

# A Royal Taste: Louis XV–1738

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THE PERSONAL INVOLVEMENT of Louis XV in the development of the rococo style is tacitly recognized in France, where the designation “style Louis XV” is usual. In the decorative more than the fine arts, the client exercised a decisive role in shaping the ultimate product. If the client was a person of well-defined taste, his stamp was set more clearly on the works made to please him than was that of the sculptor, gilder, upholsterer, or the joiner whose signature a given piece of furniture bears. A client of taste bought what he liked; a client of importance and taste had what he liked designed and made for him; the kings of France, having sponsored the development of the decorative arts since Francis I, had the world’s leading artists and artisans to create their surroundings. As traditional as royal sponsorship was personal interest in decoration.

Throughout his life Louis XV manifested an enthusiastic interest. A few exemplary incidents give an idea of the extent of his participation in the creative process. He exercised direct control over each step of the planning of new and renovated rooms in his châteaux. A 1728 plan of an extension of the library at Versailles bears an approving “bon” scrawled with careful flourish by the then eighteen-year-old King.<sup>1</sup> Louis’s enthusiasm grew over the years: the Marquis d’Argenson notes in his diary on July 8, 1739, “Le Roi fait continuellement dessiner devant lui en particulier le jeune Gabriel,<sup>2</sup> de ses Bâtimens.”<sup>3</sup> In the diary of the duc de Luynes we find this same young architect Gabriel has

been appointed by the King to the highest post in the department of buildings on May 29, 1742, inspiring Luynes’s comment “Il n’est pas le plus ancien contrôleur des bâtimens mais S.M. a beaucoup de bontés pour lui et il travaille très souvent seul avec le Roi pour les plans et les projets.”<sup>4</sup> Louis was equally involved in the furnishing of the chambers he helped plan. He had preliminary drawings made for his approval, and, in the case of particularly important pieces, he demanded wax models. One such model survived the fires of the Revolution to bear witness to a confection of a bed commissioned by Louis.<sup>5</sup> Garnished with gilded and silvered shells, flowers, and classical ornaments, the wax study reveals the care with which Mme du Barry’s bed was prepared by her royal lover. In the decorative arts Louis XV was a far from passive patron.

The widespread effects of royal decorative projects were not the King’s concern. In his employment of the foremost craftsmen, Louis’s only ambition was to please himself. The elite of all Europe followed the practice of imitating the style of Versailles laboriously estab-

1. H. Racinais, *Un Versailles inconnu* II (Paris, 1950) fig. 4.

2. Jacques-Ange Gabriel (1698–1782), appointed Contrôleur des Bâtimens du Roi, 1728.

3. Quoted in Yves Bottineau, *L’Art d’Ange-Jacques Gabriel à Fontainebleau* (Paris, 1962) p. 16.

4. Charles Philippe, duc de Luynes, *Mémoires* II (Paris, 1860) p. 133.

5. Pierre Verlet, *French Royal Furniture* (London, 1963) p. 27.



**FIGURE 1**

Louis XV, 1738. Engraving in color by Jakob Christof Le Blon. Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris

lished by Louis XIV. In imitating his great-grandson they simultaneously gratified their natural desire for a less constrained and pompous manner of living. Comfort and escapist fantasy drew a hesitant but not unwilling Louis XV from the stately rigors of grandeur. The royal example stimulated and sanctioned what was perhaps an inevitable trend. The charm of the rococo style seduced King, country, and continent.

Louis XV had clearly discernible likings. Chief among them were the hunt, women, comfort, and what can only be described as puttering around. His royal position facilitated pursuit of these interests; but, at the same time, it imbued him with a guilty conscience. He revered the example of his great-grandfather, and he sincerely wanted to preserve the glory given to the monarchy by the "Sun King."

In the year 1738 Louis XV was, at twenty-eight, just emerging from youth into manhood (Figure 1). His wife had shut her door to him after the birth of their tenth child. He was becoming involved with Mme de Mailly, the first of a series of mistresses. He hunted and dined more than he attended to affairs of state. His desire to emulate his predecessor was losing out to his own peculiar domestic hedonism.

Focusing on the year 1738 in contemporary documents, we may glimpse the process by which surroundings were tailored to fit the emerging royal personality. The *Journal du Garde-Meuble*<sup>6</sup> provides a catalogue of the furnishings acquired for the royal residences. Diaries and memoirs of the time tell of the style of life and occasionally refer to its concrete complements in decoration.

Pierre Verlet has taken the lead in mining these rich veins of information for the identification of royal furniture (*Le Mobilier royal français*, I and II, Paris, 1945 and

1955 and *French Royal Furniture*, London, 1963) and the writing of his comprehensive and definitive history of Versailles (*Versailles*, Paris, 1961). The primary sources on Versailles were first explored by Pierre de Nolhac ("La Décoration de Versailles au XVIII<sup>e</sup> Siècle," *Gazette des Beaux Arts*, 1895-1897; *La Création de Versailles*, Versailles, 1901; and *Versailles*, Paris, n.d.). Henry Racinais has revealed much about the private Versailles of Louis XV with previously unpublished plans and drawings (*Un Versailles inconnu*, Paris, 1950). To my knowledge no comparable work has been done on Compiègne, Marly, and La Muette<sup>7</sup> for the 1738 period. This is only natural as the decoration of these hunting châteaux in that era only assumes importance in a study of the decorative arts in the light of the influence of the personality of Louis XV.

## COMPIÈGNE

The young King was most comfortable away from Versailles, in any one of a series of châteaux he visited to pursue the hunt. Compiègne was one of these.<sup>8</sup> The first building campaign there was a small-scale prelude to the major construction undertaken in 1745. A Gabriel design for the King's apartment is signed and dated 22<sup>e</sup> janvier 1737.<sup>9</sup> The new rooms were ready for occupancy in the summer of 1738. On June 20, three carriages of tapestries and upholstery and a large boat loaded with chairs, marble tables, commodes, and other items for the use of the king were dispatched to Compiègne from the Garde-Meuble.<sup>10</sup> The duc d'Argenson insinuates that the building was rushed to completion to provide a love nest for the King and Mme de Mailly.<sup>11</sup> The courtly scandalmonger deserves

6. The *Journal du Garde-Meuble* is the ledger that was kept by the bureau charged with the furnishing of royal residences. The entries record location changes, repairs, and, most importantly, receipt of new acquisitions from their makers. Each new object was assigned a number that was, when possible, painted on the piece. A summary description was given, and the intended destination of the piece was stated. These dated entries follow in unbroken chronological sequence from the instigation of the system in 1685 to its reorganization in 1784. The Institute of Fine Arts of New York University possesses a microfilm of this invaluable document, thanks to the interest of Mr. and Mrs. Charles Wrightsman. Although my research is based on this microfilm, my citations refer to the folio numbers and classification designation of the original *Journal du Garde-Meuble* in the Archives Nationales, Paris.

7. Pierre Verlet permitted me to consult an as yet unpublished

paper on the château of La Muette written by Vera Granoff while she was his student at the Ecole du Louvre. In this comprehensive work I was unable to find material that related directly to the particular subject of my research.

8. Compiègne remains today a magnificent edifice, many of its rooms containing their nineteenth-century furnishings. The Queen's bedroom has recently been restored to its Louis XVI aspect.

9. Alfred Marie, "Quelques notes sur le château de Compiègne avant sa transformation par Gabriel," *Bulletin de la Société Historique de Compiègne* 22 (Senlis, 1944) p. 71.

10. Archives Nationales 01 3312, f<sup>o</sup> 120.

11. "On se dépêche d'arranger Compiègne, pour que la reine y aille et par conséquent, la petite Mailly." Quoted by Pelassy de l'Ousle, *Histoire de Compiègne* (Paris, 1862) p. 341.

in this case to be heeded since he is supported by the reliable and perennially discreet duc de Luynes who stated, “Dans les hauts de château de Compiègne on a fait un grand corridor avec plusieurs logements, tous numérotés; il n’y a qu’une seule porte sans numéro, et cela a été remarqué.”<sup>12</sup>

Since Napoleon had the 1738 apartments destroyed, the only remaining visual evidence of their style is the Gabriel drawing. Marie, who discovered it, uses the words “de style Louis XV très calme.”<sup>13</sup> Luynes tells us “il n’y a de dorure nulle part, pas même chez le Roi. . . .” The royal apartments must have been high-ceilinged for the curtains registered in the *Journal du Garde-Meuble*<sup>14</sup> measure 17 *pieds* in height.<sup>15</sup> Luynes complains of the excessively large proportions of the ministerial residences of the same building program at Compiègne. With the evidence of their height, we might infer similar overall dimensions for the King’s rooms. Luynes consistently uses the adjective “large” when listing them: “une seconde antichambre [the first antechamber served the Queen’s apartment too], . . . une grande chambre à coucher, un grand cabinet pour le conseil, un autre grand cabinet par delà où l’on joue, et plus loin une très grande salle à manger. . . .” These apartments were filled with portraits of the King’s trusted and beloved co-participants in the essential business of the château, namely Louis’s favorite hunting dogs. The inventory of paintings for Compiègne made in 1733<sup>16</sup> states that, of a series of such works by Oudry,<sup>17</sup> three were overdoors to the King’s bedroom. A scene of ducks at Marly and an amusing

fantasy of a cat dressed as a general were set above the doors of the passage. In the passage attached to the Council Chamber were two more dog portraits, while the chamber itself had another two. The *garde-robe* had one as an overdoor and the Cabinet du Jeu held the last of the series.<sup>18</sup> No mere generalized animal paintings, these were regarded as individual portraits, and inventoried under the affectionate names (such as Mignonne and Petite Fille) given the hounds by their royal master. The supposition of large-scale simplicity characterizing the rooms is supported by the inventory information that each canvas was “5 *pieds* de large sur 4 *pieds* de haut avec de simples bordures de bois blanchy et non sculptées.” The series must still have been in place when Louis commissioned five supplemental paintings of the same type from François Desportes<sup>19</sup> to decorate the Cabinet du Jeu, for which payment is recorded in 1738 and 1739.<sup>20</sup>

The dining room was the focal point of life in the château. Intimate suppers omitting protocol, a practice evolved by Louis three years before, were held here. These took place after every hunt—six times in two weeks, says Luynes. The ladies permitted to follow the hunt presented themselves in the second antechamber at the dinner hour. The doors were opened to them and they passed through the cabinets. Then the King picked out those with whom he wished to dine and the select company immediately sat down to their meal. The service was simple. By Luynes’s note, “Le Sr. Lazure, qui a soin ici des cabinets, sert sur table. . . .” We know that use was made of *tables servantes*.<sup>21</sup> The small tables

12. Luynes devotes his entry of July 27, 1738, entirely to Compiègne: *Mémoires* II, pp. 193–195.

13. Marie, “Quelques notes,” p. 71.

14. A.N. o<sup>1</sup> 3312, f<sup>o</sup> 120.

15. One *ancien pied*, the pre-Revolutionary measurement, equals 12¾ inches.

16. Relevant passage reproduced by Fernand Engerand, *Inventaire des tableaux commandés et achetés par la direction des bâtiments du Roi (1709–1792)* (Paris, 1901) p. 375.

17. Jean-Baptiste Oudry (1686–1755).

18. Jean Locquin in *Catalogue raisonné de l’oeuvre de Jean Baptiste Oudry* (Paris, 1912) records that all the dog portraits were then in the Palais de Fontainebleau, except that of Blanche, which was in the Louvre: Gaston Brière, *Catalogue Sommaire de peinture, Musée National du Louvre, école française* (Paris, 1909) no. 666. The portrait of Blanche was on exhibition at Compiègne when I was there in July 1969.

