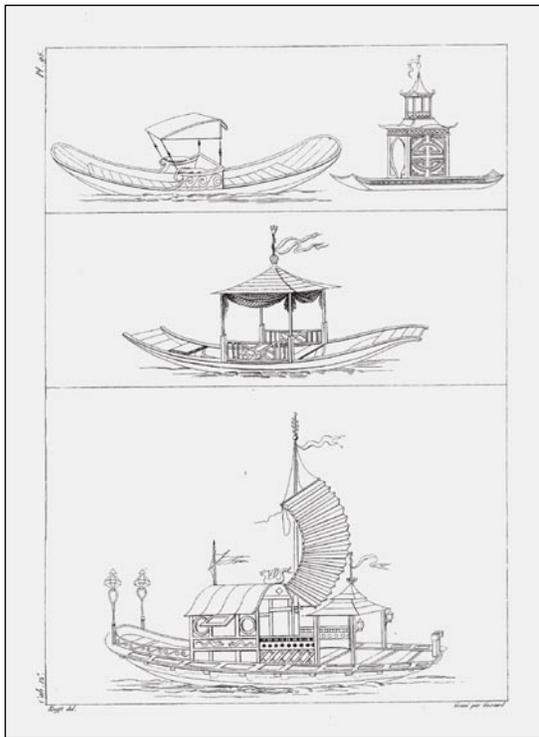
185 Photo Fries Fotoarchief, Collectie PBF Prentbriefkaarten, Ansichtkaart P53.



**FIG. 32.** A structure combining a picturesque hermitage with a classical temple topped by a statue of Diana. G. van Laar, *Magazijn*, plate V. Collection Elizabeth Barlow Rogers, New York.



**FIG. 33.** Designs for elegant Chinese boats and gondolas, lending an air of festivity to the landscape garden. G. van Laar, *Magazijn*, plate LII. Collection Elizabeth Barlow Rogers, New York.



**FIG. 34.** Designs for Chinese gondolas from Krafft's *Plans des plus beaux jardins pittoresques de France* (1809). They are identical to the designs published by Van Laar (see fig. 33), except in mirror image. University of Wisconsin Digital Collection: <http://digital.library.wisc.edu/1711.d1/DLDecArts>.



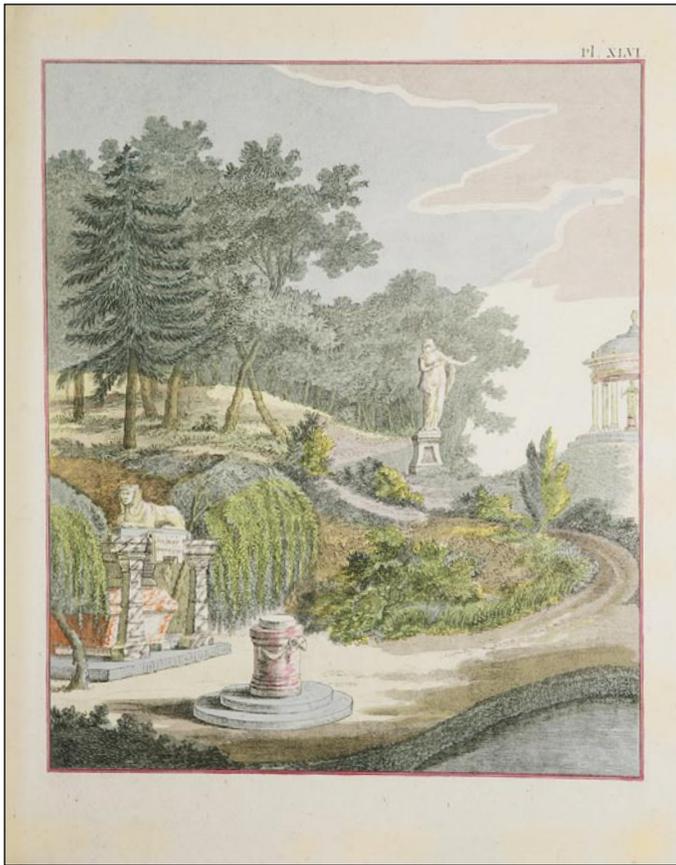
**FIG. 35.** Model for a Chinese pavilion, after the pavilion at Velserbeek. G. van Laar, *Magazijn*, plate CXLII. Collection Elizabeth Barlow Rogers, New York.



**FIG. 36.** The Chinese Pavilion in the Velserbeek garden today. The original open trelliswork is now closed by windowpanes and wall panels. Photo by author, February 2009.



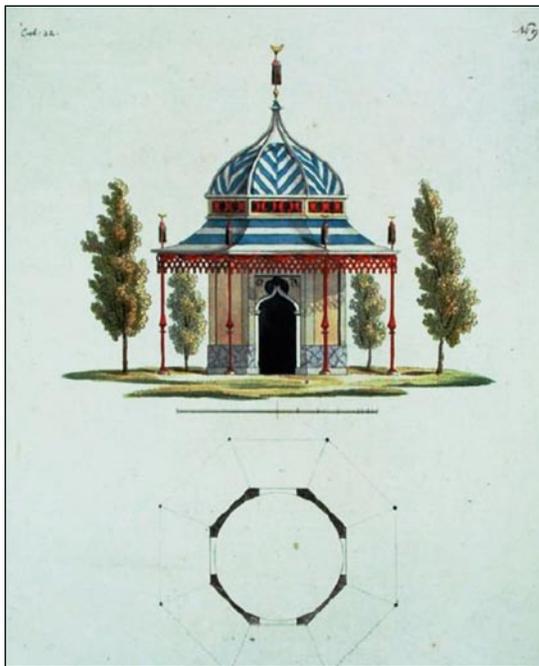
**FIG. 37.** The Chinese Pavilion in the Velserbeek landscape garden, as depicted by H. Numan, *Vierentwintig printtekeningen* (1797). The pavilion still stands in what is now a public park (see fig. 36). Beeldbank, Noord-Hollands Archief, Haarlem.



**FIG. 38.** A “mountainous Arcadian landscape” filled with classical monuments including a sphinx on a tomb. G. van Laar, *Magazijn*, plate XLVI. Collection Elizabeth Barlow Rogers, New York.



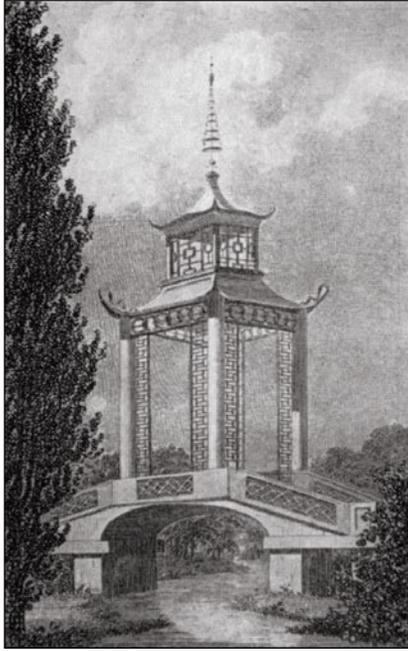
**FIG. 39.** A building defined as “Chinese Temple” by Van Laar, although with the crescent moon it looks more Turkish. G. van Laar, *Magazijn*, plate LI. Collection Elizabeth Barlow Rogers, New York.



