A Variation on the 'Villa' at the Bohemian Periphery: The Case of the Rožmberk (Rosenberg) Residence of Kratochvíle

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'There are meanings hidden behind the veil of stories.' (Giorgio Vasari, *Ragionamenti*)

In August 1582, Vilém of Rožmberk (1535–1592), the ruler of the Rožmberk family and the highest burgrave, met with his well-travelled brother Petr Vok (1539–1611) in Vilém's recently-acquired fortified manor house near Netolice in South Bohemia. Vilém, the most important representative of the Bohemian estates, intended to build a new residence there, later to be called Kratochvíle. The purpose of this meeting was to discuss how to *'erect a glorious building here'*.[1] The expression 'glorious' in the sense of 'outstanding' or 'famous' shows that from the very beginning, Vilém of Rožmberk meant his residence to be something exceptional that would attract the desired attention. The goal of this text is to introduce the Kratochvíle complex, the occasional and recreational residence begun at the end of the sixteenth century by Vilém of Rožmberk and later completed by his brother Petr, the last two members of the family line. The residence is well preserved, including its rich decoration, and provides a wealth of material for interpretation. What did Kratochvíle mean to its owners? How is it related to other, similar buildings of the period? Kratochvíle is quite unique among these buildings, as it is at once a pleasure house (*Lustgebäude*), a hunting lodge (*casino del caccia*), an occasional residence, and a villa.

Kratochvíle's uniqueness lies not only in its appearance and adornment but also in its origins and how it came to take on this particular form. The residence is also important because even though it was built on what seems like the periphery (South Bohemia), its purpose, type and decoration all together form a *Gesamtkunstwerk* unique in Bohemia. Instead, it calls for comparisons with the Italian villas of late Renaissance, built not long before Kratochvíle, which also approach them in terms of typology, quality and structure. Kratochvíle attracts attention as a bearer of meaning(s) and we can read its unique decorative program as a key to understanding those meanings. Despite some limitations to this reading, it can still reveal the various social functions of Kratochvíle. Kratochvíle's content is representative of a trend in transalpine regions to imitate both the forms and the lifestyle of the Italian Renaissance. As a micro-problem, the residence allows us to observe the phenomenon of reception of the villa architecture in Renaissance Europe north of the Alps.

Kratochvíle's architecture raises a methodological question of how to interpret such a building. Every interpretation is a construction of the artwork's meaning, strongly dependant on the individual historian's approach. Kratochvíle can be perceived as 1) a form, or 2) a concept/message (based on our use of the iconographic-iconological method), or 3) a medium of its own utilitarian and social functions. All of these points of view present Kratochvíle as a slightly different object: 1) an idiosyncratic late-Renaissance building, 2) a residence with unique decoration, or 3) a social or cultural symptom of aristocratic dwelling in the countryside. For historians or art historians, these are points of departure for different directions the research can take: the villa as an example of central European Renaissance architecture; the villa/residence's architectural typology; the changing concept of the Italian villa in transalpine Europe as a response to different building needs; the residence as a functional organism both within the network of other Rožmberk residences and independent of them; the spatial divisions of gender within Kratochvíle as a nuptial residence (the iconographic program can be analyzed from this perspective and its different levels of meaning highlighted); or Kratochvíle as a manifestation of aristocratic

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1   Jaroslav Pánek (ed.), Václav Březan: *Životy posledních Rožmberků*, Prague 1985, p. 465.

lifestyle, social self-representation, cultural politics and reception, family history, aristocratic marriage, etc. In any case, Kratochvíle represents a complex phenomenon, and research on this monument should not be limited to any one of these aspects. In both the past and present we are confronted with the image of an ideal villa that creates a sophisticated cultural landscape around itself, revealing the personal, social, and political ambitions of its owner.[2]

Building History

An earlier residence, a small fortified manor called Leptáč near Netolice, originally stood on the site of Kratochvíle. Jakub Krčín of Jelčany, the Rožmberk administrator, had it built some time before 1569.[3] In early 1580, Vilém of Rožmberk acquired the manor from Krčín in exchange for the town of Sedlčany. The value of this exchange suggests the exceptional nature of the place. The Rožmberk ruler did not hide his reasons for this acquisition; it was meant to provide a '*divertissement*' for him, which was reflected in the new name of the residence.[4] Vilém soon began building hunting reserves and in the summer of 1581 he stayed in the manor with his third wife, Anna Marie of Baden. However, the manor was inadequate in both size and splendour for Vilém's needs, and so he decided to construct a new building near the old one in 1582.[5] The project was designed in 1583 by Baldassar Maggi, a builder from Arogno in the Swiss-Italian region of Ticino and the principle architect for the Rožmberk family.[6] In 1585, a chapel was erected on the south-east corner of the property and consecrated in July 1589. By that time the new building had been completed and painters and stucco artists were working on its decoration. The death of Vilém's wife, Anna Marie, in April 1583 may explain the slow pace or break in the construction work. Vilém's new marriage with Polyxena of Pernštejn in 1587 probably stimulated the completion and decoration of the residence. After Vilém's death in 1592, work continued on completing and decorating the residence at Kratochvíle, now under the patronage of Vilém's brother, Petr Vok.[7] The Rožmberk era at Kratochvíle ended in 1602, when the emperor Rudolph II purchased part of the Rožmberks' property, including the whole Kratochvíle estate.

That under the Rožmberks Kratochvíle enjoyed the admiration of its contemporaries is apparent from the *vedute* Rudolph II had made to document the residence's appearance. At the beginning of the seventeenth century, historian Pavel Stránský praised Kratochvíle's architecture, describing it as a 'charming summer house with large orchards' tastefully complemented by the 'exquisite artful garden'.[8] In his *Miscellanea Historica Regni Bohemiae,* Jesuit historian Bohuslav Balbín compared Kratochvíle to the gardens of Rudolph II. He wrote admiringly of 'the majestic hunting château of Kratochvíle… where they built a delightful quadrangular château…with a beautiful courtyard and exquisitely decorated menagerie. He [Vilém of Rožmberk] boasted that he would add a garden to it with which he would surpass the emperor Rudolph II himself'.[9] These descriptions demonstrate that in the seventeenth century visitors of Kratochvíle were impressed by its complexity and sensual effect.