19. Alexandre-François Desportes (1661–1743).

20. Record of payment quoted by Engerand, *Inventaire*, p. 158, who located three of the five works: Merlusine et Coco and Herminie et Muscade at Fontainebleau, and Pompée et Florissant in the Louvre. In July 1969 I saw these three at Compiègne. Merlusine and Coco proved an assorted couple, feisty white Coco barking up a tree beside timid black Merlusine. Herminie and Muscade were adorable little black spaniels, while Pompée and Florissant were gentle noble beasts. Two unidentified spaniels (lacking the names painted directly beneath the dogs in the other canvases) must have been Zerbine and Jemite, recorded by Georges de Lastic (“Desportes,” *Connaissance des Arts* 107 [January, 1964] p. 71) as returned to Compiègne. The fate of the remaining Mignonne, of which Engerand (*Inventaire*, p. 159) documents the repair in 1757, is unknown.

21. The first record of *tables servantes* is in 1735 when Gaudreau delivered one to the Garde-Meuble for Versailles (A.N. o<sup>1</sup> 3312, f<sup>o</sup> 112).



were equipped with shelves, compartments, and bottle coolers to reduce the need for servants at the King's "petits soupers."

Indications of the informal, airy atmosphere of these soirées may be found in the only entries for the apartments in the *Journal du Garde-Meuble*. Twelve *pliants* for the Cabinet du Jeu were recovered in white satin with yellow flowers outlined in green. The five curtains for that second antechamber and the six for the dining room are remarkable as much for their fabric as for their number and length.<sup>22</sup> What textile could be less princely and more informal than cotton with no ornament but a border ribbon of cotton thread? In such surroundings with no ceremony, few servants, and a handful of his favorite people, Louis could enjoy the warm breezes of a summer evening.

## MARLY

Louis XIV undertook the construction of Marly in 1677 in a mood Saint-Simon describes: "Lassé du beau et de la foule, le Roi se persuade qu'il voulait quelque-fois du petit et de la solitude."<sup>23</sup> In this rare moment the "Sun King" and his successor struck a note of empathy. The château, neglected during the Regency, lay in a state of decay when it recaptured royal imagination in 1738. Narbonne tells us<sup>24</sup> that the grounds, the palace, and the twelve small pavilions echeloned along the basin constituted an enchanted site resembling a "palais de fées."<sup>25</sup> This is strong praise from the

Versailles Chief of Police, then suffering from the King's choice of "l'affreuse saison d'hiver" to visit the abandoned château.

On March 29 Luynes records the King's inspection of the minor construction just done at Marly. Louis wanted to provide himself with an additional cabinet and a place for his lathe. To this end he had an *entresol* built above the cabinet lying between the Council Chamber and the salon on the Chapel side (Figure 2). Luynes assures us that the size of the cabinet was not disproportionate to its reduced height. As best I can deduce from his note, the size of the cabinet had been reduced proportionally to its height by the stair that would have to have been built to the new *entresol*.<sup>26</sup> The curtain material noted in the *Garde-Meuble*<sup>27</sup> fits well with the idea of a nook beside the stair. The single casement window must have been small to be curtained with only "une aune  $\frac{1}{2}$ "<sup>28</sup> of muslin with bouquets of flowers.<sup>29</sup>

The furniture for the "cabinet de retrait" entered the Garde-Meuble on April 21.<sup>30</sup> First came an *encoignure* and the *gradin* to top it delivered by "Martin Vernisseur du Roy." The charm of the fragile piece with its Chinese-style decoration survives only by its description:

Une Encognure de Vernis de Martin, fond vert, fermant a clef, un chinois assis sur un tapis, jouant d'une maniere de guitare a coté duquel est un Enfant tete nue: Le tout dans un cartouche de Mozaïque fond d'or avec son dessus de marbre breche violette. L'encognure

22. A.N. o<sup>1</sup> 3312, f<sup>o</sup> 124.

23. Quoted by Emile Magne, *Le Château de Marly* (Paris, 1934) p. 7.

24. Pierre Narbonne, *Mémoires* (Paris, 1866) p. 415.

25. The gardens of Marly are now a municipal park. The plan of the palace has been indicated in stone on the site, as have plans of two of the pavilions.

26. Luynes, *Mémoires* II, p. 81.

27. A.N. o<sup>1</sup> 3312, f<sup>o</sup> 115.

28. An *aune* equals 3 feet 9 $\frac{1}{16}$  inches.

29. Primary evidence for reconstructing the project carried out at Marly in 1738 is Luynes's entry of March 29 (*Mémoires* II, p. 81): Les changements que l'on a faits à Marly ne sont pas considerables; le Roi a voulu avoir un cabinet de plus et un endroit pour mettre son tour, et pour cet effet, dans le cabinet qui est après le cabinet du conseil et qui tient au salon du côté de la chapelle, l'on a fait un retranchement pour y construire un escalier qui monte à un entresol au-dessus dudit cabinet. Le cabinet d'en bas est encore d'une grandeur et d'une hauteur proportionnées, et il y a sur le double une garde-robe de commodité de grandeur raisonnable. Sur le comble de l'entresol il y a aussi une piece assez grande.

This was the first of the Marly *entresols* that were executed throughout the château in 1744 (Magne, *Marly*, p. 222). A plan of Marly in the Archives Nationales (o<sup>1</sup> 1468-69), grouped with others and classified under the date 1733-1780, is the only one I have found showing a single *entresol*. In Figure 2 I have indicated the *entresol* areas by shading. In the right margin I have traced the plan of the area directly below the *entresol*. As can be seen, it corresponds to Luynes's description of a small cabinet, *garde-robe*, and very small stair leading up to a large *entresol* room. A problem arises, however, in that the *entresol* is shown in the lower right quadrant of the plan. The King's apartments, whose location had not been changed since the time of Louis XIV, should lie in the lower left quadrant. This was the side toward the Chapel, mentioned by Luynes, since the Chapel would lie to the left beyond the limits of this plan. This is but one of the many problems one hopes to see solved in the forthcoming dissertation on Marly by Betsy Rosasco.

30. A.N. o<sup>1</sup> 3312, f<sup>o</sup> 114.

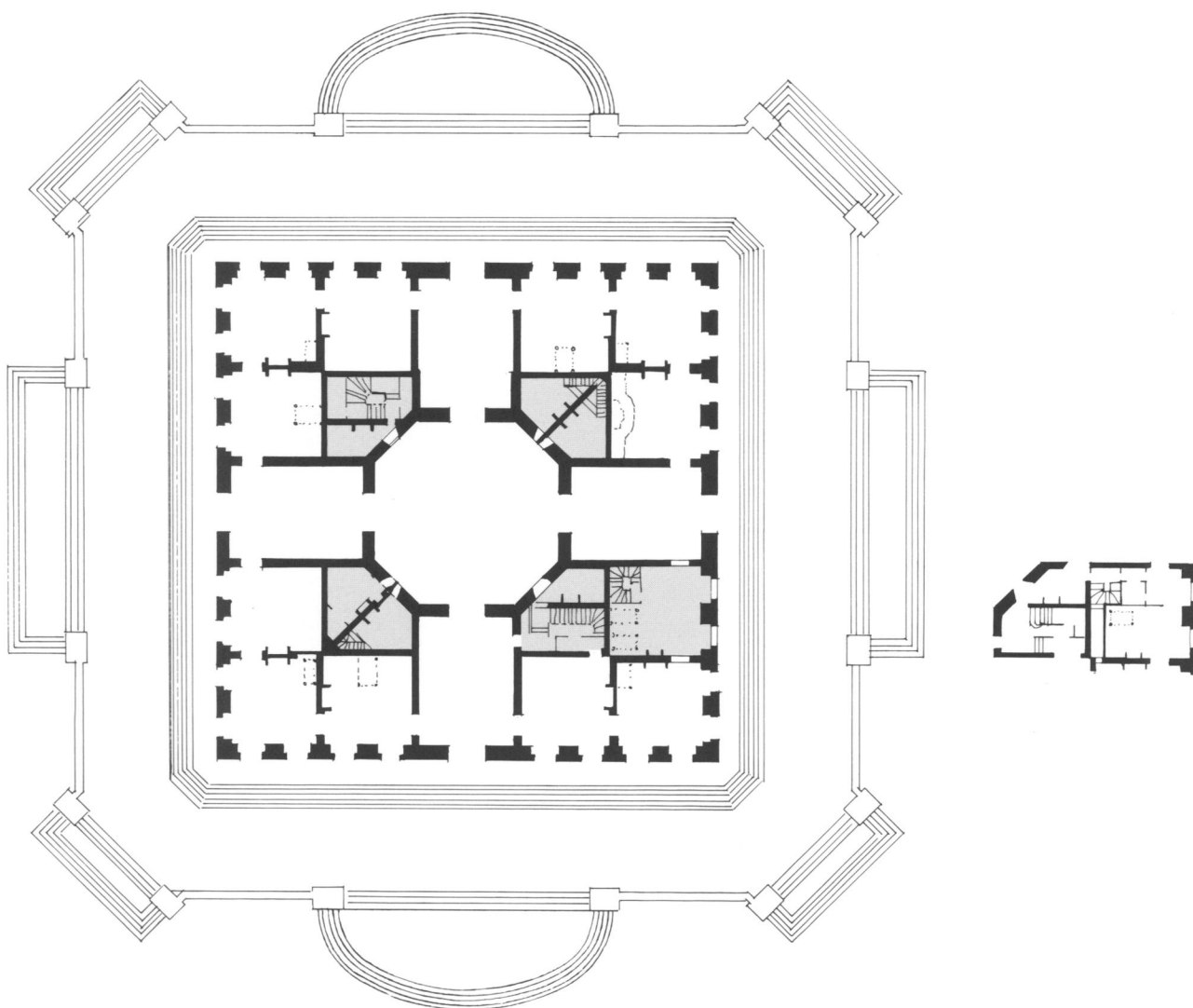


FIGURE 2

Plan of Marly by Jacques-Ange Gabriel. Shading indicates *entresol* areas; rooms below *entresol* in lower right quadrant are shown at right. After Archives Nationales o<sup>1</sup>1468–69

de 26 pouces  $\frac{1}{2}$  de profondeur, portée sur un pied separe de 9 pouces de haut, verni et dore dans le gout de l'Encognure.

The green color harmony was continued in the major furnishings of the room. Luynes says that on the day of his Marly inspection, March 29, the King ordered a complete set of green damask furniture.<sup>31</sup> Only three weeks later we read of the delivery by Sallior—the only

upholsterer figuring in the *Garde-Meuble* — of “un meuble de cabinet de damas vert, pique de houpettes d'or, consistant en un canape, un fauteuil, 16 chaises à dos, un paravent et deux rideaux de fenêtres de gros de Tours.”<sup>32</sup> Green silk braid garnished the seams of the sixteen chairs and the large (6 *pieds* 10 *pouces*) canapé. Gold braid was nailed to the three-panel screen and hung in festoons on the curtains. To the

31. Luynes, *Mémoires* II, p. 81.

32. A.N. o<sup>1</sup>3312, f<sup>o</sup>114.

armchair was attached a mobile arm of gilded metal described as steel ("acier") supporting a mahogany writing table covered with a square of green velvet. Two adjustable steel arms held silver sockets for candles. The *ébéniste* Gaudreau<sup>33</sup> made the table, while the metal work was executed by Barge. The *Journal du Garde-Meuble* as usual concentrates on the upholstery, describing the *menuiserie* with the standard summary phrase "le bois sculpté doré." This is only half the story regarding the furniture in question. Without the detailed accounts of Luynes we would remain ignorant of an important aspect of the character of the ensemble. A lovely interplay of color is revealed by Luynes's notation that the green damask was ordered for *menuiserie* painted "un lilas fort clair." If Louis had to sit down to paperwork, at least he saw to it that he would do so in a most comfortable chair. The tedium of the task would be alleviated by the surrounding prettiness of green and lilac and the silent serenade of a varnished guitar-playing Chinaman.