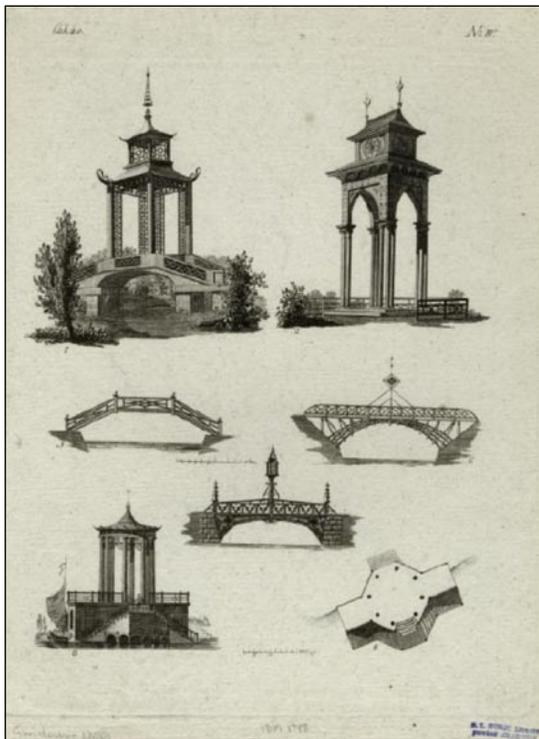
**FIG. 40.** The print that was the source for Van Laar’s Chinese temple (see fig. 39), although here the structure is called a “Turkish Tent” and has a bright blue roof. Grohmann, *Ideenmagazin*, cah. 32, plate. 9. New York Public Library (NYPL Digital Gallery).



**FIG. 41.** A “striking Asian Temple,” accompanied by rustic huts. G. van Laar, *Magazijn*, plate XLIV. Collection Elizabeth Barlow Rogers, New York.



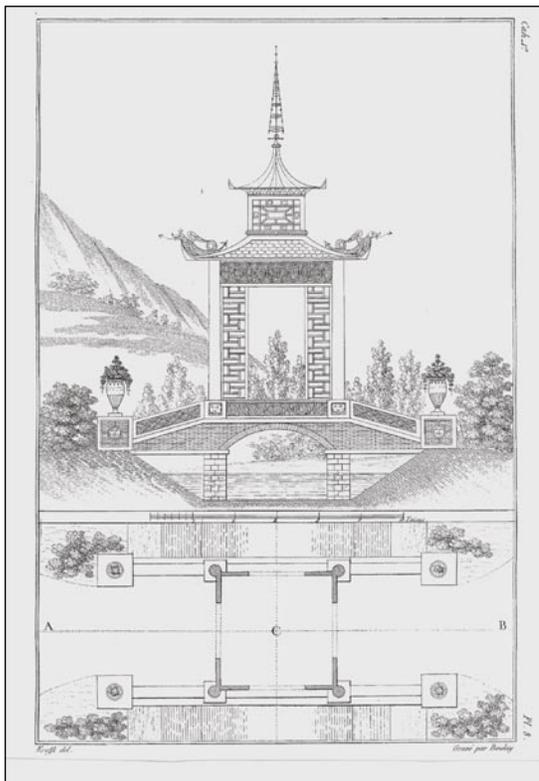
**FIG. 42.** Model for a Chinese bridge with temple. Christian Ludwig Stieglitz, *Gemälde von Gärten im neuern Geschmack* (Leipzig, 1798), plates I, B. and II, E. Illustration from E. von Erdberg, *Chinese Influence on European Garden Structures*, fig. 26.



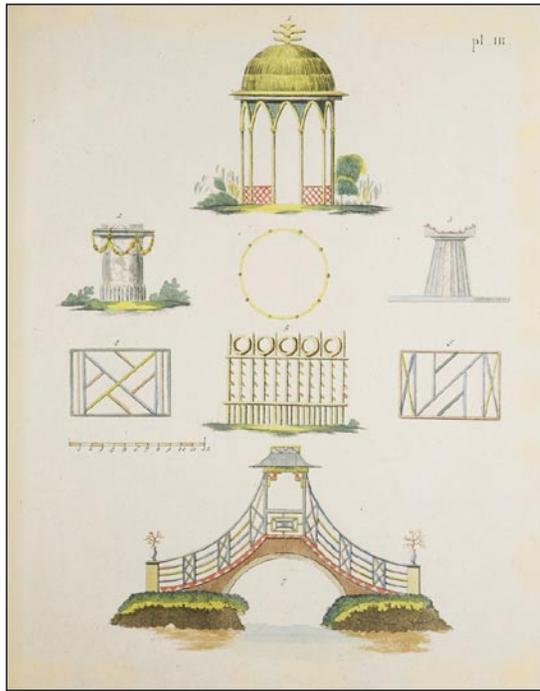
**FIG. 43.** Model for a Chinese bridge with temple (upper left), copied from Stieglitz (see fig. 42) by Grohmann, *Ideenmagazin*, cah. 20, plate 4. New York Public Library (NYPL Digital Gallery).



**FIG. 44.** Model for a Chinese bridge with temple (upper left), copied from Grohmann (see fig. 43) by G. van Laar, *Magazijn*, plate XXXVI. Collection Elizabeth Barlow Rogers, New York.



**FIG. 45.** Model for a Chinese bridge with temple (compare figs. 42–44). From Krafft, *Plans des plus beaux jardins pittoresques de France*, cah.1, plate 8. <http://digital.library.wisc.edu/1711.dl/DLDecArts>.



**FIG. 46.** Model for a small Chinese bridge with a little covered bridge house (bottom of page) in G. van Laar, *Magazijn*, plate III. Collection Elizabeth Barlow Rogers, New York.



**FIG. 47.** Chinese bridge built around 1820 by L. P. Roodbaard, after a design by Van Laar (compare fig. 46). This detail from a postcard shows the bridge in the park of the Heremastate (Joure) in the early twentieth century. Photo Fries Fotoarchief, Collectie PBF Prentbriefkaarten, P53, [www.friesfotoarchief.nl](http://www.friesfotoarchief.nl).

## VAN LAAR AND GROHMANN: SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES

Van Laar leaned heavily on Grohmann in stocking his *Storehouse*. However, he omitted certain types of prints published by Grohmann, highlighting differences between the markets they served and the idiosyncrasies of individual taste. For instance, Grohmann put forward a remarkable series of designs for country houses and monuments made by modern German architects. Several of these architects were connected with newly flourishing universities and academies of architecture in Berlin, Dresden, and Leipzig: the architects Carl Haller von Hallerstein, Jackisch, and Carl Ferdinand Langhans from Berlin; Johann Gottfried Klinsky, Johann August Heine, and Karl August Benjamin Siegel from Dresden; and August Wilhelm Kanne and Christian Friedrich Schuricht from Leipzig.<sup>186</sup> Only a small selection of their garden and country-house designs were incorporated by Van Laar, including two designs by the architect Jackisch – one for a garden pavilion or “Temple in the Gothic taste,” the other described as a “Handsome Country House in the taste of the English,” illustrated in plates 33 and 171 respectively.<sup>187</sup> Van Laar also included two country houses designed by Carl Ferdinand Langhans the Younger in a classicizing style (plates 35 and 115), one described as a “handsome building of taste” and decorated with a fronton containing a Greek fresco (fig. 48);<sup>188</sup> the other a “small Country-House of noble simplicity,” with a sphinx above the main entry portal.<sup>189</sup>

