

VILLA KRATOCHVÍLE AS AN EXAMPLE OF AN ITALIAN GARDEN IN THE CZECH LANDS

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Abstract

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The paper deals with an example of the Italian garden applied as a type in the Czech lands. Villa Kratochvíle is one of the very few cases of an independently created Renaissance villa in the territory of the Czech Republic. Its author was an Italian builder coming from the area around Como Lake – Baldassare Maggi and he was commissioned by a significant Czech nobleman, William of Rosenberg. Villa Kratochvíle together with the surrounding landscape is compared with the landscape of lakes around Mantua and Palazzo Te, which is typologically similar. Especially the use of large water bodies is what these two places and their surrounding landscape have in common. Italian arts came to the Czech lands directly with Italian artists – one of them was the garden design. However, it was transformed there by the cultural tradition as well as the geographical location.

Keywords: villa Kratochvíle, history of garden design, Czech historic garden, garden design development, Czech Renaissance

INTRODUCTION

Czech lands had an important position in the political and cultural sphere of Europe in the first half of the 16th century. Prague was one of the seats of the Austrian branch of the Habsburgs, who had just ascended to the Czech throne. The first ruler was Ferdinand I (1503–1564). He was enchanted by the new lifestyle born in Italy – Renaissance. It was thanks to him that Renaissance was introduced in the Czech lands. He built Queen Anne's Summer Palace with its garden, which has become a prominent Czech Renaissance building and he started with the import of exotic plants. His son Ferdinand II of Tyrol participated in the design of the Hvězda Summer Palace (Letohrádek Hvězda) an early renaissance building. In the mid-16th century, a large number of bricklayers, stonemasons and plasterers from Italy and all territories north of the Alps came to Prague. Most of them came from the areas around Como and Lugano Lakes; therefore they were referred to as *artisti dei laghi* in the literature (Macek, 2015). The Italians worked at Prague Castle

for the ruler and important aristocrats. One of the most important ones was William of Rosenberg, who served as the High Burgrave.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The model building, Villa Kratochvíle, has been analysed and subjected to a detailed historical exploration. We have used archives – The State Regional Archive in Třeboň (Státní oblastní archiv v Třeboni) and its branch in Český Krumlov, where archive documents from the Netolice Farm and family archives of the Eggenbergs and the Schwarzenbergs are located. Further, the lives of the last Rosenbergs have been investigated in detail – as pictured in Václav Březan's Chronicle and Jaroslav Pánek's publications – as well as the Rosenberg library, researched in Lenka Veselá's *Knihy na dvoře Rožmberků* (Books in the Rosenberg Court). Another source of information is the villa itself and its observations within the landscape context. As the exact appearance of the garden at the time of its origin is not known, the author tries

to analyse its composition based on the principle of golden ratio and ideal relations. The outcome is a graphical analysis of the entire area of Villa Kratochvíle. Within the search for the original appearance of the garden, also unpublished garden designs from more recent periods have been explored as well as the accompanying letters; however, no remark has been found as to whether the more recent designs are based on the original state in any way.

RESULTS

William of Rosenberg was a very active builder, very familiar with current trends. His palace at Hradčany was one of the first to be built in the Renaissance style. Part of it was a garden created by Ulrico Aostalli between 1573–74. It was designed architecturally, surrounded by arcades supporting galleries (Krčálová, 1989). However, the main seat of the Rosenbergs was Český Krumlov, where they had a large palace. It was rebuilt in the Renaissance style under the control of Italian architect Baldassare Maggi. Like every Italian magnate, William wanted to have his villa where he could escape the obligations of a high public official. So he had Kratochvíle built, a beautiful example of Italian architecture in the area north of the Alps.

Kratochvíle was meant to be perceived as a significant piece within the mosaic of European garden design. It has an interesting arrangement of the entire space, which includes work with water, and the landscape. Kratochvíle is not significant for its size, but it is one of the first Renaissance pieces in the Czech lands which were created as a separate composed unit without links to old structures. Its layout is unique in the Czech lands¹.

Italian culture in the court of Rosenberg

William of Rosenberg (1579–1592) was the ruler of the Rosenberg dominion, which held estimated six to seven percent of the population of the Czech lands (Pánek, 1998). He was a very educated man with a broad cultural horizon. He gained his knowledge by studying books as well as travelling all over Europe. William collected books diligently and his library contained a number of valuable books, especially incunabula (Veselá, 2005). He was very well acquainted with the art and architecture of his time. Just like his ancestors, he endeavored to revive the myth that the Rosenberg family had their origin in the Italian family of Orsini² and thus confirm a direct link of his family to Italy

(Pánek, 1998). This 'Orsini fiction' was created very consistently and in addition to official documents, which the Rosenbergs had prepared, the myth was also strengthened by hymns. One of these is Rosa Rosensis by Jacob Canter³; in the foreword the author explains the origin of the Rosenberg coat of arms. As interpreted by Šimek: „*Among the descendants of the Troya citizen and Rome founder, Aeneas, was the Roman family of Orsini, which is illustrated by the red rose in their coat of arms, the symbol of Aeneas's mother, Venus. The same symbol is found in the Rosenberg family, so their Roman, Trojan, and finally divine origin cannot be doubted*“ (Šimek, 2011).