The *entresol* workshop housing the royal lathe must have been the site of many hours' happy puttering. We know that turning objects was one of the King's favorite hobbies, shared with his daughters Mmes Adelaide and Sophie, and later Louis XVI. Luynes says that on March 16 Louis gave a master key to the duc de Penthièvre in a wooden case he had fashioned himself, as he had others.<sup>34</sup> One product of the royal amateur's turning at Marly is documented in the *Journal du Garde-Meuble*.<sup>35</sup> The material is not wood but rather silver. Turning on a lathe was not an extraordinary manner of working silver in the eighteenth century. The Havard *Dictionnaire* under the definition of "tourner" says "On tourne presque toutes les matières, le bois, l'ivoire, l'os, la corne, l'argent, le cuivre et l'or."<sup>36</sup> The Garde-Meuble entry (Appendix A) concerns four candlesticks retired from Marly at the King's request to be

engraved with the royal arms. One suspects a made-with-loving-hands quality about the candlesticks. The inventory description shows they are simple in design, a round base supporting a baluster shape. Only two of the four manage to coincide in weight. The snuffer must have presented a striking contrast in workmanship for it was made by Germain,<sup>37</sup> the leading Paris silversmith. Nonetheless the royal handicraft surely found an extravagantly appreciative audience.

Although the 1738 changes at Marly were minor, they express the King's desire to escape to a pretty illusion of the simple life. This dream he shared not only with the royal generation to follow, but with his illustrious predecessor who had created the idyllic site.

## LA MUETTE

The château of La Muette<sup>38</sup> housed the infamous orgies of the duchesse de Berry, daughter of the Regent. On her death in 1719 the Regent gave La Muette to the adolescent Louis. In 1738 it became the scene of royal revels of a less sordid sort. Jacques Gabriel started the renovations of the small hunting lodge in the Bois de Boulogne in 1735.<sup>39</sup> On May 8, 1738, Luynes informs us that the King inspected the latest works.<sup>40</sup> These included a new apartment for the King consisting of an antechamber, bedroom, *garde-robe*, and cabinet on the second floor overlooking the court. The only surviving plan showing the suite in this period is an undated rendering<sup>41</sup> presented by Gabriel to the King, who signed his approving "bon" just below the designation of his bedroom (Figure 3). D'Argenson's lip-smacking elaborations of what went on in these chambers apparently have some basis in fact. Although ostensibly housed with her friend Mlle de Charolais at the neighboring château, Madrid, Mme de Mailly reigned at La Muette. Luynes tells of her constant

33. Antoine-Robert Gaudreau (about 1680–1751), principal supplier of veneered furniture to the Garde-Meuble in this period.

34. Luynes, *Mémoires* II, pp. 66–67.

35. A.N. o<sup>1</sup>3312, f<sup>o</sup>160.

36. Havard, *Dictionnaire de l'ameublement et de la décoration* (Paris, 1887–1890), p. 1495.

37. Probably Thomas Germain (1673–1748), appointed "orfèvre du Roi" in 1723.

38. The château of La Muette was demolished in 1920 and is remembered in modern Paris only in the name of the Metro station and street in the 16<sup>e</sup> arrondissement near its site.

39. History of La Muette from Georges Pillement, *Paris disparu* (Paris, 1966) pp. 54–59.

40. Luynes, *Mémoires* II, p. 147.

41. A.N. N II Seine 177, 13. The discrepancy between the designations of rooms on the plan and those in the *Journal du Garde-Meuble* could be explained if the plan were not a final version, and if, in the definitive layout of the suite, the secondary "Chambre" on the plan became the "Cabinet" referred to in the *Journal*, while the "Cabinet" of the plan became the "Passage de la chambre au cabinet" of the *Journal*.

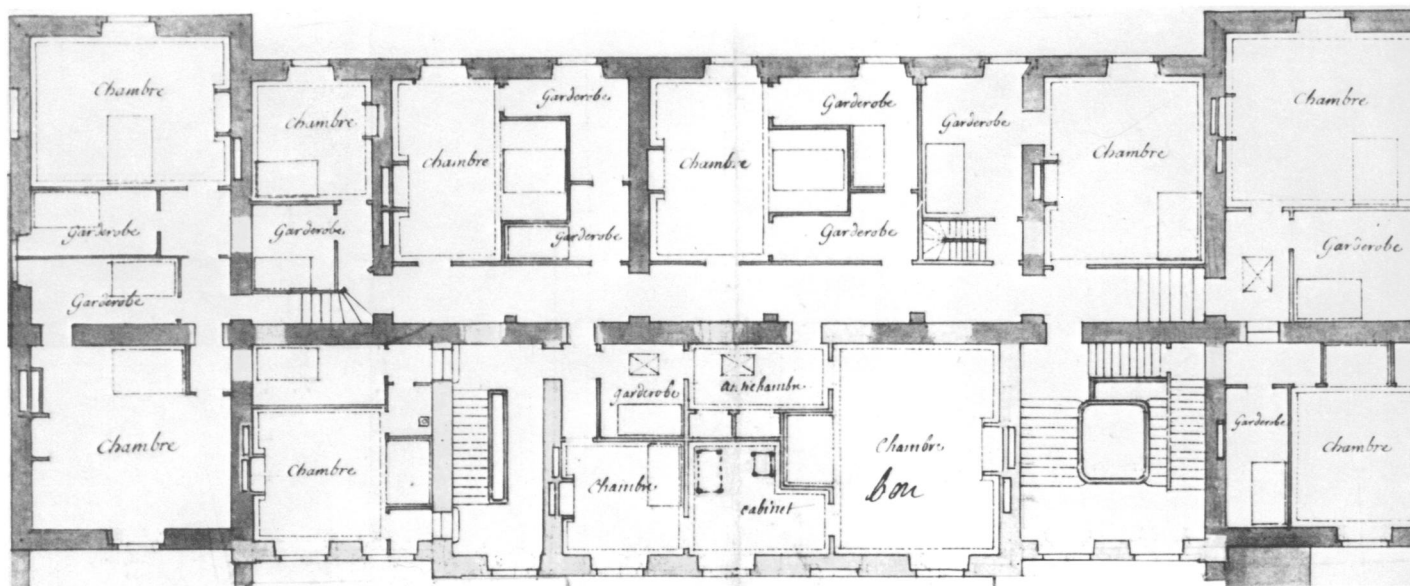


FIGURE 3

Plan of La Muette by Jacques-Angé Gabriel, with the approving “bon” of Louis XV. Archives Nationales N II Seine 177.13

presence at the all-night suppers in the King’s apartments.<sup>42</sup> Barbier, a member of the Paris Parlement and a bourgeois not prone to courtly libel, tells us that during the three-week July sojourn at La Muette, “Les soupers du Roi en hommes et en femmes ont été fréquent et se poussaient jusqu’au matin. Madame de Mailly y a été fort fêtée.”<sup>43</sup> The pattern is repeated in accounts of frequent trips to La Muette later in the year.

Through the *Journal du Garde-Meuble* we can mentally refurnish Louis’s rooms in the now-destroyed château (Appendix B). The antechamber of the suite contained fifteen varnished birchwood *tabourets* covered in blue leather with yellow leather piping and trimmed in blue braid.

The upholstered furniture delivered for the bedroom on August 18 carried out the color scheme set forth by the *grand lit à la Duchesse* with its baldaquin and hangings in blue damask. Decoration for the blue damask of two armchairs with set-back arms was limited to silk braid of the same color. The four panels of the blue

damask-covered screen were edged with similar braid, as were two pillows, intended for comfort while praying. Blue silk fringe was attached to the eight *pliants*. The two window curtains were simple lengths of blue *gros de Tours*.

We may still have the Gaudreau commode entered as no. 1131 on August 4 for use in the bedroom. A commode of corresponding description formerly in the collection of Baron Alphonse de Rothschild, now belonging to a Parisian collector, was illustrated in *Connaissance des Arts* of June 1963 and attributed to Cressent (Figure 4).<sup>44</sup> Pierre Verlet corrected the attribution by the inventory number painted on a modern copy. Francis Watson in his catalogue of the Wrightsman collection<sup>45</sup> identified another Gaudreau commode dating between 1745 and 1749 that, like a similar piece in the Jones Collection<sup>46</sup> at the Victoria and Albert Museum, is after the same model.

44. André Boutemy, “Cressent: Les Motifs qui Permettent de le Reconnaître,” *Connaissance des Arts* 136 (June, 1963) pp. 70–71.

45. Francis Watson, *The Wrightsman Collection I* (New York, 1966) pp. 146–150.

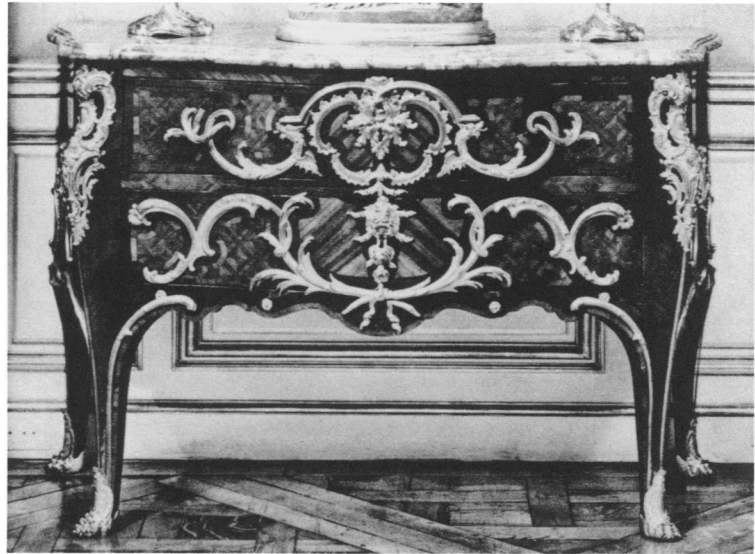
46. Oliver Brackett, *Catalogue of the Jones Collection, Victoria and Albert Museum. Part I: Furniture* (London, 1922) no. 16, pl. 8.

42. Luynes, *Mémoires* II, p. 125.

43. Barbier, *Journal* III (Paris, 1885) p. 137.

FIGURE 4

Commode of the same model as that for the Chambre du Roi, La Muette. From André Boutemy, "Cressent: Les Motifs qui Permettent de le Reconnaître," *Connaissance des Arts* 136 (June, 1963)



The two pair of ormolu sconces for the bedroom bought from the Paris shop of Darnault et Compagnie on August 4 were fashioned with chicory leaves and rocailles. The bedroom furnishings were completed with the September 13 delivery of a toilette mirror by DeLaroue. The glass was sinuously curving at the top, and hung with blue and gold brocade lined with gold-braided blue damask.

As overdoors for the bedroom four landscapes of the Paris vicinity were commissioned from Charles Grevenbroeck<sup>47</sup> for 1,200 livres.<sup>48</sup> "La vue de Saint Cloud et du pont de Sève" (Figure 5), "La vue du château de Meudon et du village du côté du parterre" (Figure 6), "La vue des Invalides, avec une partie du fauxbourg Saint Germain" (Figure 7), and "La vue du château de la Muette avec L'arrivée du roy, par M. Grevenbroeck, Academicien" (Figure 8)<sup>49</sup> are described in the *Explication* of the Paris Salon of 1738.<sup>50</sup> The painting of La Muette pictures for us the château awaiting with open doors the royal carriage and its military escort. In the coach we can see the crowded conditions that led ladies of the King's party to defy convention and shed their voluminous petticoats while riding with him to the hunt. We can also see the inducement to the frequent royal visits to La Muette, for the winged beasts atop the gateway guard a royal retreat that presents the aspect of a country mansion.

47. Charles Leopold Grevenbroeck (active Paris 1731–1743).

The artist has signed the overdoor painting on one of the blocks of stone perhaps left over from the construction of the same year.

The azure color scheme was carried through in the *garderobe*, where Gaudreau's veneered rosewood toilet had a seat of appropriate blue velvet. From Gaudreau too came the small marble-topped night table. It was veneered in violet wood and had a single drawer on the side. The room was lit by ormolu sconces from Caffieri.<sup>51</sup> Also of a small scale ("9 pouces de haut"), they carried only one candle. A charming note was added in the ornamentation of each with a zephyr mask.

