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Alexandre Gady, ed., Georges Fessy, et. al., *Jules Hardouin-Mansart: 1646-1708*. Paris: Maison des sciences de l'homme, 2010, viii + 612 pp. 494 black and white illustrations and color plates, bibliography, index. 96,00 €. ISBN-10 2-7351-1187-3 / ISBN-13 978-2-7351-1187-9.

Review by Rochelle Ziskin, University of Missouri-Kansas City.

The impeccably produced *Jules Hardouin-Mansart: 1646-1708*, edited by Alexandre Gady, written by a diverse group of scholars, and accompanied by superb architectural photographs by Georges Fessy, makes a powerful case that Hardouin-Mansart was among the most important, talented and interesting—as well as among the most prolific—designers of the reign of Louis XIV. Hardouin-Mansart has not shared the degree of acclaim enjoyed by his more famous great uncle François Mansart (1598-1666), whose inventiveness, dazzling stereotomy, precision of classical detail and proportion, and alluring facility as a draughtsman have been—and continue to be—especially prized. Nor has his reputation risen to the level of Louis Le Vau (1612-70), his immediate predecessor as Louis XIV's *premier architecte*, designer of the “envelope” at Versailles and the prominently situated and urbanistically effective Collège des Quatre-Nations in Paris, as well as the most inventive domestic planner of his time (among whose works are the château at Vaux-le-Vicomte and several *hôtels*, including the hôtel de Lambert, on the Ile Saint-Louis). Nor have any of Hardouin-Mansart's works been considered as having matched the innovative brilliance of the east facade of the Louvre, designed by the polymath scientist and classical scholar Claude Perrault (1613-88). In the realm of garden design, André Le Notre has been justifiably considered the towering genius. Hardouin-Mansart was a generation younger than those who established the style of the early reign of Louis XIV. The sheer quantity of work he produced, coupled with the necessity to respond to the king's evolving vision, resulted in some less-than-fully satisfying finished works. This volume, however, offers a much fuller and more focused picture of Hardouin-Mansart's talents, inspired ingenuity, and important achievements. Students and scholars of French seventeenth- and eighteenth-century architecture owe a considerable debt to the volume's editor, who was clearly the driving force behind this project, to the many participating scholars, and to the Centre allemand d'histoire d'art/Deutsches Forum für Kunstgeschichte, which helped to underwrite the costs of this superlatively produced publication (including 494 plates, most in color, on high quality paper).

There seem to have been several reasons why Hardouin-Mansart did not achieve the same degree of fame or, in some cases, as consistently high a quality of production as designers of the previous generation. Most important among them was surely the magnitude of his bureaucratic responsibilities. A considerable portion of his career was devoted to the château and gardens of Versailles, although he was not the first designer of either. He enlarged and modified Le Vau's château (itself a compromise, enveloping the modest brick and stone hunting lodge of Louis XIII) and with Charles Le Brun, *premier peintre du roi*, he conceived the famous *Galerie des Glaces*. That great mirror-lined gallery was functionally necessary to connect the apartments of the king and queen, but it was also ceremonially significant and scenographically effective as a backdrop to court life, accompanied by the more innovative *Salon de Guerre* and its pendant the *Salon de Paix*. More brilliant and important architecturally is the luminous chapel, with its impressive colonnade of freestanding Corinthian columns forming a light tribune above a solidly arcuated base. Also quite impressive is the elegant *Orangerie* (although Le Notre may have played a role) and the great horseshoe-shaped stables that so effectively

precede the château. In Paris, he designed two *places royales* (the Place des Victoires and the Place Vendôme) and the Dôme des Invalides. The last has been especially admired, and it is among Hardouin-Mansart's greatest architectural works. In general, however, Hardouin-Mansart—much like his counterpart Le Brun—has tended to be seen as a designer of great youthful promise who inevitably became more bureaucrat than artist, given the sheer amount of work he oversaw. That interpretation is not entirely in error, but this volume makes it abundantly clear that it is a gross over-simplification.