The orientation of the Rosenbergs toward Italy has its origins in the times of Peter IV (1462–1523), William's great-grandfather, who studied there 1476–1478. He brought several incunabula from Italy and they formed one third of the Rosenberg library. The Rosenberg library was gradually expanded until 1510, when the traditional travels of the Rosenbergs to Italian universities stopped. The recovery came with William of Rosenberg and his brother Peter Vok, who paid large amounts for the books. One of the incunabula was the famous work *Opus ruralium* by Pietro Crescenzi from 1486. Several books were devoted to architecture and modern astronomy and astrology. Tycho Brahe personally presented Peter Vok with his work *Astronomiae instauratae Mechanica* from 1598. The Rosenberg library also contained classic writings by Vitruvius and modern work of Dutchman Vredeman de Vries, as well as a number of travel books and books about the history of cities and nations (Veselá, 2005).

Architecture pattern books and treatises were the major sources of knowledge of new trends in architecture. One of the most popular authors in the Czech lands was Sebastiano Serlio. His books were used as pattern books for architects and builders. Jacopo Strada (1515–1588) spread this work through the Czech lands, a friend of William of Rosenberg working in the services of Rudolf II (1576–1611). Jacopo Strada's publication of the Seventh Book on Architecture was printed in Frankfurt in 1575, and dedicated to William⁴.

Journey to Italy

Personal experience and stories brought by the nobles and artists from their travels were the most valuable influences on artistic work. One important exchange was the journey of the Czech nobility to Genoa, which took place in 1551 on the occasion of welcoming archduke Maximilian

1 It tends to be compared with some of the imperial buildings, such as Neugebäude, but its style and scale are very different.

2 It was a fictional, but very sophisticated linking of the families, based on the resemblance of their coats of arms. The Orsinis found the myth useful so they did not refute it.

3 The exact date of the hymn is not known, literature reports a range of years 1497–1498. (Šimek, 2011), p. 267

4 Jacopo Strada was an architectural scholar, who linked William of Rosenberg and Palazzo Te. He prepared Descrizione di tutta Italia for the Duke Albrecht V in 1567, in which he describes Palazzo Te.



1: G. Bertazzolo, *Urbis Mantuae descriptio*, Mantova/Mantua 1628. Bibliotheca Teresiana, Comune di Mantova

with his wife Mary, daughter of the Spanish King, Charles V (Pánek, 1998). The welcome ceremony was attended not only by the Czech nobility, but also the Spanish, Germans, the Flemish, and Burgundians (Stagno, 2002).

William of Rosenberg participated in this trip at the age of 16, soon after he had become the ruler of his domain. As the High Burgrave, he was asked by the Emperor to leave his domain to administrators and participate in the important noble visit to Genoa. The journey over the Alps was not easy. It took a month, but the first stop was a great reward. It was Mantua, the seat of the Gonzaga family.

There is no doubt that Mantua must have left a lasting impression on all of the nobles. At that time Mantua was an impressive place. (Fig. 1) On approach, the visitors saw the vast lakes with a town in their midst. The town's fortifications were huge, tall, emerging right out of the water. The overall image was the one of an island floating in the middle of a large body of water. This seems to be the source of inspiration in Villa Kratochvíle – an island floating in water – together with Palazzo Te, which was a part of Mantua fortifications. The journey led the nobles on to Genoa, where the noble expedition spent three months against their will. As a result,

they gained good knowledge of Italian lifestyle, new habits, diet, clothing, and music (Pánek, 1998).

Villa Kratochvíle

Villa Kratochvíle⁵ has been chosen as an example of direct Italian influence in the Czech lands. It lies in South Bohemia, in the south-west of the Czech Republic. William of Rosenberg chose the location of the villa in a flat country full of lakes and ponds. He exchanged the agricultural court Leptáň, which was built near Netolice by the Rosenberg domain regent, Jakub Krčín of Jelčany for town Sedlčany and began to realize there his dream – Kratochvíle.

William of Rosenberg wanted to follow one of the fashions of the Renaissance – living in villas. Kratochvíle was an Italian villa adapted to the local natural as well as cultural background. Kratochvíle cannot be classified using a classic typology of Italian villas; still, it meets the traditional requirements for a *villa* as formulated in antiquity. It was the opportunity to relax, escape from urban life, duties of a politician, and plague diseases, a place for leisure and hunting. Kratochvíle with its vast hunting park offered hunting as well as the development of other classic aristocratic skills, as advised by Bernardo Castiglione in his

5 The name of the villa itself, Kratochvíle (in German Kurzweil), means something that you do to pass the time.

Courtier. Kratochvíle is not a *villa rustica*, defined by Renaissance as a self-sufficient farm. William stayed at Kratochvíle mainly in the summer months and invited distinguished guests there⁶ so it could be referred to as *casino* using the Italian terminology. In Czech it is often referred to as a hunting lodge (in German Jagdschloss), evidenced by the decoration of the interior⁷.