Social Life and the Functions of the Hunting Villa

The name itself, Kratochvíle (literally Pastime in English), provides one of the keys to understanding this Rožmberk residence. The name appeared in reference to hunting when Kratochvíle was first planned. It reflects the recreational function we naturally connect with this kind of architecture. In Central Europe, similar toponymy is first documented after 1450 in hunting villas and manors of Sigismund of Austria near Innsbruck (e.g. Sigmundslust). As in the case of Kratochvíle, such names express the character of aristocratic country refuges as places of pleasure.[10]

2   Claudia Lazzaro, The Sixteenth-Century Central Italian Villa and the Cultural Landscape, in: Jean Guillaume (ed.), *Architecture, jardin, paysage. L´environnement du château et de la villa aux XVe et XVIe siècles*, Paris 1999, pp. 29–30.

3   Pánek – Březan (see note 1), pp. 294, 446. Comprehensively in Ondřej Jakubec, Defining the Rožmberk Residence of Kratochvíle: the Problem of its Architectural Character, *Opuscula historiae artium*, 61, 2012, no. 2, pp. 98–119.

4   Pánek – Březan (see note 1), pp. 294, 465.

5   Theodor Antl, *Dějiny města Netolic*, Netolice 1903, p. 114.

6   Jarmila Krčálová, *Renesanční stavby B. Maggiho v Čechách a na Moravě*, Prague 1986, p. 31.

7   Ibid., p. 32

8   Ibid., p. 38

9   Helena Businská – Zdeňka Tichá (edd.), Bohuslav Balbín: *Krásy a bohatství české země. Výbor z díla Rozmanitosti z historie Království českého*, Prague 1986, pp. 138–139, 228.

10   Wolfgang Lippmann, Dal castello di caccia al Lusthaus cinquecentesco. La Maison des Champs nell´ambiente austro-germanico, in: Monique Chatenet (ed.), *Maisons des champs dans l'Europe de la Renaissance*, Paris 2006, pp. 302–305. See also Lippmann's text in this collection.

Around 1600 the new residence in the Netolice hunting reserve was commonly called '*Kratochvíl palace*'.[11] The expression, '*rytířské kratochvíle*' ('*ritterlicher khurtzweil*' or knightly divertissements), refers to various forms of collective aristocratic entertainment after the mid-sixteenth century.[12] For the Rožmberks *kratochvíle* mainly indicated hunting, which is reflected in the iconography of the villa's decoration.[13] Unlike some of the other aristocratic hunting lodges, Kratochvíle was not a piece of temporary architecture; it was a permanent structure that provided a luxurious environment for an informal lifestyle and a backdrop for aristocratic self-representation. Festivities were orchestrated in several phases, beginning in the hunting reserve and then proceeding to the residence. This spatial and chronological arrangement allowed the festivities to spread out or separate into more intimate spaces in the individual halls or private apartments.[14]

In the aristocratic environment, hunting was not only a form of entertainment, but also a kind of art, practiced as recreation, exercise, and preparation for war. These skills, supported by the nobility's exclusive privilege to hunt, manifestly confirmed the aristocrat's place in feudal society.[15] Despite the medieval criticism of hunting, theoretical treatises were written from the twelfth century emphasizing the symbolic interpretation of aristocratic hunts, a trend that naturally continued into the Early Modern era.[16] Hunting entertainments created occasions for staging the ruler, that is, confirming the legitimacy of his authority and expressing it symbolically through his power over the hunted animals.[17] In hunting lodges, actual hunts were complemented by their symbolic representations as is evident in Kratochvíle's decoration. The painted menageries in Kratochvíle are reminiscent of Italian villa gardens, especially the Medici garden in Castello or garden of Palazzo Pitti in Florence, where the well known grottos with groups of animals were created after the mid-sixteenth century. On the one hand, these menageries embody the contrast between uncontrollable, wild nature and civilization/culture. On the other hand, by appropriating and dominating the animals the ruler demonstrated his authority and grandeur.[18]

Kratochvíle's function reflected its peripheral location. The residence combined seclusion with relatively good accessibility (it stood within one day's travel from the main Rožmberk towns). Judging from the preserved bills,[19] periods of residence in Kratochvíle were perceived as extraordinary and festive. The villa could accommodate lengthy stays of a large number of guests with their entourages and horses. In 1598-1599, Petr Vok stayed in Kratochvíle for an exceptional period of ten months due to the plague epidemic in Český Krumlov. During this period Kratochvíle hosted the whole Rožmberk court, which consisted of approximately 200 persons.[20] The villa also provided an environment for important social meetings.[21] In 1588, Archduke Ferdinand of Tyrol and his wife Anna Gonzaga visited Kratochvíle, and in 1595, the pope's nuncio Antonio Puteo consecrated the villa's chapel. Important representatives of Bohemian estates were frequent visitors of the Rožmberks at Kratochvíle. The array of aristocratic guests fully corresponds with the social and self-representation potential of the residence, which is also reflected in its architectural and artistic character.

Architecture and the Decoration of the Villa

The Kratochvíle compound with the original fenced-in deer park in the vicinity is oriented approximately along the north-south axis. [Fig. 1] A rectangular wall with buildings incorporated into it delineates the original, symmetrical ground plan; the villa itself stands approximately in the centre. [Fig. 2] Visitors enter the premises through a one-storey wing with a carriage-way tower which had both a residential and operational function.

11 Pánek – Březan (see note 1), pp. 542, 544–545, 551.
12 Václav Bůžek, „Rytířské kratochvíle" na místodržitelském dvoře arciknížete Ferdinanda, in: Tomáš Borovský – Libor Jan – Martin Wihoda (eds.), *Ad vitam et honorem. Profesoru Jaroslavu Mezníkovi přátelé a žáci k pětasedmdesátým narozeninám*, Brno 2003, pp. 613–622.
13 Pánek – Březan (see note 1), pp. 181–182.
14 Ibid., p. 314, 316, 332, 469–470.
15 Václav Bůžek, *Ferdinand Tyrolský mezi Prahou a Innsbruckem. Šlechta z českých zemí na cestě ke dvorům prvních Habsburků*, České Budějovice 2006, pp. 195–196.
16 Burkhardt Krause, *Die Jagd als Lebensform und höfisches „spil"*, Stuttgart 1996, pp. 38, 53, 59, 90–98. – Hervé Brunon, La chasse et l´organisation du paysage dans la Toscane des Médicis, in: Claude d´Anthenaise – Monique Chatenet (eds.), *Chasses princières dans l´Europe de la Renaissance,* Paris 2007, s. 219–247, esp. p. 219. – Jeremy Kruse, Hunting, magnificence and the court of Leo X, *Renaissance Studies* 7, 1993, p. 256.
17 Uta Deppe, *Die Festkultur am Dresdner Hofe Johann Georgs II. Von Sachsen (1660–1679)*, Kiel 2006, pp. 19, 33, 59–50.
18 Claudia Lazzaro, Animals as Cultural Signs: A Medici Menagerie in the Grotto at Castello in: Claire Farago (ed.), *Reframing the Renaissance. Visual Culture in Europe and Latin America 1450–1650*, New Haven – London 1995, pp. 197–227.
19 Jiří Kubeš, Zásobování sídel Petra Voka z Rožmberka potravinami (1592–1602), *Jihočeský sborník historický* 68, 1999, pp. 255–289.
20 Pánek – Březan (see note 1), pp. 541, 546.
21 Ibid., pp. 316, 326, 469.

