

**INTERNATIONAL
SYMPOSIUM OF NATIONAL PALACES**

**“TO EVALUATE PALACE-MUSEUMS
IN THE 21ST CENTURY”**

**ULUSLARARASI
MİLLÎ SARAYLAR SEMPOZYUMU**

**“21. YÜZYILDA SARAY-MÜZELERİ
DEĞERLENDİRMEK”**

Milli Saraylar Başkanlığı yayınıdır. Her türlü yayın hakkı saklıdır. Yayın No. 176
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T.C. CUMHURBAŞKANLIĞI / THE PRESIDENCY OF REPUBLIC OF TÜRKİYE

Milli Saraylar Başkanlığı Adına Yayınlayan / Published on Behalf of Directorate of National Palaces by

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Gökşen Canıylmaz

İlhan Kocaman

M. Cüneyd Özpilavcı

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Hakan Berke Erkan

Rabia Bozkurt

Editör / Editor

Dr. Melek Eyigün

İngilizce Redaksiyon / Proofreading in English

Hakan Berke Erkan

Rabia Bozkurt

Grafik Tasarım / Graphic Design

Metin Tolun

Fotoğraf / Photography

Affan Coşkun İpek

Ekrem Öçalan

Fatih Yaz

Önder Özsoy

Baskı / Print

İMAK OFSET BASIM YAYIN ANONİM ŞİRKETİ

AKÇABURGAZ MAHALLESİ 137. SOKAK NO :12 ESENYURT / İSTANBUL

Matbaa Sertifika No: 71320

1. Baskı 2023 (500 Adet)

ISBN 978-625-7380-34-8

(13.10.2023)



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İstanbul 2023

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THE FORMER ROYAL PALACES IN SINTRA: DIFFERENT CHALLENGES IN VERY DIFFERENT PALACES

António Nunes Pereira*

* Assoc. Prof. Dr., Director of the Nacional Palaces of Pena, Queluz and Sintra and the Palace of Monserrate, Parques de Sintra – Monte da Lua, SA, Portugal

Palace-museums are one of the most visited museum types in Portugal. The romantic National Palace of Pena built during the 19th century on top of the Sintra mountain range near Lisbon is the most visited museum in Portugal, visitor numbers have reached almost 2 million in 2019. Despite those numbers and a crescent awareness about the museological specificity of the palace-museum, there still is some misunderstanding which reflects the public's expectation that the most important display objects in a palace-museum are (or should be) art or decorative art objects. In Portugal, this idea roots back in the very process of adapting the former royal residences into museums shortly after the abolishment of the monarchy in 1910.

When the monarchy was abolished in Portugal in 1910, most monarchies in Europe still existed. There was no experience or examples of how to deal with the enormous goods that one single family, the royal family, either possessed or had at its disposal. The solution found for many of the suddenly empty royal residences betrays some indecision about how to deal with the new reality. In the first couple of years after 1910, the palace's management with its full staff of employees was kept, whereas court officers were dismissed.¹

Most of the palaces, now deprived of their residence and royal government functions, were opened to the public who could finally visit both public and private spaces once used solely by the royal family, now in exile. Possibly, one of the main goals was to share with all the citizens of the newly founded Republic the exceptional art collections and beautifully arranged interiors and thus contributing to the people's aesthetical education (education through art), notwithstanding the voyeuristic curiosity that undoubtedly motivated some, if not most visitors. Contemporary photographs of the interiors of the Palace of Pena, for instance, show a lack of any sophisticated museology approach. The former royal apartments show little more than a carpet for visitors to step on and prevent floor damage, as well as cords to keep objects out of their reach.² Otherwise, the interiors appear to be quite unchanged, at least when compared with the latest inventories during the monarchy and particularly with the 1,910 object listings, made in all palaces for the legal transition from the crown to the Treasury under the Ministry of Finance. Former royal palaces had just become national palaces. That representative rooms and their aesthetical value were one of the main focuses of the newly-founded palace-museums

1 Luís Filipe da Silva Soares, *O Palácio Nacional da Ajuda e a sua Afirmação como Museu*, Casal de Cambra: Caleidoscópio, 2019. Although focusing in the particular case of the National Palace of Ajuda which only opened to the public in 1964, the author deals in this publication of his PhD with the transition process of the former royal residences into National Palaces.

