



RESEARCH ARTICLE

LUIGI VANVITELLI AND THE CASERTA ROYAL PALACE

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ABSTRACT

The research on the Caserta Royal Palace puts the drawing as a tool of knowledge, through critical inquiry, against some architectural exempla, whose explanatory story is not yet clearly be unraveled, the architectural design and, specifically, the relief of architectural works inherited from the past is a thorough knowledge of the process: a intellectual journey that allows, through the representation of the seized instrument, discretize, measure and capitalize, in the broad sense of its meaning, forget architectures are intended, therefore, to a sad fate of abandonment, decay and disuse.

INTRODUCTION

The research work on the Caserta Royal Palace puts the drawing as a tool of knowledge, shared commitment to the discipline of performance, as proposed as a thematic content can draw, for the first time, architectural artifacts and context vegetation. Through critical inquiry, against some architectural exempla, whose explanatory story is not yet clearly be unraveled, the architectural design and, specifically, the relief of architectural works inherited from the past is a thorough knowledge of the process: a intellectual journey that allows, through the representation of the seized instrument, discretize, measure and capitalize, in the broad sense of its meaning, forget architectures are intended, therefore, to a sad fate of abandonment, decay and disuse. The English Garden of the Royal Palace is a "case architectural" striking, if re-read through an investigative perspective able to describe, through the redesign of the original design and the configuration of the relief, its enormous potential in terms of testimony past, of meaning in the present and for the future use or as a metaphor for knowledge, permanence and programming.

Luigi Vanvitelli and his architecture

As you know, the original project was conceived by Luigi Vanvitelli was born 12 May 1700 in Naples, where his father, Gaspar Van Wittel, had been called by the viceroy Luigi

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Francesco de la Cerda, Duke of Medinaceli, to decorate the Palace environments real. And in honor of the viceroy he was given the name of Luigi. Raised in Rome under the guidance of his maternal grandfather, Andrea Lorenzani - artist too - and his father, who sometimes passed his sketchbook encouraging them to continue, Luigi was brought up to the taste of classicism with the direct observation of the many great ancient and modern monuments of the eternal city. In collaboration with his father prepared the designs for the Vineyard, that is for the house built in the vineyard had inherited from Lorenzani. In 1715, Filippo Juvarra, to Rome to design a new sacristy to the Vatican Basilica, he was able to examine the designs of Louis and, as told Lyon Pascoli, "...praised them to him a lot, and showed the surprise, which was operating at a young age by experienced. Louis became a close associate of his father. She accompanied him on business trips, assisting him in the study, helped him to draw and to paint. He learned that airy pictorial sense which never dissociated from its architectural compositions. After his first steps as a designer and as pittore5, in 1726 he became assistant architect G. Antonio Valerio to St. Peter and was gaining increasing prestige in the cultural Roman. The first assignment of some importance is the restoration of the Palazzo Albani in Urbino, he received in 1728. Vanvitelli he placed a superb fountain, dedicated the following year to Benedict XIII. In the church of St. Francis, always in Urbino, he inserted the Chapel Albani, using an early Christian sarcophagus with a bas-relief of the Good Shepherd. Good evidence offered on this occasion earned him the architect appointed to the Reverend Apostolic Chamber and the job of creating the aqueduct of Vermicino,

