The Villa Kratochvíle in Bohemia: Imagery, Senses, and Meaning in Vilém of Rožmberk's Aristocratic Hunting Lodge

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Renaissance villa architecture is a rare phenomenon in Bohemia. Aside from the Hvězda near Prague (Star Summerhouse, or better Star Villa) built in the 1550s by Archduke Ferdinand of Tyrol (1529–1595),[1] Villa Kratochvíle (its name meaning *Kurzweil* in German, pastime in English) in South Bohemia is the only significant preserved example of this architectural and cultural type (Fig. 1). In general, it is fitting to compare Kratochvíle with the splendid Star Villa. The sophisticated Habsburg architecture and decoration of the latter presents itself to the visitor as a unique *curiosum*; the same intention to astonish and surprise visitors is apparent in Kratochvíle. It was built in the 1580s by Vilém of Rožmberk (1535–1592), the head of the Rožmberk (Rosenberg) family, the highest burgrave and the most important representative of the Bohemian Estates. It is not a coincidence that Emperor Rudolf II (1552–1612) became interested in the villa, purchasing it in 1602. Immediately after he acquired the estate, Rudolf II commissioned an extensive documentation of its compound that included *vedute* of the building from all four sides, ground plans of all floors, and perspective depictions of the chapel interiors and the interiors of several other rooms.[2] Kratochvíle was likely connected with the exclusive milieu of the Rudolphinian court. As late as in the second half of the seventeenth century, Bohuslav Balbín, the Bohemian Jesuit historian, mentions Kratochvíle in his *Miscellanea historica regni Bohemiae*, describing it as a mansion whose garden could compete with those of Emperor Rudolf II.[3] Kratochvíle's contemporaries and visitors were also well aware of its exceptional character and visual appeal. At the beginning of the seventeenth century, Václav Březan (*c.* 1568–1618), the Rožmberk chronicler, described the mansion as a "very expensive and beautiful building", emphasising its remarkable decoration: "...the new building has decoration and various beautiful images, all well-made

[1] Ivan P. Muchka et al., *Hvězda: Arcivévoda Ferdinand Tyrolský a jeho letohrádek v evropském kontextu* (Praha: Artefactum, 2014).

[2] František Mareš and Josef Sedláček, *Soupis památek historických a uměleckých v politickém okresu Prachatickém* (Praha: Archaeologická komise při ČA Františka Josefa, 1913), 85.

[3] Bohuslav Balbín, *Krásy a bohatství české země: Výbor z díla Rozmanitosti z historie Království českého*, trans. and eds. Helena Businská and Zdeňka Tichá (Praha: Panorama, 1986), 138–139.

Fig. 1. Bird's-eye view of the whole premises of the Kratochvíle villa [photo: Aleš Motejl].

and glistening".[4] Another testimony comes from Claudio Sorina, the Mantuan legate, who visited Kratochvíle in 1614 in the retinue of Emperor Matthias. In his report to Mantua he writes that he saw there "a prominent place for relaxation, which the master of Rožmberk had built. From the windows of the palace one can see a large park enclosed within a wall, with more than 500 stags and roe deer".[5] In about the same period, Czech Protestant historian Pavel Stránský (1583–1657) described Kratochvíle as a "charming summer house with large orchards" tastefully complemented by the "exquisite artful garden".[6] He likely meant the villa's remarkable landscaping with fountains and water works, which will be discussed below. Bohuslav Balbín also describes Kratochvíle as "splendid" and "exquisitely decorated".[7]

Kratochvíle's unique visual character and complexity have remained intact. Set in a remote, undulating landscape of woods and ponds, in both its architectural layout and artistic decoration the villa artfully combines artificiality with the natural environment. On the one hand, the residence is isolated from the surrounding landscape by a system of walls, while on the other, it includes a deer park adjoining the main compound and a symmetrically arranged garden situated inside the walled-in area. The central palace stands on an island created by a moat and there used to be other water works and fountains in the garden. The preserved interior decoration of the villa further develops this artistic/natural framework, using hunting and animal iconography that corresponds with Kratochvíle's function as a hunting lodge. The architectural complex connects the rich interior decoration with the garden where natural and artificial effects combine in a multi-layered artwork, creating a mannerist microcosm.[8]

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[4] Jaroslav Pánek, ed., *Václav Březan: Životy posledních Rožmberků* (Praha: Svoboda, 1985), 371, 493.

[5] "*Gran luogo di ricreatione che feceil signor di Rosimberg, nel qualesono (dicono) 20 peschiere, et si veggono dale finestre del palazzo nel parcho che amplogli è intorno, circondato da muraglie, più di 500 tra cervi e capriole*", Elena Venturini, ed., *Le collezioni Gonzaga il carteggio tra la corte cesarea e Mantova: 1559–1636* (Milano: Silvana Editoriale, 2002), 609-610. I thank

Prof. V. Bůžek for drawing my attention to this source.

[6] Jarmila Krčálová, *Renesanční stavby B. Maggiho v Čechách a na Moravě* (Praha: Academia, 1986), 16–20.

[7] Balbín, *Krásy a bohatství české země*, 228.

[8] Iris Lauterbach, "Jardins de la Renaissance en Allemagne et en Autriche", in *Architecture, jardins, paysage. L'environnement du château et de la villa aux XVe et XVIe siècles*, ed. Jean Guillaume (Paris: Picard, 1992), 219–232.
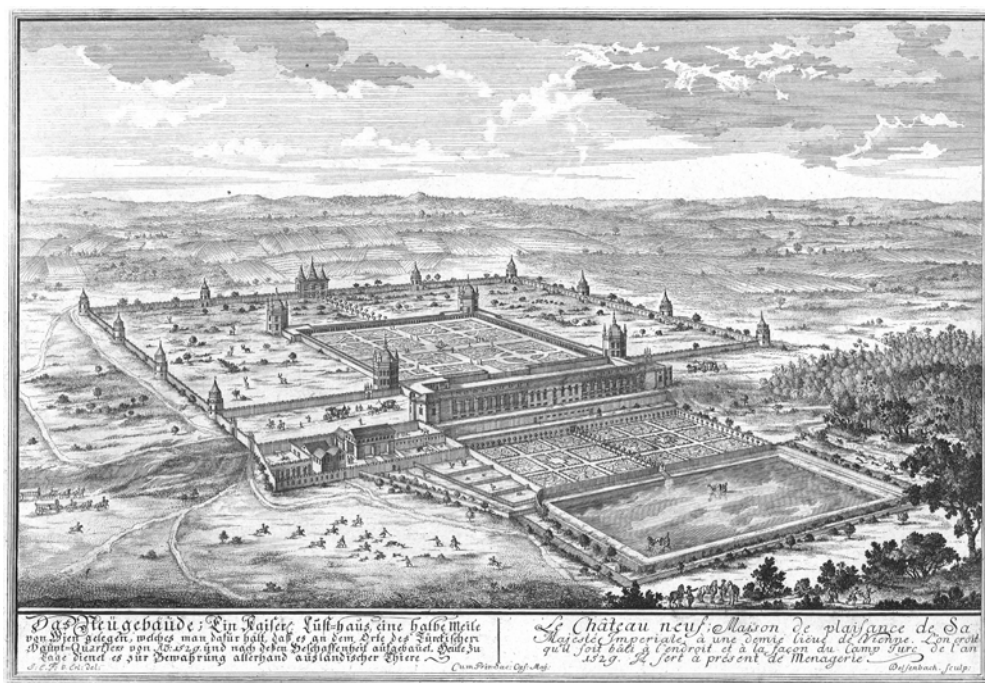
Fig. 2. Johann Adam Delsenbach after Joseph Emanuel Fischer von Erlach, view of the Neugebäude villa near Vienna, before 1715, copper-plate engraving.