The passage from bedroom to cabinet also had zephyr sconces, three pair in all. Sunlight entered through a large window curtained with six widths of simple blue *gros de Tours*. Along the corridor were aligned six damask-covered *tabourets*.

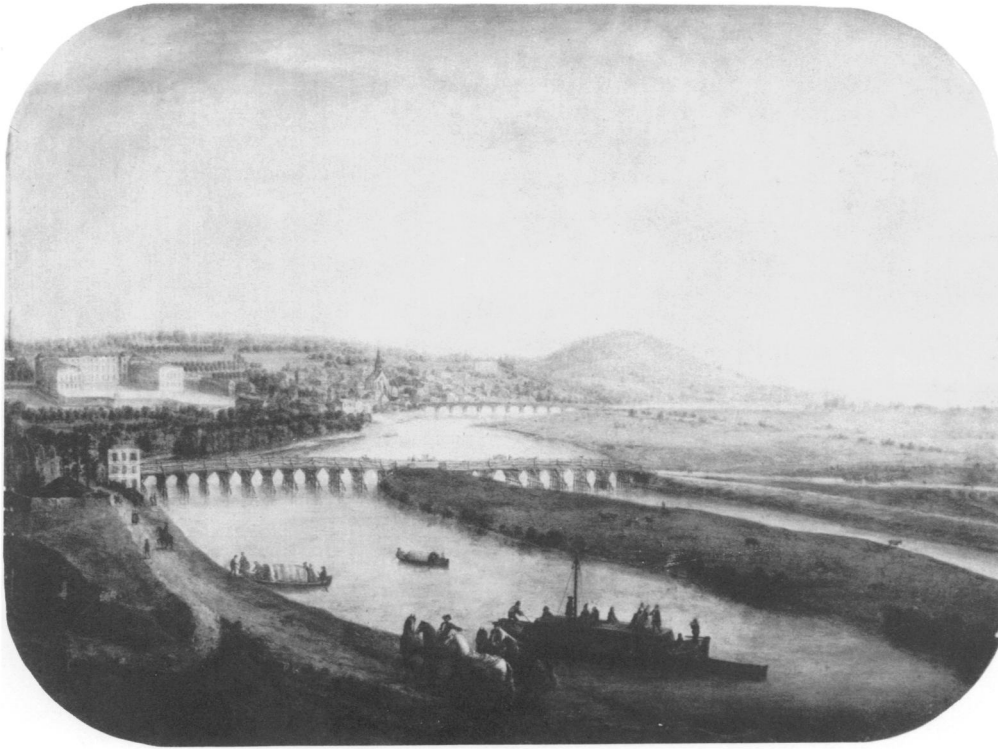
The cabinet had only one window treated in the same way as that of the passage. The theme of blue damask was continued in the cabinet by *canapés à joues*, two "à la Reine" chairs, screen, and *portières*. Attention

48. Engerand, *Inventaire*, pp. 219–220.

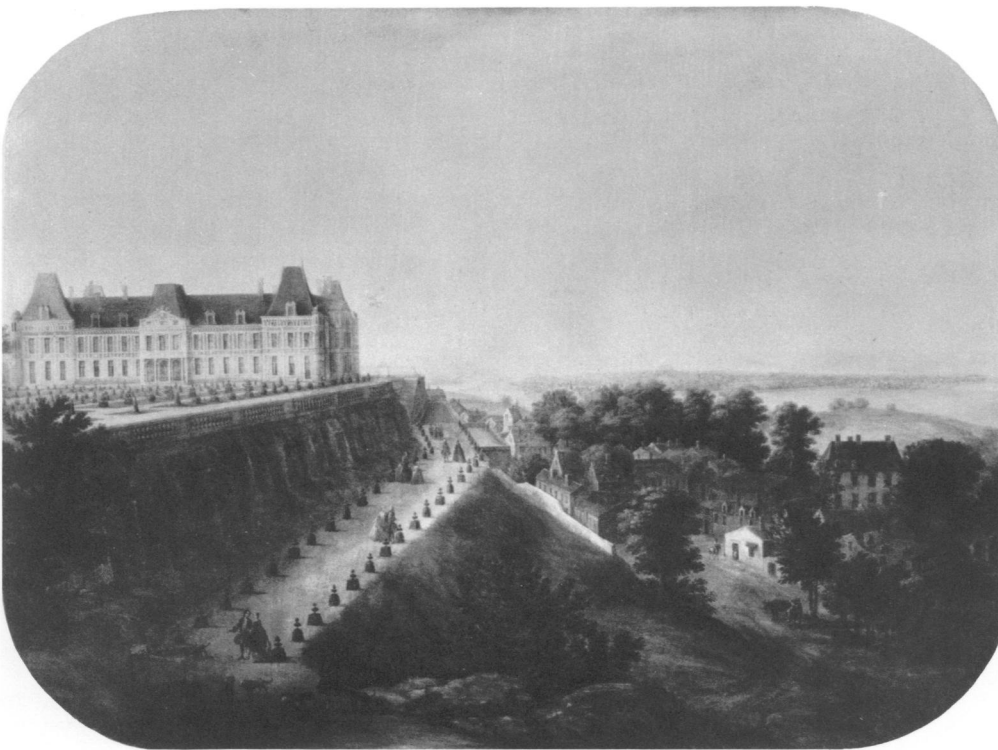
49. Grevenbroeck's landscapes are painted on copper. They are now in the Musée Carnavalet, Paris.

50. Relevant extract reproduced by Engerand, *Inventaire*, pp. 219–220.

51. Jacques Caffieri (1678–1755), sculptor and bronze-worker, became "fondeur-ciseleur" for the Bâtiments du Roi in 1736.



**FIGURE 5**  
View of Saint Cloud and  
the Sèvres Bridge, by  
Charles Grevenbroeck  
(photo: Frick Art  
Reference Library)



**FIGURE 6**  
View of the Village and  
Château of Meudon, by  
Charles Grevenbroeck  
(photo: Frick Art  
Reference Library)



**FIGURE 7**  
View of les Invalides and  
part of the Faubourg  
Saint Germain, by  
Charles Grevenbroeck  
(photo: Frick Art  
Reference Library)



**FIGURE 8**  
View of the Château of  
La Muette with the  
arrival of the King, by  
Charles Grevenbroeck  
(photo: Frick Art  
Reference Library)



FIGURES 9–12

The Seasons, by Nicolas Lancret. Musée du Louvre (photos: Musées Nationaux)

must certainly focus on the writing desk delivered by Gaudreau along with the bedroom commode. Since the commode has survived, the chances seem good that there might some day be discovered

Un bureau de bois violet a placages couvert de velours bleu, aiant pardevant deux tiroirs fermans a clefs, enrichi de moulures entrées de serrures, mains et aux coins et milieux, de cartouches sur l'un desquels sont les chiffres du Roy entre deux branches de laurier, Le tout de bronze doré d'or moulu. Le bureau porté sur 4 consolles a jour aussi de bronze doré, long de 45 pouces sur 23 de profondeur et 28 de haut, avec son tapis de maroquin bleu.

The walls of the cabinet were adorned with Lancret's<sup>52</sup> rendition of the four seasons (Figures 9–12), for which the artist was paid 2,000 livres on July 22, 1738.<sup>53</sup> The paintings, now in the Louvre,<sup>54</sup> differ in their present rectangular shape from their description in La Muette's inventory as two feet square. The discrepancy could be accounted for by the "bordure dorée" that originally surrounded each. The inventory account of Autumn as "un tableau cintre" remains, however, puzzling. Summer and Autumn are inventoried as personified by figures sowing and harvesting. In the paintings these traditional pursuits have been relegated to the margin or background. The principal figures engage in nothing more serious than amusements and flirtation. Indicative of Louis's personal penchant is the personification of seasons by the types of amusement they allowed for. The lighthearted scenes of decorous frivolity prove Louis XV's taste well defined before the advent of Mme de Pompadour.

The gilt-bronze sconces made by Caffieri for this room are small (8 *pouces*). They consist of a simple stem and two arms. A small touch, but one profoundly Louis XV, is the relief sculpture on Caffieri's gilded copper andirons, or grate. Louis was known to be a great animal lover. He kept pigeons and chickens on



the terraces above his Versailles apartments. Not only did he commission paintings of his favorite dogs, he stooped to feeding the animals himself. It must have amused the King to sit before the fire and watch the light playfully flicker about a gilded squirrel and parrot unconcernedly nibbling golden fruits.

The lights at La Muette burned all night in 1738 as they had in earlier years; but the delightful blue royal chambers were hardly suited to the debaucheries of the Regent's daughter. More likely Louis's games were pitched to the scale he sought in his smallish rooms.

52. Nicolas Lancret (1690–1743).

53. Engerand, *Inventaire*, p. 267.

54. Brière, *Catalogue*, no. 462–465.



“Le Roi est timide naturellement” Barbier tells us.<sup>55</sup> Even with gambling and dining and Mme de Mailly, his delights suggest a rather domesticated animal nibbling gilded forbidden fruit.

## VERSAILLES

Louis XV lived on the move from one château to another because he simply did not fit in at home. Home for the monarchy was Versailles. But Versailles was the creation of Louis XIV. Its stiff grandeur was the

antithesis of the intimate comfort Louis XV liked to create about him. By 1738 he was beginning to work out a tolerable coexistence with the still-present aura of the “Sun King.” This he accomplished by building, around the Cour des Cerfs, a labyrinth of cabinets, *entresols*, workshops, and terraces. Contemporaries referred to it as the “rats’ nests.” This private world, closed to all but a privileged few, left the public Versailles as imposing as ever.

Louis XV seems almost to have started out 1738 with a resolution to effect this compromise. The first order of business was to get rid of a lot of things at Versailles that he could no longer endure. Figuring largest among these was a group of twenty-five bronzes sent back to the Garde-Meuble on February 5.<sup>56</sup> Louis, always fond of cheerful colors, probably found the somber tones depressing.

Only the most self-assured ruler could live happily with constant reminders of his predecessor’s greatness. Louis XV was none such. The duc de Croy informs us, “En general, la modestie était une qualité qui fut poussé au vice chez lui.”<sup>57</sup> Considering a justifiable inferiority complex, it is hardly surprising that an equestrian statue of Louis XIV “à la Romaine” led the list of bronzes returned to the Garde-Meuble.<sup>58</sup> It had been preceded on January 30 by an equestrian ivory statuette.<sup>59</sup> We still have the ten medallions of Louis XIV at different ages,<sup>60</sup> retired from Versailles at the same time (Figure 13) (Appendix C). They are on a blue painted copper background in a bronze frame topped with a sun and the royal arms surrounded by zodiac signs. The gouache medallions were executed by Antoine Benoist as models for an engraved “Histoire Métallique du Roi.”<sup>61</sup> No wonder Louis felt better with a few less icons of his ancestor, whom the nation looked to him to equal.