2 More about the first years of the Palace of Pena as a museum: Sara Filipa Ferreira Gonçalves, *Palácio Nacional de Pena: Contributos para o estudo dos seus interiores e alterações do respetivo acervo (1910-1941)*, Master dissertation in Museology, Universidade Nova de Lisboa, 2018.

is confirmed by the complete exclusion of servants' quarters as well as service and supporting structures of the visitors' route through the buildings. It is true that many servants' quarters were still inhabited and remained so for a long time, but they offered little matter of interest anyway, as most of the visitors also lived in similar atmospheres.

Government functions were not extinguished altogether in Portuguese former royal palaces with the Republic. Some of them were never adapted to museums, such as the Palace of Belém which is until today the state residence of the President of the Republic, and the Palace of Our Lady of Necessidades, functioning as the Foreign Office since 1916. Both can be visited only very restrictively and there is no museal infrastructure. Even palaces opened to the public as museums were put into the service of the Republican government for state representative functions.³ The Nacional Palace of Pena also served as a residence for President Sidónio Pais (1872-1918) in 1918, who was murdered that very year. Portugal's President still holds official ceremonies in the National Palaces of Ajuda and Queluz. Later, the so-called Wing D. Maria I was used as the residence for the illustrious guest of the republic between 1940 and 2004. The National Palace of Sintra is the official representation venue for the Prime Minister. Other than the major museums in Portugal which had considerable development in the last decade of the 20th century and since on, palaces

were never an object of profound reflection concerning the identity of a palace-museum.

In this paper, I am going to focus on the three former royal palaces that are currently under the management of Parques de Sintra – Monte da Lua, SA (PSML).⁴ PSML was founded in 2000 to manage the Cultural Landscape of Sintra as it was classified as World Heritage by UNESCO in 1995, the first of its kind in Europe.⁵ In 2007, the Nacional Palace of Pena joined the estates managed by PSML which were mostly forests and parks including the Park of Pena. In 2012, two further palace museums came to be managed by PSML: the Nacional Palace of Sintra in the old town of Sintra and thus in the very heart of the region, and the Nacional Palace of Queluz which stands outside the Cultural Landscape but in the Sintra county. I will leave Monserrate out of this paper, as this former country house of the wealthy British family Cook is not a museum.⁶ Since 2019 the three palaces also came to be under my direction, so that a wider, joint reflection about the palace-museum type could take place, considering the similarities but also differences between the three study cases. The following conclusions are the product of these multiple directions and museological decisions that may contribute to a better perception of the specificity of the palace-museum.

3 Years later, after the First World War, in 1918-1919, other countries in Europe would be facing the same dilemma of how to deal with the former royal palaces. There still is little research about this period. The Stiftung Thüringer Schlösser und Gärten published its annuary in 2014 dedicated to the "Palace in the Republic" and to the transition of royal and noble residences from the monarchy to the republic. *Das Schloss in der Republik. Monument zwischen Repräsentation und Haus der Geschichte*, Jahrbuch der Stiftung Thüringer Schlösser und Gärten, Regensburg: Schnell & Steiner, 2014.

4 More about PSML: <https://www.parquesdesintra.pt/en/>, Accessed: February 12, 2023.

5 <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/723>, Accessed: February 12, 2023. José Cardim Ribeiro, ed., *Sintra World Heritage*, Sintra: Câmara Municipal de Sintra, 1998.

6 More about Monserrate: Maria João Neto, *Monserrate, The romantic country house of an English family*, Casal de Cambra: Caleidoscópio, 2015; Maria João Neto, ed., *Monserrate Revisited*, Casal de Cambra: Caleidoscópio, 2017.

