

AN ANALYSIS OF THE SPATIAL STRUCTURE OF THE NATIONAL PALACE OF QUELUZ

GEORGE, BENJAMIN HOLLIS

Utah State University, 4005 Old Main Hill, Logan UT 84321, benjamin.george@usu.edu

1 ABSTRACT

The National Palace of Queluz is often described as the Versailles of Portugal, a comparison that would seem fitting due to its stately rococo architecture, French-inspired gardens designed by Jean-Baptiste Robillon, and later role as the primary royal residence. But this comparison is misguided as the landscape and palace bear only a superficial resemblance to Le Nôtre's masterpiece. Instead, at Queluz we find Moorish, Dutch, and vernacular Portuguese influences beneath the more domineering baroque and formal French motifs.

Spatial and viewshed analyses of the gardens reveal a complex spatial arrangement that contrasts with baroque principles. This departure can be explained by considering the social uses of the gardens. Additional analysis is leveled at Robillon, who was neither an architect nor landscape designer, and demonstrates how his background as a jeweler may have impacted the development of the garden plan. Through understanding the socio-cultural and historic background of Queluz, it becomes clear that rather than being a flawed baroque design, the gardens are a unique hybrid of baroque and Portuguese vernacular.

1.1 Keywords

garden history, Portuguese gardens, baroque, spatial organization