The history of the villa's construction

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.[9] In early 1580s, Vilém of Rožmberk acquired the manor from Krčín in exchange for the town of Sedlčany. He did not hide his reasons for this acquisition – it was meant to provide a site for leisurely pastime, which was reflected in the new name of the residence.[10] Vilém soon began building hunting reserves and in the summer of 1581 he stayed in the manor with his third wife, Anna Maria of Baden. However, the manor was inadequate in both size and splendour for Vilém's needs, and so in 1582 he decided to construct a new building near the old one.[11] The project was designed in 1583 by Baldassare Maggi (*c.* 1550–1619/1629?), a builder from Arogno in the Swiss-Italian region of Ticino and the principal architect for the Rožmberk family.[12] A chapel was erected on the south-eastern corner of the property in 1585 and consecrated in July 1589. The death of Vilém's wife, Anna Maria, in April 1583 may explain the slow pace of the works or indicate a break in its construction. Vilém's new marriage with Polyxena of Pernštejn in 1587 probably stimulated the completion and decoration of the residence. For the aging Vilém of Rožmberk, his last wife, Polyxena, represented the last chance to maintain the family lineage. A significant part of the villa's decoration is dedicated to Polyxena and her fertility; Kratochvíle can thus be seen not only as a hunting lodge, but also as a kind of nuptial architecture.[13] The interesting complementarity between the villa's effects on the senses and its underlying sensuousness connected with the principle of natural fertility appearing in the villa's various artistic elements can be interpreted from this perspective. After Vilém's death in 1592, work on completing and adorning the Kratochvíle mansion continued until 1595, now under the patronage of Vilém's brother, Petr Vok (1539–1611).

9 Pánek, *Václav Březan*, 294, 446; Ondřej Jakubec, "Defining the Rožmberk Residence of Kratochvíle: the Problem of its Architectural Character", *Opuscula historiae artium* 61, (2012): 98–119.

10 Pánek, *Václav Březan*, 294, 465.

11 Theodor Antl, *Dějiny města Netolic* (Netolice, 1903), 114.

12 Krčálová, *Renesanční stavby*, 31.

13 Jacqueline Marie Musacchio, *Art, Marriage, and Family in the Florentine Renaissance Palace* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008).

But Petr died childless, like his older brother, and thus the famous Rožmberk family died out. The Rožmberk era at Kratochvíle ended in 1602, when the emperor Rudolph II purchased the property, together with the surrounding estate.

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.[14] The villa's functioning reflected its peripheral location. It took a day to travel there from the main Rožmberk towns, and as such, the mansion combined seclusion with relatively good accessibility. Judging from the preserved bills,[15] the sojourns in Kratochvíle were extraordinary and festive. The villa could accommodate large numbers of guests, often very important ones, for lengthy sojourns; for example, Archduke Ferdinand of Tyrol and his wife Anna Gonzaga stayed there in 1588. In 1598–1599, Petr Vok stayed at Kratochvíle for an exceptionally long period of 10 months due to the plague epidemic in Český Krumlov. During this period, Kratochvíle hosted the whole Rožmberk court, which consisted of approximately 200 people.[16] In the sense of an *architectura recreationis* or *maison de plaisance*, Kratochvíle can be compared to its closest analogue, Neugebäude near Vienna (Fig. 2). There is a distinct compositional resemblance between the remarkable *villa concetto* of Emperor Maxmillian's Neugebäude and Kratochvíle, possibly due to the role of Jacopo Strada (1507–1588), an antiquarian and architectural adviser (in 1575, Strada dedicated his edition of the *Seventh Book of Architecture* by Sebastiano Serlio to Vilém of Rožmberk).[17] Typologically, Kratochvíle can also be compared to ostentatious hunting lodges in France, as well as to the Italian examples, such as La Magliana, the hunting villa of the popes situated in the countryside outside Rome (begun in the 1470s and completed by Leo X). Its rich decoration was designed to celebrate the intellectual sophistication and artistic interests of
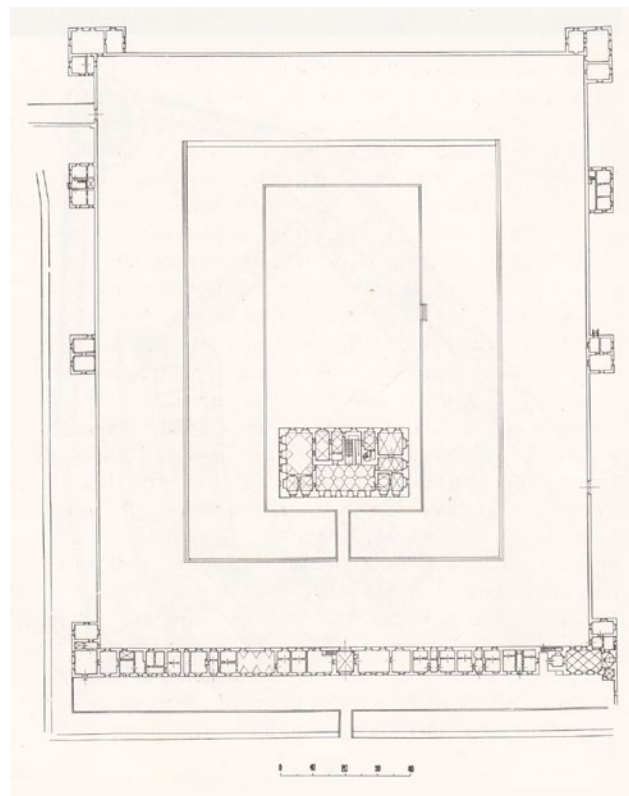

Fig. 3. Ground plan of the whole premises of the Kratochvíle villa.

the owners and create a natural connection with their aristocratic hunting pursuits.[18] Both villas also had a similar enclosed rectangular layout, combining practical and ceremonial functions, with carefully planned spaces where visitors could immerse themselves in a rich visual and intellectual environment.

The villa's architecture and decoration

The Kratochvíle complex presents the contrast between the rational architectural layout and natural context, following the contemporary fashion of

[14] Pánek, *Václav Březan*, 314, 316, 332, 469–470.

[15] Jiří Kubeš, "Zásobování sídel Petra Voka z Rožmberka potravinami (1592–1602)", *Jihočeský sborník historický* 68, (1999): 255–289, esp. 263–272.

[16] Pánek, *Václav Březan*, 541, 546.

[17] Sebastiano Serlio, *Il Settimo Libro d'Architettura* (Frankfurt am Main: 1575); Jakubec, "Defining the Rožmberk Residence", 2–23.