Palace-museums are very complex museal objects that must be dealt with individually. The building, the historical layers, its architectural reveals must be the starting point for the development of any museological strategy (like all other residential museums, palaces are the museum type in which the museum's building is simultaneously its chief piece). The research challenge consists of surveying and interpreting both architectural and historical layers. In extreme cases, the resulting exhibition concept demands an efficient mediation for interpreting past social and cultural issues today's visitors cannot understand without it. The challenge concerning the Sintra's former royal palaces was to overcome the outdated focuses on displaying representative spaces and art objects while explaining them around the artistic "style". Instead of it, we should point out the memories of palaces as multifunctional residences, typical of power centers of European monarchies.⁷ Here monarchs resided with the whole court and servants but also exerted power, reigned over countries and peoples, applied justice, collected taxes, received visitors from other courts, staged ceremonies, and displayed religious beliefs. Even more than objects, spaces reflect the multilayers a palace holds.

The precedence of the palace's building and outer spaces, i.e., the architecture and the whole territorial surrounding, over the single object is one of the first important conclusions about the specificity of palace-museums. The other one is that the building and its spaces, as well as objects – if objects are part of the palace's history – i.e., material issues, are the physical remaining immaterial issues like the memory of the people who lived in the palace and historical events connected with it. So, we could sum up the issues which are relevant for the palace-museum museology in the following way:

Material Issues:

- Space/Architecture (building exterior, interiors, room organization, and function, gardens, parks)
- Objects (furniture, art collections, technical devices like stoves, and practical objects like bathtubs)

Immaterial, Memory Issues:

- Life habits (representation versus privacy; gender differences, ceremonial, and ritual conventions)
- Historical events (important historical events linked to the palace like wars, treaties, marriages, births and deaths, visits and liaisons, and meetings)
- People connected with the palace (royal and noble court people, servants and slaves, ambassadors, government officers, artists)

The table above shows that palaces and their history around space, objects, life habits, historical events, and people are a never-ending source of themes you can put evidence in your cultural mediation, also according to contemporary concerns. So, the challenge for the 21st century is to make palace-museums meaningful for new generations who know little about past ways of life. A few examples: gender issues in past

⁷ In Sintra we were no pioneers in these matters. For some years now palaces have been studied and having their exhibitions changed according to these points of view. Without pretending to present here a state of art in palace studies, it is important to mention international European research projects like "Palatium, Court Residences as Places of Exchange in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe (1400-1700)", <https://u0006493.pages.gitlab.kuleuven.be/courtresidences.eu//index.php/home/index.html> and more recently "Palamusto, The European Training Network" for the palace museum of the future <https://www.palamusto.eu/>, with Parques de Sintra – Monte da Lua in the latter's consortium.

societies reflected on palaces' spaces, i.e., how men and women lived (apart) and especially women being kept from important decisions –with significant exceptions– can and should be a way to reflect on the relationship between men and women today (in contrast to the historical situation). Also, the question of private versus public life which so much defines our present life type –perhaps now in danger through the use and abuse of social media– stands in sheer contrast to court life from the Middle Ages until the end of the Ancien Regime, when there was no such distinction, at least for the monarchs and higher noble families. One of the greatest challenges of palace-museums today is precisely to make this fact visible to visitors who used to a strict separation of public and private life. The use of water is also a very interesting issue with an extraordinary topicality. If on the one hand, the use of water in the past, especially concerning hygiene, surprises us for its frugality even in the most sophisticated residences, on the other hand, it should make us reflect on how water was rare and precious and therefore its waste was being carefully avoided. But also, how social hierarchy in court is reflected in palaces' spaces, what it meant to feed a whole court, the presence of religion in almost every moment of court life, all these issues are of key importance to understand –often by contrast– our present way of life and mentality.