which he completed in 1731. From the marriage with Olimpia Starich, daughter of an accountant of S. Factory Peter, born Carlo in 1739; Pietro in '41; Gaspare in '43; Thomas in '44; Francesco in '45; Anna Maria in '47; Maria Cecilia in '48; Maria Palmira in '50. Of the sons, Charles followed his father's footsteps and replaced it in the direction of the works in Caserta; Peter and Francis went with Charles of Bourbon in Spain, as a military architects; Gaspare became magistrate and lived in Naples. While working in Ancona, in 1739 Luigi Vanvitelli was called to Perugia to build the church and convent of the Olivetan. The project, of which there are some drawings in Caserta, it was later realized by Moray in 1762. The restoration of the Romanesque cathedral of Foligno is the last work in Umbria. Still in Siena, however, it documents the activities for the project of the St. Augustine Church. The many commitments in the Marches, Umbria and Tuscany, however, prevented him not to treat his interests in Rome, where he kept the office of the architect of St. Peter's. After the aqueduct of Vermicino, the most important work of which he was in charge was, in 1741, the restoration of the Jesuit Villa Tuscolana in Frascati, also called "Rufinella" from the name of Rufino Cardinal who had owned. Two years later in Civitavecchia he erected the fountain of the port. One of the most challenging problems we had to deal with since 1742 was the static of Michelangelo's dome of St. Peter, who from completion, it can be said, has always given strong concerns. Did some surveys and a careful study, Luigi Vanvitelli presented, September 20, 1742, a report in which he denounced the severity of the damage and proposed the hoop iron dome. In 1748 he was entrusted with the restoration of Michelangelo's another church S. Maria degli Angeli, built on the ruins of the Diocletian Baths.

Despite all efforts, even this work was harshly criticized mainly by the Bottari, unyielding opponent of Vanvitelli and proponent of the Fugue, his countryman. We arrived, meanwhile, to January 1751, when he received the invitation of Charles of Bourbon to plan the Royal Palace of Caserta¹². At that moment Luigi Vanvitelli was in Loreto. Charles of Bourbon, son of Philip V of Spain and Elisabetta Farnese, became Duke of Parma and Piacenza in October 1732. During his stay in Emilia, lasted until January 1734, the young Duke had especially appreciate the places maternal ancestors, living mainly in the suburban residences of Colorno and Sala Baganza, where he loved to devote himself to his passion, hunting. Parma [the young Charles] wrote to parents who Colorno was much nicer. Colorno, as subsequently Caserta, appears to be the product of the union of Italian and French elements that made it, at the time, one of the most famous buildings in Italy, considered, also, as another little Versailles. It 'possible that the attendance of that environment has influenced the design of their homes by the future king of Naples. In this regard it seems interesting to note that one of the most characteristic elements of the Royal Palace, the entrance vestibule, has some elements in common with the atrium entrance to the Garden of the Ducal Palace of Colorno, depicted in an engraving of 1726. the picture is in fact represented the center of which opens an avenue leading into the garden, while the sides will notice the staircase, double ramp leading to the upper floor. E 'therefore possible that the sovereign has described to Vanvitelli some memories of an environment that both remained in the heart, with the following features: octagonal shape; opening onto the garden; ramp of the staircase; they were subsequently reflected in the realization of the work Caserta.