It is clear from the choices Van Laar makes in coming to his final print selection that his taste was conservative. He favors buildings and garden structures with classical decoration or picturesque details. His *Storehouse* does not contain prints of modern garden buildings or country houses in the very latest architectural style, the stripped-down, sober manner that was evolving in England and Germany at the time. Indeed, Van Laar left out a group of country house designs that are starkly barren in appearance, without any ornamental detail on exterior façades, even though Grohmann embraces such modern buildings in his *Ideenmagazin*.<sup>190</sup> Interestingly, some of those German country houses with plain façades were based on English designs by John Soane<sup>191</sup> and his students Joseph Michael Gandy and David Laing.<sup>192</sup>

Also omitted by Van Laar were very large and majestic buildings in the classical style, such as those designed by the German architect Peter Speeth,<sup>193</sup> which most likely were considered unrealistic designs for Holland. Outside Van Laar’s scope as well were buildings in the New World, though Grohmann does illustrate several American country houses.<sup>194</sup> Given his bent towards conventional taste, Van Laar surely would not have included the designs by the visionary French architect

Claude-Nicolas Ledoux incorporated in the last issues of Grohmann's *Ideenmagazin*,<sup>195</sup> published after Van Laar's *Storehouse* was already in production. Finally, none of Grohmann's prints with designs for interiors appear in the *Storehouse*.

Overall, when it comes to garden and country-house architecture, Van Laar rejects the starkly modern country house and embraces the charming cottage style with rustic undertones, a choice that entirely fits the general tone of his work. Nor does he discuss the new science of land management in the *Storehouse*. Hotly debated theories on how to advance a more efficient agricultural economy and society and improve hygiene and living conditions for the laboring classes are outside the scope of Van Laar's book, while Grohmann especially focuses on them.<sup>196</sup>

The dissimilarities between Van Laar's and Grohman's publishing output reflect important differences in their approach to publishing an illustrated work. Van Laar considered his work of local interest, a useful pattern or model book for the ordinary Dutchman. His limited formal education is evident from grammatical irregularities and awkward sentence structures in his text. Grohmann, in contrast, was a well-known professor of philosophy and history at Leipzig University, moving in the literary circles of his day. He saw his publication as a forum for modern design ideas and inventions, a tool to further international debate on new directions in garden architecture.<sup>197</sup> In addition to the *Ideenmagazin*, Grohmann had published studies on art, architecture, history, and aesthetics.<sup>198</sup> Furthermore, Grohmann's publisher, Friedrich Gotthelf Baumgärtner, was himself an intellectual, unlike Van Laar's publisher, Johannes Allart, an Amsterdam-born businessman.

Different kinds of readers seem to have collected and studied Van Laar's and Grohmann's works. Analysis of Van Laar's plates suggests that the subscribers to his series sent in few garden plans in response to his open invitation to contribute designs. The general Dutch public may not have been sufficiently informed or actively interested at that point in time to join in the intellectual debate about the proper design of gardens. In Germany, however, high-level exchanges between author and subscribers existed. Grohmann received a range of prints that were sent by a well-informed public – dilettantes and professional architects alike – and had a lively correspondence about emergent style principles and new inventions, as remarks throughout the text of his *Ideenmagazin* indicate.<sup>199</sup>

Van Laar borrowed from the *Ideenmagazin* prints that were aesthetically pleasing and useful for the ordinary public. He excluded not only ultramodern buildings, but also designs for technologically advanced machines and mechanical gear typical of this period of emerging industrialization. Engineering improvements such as iron

or cable bridges,<sup>200</sup> including one designed by Grohmann's publisher Baumgärtner,<sup>201</sup> and other scientific novelties discussed in the *Ideenmagazin* are missing from Van Laar's work. Likewise, he omitted an interesting new model for a more efficient hay wagon developed in the Intelligenzcomptoir at Leipzig, the then-current think tank for new technologies,<sup>202</sup> and passed over new English inventions, including a mowing machine designed by John Middleton.<sup>203</sup> He also left out a remarkable "telegraph device" – in fact, an early optical telegraph – to be placed on the roof of country houses for easy communication with neighbors (fig. 49).<sup>204</sup> These and other inventions are not mentioned by Van Laar in the *Storehouse*, probably because he was not sufficiently versed in these matters and also because they lay outside the scope of what was primarily a model or pattern book. Moreover, in Holland only a small segment of society was aware of the technological revolution in landscape gardening, although one progressive property owner used a steam engine for his estate's water management.<sup>205</sup> New land management and farming techniques had not been implemented widely, certainly not to the degree they had been applied in England and Germany from the late eighteenth century onward. Only in the nineteenth century, as sociopolitical circumstances improved and new scientific methods were systematically introduced, did estate management and social reform come to be embraced in Holland.

## ENDNOTES

186 See Philipp, *Um 1800*, pp. 107–9.

187 Van Laar's garden pavilion in plate XXXIII (33) comes from Grohmann, *Ideenmagazin*, cah. 10, plate 6; see also Philipp, *Um 1800*, p. 62, fig. 29. Jakisch's country house in Van Laar's plate CLXXI (171) is taken from the *Ideenmagazin*, cah. 11, plate 3; see also Philipp, *Um 1800*, p. 108.

188 Van Laar, *Magazijn*, plate XXXV (35).

189 Van Laar, *Magazijn*, plate CXV (115). They correspond with Grohmann, *Ideenmagazin*, cah. 23, plate 1, and cah. 17, plate 3, respectively. See Philipp, *Um 1800*, p. 108.

190 Grohmann, *Ideenmagazin*, cah. 26, plate 4. This is a modified version of a design by John Soane, published as plate IX in his *Sketches in architecture; containing plans and elevations of cottages, villas, and other useful buildings with characteristic scenery* (London, J. Taylor, 1798).

191 Sir John Soane, *Sketches in architecture*.

192 Grohmann, *Ideenmagazin*, cah. 50, plates 1 and 9. Another country house in modern "English style" is illustrated in cah. 47, plate 2.

193 Grohmann, *Ideenmagazin*, cah. 14, plates 5 and 6, by Peter Speeth, and other garden buildings defined as Corinthian or Ionic, shown in cah. 19, plate 2, and cah. 21, plate 2. See also Philipp, *Um 1800*, pp. 114–15. For theories of classical architecture and "noble simplicity" central to contemporary country house architecture, see Udo Kultermann, *Architecture and Revolution. The Visions of Boullée and Ledoux* (Budapest: Keves Studio Galeria, 2003), p. 112 ff. Winkelmann's concept of "edle Einfach und stille Grösse," translated as "le grand gout de la belle simplicité" in French and as "noble simplicity" in English, was further developed by J. F. Blondel in France, John Soane and Robert Adam in England and Thomas Jefferson and Benjamin Latrobe in the United States.

194 Grohmann, *Ideenmagazin*, cah. 1, plate 9, house with large veranda, and cah. 43, plate 10, described as a "Nordamerikansiche Pflanzerhütte" (North American settler's cabin).