In the very specific case of the three very different palace-museums managed by PSML, I found in my joint direction another problem: the official designation of these former royal palaces as “National Palace”. The designation is of course completely legitimate and important, as it reveals the state ownership, the 1910 process of shifting from the crown to the Republic, the function change from royal residence to the museum, and the palaces' national relevance. But this equalizing designation of “National Palace”, is only

differentiated by their location's name –Pena, Queluz, and Sintra– stands in the way of a different perception of the buildings' historical functions and consequently of their architectural characteristics. Yet it is important to inform visitors that every palace is very different from one another and the experience of one visit is different from the others. The solution I propose is to add to the “official” name the designation of the building type and function. Going backward in chronology, the 19th-century “Palácio Nacional da Pena” will also be called a “Romantic Castle”, the 18th-century “Palácio Nacional de Queluz” a “Royal Villa in the Periphery of Lisbon” and the medieval “Palácio Nacional de Sintra” the “Royal Palace” as actually the only palace which holds all the functions of a royal residence and center of power. In the following text, I will summarize the museological strategy for the three palace-museums we took in recent years using the table of issues above.

The Romantic Castle of Pena (Fig. 1) was built between 1838 and 1860 on top of Sintra's mountain range as the private residence of Portugal's King-Consort Ferdinand von Sachsen-Coburg und Gotha (1816-1885).⁸ It was designed by the mining engineer Baron Wilhelm von Eschwege (1777-1855) who also designed the surrounding park. It all started with the restoration of a 16th-century monastery, built by King

8 More about Pena: Jorge Muchagato, *O Palácio e Parque da Pena*, 2 vols, Sintra: Parques de Sintra – Monte da Lua, S.A., 2011; Margarida de Magalhães Ramalho, *Os Criadores da Pena. D. Fernando II e a Condessa d'Edla*, Sintra: Parques de Sintra – Monte da Lua, S.A., 2013; Mariana Schedel, *Palácio da Pena. Casa de D. Fernando de Saxe-Coburgo*, Casal de Cambra: Caleidoscópico, 2019; António Nunes Pereira, “Park und Schloss Pena: der Gestaltungsbeginn von Sintras romantischer Kulturlandschaft”, *Zweite Schweriner Welterbetagung, 13-14 Oktober 2016, Tagungsband*, Schwerin, 2017, 201-210; Mariana Schedel and António Nunes Pereira, “D. Fernando II e o Palácio da Pena. Olhar Oitocentista sobre a Época Manuelina e os Exotismos”, *Artis, Revista de História da Arte e Ciências do Património*, 4 (2016), 42-49.

Manuel I (1469-1521). But soon King Ferdinand realized that the monastery was too small to include adequate rooms for his wife, the reigning Queen D. Maria I (1819-1853), and added new wings which completely changed the character of the initial building – just as the new park radically changed the existing landscape. The result was a castle in the fashion of the German movement “Burgromantik” with allusions to Portuguese national History, used as a private holiday dwelling for the royal family. In its small spaces attention was given to emerging issues like privacy, comfort, and even hygiene. The romantic castle of Pena thus reflects the new time of the parliamentary monarchies after the French Revolution, in which the bourgeois separation between public and private life was a reality extending even to royals, Pena belonging to their private sphere. The sum, Pena’s key issues, and the museological strategy are:

National Palace of Pena, the Romantic Castle

Material Issues:

- Architecture – romantic, commemorative of the nation’s history
- Space and Objects – romantic domestic interiors, showing European bourgeois fashion, eclecticism (different styles for different space functions); privacy, comfort, and hygiene; museological authenticity in interior reconstitution

Immaterial, Memory Issues:

- Life habits - living in privacy and comfort, the importance of hygiene
- Historical events – Beginning of Liberalism and Parliamentarism; the nation is the country’s identity (no longer a monarchy or religion)
- People – King-Consort D. Fernando II, of the Saxe-Coburg family, one of the great art collectors

in Portugal of the 19th century; Baron von Eschwege, Queen D. Maria I, the countess of Edla (second wife of Ferdinand, who played a major role in Pena, palace, and park, years after the deaths of D. Maria I and von Eschwege).

