

FOCUS

STORIES OF WATER AND GARDENS

CHÂLONS-EN-CHAMPAGNE





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CHÂLONS ACROSS THE WATER

LET'S TRAVEL UP THE TIME STREAM... AND THE

The city of Châlons was born out of the intersection of a road (the roman «Agrippa» way) with a river (the Marne ①). This river is subdivided into many arms, two of which, the Mau ② and the Nau ③, are crossing the city. The economic and the geographical growth of Châlons will depend on these water streams throughout the centuries. The Marne, the longest river in France, still crosses Châlons to this day. The Nau is an offspring of the Marne; the Mau is its own river, with its source at Saint-Memmie.

The first inhabitants of Châlons (called the Catalauni) came to live at this intersection during antiquity, attracted by the constant presence of water.

In the middle ages, the commerce of sheets and animal skins brought prosperity and recognition to Châlons. The work of the tanners and the weavers requires water.

During the industrial era, the water streams are the link between the roads and the railways and enable many companies to set foot in the area (Champagne, breweries, wallpapers).

And today, after night fall, the «Métamorph'eu'ses» (a company organising visits of Châlons via its water ways) offer a unique cruise on the Mau and Nau... A sound and light show highlights the monuments, the bridges and the religious structures of Châlons.



The Castle of the market, in the small garden.

THE WATER STREAMS, NATURAL DEFENCES

During the Middle Ages, the water is used to protect the city and is being diverted to surround the fortifications. It becomes a defense tool during wars and invasions.



An engraving of the fortified city
ES PLANC CHA5 (2425)



Arche Mauvillain
Louis Barbat, Bastion Mauvillain

Let's take a look

The Mauvillain arch ⁴, with its shell shape, spans the Mau. It's one of the oldest fortifications of Châlons. As a true point of entrance into the fortified walls, it was equipped with a harrow, from which we can still see the railing. Further down, we can see the remains of the stronghold of the same name.



WATER IN THE EVERYDAY LIFE OF THE PEOPLE OF CHÂLONS.

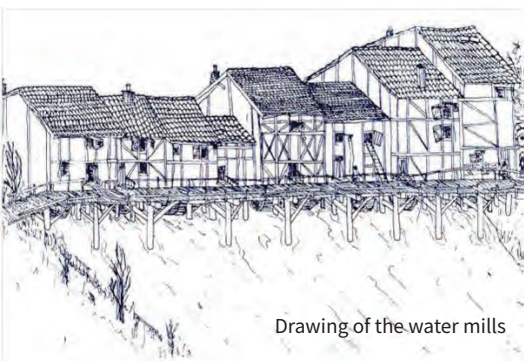
Water is a vital element for some of the trades and commercial exchanges. Its presence is felt at every twist and turn of the city.



La Petite Juiverie (the little Jewry) ⑤, on the border of the Nau, is a good example of a timber-framed walls house. During the Middle Ages, a floating method was used to convey the wooden beams on the river from the Der region; these were then used for the construction of the houses.

The beams are put into the river and float down to Châlons. Once there, they are taken out of the water at the port and left out to dry.

Let's stop for a minute at the **Rue des Poissonniers (Fishermen Street)** ⑥ and **pont des Viviers** ⑦... where the fishermen and fishmongers had their stalls. You can't see the river on Rue des Poissonniers? The Nau was indeed covered up around this area during the 19th Century; this gave birth to the Rue Locht (Lochet Street) which helped to unclutter the neighbourhood..



Drawing of the water mills

Focus: the seven water mills

They belong to the Bishop, and the flour they produce is feeding a big chunk of the population.

Created as early as the year 1028, their production is becoming insufficient towards the end of the 15th Century.

Hence the creation of the **Canal Louis XII** ⑧ during the 16th Century, which diverts some of the water of the Marne to increase the flow of the Nau, and help reinforce the production of the seven water mills. Old and badly maintained, they are however demolished during the 18th Century.

THE CITY EMBELLISHED BY THE WATER

The ramparts surrounding the city of Châlons are lowered down during the project of the embellishment of the city that started in the 18th century. The city breathes, and the pedestrian promenades, highlighted by the Cours d'Ormesson, provide a global feel of harmony ⑨. The surplus of stones is used to build the Notre-Dame dock ⑩ along the Mau and protects the population from any potential overflow.



Putte Savatte bridge
Engraving by Louis Barbat

In 1882, a portion of the Mau is covered up in order to create sufficient room for the building of new halls while hiding one side of the Putte Savatte bridge.

Did you say Putte Savatte? ⑪

Originally called «Croix-des-Teinturiers» (Cross of the dyers), the «Pont Putte Savatte» (Putte Savatte bridge) was named this way during the Middle Ages because of its proximity with the tanner's guild and with the leather shoe makers, and the resulting foul smell that was permeating the area...

«Putte» in old French comes from the verb «puter» which means «to stink», and the word «savate» means «old shoe»...



