



CHÂTEAU DE VERSAILLES

**FONDATION PHILANTHROPIA :
A PARTNERSHIP FOR THE
RESTORATION OF THE
LATONA FOUNTAIN**

25 JUNE 2012

*You must then go straight up above
Latona and pause to
consider Latona,
the lizards, the ramps, the statues,
the royal walk, Apollo, the canal,
then turn to see
the parterre and the palace.*

Louis XIV in *How to present the gardens of Versailles*

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CHATEAU DE VERSAILLES

F O N D A T I O N
PHILANTHROPIA
L O M B A R D O D I E R

Versailles, 25 June 2012

PRESS RELEASE

FONDATION PHILANTHROPIA: PARTNER IN THE RESTORATION OF THE LATONA FOUNTAIN

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THE PUBLIC ESTABLISHMENT OF THE PALACE, MUSEUM, AND NATIONAL ESTATE OF VERSAILLES AND FONDATION PHILANTHROPIA ANNOUNCE A MAJOR PARTNERSHIP FOR THE PRESERVATION OF CULTURAL HERITAGE AND THE TRANSMISSION OF SKILLS AND EXPERTISE.

CATHERINE PÉCARD, President of the Public Establishment of the Palace, Museum, and National Estate of Versailles, describes her reaction on taking up her role at Versailles: "As soon as I arrived here, I saw that the Latona Fountain was highly damaged and wanted to reinstate it to its former splendor. Restoring the masterpiece of the gardens that André Le Nôtre designed is the finest homage we can pay him, as we prepare to celebrate the 400th anniversary of his birth in 2013. Thanks to Fondation Philanthropia, we can also pay tribute to the artisans and craftsmen who keep alive the link of excellence between the past and the present."

"Fondation Philanthropia has committed itself to the restoration of the Latona Fountain because transmitting heritage lies at the heart of our mission. At Versailles, this heritage not only takes the shape of an architectural masterpiece; it is also reflected in the immense wealth of expertise and skill embodied by the artisans and craftsmen involved in its restoration," commented Thierry Lombard, President of Fondation Philanthropia and Managing Partner of Lombard Odier & Cie.

A COMMITMENT TO PRESERVING HERITAGE: THE RESTORATION OF THE LATONA FOUNTAIN AND THE LATONA PARTERRES

THE LATONA FOUNTAIN, with its marble tiers, rich lead and sculpted marble decoration, and intricate water features, is probably the most famous masterpiece in the gardens of Versailles. Located in the centre of the east-west Grand Perspective, it marks the start of the Royal Walk leading to the Apollo Fountain. It is the lynchpin of the hydraulic system of the park of Versailles: the water collected in its underground galleries supplies the other fountains of the park.

TODAY, over three centuries after it was built, its restoration has become imperative. Work is urgently needed on its infrastructure, hydraulics and sculpted decorations. The deterioration, notably of the rim stones, has affected the overall stability of the structure and the waterproofing of the basin. The sculptures and the marble features are in a state of grave disrepair. The internal and external hydraulic system has also suffered a great deal of damage, and this has contributed to the current malfunctioning of the garden's overall hydraulic system.

ALL THE VISUALS OF THE LATONA FOUNTAIN AND PARTERRES CAN BE DOWNLOADED FROM THE FOLLOWING LINK: http://wtrns.fr/yP8_77pX3OZjrTW

THE WORK, which will begin in early November 2012 and run for 16 months, will be carried out in accordance with ancient techniques by numerous artisans, master craftsmen and engineers. In parallel, an educational exhibition will be organized to inform the general public and showcase the techniques and skills of the period.

BY REGENERATING THE APPEARANCE OF THE LATONA PARTERRES, Fondation Philanthropia is helping restore the gardens to the original design of the “King’s gardener”. And the restoration coincides with the 400th anniversary of the birth of André Le Nôtre, which is being celebrated in 2013.

A MISSION TO TRANSMIT EXPERTISE: SUPPORT FOR TRAINING IN ARTS AND CRAFTS FOR THE PRESERVATION OF EXCEPTIONAL FORMS OF KNOW-HOW

THIS INITIATIVE will promote a number of unique and fragile forms of expertise and encourage future generations to acquire them. It will also incentivize young artisans in their careers and in the pursuit of excellence. It stems from Fondation Philanthropia’s desire to secure a place for arts and crafts, such as gilding, woodworking, embroidery and marble and metal work, in both the present and the future. To safeguard the future of these crafts, which are an integral part of our intangible heritage, it is vital that they are passed on to younger generations. Fondation Philanthropia is keen to support a new crop of young talents with the ability to perpetuate these arts and crafts, and in the process help them find employment.