195 Grohmann, *Ideenmagazin*, for example: cah. 40, plate 2 and cah. 51, plate 3. See Philipp, *Um 1800*, p. 119.

196 See Philipp, *Um 1800*, pp. 116–17.

197 See Philipp, *Um 1800*, p. 112 ff, on Grohmann's effort to create an "internationalen Vergleichsrahmen" (international framework) for new architecture and landscape design.

198 For an excellent overview of Grohmann's publications, see Philipp, *Um 1800*, p. 264.

199 For example, in cah. 5, plate 2 of the *Ideenmagazin*, Grohmann comments that "Various Gentlemen Enthusiasts (*Herren Interessenten*) requested some added design ideas for wooden or iron fences," which are supplied in this cahier. In cah. 22, plate 9, Grohmann reproduces a design by Jakisch and apologizes to his readers for the late appearance of certain designs due to the many responsibilities of his printmaker, Höllman. His cah. 30, plate 9 illustrates a Mill in Swiss style sent in by a Mr. Savin from Grenoble; cah. 21, plate 1 shows a swing in the Chinese style invented by a certain Mr. Dähne, mechanic in Leipzig; and cah. 31, plate 5 depicts a design for a stone Bridge with statues designed and drawn by an architect, Mr. Röber. Van Laar copied the bridge in his *Magazijn*, plate CI (101).

200 For example, Grohmann, *Ideenmagazin*, cah. 12, plate 10.

201 Grohmann, *Ideenmagazin*, cah. 41, plate 9.

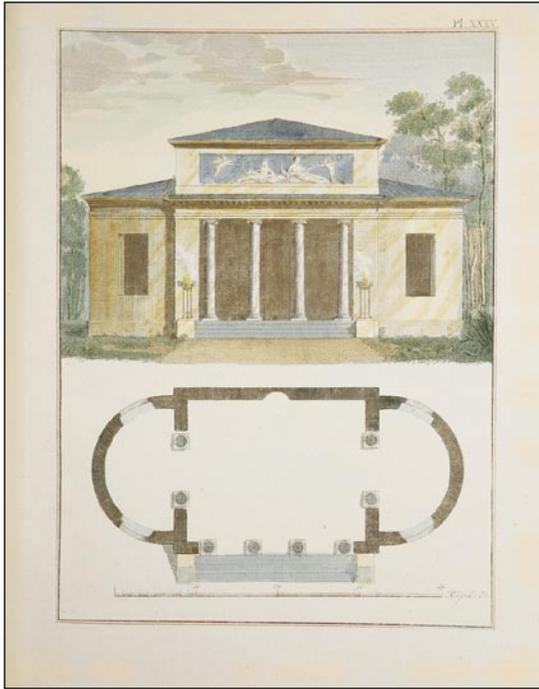
202 Grohmann, *Ideenmagazin*, cah. 21, plate 10.

203 Grohmann, *Ideenmagazin*, cah. 14, plate 8.

204 Grohmann, *Ideenmagazin*, cah. 36, plate 1. A similar device on the roof of a house designed by James Malton, is illustrated in cah. 37, plate 1. The device in question – actually an optical telegraph – is described by Grohmann as an “English rural Telegraph” (“Englischen ländlichen Telegraphen”), useful for sending short messages to one’s neighbors. A booklet explaining the function of this telegraphic device could be ordered separately at Baumgärtner’s publishing house.

205 Lissa L. Roberts, “An Arcadian Apparatus: The Introduction of the Steam Engine into the Dutch Landscape,” *Technology and Culture*, vol. 45, nr. 2 (April 2004), pp. 251–76.

206 For Rousseau’s memorial on the island in the gardens of Ermenonville, see Rogers, *Landscape Design*, pp. 263–65; for later developments of commemorative landscapes and cemeteries see pp. 330 ff.



**FIG. 48.** A “handsome building of taste” designed by the German architect C. F. Langhans the Younger. G. van Laar, *Magazijn*, plate XXXV. Collection Elizabeth Barlow Rogers, New York.



**FIG. 49.** An early model for an optical telegraph. It was designed to be set up on the roof of a manor for easy communication with neighbors. Grohmann, *Ideenmagazin*, cah. 36, plate 1. New York Public Library (NYPL Digital Gallery).

## VAN LAAR AND THE ROMANTIC IDEAL: COMMEMORATION IN THE GARDEN

In the Romantic era, gardens became a place to commemorate, and even bury, the dead. However, unlike in other countries, where the landscape garden could include burial sites – best exemplified by Rousseau’s tomb at Ermenonville<sup>206</sup> – the tradition of the garden as graveyard never truly developed in Holland. In fact, beginning in the early nineteenth century, burial regulations would have strictly prevented it.<sup>207</sup> However, Dutch landscape gardeners followed the Romantic tradition of using gardens as places of commemoration. Various early- to mid-nineteenth-century memorials survive, an excellent example being a pedestal with classical urn in the gardens of Enghuizen near Hummelo (fig. 50).<sup>208</sup> It can be directly compared to Van Laar’s “beautiful Memorial under an old picturesque tree . . . [to commemorate] a deceased loved one or devoted friend” (fig. 51).<sup>209</sup> The Enghuizen memorial was erected to celebrate the short life of the property owner’s beloved daughter, Julie, named after Rousseau’s well-known heroine,<sup>210</sup> or after the main character of *Julia* (1783) by the popular Dutch author Rhijnvis Feith, who was inspired by Rousseau’s story.<sup>211</sup> This romantic novel was followed in 1792 by the equally sentimental and melancholic *Het Graf* (The Grave);<sup>212</sup> both books feature the commemoration of dead soul mates and emotionally wrought visits to tombs in gardens. Such themes were also inspired by Goethe’s *Die Leiden des jungen Werthers* (1774)<sup>213</sup> as well as Romantic notions of *Weltschmerz* developed by Goethe and other authors of late-eighteenth-century novels.

The contemporary Dutch writer Elizabeth Maria Post in *Het Land, in brieven*,<sup>214</sup> inspired by the garden theorist Christian C. L. Hirschfeld’s *Das Landleben*,<sup>215</sup> writes about the same subjects, confirming how well established in Dutch Romantic literature is the theme of commemoration of loved ones in gardens. In fact, an illustration in Post’s book shows a garden scene with a tomb in a secluded wooded area where two ladies are seated in melancholic contemplation (fig. 52). This illustration can be compared with Van Laar’s depiction of a lady swooning over a memorial that bears a bust of her beloved (fig. 53).<sup>216</sup> In the text accompanying the print, Van Laar says that placing such a monument in one’s garden “calls up emotions that are better felt than described.” He suggests as ideal placement for this kind of memorial a secluded spot overshadowed by weeping willows at the center of an island, an image that recalls the position of Rousseau’s tomb in the middle of a tree-covered isle.

In the text accompanying an illustration of memorials for deceased children (fig. 54),<sup>217</sup> Van Laar explains burial traditions in Holland, which, unlike those of surrounding European countries, only allowed the interment of dogs and other pets in the garden:

Although it is not customary in this Country to bury the remains of relatives or friends in one's own grounds, one can still set up a memorial. To that end, three Memorials commemorating Children are represented here. Monuments of this kind do not befit a very small Estate, and should be erected in a secluded spot that one is not obliged to see too often. One only visits it when in the right state of mind for such sentiments.<sup>218</sup>

Van Laar includes various memorials for dogs<sup>219</sup> and other beloved pets such as lambs or birds, and proposes that the actual remains be placed under the monument to lend authenticity to the setting. He even offers suggestions for appropriate sentimental poetry to be inscribed on such monuments. The most extensive and rather odd example describes the tomb of the marquis de Segur's favored dog, which died tragically while giving birth to a litter of puppies. The monument was built in the gardens of Romainville, shortly before they were destroyed during the French Revolution.<sup>220</sup> Van Laar does not illustrate any memorials for horses,<sup>221</sup> an English tradition that may have been popular in Germany also, but apparently did not have much of a following in Holland.