One of the corners of the entrance wing contains a chapel, to which a tower was later added. There are four simple residential pavilions, two of which are incorporated into corners of the wall and two into the centre of the opposing side walls. (Another two pavilions, which were built later, disrupt the original symmetry of the compound.) Inside the wall the moat follows the rectangular enclosure, isolating the central residential building on an island which can only be accessed by a bridge. [Figs. 3, 4, 5] The central palace, a simple rectangular two-storey building, intersects the axis of the complex. It is built on a three-part ground plan with the layouts of both floors almost identical – it is a symmetrical arrangement with two central halls of the same size on both floors. The Kratochvíle interiors give the impression of an unusual grandeur because of the wide span of the vaults.

Kratochvíle contained three apartments with one on the ground floor and two separate apartments on the second floor. Of the second-floor apartments the smaller belonged to Vilém and the larger to his wife Polyxena, and both consisted of an ante-chamber and a bedroom. Even though these apartments are connected to the large halls, they provided a private space for their owners. The whole structure of Kratochvíle has a clear hierarchy, the multi-layered confines defined by several boundaries with the central building turned into an isolated island. Like other aristocratic residences, Kratochvíle is based on the principle of select accessibility, where spaces were either open or off-limits for visitors depending on their social status.

The villa compound was designed to surprise visitors through its elusive layout which was revealed gradually as guests moved through the premises. The effect of surprise was employed in the interior as well, where the sophisticated adornment began with the frescoes on the ground floor and reached its peak with the white gilded stucco on the second floor. Following a similar principle, the inconspicuous exterior of the chapel contrasts with the unusually rich decoration of its interior. In 1590, Georg Widman, a painter from Brunswick, decorated the rooms on both floors of the main residential building. On the ground floor, he adorned the entrance hall with various hunting scenes inspired by woodcuts by the German engraver Jost Amman (*Figuren von Iag und Weidtwerck*, 1582).[22] [Fig. 6] Other hunting scenes and landscapes were likely painted in lower sections of the walls in the entrance hall; however, only fragments of these frescoes have been preserved. The nature and hunting theme of the murals is further enhanced by separately painted animals – also modeled after Jost Amman's woodcuts (*Ein neuw Thierbuch*, 1569) – such as a fallow deer (reindeer), wolf and duck, monkey (baboon), leopard, lion, gryphon, monkey (vervet), bear, and two camels. Similar hunting-animal iconography is featured on the walls of the adjoining guard hall. Here, too, the lunette vaults are decorated with figures of armed hunters and various animals: a lion, rhinoceros, elephant, deer, lioness, fox, wolf, unicorn, mountain goat, monkey, wild boar and Alpine ibex, all inspired by Amman's 1569 prints.[23] Remarkably, this diverse menagerie comprises both local and exotic animals, as well as mythical creatures. There are several possible reasons for the choice of such diverse animal motifs. One of them may be an attempt to provide the visitor with an intensive visual experience of the colourful variety of the animal realm. To a certain degree this may have also reflected the contemporary practice of keeping animals in zoological gardens which often surrounded similar residences (exotic animals, such as buffalo and camel, were kept in Kratochvíle as well). It is also possible that, inspired by the Italian Renaissance villas, the frescoes were meant to evoke Eden or Arcadia.[24]

Aside from hunting and animal themes, both ground-floor halls contain another iconographic layer of mythological poetic scenes or *favola*[25] which are also related to the natural world. A large space in the guard hall is dedicated to the three pastoral deities, Autumnus, Cyparissus, and Vertumnus, which are modeled on the prints by Cornelis Cort. In the entrance hall, the hunting scenes are complemented with stories from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* set in small fields in vaults above the windows and the door. From the originally larger set of painted scenes, the following scenes, modeled after prints by Hendrik Goltzius, have been preserved: Jupiter courting Io; Pan and Syrinx; the birth of Adonis; Apollo and Daphne; the Silver Age; and Apollo killing Python.

Compared to the ground floor, the decoration of the second floor offers an entirely different world, artistically and thematically. Aside from the occasional mythological figures of antique deities in Vilém's *studiolo* the whole floor is dominated by '*antiquitetischen Historien*', the frescoes mentioned in Georg Widman's design

22   Gero Seelig – Giulia Bartrum – Marjolein Leesberg, *The New Hollstein German Engravings, Etchings and Woodcuts 1400–1700. Jost Amman: Book Illustrations VII*, Rotterdam 2003, pp. 225–228.
23   Ibid., pp. 128–137.
24   Bůžek – Jakubec (see note 3), pp. 93–95.
25   Michael Thimann, *Lügehafte Bilder. Ovids favole und das Historienbild in der italienischen Renaissance*, Göttingen 2002.

of the decoration from 1589. Vilém's office features mainly Old-Testament and ancient Greek and Roman scenes. The central scene of Samson with Delilah as she orders his hair cut accentuates the motif of woman's victory over man. The moralizing concept of *Weibermacht* underlies the whole painted cycle of strong women winning over men; this has been partly preserved in the lunettes: Solomon, Heliogabalus and Sardanapalus. All of these scenes are modeled after prints by Raphael Sadeler.[26]

