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Urbanissime Strada: Jacopo Strada and Cultural Patronage at the Imperial Court

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Part III

THE MUSAEUM

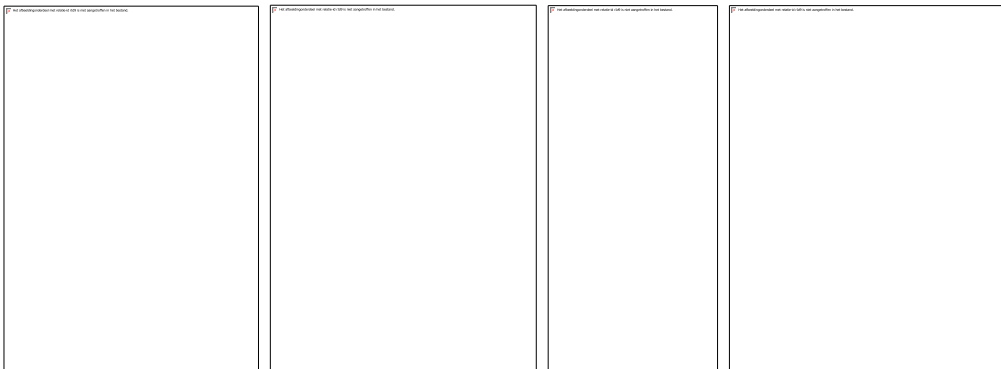
Chapter 11

THE *MUSAEUM*: STRADA'S CIRCLE

11.1 | Strada's house

The second part of this study contains a survey of the activities of Strada as an architect, attempting to show that his expertise cannot have failed to influence projects developed by his patrons and members of their immediate circle. For that reason alone it can be supposed that his presence contributed to the development of fashion and taste, and would have had some effect on the artistic developments in the Habsburg lands. Such influence was exerted by example: the example of his own activities as a patron, a collector and a designer, but even more by the examples of the most splendid and authoritative works dating from classical Antiquity or the fruits of the genius of the most famous contemporary masters, documentation of which Strada had brought together in what he proudly called his “Musaeum”.

In chapter 7 an excursus was dedicated to the splendid house Strada built in Vienna, close to the Hofburg, the Imperial residence, and designed as an object lesson in the newest style. An excursus, because this was a private commission, not a commission from his Imperial patrons. There is ample evidence that the resulting *Musaeum* - the word Strada liked to use as a blanket term for his house, his library and collections, and his workshop - did in fact fulfill a representative function within the wider orbit of the court. A partial reconstruction of the circle of patrons, friends and acquaintances Strada received there, helps to get some impression of this function.



11.01- 11.04 | Princely visitors to Strada's house in Vienna: Alfonso II d' Este, Duke of Ferrara;
Francesco de' Medici, prince of Florence; Elector August of Saxony and
Johann-Wilhelm, Duke of Saxe-Weimar

As described above, Strada's house [above, ill. 7.9-7.12] consisted of two wings each of two principal storeys above a *rustica* ground floor, which were set at a right angle along the Vordere Schenkengasse and the small piazza in front of the Löwelbastei. It held twelve principal rooms heated by traditional tiled stoves, at least one of which was a reception room or hall sufficiently large for the informal banquet, masque and dance organized in 1579 for Maximilian's youngest sons, the Archdukes Matthias and Wenzel. At that time its top floor was sufficiently ample and well appointed both to lodge Juraj (György) Drašković, Archbishop of Kalocsa, *Ban* of Croatia and Chancellor of Hungary, and to house the offices of the Hungarian chancery.

Even before that the house had occasionally provided lodgings for important visitors to court, such as Hans Jakob Fugger, Strada's patron and a personal friend, and Count Palatine Georg Johann I of Veldenz-Lützelstein. To thank the Duke of Mantua for the benefice conferred on his son Paolo, Strada courteously offered him the use of his house, "which, once it is finished, will be suitable to lodge a prince". When Strada's financial needs became pressing he more seriously offered it as a possible residence to Vilém z Rožmberka, principal magnate of Bohemia, and to the Duke of Bavaria for his son, Prince Ferdinand. This all leads one to expect that the house was suitably and stylishly furnished, and in fact Hubert Languet, who repeatedly visited it, could not name another house in Vienna "of similar elegance and provided with so many features conducive to commodious living". According to Hans Jakob Fugger it was built and decorated "all' Italiana" which - in view of Strada's interests - implies that its architecture and furnishing adhered to the strict classicism of the High Renaissance as developed in Rome, in Mantua and in Venice⁸⁸⁸.