William wanted to show his architectural and artistic education of the time and understanding for the Italian way of life in the villas, but adapted to life north of the Alps. Inspired by his travels, William built his summer residence in a landscape of ponds, taking advantage of the potential of water to create a water garden, and in contrast with the regular garden layout (*locus amoenus*) he added a hunting park, which symbolised *locus terribilis*. The Renaissance philosophy defined these contrasts as the essential conflicts of the wild world and the world of people.

Only a few buildings of the Czech Renaissance were founded without a tie to old building structures, in the “green field”. Kratochvíle was one of them. Rosenberg’s builder, Baldassare Maggi⁸, who worked on the reconstruction of the main Rosenberg seat in Český Krumlov, was commissioned to build a representative summer residence in a contemporary spirit. The professional literature attempts to find a direct model of Kratochvíle, but Maggi did not copy any of the known buildings. However, we can see a type resemblance with north Italian Palazzo Te in Mantua, as described above. Palazzo Te is a villa on a separate island and a part of Mantua fortifications. The villa with the garden is flat and axially symmetric. A large body of water is a significant element of the garden. We can presume there were waterworks. Both the villa and the garden were enclosed in walls. Maggi chose a simple rectangular layout, based on the longitudinal axis. He used the juxtaposition of water and the residential building, which naturally dominates the complex, and surrounded it with an enclosing wall.

Since its creation, Kratochvíle was the centre of the Netolice hunting park, which was crossed by a system of ponds interconnected by a human made canal Krčínka (Preusz *et al.*, 2013). The park was a place where distinguished visitors met and, as recorded by the chronicler in 1586: “...they hunted the deer, and good hunting they had.” (Březan, 1847) The hunting park was approx. 22 km in circumference – five villages had disappeared due to it. Chronicler Václav Březan described it as follows: “... a large hunting park, which has no equal in Bohemia, which is nearly two miles around ...”⁹

The circumference was marked by a perimeter wall. Krčínka, which was the backbone of the park, brought water to the garden of Kratochvíle. It was about eight kilometers long and it was a major technical work. Traces of this unique Renaissance landscape are still obvious there.

To describe the villa of the time, we only have its current appearance, chronicler Březan’s descriptions, and a few later drawings or paintings. The paintings that were supposedly made by Bartoloměj Beránek-Jelínek for Rudolf II have been lost and other contemporary documents do not exist. One of the oldest paintings comes from Henry de Veerle from the year 1686, but its information value about the garden is very low. After the Thirty Years’ War [1618–1648], site descriptions would not say much about its former beauty. We can only see part of a regular grid of trees, and perhaps a central circular element, but the painting does not provide any more detailed information. Some authors believe (Bůžek, 2012) that Veerle’s painting has its basis in Jelínek’s paintings.

Kratochvíle composition

Baldassare Maggi was commissioned to create architecture he had known from his home. When designing the villa, he stuck to clear and already used patterns based on the principle of the golden ratio. The garden is axially symmetrical; its shape is strongly determined by the enclosing walls. (Fig. 2) However, the overall composition includes the space in front of the linear entrance building, so the total dimensions of the garden start with the water canal in front of the entrance. This delimits a square module, whose sides correspond to the width of the “island”, where the palace stands.

The construction of the building itself is very simple. The walls are interrupted by windows only, but to create the impression of the Italian ornate villas it has illusive painting on the facades. The painting divides the facade by pilasters, niches and cornices. The facade which is turned into the garden is complemented by a painting of a tower, which emphasizes the staircase inside the house. Unfortunately, the viewing angle afforded for the painting feels somewhat awkward.