Stuccoes dominate the decoration on the villa's second floor. They were made some time before 1589 by Antonio from Melano (Antonio Melana/Melani/da Melano), an artist from a town near Arogno in northern Italy and the hometown of Kratochvíle's architect Baldassare Maggi. The choice of both the technique (carried out in the *all´antica* style of white stuccoes with gold decoration) and the classical iconography is remarkable. With the exception of the imperial Hvězda (Star Summer Palace) near Prague, no other architectural work in Bohemia employs with comparable complexity what was at that time a very modern and exclusive decorative motif, although the quality of Kratochvíle's stuccoes cannot equal that of Hvězda's decoration. The richest and most numerous set of stuccoes adorns the vault above the Golden Hall, Kratochvíle's central banquet hall. [Fig. 7] Other stuccoes are found in the ante-chamber and the bedroom that belonged to Vilém's wife, Polyxena of Rožmberk and Pernštejn. The luxurious decoration of the Golden Hall clearly signifies its festive function. The decoration begins with female personifications in the extensions of the vault, depicting Fama, Bounty, Love, and Temperance. The large, central vault is filled with scenes from ancient-Roman history inspired by Livy's *Ab urbe condita* which also supplied the themes featured in Polyxena's apartment. There are altogether twenty-five scenes, all derived from woodcuts by Jost Amman who illustrated numerous Latin and German editions of Livy.[27] Such complex employment of Livian scenes executed in the technique of 'Roman' stucco is exceptional even in the wider European context.[28] The Golden Hall features the following scenes in order: Romulus and Remus nursed by the wolf; Senator Popillius Laenas drawing a circle around King Antiochus Epiphanes; Romulus killing the king of Caenina; Cloelia and her companions fleeing from the Etrurian camp; Etrurian soldiers threatening escaping Roman women; Lucius Cincinnatus summoned to the senate; Veturia and Volumnia begging Martius Coriolanus to spare Rome; the assassination of the Syracusian King Hierus II; Horatius Cocles; King Servius Tullius; two scenes with Queen Sophonisba; the assassination of Tarquinius Priscus; Tullia in a carriage running over the body of her father; the battle of Horatii and Curiatii; and Marcus Valerius Corvinus and Titus Manlius fighting the Gauls. The whole set of Livian scenes is concentrated around the composition in the central panel of the vault which shows the Rožmberk rider, the traditional emblematic figure referring to Vilém of Rožmberk himself, as is apparent from the coats of arms of his four wives. These coats of arms are complemented with the personifications of four cardinal virtues, Justice, Courage, Wisdom and Temperance, referring to Vilém's ideal characteristics.

In Polyxena's apartment these ancient-Roman scenes continue in the ante-chamber with depictions of Romulus killing Remus and the enthroned Numa Pompilius, as well as two scenes from the life of the last Roman King Tarquinius Superbus, depicted here with the messenger from Gabii. Two medallions feature prototypes of heroic Romans, Mucius Scaevola and Marcus Curtius. The vault in the ante-chamber is also adorned with a series of female personifications of the seven virtues: three theological virtues in the axis of the vault, Faith, Hope, and Love, and four cardinal virtues in the lunettes. Polyxena's bedroom offers another interesting set of murals depicting two scenes from Livy, the Roman general Scipio before the Iberian chieftain Allucius, and his fiancée and Lucretia committing suicide.[29] The vaults also feature female personifications of the four seasons, medallions with cupids in the top of the vault, and a series of water birds.

These scenes from Roman history can be interpreted as a cycle of both moral models (*exempli virtutis*) and warnings against the human vices.[30] The aristocratic milieu of the Early Modern era saw the ideal ruler as

26   Karl G. Boon, *Hollstein´s Dutch and Flemish Etchings, Engravings and Woodcuts ca. 1450–1700, XXII. Aegidius Sadeler to Raphael Sadeler* II, Amsterdam 1980, no. 180.

27   Gero Seelig – Giulia Bartrum – Marjolein Leesberg, *The New Hollstein German Engravings, Etchings and Woodcuts 1400–1700. Jost Amman: Book Illustrations* II, Rotterdam 2002, p. 191, no. 45–46; IV, p. 148, no. 88.

28   Milada Lejsková-Matyášová, *Výjevy z římské historie v prostředí české renesance*, *Umění*, 8, 1960, pp. 287–299.

29   The decoration is complemented by an allegory of Poverty (depicted also on the wall around Kratochvíle and on the facade of the main Rožmberk château in Český Krumlov). It was modelled after the emblem of Andrea Alciato from *Diverse Imprese* (Lyon 1551), no. 121.

30   Christian Tümpel, Bild und Text. Zur Rezeption antiker Autoren in der europäischen Kunst der Neuzeit (Livius, Valerius Maximus), in: Wilhelm Schlink – Martin Sperlich (eds.), *Forma et subtilitas. Festschrift für Wolfgang Schöne zum 75. Geburtstag*, Berlin – New York 1986, pp. 198–218.

a nobleman whose power is validated by and based on moral principles.[31] In Kratochvíle, this is illustrated by the moral examples from Livy's history and their connection with the personifications of virtues. We can call this kind of decoration a program of Rožmberk ethics the goal of which is to visually represent and construct Vilém of Rožmberk's identity as a moral aristocrat and ruler. The Roman character of this program can also be connected with the Rožmberk family legend, according to which the family lineage reaches as far back as Aeneas via the Roman Orsini family. It is not surprising that Roman virtues were depicted in Polyxena's apartment as well, where the iconography contains feminine models such as Lucretia. These virtues are expressions of male demands projected into female space in an era which considered women as inferior.[32] The choice of iconography can also be connected with the nuptial character of the residence apparent in Vilém's and Polyxena's associated coats of arms appearing throughout the whole residence. For the aging Vilém of Rožmberk, his new marriage to Polyxena meant the last chance to maintain the family lineage. It is therefore possible that Kratochvíle with its hunting-nature character also reflects its role as a nuptial residence and its natural-fertility aspect. In Polyxena's room the procreative force is represented by figures of cupids but also by the personifications of the seasons and the water birds; similar iconography can be found in late-Renaissance Medici villas where the cycles of the year were meant to express continuity of the family and its rule. Vilém's plan for the decoration of Polyxenas's bedroom can be seen as a remnant of the medieval practice reflected in the treatises of Leon Battista Alberti who recommended that the parts of the house where women reside should contain depictions of respected and brave men in order to stimulate female fertility.[33]

The complex adornment of Kratochvíle described above closely corresponds with Renaissance art theory, as it constructs a hierarchy of meaning by employing a different genre on the different levels. Renaissance theorists such as Gian Paolo Lomazzo saw the mythological and nature-inspired scenes as carrying a '*conventional meaning and purpose*', especially in the adornment of the less formal secular spaces, such as the entrance areas of the villas, which are connected with nature. For the more important or dignified public places, serious themes, *storie*, were more suitable, as was recommended by many authors, including Giorgio Vasari.[34]

Kratochvíle's Typology and the Intent of its Architecture

The definition of Kratochvíle remains a principal question. What did the residence mean for its owners and how can we define it in terms of art-historical categories? What term should we use? Kratochvíle's builders and contemporaries themselves used a diverse array of terms to describe it. The most common was simply 'building' (*Bau* in German*),*[35] or 'the Kratochvíle building'.[36] 'Kratochvíle chateau' was also common.[37] However, it was sometimes referred to as a 'castle', (*Burg* in German)[38] and a 'fortified manor', (*Feste* in German).[39] The fact that Kratochvíle is a compound that contains a residential building inside it further complicates matters since this central building itself carried different designations. Most often it was referred to as a 'palace', a term also used for the festive halls on the second floor which formed the social centre of the residence. In 1614 Claudio Sorina, the Mantuan legate at the court of Emperor Matthias, described the central building as '*palazzo nel parcho*'.[40] In a similar vein, Joseph Furttenbach, reflecting the late-Renaissance tradition, calls such a building, surrounded by an ideal '*Lustgarten*', a '*palazotto*'.[41]

31 Rainer A. Müller, Historia als Regentenhilfe. Geschichte als Bildungsfach in deutschen Fürstenspiegeln des konfessionellen Zeitalters, in: Chantal Grell – Werner Paravicini – Jürgen Voss (eds.), *Les princes et l´ histoire du XIVᵉ au XVIIIᵉsiècle*, Bonn 1998, pp. 359–371.