Roughly a century before Pena, Queluz in the close periphery of Lisbon (Fig. 2) was in its heyday. Originally a farm of a noble family, the Côrte-Real, marquises of Castelo Rodrigo, it was confiscated after King Philipp IV’s (III of Portugal; 1605-1665) deposition of the Portuguese throne in 1640. The Côrte-Real, being close to King Philipp, were then considered to be traitors and deprived of their properties in Portugal.⁹ In 1654 King João IV (1604-1656) founded the “Casa do Infantado” with the Corte-Real properties including the Côrte-Real farm in Queluz. This crown institution enclosed all the properties, goods, and incomes entailed to kings’ second son, thus being passed over from uncle to nephew. After Lisbon’s great earthquake in 1755 and the definitive loss of the palace of the “Casa do Infantado” in the capital, Queluz capital became its first estate. The house was successively enlarged, particularly for the marriage of the Infante D. Pedro (1717-1186) with her niece (!), the future queen of Portugal D. Maria I (1734-1816). Although Queluz maintained the character of a suburban villa, its house was now greater than the majority of any such estate in the capital’s periphery (yet smaller than the average palace).¹⁰ By the end of the 18th century, the royal family

9 Santiago Martínez Hernandez, “Os marqueses de Castelo Rodrigo e a Nobreza portuguesa na monarquia hispânica”, *Ler História*, 57 (2009), 7-32.

10 More about Queluz: António Caldeira Pires, *História do Palácio Nacional de Queluz*, 2 vols, Coimbra: Imprensa da Universidade, 1925-1926; Natália Correia Guedes, *O Palácio de Queluz*, Lisboa: Livros Horizonte, 1971; Simonetta Luz Afonso and Angela Delaforce, *Palace of Queluz. The Gardens*, Lisboa: Quetzal Editores, 1989; Maria Inês Ferro, *Queluz*.

and the whole court were living in Queluz, waiting for the conclusion of the new palace in the capital, Palácio da Ajuda. Queluz should also undergo an extensive enlargement which would turn it into a great royal palace. But all that came abruptly to an end with the invasion of the Napoleonic army in 1807. The court moved to Rio de Janeiro in Brazil, where it remained until 1821. Although King D. João VI (1767-1826) and the court returned to Queluz after the Brazilian intermezzo, the times of great investment in Queluz were passed. Soon Portugal plunged into conflicts between the defenders of the old absolutist regime and the revolutionaries of liberalism. Queluz remains the absolutism stronghold under the Widowed Queen D. Carlota Joaquina (1775-1830) and her younger son Infante D. Miguel (1802-1866). On the other side of the barricade was his elder brother D. Pedro (1798-1834). D. Pedro had proclaimed the independence of Brazil back in 1822 and became its first emperor, had abdicated to his son D. Pedro II of Brazil, as King D. Pedro IV of Portugal abdicated to his daughter D. Maria II (future wife of Ferdinand of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha, the builder of the Pena estate in Sintra), fought his brother D. Miguel and the absolutists, won the civil war, settled liberalism in Portugal and went to Queluz to die in the very

The Palace and the Gardens, London: Scala, 1997; Ana Duarte Rodrigues and Denise Pereira da Silva, *The Gardens of the National Palace of Queluz*, Lisboa: Palácio Nacional de Queluz, 2011; Ana Duarte Rodrigues, "Glamour e Expertise na Real Quinta de Queluz", *Atas do Ciclo de Conferências do Palácio Nacional de Mafra na Comemoração do Tricentenário do Lançamento da Primeira Pedra da Basílica de Mafra (1717-2017)*, Mafra: Câmara Municipal de Mafra, 2019, 126-139; Maria Inês da Franca Sousa Ferro, *O Pavilhão Robillion do Palácio Nacional de Queluz*, Dissertação apresentada no Curso de Mestrado em Arte, Património e Restauro, Universidade de Lisboa, 2000; Cristina Raquel et al., "Modelling the Water Supply System of the National Palace of Queluz Gardens", *Gardens and Landscapes of Portugal 7* (2021), 44-55; António Nunes Pereira, "Das Schloss von Queluz (Portugal): von einer Aristokratischen Villa zu einem königlichen Schloss", *Burgen und Schlösser*, 4 (2022), 224-234.