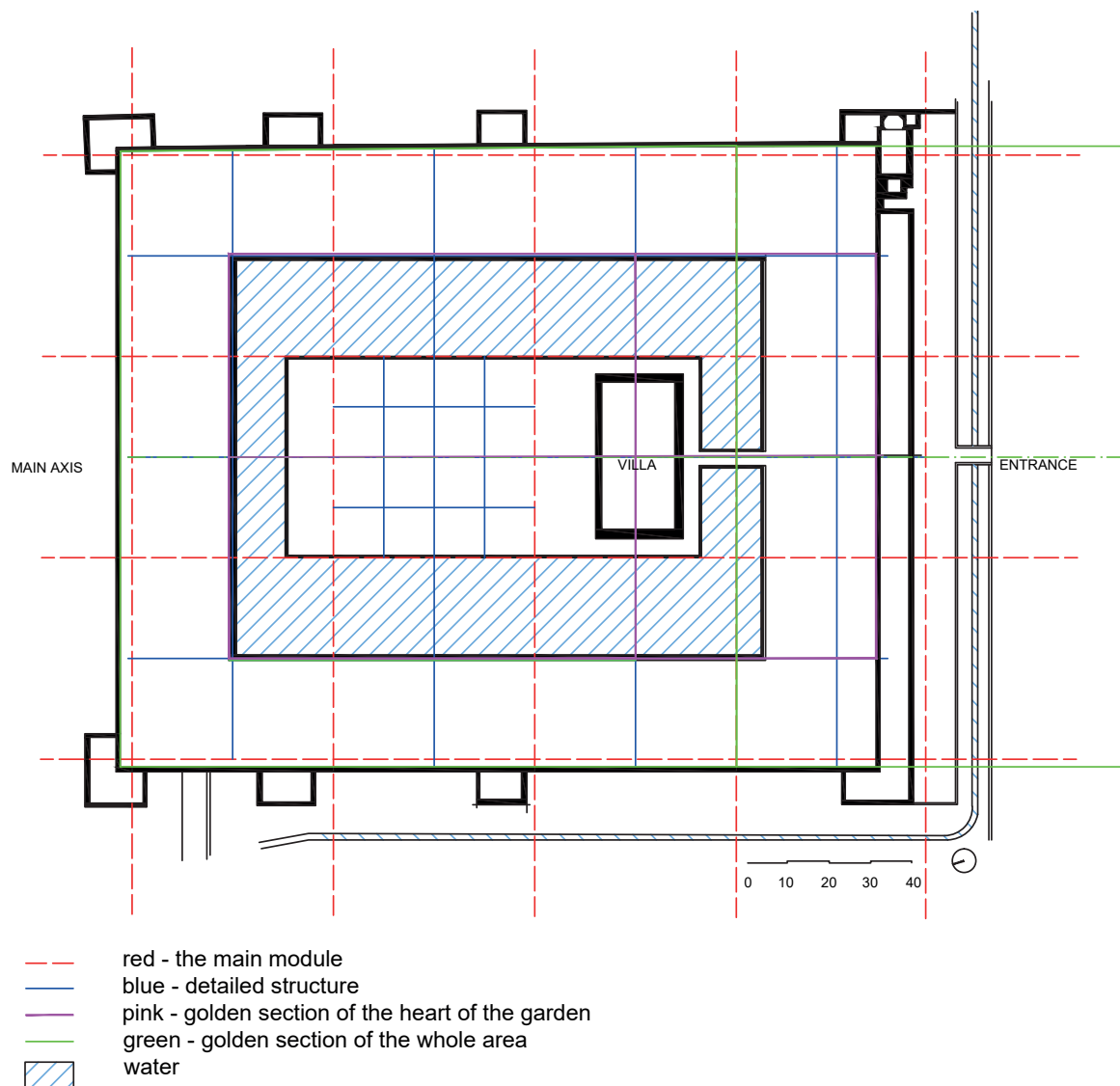
The garden space is complemented by the surrounding hilly landscape, which contrasts the strict plane of the garden. The dark vegetation of surrounding forests forms another contrast with the light architecture and open space. The walls produce an impression of protection from wilderness beyond the walls of the garden.

6 For example, Ferdinand II, Archduke of Austria, was accommodated there on July 27, 1588.

7 The definition of the architectural character of the villa is provided by Ondřej Jakubec. (Jakubec, 2012)

8 Maggi was one of migrant builders from northern Italy. He came from a small town of Arogno and permanently settled in the Czech lands.

9 *ibid.*



2: Kratochvíle – an analysis of the composition, drawing by author

Villa Kratochvíle represents a classic Renaissance contrast between bound construction and unbridled nature, which, human beings only started to tame. Humans learned to control water as well as fire, thanks to their knowledge of mathematics, technology and science. Confined nature, inside impenetrable walls is limited to a safe, human scale distributed in geometric shapes. Inside these shapes it is possible to grow various plant species, from herbs which can be used for medicine to various decorative or exotic species.

The mid-16th century is a period when plants in general started to be of interest and their life was becoming the subject of research in the Czech lands.

William of Rosenberg supported botanical research in his gardens in Prague, Český Krumlov and Kratochvíle. For example, Tadeáš Hájek of Hájek with his student, Adam Zalužanský of Zalužany, who dedicated his book *Methodi herbariae libri tres* (Three Books on Botanical Method) to William in 1592, worked there. William of Rosenberg was one of the patrons who allowed Hájek to translate the Mattioli's Herbarium into Czech¹⁰. The Rosenbergs joined the effort to establish botanical gardens and their libraries included a total of 29 herbariums and several writings about the natural science (Mattioli, Adam Lonitzer, Andrea Cesalpino) (Veselá, 2005).

¹⁰ Hájek added several pieces of his own botanical knowledge and pictures to the translation, raising thus the values of the book. The Herbarium is also a good source of knowledge concerning the introduction of some plants to Central Europe.

Water, which was a necessary part of the Italian Renaissance garden, became the main motif also at Kratochvíle. A sophisticated water system brought water to the garden and fed the artificial lake that surrounds the island with the palace. It was an artistic as well as technical solution, because the oak piles supporting the house had to be kept under water. The lake became a stylized water landscape, representing the Renaissance desire of humans to understand and dominate nature. It could also be a place of controlled hunting of birds, as the literature of the time testifies.

Water appeared in other places around the garden, chronicler Václav Březan says. However, he himself was not really excited about the machines. Except his brief report from 1586 in the chronicle, we have no document which would describe the form of the water features. Expert literature presents a report that the water machines were imported from a sculptural workshop in Innsbruck (Krčálová, 1989).