[18] David R. Coffin, *The Villa in the Life of Renaissance Rome* (Princeton:

Princeton University Press, 1979), 112–114; Marco Dezzi Bardeschi, "L'opera di Giovanni da Sangallo e d Donato Bramante nella fabbrica della villa papale della Magliana", *L'arte* 5, (1971): 111–173; Francesca Cappelletti, "L'uso delle Metamorfosi di Ovidio nella decorazione a fresco della prima meta' del Cinquecento: Il caso della Farnesina", in *Die Rezeption der Metamorphosen des Ovid in der Neuzeit. De antike Mythos in Text und Bild*, eds. Hermann Walter and Hans-Jürgen Horn (Berlin: Mann, 1995), 115–128, esp. 121.

Fig. 4. Central villa ("palace") in the middle of the moat.

placing together manmade and natural elements. The symmetrically composed rectangular walled-in area with the house at its centre is situated among the woods and ponds of a remote landscape. The rectangular wall frames the whole compound and contains small residential pavilions in its corners and in the centre of both longer walls (Fig. 3) (another two pavilions were added later, which disturbed the original symmetry). One of the corners of the entrance wing contains a chapel, to which a tower was later added. Within the wall, the moat follows the rectangular enclosure, isolating the central residential building on an island which can only be accessed by a bridge (Fig. 4). The palace is a simple rectangular two-storey building with near-identical layouts for both floors. It is built on a three-part ground plan: on the left side, both floors contain two smaller hallways of the same width, and in the centre, there are two larger halls of similar dimensions on both floors (Fig. 5). Kratochvíle's

layout resembles the Renaissance Italian villa type in the form of a compact three-part block as developed especially by Palladio.[19] The four main halls include the entrance hall, the adjoining Rožmberk guard hall on the ground floor and the two adjoining festive rooms on the upper floor (one of them, the Golden Hall, served as a banqueting room). The villa also included one apartment on the ground floor and two separate apartments on the floor above: the smaller one for Vilém and the larger one for his wife Polyxena. 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 complex of Kratochvíle demonstrates a clear spatial hierarchy. In the centre, there is a residential building on an isolated island surrounded by water. Several fences and walls around this core arrangement turn the villa into a protected compound. Like other aristocratic

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19 James S. Ackerman, "Sources of the Renaissance Villa", in *Studies in Western Art. Acts of the Twentieth International Congress of the History* *of Art*, vol. 2, *The Renaissance and Mannerism*, ed. Millard Meiss et al. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963), 6–18, esp. 9.
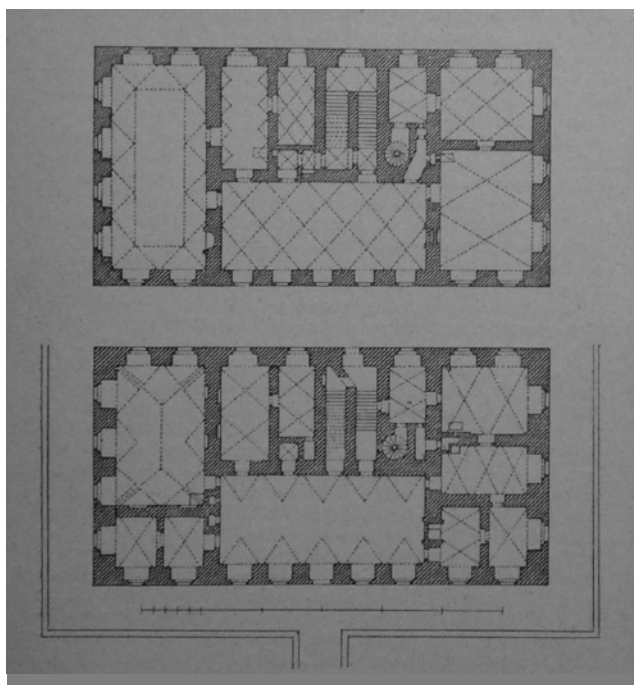
Fig. 5. Ground plans of the main floor (bottom) and the second floor (top) of the central villa.

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 guest had to walk through the gates in the compound's walls, across the bridge and through the configuration of rooms in order to penetrate to the core of the mansion, that is, to the festive halls or the private apartments.

The villa complex was designed to surprise through its elusive layout, revealed gradually as the visitor moved about the premises. The effect of surprise was employed in the villa's 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 upper storey. Following a similar principle, the inconspicuous exterior of the adjacent church contrasts with the unusually rich decoration inside. Around 1590, Georg Widman, a painter from Brunswick, painted the frescoes in the rooms on

both floors of Kratochvíle's main palace. On the ground floor, he adorned the entrance hall with various hunting scenes inspired by woodcuts by the German engraver Jost Amman (1539–1591) (Fig. 6). The pictorial themes of the murals focusing on nature and on hunting, are further enhanced by separately painted animals also modelled on Amman's woodcuts. Similar iconography is featured in the adjoining guard hall.[20] Remarkably, this diverse menagerie comprises local and exotic animals (boar, bear, elephant, camel, rhinoceros), as well as mythical creatures (gryphon, unicorn) (Fig. 7). 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 and diverse animal realm. To a certain degree this may also have 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 possible that, inspired by the Italian Renaissance villas, the frescoes were meant to evoke Eden or Arcadia.[21] Kratochvíle's painted menagerie can be also compared with murals depicting groups of animals in grottoes that were built in Italian villa gardens after the middle of the sixteenth century, as for example in the Medici villa in Castello, or in the Boboli garden belonging to the Palazzo Pitti in Florence. In the Villa Mattei in Rome (1580s) the animals carved from volcanic stone and painted to look naturalistic were placed in the garden's *boschetto*. Another collection of both real and monstrous animals (lions, elephants, dragons, bears etc.) comes from the *Sacro Bosco* of Vicino Orsini's villa in Bomarzo. Thus, the animal (i.e. natural) element was represented in these gardens by many forms, both live and artificial.[22] The variety of animals in Renaissance gardens (in line with the expectations of contemporary public) expressed the contrast between uncontrolled, wild nature and civilization/culture. At the same time, the animals' presence in the gardens, where everything was controlled by the owner, demonstrated the aristocrat's authority.[23]

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[20] Gero Seelig et al., ed., *The New Hollstein German Engravings, Etchings and Woodcuts 1400–1700: Jost Amman: Book Illustrations III* (Rotterdam: Sound & Vision Interactive, 2002), 128–137.

[21] Václav Bůžek and Ondřej Jakubec, *Kratochvíle posledních Rožmberků* (Praha: Nakladatelství Lidové noviny, 2012), 93–95.

[22] Claudia Lazzaro, *The Italian Renaissance Garden. From the Conventions of Planting, Design, and Ornament to the Grand Gardens of Sixteenth-Century Central Italy* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1990), 137–140.

[23] Claudia Lazzaro, "Animals as Cultural Signs: A Medici Menagerie in the Grotto at Castello", in *Reframing the Renaissance: Visual Culture in Europe and Latin America 1450–1650*, ed. Claire Farago (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1995), 197–227.

Fig. 6. Main floor entrance hall with fresco decoration depicting hunting scenes and themes from Ovid
(Georg Widman from Brunswick, around 1590).

Decorations of Kratochvíle's ground-floor halls contain another iconographic layer, namely the mythological poetic scenes or *favole*,[24] which are also related to the natural world. A large composition in the guard room is dedicated to the three pastoral deities, Autumnus, Cyparissus and Vertumnus, modelled on a print by Cornelis Cort (1563). In the entrance hall, the hunting scenes are complemented by stories from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, set in small fields in vaults above the windows and the door. From the originally larger set of murals, the following scenes, modelled after prints by Hendrik Goltzius (1558–1617), have been preserved: Jupiter courting Io; Pan and Syrinx; the birth of Adonis; Apollo and Daphne; the Silver Age; Apollo killing Python (Fig. 8).