11.2 | High-ranking visitors: Strada's guest book and Ottavio's *Stammbuch*

Strada's house and its contents were sufficiently interesting to draw illustrious visitors even at a quite early date: in August 1565, when large parts of the house must still have been under construction, it was visited repeatedly by Alfonso II d'Este, Duke of Ferrara, on a state visit to his prospective brother-in-law [ill. 11.01]. Accompanied by his young kinsman, Francesco Gonzaga, Count of Novellara, he came to see "le medaglie et l'altre anticaglie del Strada mantovano", but also took note of the quality of its Italianate architecture. Strada proudly reported that the Duke had considered it the finest house in Vienna, and had persuaded the Emperor himself to pay it a visit⁸⁸⁹. It is quite understandable that Strada was proud of such visits by ruling princes: they both strengthened his professional prestige and furthered his ambitions for himself and his family. That is why - perhaps incited by the *Stammbuch* of his neighbour, Christoph von Teuffenbach - he decided to make up a sort of guestbook to record the names of such illustrious visitors. He described it in a letter of June 1573 to his old acquaintance Jacopo Dani, secretary of Duke Cosimo of Florence:

⁸⁸⁸ Cf. above, chapter 7.

⁸⁸⁹ DOC. 1565-08-26; Niccolò Stopio to Hans Jakob Fugger, Venice 7 sept. 1567: "<...>non li [= Strada] mancha modo di riuscirne con bon utile, et certo bisogna bene che così sia, volendo fabricare palazzi de 7 o 8 mila taleri, come dice che lui fa, et che dal duca di Ferrara fu giudicata il più bello di Vienna, onde Sua Maesta Cesarea l'andò anche a vederlo, havendo ciò inteso dal Duca<...>", BHStA-LA 4852, f. 64/58; and cf. above, ch. 7. It should be noted that the tone of this passage again demonstrates Stopio's almost irate envy of Strada's success. The presence at this visit of Francesco Gonzaga da Novellara, who acted as envoy or agent of his cousin, the Duke of Mantua, is mentioned in a letter by Strada to the Duke of Mantua (DOC. 1568-12-28).

“Some years ago I prepared a little book, as a memorial of my house, on the first page of which His Imperial Majesty [= Maximilian II] wrote his rime or device; then follows the King [= Rudolf II], with his brother [= Archduke Ernest]; and then the other Dukes, but not in their order [of precedence], but according to when they have been in my studio. All have written in it, the Duke of Bavaria is among the recent ones, and of Saxony, Duke Wilhelm and the Elector [= August] follow, I mean to say that there is no precedence, other than that occasioned by time [ills. 11.03-11.04].”⁸⁹⁰

Then Jacopo asked Dani to persuade Duke Cosimo and his son Francesco to write their devices on the enclosed clean sheet of paper, and send him their coats of arms, so that he could add their entries to this album. Though Francesco de’ Medici [ill. 11.03], who like his future brother-in-law Alfonso d’Este visited Vienna in 1565, probably had seen Strada’s house in person, Cosimo never came to Vienna. This implies that Strada’s book was not so much an exact register, as an exalted type of *album amicorum*, documenting Strada’s connections with his princely patrons⁸⁹¹. So it is probable that the entries of other princes Strada had met or visited in the course of his travels - such as Landgrave Wilhelm IV of Hessen-Kassel, who entertained Strada and his elder son Paolo sometime in the mid-1570s - would likewise have been added to the album [ill. 11.12]⁸⁹².

As a source Strada’s description of his “Memoria di casa mia” is supplemented by his son Ottavio’s more conventional *Stammbuch*. In his copy of a set of beautiful wood engravings illustrating Aesop’s fables by Virgil Solis, printed posthumously in 1566 by Strada’s later printer, Sigmund Feyerabend, Ottavio had the highest-ranking members of his acquaintance write their name and motto or device [ills. 11.06-11.10]. The entries date from 1572 until 1598 and include many leading members of the aristocracy of the Habsburg dominions, of the Imperial government and of the ecclesiastical hierarchy, as well as some visiting princes⁸⁹³.

⁸⁹⁰ DOC 1573-06-17; on Teuffenbach and his possible influence in this, cf. 10.5. When Strada says that he intends the described the book “per una memoria di casa mia” he can refer either to his house, the actual building, or to his “house”, i.e. his family or dynasty; possibly he meant to imply both.

⁸⁹¹ Strada probably met Cosimo on an earlier occasion, and Dani had probably renewed his contacts with Strada in consultation with the Duke, who needed useful contacts at the Imperial court in the wake of his assumption, against the Emperor’s wishes, of the title of Grand Duke of Tuscany.

