



Palaces of the Sun King: Versailles, Trianon, Marly: The Chateaux of Louis XIV

Bernd Dams

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This comprehensive volume documents for the first time twenty-one châteaux and pavilions commissioned by Louis XIV, France's great builder-king. These royal buildings, and over forty architectural ornaments enriching their gardens, are illustrated in breathtaking watercolors by authors Andrew Zega and Bernd H. Dams. Depicted are several of the most influential structures in all of Western architecture, such as the palace of Versailles and the magnificent lost complex at Marly, which contemporaries deemed a veritable "Paradise on Earth." The authors give full attention to unrealized projects and depict completed structures not as they stand today, if indeed they stand at all, but as they were originally designed by the leading architects of the day.

Meticulously prepared over many years, *Palaces of the Sun King* presents a wealth of historically accurate watercolor illustrations, complemented by a sophisticated narrative, that together offer a fundamental reappraisal of the architecture of the reign of Louis XIV. Modern academics have clarified the function of the political and social construct of the Sun King, but the nature and extent of the parallel architectural revolution which Louis XIV engendered have remained largely unquestioned out of veneration for a national treasure. Time, too, has seen the disappearance or destruction of many of the châteaux and architectural designs commissioned by the king, and in deciding to recreate lost buildings and unexecuted designs, the authors open new realms of discovery for a subject heretofore deemed thoroughly understood. Here, then, the Sun King's masterworks are reconsidered and deconstructed, providing a work of groundbreaking investigation that will both fascinate and inform.

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