Compared to the ground floor, the decoration of the second storey offers an entirely different world, both artistically and thematically. The whole floor is dominated by "*antiquitetischen Historien*", as the frescoes were defined by Georg Widman in his design for the decoration from 1589.[25] Vilém's *studiolo* 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 a woman's victory over a man. The moralising concept of *Weibermacht* underlies the whole painted cycle of strong women winning over men, which has been partly preserved in the lunettes, showing the stories of Solomon, Heliogabalus and Sardanapalus. The complex adornment of Kratochvíle closely corresponds with Renaissance art theory, as a hierarchy of meaning is implied by employing different genres in specific spaces. Renaissance theorists recommended that decorators should use mythological and nature-inspired scenes for decoration of the villas' entrance areas on the ground floor, while more serious, historical themes were seen as better suited to the important public spaces on higher floors.[26]

The decoration of Kratochvíle's second storey consists largely of stuccoes made some time before 1589 by Antonio of Melano.[27] The choice of both the technique, carried

[24] Michael Thimann, *Lügehafte Bilder. Ovids favole und das Historienbild in der italienischen Renaissance* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2002).

[25] František Mareš, "Materiálie k dějinám umění, uměleckého průmyslu a podobným", *Památky archaelogické a místopisné* 17, (1896–1897): 45.

[26] Thimann, *Lügehafte Bilder*, 70, 76, 84, 88–89.

[27] Melano is a town in Ticino, near Arogno, the birthplace of Baldassare Maggi.

Fig. 7. Guard hall with fresco decoration representing animal iconography and mythological figures of pastoral deities (Georg Widman from Brunswick, around 1590).

out in the *all'antica* style of white stuccoes with gold decoration, and the classical iconography is remarkable. With the exception of the summerhouse Hvězda (Star Villa) near Prague, no other architectural work in Bohemia employs with comparable complexity what was at that time a very modern and exclusive decorative motif. The richest set of stuccoes adorns the vault above the Golden Hall, Kratochvíle's central banqueting room (Fig. 9). 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 programme begins with female personifications in the extensions of the vault, depicting Fame, Bounty, Love and Temperance. The large central vault is filled with scenes from the history of ancient Rome inspired by Livy's *Ab urbe condita*, which also supplied the themes featured in Polyxena's apartment. There are twenty-five scenes in total, all derived from woodcuts by Jost Amman, who illustrated numerous Latin and German editions of Livy.

Such complex employment of Livian scenes executed in the technique of "Roman" stucco is exceptional even in the wider European context.[28] The decoration of the Golden Hall features a spectrum of positive, negative and neutral heroes: Romulus and Remus nursed by the she-wolf; Senator Popillius Laenas with King Antiochus Epiphanes; Romulus killing the king of Caenina; Cloelia; Lucius Cincinnatus being summoned to the senate; Veturia and Volumnia begging Martius Coriolanus to spare Rome; the assassination of the king of Syracuse Hierus II; Horatius Cocles; King Servius Tullius; Queen Sophonisba; the assassination of Tarquinius Priscus; Tullia in a carriage running over the body of her father; the battle of Horatii and Curiatii; Marcus Valerius Corvinus and Titus Manlius fighting the Gauls. The key to understanding the Golden Hall and its decoration is in the set of Livian scenes encircling the composition in the central panel of the vault. It shows the so-called Rožmberk horseman, the traditional emblematic figure that refers to Vilém of Rožmberk himself,[29] as is apparent from the coats of arms

[28] Milada Lejsková-Matyášová, "Výjevy z římské historie v prostředí české renesance", *Umění* 8, (1960): 287–299.

[29] Jiří Kuthan and Petr Pavelec, "Rožmberský jezdec", in *Rožmberkové.*

Rod českých velmožů a jeho cesta dějinami, ed. Jaroslav Pánek (České Budějovice: Národní památkový ústav, územní odborné pracoviště v Českých Budějovicích, 2011), 94.

Fig. 8. Apollo and Daphne; the Silver Age; and Apollo killing Python above the doors to main-floor entrance hall (Georg Widman from Brunswick, around 1590).

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.

These ancient-Roman scenes continue in the ante-chamber of Polyxena's apartment with further depictions of historical events: Romulus killing Remus, Numa Pompilius, two scenes from the lives of the last Roman king Tarquinius Superbus, Mucius Scaevola and Marcus Curtius. The vault in the ante-chamber is also adorned with a series of female personifications of the four cardinal and three theological virtues. Polyxena's bedroom offers another interesting set of murals depicting two scenes from Livy: the Roman general Scipio with Allucius and his fiancée, and Lucretia committing suicide. Other parts of the vault 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] In Kratochvíle, this is evident from the way the moral examples from Livy's history are connected with the personifications of virtues. It is not surprising that Roman virtues were depicted in Polyxena's apartment as well, where the iconography contains feminine models of conduct, such as Lucretia. The appearance of these virtues illustrates male patriarchal demands projected into female space in an era which defined women as passive and submissive.[31] The choice of iconography can also be connected with the nuptial character of the residence, as well as its function as a hunting lodge and its connections to nature, thus to the natural fertility associations. In Polyxena's room this procreative force is represented by figures of cupids, the personifications of the seasons and the water birds; similar iconography can be found in the nearly contemporary

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30 Rainer A. Müller, "Historia als Regentenhilfe. Geschichte als Bildungsfach in deutschen Fürstenspiegeln des konfessionellen Zeitalters", in *Les princes et l´histoire du XIVᵉ au XVIIIᵉ siècle*, ed. Chantal Grell et al. (Bonn: Bouvier 1998), 359–371.

31 Ondřej Jakubec, "Etický program výzdoby rožmberské vily Kratochvíle jako symbolický obraz manželské ctnosti", in *Artem ad vitam: Kniha k poctě Ivo Hlobila*, ed. Helena Dáňová et al. (Praha: Artefactum, 2012), 455–468.

Fig. 9. The so-called Golden Hall on the second floor; the vaulted ceilings are decorated with stucco scenes inspired by Livy's History of Rome (Antonio Melana/Melani/da Melano, around 1590).

contain depictions of respected and brave men in order to stimulate female fertility.[33] The whole complex of Kratochvíle with its natural setting and nature-inspired themes in the decoration provided rich visual sensations, accompanied (especially in the garden and park) with other sensual stimuli. These historical and natural-poetic motifs focusing around Polyxena's apartment were to create an atmosphere that would ideally lead to the conception of a Rožmberk heir.