For the “Sun King” there was no such thing as a private life. He transformed every element of royal existence into state ceremony. Sleeping ranked not the

55. Barbier, *Journal* III, p. 125.

56. A.N. o<sup>1</sup>3312, f<sup>o</sup>110–111.

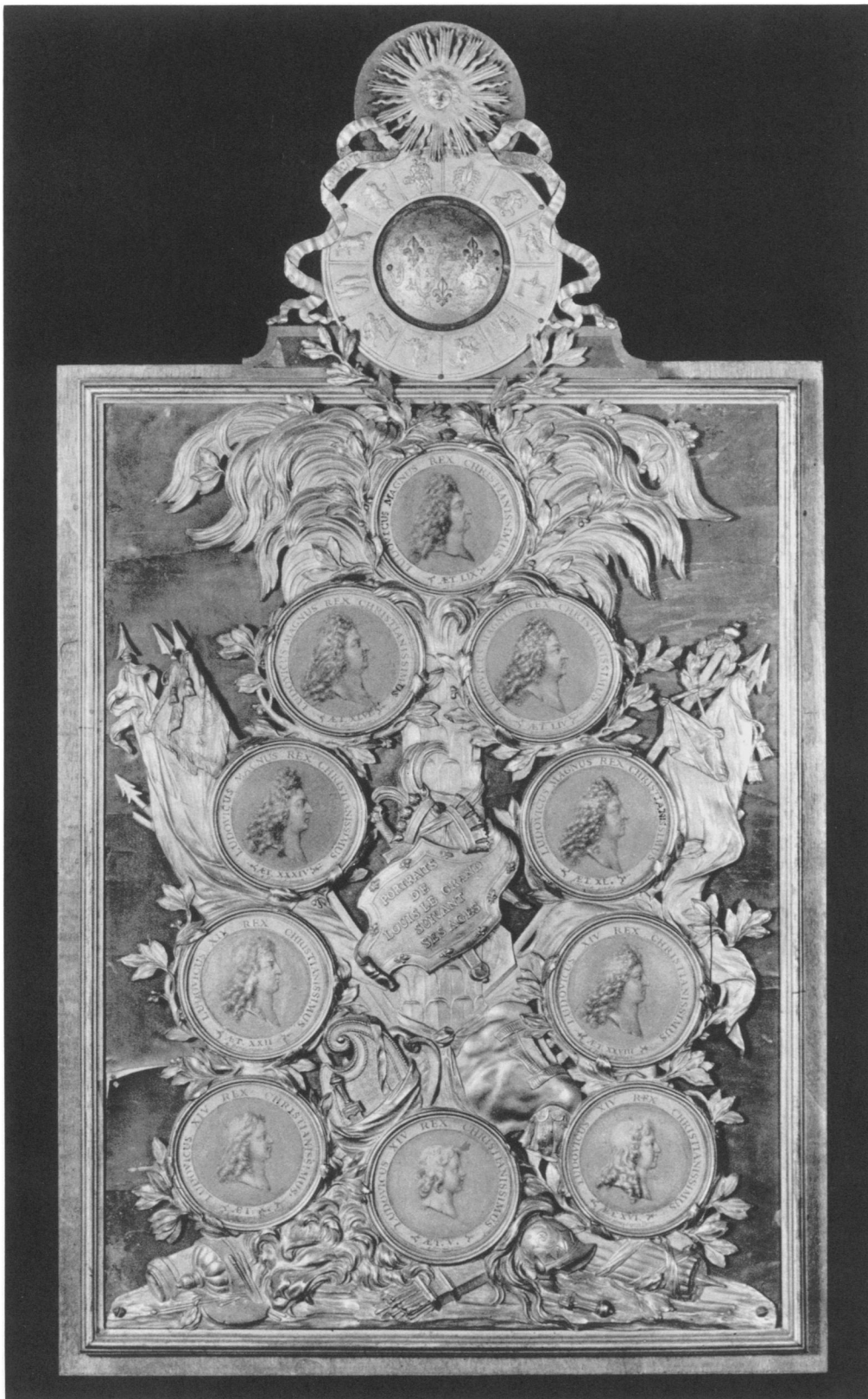
57. Duc de Croy, *Journal* III (Paris, 1907) p. 108.

58. A.N. o<sup>1</sup>3312, f<sup>o</sup>110.

59. A.N. o<sup>1</sup>3312, f<sup>o</sup>110.

60. Now in the Cabinet des Médailles, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.

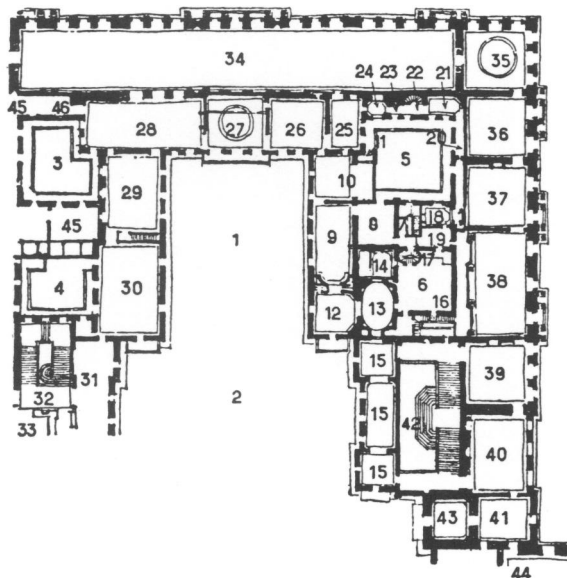
61. Charles Mauricheau-Beaupré, *Versailles* (Paris, 1949) p. 14.



**FIGURE 13**  
 Medallions of Louis  
 XIV at different ages.  
 Versailles (photo:  
 Draeger)

least among solemn royal functions. Louis XV endured for years the tortuous process of being put to bed and awakened in the formal manner prescribed by his great-grandfather. Worst of all was actually weathering the night in the frigid drafty royal bedroom (Figure 14, no. 27). In December of 1737 he finally caught what he must have feared was his death of cold. He was confined to bed until well into February 1738, coughing constantly, as Luynes reports. It is at this point that I

FIGURE 14  
Plan of Versailles. From Pierre Verlet, *Versailles*  
(Paris, 1961)



*Appartement du Roi (premier étage) vers 1740.*

1. Cour de marbre. — 2. Cour royale. — 3. Cour de la Reine. — 4. Cour dite de Monsieur. — 5. Cour des Cerfs. — 6. Petite cour intérieure du Roi. — 7. Degré du Roi. — 8. Antichambre dite des Chiens. — 9. Salon-ovale ou Cabinet des Pendules. — 10. Nouvelle Chambre du Roi ou Chambre de Louis XV. — 11. Cabinet de Garde-robe. — 12. Cabinet à pans ou Cabinet-intérieur (Cabinet d'angle). — 13. Ancien Salon-ovale de Louis XIV. — 14. Cabinet en niche. — 15. Petite Galerie avec ses deux salons. — 16. Degré d'Épernon. — 17. Escalier ovale montant aux Cabinets du second étage. — 18. Chambre des Bains. — 19. Pièce des Cuves. — 20. Corridor. — 21. Cabinet-doré. — 22. Escalier demi-circulaire. — 23. Cabinet de Chaise. — 24. Petit Cabinet particulier du Roi. — 25. Cabinet des Perruques. — 26. Cabinet du Conseil. — 27. Grande Chambre ou Chambre de Louis XIV. — 28. Antichambre de l'Œil-de-Bœuf. — 29. Première Antichambre. — 30. Salle des Gardes du Roi. — 31. Vestibule ou loggia sur l'Escalier de la Reine. — 32. Escalier de la Reine. — 33. Grande Salle des Gardes. — 34. Grande Galerie. — 35. Salon de la Guerre. — 36. Salon d'Apollon. — 37. Salon de Mercure. — 38. Salon de Mars. — 39. Salon de Diane. — 40. Salon de Vénus. — 41. Salon de l'Abondance. — 42. Grand Escalier ou Escalier des Ambassadeurs. — 43. Cabinet des Médailles. — 44. Salon d'Hercule. — 45. Appartement de la Reine. — 46. Premier valet de chambre du Roi et passage du Roi chez la Reine.

suspect discomfort outweighed respect for tradition, and he resolved never more to sleep in that chilly chamber on which he must have blamed his misery. He spent his confinement in an improvised bedroom in the Cabinet des Glaces or Cabinet du Conseil (Figure 14, no. 26). Here, even if his surroundings were not precisely to his taste, he could at least keep warm.<sup>62</sup>

Although the King continued the ceremonial *Coucher* and *Lever* in Louis XIV's bedroom, as of 1738 he retired to sleep in his own room. This was the former billiard room (Figure 14, no. 10) with new paneling sculpted by Jacques Verberckt (Figure 15).<sup>63</sup> The room was probably chosen because it was the nearest to the state bedroom—the scuttle back and forth to be put to bed and awakened had to be taken into consideration—with a southern exposure for warmth. Here Louis set about creating his very own type of atmosphere. Verberckt had just completed the Queen's chambers the previous year. Louis had him use the same motifs, rendered in a lighter manner. The playful amours are contained in cartouches and on a much smaller scale (Figure 16). Less emphasis is put on golden latticework and more on delicately capricious scrolls (Figure 17). The airy room was to house the summer furniture of jonquil and silver silk brocade designed by Lallié. The *Journal du Garde-Meuble* contains several accounts of transactions concerning the fabulous cloth. Manufacture was begun in 1731 by Pullignieu, but the lengths were not delivered until July and August of 1738.<sup>64</sup> The extraordinarily expensive project won approval, at least in Luynes's case, because it gave work to the Lyons silk industry, then in decline.<sup>65</sup> The effect must have been worth the time and money, as the silver flowers dancing upon their gay yellow background put the royal tenant in a cheerful frame of mind.

The King retained a fondness for the Cabinet du Conseil where he had hibernated for the duration of his cold. It seemed to represent to him the best of the Louis XIV style, a grandeur wholly appropriate to state functions. He paid symbolic tribute to his predecessor's concept of the monarchy by placing an antique porphyry bust of Alexander in the Council Chamber

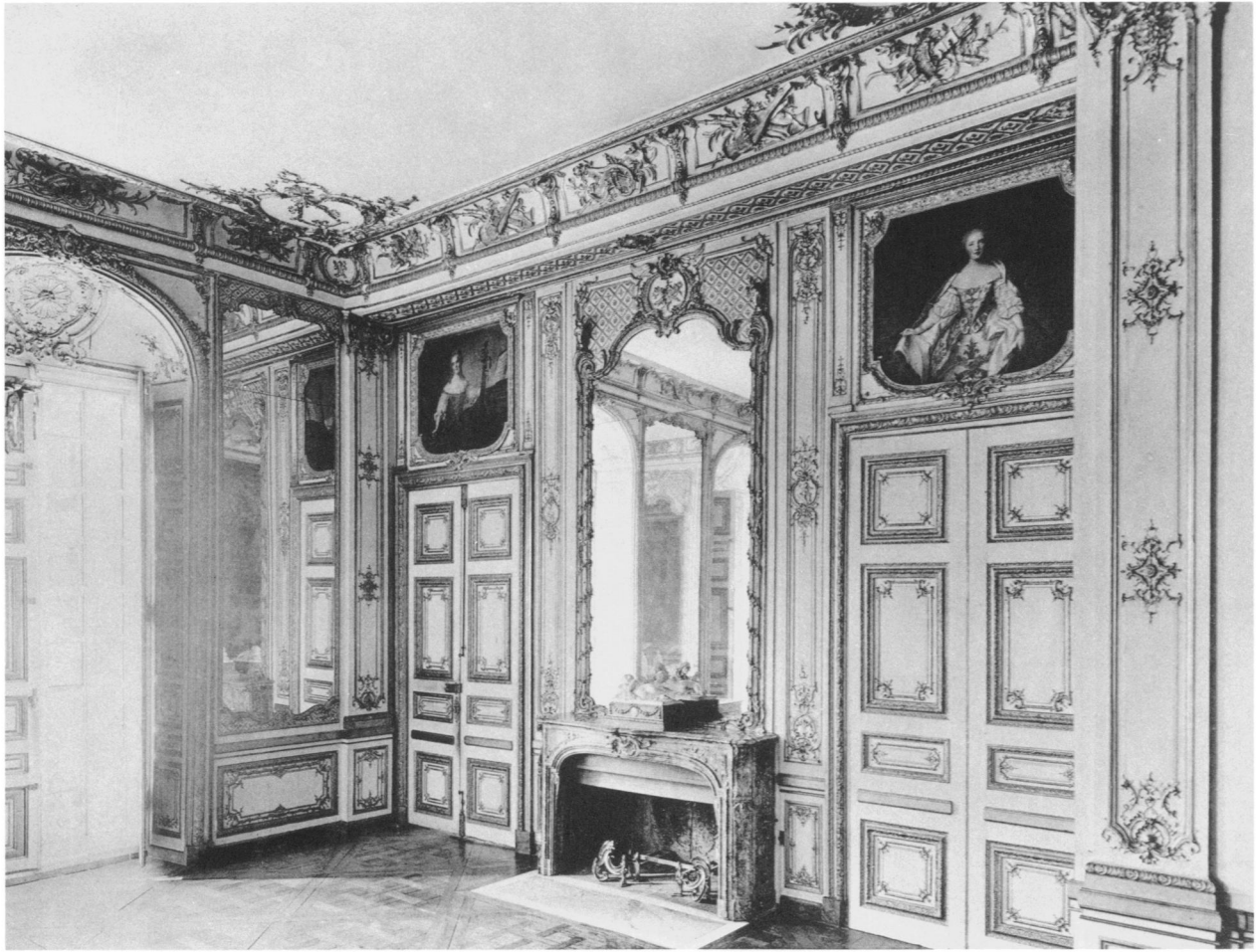
62. Luynes, *Mémoires* II, p. 12.