In addition to memorials and tombs, Van Laar includes images of grand Romantic landscapes filled with classical monuments and statues that express similar commemorative themes. For example, he presents us with a beautiful, mountainous "Arcadisch Landschap," a true Dutch Arcadia, a place that conceivably could be created in hilly Gelderland (see fig. 38).<sup>222</sup> Filled with classical buildings and statues – including a tomb with an Egyptian sphinx, a statue of a weeping priestess, and a temple dedicated to Melpomene, the Muse of Tragedy – this Dutch Arcadia in all respects measures up to the ancient Greek Tempe Valley:

Part of a mountainous Arcadian Landscape, which I imagine will have a striking effect on a large and appropriately rural estate, for example in the province of Gelderland, where nature in itself is splendid and grand. . . . One can see a tomb with a Sphinx, erected to commemorate a Philosopher. On the tomb is written: *Hic jacet quem dilexi* or "here rests whom I loved." In its vicinity stands an altar where one used to sacrifice yearly to commemorate the dead. . . . One can distinguish a crying priestess on a pedestal, holding an incense burner in her hand . . . The Temple is dedicated to Melpomene, one of the Muses of Singing, who in Funerary Songs celebrates the glory of the deceased.<sup>223</sup>

Van Laar's description evokes an outdoor, theatrical *mise en scène*. In fact, pageants with guests dressed as ancient Greeks or medieval knights were staged in the Romantic gardens of the day.<sup>224</sup> Indeed, recent investigations of Masonic symbolism in Van Laar's work suggests the possibility that, by the enlightened few, the whole scene and each specific architectural and ornamental object might be interpreted through the lens of Masonic ritual. The garden would then represent an outdoor Masonic theater or temple, with each Egyptian and Greek statue having esoteric meaning. Such a Masonic garden iconography would not be an improbable scenario since, as mentioned earlier, Van Laar was a Freemason and member of the Masonic lodge in Alkmaar. A forthcoming publication on the influence of Masonic symbolism in Dutch garden art should aid in pinpointing Masonic symbolism in Van Laar's work.<sup>225</sup>

## ENDNOTES

- 207 Sometimes property owners were secretly buried in the garden anyway. For example, Daniel Wyttenbach, who died in 1820, was buried in the garden of his estate, Den Hoogenboom (Oegstgeest). A commemorative pillar still marks the grave. See Henk Rijken, *De Leidse Lustwarande. Geschiedenis van de tuinkunst op kastelen en buitenplaatsen rond Leiden, 1600–1800* (Leiden: Primavera Pers, 2005), pp. 78, 219.
- 208 Rob van der Laarse, “De beleving van de buitenplaats. Smaak toerisme en erfgoed,” in *Bezeten van vroeger. Erfgoed, identiteit en musealisering*, ed. Rob van der Laarse (Amsterdam: Het Spinhuis, 2005), pp. 59-87, here esp. p. 76.
- 209 Van Laar, *Magazijn*, plate LVII (57), taken from Grohmann, *Ideenmagazin*, cah. 29, plate 6, also referring to death and commemoration in the garden.
- 210 Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Julie ou la nouvelle Héloïse* (Amsterdam: Rey, 1761).
- 211 Rhijnvis Feith, *Julia* (Zwolle, 1783).
- 212 Rhijnvis Feith, *Het Graf, in vier zangen* (Amsterdam: Johannes Allart, 1792).
- 213 Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Die Leiden des jungen Werthers* (Leipzig, 1774).
- 214 Elisabeth Maria Post, *Het Land, in brieven*, 1788. A 1792 edition was published by Johannes Allart in Amsterdam.
- 215 C. C. L. Hirschfeld, *Das Landleben* (Bern: Verlag der Typographischen Gesellschaft, 1767).
- 216 Van Laar, *Magazijn*, plate LXXXVIII (78).
- 217 Van Laar, *Magazijn*, plate LXVI (66).
- 218 Van Laar, *Magazijn*, explanation of plate LXVI (66).
- 219 Van Laar, *Magazijn*, plate LXXIV (74).
- 220 Van Laar, text accompanying plate XLV (45): “One could . . . have the tomb be the burial place of a beloved little lamb, dog, bird or some other living creature in this world. . . . Then one would place the following inscription with befitting verses at its pedestal, for example: ‘Chien favori, Repose ici!’ On the estate of the former Marquis de Segur, at Romainville, stood, before the Revolution, a similar small tomb in a little stretch of wood.”
- 221 Grohmann, *Ideenmagazin*, cah. 17, plate 1.
- 222 Van Laar, *Magazijn*, plate XLVI (46).
- 223 Van Laar, *Magazijn*, explanation of plate XLVI (46).
- 224 Marie Louise Gothein, *Geschichte der Gartenkunst* (Jena: Eugen Diedrichs, 1914), vol. 2, pp. 404–6.
- 225 A study by Heimerick Tromp to be published at Waanders in Zwolle. See also Tromp, “Symbolisme,” *Cascade Bulletin voor Tuinhistorie*, pp. 7–13, and *Symbolism in 18th-Century Gardens*, pp. 9–24 ff. In addition, see Curl, *Art and Architecture of Freemasonry*, pp. 114–18, 131–33, and 169–204 on Egyptian architecture in gardens; and pp. 169–204 on the “route” through a garden, and the meaning of monuments and tombs in gardens.



**FIG. 50.** Pedestal with classical urn in the park of Enghuizen (Hummelo). It commemorated the owner's young daughter Julia, named after Rousseau's *Julie, ou la nouvelle Héloïse* or after the heroine of a novel by the Dutch author Rhijnvis Feith. Photo by Rob van der Laarse, from *Bezeten van vroeger. Erfgoed, identiteit en musealisering*, p. 76.



**FIG. 51.** A "Beautiful Memorial under an old picturesque tree" to commemorate "a deceased loved one or devoted friend." G. van Laar, *Magazijn*, plate LVII. Collection Elizabeth Barlow Rogers, New York.



**FIG. 52.** Two women seated in melancholic contemplation in front of a tomb in a secluded area of a garden. Print by R. Vinkeles after J. Buys. Illustrated in Elizabeth Post, *Het Land* (1788). Leiden University Library, Leiden.



**FIG. 53.** A woman swoons in front of a memorial that bears a bust of her beloved. G. van Laar, *Magazijn*, plate LXXVIII. Collection Elizabeth Barlow Rogers, New York.



**FIG. 54.** Designs for memorials of deceased children, including a pedestal with a sleeping child and a shrouded urn. G. van Laar, *Magazijn*, plate LXVI. Collection Elizabeth Barlow Rogers, New York.