To a considerable extent, Hardouin-Mansart's reputation has been sullied by the invective of Saint-Simon, who seethed with jealousy over the lowly architect's close relations with the royal family, outraged at his ease of access to the king, and apoplectic that he dared “tiroit un fils de France par la manche et frappoit sur l'épaule d'un prince du sang”;[1] according to Saint-Simon, Mansart, who could not even draw, took his best ideas from his draughtsmen—especially Pierre Cailleteau, called Lassurance (1655-1724)—whom he kept under lock and key to disguise their real contributions.[2] Saint-Simon's account has no doubt contributed to uncertainty about Mansart's own talents and even his authorship of works assigned to him. Those doubts spurred Albert Laprade to argue that François d'Orbay was the real designer of Hardouin-Mansart's principal buildings and Fiske Kimball to contend that Pierre Lepautre was the real author of Mansart's innovations in the decorative realm at the turn of the eighteenth century.[3] Saint-Simon's depiction also found support in the extremely small number of drawings that could be confidently assigned to Hardouin-Mansart's own hand. It seemed, moreover, in keeping with the ambition that would seem to explain Jules Hardouin's attaching the surname of his celebrated great uncle to his own. Although Saint-Simon did not invoke it, the sheer number of portraits and other representations of Hardouin-Mansart (far exceeding those of his predecessors or successors as *premier architecte* or *surintendant des bâtiments*) also seems to confirm a degree of ambition consonant with the memoirist's appraisal.

Until quite recently, there has been no scholarly, comprehensive study of Hardouin-Mansart's architectural production. Pierre Bourget and Georges Cattai's 1960 book was clearly far from complete and has always been considered as little more than an introduction. [4] For nearly five decades, however, scholars awaited the publication of a 1962 dissertation by the eminent art and architectural historian Bertrand Jestaz. Jestaz maintained a hold on the thesis during that entire period, thereby keeping it out of the public realm, doling out permission to consult it only sparingly and often refusing requests from scholars. During the intervening decades, however, Jestaz published a series of significant articles on several of Hardouin-Mansart's more important projects. Apparently in 2005, in anticipation of an exhibition commemorating the 300th anniversary of Hardouin-Mansart's death and the preparation of the book under review, Jestaz joined forces with this group of scholars, but later decided to publish separately (recounted in preface and notes of Jestaz's 2008 monograph on the architect).[5] That decision now seems fortuitous. His interpretation and evaluation of Mansart's work and the issues relevant to it differ in some respects from those in the collaborative volume. On the other hand, his monograph, although amply illustrated, is marred by too many dark photographs of poor quality, mostly taken by the author himself. The work under review is a stunning complement to Jestaz's book, graced by Fessy's superb architectural photographs. The two studies will certainly be consulted in tandem.

Jestaz's monograph is in many respects the more readable of the two, intelligent and generally illuminating, offering a continuous chronological narrative as a kind of artistic biography. It is the culmination of a whole career's study and reflection, but—like the volume under consideration—it is overwhelmingly concerned with the development of Mansart's architectural style. Jestaz adopts a more critical stance toward Mansart's production, criticizing what seem to him to be awkward or less successful aspects of certain designs. He also accepts the contention that Hardouin-Mansart probably could not—or did not—draw.

In *Jules Hardouin-Mansart: 1646-1708*, the tone is more celebratory. This volume benefits from the collective knowledge and research of a large field of experts—including both eminent historians and younger scholars—and it considers a larger range of issues that help to place the architect in his social, architectural and bureaucratic context. Incorporating some new findings not found in Jestaz's monograph, it better explores Mansart as an urbanist and as designer of gardens (on those aspects, see especially the articles and entries by Claude Mignot, Thomas Hedin, Thomas Gaetgens, Aurélia Rostaing, Thierry Sarmant, Dominique Fernandès, Joëlle Barreau and Jean-Charles Forgeret). It is also accompanied by a more extensive and complete bibliography.

The first part of the book, entitled *L'Homme et l'architecte*, consists of longer thematic essays, including an appraisal of the critical reception of Hardouin-Mansart's work (Jean-Pierre Pérouse de Montclos); significant assessments of Mansart's architectural career within the Bâtiments du roi (Mignot) and of the operations of that service within the royal bureaucracy (Benjamin Ringot and Sarmant); an interesting account of Mansart's finances, speculative investments, and social mobility (Barreau and Yoann Brault); and a related consideration of what his numerous portraits tell us about his changing status (Gady). Other important essays explore Hardouin-Mansart as a designer of gardens (Mignot) and the architect's great technical mastery of stereotomy—especially evident in the remarkable vault of the vestibule of the Hôtel de Ville at Arles, in the towering cupola of the Dôme des Invalides, and in the colonnade of the Chapel at Versailles (Guillaume Fonkenell).