The garden of the Villa Kratochvíle

The experiences of the visitors and inhabitants of the villa were not simply limited to the visual, as Kratochvíle's garden provided a number of sophisticated acoustic, olfactory and haptic sensations. In keeping with the Italian theory and practice of villa gardens, numerous water works around the villa (the canal, fountains, ponds) as well as the vegetation offered a rich spectrum of these sensations. The rousing effects of gardens were considered essential to the recreational lifestyle in the villas (*otium sine negotium*) as celebrated by Horace and others. The wealth of artistic and natural forms in the Renaissance villas provided a feast for the senses, favourably influencing human health. These healing effects were mentioned in ancient Greek medical literature and later for example in the work of Vitruvius, who was inspired by these sources. Early-modern villas purposely developed this concept.[34] Art, flowers and the element of water had both a calming and aesthetically refreshing effect on people.[35] It is therefore not surprising that at the end of the sixteenth century, Kratochvíle served as a refuge from the plague epidemic for all the members of Rožmberk court, who stayed there for almost a year. According to Annibal Caro (1507–1566), an important Italian humanist and garden theorist, the

Medici villas, where the cycles of the seasons were meant to express the eternal continuity of the family and its rule.[32] Vilém's plan for the decoration of Polyxena's bedroom can be seen as a remnant of the medieval practice reflected in the treatises of Alberti, who recommended that the parts of the house where women reside should

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[32] Janet Cox-Rearick, "Themes of time and rule at Poggio a Caiano the portico frieze of Lorenzo Il Magnifico", *Mitheilungen des kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz* 26, (1982): 167–210; Janet Cox-Rearick, *Dynasty and Destiny in Medici Art: Pontormo, Leo X, and the Two Cosimos* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984).

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

[34] Susan Russell, "The Villa Pamphilj on the Janiculum Hill: The Garden, the Senses and Good Health in Seventeenth-Century Rome", in *Sense and the Senses in Early Modern Art and Cultural Practice*, eds. Alice E. Sanger and Siv Tove Kulbrandstad Walker (Farnham–Burlington: Ashgate, 2012), 129–146.

[35] D.R. Edward Wright, "Some Medici Gardens of the Florentine Renaissance? An Essay in Post-Aesthetic Interpretation", in *The Italian Garden: Art, Design and Culture*, ed. John Dixon Hunt (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 41–42.

relaxation in an aristocratic villa's garden should be above all dignified *(otium cum dignitatem)*, intellectual and cultivating.[36] Analysis of these relaxation activities in the villa gardens does not have to remain exclusively a subject of social history;[37] the sensual character of the gardens can inspire art historians who are interested in the idea of a "sensory turn". When analysing the villas and their gardens, art historians naturally step beyond the limits of the visual, expanding the field of interest to all other sensual impulses.[38] This research is based not on random aesthetic retrospections, but on the theoretical discourse of the period.[39]

The garden at Kratochvíle forms an artistically, but also semantically unified whole with the villa's architecture and decoration. The inner garden was separated from the outside world by the low walls around the moat and, further beyond, by the outer wall encircling the whole compound. The adjacent fenced-in deer park offered the visitors charming views when admired from the villa's windows, as emphasised by the above-mentioned Mantuan legate, Sorina.[40] A gardener of Italian origin, Petr Bianco, was responsible for the upkeep of the garden in the 1590s.[41] However, how exactly this garden looked like is not known. It could have had an ornamental configuration with geometrically divided flowerbeds. The outer strip beyond the moat could have contained fruit trees, likely arranged into a geometrical frame.[42] Such a geometrical garden would closely correspond with the clear architectural structure of the villa, in agreement with the recommendations of Italian architectural theorists of the time.[43] A similar conception can be found in the garden of the Neugebäude imperial villa near Vienna which, like Kratochvíle, was complemented with a pond.

Fig. 10. Villa Lante, summerhouse of Viterb bishop Gianfrancesco Gambara, Bagnaia near Viterba, 1596, copper-plate engraving.

In both of these important examples, the stretch of decorative flower beds, the orchard and the water dam, as well as the animal garden form parts of the basic arrangement.[44] The structure of the Kratochvíle complex can also be compared to the garden of the Villa Lante in Bagnaia near Viterbo, built by Cardinal Gianfrancesco Gambara after 1550 (Fig. 10), as it has an analogical arrangement with a strictly geometrical garden adjoining to the villa's *casinos*, as well as the *barco*, an artificial grove. All these elements formed the basic villa garden structure, which had a well-established tradition.[45]

There are more features in Kratochvíle confirming its connection with sixteenth-century villa gardens and their sophisticated sensuality. In 1586, Rožmberk chronicler Václav Březan wrote a critical note concerning hydraulic automatons, "water dolls", which he described as "peculiar water machines and effigies, through which water would

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[36] Fritz-Eugen Keller, *Zum Villenleben und Villenbau am Römischen Hof der Farnese. Kunstgeschichtliche Untersuchung der Zeugnisse bei Annibal Caro* (Berlin, 1980), 5–11, 32.

[37] Amanda Lillie, *Florentine Villas in the Fifteenth Century. An Architectural and Social History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

[38] Patrizia Di Bello and Gabriel Koureas, "Introduction: Other than the Visual: Art, History and the Senses", in *Art, History and the Senses: 1830 to the Present*, eds. Patrizia Di Bello and Gabriel Koureas (Farnham-Burlington: Ashgate, 2010), 2–17; Francesca Bacci and David Melcher, eds., *Art and the Senses* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 2–3.

[39] Wright, *Some Medici Gardens*, 42-44.

[40] Venturini, *Le collezioni*, 609.

[41] Sylva Dobalová and Jiří Olšan, "Zahrady", in *Rožmberkové. Rod českých velmožů, 426–429.*

[42] David R. Coffin, *Gardens and Gardening in Papal Rome* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 195–214.

[43] Jennifer Nevile, "Order, Proportion and Geometric Forms: The Cosmic Structure of Dance, Grand Gardens, and Architecture during the Renaissance", in *Dance, Spectacle, and the Body Politics, 1250–1750*, ed. Jennifer Nevile (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008), 295–311, esp. 306.

[44] Wilfried Hansmann, *Gartenkunst der Renaissance und des Barock* (Köln: DuMont, 1983), 79–81.
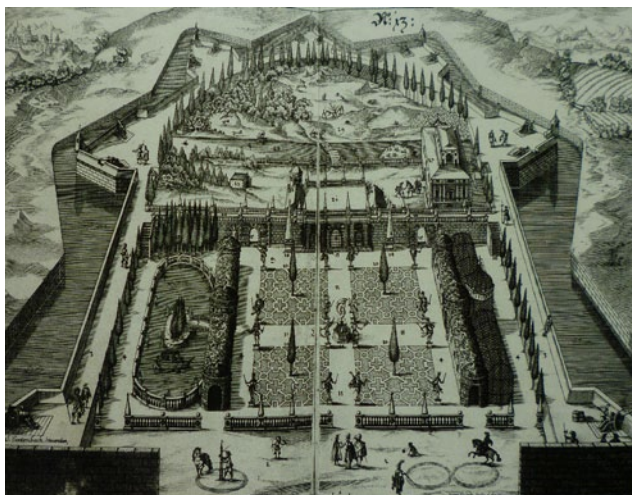
[45] Keller, *Zum Villenleben*, 6.