Based on the current knowledge of the Italian garden and the publications of the time, we can at least guess how these water works looked like and how they worked¹¹. The main principle was naturally the water in motion, which the Italians were able to make use of in its natural flow. However, the prerequisite was a steep terrain, which gave the water dynamics. The source of water at Kratochvíle was the already mentioned canal. However, it came through the valley from the western side, and could hardly gain sufficient speed for the water mechanisms. The terrain topography around Kratochvíle provides other possible sources of dynamic water for the garden, but only a survey could prove their existence. If the water could not be moved by gravity, it could have been put in movement by a system of mechanisms and fed to the system of water puns. There is also a presumption that it was pumped into the entrance tower and then sent to the water features (Krčálová, 1989).

Water in the Italian garden formed the entire iconographic program of the villa, therefore the water elements took forms of mythological figures from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, Bible or they were astrological symbols, such as a sundial with the signs of the zodiac. Such elements in the area north of the Alps are known, for example, from the garden in Ostrov nad Ohří¹², or even the better-known garden Hortus Palatinus at Heidelberg. The figures of the water system were supposed to tell a story in which also the garden owner's symbol appears. Should the iconography

of the garden be related to the interior of the palace, the main protagonist would be the biblical Samson or Romulus.

Due to the fact that no engraving showing the original garden layout has been preserved, we can only infer its original spatial arrangement. Naturally, we can start from classic Renaissance shapes, such as a square and a circle, but this will only get us to the overall arrangement of the garden. But how did the garden really look? Did the botanists get the beds in the main section behind the house? Or were they pushed to the lands around the lake? Both are possible, since the Renaissance admired each plant individually and allowed it to decorate flower beds. There could be raised flower beds, such as in Orto Botanico of Padua, on a square plan, with the center highlighted by a water element. The sculptural decoration of the garden could have included water features, but also elements of astrology, which was very popular among the nobility at that time. Whatever the arrangement of the garden was, it was definitely a valuable example of the Italian architecture the Alps.

Transformations of the garden in the 17th and 18th centuries

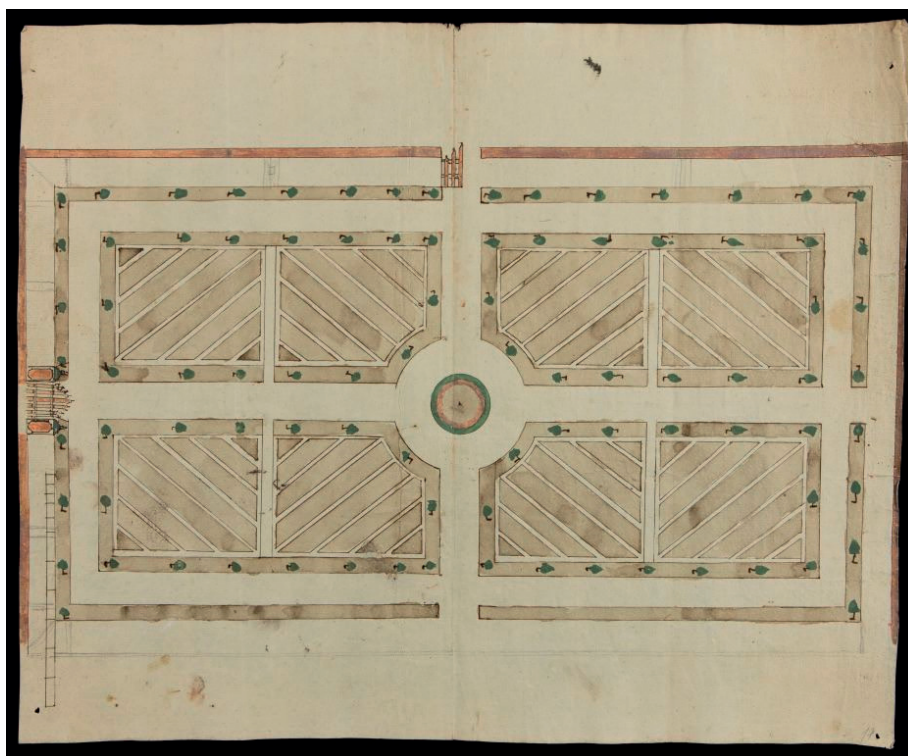
Kratochvíle was inherited by Peter Vok, who was forced to sell it together with Český Krumlov to Rudolf II in 1601. The Emperor liked Kratochvíle very much; he even had it painted in two perspectives, neither one of them has been preserved. The author of the paintings was Bartoloměj Beránek-Jelínek.

In 1622 the Eggenbergs got Kratochvíle as part of the Český Krumlov domain for their good services to the emperor. Until 1682, when Marie Ernestina and Johann Christian started with the reconstruction of the Český Krumlov castle, nothing important had changed in the domain. However, Český Krumlov became their seat, and so they started to use it as William of Rosenberg had intended, even with the summer residence Kratochvíle. The letters from countess Marie Ernestina to Franz von Dietrichstein (Zahradičková, 2014) show that they spent their summer months there. Their correspondence dates back to 1685–86, and most letters were sent in 1685 from Kratochvíle, i.e., very soon after the reconstruction of the Český Krumlov castle started. In the letters, the countess mentioned that she came there to cure herself of various diseases and also that the air in Český Krumlov is not very favourable for her, and she hoped that she would feel better in Netolice¹³. Kratochvíle may have also offered a refuge from the building works in

11 One of the historical publications, which William of Rosenberg had in his library, was a writing by Agostino Ramelli *Le diverse et artificiose machine* from 1588.