⁸⁹² Marburg, Hessisches Staatsarchiv, Bestand 4n, Nr. 265, Paolo Strada to Moritz, Landgrave of Hessen-Kassel, Vienna 23 December 1594: “Genedigister Fürst und Herr, mit was grossen Gnaden und für: wolthaten weilend der auch durchleuchtigist und hochgeborne Fürst, Eur: Für: Gn: Geliebter Herr Vatter hochlößlichster Gedechnus, noch vor verschieen 20 Jarn, mein lieben Vatter Jacobo Strada Röm: Kaij: Mt: Hofdiener und Antiquario seligen, in Iren fürstlichen Schloss und Burchth zu Cassel begegnet, dessen wais ich mich noch, als der der hochgedachter Ir. Für: Gn: hochlobigister Gedechnus, gendigister Tractation, zugleich meinem lieben Vatter seligen Genossen, in underthenigister schuldigister Danckbarkeit, wol zu entsinnen<...>”.

⁸⁹³ Prague, National Library, Ms. 5 J 38; the basis of the *Stammbuch* is a copy of *Aesopi Phrygis Fabulae, elegantissimis iconibus verus animalium species ad vivum adumbrantes Ioannis Posthij Germershemij Tetrastichis illustrata*, Frankfurt am Main 1566. It was printed by Sigmund Feyerabend, who in 1575 would print Strada’s editions of Caesar *Commentaries* and Serlio’s *Settimo Libro*. Some examples: four bishops from the Habsburg lands entered their names opposite p. 39, fable 46 “Leo et Ursus”; three leading courtiers (Hans Trautson, Leonhard von Harrach, Johann Baptist Weber) opposite p. 47, fable 40 “Vates”; the Marquis of Finale (opp. p. 51/ emblem 44); Philip Sidney (“Philippus Sideneus”, with his motto “Quo me fata vocant”) and two other Englishmen, both friends of Sidney’s, Ricardus Scelleius (Richard Shelley, nephew and assistant to the prior of St John of Jerusalem in England) and the diplomat Robert Corbett (opp. p. 101, fable 94, “Fures”). It should be noted, however, that they may not all be autograph perhaps occasionally Ottavio documented a visit after the fact, or one visitor wrote the names of himself and his friends (I have my doubt about Sidney’s).



11.05 | Martino Rota, portrait of Ottavio Strada, 1574, engraving
 11.06-11.10 | Ottavio Strada's Stammbuch: title page, his own autograph entry and
 those of three bishops, the Marquis of Finale and Sir Philip Sidney

Ottavio Strada was quite ambitious, as is evident from the portrait print he commissioned from Martino Rota [fig. 11.05]⁸⁹⁴. Nonetheless before the accession of Rudolf II in 1576 Ottavio had hardly an independent position. The willingness of such high-ranking and often powerful members of the Imperial court to oblige a young minor courtier was due to their respect for his father, in whose house or company they would have met him⁸⁹⁵. That at least some of these signatures reflected some concrete personal relationship is documented in Ottavio's letter to his father from Nuremberg in December 1574, in which he reassures him that he will go and pay his respect to Vilém z Rožmberka, as instructed. Then he asks his father to convey his greetings to "<...>l Messer Martin, et l Signor Marchese del Vinal", that is Maximilian's Lord Chamberlain Martín de Guzman, and Alfonso del Carretto, Marquis of Finale in Liguria, at court involved in a process to regain possession of this fief. The passages provides concrete evidence of the care with which the Stradas cultivated their patronage network and their business relations⁸⁹⁶.

⁸⁹⁴ This in contrast to his father: though portrayed by Titian, no other effigies of him are known, though a portrait engraving by one of the many wood-engravers he employed in his publishing projects could have been expected; and for a numismatist of Strada's fame it is surprising that the court-medalist, Antonio Abondio, who portrayed so many other learned members of Maximilian's entourage, does not seem to have produced a portrait medal of Strada.

⁸⁹⁵ In 1572 Jean de Viçose d'Alfeyran, a secretary of the Duke of Anjou, entered his name in Ottavio's *Stammbuch*, adding that he had "visited and admired the Museum of the most learned man I. Strada" (opp. p. 153, fable 142).