Fig. 11. Joseph Furttenbach sr., the Lustgarten project with
a summerhouse (*Architectura civilis*, Ulm 1628; Jacob Custos,
copper-plate engraving).

run. They were costly and there was nothing lasting about
them. This way, foreigners swindled the owners out of
a lot of money".[46] It is possible that the figures in these
water mechanisms depicted mythological creatures and
deities connected with water, such as nymphs.[47] New
garden features could have also been added later, under
the patronage of Petr Vok, who sometime before 1600
commissioned Georg Thumbler, a *Wassermeister*, to
create fountains for an unidentified Rožmberk *Lustgarten*.
This artist was known not only for his fountains, but
also for various hydraulic mechanisms or automatons.[48]
A document from 1586 mentions the delivery to
Kratochvíle of sculptures (fountains), likely from the
Innsbruck workshop of Alexander Colin (1527/29–1612),
which could hypothetically relate to these automatons.[49]
Water elements and various mechanisms were meant
to brighten up the environment and create impressive

effects, such as the play of light, mirroring, as well as
the movement and sounds of water. Italian designers
frequently played on these effects and similar approaches
were also used in various water works and fountains in the
gardens of Rudolphinian Prague.[50]

The element of water played an essential role in the
theory and practice of late-Renaissance Italian gardens.
The above-mentioned Italian humanist Annibal Caro, the
artistic adviser and garden designer of the Farnese family,
accentuated water in his designs, finding support for his
theories in ancient Roman descriptions of the different
parts of gardens and villas. Water is naturally connected
with plants, *spolia*, conches, grottoes and sculptures,
helping to create a space where natural and artistic
elements mingle and balance one other in an aesthetically
pleasing way (*Naturarchitektur*). Caro uses a number of
adjectives to depict the diverse effects of falling, flowing
or mirroring water which are satisfying not only visually,
but also acoustically and haptically.[51]

The garden of the Villa Kratochvíle provided an
ideal enclosed space for aristocratic self-representation
and relaxation (*locus amoenus*) as celebrated by classically-
inspired Renaissance theorists.[52] In humanist culture, this
paradiso became one of the connecting points between
the classical and Christian worldview, because the garden
was meant to serve as a site for the aristocrat's cultivation
and contemplation (Fig. 11). As the symbolical image of
paradise, the villa and the garden in Kratochvíle embodied
the multiform character and harmony of God's universe.
The combination of natural forces and human activity
created the complex image of the world, the macrocosm
reflected in the microcosm of the garden.[53] Architecture,
natural objects, sculptural monuments and paintings
together formed a harmony of *naturalia* and *artificialia*,
turning the garden into a multi-layered artwork.[54] In his

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[46] Ibid., 335. Jarmila Krčálová, "Kašny, fontány a vodní díla české a
moravské renesance", *Umění* 21, (1973): 527–541, esp. 531, 536.

[47] Krčálová, "Kašny, fontány a vodní díla", 531, 538.

[48] Tomáš Knoz, "Karel st. ze Žerotína: Stavebník a jeho stavitelé", *Cour
d'honneur* 1, (1998): 18–22, esp. 20.

[49] Krčálová, *Renesanční stavby*, 38; Sylva Dobalová, *Zahrady Rudolfa II.:
Jejich vznik a vývoj* (Praha: Artefactum, 2009), 269.

[50] Sylva Dobalová, "Der rudolphinische Garten des Schlosses in Brandeis
an der Elbe", *Studia Rudolphina* 10, (2010): 48–67.

[51] Keller, *Zum Villenleben*, 32–35; Silvio A. Bedini, "The Role of Automata

in the History of Technology", *Technology and Culture* 5, (1964): 24–42;
Birgit Franke, "Automaten in höfischen Lustgärten der Frühen Neuzeit", in
Automaten in Kunst und Literatur des Mittelalter und der Frühen Neuzeit,
eds. Klaus Grubmüller and Markus Stock (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz,
2003), 247–263.

[52] Alexander Samson, "Locus amoenus. Gardens and horticule in the
Renaissance", *Renaissance Studies* 25, (2011): 1–23.

[53] Giuliana Baldan Zenoni-Politeo and Antonella Pietrogrande, eds., *Il
giardino e la memoria del mondo* (Padova: Olschki, 2002), esp. 43–52.

[54] Lauterbach, "Jardins de la Renaissance", 219–232.

1550 description of the gardens at Salò around Garda Lake, Jacopo Bonfadio referred to this interplay of Art and Nature as "third nature".[55] It is therefore not surprising that Hans Jakob Fugger in his letter to Jacopo Strada called the above-mentioned Neugebäude near Vienna "a palace of Nature"[56] (see Fig. 2).

Rhetoric and sensuality of the Villa Kratochvíle

In his analysis of the Villa Barbaro in Maser, Lex Hermans points to a significant feature of sixteenth-century art theory emphasising the affinity between visual arts and rhetoric.[57] Since the publication of Alberti's treatise *On Painting*, it was generally believed that the primary goal of both artists and orators was to attract their audience's attention by means of powerful effects.[58] According to Lodovico Dolce (*Dialogo della Pittura*, 1557), the motionless artworks could "move" minds. The rhetorical aspect of early-modern architecture has deservedly become a subject of extensive research.[59] In the sixteenth century, it was widely discussed by theorists who generally emphasised the affinity between the human face and the facade as the face of a building, both sharing the same quality of expressiveness and persuasiveness. In his 1538 letter to the Venetian art collector Andrea Odoni, Pietro Aretino wrote the following: "But for anyone who

wants to see how clean and bright is his spirit, let him look at his face and his house".[60] A similar message appeared on the facade of the villa in Cricoli near Vicenza built by Giangiorgio Trissino (1478–1550), the aristocratic theorist and Andrea Palladio's first patron: "if you want to know the soul of the master, look at and think of his house".[61]

The rhetorical dimension of art of the early-modern era is connected with its increased intellectual potential and social status. It also follows the basic Aristotelian teaching on cognition through the visual – in this sense, the villas conveyed an architectural, visual message about their owners. According to Aristotle's conceptualisation of the senses, sight is the most important one, as it is directly connected with human cognitive abilities.[62] The Villa Kratochvíle can be perceived in just this spirit. The rhetorical dimension of the visual and, in case of the garden, generally sensual experiences was meant to capture the spectators' attention, but it required a level of sophistication on their part.[63] Kratochvíle's complex decorative program featuring Ovidian poetry and Livian histories reflected the classical learning of the two last Rožmberks, brothers Vilém and Petr Vok, whose interest in history, science and literature is evident from their rich library of more than 10,000 volumes.[64] This high sophistication is in keeping with Renaissance villa theory, which was not limited to emphasising purely visual attractiveness. In his *La villa* (1559), Bartolomeo Taegio, one of the first key authors of the so-called villa books, writes that the villas should

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[55] Lazzaro, *The Italian Renaissance Garden*, 9; Thomas E. Beck, "Gardens as a 'third nature': the ancient roots of a renaissance idea", *Studies in the History of Gardens & Designed Landscapes: An International Quarterly* 22, (2002): 327–334.

[56] Hans Jakob Fugger used the term ("*pallazo di natura*") in his letter from November 13, 1568 to Jacopo Strada, see 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: Deutscher Kunstverlag, 1987), 117–118; Karl Schütz, "Art and Culture at the Court of Emperor Maximilian II", in *Arcimboldo, 1526–1593*, ed. Sylvia Ferino-Pagden (Wien: Kunsthistorisches Museum, 2007), 77.

[57] Lex Hermans, "Built-in Eloquence: Rhetorik in Architecture and the Villa Barbaro at Maser," *Notizie di Palazzo Albani, Rivista di storia e toeriadelle arti* 34–35, (2005–2006): 53–74.