FONDATION PHILANTHROPIA

FOR SEVEN GENERATIONS Lombard Odier has been managing the assets of its clients and helping them achieve their ambitions. Philanthropic initiatives hold a special place in this respect, and the Partners of Lombard Odier provide their clients with their experience as bankers as well as philanthropists.

LOMBARD ODIER SET UP FONDATION PHILANTHROPIA EXACTLY FOR THIS PURPOSE. Combining flexibility, security, and continuity, the Foundation simplifies the philanthropic process and helps its clients fulfill their philanthropic objectives. As a custodian, it is responsible for managing the assets entrusted to it. It also respects the wishes and perpetuates the memory of the donors. The Foundation is active in all areas of civic engagement, such as art and culture, social action, the environment, and medical research. Supporting donors has been part of Lombard Odier’s philanthropic advisory services for many years. The Firm has played a key role in a great many philanthropic initiatives of both a human and social nature. These include Fondation Louis-Jeantet, which is dedicated to supporting biomedical research, and Fondation Brochet, endowed by the donor of a vast domain and in charge of its maintenance and transformation into an accommodation and work space for researchers involved in the ethical, legal and social implications of medical development.

FONDATION PHILANTHROPIA’S expertise stems from the practical experience that the various generations of Partners of Lombard Odier & Cie have acquired since the Firm was founded in 1796, in the course of their own philanthropic activities. The commitment of Alexandre Lombard in 1859 alongside Henri Dunant, who went on to found the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), illustrates this to perfection. And Thierry Lombard, the current chairman of the Foundation for the ICRC – whose objectives include supporting the training of delegates – continues in this tradition.

PART I

THE RESTORATION OF THE LATONA
FOUNTAIN AND PARTERRES

THE LATONA FOUNTAIN



The Latona Fountain
© château de Versailles,
C. Milet

THE PYRAMIDFORM OF THE FOUNTAIN IS THE WORK OF JULES HARDOUIN-MANSART (1687-1689). The Latona pyramid is formed by four oval tiers covered with red and white marble. Each of the three levels of the fountain forms a basin containing a series of lead frogs which, in the lower basin, are combined with figures undergoing metamorphosis. At the top of the upper tier, the statue of Latona with her children, Apollo and Diana, the work of the brothers Gaspard and Balthazar Marsy, dominates the composition and looks towards the Grand Canal. At the base of the pyramid and around it are turtles and lizards, symbolising the peasants punished by Jupiter, emerging from the water

MANY WATER FEATURES BRING the fountain to life, over the lower and three upper basins. The 74 water jets are fed by two concentric rings of lead piping in the form of a “spider” housed in a vaulted underground chamber.

WITH ITS MARBLE PYRAMID, statues and water features, the Latona Fountain forms the largest fountain of its type in the entire park of Versailles and plays a vital decorative and hydraulic role.

RESTORATION HAS BECOME ESSENTIAL

THIS COMPOSITION HAS BEEN MAINTAINED and repaired numerous times over the centuries. The last restoration operation was in the 1850s. In the 1980s, the white marble sculpted group of Latona and Her Children which had been vandalised, was replaced by a resin copy.

TODAY, MORE THREE CENTURIES AFTER ITS CREATION, numerous repairs are needed to the different parts of the Latona Fountain. Urgent work is required on its infrastructures, hydraulic system and sculptures.



The Latona Fountain
© château de Versailles,
C. Milet

THE DETERIORATIONS identified are first and foremost structural (the central pyramid shows signs of tipping over to one side) affects the fountain's general stability. The decorative features – marble surfaces and sculpted lead figures – are likewise damaged. Lastly, the numerous defects affecting the internal and external hydraulic system contribute to the malfunctioning of the fountain.

THE RESTORATION WORK ON THE LATONA FOUNTAIN will be carried out by Pierre-André Lablaude, Chief Architect in the Historical Monuments Department.

The complete restoration programme concerns the various elements that make up this exceptional ensemble:

- Infrastructures of the pool and the pyramid.
- Superstructures of the pyramid.
- Marble facing elements.
- Waterproofing devices.
- Sculptures.
- Water features and associated plumbing elements.