## TROMPE L'OEIL IN THE GARDEN

The *Storehouse* contains more than twenty-five different models for painted panels, which represent a uniquely Dutch contribution to Romantic garden ornamentation. These painted decorations consisted of flat wooden panels of varying size (averaging eight to twelve feet in width and height), painted with trompe l'oeuil representations of buildings and interiors – including ramshackle hermitages and rural cottages, as well as picturesque façades of seemingly old farms and inns (fig. 55).<sup>226</sup> There are also designs for panels painted with dilapidated old Gothic buildings and intimidating ruins (fig. 56).<sup>227</sup> Strategically placed in a secluded area under a canopy of trees, these wooden panels were supposed to look real, tricking the beholder. They were cheap alternatives to actual, three-dimensional buildings.

Only a few rare specimens of these fascinating and popular but highly ephemeral garden structures survive today. One famous example, still standing in its original location in the wooded section of the Elswout park, is a painted wooden structure with protruding thatched roof, known as the Cottage of Kabuur (fig. 57).<sup>228</sup> About 5 meters (15 feet) wide and 3 meters (9 feet) high and upheld by poles, as a side-view reveals (fig. 58), it represents a small Dutch farmhouse. A farmer's wife in traditional costume stands in the open front door. The form and decoration of the Cottage of Kabuur closely resembles models in the *Storehouse* of little inns and farms (some even including a person standing at the front door) that could be built for actual use or painted on a wooden panel (see figs. 31 and 55).<sup>229</sup> Old photographs showing painted panels set up in gardens – such as one on the estate Welgelegen in Rijswijk (The Hague), depicting the frontal elevation of an old farm with a watchful farmer smoking a pipe – suggest that the use of such objects to decorate gardens was widespread.<sup>230</sup> These painted “façades” are puzzling today, as it is hard to imagine how the nineteenth-century onlooker could be convinced and satisfied by such mock-architectural concoctions.

No landscape garden was complete without a hermitage, which, again, could be built or exist merely as a trompe l'oeil. In offering various designs for hermitages, Van Laar caters to the craze for such picturesquely primitive edifices, which originally became popular in early eighteenth-century England. Famous examples included the hermitages at Stourhead and Stowe, each of which was supposed to be inhabited by a real-life hermit, assuming one could be employed. Van Laar, to keep expenses down and perhaps to shield garden owners from problems with hired staff – being a recluse was a lonely profession that tended to coincide with alcohol dependency – suggested that one could replace the hermit by a dummy or mannequin. This stand-in would have to be fully dressed in all-monk regalia or else painted on a board, cut out, and set up in front of or inside the hermitage.

Van Laar illustrates various hermitages, but one of the most interesting examples stands on top of a densely planted island that is connected to the mainland by means of a small ferryboat (fig. 59).<sup>231</sup> Remarkably, this scene depicts the actual hermitage of Velserbeek (Velsen), which still survives, standing on its island in the center of the old estate (fig. 60). While Van Laar's print is an original illustration, the Velserbeek hermitage was first depicted in a drawing by Numan that shows the hermit holding a crucifix as he crosses the water to his somber habitation (fig. 61). In the description of his own design, Van Laar explains how such hermitages are cheaply and easily constructed out of wattle and daub and covered by reed or straw. They should be deliberately aged and kept dark to strike the appropriate rustic tone, inviting a melancholic mood. What the hermitage looked like on the inside is shown in the next plate, which depicts a hermit mannequin surrounded by religious objects and memento mori, including a coffin that functioned as his bed (fig. 62).<sup>232</sup> Interestingly, a description written by contemporary traveler confirms that the hermitage's interior looked the way Van Laar depicts it. Inside was "a hermit in gown and slippers, made out of wood and wax in such a natural manner that I made my obeisance on quickly entering and looking around."<sup>233</sup> As eccentric as the practice of placing a "doll" in a hermitage seems to be today, the use of such mannequins, even some with movable heads, was not uncommon. Indeed, Klaas Bakker, at Broek in Waterland, had moving figures set up in his garden that were much commented upon in contemporary travel journals.<sup>234</sup>

The little ferryboat needed to cross the moat to reach the Velserbeek hermitage was in use until the mid-1940s, when the hermitage was emptied and the hermit mannequin destroyed. Such manually operated cable ferries, commonly found in Dutch gardens, were ideal for maneuvering efficiently across the Romantic landscape garden's extensive systems of ponds and lakes. Grohmann depicted a similar cable ferry that was used in the gardens at Weimar.<sup>235</sup>

Van Laar's trompe l'oeil designs can be categorized as Dutch manifestations of the Picturesque aesthetic. The concept of translating landscape paintings into actual garden settings drew on visions of ideal landscapes as expressed in seventeenth-century Dutch landscape paintings. The works of Jacob van Ruysdael, Meindert Hobbema, and Jan van Goyen, among others, inspired the nineteenth-century vision of a quintessential Dutch landscape: swampy lowlands with gnarled trees and windswept dunes with weather-beaten farms. Van Laar's images of thatch-roofed farms and old inns – whether designed to be built or simply painted on panel – mirror this image of the ideal Dutch countryside.

## ENDNOTES

- 226 Van Laar, *Magazijn*, plate LXXXVI (86). This scene may represent a miniature farmyard that stood on the grounds of the Raadwijk estate in Alphen aan den Rijn. The Raadwijk estate is depicted in Van Laar's plate LXIII (63). See Van den Broeke and Meulenkamp, "Gijsbert van Laar," *Cascade Bulletin voor Tuinhistorie*, pp. 28–29.
- 227 Van Laar, *Magazijn*, plate LXXXV (85).
- 228 Meulenkamp, "G. van Laar's *Magazijn*," *Bulletin KNOB*, p. 137; Van Eck et al., *Het schilderachtige*, p. 83.
- 229 Van Laar, *Magazijn*, plates LXXIX (79) and LXXXVI (86). For designs of related "old Dutch" façades and interiors, see plates CXXV, CXXXIII and CXC (125, 133 and 190).
- 230 Van Eck et al., *Het schilderachtige*. For the photograph on the frontispiece, depicting the painted board entitled "Boerderij in het woud" (farm in the wood) at Welgelegen (Rijswijk), see Wim G. J. M. Meulenkamp, "Kluisenaars, boeren en dagloners," pp. 74–84, esp. 82.
- 231 Van Laar, *Magazijn*, plate CLXXXI (181). See also Rogers et al., *Romantic Gardens*, p. 94.
- 232 Van Laar, *Magazijn*, plate CLXXXII (182).
- 233 Heinrich Sander, *Beschreibung seiner Reisen durch Frankreich, die Niederlande, Holland, Deutschland und Italien. In Beziehung auf Menschenkenntniss, Industrie, Literatur und Naturkunde insonderheit*, 2 vols. (Leipzig: F.G. Jacobaër und Sohn, 1783–84), esp. vol. 1, p. 580–81. Also quoted in Van den Broeke and Meulenkamp, "Gijsbert van Laar," *Cascade Bulletin voor Tuinhistorie*, p. 20.
- 234 Niemeyer, "Nieuwe gegevens," *Noordholland*, p. 7, discusses the reaction to artificially made figures (an old woman with spinning wheel and a man smoking a pipe, with a growling dog at their feet) described in the travel journal of Theodor Flidner, *Collektenreise nach Holland und England* (Essen, 1831), vol. 1, p. 118. The garden architect C. A. E. Petzold in *Erinnerungen aus meinem Leben* (Leipzig, 1890) gives a negative assessment of this Broek in Waterland estate as a "caricature of the art of the Dutch Garden." See also Meulenkamp, "G. van Laar's *Magazijn*," *Bulletin KNOB*, p. 131, referring to a hermit mannequin nodding its head in the hermitage at Arlesheim, Switzerland.
- 235 Grohmann, *Ideenmagazin*, cah. 31, plate 9.



