

Towards 1122 **Louis VI le Gros** had a fortified castle built on the plateau of Laye which at the time was covered with forests. The dungeon (the square tower on the left of the museum entrance), is the only part retaining the shape, site and foundations of the original building known as "« le Grand Châtelet ».

**Louis IX** (Saint Louis) completed this feudal castle with a group of buildings described as « le Petit Châtelet ». Between 1230 and 1238 he had a chapel built a little away from the other constructions . Aprotecting wall surrounded the whole site.

In1337, England claimed the throne of **Philippe VI Valois** and war was declared. The troops of the Black Prince, son of the English king, set fire to the village which had spring up hear to the castle. Both were burnt down and only the chapel was spared.

It was not until the reign of **Charles V le Sage** that kings returned to Saint-Germain. This monarch, the richest in Europe, had the burnt buildings razed to the ground and between 1364 and 1367 rebuilt a new castle on the site of the protecting wall erected by **Louis IX** . The chapel is then joined to the main building.

**François 1st** who married Claude de France in this chapel, at first lived in the castle without undertaking any work. In 1539 he had the old building knocked down and rebuilt on the foundations of the construction of **Charles V**. After his death in 1547, his son **Henri II**, carried on with the building work following the same plans.

In 1559 the castle covered a total surface of 8000 square meters. It comprised of 55 « logis » (a term applied to appartements in the 16<sup>th</sup> century), a ballroom (the present room of comparative archeology on the first floor), 7 chapels, a kitchen. The vaulted basement of the dungeon holds a prison. At the end of the present terrace, **Henri II** started the construction of the « Château Neuf » which was to be completed by Henri IV (you can see the model of royal castles in the chapel when no exhibition is on). Under the reigns of **Henri IV** and **Louis XIII**, what is now called the « Château Vieux », was left to royal chil-

dren and their household staff.

In 1660, **Louis XIV** moved into the « Château Vieux » and had some interior modifications carried out. In 1680, Jules Hardouin Mansart disfigured it with the addition of five corner wings (now removed). Le Nôtre designed the terrace overlooking in the Seine.

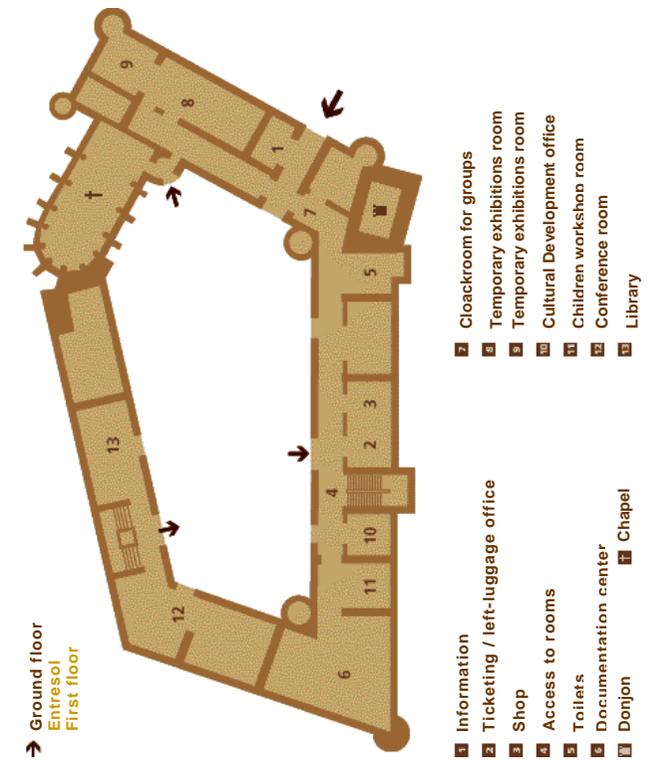
On 20<sup>th</sup> April 1682, the court left Saint-Germain permanently for Versailles. The « Château Vieux » became the residence of **Jacques II** (king of England) and his family during their exile. The « Jacobites » were to remain in Saint-Germain until 1793.