It will cover:

- Work to consolidate the infrastructures and superstructures.
 - The restoration of the marble facings.
 - The complete repair of the waterproofing devices.
 - The restoration of the lead rings of the inner room.
 - The restoration of the sculpture decoration.
 - The re-establishment of the defunct water features and the redesign of the overall hydraulic system.
 - The treatment of the sand promenade and the strip of lawn of the Latona Fountain.
-

A LARGE-SCALE EDUCATIONAL PROJECT

2013, which will mark the 400th anniversary of the birth of André Le Nôtre, will feature this large-scale heritage operation on the major axis of the gardens of Versailles involving the restoration of the Latona Fountain and its parterres.

IN THE CENTRE OF THE GRAND PERSPECTIVE OF THE PARK, this unique and innovative operation will highlight the traditional arts and crafts used in the restoration of the world's heritage (artwork plumbing, marble work, gilding, fountain systems, sculpture, hydraulics, casting of sculpture and décor, etc.).

FOR THE FIRST TIME, the millions of visitors who stroll each year along the paths of the park and in particular the Grand Perspective, which will remain accessible, will be able to discover and follow all the stages of the restoration of this architectural masterpiece of the gardens of Le Nôtre.

A BELVEDERE built around the work site for the convenience of visitors will enable them to follow the work throughout the period of restoration and support communication with visitors.



- ① Information des visiteurs sur le chantier de restauration
- ② Belvédère aménagé en surplomb du chantier
- ③ Ateliers de restauration (fontainerie, marbrerie, dorure, etc.)
- T Signalétique directionnelle (orientation des visiteurs vers le chantier et les ateliers de restauration)

Pierre-André Lablaude
Architecte en chef des Monuments Historiques

THE INFORMATION WILL BE PROVIDED AT THREE STRATEGIC POINTS:

- Installation of a display of physical and digital information to prepare the visitor before visiting the site.
- Site facilities to enable the public to see the site out in the open.
- Installation of workshops close to the site with temporary structures housing the specialists in charge of the work and enabling the public in peak season to discover the restoration techniques and the know-how of the fountain experts of the Palace of Versailles. Meetings with the public, guided tours and workshops may also be organised.

Part I—The restoration of the Latona Fountain and parterres

THE LATONA PARTERRES



The Latona Parterres
© cabinet Lablaude

THE LATONA PARTERRES are located on the main axis of the estate (east-west), which starts at the Palace and goes as far as the Grand Canal which lengthens it; this axis dominates the entire Small Park.

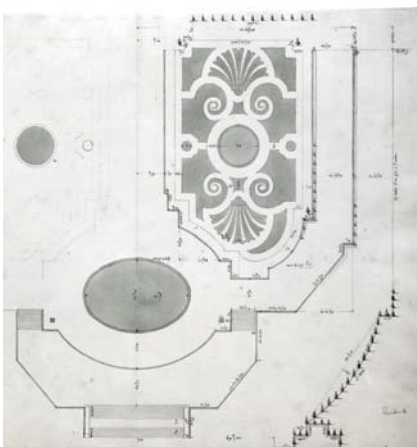
LAID OUT IN 1665, These parterres with sections of lawn, decorative whorls and seashells, existed until the early 19th century. Their transformation into simple compartments of lawn bordered by flower-beds began in 1818 and has lasted until today.

THESE VAST PARTERRES, covering a total area of 1.35 hectares, mark the beginning of the Grand Perspective of the garden and frame the monumental Latona Fountain.

THE RESTORATION

THE GENERAL PRINCIPLE OF THE WORK ON THE PARTERRES OF VERSAILLES respects the coherence of the overall restoration plan of the garden initiated in 1989 and which requires, for the parts nearest to the Palace or directly visible from it, for their reinstatement as they were in the reign of Louis XIV.

THE LAVISH AND VERY PRECIOUS ANCIENT ICONOGRAPHIC documentation enables us to determine with precision, for the Latona parterres, the overall locations and layouts, as well as the details of their composition as they feature in the adopted reference plans. The iconography (engravings and paintings), as well as the written sources and descriptions of the period, likewise enable us to understand the organisation of the flora and the overall size.



The Latona Parterres
© D.R.

THE RESTORATION PROJECT aims to restore the original composition of Le Nôtre with its sections of lawn, seashell motifs and whorls. The work will involve the following elements:

- The sections of lawn in each compartment.
- The box hedges framing each compartment.
- The lines of topiary yews punctuating the supporting walls of the parterre. This topiary work will be carried out by the teams of the gardens department of Versailles.
- The sandy cover of the compartments and their periphery.

THIS RESTORATION will be supervised by Pierre-André Lablaude, Chief Architect of the national Historical Monuments Department.