Fig. 1. The Caserta Royal Palace

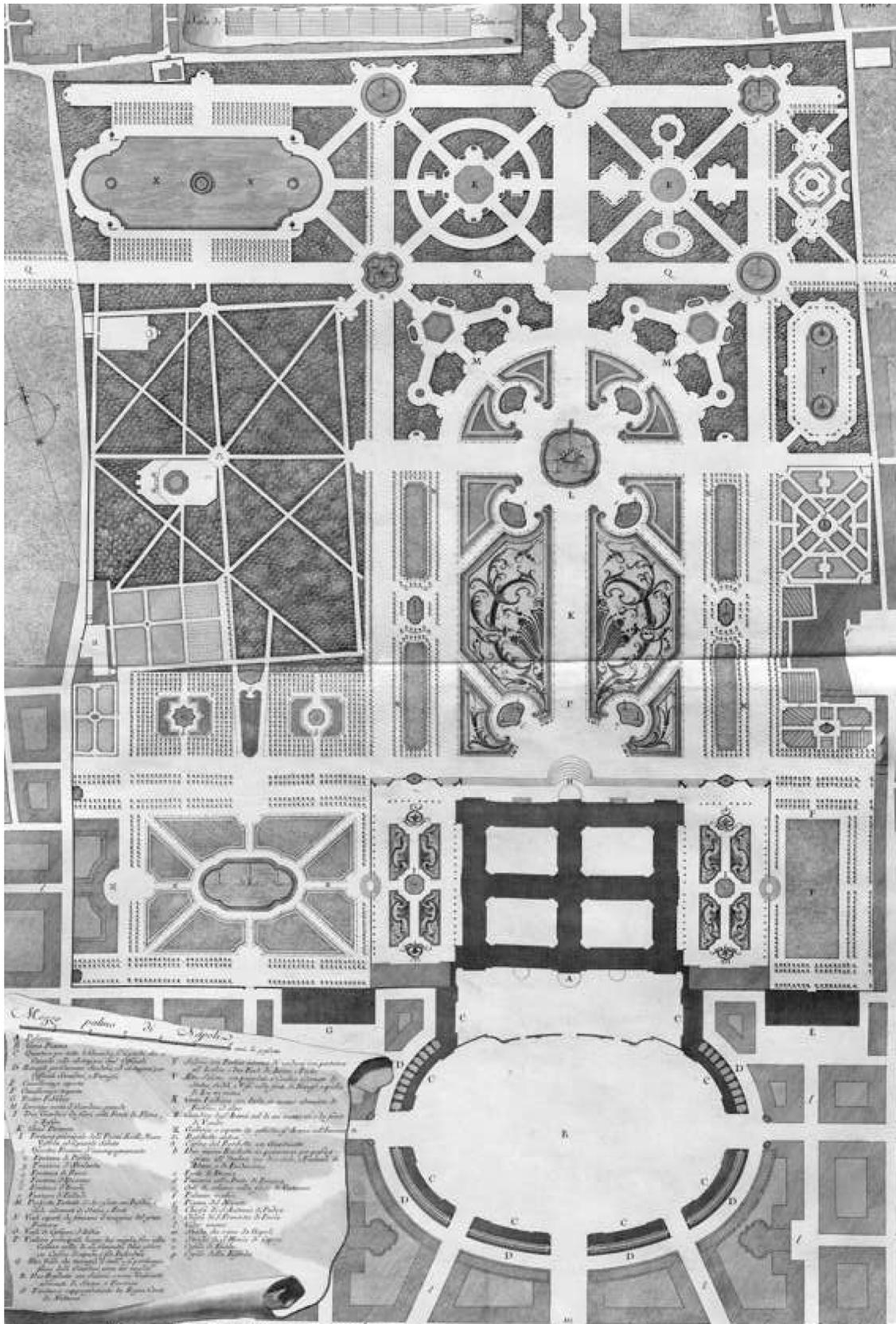


Fig. 2. The Caserta Royal Palace

The English Garden of the Caserta Royal Palace

Caserta had then, from the beginning, the vocation, the aspiration and destiny, to become the corresponding Italian Versailles. Reached quickly Naples, after a quick survey in Caserta, Vanvitelli, a first idea to the king, receiving the approval. He then returned to Rome where it was still committed to St. Augustine and had to complete the

arrangement of Anzio and Fiumicino ports. Also he had several works in progress in the Marches, Umbria and Tuscany. However in May he was back in Naples and 22 showed up to the Kings to the final designs of the project for Caserta. The enthusiasm of the sovereign was enormous, as he himself wrote to his brother Urbano. The queen never tired of watching, to ask, to observe; finally he said to have done “a design for the city of Caserta and the roads”. The King wanted

it to be an exhibition of the project, November 22, and ordered him to be released from the royal printing to be widespread among the courts of Europe to show the grandeur, magnificence, and thus the power of the sovereign of Naples. The speed with which it had been prepared the project was accompanied by the will of the monarchs to pass without delay the work. In late November Vanvitelli took up residence in the Palace in Caserta of Intendant, cav. Lorenzo Maria Neroni, in Boschetto. In little more than a month, the large building site was ready for the laying of the foundation stone. Was chosen the date of 20 January, the day birthday of the King. Vanvitelli turned friend Porzio Lionardi to Rome for help in composing a Latin couplet as to affect the first stone.