63. Jacques Verberckt (1704-1771), woodcarver, working for Bâtiments du Roi from 1730.

64. A.N. o'3312, f°142, 148, 153.

65. Luynes, *Mémoires* I, p. 404.





**FIGURE 15**

Bedroom installed at Versailles by Louis XV for his own use in 1738. From Pierre de Nolhac, *Versailles II* (Paris, n.d.)

(Figure 18). This magnificent piece was picked up by the Intendant du Garde-Meuble as recorded in the *Journal* on August 12 (Appendix D). It had been purchased at the sale of the collection of the Maréchal d'Estrées. Luynes in his diary entry of August 16<sup>66</sup> details the history of the piece, a story too fascinating and involved to abridge.

Ce buste d'Alexandre est extrêmement fameux; on prétend qu'il est de Praxitèle, parce qu'il n'y avait que Praxitèle à qui Alexandre eût permis de le représenter;

il est de porphyre. Le cardinal Richelieu le fit venir de Grèce pour lui, mais le buste n'arriva qu'après sa mort; sa nièce, Mme. d'Aiguillon, ayant fait faire son mausolée par Girardon, fut si contente de cet ouvrage qu'elle voulut, outre le prix convenu, donner une gratification à l'artiste; elle dit donc à Girardon qu'elle avoit chez elle plusieurs bustes qu'il devoit y en avoir de beaux, qu'il les examinât et qu'il choisît.<sup>67</sup> Girardon ne balança point dans son choix, il loua beaucoup le buste d'Alexandre et Mme. la duchesse d'Aiguillon lui en fit présent. C'est à la mort de Girardon que M. le marechal d'Estrées acheta ce buste à 15,000 livres.

66. Luynes, *Mémoires* II, p. 211.

67. Francois Girardon (1628–1715) had remarkable success in adapting antiquity to the needs of Louis XIV. In 1668 he was com-

missioned to search Genoa and Rome for art to beautify the residences of the "Sun-King." His execution of this charge initiated the high royal favor he enjoyed for the rest of his life.





FIGURES 16, 17

Wall panels carved by Jacques Verberckt for the bedroom of Louis XV at Versailles.  
From Nohac, *Versailles II*





**FIGURE 18**

Antique bust of Alexander, with gilt-bronze drapery and ornament by François Girardon. Versailles (photo: Musées Nationaux)

Girardon y a mis une armure; il en essaya trois différentes et ne fut point content des deux premières; les connoisseurs même prétendent que la troisième n'y fait pas bien. Dix que douze ans après que M. le marechal d'Estrées eût acheté cette figure, ayant entièrement oublié qu'il en étoit possesseur, il chargea un curieux de lui découvrir où pouvoit être ce buste; il lui en coûta 100 écus de frais, et après une infinie de soins. . . on lui apprit qu'il étoit dans sa maison.

According to both Luynes and the Garde-Meuble the King paid 18,000 livres, a princely offering in the Louis XIV cult of glorification of monarchy.<sup>68</sup>

Yet another lavishly respectful gesture is represented by the chandelier given a lengthy description in the *Journal du Garde-Meuble* on May 29 (Appendix E). Executed by Laroue, it was designed by one of the Slodtz brothers.<sup>69</sup> The entry states that the piece is to serve in the Cabinet du Conseil. However, on June 1 Luynes says "Ce même jour [May 29] on avait mis dans la chambre du Roi un chandelier de cristal de roche d'une grande beauté et que l'on estime au moins 100,000 livres."<sup>70</sup> Verlet tells us that the chandelier remained in the Louis XIV bedchamber until the Revolution.<sup>71</sup> In either room the intention is obviously to enhance in grandiose fashion a decor of the Louis XIV aesthetic.

Despite his intellectual appreciation of the import of monarchical dignity, Louis could not keep it up in private. Still in many ways a shy boy, he needed somewhere to sulk or cry or just be alone. There was no such place accessible to a king before his time. He had installed in various locations in his apartments tiny rooms known as Cabinets de Garderobe or de la Chaise. Their make-up varied in all but two elements, absolute privacy and a toilet. In 1738 he had one such cabinet created off the alcove of his new bedroom (Figure 14, no. 11). Verlet has uncovered much information on this inner sanctum, including the discovery of the bronze-mounted Chinese porcelain perfume fountain purchased from the *marchand mercier* Hebert in 1743.<sup>72</sup>

The furnishings in 1738 included a toilet with running water decorated with marquetry by Jean-Philippe Boulle, and two small night tables. It was to this room that Louis repaired, in 1739, to sulk when angered by Cardinal Fleury, who was forced to await His Royal Majesty's re-emergence in three-quarters of an hour. He chose the same retreat four years later to mourn his mentor's death.<sup>73</sup> The spoiled and petted King must have found solace in that cozy cabinet on the few occasions when he was crossed.

An antechamber was necessary even for the most informal of suites. Louis installed his in 1738<sup>74</sup> between the staircase called the Degré du Roi and the Cabinet de la Pendule, through which one would have to pass to reach his new bedroom (Figure 14, no. 8). It was for the time being furnished with remnants from the previous reign: overdoors with gilded eagles, removed from the billiard room when it was transformed into the royal bedroom, and eight gilded *tabourets* of the Louis XIV style. It was not long before the young King marked this waiting room with his own style, in an unexpected manner, with the creation in 1739 of the most charming plaster cornice at Versailles. It consists of packs of dogs leading putti hunters in a spirited chase that is not in the least interrupted by rolling feathered and foliate rocailles. It was in this room that Louis XV performed one of the few rituals he must have truly enjoyed: here he presented his favorite dogs with their daily biscuit. When the King was absent from Versailles the "maître d'hôtel" or the "premier gentilhomme de la Chambre" saw that his pets did not go disappointed. The room still goes by the name *Antichambre des Chiens*.

Dear to Louis was the room on the angle overlooking the Cour de Marbre and the Cour Royale (Figure 14, no. 12). It was variously called the Cabinet d'Angle, à Pans, de Travail, Intime, Intérieur de Retrait, or just le Cabinet. In 1738 Louis undertook to make its

68. The bust of Alexander was returned by the Louvre to Versailles where it is exhibited in the salle des Gardes de la Reine. Its inappropriate placement is one of the examples used by Pierre Verlet in his discussion of the problem "Peut-on remeubler Versailles?" in *Jardin des Arts* 40 (February, 1958) p. 254.

69. Sebastian-Antoine Slodtz (1695–1754) and Paul Ambroise Slodtz (1702–1758), sculptors and designers, working for the Menus Plaisirs, successively holding the post of "dessinateur de la Chambre et du Cabinet du Roi."

70. Luynes, *Mémoires* II, p. 167.

71. Pierre Verlet, *Versailles* (Paris, 1961) p. 364.

72. Verlet, *Versailles*, pp. 523–525, and Verlet, "Bronzes d'ameublement faits pour Versailles," *Humanisme Actif, Mélanges Julien Cain* (Paris, 1968) p. 383.

73. Verlet, *Versailles*, p. 524.

74. Verlet, *Versailles*, p. 519.

square shape more modish by truncating two of its angles with panels sculpted by Verberckt.<sup>75</sup> The tone of the room was a warm red. The mantelpiece was made of red *griotte* marble. On the walls crimson damask provided a backdrop for the royal collection of Old Masters. Intimacy was the essence of the room for which a “fauteuil de commodité à joues manière de confessional” of red velvet with gold braid was delivered on July 29.<sup>76</sup> This was the first of a set of crimson-upholstered furniture which followed on December 24. One can only surmise that the original chair with its engulfing red velvet form was meant to be enjoyed by the King. A damask-covered “fauteuil de commodité en bergère” extended by a footstool was made for reclining. Two chairs “à la Reine” and two *tabourets* would seat only a few intimates. Novelty was added to the Cabinet de Retrait by a fire-screen that opened into a three-fold *paravent*. This piece made by Gaudreau held a Chinoiserie surprise:

Un Ecran de bois d’amarante massif et uni le milieu est à coulisse et les côtés s’ouvrent en deux feuilles de paravent par des charnières et se ferment avec de petits verrous à ressorts. Le tout de bronze doré d’or moulu. Les trois milieux des châssis sont couverts des deux côtes, de papier des Indes fond d’or, peint de différentes figures chinoises, haut de 35 pouces sur 22 de large.<sup>77</sup>

On July 17 the Garde-Meuble registered the receipt of a secretary from Gaudreau.<sup>78</sup> It was veneered in violet wood, set on *pieds de biche*, and the front corners ornamented with gilded copper masks. The fall front “en pupitre” opened to form a writing surface supported on two sliding bars of gilded iron. Its equipment included thirteen interior compartments of which six were drawers that sprung open at the press of a button. One of these drawers was to hold the silver containers for ink, sand, and a sponge delivered by Germain on the same day.<sup>79</sup> Five drawers in the lower structure had gilded keyholes so that royal secrets might be secure. Louis did at times tend to administrative business, and at this desk within its modest dimensions (“40 pouces de haut, 3 pieds de large et 16 pouces de profondeur”)

he could keep everything he needed at his disposal.

The most appealing picture of Louis in this Cabinet d’Angle is given by Luynes.<sup>80</sup> The King could often be found standing at the windows overlooking the two courtyards watching the life of Versailles pass below. We sense the loneliness of the man at the hub of the courtly universe.

If there was loneliness and ennui in the King’s life it was determinedly dispelled in the maze of apartments occupying the third and fourth floors. D’Argenson would have us believe that there was but one pastime in these small intimate rooms: “Cette affaire a été menée fort secrètement, comme toutes les galanteries des princes devroient l’être. On a amené les choses de loin. Les entresols et les petits cabinets du roi ont cent issues.”<sup>81</sup> Barbier does corroborate to a limited degree D’Argenson’s tales, noting in January of 1739 a change in the King’s pursuits:

... le Roi commence à prendre goût aux plaisirs ordinaires. Il n’y a pas grand mal qu’il se defasse peu à peu de la fureur qu’il avoit pour la chasse, qui répété tous les jours en tout temps et en toute saison, ne pouvoit qu’altérer son tempérament et lui rendre l’esprit sombre et sauvage: le commerce des femmes et des plaisirs lui prendra moins de temps et lui formera mieux le génie et les sentiments.<sup>82</sup>

There were, however, other amusements to keep the King busy and content in his private Versailles. Much of the third floor was taken up by a library (Figure 19, nos. 11, 12, 13) featuring a room of maps. By all accounts the King spent much time here. We know from the duc de Croy that he was interested in and well versed in the sciences, particularly astronomy, physics, chemistry, and botany.<sup>83</sup> He had only to climb one floor from his library to perform his own experiments in his laboratory or “Distillation” (Figure 20, no. 16). On the terraces (Figure 20, nos. 7, 12, 18) of the same floor he could study the flowers by day and the skies by night. Less lofty royal interests were catered to here in the kitchens (Figure 20, no. 17) by the renowned pastry cook Lazur. With the incredible

75. Verlet, *Versailles*, pp. 528–530.

76. A.N. o’3312, f°144.

77. A.N. o’3312, f°163–164.

78. A.N. o’3312, f°143.

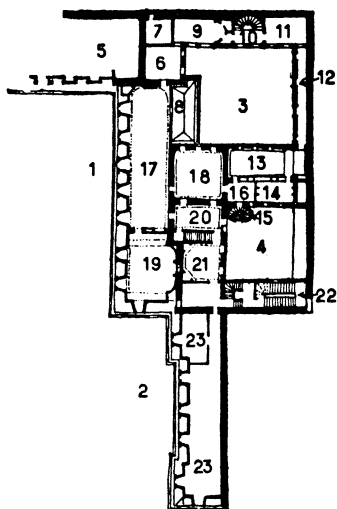
79. A.N. o’3312, f°143.