PART II

FONDATION PHILANTHROPIA

ENCOURAGING PHILANTHROPIC COMMITMENT

TWO HUNDRED YEARS OF SOCIAL COMMITMENT have taught Lombard Odier & Cie that giving is an art that is both wonderful and challenging. This is why Lombard Odier decided to share its longstanding experience and expertise in philanthropy with its clients by developing its own philanthropic advisory service. This service enables the bank to support its clients by helping them to design charitable strategies that align with their own philanthropic aspirations, and select the right donation methods at their leisure.

IT IS AGAINST THE BACKGROUND OF THIS PHILANTHROPY ADVISORY SERVICE that Lombard Odier has established Fondation Philanthropia. In the same way as Fondation de France, Philanthropia is an umbrella foundation that gives donors the opportunity to engage in two ways:

1. Either by funding projects alongside other donors through ‘Thematic Funds’.
2. Or by setting up their own ‘Personal Fund’.

EITHER ROUTE SIMPLIFIES ADMINISTRATIVE FORMALITIES and allows structural costs to be spread and shared. It also facilitates the sharing of experience and, as a result, maximizes the effectiveness and impact of donations. Backed by an institution with a heritage dating back more than two hundred years, Fondation Philanthropia also provides donors with a context of longevity for their philanthropic commitments, and the assurance that their wishes will be implemented from one generation to the next.

FONDATION PHILANTHROPIA covers all aspects of philanthropic commitment, broken down into four areas of involvement:

- Humanitarian and social action (which accounted for 50% of the total grants in 2011).
- Culture and education (7,5%).
- Medical and scientific research (35%).
- Environment and sustainable development (7,5%).

THE WORK OF THE HUMANITARIAN AND SOCIAL THEMATIC FUND has been well illustrated by its 2011 support for the Kenya Red Cross Society and its initiatives to relieve the food crisis in the Horn of Africa. During the same year, the Medical and Scientific Research Thematic Fund provided funding to assist the Institut Pasteur in its development of a therapeutic cancer vaccine.

AT THE SAME TIME, SOME FIFTEEN PERSONAL FUNDS continued to make valuable contributions in the areas selected by the concerned donors. These included the provision of support for people affected by Parkinson’s disease, and scholarships for students attending the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Geneva.

SINCE ITS INCEPTION IN 2008, Fondation Philanthropia has committed over 17 million Swiss francs to some fifty organizations.

PART III

SPONSORSHIP IN VERSAILLES

SUPPORTING VERSAILLES, OPEN TO ALL

CHARITABLE GIVING, A VITAL UNDERTAKING

IN VERSAILLES, CHARITABLE GIVING FITS INTO A LONG HISTORICAL TRADITION. Altogether a former royal residence, the Museum of French History and a palace of the French Republic, as well as a World Heritage monument, Versailles has always attracted the generosity of numerous donors, from France and abroad. First among them, John D. Rockefeller, enabled a veritable rescue operation of the site in the 1930ies. This generosity, which never faltered, has received a new impetus with the law of 1 August 2003 on charitable giving, non-profit organisations and foundations.

TODAY, THE GENEROUS SUPPORT OF COMMITTED DONORS IS, more than ever, vital to the Palace of Versailles. It is a necessary complement to the efforts of the French State in the context of the vast restoration of the Palace of Versailles currently under way (it is the largest renovation operation since King Louis-Philippe radically transformed the Palace in the 19th Century to house the Museum of the History of France). It also enables the Public Establishment of Versailles - the administrative entity that manages the site - to go further in exercising its missions to maintain and enhance its heritage and to enrich and disseminate knowledge of the collections housed in the Palace and on the estate.

A WIDE RANGE OF PROJECTS

CHARITABLE GIVING INTERVENES IN ALL OF THE PALACE'S FIELDS OF ACTION: the restoration of artworks, interior decors and buildings, the acquisition of artworks and furniture, the restoration of the gardens, the statues and benches in the park, the organisation of temporary exhibitions and cultural programmes, the development of visitor services, and the contribution of technical skills. The Palace and estate of Versailles represent a permanent work site, and every donor - whether a foundation, an individual or a company, a multinational corporation or a small and medium-sized enterprise, and whether in the industrial or services sector - can find a suitable project to support. Gifts may be financial or in-kind.

EACH GIVING PROJECT IS CUSTOM-MADE, from a thousand Euros for replanting a young tree to re-establish the gardens' architecture in the 17th and 18th centuries, to several million Euros for a large-scale restoration operation. A wide range of projects, reflecting the huge needs of the Palace and its estate, provide each donor with an opportunity to choose a project which fits both its brand and its financial means, and thus to contribute to the lasting quality and cultural influence of this exceptional heritage.