features of Royal Delights. In the wake of the ancient Roman aqueduct Water Giulia, Vanvitelli went Valle Caudina where he found the Fizzo sources at Bucciano, at the foot of Taburno. Caserta became a huge building site worked there about three thousand people. The closest collaborators were the architects Luigi Vanvitelli Marcello Fonton, Francesco Sabatini, Francesco Collecini, which he added his own son Charles. As well as masons, blacksmiths, masons, carpenters, laborers and other workers, there were many slaves, generally Turks captured in raids along the coasts. A mixture of languages, colors, costumes, where visitors have the time left very interesting testimony. To help men there were oxen, horses, even a few camels.

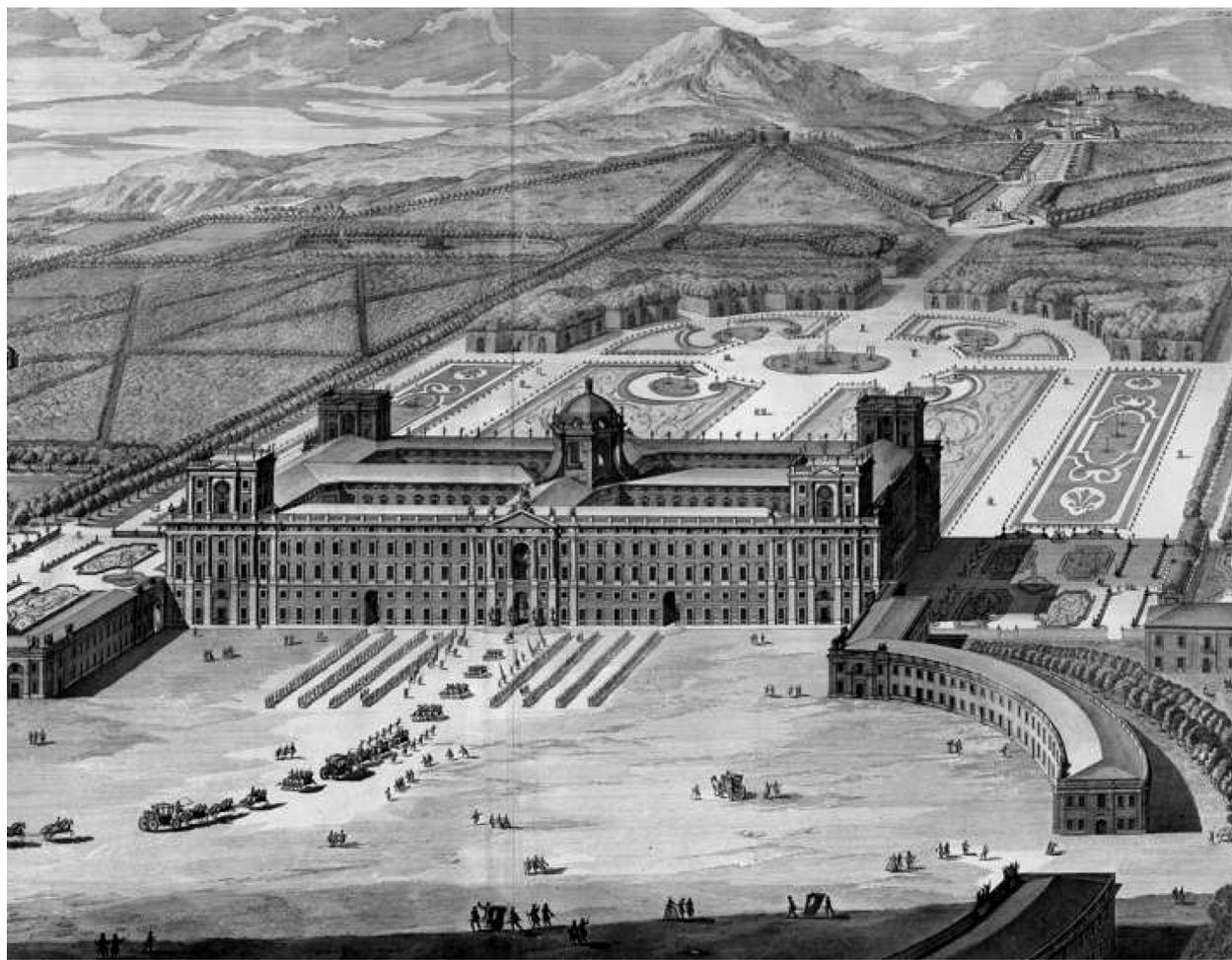


Fig. 3. The Caserta Royal Palace

Here are the verses that wish perpetuity to the palace and the Bourbon race: STET DOMUS, SOLIUM ET, ET SOBOLES Bourbon Donec superos OWN AD VI LAPIS HIC REDEAT. In the stone cord the king deposited some gold coins specially minted. A regiment of infantry and one of cavalry described the perimeter of the building. Gennaro Maldarelli revives the scene in the fresco on the ceiling of the Throne Room, painted in 1844, in which we see the sovereign down from the royal box with high canopy, on a red carpet, accompanied by the court and by the Vanvitelli. The atmosphere of solemnity and magnificence is underlined by the gaudy uniforms of the gentlemen and the ladies loose clothing damask. Beyond the perimeter of the building, outlined by regiments of infantry and cavalry, the forest and the hills Tifatini frame the scene. On the right side of the Belvedere of San Leucio, and, higher up, the medieval town of Caserta, the first origin of the nascent city. A few days later they began to search for sources of water