Sur le Nau
CP 1700



Municipal baths
AA 77608

Focus: the baths

Bath chambers are flourishing all across France from the 18th century. In Châlons, as early as the 14th century, many bath houses can be found along the river banks, and the Bains Bernard (Bernard baths) are one of them ⑫! In 1930, the city council buys back one of the private bath houses on the banks of the river Marne ⑬. After some major building work, it takes on the aspect we now know with its reinforced concrete structure. It's the beginning of the prosperous period for the municipal baths; they are very successful and are a real local pride. In the 1970's, these river baths are becoming less popular and the «municipal baths» as we know them are slowly closed down in favour of the municipal swimming pools.

THE NAVIGABLE WATER



From the side channel...

A true economic benefit, the works on the side channel end in 1846. The fallouts are instant, and many entrepreneurs set shop near the port. From then on, around 5 000 ships pulled by horses (when they are full) or by men (when they are empty) transit through Châlons. The channel banks, now towpaths, quickly become preferred places for promenades. ¹⁴

...to the nautical relay ¹⁵

Launched in July 2011, the nautical relay is located on the side channel. As an important passage point, it offers 16 docking spaces for boats up to fifteen metres in length. It benefits from the «Pavillon bleu» label (blue pavillion) as a reward for the environmental quality of the site. This port of call welcomes around 400 boats during the summer.



Nautical relay, Grand Jar (great garden)

CHÂLONS AND ITS GREEN TREASURES

THE GARDENS, GREEN LUNGS OF THE CITY

Originally, the Jard (Garden) was a low level piece of virgin land, in part a non cultivated prairy and in part a swamp flooded by the Marne, with willows there and there. Owned by the lords of the city, the bishops, it was regularly flooded by the nearby Marne. Their property was much more spread out towards the south than it is today, all the way until their castle of Sarry. The Lord of the city could thus reach it without leaving its own land. The people of Châlons would bring their sheep to graze at the English Jard (English Garden) and the pilgrims from Compostelle would walk alongside it during each peregrination. The Jard becomes the property of the city during the 15th century and would be subject to many modifications...



The great Jard, seen from the cathedral

THE GREAT JARD (THE GREAT GARDEN) ①

During the 18th century, the Jard was reorganised by the steward Gaspard Louis Rouillé d'Orfeuil, who represented the king, as part of its beautification policy. The Jard is redesigned and divided in three gardens: the Small, the Great and the English Jard.

A walk is carried out as a long perspective starting from the gardens of the Hotel de l'Intendance and extending until the Marne: it is named the Cours d'Ormesson.

As a French style garden, the great Jard advocates symmetry, is based on a regular plan and displays an alignments of trees.

Focus: the music kiosk, symbol of the great Jard ②

The installation of a music kiosk in the great Jard becomes obvious during the second half of the 19th century, which is marked by various musical formations. Inaugurated on the 11th July 1885, the kiosk hosts concerts every Thursday and Sunday (weather permitting). The latter being equipped with gas lamps until 1925, big parties are sometimes given at night.



Kiosque du Grand Jard



Plans of the great Jard
B 511 086 101 ES 2016



Inauguration of the skate park

And today, a skate park! 3

On the 23rd September 2017, a skate park was inaugurated in Châlons-en-Champagne, in the presence of world champion roller skater Taïg Khiris. This achievement is part of the first phase of the redevelopment of the Grand Jard.



English Jard

THE ENGLISH JARD 4

In 1818, the most remote part of the Jard was built in the English style. The old bed of the Marne (current channel) is filled with water again. It is therefore necessary to establish a link between the two Jards. A swing bridge is therefore built, and is replaced in 1846 by a foot bridge. The current foot bridge was built at the time when Eiffel was building its famous Tower, hence a resembling appearance with the Parisian Tower.

Focus: a bird island? 5

The isle of the Jard is a protected area. Classified as a natural site since 1929, it hosts many birds that use it as habitat and nesting place.

THE SMALL JARD 6

In 1861, this space is temporarily arranged to showcase flowers and trees at the Regional Agricultural Competition. The success of Petit Jard is such that the municipality is obliged to preserve this garden, to the great delight of the people of Châlons! Lawns were adorned by mythological statues. Today, the Jard is displaying four sculptures by Juan-Carlos Carrillo, each representing a season.



Small Jard, after the 1999 storm

Did you say arboretum?

As of 1938, the small Jard became an Arboretum, which is a botanical garden, born from the meeting of two personalities: Pierre Gauroy, lover of botany and Charles Adrien Hermant, priest at the cathedral. Its purpose is to gather tree species as to compare their families and study their evolution throughout the seasons...

On the 26th December 1999, France is badly affected by the storm Lothar. The Jards are destroyed. Châlons-en-Champagne then launched a «green plan», pledging to replant each fallen tree.