[58] Anthony Grafton, *Leon Battista Alberti. Master Builder of the Italian Renaissance* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press 1983), 111–149.

[59] Christine Smith, *Architecture in the Culture of Early Humanism. Ethics, Aesthetics, and Eloquence 1400–1470* (Oxford: Oxford University

Press, 1992); Carsten-Peter Warncke, "Rhetorik der Architektur in der frühen Neuzeit", in *Johann Conrad Schlaun, 1695–1773: Architektur des Spätbarock in Europa*, ed. Klaus Bußmann et al. (Stuttgart: Oktagon, 1995), 612-621; Charles Burroughs, *The Italian Renaissance Palace Facade: Structures of Authority, Surfaces of Sense* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

[60] Lex Hermans, "The Rules of Rhetoric as Manual for Reading Classicist Architecture", *International Journal of Architectural Theory* 12, no. 2 (2008), online.

[61] Ibid.

[62] Stuart Clark, *Vanities of the Eye. Vision in Early Modern European Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 9.

[63] John Shearman, *Only connect... Art and Spectator in the Italian Renaissance* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 225. On communicative aspects of images see Martin Kemp, *Behind the Picture: Art and Evidence in the Italian Renaissance* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997).

[64] Lenka Bobková, *Knihy na dvoře Rožmberků* (Praha: Knihovna Akademie věd ČR: Scriptorium, 2005).

develop three pleasures of human bodies and minds: sensual pleasure, spiritual pleasure (i.e. contemplation of natural wonders created by God), and the pleasure of the sensual and the intellectual, combined and stimulated by the interconnection of Art and Nature.[65] It is not surprising that the architectural concept of Kratochvíle as a mansion set in a natural environment and decorated with remarkable artworks reflected also the main aspect of the early-modern residence, that is, the principle of *decorum*.

Decorum or appropriateness was an important concept in the work of Annibal Caro, the above-mentioned art connoisseur and humanist adviser on the subject of villas and their gardens, whose ideas appear to have penetrated into Central Europe. In his view, the villa should be situated in a pleasant place in the country, complemented with garden and fountains, and should provide space for relaxation and hunting. He also recommends that the ground-floor rooms of the residence, that is, those closest to the garden, should be decorated with pastoral and mythological scenes (as in his design for Villa Giulia, the Roman villa of Julius III).[66] In Caro's design, both the villa and its garden feature examples of deities and creatures connected with pastoral poetry, such as satyrs and nymphs, Silenus, Bacchus, Pan, and earth goddesses Diana, Flora, Ceres and Pomona. The fountains contain sculptures of Neptune, various river gods, water nymphs and sea monsters.[67] Ovid's *Metamorphoses* is recommended as a suitable source of inspiration for the villa decoration.[68] According to Gian Paolo Lomazzo (1528–1592) and other theorists, these pastoral scenes, *favole*, were appropriate for less formal secular spaces immediately connected with nature, such as the entrance areas or the *sala terrena*.[69] The theorists recommended Biblical or historical stories (*storie*) for decoration of reception halls on the upper floors or in

the *piano nobile*.[70] Both of these thematic areas were seen as related to the villa decoration. In his letter from 1601, Cardinal Silvio Antoniano (1540–1603) wrote to Pietro Aldobrandini (1571–1621), another cardinal and patron of art, that the villa decoration should comprise "stories of gods, nature, as well as moral issues, that is, everything real but also mythical".[71] Kratochvíle's decoration is arranged according to the same principle: hunting and natural scenes on the ground floor and biblical and historical (ancient Roman) scenes on the second floor. The entrance part of the villa demonstrates the sensual diversity of the depicted natural scenes in immediate connection with the actual nature around. It features hunting scenes and landscapes and especially mythological scenes from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, all set in elegant *grotesque* decorative patterns. In another ground-floor hall, this mythological thread continues with murals depicting Autumnus, Cyparissus and Vertumnus, gods representing natural fertility.[72]

At Kratochvíle, the fertility and bounty of nature is further represented by the water elements in the garden: the canal, the fountains, the pneumatic/hydraulic automatons and also the water deities on the banks of an imaginary body of water depicted on the window sills in Kratochvíle's central Golden Hall. This iconography may refer to Vilém of Rožmberk as ruler of the South-Bohemian "water realm", because the Rožmberks had built an extensive network of fish ponds which became one of the mainstays of the estate's economy.[73] However, as emphasised by Caro's work, in Renaissance villa gardens water played primarily the role of a rich source of sensual experiences.[74] In Kratochvíle, the refined effects of real water were complemented by painted images inside, creating a physical connection between nature (in the form of real water channel behind the windows) and art.[75] In

[65] Thomas E. Beck, ed., *Bartolomeo Taegio: La villa* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), 249.

[66] Keller, *Zum Villenleben*, 57.

[67] Elisabeth MacDougall, "Imitation and Invention: Language and Decoration in Roman Renaissance Gardens", *Journal of Garden History* 5, no. 2 (1985): 119–134, esp. 124.

[68] Cappelletti, "L'uso delle Metamorfosi", 116.

[69] Claudia Cieri Via, *L'arte delle metamorfosi. Decorazioni mitologiche nel Cinquecento* (Roma: Lithos, 2003), 31.

[70] Cieri Via, *L'arte delle metamorfosi*, 70, 76, 84, 88–89.

[71] Thimann, *Lügehafte Bilder*, passim; Cappelletti, "L'uso delle Metamorfosi", 118.

[72] Paul van der Ree, Garrit Smienk and Clemens Steebergen, *Italian Villas and Gardens* (München: Prestel, 1992), 16.

[73] Alois Míka, *Osud slavného domu: rozkvět a pád rožmberského dominia (České Budějovice: Růže, 1970).*

[74] Françoise Boudon, "Jardins d'eau et jardins de pente dans la France de la Renaissance", in *Architecture, jardin, paysage. L'environnement du château et de la villa aux XVe et XVIe siècles*, ed. Jean Guillaume (Paris: Picard, 1999), 137–183.

[75] See Konrad Ottenheym' s and Tatjana van Run's paper in this volume, "The Admiral, his Villa and the Smell of Gun Powder, Sea and Glory" where a related example, that of Admiral Tromp's villa Trompenburg in 's-Graveland, is discussed.

his account of the Villa d'Este in Tivoli, Caro describes the complex sensual and emotional experience of the water features in this garden. In its refined sensuousness, the interrelated composition of visual, haptic and acoustic effects of water is almost erotic. The pleasure of the senses mirrors uncontrollable natural fertility – represented in Kratochvíle by the goddess Ceres and the nymphs – and contains an erotic subtext.[76] Water as a bearer of natural-fertility symbolism was strongly present in Italian villa architecture and landscaping.[77]