**FIG. 55.** This image of a “Rural Cottage placed in a stretch of farmland” recalls the picturesque landscape scenes of seventeenth-century Dutch masters. Miniature farmyards such as this could be built in the landscape garden. G. van Laar, *Magazijn*, plate LXXXVI. Collection Elizabeth Barlow Rogers, New York.



**FIG. 56.** Design for a ruin or “seemingly old Gothic building” painted on a wooden panel. Strategically placed among trees, it was supposed to look real. G. van Laar, *Magazijn*, plate LXXXV. Collection Elizabeth Barlow Rogers, New York.



**FIG. 57.** The nineteenth-century trompe l'oeil farmhouse that stands on the estate of Elswout (Overveen) and is known as the Cottage of Kabuur. Photo by Jan Holwerda, summer 2007.



**FIG. 58.** The Cottage of Kabuur at Elswout (Overveen). Side-view, showing the front and rear poles holding up this trompe l'oeil panel with its protruding thatched roof. Photo by the author, winter 2009.



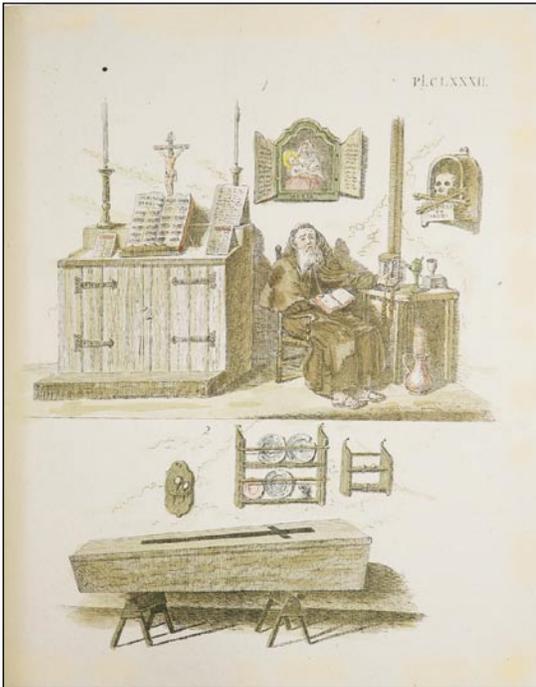
**FIG. 59.** The hermitage at Velserebeek, situated on a densely overgrown island only approachable by ferry. G. van Laar, *Magazijn*, plate CLXXXI. Collection Elizabeth Barlow Rogers, New York.



**FIG. 60.** The original early- nineteenth-century hermitage in the park of Velserebeek on a winter day. The stairs are overgrown and the ferry is gone. Photo by the author, February 2009.



**FIG. 61.** The hermit crossing the water to the Velserbeek hermitage. H. Numan, *Vierentwintig printtekeningen* (1797). Beeldbank, Noord-Hollands Archief, Haarlem.



**FIG. 62.** Interior of the hermitage at Velserbeek. A coffin served as the hermit's bed. The hermit was a mannequin dressed in a monk's habit. G. van Laar, *Magazijn*, plate CLXXXII. Collection Elizabeth Barlow Rogers, New York.

## THE ROMANTIC LANDSCAPE GARDEN AS PLAYGROUND

A little-studied aspect of the Romantic landscape garden is its function as a place for outdoor entertainment, and the remarkable role of playground equipment therein. Grohmann was fascinated by this topic and published charmingly illustrated books of well-known games to be played in the garden. He also included pictures of *Machinen* – machines or apparatus that today we might call playground equipment – that were valued for “contributing to one’s health and happiness.”<sup>236</sup>

Following Grohmann, Van Laar offers several models for swings, seesaws and other equipment. These objects underscore the varied function of the garden as a place to enjoy and contemplate nature but also to engage in amusing outdoor activities and engage in healthy exercise. Indeed, these pieces of equipment were not only seen as aesthetically appealing, but believed to provide physical conditioning through their motions. Especially the *Gesundheitspferd* or “fitness horse” (fig. 63),<sup>237</sup> which mimicked the swinging and rocking movements of horseback riding, was promoted as keeping one in excellent shape, thus combining the pleasurable and the useful.<sup>238</sup>

Highly ornate models for carousels, merry-go-rounds, seesaws, and swings are illustrated in the now-familiar “trio” of publications: Van Laar’s, Grohmann’s, and Krafft’s. Both Grohmann<sup>239</sup> and Krafft illustrated a carousel or “Chinese round for tilting at the ring,” a “swing in the Egyptian style,” and a “seesaw moving upon a globe with four seated men.”<sup>240</sup> These types of apparatus stood in small amusement parks created in European estates during the late-eighteenth and early nineteenth century. The garden of Monceau in Paris, laid out around 1775 and ornamented with an elegant merry-go-round in Chinese style, is a well-known example;<sup>241</sup> the amusement quarter in the park of Schloss Ludwigsburg near Stuttgart (Baden-Württemberg) is another. Here the reconstructed, originally early nineteenth-century playground ensemble still survives, including a *Schaukelhaus* (pavilion with swing) and a *Russischen Rad*, literally a “Russian wheel,” or “up-and-down.”<sup>242</sup> The up-and-down is of special interest, as it can be directly compared to the charming representation of such an apparatus in Van Laar’s *Storehouse* where it is described as a “Russian Swing-Mill,” and has four gondola seats made of wicker (fig. 64).<sup>243</sup> It has a turning mechanism attached to the main pole that can be hand-propelled. Called a *Russische Schaukel* or *Escarpolette Russe* by Grohmann,<sup>244</sup> such an up-an-down is considered to be an early form of the Ferris wheel, a device that came to Europe by way of Russia.<sup>245</sup>

Russia was also the source of other designs for unusual garden playground equipment and structures, including tall wooden frames with steep ramps to slide down in winter, which Grohmann described as “quite original ideas often found executed in gardens of distinguished Russians.”<sup>246</sup> Indeed, in the late 1770s such entertainments were found in the gardens of Catherine the Great at Tsarksoe Selo, a favorite one being the dangerous coasting hill, or “Flying Mountain.”<sup>247</sup> Smaller versions of such coasting hills are illustrated in Grohmann, but omitted by Van Laar, since they were not suitable for the Dutch climate and countryside. Van Laar’s illustrations of more familiar and less risky playground equipment, including swings and seesaws, helped landscape designers make the nineteenth-century Romantic garden a place for active enjoyment.

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This study has shown that Gijsbert van Laar’s *Storehouse of Garden Ornaments* is an important compilation of prints of both local and foreign provenance, arranged and annotated in a uniquely Dutch transliteration. It highlights the development of the landscape garden for middle-class citizens of a small country in early nineteenth-century Northern Europe. While Johann Gottfried Grohmann’s contemporary German publication formed the basis for most of the buildings and garden ornaments illustrated in the *Storehouse*, Van Laar’s garden plans and designs for painted wooden panels were his own unique creations. He offered layouts for modestly sized landscape gardens adapted to Holland’s wet climate and flat countryside. Designed in the Early Landscape Garden style, they were small in scale, strictly enclosed, and decoratively conceived rather than spatially envisioned. They had more in common with the moderately sized suburban gardens surrounding Paris and other Northern European cities circa 1800 than with the extensive landscape parks in England.