80. Cited by Verlet, *Versailles*, p. 529.

81. Albert Meyrac, editor, *Louis XV d’après le journal-mémoires de d’Argenson, les chansons du temps et les mémoires du duc de Richelieu* (Paris, n.d.) p. 13.

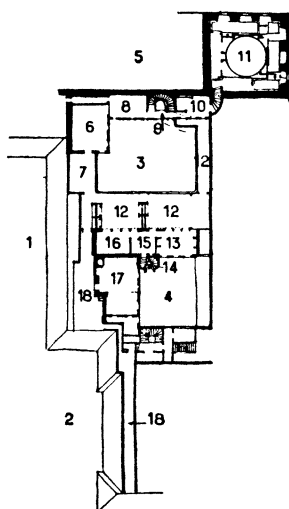
82. Barbier, *Journal* III, p. 153.

83. Croy, *Journal* III, p. 108.



*Petits Appartements du Roi (second étage) vers 1741.*

1. Cour de marbre. — 2. Cour royale. — 3. Cour des Cerfs. — 4. Petite cour intérieure du Roi. — 5. Dessus du Cabinet des Perruques. — 6. Cabinet-particulier. — 7. Chaise. — 8. Toit de l'alcôve de la Chambre du Roi. — 9. Antichambre. — 10. Escalier demi-circulaire. — 11. Premier Cabinet de la Bibliothèque. — 12. Galerie de la Bibliothèque. — 13. Grande Pièce de la Bibliothèque. — 14. Cabinet de la Bibliothèque. — 15. Escalier ovale. — 16. Passage et Garde-robe. — 17. Petite Galerie. — 18. Salle à manger d'hiver. — 19. Cabinet de la Petite Galerie ou Cabinet d'angle. — 20. Antichambre. — 21. Cabinet Lazur. — 22. Degré d'Epéron. — 23. Distillation.



*Petits Appartements du Roi (troisième étage) vers 1741.*

1. Cour de marbre. — 2. Cour royale. — 3. Cour des Cerfs. — 4. Petite cour intérieure du Roi. — 5. Dessus de la Grande Galerie. — 6. Salle à manger d'été. — 7. Terrasse. — 8. Antichambre des Buffets. — 9. Escalier demi-circulaire. — 10. Cabinet à niche. — 11. Petit appartement au-dessus du Salon de la Guerre. — 12. Terrasses. — 13. Pièce du Tour. — 14. Escalier ovale. — 15. Antichambre. — 16. Laboratoire. — 17. Cuisines. — 18. Terrasses.

FIGURES 19, 20

Plans of Versailles. From Verlet, *Versailles*

privilege of his own Cabinet (Figure 19, no. 21) in the Petits Appartements, we have good reason to believe the chef was induced to impart some of the culinary arts to a royal pupil. Mouffle d'Angerville blamed Mme de Mailly for Louis's involvement in so demeaning a pursuit, citing the pleasure he was known to take in preparing "de petits ragoûts, genre de divertissement ignoble."<sup>84</sup>

The King's equally ignoble lathe was moved up to the fourth floor too in 1737 (Figure 20, no. 13). The importance Louis attached to this humble hobby is illustrated by an extraordinary *Garde-Meuble* entry on November 19, 1737:

Un siege eleve de bois de hestre sculpte legerment dont le dossier ceintre est garni de bois de canne: Le fond couvert de velour citron, cloue de clouds argentez porte sur 4 pieds de biche. Na. Le Siege fourni par Tilliard menuisier. Ce siege a été a fontainebleau et recouvert de velours cramoisy.<sup>85</sup>

Although the recovering of chairs must have been ordinary procedure, it is a rare occasion indeed where the maker of the chair, its former location, and upholstery are recorded in the *Journal*. I can only suppose this attention was in response to the King's specific request for a special seat designed by the *menuisier* Tilliard for his comfort while working at the lathe. The yellow velvet added to the brightness of the room where sunlight streamed through the embroidered muslin curtains of three east windows.<sup>86</sup> Many a winter morning must have been spent by the King perched high on the Tilliard seat turning the ivory or rough wood snuff-boxes that were to be the most prized trophies of the gift-giving at New Year's, 1739.<sup>87</sup>

Social life was not excluded from the third floor of the King's apartment, but it was of the informal sort in which the royal host took such pleasure. There was a dining room here (Figure 19, no. 18), its three windows draped in curtains of muslin embroidered with bou-

84. Mouffle d'Angerville, *Vie privée de Louis XV II* (London, 1781) p. 36.

85. A.N. o<sup>1</sup>3312, f<sup>o</sup>100.

86. A.N. o<sup>1</sup>3312, f<sup>o</sup>142.

87. Angerville, *Louis XV II*, p. 47; Luynes, *Mémoires III*, p. 119.

quets delivered on July 8. Later in the month the dining room's antechamber was furnished with two *banquettes* of different sizes, covered in crimson damask with embroidered *fleurons* at the corners.

The largest room on the third floor was the Petite Gallerie (Figure 19, no. 17). Its antechamber, the Pièce aux Lanternes (Figure 19, no. 19), had two *banquettes* "ceintrées" and ten chairs covered in crimson damask. The Petite Gallerie itself exemplifies Louis's taste. The curtains provided for the five windows overlooking the Cour de Marbre in July 8 were of muslin embroidered in a delicate overall floral pattern. On July 17 an ensemble of green damask furniture was delivered.<sup>88</sup> The six-panel screen was trimmed with gold braid. The twelve chairs had gold tassels. The decoration of the eight *banquettes* with two widths of gold braid was supplemented at each corner by a "fleuron de broderie d'or entremeslé d'un compartiment de galon." We see Louis's customary flair for color, for the green fabric was to be set off against the room's paneling of golden yellow varnish by Martin.<sup>89</sup> The gloom that might have penetrated of an evening was dispelled by the light of six candles sparkling in the rock crystal drops of each of the two chandeliers added to the gallery's furnishings on December 24.<sup>90</sup>

The contrast between Louis XIV and Louis XV can be seen in the commission of paintings of exotic scenes of the hunt for the Petite Gallerie. The series of canvasses executed between 1737 and 1739 by Boucher, Parrocel, Carle Vanloo, de Troy, and Pater<sup>91</sup> lined

the walls alternating with mirrors. Where the "Grand Monarque" surrounded himself with depictions of his victories, his successor sought no more than to amuse himself with fanciful scenes of his favorite sport in far-off lands. The subject of the Chasses Etrangères was appropriate to the use of the room, for it was here that Louis staged post-hunt soirées like those of La Muette. The portable game tables, delivered by Gaudreau on August 28 and September 13,<sup>92</sup> probably found their way into the Petite Gallerie when the select company moved from the dining room to their after-supper amusements. Those not privileged to attend were eager to spread rumors of the Bacchanalian aspect of these supper and cards parties. It seems unlikely, however, that they were more than pleasant social evenings of good food, good wine, good company, and—on a good night—good cards.

The Louis XV style was a way of living and a way of decorating. The determining factor in that style was the interplay between Louis's position and his personality. As King of France he followed Louis XIV; he was forced into a role created by the "Grand Monarque" who alone could do it justice. But it was his personality that determined the compromise he fashioned to make life endurable. His escape was to a simpler private life, or rather to the illusion of simplicity manufactured at royal command. At Compiègne, Marly, La Muette, and even in his private Versailles, he could return from a day's sport to direct sociability uncomplicated by court etiquette. He could spend hours alone puttering away in one of his workrooms at a lathe, a kitchen stove, or with flasks and beakers. He could, if he chose, just sit in an easy chair to read or write letters. All these pursuits he enjoyed in surroundings where the quality sought was comfort rather than impressiveness. To please him, rooms should contain cheerful colors and prettily sinuous lines. Most of all, they should be intimate and cozy. Such was the royal taste of Louis XV in 1738.

88. All these deliveries are in A.N. o<sup>1</sup>3312, f<sup>o</sup>142 and 144.

89. Verlet, *Versailles*, p. 550.

90. A.N. o<sup>1</sup>3312, f<sup>o</sup>164.

91. Engerand, *Inventaire*, p. 379, gives this information on the Chasses Etrangères executed for the Petite Gallerie:

Artist	Subject	Date of payment and present location
Parrocel (Pierre, 1670–1739)	Chasse d'éléfants	31 mars 1737 Musée de Calais
Boucher (François, 1703–1770)	Chasse du Tigre	31 mars 1737 Musée d'Amiens
Boucher (François, 1703–1770)	Chasse au Crocodile	20 avril 1739 Musée d'Amiens
Lancret (Nicolas, 1690–1743)	Chasse de léopards	13 mars 1737 Musée de Fontainebleau
Pater (Jean-Baptiste, 1695–1736)	Chasse Chinoise	13 mars 1737 Musée de Fontainebleau
de Troy (Jean-François, 1679–1752)	Chasse au lion	12 mars 1737 Louvre
Van Loo (Carle, 1705–1765)	Chasse d'Ours	13 mars 1737 Musée d'Amiens
Van Loo (Carle, 1705–1765)	Chasse de l'Autriche	17 décembre 1738 Musée d'Amiens

92. A.N. o<sup>1</sup>3312, f<sup>o</sup>152, 155–156.



## Appendix A

	du 13 Nov. 1738	160
	Faire recette d'Entrée de 4 flambeaux d'argent a pied rond, la tige a balustre, tournés par le Roy au chateau de Marly, lesquels Sa Majesté m'a ordonné de retirer dud. chateau, pour etre gravez des armes du Roy 3 Couronnes, de Nos. et poids ainsi qu'il ensuit Argent blanc aux armes du Roy	
	3 Couronnes	
aNo. 2054	Quatre flambeaux a pied rond, la tige a balustre pesans	
	L'un ..... 3 <sup>m</sup> 3 <sup>on</sup> 3	
	L'autre ..... 3 3 1	
	Et deux, chacun 3 <sup>m</sup> 3 <sup>on</sup> 2 .... 6 6 4	
		13 5 0
	du 14 Novbre 1738	161
	Livré par le S. Germain orfevre pour servir avec les quatre flambeaux cy dessus	
	Argent blanc aux armes du Roy	
	3 Couronnes	
aNo. 2055	Une Mouchette	

## Appendix B

The entire list of La Muette entries in the *Journal du Garde-Meuble* is reproduced here as a representative record of a single decorating project.

	du p.er aout 1738	145-148
	Livre par le S. Caffieri	
	Pour Servir dans la chambre du nouvel apartem.t du Roy au chateau de La Muette	
aNo. 1408	Une grille a quatre branches en 2 parties, de 24 pouces de profondeur ornée sur le devant de consoles et roulots contournés de cuivre doré d'or moulu, sur lesquels sont raportez differens feuillages de relief, et de 4 piramides de fer poli, avec pelle, pincette et tenaille, a pommes de cuivre doré, et 2 croissans assortissans Pour Servir dans le cabinet du Roy du meme appartement	
1409	Une grille a quatre branches en deux parties de 24 pouces de profondeur, aiant sur le devant des consoles ou sont en relief, un Ecureuil et un perroquet qui mangent des fruits, Le tout de cuivre doré d'or moulu et 4 piramides de fer poly, avec pelle, pincette et tenaille a pommes de cuivre doré et deux croissans assortissans	
1410	Deux paires de bras a 2 branches, de cuivre doré d'or moulu, la tige en console, haute de 8 pouces avec leurs bassinets separez Pour le passage et la garderobe du meme appartement	
aNo. 1411	Trois paires de bras a une branche, de cuivre doré d'or moulu; La tige ornée d'un masque de zephire, haute de 9 pouces, avec leurs bassinets separez.	