same room where "Don Quixote" had born 34 years ago. After that, Queluz was out of fashion, apart for a few years during the 1870s, when Queen-Consort D. Maria Pia (1847-1911) spent some seasons there. After 1939, when the palace was already opened to the public as a palace-museum, the state guests of the Portuguese Republic were accommodated in the Wing D. Maria I. Until 2004 Queluz welcomed many known personalities like Generalissimo Franco from Spain, Queen Elizabeth II of the United Kingdom (twice), Prince Charles and Lady Di, Nicolae Ceaușescu from Romania, several heads of state of the former colonies in Africa (after the revolution of 1974) and many others. Today the Wing D. Maria I is open to the public as the only section of a royal palace to have been used as a residence during the Republic (except for the Palace of Belém, the residence of the President).

National Palace of Queluz, the Royal Villa in the Periphery of Lisbon

Material Issues:

- Architecture – late baroque, turning to (neo-) classical; closeness to gardens typical of the *villegiatura*.
- Space and Objects – representative rooms and apartment organization still according to the "Ancien Regime"; objects are already showing the crescent importance of comfort in private royal apartments. The 20th century adapting of one of the wings as a Residence of the state guests of the Republic.

Immaterial, Memory Issues:

- Living habits – individual apartments only for members of the royal family; court life and entertainment in a villa's informal environment; specially commissioned music, "serenades", for court entertaining in Queluz.

- Historical events – last royal residence to be inhabited before the court left for Brazil in 1807; birth and death place of D. Pedro, King of Portugal / first emperor of Brazil; stronghold of absolutism in Portugal.

People – Queen D. Maria I, Portugal's first queen in her own right, and her husband and builder of Queluz, King-Consort D. Pedro III; their son King D. João VI and his wife D. Carlota Joaquina; his son D. Pedro, first emperor of Brazil; Queen Maria I's sister Princess Maria Francisca Benedita; the architects Manuel da Costa Negreiros, Mateus Vicente de Oliveira, Jean-Baptiste Robillion and Manuel Caetano de Sousa; the artists Pedro Alexandrino and Silvestre de Faria Lobo.

The National Palace of Sintra (Fig. 3) is certainly the only real "royal palace" of all three. It is one of the oldest royal palaces in Europe, of which the beginning of the construction is unknown. It is almost certain that in its place existed an Islamic fortress by 1147, the year of Sintra's Christian Reconquista. Yet it is unknown whether the present palace still holds any built structures of this fortress. The oldest known date is 1281 in a document signed by King D. Dinis (1261-1325).¹¹ The chapel and the highest wing belong to this period of the late 12th century, but other parts have not survived. In this wing, the queens and

the court women were lodged at least during the 16th century. In the early 15th century King D. João I (1357-1433) built the most important royal apartment which includes the "Swans' Room", the "Magpies' Room", the "Golden Chamber", as well as the iconic kitchen with the two 33m high chimneys. One century later King D. Manuel I (1469-1521) commissioned a full new wing with double royal apartments, one on top of the other. He also built the famous but puzzling heraldic space "Room of the Coats of Arms" with the coats of arms of the kingdom's most important families in the inner pyramidal roof beneath the king's and princes' coats of arms. His son King D. João III (1502-1557) united several of the palaces' loose wings which nowadays makes it difficult for visitors to understand the several construction phases apart. During the big earthquake in 1755, some of the main walls collapsed and were later rebuilt. The old palace was restored under the Queens D. Maria I (1734-1816) and D. Maria II (1819-1953) and remained one of the main royal palaces in the region of Lisbon until the fall of the monarchy in 1910. After that year several wings were demolished, as they accommodated court servants and officers who were no longer needed. Visits to the palace-museum after 1911 were confined to the most representative rooms and only the servants' rooms beneath them were spared demolition. Despite great building losses, there still exist the original late medieval spaces to display justice and solve conflicts, collect taxes, as well as for the king to meet with his councilors, where later courts of law took place. Even the great chapel and kitchen with supporting rooms are kept. Other than in Pena or Queluz, we can still recognize the several spaces for the multiple functions of a royal palace beside the residential ones (in Pena these spaces never existed, Pena was built at a time when kings no longer ruled, and in Queluz, the few governing spaces no longer exist).