Detailed analysis of Van Laar’s text, the terms he used, and the illustrations he selected demonstrates that he was aware of contemporary illustrated publications and conversant with important theoretical works by authors ranging from Chambers to Repton, Delille to Rousseau, Goethe to Hirschfeld. His gardens mirror themes that were central to Dutch culture and literature of the Romantic Age. Above all he preferred a rustic, picturesque style designed to evoke a historic and romanticized Dutch past. Indeed, his designs for rustic buildings and ornaments would be his most lasting achievements as taste shifted away from excessive artifice in the landscape garden in the later nineteenth-century.<sup>248</sup> In the 1867 Gouda edition of Van Laar’s work the exotic structures and painted boards are omitted and only the more authentic-looking, rustic garden features and ornaments remain.<sup>249</sup>

In all respects, Van Laar’s *Storehouse* fits in the Romantic movement, which, after a time of great sociopolitical upheaval in the wake of the French Revolution, helped to fuel a sense of new cultural unity. The *Storehouse of Garden Ornaments* gave the common Dutch citizen the chance to carve out his own small place in the landscape of a nation trying to recover a sense of security and stability.

## ENDNOTES

236 Johann Gottfried Grohmann, *Professor J. G. Grohmanns Ländliche Vergnügungen oder Gartenspiele die mit Leibesbewegung verbunden, desalb Personen deren Beruf ist viel zu sitzen, vorzüglich zu empfehlen, und dem Hufelandischen System, die Gesundheit durch Bewegung und frohen Muth zu erhalten, ganz angemessen sind* (Leipzig: Baumgärtnerische Buchhandlung, no date, [1800]).

237 Grohmann, *Ideenmagazin*, cah. 16, plate 10. This apparatus was a swing, placed beneath a canopy that is decorated in the Chinese style. See also Erdberg, *Chinese Influence*, fig. 36.

238 Grohmann, *Ideenmagazin*, cah. 16, plate 10. Grohmann notes that he has included several models in its publication that combine the pleasurable with the useful; this one improves fitness through its shaking motion: “Wir haben uns schon einige Mal bemüht, in unseren Magazin Maschinen zu liefern, die das Angenehme zugleich mit dem Nützlichen verbinden, und geben hier einen Erfindung, wodurch die der Gesundheit so zuträgliche Erschütterung des Reitens in einem hohen Grade nachgeamt . . .” In another of his books, *Ländliche Vergnügungen*, Grohmann again explained the importance of exercise through games, especially for those who lead a sedentary life.

239 A seesaw depicted by Grohmann (*Ideenmagazin*, cah. 10, plate 8) was the model for Van Laar’s plate CXXXV (135). Grohmann also included designs for ornate garden swings in cah. 11, plate 2 and cah. 21, plate 1, including one described in the French text as an “escarpolette ou balançoire horizontale de style chinois.” This apparatus was invented by a certain Mr. Dähne, a mechanic from Leipzig. A version of it is published by Krafft.

240 Krafft, *Jardins pittoresques de France*, cah. 7, plates 50 and 51. In his *Recueil d’architecture civile*, cah. 19, pl. 112, Krafft illustrates actual playground equipment in the garden of St. James in Paris.

241 Eleanor P. DeLorme, *Garden Pavilions and the 18th-Century French* (Woodbridge, UK: Antique Collectors’ Club, 1996), p. 195. See also Elizabeth S. Eustis, *European Pleasure Gardens: Rare Books and Prints of Historic Landscape Design from the Elizabeth K. Reilly Collection*, an exhibition catalogue (Bronx, N.Y.: New York Botanical Garden, 2003), p. 75.

242 Gerhard Bäuerle and Michael Wenger, *Schloss Ludwigsburg. Die Baugeschichte, das Leben am Hof, die Gärten und das “Blühende Barock”* (Karlsruhe: G. Braun GmbH and Co., 1998), pp. 43–44. The Ostgarten (an English-style landscape garden since 1798) contains playground equipment dating from 1802. These include a carousel and various swings, among them the “Schaukelhaus,” “Schiffchenschaukel,” and “Russischen Schaukel” or “Rad.”

243 Van Laar, *Magazijn*, plate CXVII (117). The apparatus is described as a “Russische rondgaande Schommel-molen.”

244 Grohmann, *Ideenmagazin*, cah.13, plate 9: “Russische Schaukel” or “Escarpolette Russe.” A different model for a “Russian Swing-Mill” is published in Grohmann’s *Ländliche Vergnügungen*, fig II.

245 This piece of playground equipment is believed to have originated in the Middle East. For more information, see Norman D. Anderson, *Ferris Wheels: An Illustrated History* (Bowling Green, OH: Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 1992).

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246 Grohmann, cah. 33, plate 7. “Eine originelle Idee die man in den Gärten vornehme Russen oft ausgeführet sieht” (“Un idée assez originale, que l’on trouve souvent exécuté dans les jardins des Seigneurs russes”).

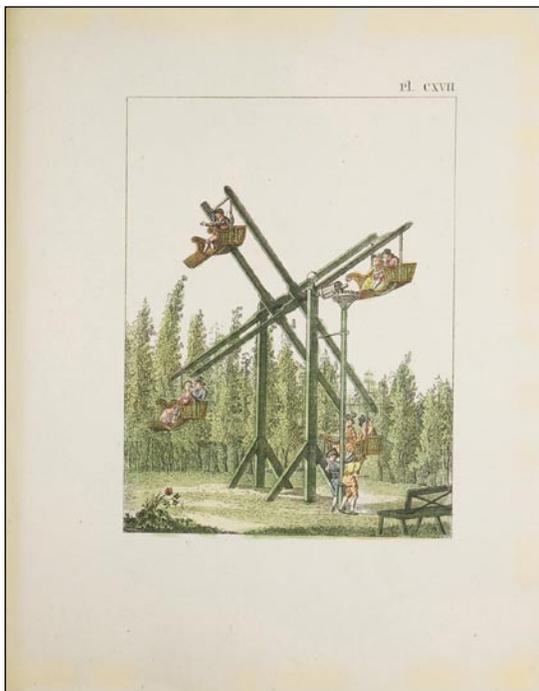
247 Peter Hayden, *Russian Parks and Gardens* (London: Francis Lincoln, 2005), pp. 82, 96.

248 For example, H. F. Müller’s *Gartenverschönerungen* (Vienna, 1834) contains nothing but designs for rustic benches. See also Eustis, *European Pleasure Gardens*, p. 82.

249 Meulenkamp remarked on this in “G. van Laar’s *Magazijn*,” *Bulletin KNOB*, pp. 132–33.



**FIG. 63.** Design for a *Gesundheitspferd* (fitness horse), recommended for exercise and entertainment. Grohmann, *Ideenmagazin*, cah. 16, plate 10. New York Public Library (NYPL Digital Gallery).



**FIG. 64.** A “Russian Swing Mill,” a forerunner of the Ferris wheel. The frame is made of wood and the chairs of wicker. G. van Laar, *Magazijn*, plate CXVII. Collection Elizabeth Barlow Rogers, New York.

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