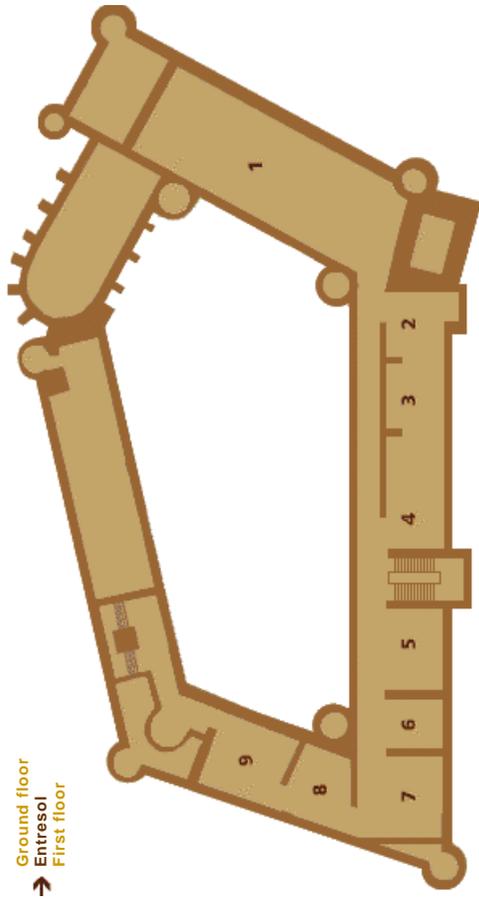
During the revolution (starting 1789) the castle was used as a prison for suspects. Then, according to circumstances and needs, the castle became a hospital for the treatment of contagious diseases, a cavalry school under **Napoléon 1st**, barracks and finally a military prison under **Louis-Philippe**.

**Napoléon III**, by a decree 8<sup>th</sup> March 1862, decided the creation in the « Château de Saint-Germain en Laye d'un musée d'antiquités nationales celtiques et gallo-romaines ». The building was in a very bad state of repair. Listed as a historical monument on the 8<sup>th</sup> of April 1863, it was extensively restored under the direction of **Eugène Millet**, who studied under Viollet-le-Duc. The first seven rooms were inaugurated by the Emperor in 1867. Its renovation was carried out by **André Malraux** in 1962.

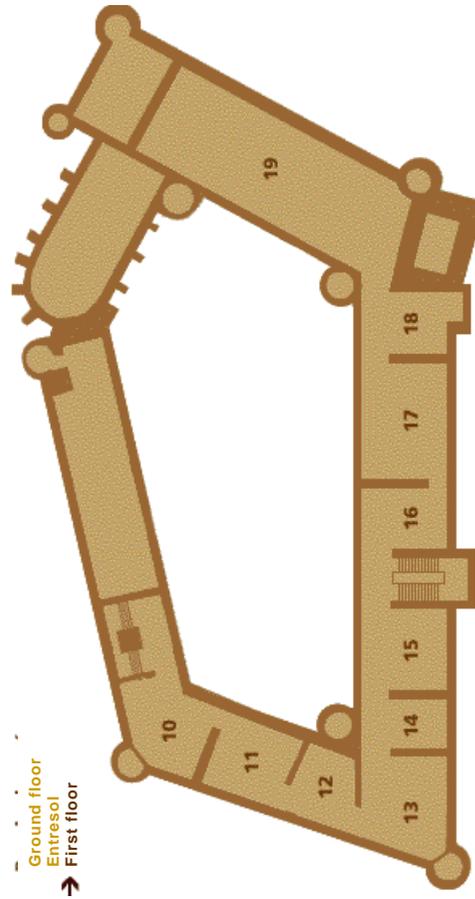
Today, the old rooms of the castle have been turned into exhibition rooms (there is no furniture), displaying archeological collections, some being among the richest in the world, illustrating the life and inventions of men from their origins to the merovingian period.

However, all along the visit you will find notices giving informations about the rooms during the different royal periods and the kings and famous people who have lived in this highly historical place.





- 1 Paleolithic
- 2 Neolithic
- 3 Bronze Age
- 4 Early Iron Age
- 5 à 9 Gaul



- 10 à 14 Roman Gaul
- 17 à 18 Merovingian Gaul
- 19 Comparative archeology room

HISTORY OF THE CASTLE OF  
 SAINT-GERMAIN-EN-LAYE  
 AND THE MUSEUM OF  
 NATIONAL ARCHAEOLOGY