32 Ondřej Jakubec, Etický program výzdoby rožmberské vily Kratochvíle jako symbolický obraz manželské ctnosti, in: Helena Dáňová – Klára Mezihoráková – Dalibor Prix (eds.), *Artem ad vitam. Kniha k poctě Ivo Hlobila*, Prague 2012, pp. 455–468.

33 Susanne Kress, Frauenzimmer der florentiner Renaissance und ihre Ausstattung, in: Jan Hirschbiegel – Werner Paravicini (eds.), *Das Frauenzimmer. Die Frau bei Hofe in Spätmittelalter und früher Neuzeit*, Stuttgart 2000, pp. 110–113.

34 Thimann (see note 25), pp. 70, 76, 84, 88–89.

35 Pánek – Březan (see note 1), p. 465.

36 Ibid., p. 460.

37 Ibid., pp. 542, 544–545, 551.

38 Quoted from Kubeš (see note 19), p. 272.

39 Pánek – Březan (see note 1), p. 460.

40 Elena Venturini (ed.), *Le collezioni Gonzaga il carteggio tra la corte cesarea e Mantova (1559–1636)*, Milan 2002, pp. 609–610. I thank Prof. Václav Bůžek for this information.

41 Joseph Furttenbach, *Architectura civilis*, Ulm 1628, p. 34, fig. 13.

Historical terms for Kratochvíle are numerous and the present-day terminology seems equally complicated, largely due to linguistic and geographical incompatibility. Czech heritage authorities classify Kratochvíle as a *zámek* (*Schloss* in German and château as usually translated in English). However, the word château in both present-day and sixteenth-century English is not quite fitting and the general terms, manor house or country house, seem to be a better option for a residential structure without a defensive function. The more subtle terms such as casino or summer house (*Lusthaus* in German*)* do not correspond with the architectural logic of the building, failing to reflect the architectural independence and complexity of Kratochvíle as an autonomous and self-sufficient residence. Classical summer houses usually lack this autonomy, as they are related to other, larger residences, serving as satellite structures. Other terms that are related to summer house (*Sommersaal*, *Gartenhaus*, *Gartensaal*, *Gartenpavillon*, belvedere, casino, or garden house)[42] express the same ancillary character, referring to structures built most often in gardens or parks and subsidiary to the main residential building.[43] It might be interesting for our case that during his travels to the Netherlands in 1563, Petr Vok visited the French royal residence, Château de Bussy-Rabutin, and in his description of it distinguished the palace itself (*zámek*) from the 'pretty summer house with a beautiful garden'.[44] More general English terms such as pleasure house or hunting lodge seem more apt, the former expressing the high quality of life and its environment, the latter referring to the building's practical function. In German, and generally in the transalpine environment, the terms such as *Lustgebäude* or *Lustschloss* imply the buildings' independent character as a free-standing structure. It is also possible to describe Kratochvíle in almost metaphorical terms related to the classical topoi of the ideal village life and 'noble relaxation',[45] such as the somewhat later term *maison de plaisance*. One such term, '*gran luogho di dilletto'*, was used in connection with Kratochvíle at the beginning of the seventeenth century by the above-mentioned legate Sorina.

The Rožmberk residence is not the only one of its kind. In Europe, places of rest began to appear after the mid-fifteenth century, for example the 'hunting villas' of Sigismund of Austria in the surroundings of Innsbruck, which were also referred to as places of pleasure ('*luoghi di dilletto')*.[46] From 1500 on, similar independent and complementary recreational residences became more common, imitating the Italian ideal or representing the pan-European courtly model of moving between primary and secondary residences. The Annaburg villa of Saxon Elector Fridrich the Wise in Lochau, dating to the beginning of the sixteenth century, may represent this specific architectural type. Almost twenty kilometres from Friedrich's main residence in Torgau, this *Lusthaus* served as a hunting lodge but also featured a sophisticated artificial garden, reflecting the new aristocratic ideal of spending free time in the countryside.[47] The garden villa Hellbrunn, a much later analogue of the Italian villa, was built in 1612 outside Salzburg. In sixteenth-century central Europe, similar country residences were popular among Polish aristocracy and royalty (see, for example, Woła Justowska and Łobzowie near Kraków, villa in Księt Wielki or the bishop's residence in Brok), as well as among wealthy bourgeoisie.[48] Kratochvíle was likely inspired by the 'residence landscape' of imperial secondary residences (such as the '*grüne lusthaus'* type, including Neugebäude, Kaiserebersdorf, Laxenburg, Favorita and others) which were built from the sixteenth century on in the vicinity of Vienna, even though, unlike Kratochvíle, they existed in close proximity to the imperial seat in Vienna, the Hofburg.[49] These residences were not meant simply for relaxation, they also embodied the need for self-representation. By transferring the comfort of urban life to the country, they provided a suitable backdrop for the demonstration of power, while at the same time expressing the owner's territorial dominance.[50] The same

42 Ulrike Weber-Karge, "*...einem irdischen Paradeiß zum vergleichen...*" *Das neue Lusthaus in Stuttgart. Untersuchung zu einer Bauaufgabe der deutschen Renaissance*, Sigmaringen 1989, p. 9.

43 John Fleming – Hugh Honour – Nikolaus Pevsner, *The Penguin Dictionary of Architecture and Landscape Architecture*, London 1999, p. 99.

44 Quoted from Jaroslav Pánek, *Poslední Rožmberk. Životní příběh Petra Voka*, Prague 1996, pp. 57–58.

45 Paul Holberton, *Palladio´s Villas. Life in Renaissance Countryside*, London 1990, pp. 173–178. – David R. Coffin, *Gardens and Gardening in Papal Rome*, Princeton 1991, p. 9.