Vanvitelli had to provide everything: from the drawings, calculations, the leveling, the excavations, the choice of building material, the park, the statues, the artists hired to decorate the rooms (apartments, theater, chapel), the aqueduct that, from the name of the sovereign, he was called Carolino. And along with these things he had to deal with a huge amount of restoration projects, construction of the different species, scattered throughout the Kingdom. Meanwhile already beginning to court the first conflicts and obstructions: one day is forced to address a petition to Tanucci to get the charcoal to the brazier to heat its office Caserta; Charcoal already distributed to other offices. The nobles vied to ask him a project, a restoration or simply a design for their palaces. At Caserta he was commissioned to restore the palace Acquaviva (also called Palazzo Vecchio, just to distinguish it from the new under construction), expand the steward's house in order to create the apartments of princes, to build the palace for the

marquis of Squillace and Vaccheria of Aldifreda (today's police Academy). In the minds of Vanvitelli every problem is always a dual solution: practical and artistic.

His rule was always "the profit union and the beautiful." The Carolino aqueduct can be cited as a typical example: after having given birth to the waterfalls and the fountains of the



Fig. 4. The Caserta Royal Palace



Fig. 5. The Caserta Royal Palace

park, the water would be channeled to Naples for the city's needs. From the main door of the Palace to a vestibule that passes through it from end to end, monumental, grand, decorated with 60 Ionic columns, you enter the park, which can be seen up to its extreme limit, where the waterfall that flows from Mount Briano, it distributes its clear waters for a vast expanse of woods and gardens, creating fountains, ponds, streams, waterfalls from the infinite games, Between a festival of lights stand out, spread, the magnificent white marble statues herms and in which the statuesque sings his immortal glory.