Part III—Sponsorship in Versailles

CHARITABLE GIVING TO VERSAILLES DONORS

NUMEROUS INDIVIDUALS

THIS IS THE OLDEST SOURCE OF CHARITABLE GIVING. King Louis-Philippe himself, in the 1830ies, paid out of his personal allowance for numerous artworks which now belong to the Palace's collections. Then, there was John D. Rockefeller, followed by numerous French and American donors, owing in particular to the tireless efforts of Gérald Van Der Kemp, Chief Curator of the Palace from 1953 to 1980. This tradition continues vigorously to this day, with the support of, notably, LADY MICHELHAM OF HELLINGLY, HUBERT DE GIVENCHY, EDOUARD DE ROYÈRE, MADAME FRANÇOIS PINAULT, EDGAR DE PICCIOTTO, JEAN-MARC FORNERI, CATHERINE POSOKHOW, JEAN-LOUIS REMILLEUX, LILY SAFRA, STEPHEN A. SCHWARZMAN and countless others.

CORPORATE SUPPORT

FOR THE PAST THIRTY YEARS, INDIVIDUAL GIVING HAS BEEN REINFORCED by corporate support, which significantly contributes to protecting the heritage and enriching the Palace's collections. Corporate donors include: ABN-AMRO, ANNICK GOUTAL, AUTOMOBILES PEUGEOT, BNP-PARIBAS, BOUYGUES, BREGUET, CHANEL, CHRONOPOST, COLAS, EADS, EDF, EUROTUNNEL, LA FRANÇAISE DES JEUX, GDF SUEZ, GOOGLE, HSBC, IDEAL STANDART, KPMG, KUBOTA, L'ORÉAL, LVMH, MARTELL, MATIF SA, MOËT-HENNESSY, MONNOYEUR, NEXANS, NIKKEI, ORANGE, PHILIPS, RENAULT TRUCKS DEFENSE, SANOFI, SWAROVSKI, TOTAL, VINCI, etc.

FOUNDATIONS AND BENEFACTORS' ASSOCIATIONS

FINALLY, CLUBS, FOUNDATIONS AND ASSOCIATIONS ACTIVELY RALLY TO SUPPORT THE PALACE OF VERSAILLES. The SOCIÉTÉ DES AMIS DE VERSAILLES in the first place, together with its counterparts THE AMERICAN FRIENDS OF VERSAILLES and the SOCIÉTÉ DES AMIS EUROPÉENS DE VERSAILLES, as well as THE RICARDO DO ESPIRITO SANTO SILVA FOUNDATION, THE CALOUSTE GULBENKIAN FOUNDATION, THE EDP FOUNDATION, THE FLORENCE GOULD FOUNDATION, THE VERSAILLES FOUNDATION, THE FRENCH HERITAGE SOCIETY, and THE WORLD MONUMENTS FUND all support in particular restoration projects undertaken by the Palace.

TODAY, BY FINANCING THE RESTORATION OF THE LATONA FOUNTAIN AND ITS PARTERRES, Fondation Philanthropia contributes to returning the gardens of André Le Nôtre to their original splendour, for the great pleasure of the millions of visitors who, each year, ramble along the park's walks.

WITH THIS GENEROUS GIFT, FONDATION PHILANTHROPIA not only enters the historical lineage of the great donors who have been contributing to protecting and enhancing this World Heritage site, but it also joins the Palace of Versailles in its endeavour to transmit to future generations.

PART IV

THE YEAR OF LE NÔTRE
IN THE PALACE OF VERSAILLES

Part IV — The year of Le Nôtre in the Palace of Versailles

THE YEAR OF LE NÔTRE IN THE PALACE OF VERSAILLES



André Le Nôtre (1613-1700)
Carlo Maratta (1625-1713)
Huile sur toile
© RMN (Château de Versailles),
G. Blot

IN 2013, THE PALACE OF VERSAILLES will pay special homage to the great gardener of Louis XIV in a spirit of fruitful dialogue between past and present, marking the 400th anniversary of his birth.

MAJOR RESTORATIONS WILL BE UNDERTAKEN DURING THE YEAR OF LE NÔTRE: The restoration of the Latona Fountain will be a key event, as well as that of the parterres with their lawns laid out in patterns of palmettes, volutes and whorls.