46 Lippmann (see note 10), pp. 302–305.

47 Stephan Hoppe, Anatomy of an Early 'Villa' in Central Europe. The Schloss and Garden of the Saxon Elector Frederick the Wise in Lochau (Annaburg) according to the 1519 Repport of Hans Herzheimer, in: Chatenet (see note 10), pp. 159–166.

48 Stanisław Mossakowski, Le residenze nobiliari di campagna nella Polonia del Cinque e Seicento, in: Chatenet (see note 10), pp. 317–328.

49 Herbert Karner, The Habsburg Country Residences around Vienna in the Sevententh Century and their Relationship to the Hofburg Palace, in: Barbara Arciszewska (ed.), *The Baroque Villa. Suburban and Country Residences c. 1600–1800*, Warsaw 2009, pp. 187–196, esp. p. 188.

50 Matthias Quast, Die Medici-Villen als Spiegel frühabsolutischer Herrschaft. Beobachtung zur Instrumentalisierung der Villenarchitektur unter Großherzog Ferdinand I. (1587–1609), in: Wolfgang Liebenwein – Anchise Tempestini (eds.), *Gedenkschrift für Richard Harprath*, Munich – Berlin 1998, pp. 375–385.

feature is apparent in Kratochvíle, whose luxurious programmatic decoration reflected the owner's social status.

Kratochvíle's individual sources of inspiration deserve closer attention. Only two buildings in the immediate surroundings are similar in terms of residential function and form. As evident from the descriptions above, Kratochvíle has a very complex and at the same time compact form; the symmetrical compound and pavilions were built into the encircling wall. Within this architecturally framed garden complex, the central palace stands slightly off-centre, in the direction of the entrance. This layout also appears in the Bučovice château in South Moravia which Jan Šembera Černohorský from Boskovice began building at the end of the 1560s. The second analogical example is the Neugebäude, the imperial villa (*Lustgebäude*) of Maxmilian II near Vienna. It was built, together with its garden, after 1568.[51] It is hardly a coincidence that all the three buildings are connected with one person: the antiquarian, art advisor, and architect Jacopo Strada. He is in all likelihood the designer of the Neugebäude. In late 1583/early 1584, he spent several months in Bučovice[52] and could therefore have influenced the remarkable iconographic program of the château. With regards to Jan of Boskovice's close contacts with Vienna, it is possible that Jan and Strada consulted on the whole architectural project of the Bučovice château even before that time. In 1575 Strada dedicated his edition of Sebastian Serlio's Seventh Book of Architecture to Vilém of Rožmberk, the culmination of the long history of contact between the two men, indicating that Strada may have been involved with the design of Kratochvíle.[53] Strada's edition of Serlio's treatise contains a passage dealing with designs for 'palaces to be built in the countryside for princes and noblemen'. Serlio's original text did not include this passage about palaces; the addition comes from Strada himself.[54] However, we cannot rely with absolute certainty on the connection between both Kratochvíle and Bučovice and Strada. His sojourn in Bučovice took place well after the château's construction had begun which, interestingly, corresponds with the laying of the Neugebäude's foundations. All these buildings likely resulted from the traditional practice of collaboration between several persons. Strada's role was undoubtedly that of an artistic advisor[55] who would formulate the main idea of the project. Both Bučovice and Kratochvíle share the same layout which is also clearly related to Strada's Neugebäude.[56]

Kratochvíle's builders drew inspiration from several sources. For example the motif of the moat could have come from the milieu of French-Netherlandish water castles. We know that Vilém of Rožmberk consulted his brother, Petr Vok, on the construction of Kratochvíle. Vok had acquired extensive knowledge of this milieu during his travels in the Netherlands in 1562–1563,[57] bringing back a number of prints which could have depicted just this kind of residence. Vok's graphic prints probably resembled those produced by Jacques Androuet du Cerceau, whose *Livre d'architecture* (1582) contains designs with a ground plan similar to Kratochvíle (e.g. plate XIX or IX).[58] Moreover, the model of hunting culture, in terms of both hunting techniques and architectural forms, was originally French and later moved into the Italian peninsula at the beginning of the sixteenth century. The disparate sources of inspiration used to create a hunting residence were in fact quite intricate.[59] In his recent study, Dirk Jansen convincingly shows that sixteenth-century art in the Habsburg court did not derive its Italianate style directly from Italian prototypes, of which the Habsburgs had very limited knowledge (with the exception of northern-Italian art). More than other conventional building tasks, the type of pleasure buildings (hunting lodges or summer houses, and *Lustschlösser*) provided the opportunity for architectural experimentation

51 Hilda Lietzmann, *Das Neugebäude in Wien. Sultan Süleymans Zelt – Kaiser Maximilians II. Lustschloß. Ein Beitrag zur Kunst- und Kulturgeschichte der zweiten Hälfte des sechzehnten Jahrhundert*, München – Berlin 1987. – Karner (see note 49).

52 Bohumil Samek and others., *Zámek Bučovice*, Brno 2003, p. 20.

53 Dirk Jacob Jansen, Le rôle de Strada comme éditeur du Settimo Libro de Serlio: Le catalogue d'éditeur de Jacopo Strada, L'édition des Commentaires de César par Jacopo Strada, and La letter d'Ottavio Strada à son père, in: Sylvie Deswarte-Rosa (ed.), *Sebastiano Serlio à Lyon. Architecture & Imprimerie 1. Le Traité d'Architecture de Sebastiano Serlio. Une grande enterprise éditoriale au XVIe siècle*, Lyon 2004, pp. 176–193.

54 Vaughan Hart – Peter Hicks (eds.), *Sebastiano Serlio on Architecture II. Books VI and VII of ´Tutte l'opere d´ architettura e prospetiva´*, New Haven – London 2001, p. 544, note 76.

55 Lietzmann (see note 51), p. 180 – Dirk Jacob Jansen, The Case for Jacopo Strada as an Imperial Architect Private, in: Lubomír Konečný – Beket Bukovinská – Ivan Muchka (eds.), *Rudolf II, Prague and the World*, Prague 1998, pp. 229–235, esp. p. 231.

56 Dirk Jacob Jansen, Taste and Thought: Jacopo Strada and the Development of a Cosmopolitan Court, in: Lubomír Konečný – Štěpán Vácha (eds.), *Hans von Aachen in Context. Proceedings of the international conference Prague 22–25 September 2010*, Prague 2012, p. 175.

57 Jaroslav Pánek, *Poslední Rožmberkové. Velmoži české renesance*, Prague 1989, pp. 119–124.

58 When describing model IX, du Cerceau emphasizes that despite the lack of space, the residence provides enough room and comfort, which applies to Kratochvíle as well. See his *Livre d´ architecture de Iaques Androuet du Cerceau*, Paris 1582, f. 9v.