The second part, comprising about four-fifths of this volume, is a *catalogue raisonné* of Mansart's built and unbuilt works. Entries are written by an impressive group, including all of those who contributed to part one, plus many other scholars (among them Jean-Pierre Babeon, François Bergot, Christophe Bourel Le Guilloux, Isabelle Dérens, Frédéric Didier, Françoise Hamon, Pascal Julien, Katharina Krauss, Emmanuelle Loizeau, Raphaël Masson, Dominique Massounie, Fabrice Ouziel, Emmanuel Pénicaut, Aurélia Rostaing, Claudia Rudeck, Jean-Pierre Samoyault, Victoria Sanger and others—some of whom are cited below); several among them have previously published on the buildings or sites they explore here. Although each entry was written separately (indeed, more cross-references to essays, entries, and illustrations in the book would have been helpful), this was clearly a collaborative project in which sources were shared and findings discussed.

One appreciates the comprehensive goals, which will make this volume a standard reference for future scholarship. The catalogue format, however, has some inherent limitations. Although the entries do vary in length from several pages allotted to the key works to just a page or two, the summaries are quite succinct and should be considered an introduction to the sites and to current scholarship. In keeping with that goal, however, some authors could have improved their entries by citing a broader range of secondary sources. This reader would have preferred a more in-depth treatment of the most important sites, with less significant or questionable works and projects and their relevant archival sources summarized in an appendix. Some entries are heavily documentary, offering step-by-step accounts of each phase of construction, noting each *devis* and *marché* and nearly every artisan employed—a level of detail that would have been better relegated to notes. Most entries focus primarily on questions of form and style, with occasional consideration of use and broader issues of representation.

Among the entries that might have been developed at greater length is Alexandre Maral's generally interesting piece on the chapel of Versailles. He offers a history of the chapels at the château and outlines its special status as a palatine chapel, noting (as have other historians) the relationship of Mansart's final design to the chapel at Vincennes and to the Sainte-Chapelle. This entry does not, however, fully convey just how radical this design was in its combination of classical Corinthian columns bearing flat entablatures—actually complexly built flat arches reinforced by iron—with Gothic building techniques, permitting an airy spaciousness quite distinct from the reigning Baroque style. These aspects are not ignored, and Maral concludes by noting that these features would have an

important following in the eighteenth century. Perhaps from a desire to stress Mansart's ingenuity, however, Maral steers clear of one of the more intriguing debates among specialists concerning the possible impact of Claude Perrault's project of the 1670s for a new church of Sainte-Geneviève. Michael Petzet, Wolfgang Herrmann and others have argued quite convincingly for its likely importance.[6] When Maral does point to Perrault's importance, it is by reference to the Louvre colonnade, not at issue among scholars. He notes "l'édifice renvoie explicitement à la colonnade du Louvre, référence majeure de l'architecture régnicole, voire gallicane" [pp. 221-222], thereby citing Perrault without actually engaging the debate. Jestaz does so more directly, but very quickly dismisses the influence of "un project pour la reconstruction de l'église Sainte-Geneviève que Claude Perrault venait de proposer en 1697." That late date suggests the project had little impact on Mansart, but the 1697 memoir was written by his brother Charles nine years after Claude's death in 1688 to accompany Claude's earlier project (apparently of the 1670s). Maral might at least have cited more of the secondary literature on the chapel, especially studies stressing Perrault's possible importance; most curiously omitted is Martha M. Stumberg Edmund's monograph. [7]

Vincent Maroteaux's engaging entry on the château de Clagny, built for Madame de Montespan and of considerable significance in helping to launch Hardouin-Mansart's career in the royal building works, would have similarly benefited from a more generous allotment of space. One appreciates the inclusion of newly published architectural drawings, but several are simply illustrated without a discussion and assessment of their significance, which is not self-evident. On the other hand, quite puzzling is the omission of Michel Hardouin's engraved plan, which Jestaz reproduced (as have other scholars), since the names of rooms are labeled on it. Without recourse to that plan, it is quite difficult to follow Maroteaux's description of how the spaces unfolded.

Another subject that might have received more attention is Hardouin-Mansart's role in the realm of interior decoration, especially the transition at the turn of the new century into a lighter, less classical style that would develop into the Rococo. As noted above, Kimball had insisted that Pierre Lepautre was the innovator in that realm. Since Kimball's groundbreaking publications of 1943 and 1949, however, a wealth of new information has come to light through Bruno Pons' diligent research and pioneering studies.[8] The remarkable *antichambre de l'Oeil-de-boeuf* is discussed, but rather succinctly considering its significance. There is no photograph of this important room, and the drawings used to illustrate it, although of interest, do not convey well enough how radically new was this treatment of the wall and cornice zone.