The “Rond Vert” (Round Green) grove will be reinterpreted by a contemporary landscape designer also paying homage to Le Nôtre.

In-depth studies will also be launched for the South and North parterres and the central section of the Star grove.

A MAJOR EXHIBITION, “ANDRÉ LE NÔTRE, 1613-2013”, presented from 21st October 2013, will be entirely devoted to the figure of Le Nôtre and will review in an original way the story of this exceptional man and the gardens and cities of the world that Le Nôtre influenced.

THE SCULPTOR GIUSEPPE PENONE, the guest contemporary artist in spring 2013, will present his vision of nature with the work of Le Nôtre.

A GARDENING BOOK PRIZE will be awarded for the second time in June 2013 as part of the “Lire au Jardin” event (Garden Book Fair) in the gardens of Trianon.

A PROGRAMME OF SHOWS IN THE GARDENS will be offered to the ever-widening audience for entertainment at Versailles.

A PROGRAMME FOR DISCUSSING EXPERIENCES and sharing know-how between the gardeners of Versailles and the imperial garden of Tokyo will get under way following the signing of a partnership in 2012. The teams of gardeners will meet both in Tokyo and Versailles.

PART V

FURTHER INFORMATION

THE GARDENS OF VERSAILLES



The Grand Perspective
© cabinet Lablaude

THE PARK OF VERSAILLES is the archetype of the formal French garden laid out to follow a strict architectural and geometric plan. Designed to harmonise with the architecture of the buildings, the estate of Versailles and Trianon has different features including the parterres around the Palace and the groves, open-air “rooms of greenery” disguised in the wooded areas of the garden.

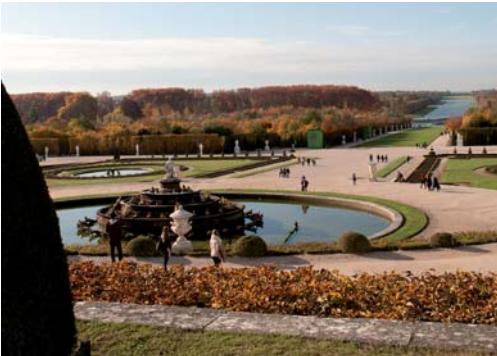
Louis XIV loved gardens. Until his death, he personally supervised their design and wanted to see “every detail” beforehand; he walked there often and accompanied his important guests and foreign ambassadors on their strolls. Sumptuous festivities were organised and the king even wrote an itinerary in which he indicated *How to show the gardens of Versailles*.

IN 1661, LOUIS XIV ENTRUSTED ANDRÉ LE NÔTRE (1623-1700) with the design and laying out of the gardens of Versailles, which began just before the extension work on the palace of Louis XIII. It took forty years. The creation of the gardens was a tremendous undertaking in an area consisting only of woodland, meadows and marshes. The King, anxious to see his dream come true quickly, had thousands of large trees transplanted there. Thousands of men worked on this huge landscaping operation.

THE GARDENS ARE LAID OUT ALONG TWO MAIN AXES that meet in a right angle at the terrace and offer varied perspectives:

- The principal east-west axis from the façade of the Hall of Mirrors to the end of the Grand Canal.
- The transversal north-south axis from the Neptune fountain to the Pièce d’Eau des Suisses (Swiss Guards ornamental lake).

THE MAJOR PERSPECTIVE OF VERSAILLES which Le Nôtre laid out up to the horizon, stretches for over 3 kilometres, from the façade of the Palace to the western gate of the Park.



The Latona Fountain and Parterres
© château de Versailles, C.Milet

SCULPTURES WERE A KEY FEATURE OF THE GARDENS, making the park of Versailles one of the largest open-air statue museums. In marble, bronze or lead, sculptures adorn walks, groves and fountains. They are inspired by the legends of Greco-Roman mythology as well as by ancient history. In 1661, Charles Le Brun supervised with his team of sculptors the installation of the fountains, statues and vases.

ORIGINAL SCULPTURES OR COPIES OF ANTIQUE MODELS have been carved by the scholarship-holders of the French Academy in Rome, and over 300 sculptures adorn the gardens. Artists such as Girardon, Tuby and Coysevox produced a large number of masterpieces that make the gardens

famous, to which were added the Grand Commission by Colbert for 24 white marble statues for the Water Parterre in 1674.

IN THE FOLLOWING CENTURY, a general replanting programme was undertaken by Louis XVI and some groves were transformed, such as the Apollo's Bath Grove and the Queen's Grove. A new general replanting operation took place during the Second Empire.