There was a good reason for emphasising natural fertility. Kratochvíle was not only a *curiosum* designed to surprise and astonish its visitors, but also an environment meant to stimulate its mistress. Aside from functioning as a place of self-representation where Vilém received his numerous guests and held political meetings, or as a hunting-lodge and a refuge for relaxation, Kratochvíle was especially important as a nuptial residence for Vilém's last two wives. It is documented that Vilém was deeply sorrowed by his lack of an heir as all his marriages failed in this respect. His fourth wife, Polyxena of Pernštejn, represented the last hope for the aging aristocrat. Celebratory poems issued on the occasion of their wedding urged the new couple to conceive the Rožmberk heir.[78] Kratochvíle's decoration also explicitly refers to this aspect of the new marriage. The stuccoes in Polyxena's apartment depict the natural cycle of seasons, the goddesses Ceres and Flora (who embody the continuity of time and the family lineage), water birds and cupids with arrows. Placed directly in the wife's bedroom, these scenes likely referred to the consummation of the marriage. It was a common practice in Renaissance households to use visual or verbal expressions of openly erotic or even lascivious character.[79] Renaissance homes contained numerous artefacts that were related to the reproductive aspects of marriage and served as examples and a source of stimulation, or sometimes as
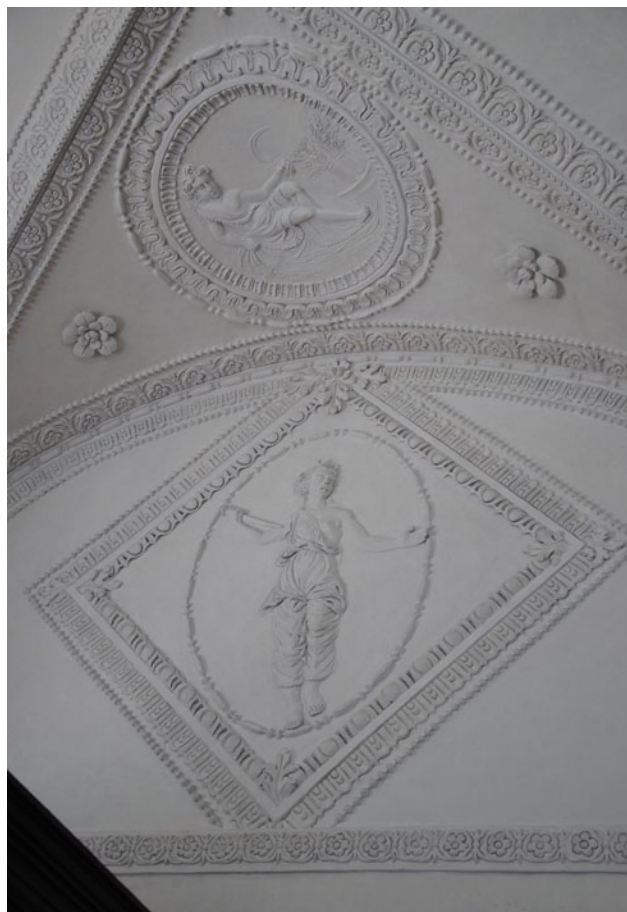

Fig. 12. Lucretia and personifications of Summer, bedroom of Polexyna of Rožmberk (born of Pernštejn), Antonio Melana/Melani/da Melano, around 1590.

talismans (images of the Virgin Mary etc.).[80] Principles of fertility, the natural cycles and continuity of the family lineage were key to Renaissance marriage symbolism.[81] The couple confirmed their union through agreements and wedding rituals, but also through the permanent presence of objects acquired during the ceremony or through decorations made specifically for the occasion in

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[76] Lazzaro, *The Italian Renaissance Garden*, 136, 144.

[77] MacDougall, "Imitation and Invention", 124–125.

[78] Václav Bok, "Literatura a literární kultura spjatá s rodem Rožmberků", in *Rožmberkové.* **Rod českých velmožů**, 257.

[79] Marta Ajmar-Wollheim, "'The Spirit Is Ready, but the Flesh Is Tired': Erotic Objects and Marriage in Early Modern Italy", in *Erotic Cultures of Renaissance Italy*, ed. Sara F. Matthews-Grieco (Farnham-Burlington: Ashgate, 2010), 141–169.

[80] Geraldine A. Johnson, "Beautiful Brides and Model Mother: The Devotional and Talismanic Function of Early Modern Marian Reliefs", in *The Material Culture of Sex, Procreation, and Marriage in Premodern Europe*, eds. Anne L. McClanan and Karen Rosoff Encarnación (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001), 135–161; Adrian W. B. Randolph, "Renaissance Household Goddesses: Fertility, Politics and the Gendering of Spectatorship", in: Ibid., 163–189.

[81] Jaqueline Marie Musacchio, *The Art and Ritual of Childbirth in Renaissance Italy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), 17.

the interiors of aristocratic palaces. Thus, the marriage and the birth of the offspring produced numerous interesting visual artefacts in Renaissance households, celebrating the fertility of the married couple, the auspicious association of families and the triumph of love. At Kratochvíle, this anxiously awaited "triumph of love" was represented by the popular and in this case highly significant cupids and putti in Polyxena's bedroom. The art objects and decorations in the family mansions were commissioned specifically as a perpetual reminder of the marriage and the offspring that would arise from it.[82] This coming together of the sensual and the erotic at Kratochvíle is apparent not only within the natural sphere (both symbolic and actual) but also in the sphere of history, as the Roman *storie* (especially the tale of Lucretia and the heroic stories) in Polyxena's apartment traditionally held the potential to motivate the conception of an heir (Fig. 12). Still, it was the mutuality of natural and artificial elements and their sensual effects that in the end played the key role in the conception of the Villa Kratochvíle.

Conclusion

Kratochvíle represents a specific type of villa architecture of the early-modern era not only in its formal aspect, but also through the culture of *villeggiatura* for which it was a site, creating a cultivated environment for aristocratic relaxation and self-representation. In accordance with sixteenth-century villa theory, the Rožmberk villa, like the many other examples referred to in the essay, provided an array of sensual stimuli – the surrounding landscape and the garden with its diverse plants were a feast for the senses. The hunting reserve offered an unmediated access to the animals, while the garden with its waterworks and hydraulic automatons invited a more cultivated appreciation of diverse sensual pleasures. The impressive effects of the natural elements, especially water, were complemented by the motifs in the villa interiors which combined paintings and sculptural works to enhance the sensuousness, and illusiveness of the villa's decoration. This sensual potential of Kratochvíle was essentially connected with the function of the country seat. At the very beginning of the villa's construction, Vilém of Rožmberk clearly formulated his intention to erect an exceptional, "glorious building" that would demonstrate his social status and attract attention. In Kratochvíle, the hunting role was closely connected with the self-representation attributes of the mansion as a backdrop for diverse social activities, meetings and festivities. The hunting-lodge type of the country villa proved to be particularly viable in the architecture of the early-modern era, as it provided the opportunity for architectural experimentation and new forms, using a combination of diverse architectural elements along with the villa's most characteristic feature: the plethora of sensual stimuli. Together, the natural and refined, artificial aspects of the villa created an idiosyncratic world calling for sensuous engagement.[83] The case of Kratochvíle shows that even in the somewhat peripheral South Bohemia, the concept of the sensual villa could take on a unique form.

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[82] Sara F. Matthews-Grieco, "Marriage and Sexuality", in *At Home in Renaissance Italy*, eds. Marta Ajmar-Wollheim and Flora Dennis (London: V & A Publishing, 2006), 104–123.

[83] Sabine Frommel, "L'Italie de la Renaissance, du casino di caccia a la résidence de chasses", in *Chasses princières dans l'Europe de la Renaissance: Actes du colloque de Chambord*, eds. Claude d'Anthenaise and Monique Chatenet (Paris: ACTES SUD edition, 2007), 289–326, esp. 290, 308.