Finally, in considering Mansart's career and legacy, neither this book nor Prof. Jestaz's study explore in any depth the architect's relations with artists and the significance of his tenure as the royal administrator in charge of the Académie de Peinture et Sculpture from 1699. Artists' names do appear when the works considered included decorative painting or sculpture, but in general there is only limited consideration of the interrelations of built form and decorative embellishment. It would have been well worth exploring Mansart's close ties to his friend Charles de La Fosse, the most talented and probably the most influential painter of the generation following Le Brun. Mansart clearly recognized his gifts and wanted to assign to La Fosse the entire painted decorative programs of the Dôme des Invalides and, most likely, the chapel of Versailles as well (both commissions would later be divided among the principal painters of the time)—and La Fosse resided for a period in or near Mansart's house, where he also did decorative painting. Gady seems interested in these relationships and alludes to them, but only briefly, and they are nowhere fully explored. Moreover, to understand the magnitude of Mansart's significance, it seems essential to explore his role in reinvigorating the royal Academy of Painting and Sculpture by immediately promoting within its hierarchy not only La Fosse, but also the most vibrantly progressive theoretician of the time, Roger de Piles—both constituting a clear sign that the colorists had prevailed. Mansart also revived the long-lapsed Salon, thereby making works of academicians available to the public, and within months had it mounted in the grande galerie of the

Louvre.[9] A more extended assessment of Mansart's motives and patronage with respect to artists, art theory, and the Academy would surely have deepened our understanding of his aesthetic goals and broader historical importance.

Obviously, no single volume can treat every aspect of a career. *Jules Hardouin-Mansart: 1646-1708* has been carefully and intelligently conceived and elegantly produced. It draws upon the intellectual labor and diligent research of a wide range of scholars, and it clearly constitutes a significant contribution. The cumulative effect of the essays, the wide ranging catalogue entries, the multiplicity of voices, the new archival sources, and the superb plates are quite impressive, revealing better than any previous study the scope of Mansart's achievement and ingenuity. It will be consulted, for some time to come, as one of the fundamental studies of Hardouin-Mansart, certainly among the most important figures of his time.

#### NOTES

[1] Saint-Simon, *Mémoires*, Boislisle ed. XVI (1902), reprinted by Bertrand Jestaz, *Jules Hardouin-Mansart: [I] : Vie et oeuvre. [II] : Documents* (Paris: Picard, 2008 ), II: 11.

[2] "Il étoit ignorant dans son métier; De Coste, son beau-frère, qu'il fit premier architecte, n'en savoit plus pas que lui. Ils tiroient leurs plans, leurs desseins, leurs lumières, d'un dessinateur des bâtiments nommé L'Assurance, qu'ils tenoient tant qu'ils pouvoient sous clef. . . . Il [Hardouin-Mansart] gagnoit infiniment aux ouvrages, aux marché et à tout ce qui se faisoit dans les bâtiments, desquels il étoit absolument le maître et avec un telle autorité qu'il n'y avoit ouvrier, entrepreneur ni personne dans les bâtiments qui eût osé parler ni branler le moins du monde. Comme il n'avoit point de goût ni le Roi non plus, jamais il ne s'est rien exécuté de beau ni même de commode, avec des dépenses immenses. . . ." Ibid.

[3] Albert Laprade, with Nicole Bourdel and Jean Lafond, *François d'Orbay: architecte de Louis XIV* (Paris: Vincent, Fréal, 1960). Fiske Kimball, *The Creation of the Rococo* (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Museum of Art, 1943) and *Le Style Louis XV: origine et evolution du Rococo* (Paris: Picard, 1949).

[4] Pierre Bourget and Georges Cattai, *Jules Hardouin Mansart* (Paris: Vincent, Fréal et Cie, 1960).

[5] For Jestaz's 2008 monograph, see above n. 1.

[6] See Michael Petzet, «Un Projet des Perrault pour l'église de Sainte-Geneviève à Paris,» *Bulletin monumental* CXV, avril-juin 1957, 81-96 and «Quelques projets inédits pour la chapelle de Versailles, 1688-89,» *Art de France*, no. I (1961), 315-319.

[7] Martha M. Stumberg Edmund, *Piety and Politics: Imaging Divine Kingship in Louis XIV's Chapel at Versailles* (Newark, Del. and London: University of Delaware Press, 2002).

[8] See especially Bruno Pons, *De Paris à Versailles, 1699-1736: les sculpteurs ornemanistes parisiens et l'art décoratif bâtiments du roi* (Strasbourg: Association les publications près les Universités de Strasbourg, 1986); for Kimball, see above n.3.

[9] For a discussion of Mansart's role , see Thomas E.Crow, *Painters and Public Life in Eighteenth-Century Paris* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), chapter 1.

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