IN 1992, AFTER THE SEVERE STORM OF FEBRUARY 1990, a new replanting operation was undertaken. It was extended following the major storm of December 1999.

TODAY, the gardens once again have their original tree cover and layout in the proportions designed by Le Nôtre.

THE ESTATE OF VERSAILLES IN A FEW FIGURES

THE TOTAL AREA: 787 hectares, of which:

- 431 hectares for the Grand Park
- 96 hectares for the Trianon estate
- 77 hectares for the garden and its groves (Small Park)
- 24 hectares for the Grand Canal

THE PLANT STRUCTURES OF THE GARDEN

- 350,000 trees in the estate
- 32 hectares of lawns
- 43 km of walks
- 23 km of trellis
- 700 topiary trees with 67 different shapes
- 300,000 flowers planted each year.
- 1,500 trees in tubs in the Orangery, including 900 orange trees.

THE OPEN-AIR STATUARY: 235 vases, 155 statues, 86 sculpture groups.

THE BASINS AND FOUNTAINS:

- 55 fountains and over 600 water features.
- 35 km of water pipes (90% in wrought iron and 10% in lead).

Part V—Further information

THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE LATONA FOUNTAIN

THE LATONA FOUNTAIN WITH IT PARTERRE today form one of the most prestigious ornamental structures of the park of Versailles. Located on the principal axis of the garden, it was designed in several phases, each one devoted to the construction of a key element: the earthworks of the parterre, the construction of the fountain and the construction of the pyramid.

CHRONOLOGY

- 1665** - Construction of the fountain. In its first state, it was called the Oval Fountain.
 - Construction of the underground passages housing the hydraulic system for supplying the basin and its water features that began to function the following year.
 - The two small pools of the parterre were dug out.

- 1666** - Inauguration of the first water features of the basin: 6 “boiling” features around a central spout, 20 peripheral spouts outside the pyramid’s lower edge.

- 1667** - Installation of the first lead sculptures: 20 frogs painted in natural colours beside each of the 20 peripheral spouts. The Oval Fountain became the Frogs Fountain.
 - 24 turtles and lizards were installed to decorate the two round ponds of the Parterre.

- 1668** - Choice of the ornamental programme of the basin: the theme was the flight of Latona with her two children through Lycia to escape the wrath of Juno. The fountain henceforth was known as the Latona Fountain.

- 1669** - Installation of the figures of peasants above the 6 spouts of the fountain.

- 1670** - Installation of the marble sculpture group of Latona and her two children in the centre of the fountain.

- 1686** - Decision to augment the decoration of the fountain.

- 1687-1689**
 - Construction of a first pyramid in stone painted to look like marble.
 - Demolition of this first pyramid and reconstruction in real marble.
 - Arrangement of the sculptures on and around the pyramid with new lead figures.
 - The stone edge was replaced by a marble one.

TODAY’S FOUNTAIN CORRESPONDS TO THIS LAST FORMS.

Part V—Further information

MYTHOLOGY SERVING THE REGIME'S COMMUNICATION



Latone and her children
© château de Versailles,
C. Milet

JUPITER RESCUING LATONA

IN ROMAN MYTHOLOGY, Latona was the mother of Diana and Apollo, whose father was Jupiter. Because of the jealousy of Juno, Jupiter's wife, Latona was forced to continually flee from her. As they were crossing through Lycia, a region of Asia Minor, she stopped to drink water from a marsh. Her children had drunk the last drops of her milk and her throat was parched due to the heat. But the neighbouring peasants gathering rushes in the marsh tried to stop her from drinking. Latona begged them to have pity on her and her children, who held out their little arms to move the peasants. But these people would not listen: they trampled around in the water to stir up the mud. Latona realised that she was not going to get her drink and became angry. She looked up to heaven to beg for the help of Jupiter, while cursing the peasants: "May you live forever in your marsh!" Immediately, the Lycian peasants were transformed into frogs and toads.

THE LATONA FOUNTAIN DRAMATIZES THIS PRECISE MOMENT, of the metamorphosis of the peasants, while Latona begs Jupiter while her two children have their arms outstretched. Some peasants have already become frogs, while others are beginning to transform. Some of their hands have only four fingers as they become the webbed limbs of frogs. Some heads are hybrids. These monsters were made in lead painted in polychrome to give the illusion of real colour and by contrast reinforce the whiteness of the marble group. The water pouring from their mouths represents the curses and threats they heap on Latona and the croaking to which they are now condemned.