12 see KULHÁNKOVÁ, Z. 2012. The garden in Ostrov nad Ohří as an example of European garden design development. *Studies in the History of Gardens and Designed Landscapes*, XXXII(3): 214–239

13 *ibid.*, p. 33



3: The garden plan from 1767, not sign., SOA Třeboň, sig.: VIG alfa 2a28

the Krumlov castle. A painting by Jindřich de Veerle, the court painter, from 1686 illustrates the interest of the rulers of Český Krumlov in Kratochvíle. The painting does not have a high information value for the garden – we can see the regular arrangement of flowerbeds, trees in a regular grid, the lake – but the main emphasis was placed on picturing the palace. The painting also shows the hunting park that was attached to the palace.

Marie Ernestina was in charge of the Kratochvíle garden. We have an interesting correspondence, demonstrating Countess Marie Ernestina's great interest in what was happening in the garden¹⁴. The oldest letter concerning the Kratochvíle garden comes from March 1700 and the countess is asking how the planted trees are doing. Apparently, it was her initiative to plant the garden. We can deduce from historical sources that she had a regular grid of cut European box established there, because in 1768, in the times of Joseph Adam from Schwarzenberg, the garden started to be "levelled" and the boxes were transported from Kratochvíle to Krumlov, where „the Duke had them moved to the Upper Garden and used to decorate it“¹⁵. It seems that the amount of the shrubs was huge, as there is the note that 12

carriages will be needed. Another letter is Marie Ernestina's order that „juniper in the Kratochvíle lustgarten [pleasure garden] must not be cut, but left to spontaneously grow and shape.“¹⁶ Another countess's command is dated from 1709: „The fountains in the new garden of Kratochvíle should be decorated by green boards, as indicated and as the gardener was told.“¹⁷ It is apparent that the countess and her husband liked to visit the garden and take care of it; unfortunately, none of the plans of the time have been preserved. There is only Veerle's veduta, which, however, comes from the time before the garden was finished. The garden included the pheasantry, for which the countess also issued a number of principles. The fact that the pheasantry was an integral part of the garden is confirmed by various period images, for example, the Map of the Schwarzenberg estates dating from 1711, which depicts Kratochvíle (Fürst. Eggenbergl. Schloss Kurzweil) very schematically, but with a fenced area full of trees¹⁸. The painting emphasizes the enclosing wall, the entrance tower and the palace.

In 1719, after Marie Ernestina's death, the Eggenberg domain passed on her nephew Adam Franz of Schwarzenberg, which was the last

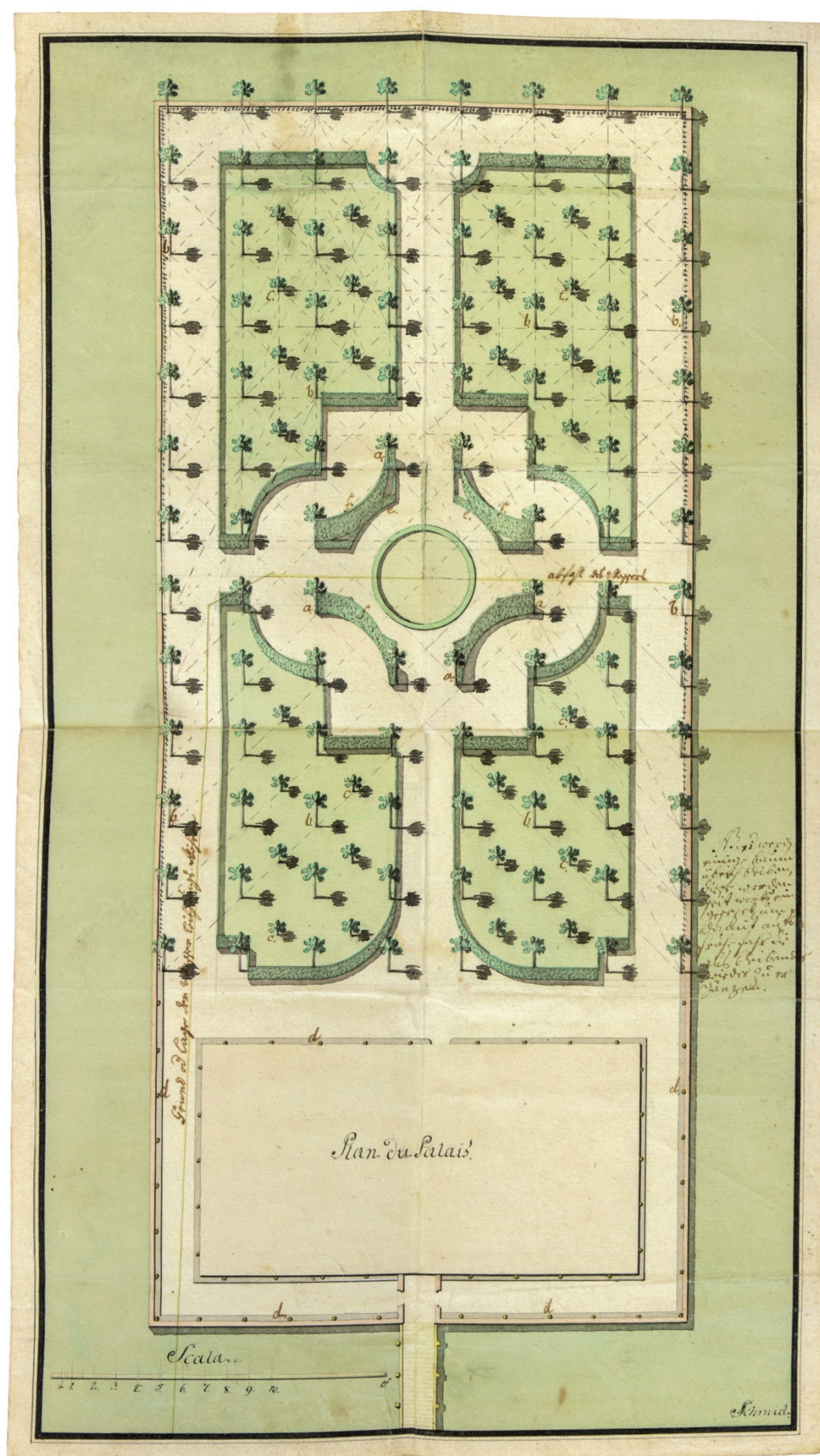
14 SOA Třeboň, VS Netolice VI G alfa2a No. 1–No. 4