59 Sabine Frommel, L´Italie de la Renaissance, du casino di caccia a la résidence de chasses, inn: d´Anthenaise – Chatenet (see note 16), p. 292.

and new forms.[60] Kratochvíle might be also influenced by local, central-European, and especially Lower-Austrian water castles, such as Wasserburg which resembles Kratochvíle in its layout.[61] Moats can be found in other places as well, for example in Kaiserebersdorf, a Habsburg residence near Vienna which was functionally connected with the Neugebäude.[62]

In addition to questions about its origins and architectural sources, Kratochvíle also raises sociological and semantic questions. What was the role of the residence for the people who built it and inhabited it? Kratochvíle was not a manor house in the sense of an administrative centre of feudal territory, nor was it a summer house attached to a larger residence. It is possible to see it as a variation of the Italian suburban villa,[63] but this approach does not take into account the specific conditions of the transalpine milieu, where the nobility ruled over larger areas and owned several country residences. The transalpine villa, *Lustschloss* or *Lustgebäude*, complemented the larger residential structure of an aristocratic dominion, which was formed by the main residences as centres of power in the countryside, and a palace in the royal capital or in one of the provincial capitals. The villa had an important role to play in this structure. Because of the year-round use and the high standard of living (such as at Kratochvíle), we can regard these residences as alternative dwellings (*Nebenresidenzen*). These satellite residences formed, within their particular domains, an important part of the residential structure and provided the aristocrat with a space for relaxation. At the same time, they were as luxurious and socially dynamic as the main residences.[64] The size of these dwellings and their number was always directly proportional to the power and financial position of the owner. They were autonomous but within reach of the main aristocratic residences. Kratochvíle, for example, was built fifty kilometres from the main Rožmberk residences in Bechyně, Český Krumlov and Třeboň, accessible within one day's travel.[65] Similar arrangements existed in the surroundings of Wittelsbach Munich and Habsburg Vienna.[66]

The role hunting played at Kratochvíle opens up possibilities for further investigation. As a hunting lodge, Kratochvíle connected a comparatively informal lifestyle with the demands for self-representation, as was also the case at La Magliana, the pope's hunting villa,[67] or some of the Medici villas, notably Pratolino.[68] In both of these cases, the villas' hunting character combines with its role as a status symbol and as a backdrop for diverse social activities, including meetings and festivities, while also restoring the ideal of the ancient Roman villa and its emphasis on solitude and independence. Aside from offering Arcadian isolation from the outside world, these villas manifested their owners' power and sophistication encoded in the elaborate iconographic programs. In correspondence with the Franco-Italian model, these late-Renaissance decorative programs conveyed the image of an ideal aristocrat as a hunter, warrior, and cultivated gentleman. In Early Modern architecture, the hunting country residence presents unusual creative potential. As a crossover between the chateau, the villa, and other architectural and functional forms, it corresponds more accurately with the rather general type of *maison de champs*. Examples such as Chambord, Pratolino, Castel del Monte, the Hvězda (Star Summer Palace in Prague), Stupigini or Belriguardo near Ferrara offer an array of solutions to this building task. The variety of architectural forms and motifs reflect the diverse social and cultural norms across Europe, as well as the structure of aristocratic society and its residential practice. In the second half of the sixteenth century, the architectural type of the hunting lodge or villa generally tended towards greater autonomy, and the various idiosyncratic and eclectic forms resulted in increasingly magnificent, independent buildings.[69]

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60 Jansen (see note 56), pp. 172–173.
61 Tomas Karl – Herbert Karner et al., *Die Kunstdenkmäler der Stadt St. Pölten und ihrer eingemeindeten Ortschaften. Österreichische Kunsttopographie Band LIV*, Horn 1999, p. 564.
62 I thank Dr. Andreas Kusternig from Vienna for his helpful advice and recommendations.
63 Krčálová (see note 6), p. 38.
64 Samuel John Klingensmith, *The Utility of Splendor. Ceremony, Social Life, and Architecture at the Court of Bavaria, 1600–1800*, Chicago – London 1993, pp. 65–66.
65 Jiří Kubeš, „Tehdáž, když v oboře před morem bytností jsem byl". Zásobování letohrádku Kratochvíle v letech 1592–1602, in: *Celostátní studentská vědecká konference Historie 1997*, Brno 1998, pp. 149–150.
66 Klingensmith (see note 64), pp. 66–67. – Karner (note 49).
67 Marco Dezzi Bardeschi, L´opera di Giovanni da Sangallo e d Donato Bramante nella fabbrica della villa papale della Magliana, *L´arte* 5, 1971, pp. 111–173.
68 Brunon (see note 16), pp. 219–247.
69 Frommel (see note 59), pp. 290, 308.

Facit: Semantic and Interpretive Layers of the Villa Kratochvíle

The way the architecture and decoration has been presented here shows that the Rožmberk villa is not only a complex architectural work but also a social phenomenon and a symptom of a particular historical situation. This perspective introduces a further semantic level that is important for the artwork's interpretation, namely its role as a means of communication. The decoration of aristocratic residences used methods of performative rhetoric in connection with both festive rituals and the daily life of inhabitants and visitors. The decorations conveyed different configurations of meanings to different recipients, employing diverse ways of mirroring and staging the aristocrat's identity.[70]

There are many aristocratic or ruler's residences that feature decorative systems that may be considered semantically ambivalent by contemporary art-historical literature. That there is more than one way of reading these programs is the result of a design process in which the meaning of these decorations was often purposefully shifted in the course of their creation and new semantic layers added to them. For example, the recent interpretation of the gallery of Francis I in Fontainebleau shows that this layering of meanings was intentional and that the plethora of scenes, figures, motifs, and juxtaposed meanings was meant to surprise the spectator and evoke a strong visual and intellectual experience.[71] Another example of this tendency can be found in Vasari's decoration of the Palazzo Vecchio in Florence. The array of scenes has been rightly interpreted as a general celebration of Cosimo de´Medici and his family. Vasari's treatise, *Ragionamenti*, published in 1588, provides additional explanation for these scenes, unambiguously supporting the above interpretation. However, Vasari himself suggests that aside from the main interpretive frame ('*il senso nostro*'), some motifs can be explained on several different levels, 'there are meanings hidden behind the veil of stories'.[72]

Kratochvíle's halls offer similarly diverse semantic configurations: the sensually playful world of Ovidian poetry placed within the natural context of the villa; the straightforward hunting imagery connected with the villa's function; the villa as social-status symbol demonstrated by the luxurious decoration; the familial and aristocratic self-representation supported by the moral and mythological subtext; and the nuptial symbols accentuating the ethical principles and the procreative powers of marriage. The inhabitants and visitors of the villa were exposed to different aspects of its decorative program providing them with a visually and intellectually stimulating experience. The viewers could either perceive only one part of the villa's semantic configurations or decipher more of its layers. Still, the main semantic line encoded in both the iconography and the form of Kratochvíle's adornment followed the traditional rhetoric of Early Modern architecture and its decoration; the purpose of the building was not only to evoke emotions but mainly to convey the intended message.[73] It is hardly surprising that the contemporary cultural-socio-historical approach defines the villa type as a *Herrschaftszeichen* or even more aptly as a 'powerhouse, a place not of retreat but of attack'. An effective tool for legitimizing power,[74] the villa is a concentrated socio-historical phenomenon. As such, Kratochvíle with all its different aspects represents an ideal object of study.