HISTORIANS HAVE WISHED TO SEE IN THE EPISODE OF LATONA as an allusion to the punishment of the Fronde rebels, those nobles who rebelled against royal authority during the childhood of Louis XIV, but no commentary from the period backs up this interpretation. However, it is undeniable that the theme of this fountain illustrates the divine protection given to Apollo, the symbol of the king, and on a more general level, the victory of civilisation, sculpted in white marble, over the monstrous forces of those rebelling against the divine order of things.

Part V—Further information

THE SCULPTURE DECORATION OF THE LATONA FOUNTAIN

The Latona fountain presents, in a tiered composition of polychrome marble, an exceptional group of sculptures decorating each tier of the pyramid. They consist of lead figures and the marble group on the top (today replaced by a resin mould).



Details of the Latona sculptures
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IN 1667, TO DECORATE THE FIRST FORM OF THE FOUNTAIN (called the Oval and then the Frogs fountain), twenty frogs and twenty-four turtles and lizards were cast in lead to decorate respectively the edge of the fountain's basin and the two small ponds located below it.

FOLLOWING THE CHOICE OF THE NEW ORNAMENTAL THEME OF THE LATONA FOUNTAIN, a new commission for figures of peasants was given in 1668 to Balthazar Marsy and the figures were installed in the fountain in 1669. In 1687-1688, for the final transformation of the fountain, these different sculptures, including those in the small independent ponds, were regrouped in the new pyramid-shaped composition. Extra figures were then cast by Bertin: four frogs and six lizards.

THUS, THE LEAD FIGURES CAST IN THE LATE 17TH CENTURY consisted of twenty-four frogs, thirty turtles and lizards, and six peasants undergoing metamorphosis. In 1670, these figures were covered with a type of gilding that gave them the precious look described at the time as (legend of the engraving of the Latona Fountain by Perelle): "... all in gilt bronze" – and by Dezallier d'Argenville as: "frogs in bronzed lead". The treatment of lead by the application of a "bronzine" was a traditional technique of the late 17th century, then widely used on the lead sculptures in the different fountains of Versailles. The gilding effect was obtained using a composite based on bronze powder (copper, tin, zinc, iron, etc.).

THE MARBLE SCULPTURE GROUP crowning the composition and representing Latona and her children was executed by Gaspard Marsy in 1668-1669: the principal group of Latona and her children, sculpted by the other Marsy brother, Balthazar, was placed in 1670 on an islet in the centre of the basin.

ALL THE LATONA SCULPTURES, like other elements of the fountain, were regularly restored and repaired over the years. The first operation was at the end of the 18th century and was followed a century later by a general restoration (1888-1889). The last major operation was carried out in 1941-1942. In the 1980s, the sculpture group of Latona and her children was replaced by a resin mould following acts of vandalism.

Part V—Further information

A MASTERPIECE OF HYDRAULIC ENGINEERING

THE LATONA FOUNTAIN, the central element of the Grand Perspective of the garden, is also the centre of the hydraulic system of Versailles. It plays a key role for the fountains, linking the upper water features (on the terraces: Water Parterre and Animal Combats) and the fountains below it (Apollo's Chariot, Bacchus, Mirror and Roman Ladies, and the fountains of the Dauphin, Girandole, Obelisk and Colonnade groves). The latter depend entirely on Latona which, thanks to its water spouts and the water collected in its underground galleries, can supply them with pressurised water by means of valves.

THE WATER FEATURES OF THE LATONA FOUNTAIN

THE LATONA FOUNTAIN IS OUTSTANDING FOR THE NUMBER, the nature, the tiered effect and the association of its different water effects that are distributed among the three upper tiers and the basin. The 74 water jets are fed by two concentric rings of lead piping in the form of a "spider" housed in a vaulted underground chamber.

ON THE RIGHT OF THE PYRAMID, the falling spouts supply the water pouring over the edges of the three tiers and ends up in the basin below them.

THE WATER FEATURES OF THIS BASIN consist of the sloping spouts of the ring surrounding the base of the pyramid and the two high spouts on the sides.

THE HYDRAULIC SYSTEM OF THE BASIN remained largely unchanged between the 1680s (construction of the pyramid) and the mid-19th century. Since then, the major transformation was the elimination of the vertical spouts of the second tier. Other changes have also been seen in the shape and intensity of the spouts: transformation of the two side spouts of the basin into sprays, reduction of the arc of the spouts of the ring of lizards and turtles, etc.

THE WATER FEATURES of the Latona Fountain are adjusted through 74 nozzles that control the spouts.