15 SOA Třeboň, VS Netolice, VIG alfa 2m, Puxbaum Uiberlieferung 1768

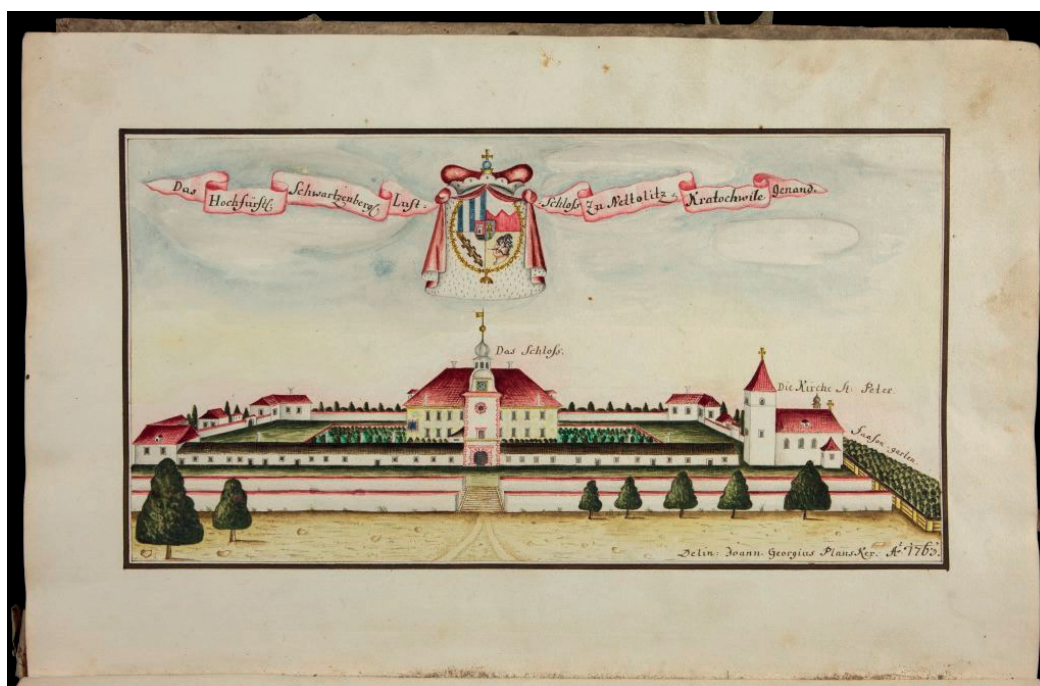
16 Videň 3.6.1708 to county representative Praxl in Netolice Mr. Sanitzky. Vs Netolice VI G alfa 2a No. 2

17 ibid.

18 SOA Třeboň. Map of the Schwarzenberg estates dating from 1711. Available at: <http://digi.cesearchivy.cz/cs/1415>



4: The garden plan from 1770, author: Schmid, SOA Třeboň, pobočka Český Krumlov, Schwarzenberská ústřední kancelář, staré oddělení, Netolice, sig. B6G alfa 1a