70 Margaretha Rossholm Lagerlöf, *Fate, Glory, and Love in Early Modern Gallery Decoration. Vizualizing Supreme Power*, Farnham 2013, pp. 233, 238.

71 Ibid., pp. 21–92, 236–238.

72 Paola Tinagli, The Identity of the Prince: Cosimo de´Medici, Giorgio Vasari and the Ragionamenti, in: Mary Rogers (ed.), *Fashioning Identities in Renaissance Art*, Aldershot 2000, pp. 189–196.

73 Carsten-Peter Warncke, Rhetorik der Architektur in der frühen Neuzeit, in: Klaus Bußmann – Florian Matzner – Ulrich Schulze (eds.), *Johann Conrad Schlaun, 1695–1773. Architektur des Spätbarock in Europa*, Stuttgart 1995, pp. 612–621.

74 Joseph Connors, The Baroque Villa: Concluding Remarks, in: Barbara Arciszewska (ed.), *The Baroque Villa. Suburban and Country Residences c. 1600–1800*, Warsaw 2009, pp. 271–273, here p. 271.

1. Jindřich de Veerle, Kratochvíle villa, detail from the view of Netolice, oil on canvas, 1686, Národní památkový ústav České Budějovice.

Photo: O. Jakubec
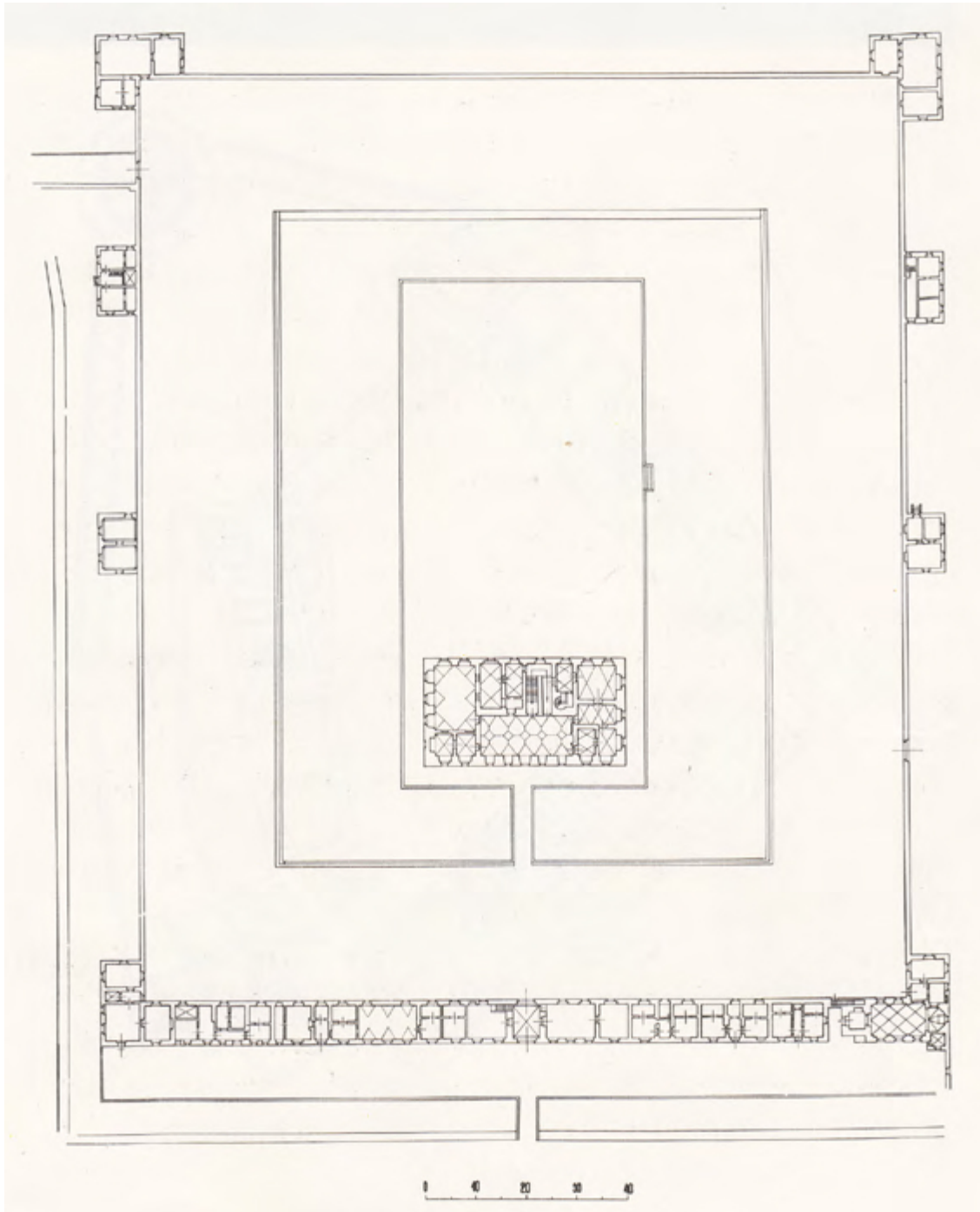
2. Ground-plan of the of the Kratochvíle villa complex.

3. Kratochvíle villa. View of the central villa, 1583–1589.

Photo: O. Jakubec

4. Kratochvíle villa. View of the central villa with
the entrance tower, 1583–1589.

Photo: O. Jakubec

5. Kratochvíle villa. View of the rear facade of the central villa and its fictitious painted bastion ('staircase tower').

Photo: O. Jakubec

6. Kratochvíle villa, entrance hall with fresco decoration
by Georg Widman (around 1590).

Photo: O. Jakubec

7. Kratochvíle villa, the so-called Golden Hall with stuccoes by
Antonio Melana (around 1590).

Photo: O. Jakubec