



# A History of the Gardens of Versailles (Penn Studies in Landscape Architecture)

*Michel Baridon*

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The gardens of Versailles are perhaps the most famous in the world. Seemingly open to the horizon, their scale is monumental. Their grand east-west axis celebrates the Sun King, even as they offer an expression of the scientific spirit of the age in their geometrical layout and exploitation of the optical properties of reflecting water. The original park design, realized by André Le Nôtre, a few advisers, and Louis XIV himself—author of *The Way to Present the Gardens of Versailles*—remains largely intact. Yet Louis XV made his own original contribution to the gardens at the Trianon, where later still Richard Mique and Hubert Robert designed the English garden and the delightful village beloved by Marie Antoinette.

Michel Baridon traces the history of the gardens from their inception through three centuries of their history. He stresses the cultural importance of the landscape, provides a chronology to show the stages of its growth, and discusses the contemporary challenges posed by its conservation and historical interpretation. Beautifully illustrated with archival images and commissioned photographs, *A History of the Gardens of Versailles* provides visitors and enthusiasts with a guide to these legendary grounds.

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