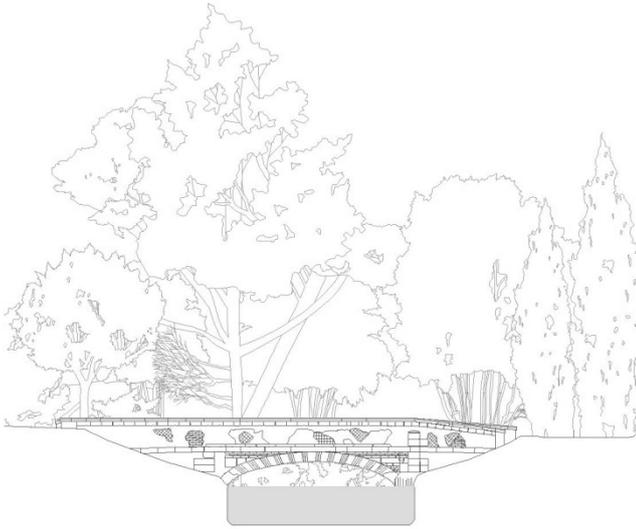


Fig. 6. The Caserta Royal Palace. The survey of the English Garden

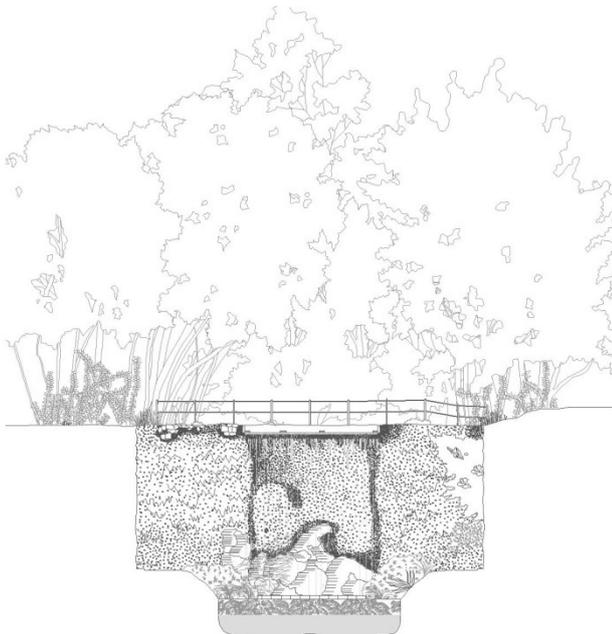


Fig. 7. The Caserta Royal Palace. The survey of the English Garden

It is now the instinct to run, to pass the green carpet preceding the woods and fountains, with the anxiety of aims to achieve a goal; but as soon as you walk along the central avenue, this connection gives way to the need of observation of detail and striking for their originality, huge balls of laurel that arise, like so many islands, in the meadows. They are large bushes where grew the wild game or brooded hid the houses of the keepers

and hunters; since it is known that the Bourbons were one great dynasty of Nimrod. Here the eye is still imprisoned by the green walls that line the forest paths and unknowingly gaze rises to wander freely on the last slopes of the Apennines, which limit the park. After a circular pool that bisects the great avenue to make room in the center of the couloir, here is the dolphin fountain, then that of Aeolus, and further up, that of Ceres, the goddess bearing aloft the tripod jellyfish, symbol Trinacria, surrounded by nymphs intended to recall the Anapo and Arethusa the classic rivers of that kingdom which lay beyond the lighthouse. And after Ceres, here is the fountain where Venus recommended Adonis to hunt wild boar and more on the fifth and final waterfall, one that forms them all. And here that the water comes from the mountain, and descends slowly to a flight of steps to form a small lake in which spring from the waters the two most attractive groups for the subject, the multiplicity of statues and for their exquisite workmanship. On the one hand we sell nymphs startled intent on defending and consular Diana who is at the center, the other Actaeon transformed into a stag in place to escape the dogs attack him, just punishment of the goddess against he wanted to surprise her in the bathroom. We are the extreme limit of the Park and the staircase ramps, balustrades, all populated herms make us relive a dream eighteenth century when, with the crinoline and with a white tube, the Court of Naples wore fashionable in France, in homage to Marie Antoinette, the sister of the Queen of Naples. But give them their praise as well, since it is due to this snobbery transalpine the creation of the English garden that occupies twenty hectares of the park, constituting one of the most admired parts.

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