	du 4 aout 1738	
	Livre par le s. Gaudreaus Ebeniste	
	Pour Servir dans la chambre du nouvel appartement du Roy au chateau de La Muette	
aNo. 1131	Une belle commode de differens bois de Indes a placages, enrichie de palmes, guirlandes de fleurs mains, Entrées de Serrures et autres ornemens de relief de bronze doré d'or moulu, aiant pardevant deux tiroirs, et sur les côtez, 2 guichets, Le tout fermant a clef. La Commode a dessus de marbre d'antin portée sur quatre pieds a roulots et a griffes de Lyon, longue de 4 pieds ½ sur 24 pouces de profondeur et 33 pouces de haut	
	No. le dessus de marbre fourni par les batimens	
	Pour le Cabinet du meme appartement	
1132	Un bureau de bois violet a placages couvert de velours bleu, aiant pardevant deux tiroirs fermans a clefs, enrichi de moulures entrées de serrures, mains et aux coins et milieux, de cartouches sur l'un desquels sont les chiffres du Roy entre deux branches de laurier, Le tout de bronze doré d'or moulu. Le bureau porté sur 4 consoles a jour aussi de bronze doré, long de 45 pouces sur 23 de profondeur et 28 de haut, avec son tapis de maroquin bleu.	
	Pour la Garderobe du meme appartement	
aNo. 1133	Une table de nuit de bois violet a placage, a double tablette de marbre de breche d'alep et petit tiroir sur le côté, longue de 19 pouces sur 13 de profondeur et 28 de haut.	

	du 7 aout 1738	
	J'ay acheté et paie comptant des Srs. Darnault et Compagnie	
	Pour Servir dans la chambre du nouvel apartem.t du Roy a La Muette	
aNo. 1412	Deux paires de bras a 2 branches de bronze doré d'or moulu enrichis de feuilles de chicorée, rocailles et autres ornemens, La plaque haute de 17 pouces avec leurs bassinets separez.	

	du 18 aout 1738	
	Faire recette d'entrée des meubles dy apres mentionnez, faits par le S. Sallior Tapissier du Roy, pour Servir dans le nouvel appartement de sa Majesté au Chateau de La Muette	
	Pour L'Antichambre	
aNo. 2913	Quinze Tabourets couverts de maroquin bleu, aians une petite nervure de maroquin citron et garnis de galon de soye bleue, Les bois de hetre Sculptez legèrement et vernis.	
	Pour la chambre a coucher	
2914	Un Lit a la Duchesse de damas de Genes bleu, garni d'un galon a crete de soye de même couleur et d'un autre galon de soye uni a l'Imperiale, chantourné, grand dossier et courtépointe, pour servir a 4 pieds 8 pouces de large, sur 6 pieds 2 pouces de long et 10 pieds 4 pouces de haut, composé de 3 pentes de dehors festonnées, 4 pentes de dedans aussi festonnées, Imperiale fond, grand dossier chantourne, 2 grands rideaux, deux bonnes graces, courtépointe et 3 soubassemens L'entour de 24 lez de gros de Tours bleu uni sur 3	

aunes 1/6 de haut, avec tringle tournante de fer doré  
Le bois du Lit garni de 4 matelas de laine et futaine,  
cousus de soye et piqués de capiton, un traversin de  
duvet et bazin, avec souille de Taffetas blanc, une  
couverture de ratine d'hollande Ecarlate, une couverte-  
ture de ratine blanche Valentin, une couverture de  
Marseille piquée et une Couverture d'ouate de satin  
blanc des deux côtéz.

Deux fauteuils de commodité a carreaux, couverts  
dud. damas bleu et garnis d'un galon de Soye de meme  
couleur, cloué de clouds dorez, Les bras reculez et a  
manchettes, Les bois Sculptez dorés avec housses de  
Taffetas doublées de serge.

8 plians couverts dud. damas et garnis de frange de  
soye de même couleur. Les bois sculptes dorez avec  
housses comme aux fauteuils. Deux carreaux pour  
prier Dieu, couverts des deux côtéz dud. damas, garnis  
d'un galon de soye de même couleur, avec housses  
comme aux sieges

Quatre portières de 4 lez chacune, dud. damas bleu,  
sur 7 pieds 10 pouces de haut, bordées d'un côté de  
soye de meme couleur et doublees de Taffetas.

Un Paravent de 4 feuilles, couvertes des deux cotez  
dud. damas bleu et garnies de galon de soye cloué,  
avec housses de Taffetas doublees de serge.

Deux Rideaux de fenetres de six lez chacun de gros de  
Tours bleu, unis sur 10 pieds 3 pouces de haut.

Pour le passage de la chambre au cabinet

aNo. 2915 Deux portières de 4 lez chacune dud. damas bleu, sur  
7 pieds 10 pouces de haut, bordées d'une Crete de  
Soye de meme couleur et doublées de Taffetas  
Six Tabourets en banquettes couvertes dud. damas  
bleu et garnies dud. galon. Les bois sculptes dorez,  
avec housses de Taffetas doublées de serge  
Un Rideau de fenetre de 6 lez de gros de Tours bleu,  
uni, sur 10 pieds 4 pouces ½ de haut.

Cabinet

Un Canapé a Jous couvert dud. damas bleu et garni  
de galon de soye de même couleur, avec un matelas  
et 2 Carreaux pareils: Le dossier et les Jous piquez,  
long de 6 pieds ½ sur 24 de profondeur, avec housse de  
Taffetas bleu, doublée de serge: Le bois sculpté doré.  
Deux chaises a la Reine couvertes dud. damas piqué  
de houpettes de soye et garnies de galon de soye bleue:  
Les bois sculptes dorez avec housses de Taffetas  
doublees de serge

Un Ecran a coulisse couvert des deux cotez dud. damas  
bleu, Le bois sculpte dore avec housse comme dessus.  
Quatre portieres de 4 lez chacune dud. damas bleu  
sur 7 pieds 10 pouces de haut bordees d'une creste de  
soye de meme couleur et doublees de Taffetas

Un Rideau de fenetre de 6 lez de Tours bleu, uni sur  
10 pieds 3 pouces ½ de haut.

dud. jour 18 aout 1738

Livré par le S. Gaudreaus Ebeniste

Pour servir dans la garderobe du Nouvel appartement  
du Roy au chateau de La Muette

aNo. 520 Une chaise d'affaire de bois de palissante a placage  
avec mains de cuivre en couleur d'or et Lunette de  
velours bleu et double sceau de fayance.

dud. Jour 21 aout 1738

livré par le S. Minel

Pour Servir dans l'antichambre du nouvel appartement  
du Roy au chateau de La Muette

aNo. 1415 Une paire de bras a 2 branches, de cuivre en couleur  
d'or, cizelés de feuilles et autres ornemens, La tige  
haute de 18 pouces.

du 13 Sept.bre 1738

156

Livre par le S. DeLaroue fils

Pour Servir dans la chambre du Nouvel apartem.t du  
Roy a La Muette

aNo. 349 Un Miroir de toilette ceintre et chantourné par le  
haut, garni de brocart fond bleu et or, doublé de damas  
bleu avec galon d'or devant et derriere.

La glace haute de 16 pouces ½ sur 13 de large avec  
sa boette doublée de reveche.

## Appendix C

du Jan.er 1738

109

Etat des differentes choses retirees de Versailles le  
premier fevrier 1738 par ordre du Roy, lesquelles  
n'avoient pas encores été Inventoriees, et sont a porter  
aux chapitres de l'Inventaire general, ainsi qu'il  
ensuit . . .

Au Chapitre des divers Meubles

510 Un Tableau de 19 pouces de haut sur 14 de large  
representant sur fond de cuivre peint facon de lapis,  
dix medaillons des portraits de Louis 14, suivant ses  
differens ages, dans des Trophees et branches de  
palmier de cuivre dore d'or moulu. Le chapiteau de  
7 pouces de haut, representant sur fond de lapis, les  
armes de france dans un cercle charge des douze signes  
et surmonte d'un Soleil.

## Appendix D

du 12 août 1738

146

J'ay été par ordre de M. le Comte de Maurepas  
prendre et enlever pour le Roy a l'hostel d'Estrées a  
Paris

Un beau buste antique representant Alexandre avec  
un casque, La tete et le corps sont le porphyre et le  
reste de marbre de ver d'Egypte veiné, orné d'une  
draperie de bronze doré, avec un cordon en chaine,  
que pend de l'Epaule gauche, et une tete en medaillon  
entre deux palmes sur la poitrine, aussi de bronze dore  
haut de 42 pouces, porte sur un scabellon de marbre  
ser fontaine a trois consoles en guaine, avec un orne-  
ment de bronze doré, haut de 43 pouces.

Et le 14 du meme mois. J'ay fait transporter le buste  
cydessus a Versailles et poser dans le cabinet du Con-  
seil, sans recepissé Il a été acheté 18000 compris dans  
plus grand somme a l'inventaire de feu M. le Maréchal  
d'Estrées

## Appendix E

- du 29 may 1738 116  
 Livre par les Srs. Laroue et Slodz  
 Pour servir dans le cabinet du Conseil du Roy a  
 Versailles
- No. 250 Un beau et riche chandelier, monté à la moderne, en  
 bronze argenté et cristal de roche, à 12 bobeche  
 distribuées trois par trois en girandolle, le corps formé  
 par quatre grosses branches de palmier en consolles,  
 jointes par en bas dans un entablement, qui soutient  
 dans le milieu un gros et magnifique vase de cristal et  
 lilées par en haut en berceau: Les quatre branches de  
 palmier sont ornées de 4 palmettes 4 vases et 4 belles  
 pyramides, entre lesquels pendent plusieurs pieces  
 lisses, taillées en bijeau de différentes facons, et 4  
 grosses boules lisses au dessous des pyramides, Le tout  
 entremeslé de dattes aussi de Cristal au milieu de  
 Berceau: Dans le haut, il y a une grosse et très belle  
 boule lisse, suspendue à la pointe d'une pyramide  
 renversée. Le Couronnement est formé par un bout  
 de tige de cristal, entourée de 8 branches, d'ou pendent  
 8 pieces dentelees à bijeau et quatre moiennes boules  
 lisses; Chaque girandole est composée de 3 branches  
 qui soutiennent les bobeche et plateaux de cristal  
 derriere celle du milieu est un gros vase. Sous 8 des  
 bassins pendent 8 grosses et belles pieces en poires à  
 6 pans et à canaux, Sous les quatre autres, 4 grandes  
 pieces lisses faconnées. Le cul de lampe est forme de  
 branches de palmier et de girandoles qui se reunissent  
 dans l'entablement, d'ou pendent de grandes et belles  
 piece de cristal, faconnées et tailles en lres, gouttes de  
 suif, calichons et 8 moiennes boules lisses et terminé  
 par une tres belle poire à 6 pans, cannelée attachée à  
 une grosse piece de cristal et entourée de 4 guirlandes  
 qui sortent des consoles de l'Entablement. Le chande-  
 lier haut de 5 pieds sur 42 pouces de diametre  
 Pour entrer dans la composition duquel lustre  
 J'ay delivré au S. LaRoue, 98 pieces de cristal de roche  
 de différentes formes et grandeurs, pesantes ensemble  
 1130<sup>on</sup>6 faisant partie des 140 pieces de cristal acheté

le 5 decembre 1736 des Srs. Civia et Cattanco, par  
 ordre et pour le compte du Roy Partant il ne reste plus  
 ceans que 42 pieces dud. cristal à employer ainsi qu'il  
 sera ordonné par sa Majesté  
 La poire qui termine et les autres pieces de cristal ont  
 été achetées comptant ou fournies par le S. Laroue.

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