VARIOUS FACTS ABOUT THE JARDS (GARDENS)



The cemetery of the Jard / garden

There was a cemetery in the Jard along the walls of the city. Its creation is attributed to Saint-Memmie, the first bishop of the city. At the time, the land was at a low level and was often flooded; the headstones would suffer from it, this resting place was disturbed... Closed in 1723, the more recent graves were moved to the new cemetery of Sainte-Catherine, whereas the oldest ones remained there. Three have even been planted onsite!

A crusade place?

In 1147, a pulpit (a speaking chair for the sermon) was erected, rumoured to have been used by Saint Bernard. Bernard de Clairvaux is said to have come to Châlons to organise the second crusade and to have gathered the templars at the Jard. He would have contemplated the assembly from the top of the pulpit and explained the purpose of the expedition to the templars, while exalting their courage and promising them many successes. The crowd then left for the Promised Land...

In October of that same year, the pope Eugene III came to consecrate the Saint-Etienne cathedral. A huge crowd comes and joins Cardinals, Archbishops, Bishops, Abbots and the King followed by its court, foreign lords and the nobility of the Champagne region at the Jard, for lack of space on the square of the cathedral...

It is very likely that the popular legend had the two events mixed up, wrongly offering a great moment of Christianity's history to the City of Chalons and its Jard.

Marquerite of Scotland

Daughter of Jacques Stuart and wife of Louis XI, Marguerite of Scotland passed through Châlons and lodged at the Bishop's place with her court. She relaxed one evening, and played the game of pelota in the meadows along the ramparts (the Jard). The Dauphine didn't pay attention to the coolness of the evening and caught a cold; she died three days later.

A GREEN TREASURE



Cloister garde of Notre-Dame-En-Vaux and canonical houses



Garinet garden

Garinet garden plans
MS 778

THE CLOISTER'S GARDEN OF THE COLLEGIATE CHURCH OF NOTRE-DAME-EN-VAUX 7

The cloister, built during the 12th century on the north side of the Notre-Dame-En-Vaux collegiate church, was richly decorated with carved statue-columns and capitals. Requiring a lot of maintenance and becoming very expensive, it is destroyed in the middle of the 18th century and then falls into oblivion... Its garden is remodeled following the unearthing of old remains during excavations in the 1960s. Today, the cultivated spaces arranged in a square fashion remind those of medieval gardens.

The Garinet garden 8

The Garinet museum is the oldest stone dwelling in the city. Former residence of the vidames of Châlons who represented the Bishop on the 13 rue Pasteur (13 Pasteur street), it is acquired at the beginning of the 19th century by Claude Garinet. Hi son, Jules, will bequeath the house and its collections to the City. The garden as Jules Garinet and his wife knew it has now pretty much disappeared. Try to picture it with flower beds, a vegetable garden, fruit trees, lindens!

THE BELLE VUE PARK 9

The park is located in the district of La Bidée and offers a breathtaking view of Châlons-En-Champagne from the belvedere. Playgrounds, orchards, animal farm... Many installations and structures have been put into place since its creation in 2011.



Panorama of the Bellevue park and of the city

IN A CITY LIKE CHÂLONS, CHIEF TOWN OF A LARGE PROVINCE, A WALK IS A DECORATION OF THE CITY, A COMMODITY TO ITS INHABITANTS, AND AN OBJET OF UTILITY FOR THE CITY, IN THAT IT PROVIDES HER WITH A KIND OF FAME AND ATTRACTS FOREIGNERS.

Gaspard Louis Rouillé d'Orfeuil, municipal archives (DD7).

The service for the Animation of Architecture and of the Heritage coordinates the initiatives in Châlons en Champagne, city of art and history.

You are welcome at the «Châlons, Ville d'art et d'histoire (city of art and history)» space from Tuesday to Saturday 2pm to 6pm. This entirely digital and interactive space will show you the urban evolution of Châlons en Champagne and its territory as well as the specifics aspects of its architecture and heritage.

Information and bookings:

Animation du Patrimoine
«Châlons, Ville d'art et d'histoire» space
68 rue Léon Bourgeois
51000 Châlons-en-Champagne
Tel number: +33 (0) 3 26 69 98 21
Email: animation.patrimoine@chalonsenchampagne.fr

Châlons-en-Champagne belongs to the national network of Villes et pays d'art et d'histoire (Art and history cities and countries).

The label «City or Country of Art and History» is awarded by the Ministry of Culture after consulting with the National Council of Cities and Countries of Art and History.

It qualifies territories, municipalities or group of municipalities that are aware of the challenges presented by the appropriation of their architecture and their heritage by its inhabitants, and that engage in an active approach of knowledge, of conservation, of mediation, and support to the creation and to the quality of the architecture and of the quality of life.

The Animation of Architecture and Heritage service, led by the facilitator of Architecture and Heritage, organises many actions to enable the discovery of the architectural and patrimonial wealth of the City by its inhabitants, for young people and adults, and by its visitors with the help of professional guides-speakers.

Nearby cities

Reims, Langres, Sedan, Troyes, Bar-le-Duc, Charleville-Mézières, and Metz all benefit from the appellation City of Art and history.

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Cover

Old plan of Châlons, DD27



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