5: A painting of Kratochvíle by Jan Jiří Plansker, 1763, SOA Třeboň, kniha činžovních pozemků panství Netolice, Vs Netolice VIG8 No.2

family that owned it. During his lifetime, the duke did not have time to take care of his domain. This was taken up by his son Joseph Adam, who decided to rebuild the castle in Český Krumlov as well as Kratochvíle in the modern style of the period. Concerning this change, two drawings have been preserved which show the development of the design¹⁹. (Fig. 3) The older one is very simple; it is a representation of the garden space on an island without the palace. The central point is a water element of circular layout and a space divided into rectangular fields, which are lined with rows of fruit trees. Unfortunately, it is not known if this design is derived from the original state, or if it is a fundamental change in the garden composition. However, based on the subsequent correspondence, it seems that the duke decided for a new design of the garden, inspired by the French garden. This plan is signed directly by the Schwarzenberg economic director Schmid. He was also the author of the letter to Duke Joseph Adam, in which he asks for further instructions, because the gardener „is already done with his work, i.e. garden treatment, and only the mentioned trees remain to be planted.”²⁰ The trees mean a rich assortment of all fruit trees – pear and apple trees, cherry trees around the fountain, peaches and apricots, plums and prunes, currants and

gooseberries. The attached map shows the plan of planting with the designation of the trees and their staking out using a rectangular grid. It also shows the entire island with the palace, as it is referred to here. The central area around the circular fountain is divided by hedges, which also appear around the rectangular fields. Regarding the scale, we can estimate that the height of the planned hedge was 50 cm; the height of the hedge around the fountain was about one meter. Both plans including Veerle's painting keep the axis symmetry and the penetrability of the garden. Their common feature is also a smaller scale of all elements adapted to the total area of the garden.

The latest proof of the garden appearance of the time is Jan Jiří Plansker's painting dating from 1763²¹. The veduta shows the entire premises in the front view, and refers to it as: “Das Hochfürstl. Schwarzenberg. Lust. Schloß Zu Nettolitz Kratochvíle Genand”. An interesting moment is the absence of the lake around the inner garden²². The veduta says nothing about the internal arrangement; it only underlines that the garden was densely planted with probably fruit trees. The entire area is not set in a landscape context; the author only indicated where the pheasantry is located.

19 Plan from 1767 – SOA Třeboň, sig.: VIG alfa 2a28, plán z roku 1770 – SOA Třeboň, pobočka Český Krumlov, Schwarzenberská ústřední kancelář, staré oddělení, Netolice, sig. B6G alfa 1a

20 Videň 3.6.1708 to county representative Praxl in Netolice Mr. Sanitzky.

21 SOA Třeboň, kniha činžovních pozemků panství Netolice, Vs Netolice VIG8 No.2

22 This agrees with the claim that the garden was about 300 years without water. See Preusz *et al.*, 2013.



6: Kratochvíle – panoramic view, author 2016

DISCUSSION

The effect of the Italian culture in the Czech lands is very well documented by historians of fine arts and architecture, but few publications have been devoted to garden art. The period of Renaissance was not as abundant in villa creations in the Czech lands as in Italy so Villa Kratochvíle is exceptional in this context. Additionally, it breaks with the tradition of reconstructing old buildings, usually castles and constructions of fort character. Kratochvíle has been devoted several publications describing its richly decorated interiors in detail – last of them, Ondřej Jakubec and Václav Bůžek is very comprehensive and also discusses the term villa within the context of the Italian villa typology. The paper presented follows this discussion only peripherally, as it is more concerned with the history of the garden, its models in a narrower perspective than in the above mentioned publication, and the analysis of its composition. The exact determination of the villa type is not as important as the very fact that this type of construction existed in the Czech lands and that it is an example of understanding the Italian *villeggiatura* and its transposition to the Czech environment.

The cultural tradition of the country dictates the main function of the building – a hunting lodge. We can hardly find a direct model for Kratochvíle. This paper indicates possible similarities with Palazzo Te based on the similar landscape in which they are located, the closed character of the places, and the use of large water bodies. Mantua landscape resembles the South Bohemian very much – flat lands interweaved with rivers, ponds and water canals, landscape heavily used but picturesque and idyllic. Unfortunately, no images of Kratochvíle from the time of its origin are available so we cannot describe the garden layout precisely. By explorations of Baldassare Maggi's thoughts, ideas and creative principles, a graphical analysis of the garden was created based on the principle of golden ratio, which showed that the entire villa location follows this principle – it can be divided into squares whose width corresponds to the width of the inner island with the building of the villa itself. The entire place is significantly axially symmetric; however, to apply the golden ratio we have to take into account the space in front of the villa up to the water stream. It is a matter of discussion and further research if the author understood the entrance parts as a part of the unit he was building.

CONCLUSION

The development of the Italian garden in the Czech lands was relatively direct. The educated aristocracy felt the desire to approach the places where the basic ideas of European culture arose; they were interested in the principles of Renaissance architecture and philosophy, and everyone wanted to taste this new lifestyle, which linked the house with the garden. The Italian culture came with the craftsmen who crossed the Alps, in books, and thanks to the chivalrous travels of the nobles, which had become very trendy. The Italian art underwent a metamorphosis in the Czech lands, which resulted from the differences in the climate as well as the cultural and architectural tradition. However, the basic principles of Italian architecture, including the garden, were maintained. Kratochvíle is one of the purest examples of the Renaissance in the Czech lands. It is an Italian villa built for an important noble family which bears resemblance with Northern Italian Palazzo Te. They were both built on flat lands, which make usage of water more intricate than in gardens on steeper slopes. They are also related by their scale, closed layout, and the character of the surrounding landscape.

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