11 More about the Palace of Sintra: Conde de Sabugosa, *O Paço de Cintra*, Lisboa: Imprensa Nacional, 1903; Francisco Costa, "O Paço Real de Sintra", (first publ. 1979), *Estudos Sintrenses I*, Sintra: Câmara Municipal de Sintra, 2000, 15-100; Luís Filipe da Silva Soares, *Palácio Nacional de Sintra. Circuito Expositivo. Análise da sua evolução*, Dissertação de Mestrado em Museologia, Universidade Nova de Lisboa, 2010; José Custódio Vieira da Silva, *O Palácio Nacional de Sintra*, London: Scala, 2002; José Custódio Vieira da Silva, *Paços Medievais Portugueses*, 2nd edition, Lisboa: IPPAR, 2002; Cláudio E. Cardoso Marques, *Cicerone. Discurso Histórico como Recurso Turístico*, PhD dissertation, Instituto Universitário de Lisboa, 2012.

So to sum up a very extensive table concerning the museological strategy for the National Palace of Sintra, we have:

National Palace of Sintra, the Royal Palace

Material Issues:

- Architecture – late medieval and early modern wings, later additions; royal apartments according to European tradition; Gothic, Manueleine, Renaissance, Baroque, and revival architecture.
- Space and Objects – European court space organization; Islamic influence in the decorative arts; spaces for humanism; water and food supply, government, and justice.

Immaterial, Memory Issues:

- Living habits – kings and queens lived separately but with all their male/female court all day and night around them; the queen lives with their ladies in waiting in a secluded wing; adaptation of medieval spaces to a private apartment during the 19th century; food arrangement and religion in court life.
- Historical events – 13th to early 20th-century court life; 15th /16th-century maritime expansion, first Embassy of Japan in Europe (1582-1590); dynastic conflicts in late 17th century; museological exhibition during the 20th century according to supposed national identity issues.
- People – several kings and queens (D. Dinis and his wife D. Isabel of Aragon, D. João I; D. Manuel I, D. Catarina of Habsburg; D. Afonso VI who was deprived of power and imprisoned in the palace; D. Luís and D. Maria Pia, this queen being the last royal inhabitant), court officers, but also many anonymous like servants and slaves.

I underline that these individual tables for each palace-museum are still an embryo and will develop according to further research. For instance, there are no servants or ambassadors, and only a few artists are referred to in the tables of Queluz and Sintra. Yet the idea is not to stop at the royal historical characters who commissioned the building of the palaces, but also to include those who lived, served, and worked there as part of the whole court. Unfortunately, we still are at a too early research stage to have a more thorough information. Yet this “work in progress” with always new information about people and events, as well as about the material objects, is also a way to keep the palace-museum alive with regular news points of interest and new reasons to visit it again. So, rather to look out at research needs with discomfort, we should see them as an opportunity for an always-renewed palace-museum.

To conclude, the 21st-century palace-museum is a very specific museum type of its own, with an intrinsic never-ending source of themes that can be established using serious, continuous research and put in evidence through cultural mediation. For the palace-museum’s relevance, themes can and should be chosen according to present social questions and today’s concerns. The confrontation between historical situations and contemporary issues is an extremely effective way of reflecting us, putting our life and mentality into perspective, and, maybe, provoking changes.

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1 National Palace of Pena, the Romantic Castle, PSML, Luís Pavão



2 National Palace of Queluz, the Royal Villa in the Periphery of Lisbon, PSML, Wilson Pereira



3 National Palace of Sintra, the Royal Palace, PSML, EMIGUS