⁸⁹⁶ DOC. 1574-12-05: Ottavio was overseeing the printing of several books, including Serlio's *Settimo Libro*, which was to be dedicated to Rožmberk: "Quando vederò l Rosenberg lo visiterò, secondo mi ordinasti. <...>Non altro,



- 11.11 | Juraj Drašković, Archbishop of Kalocsa and Chancellor of Hungary, lived in Strada's house
 11.12 | Wilhelm IV, Landgrave of Hessen-Kassel, received Strada in Kassel
 11.13 | Lazarus von Schwendi, a famous general serving Ferdinand I and Maximilian II, shared some of Strada's interests

Strada would of course meet these colleague-courtiers when he occasionally attended the Emperor in person, “in camera” as he calls it himself, but he also had to work together with at least some of them when fulfilling his master’s commissions. Moreover he would meet them socially, at least as neighbours: many of the higher ranking courtiers had houses built along the Herrengasse, the Minoritenplatz and the Schenkengasse: situated between Hofburg and the Landhaus, the proud new building erected for the Estates of Lower Austria, this quarter soon became the most exclusive residential quarter of town. One of the earliest of the new aristocratic dwellings, in a situation that made it quite conspicuous to anyone walking along the top of the city wall, and built in an exclusive, avant-garde style, Strada’s own house must have excited his neighbours’ interest. Even had Strada not been as eager to show off his prized possessions as Titian’s portrait suggest, he would never have refused hospitality to the higher-ranking courtiers, who could so easily influence his own position at court. That some of these high functionaries indeed shared Strada’s interests and patronised his work is documented in the cases of the *Hofkammerpräsident* Reichard Strein von Schwarzenau and the Imperial General Lazarus von Schwendi, both intellectuals and erudite authors as well as men of action [ills. 10.35 and 11.13]⁸⁹⁷. The same would be true for some of the visitors to the court - an example is the Milanese nobleman Prospero Visconti, himself a learned and assiduous collector, and active as agent and advisor on artistic matters of the Bavarian court. He visited Strada’s house when in Vienna in attendance on Duke Albrecht V of Bavaria during the wedding festivities of Archduke Charles and princess Maria of Bavaria in 1570⁸⁹⁸. Another example is the German nobleman Franz

solum il Francesco Nieri Vi saluti, et sarebe bene che li scrivesti una leterina di raccomandatione. Salutate l’ Messer Martin, et l’ Signor Marchese del Vinal [= Finale], et io megli raccomando, et manteneteVi sano.” On the Finale question, see EDELMAYER 1988.

⁸⁹⁷ In 1573 Strein promoted Strada’s attempt to obtain funding for some of his publications [DOC. 1573-00-00]; in 1577 Strada offered the Grand Duke of Tuscany coloured images from a book with imperial portraits commissioned by Schwendi, to which he was granted access - probably because he had himself produced it, which he may have found politic not to tell the Grand Duke [DOCS. 1577-10-04/C and 1577-10-04/D].

⁸⁹⁸ ASF, *Medici del Principato* 827, fol. 318, Ottavio Strada to Prospero Visconti, Prague 1 November 1590: “Riccordandomi della S[ignori]a V[ostr]a Ill[ustrissim]a quando la fu in Vienna con la altezza del Alberto Duca di

von Domsdorf, whose extensive travels are documented in his *Stammbuch*, in which both Strada himself and his son Paolo inscribed their names on the occasion of Domsdorf's visit to Vienna in September 1579⁸⁹⁹.

11.3 | “Urbanissime Strada”: accessibility of and hospitality in the *Musaeum*

That Titian's insight was right, and that Strada's house was in fact an open house is suggested by a letter Strada wrote to his old friend, Jacopo Dani, secretary of Francesco de' Medici, now Grand Duke of Tuscany, in November 1581. He reacts to a (lost) letter of recommendation Dani had written to introduce Riccardo Riccardi, who was visiting Vienna at about this time. Strada reassures Dani of his friendship, and tells him that immediately on reception of the letter he had sent his son Paolo to Riccardi to invite him to come and visit the studio. To Strada's great disappointment Riccardi had excused himself. That the later founder of the still existent Biblioteca Riccardiana did not think a visit to Strada's house worthwhile is perhaps an indication that by this time Strada's star had dimmed after Rudolf II moved his court to Prague:

“I had already organized everything to offer him a banquet, and to invite the Archbishop of Kalocsa, who is now Bishop of Győr, and Supreme Chancellor of the Kingdom of Hungary. This Lord is Juraj Drašković, who was Legate at the Council of Trent. He lodges in my house, in the rooms on the upper floor, and also in my house is the Chancery of the Kingdom of Hungary. I also wanted to invite two friars of the Dominican convent, the Lecturer of the University, and the preacher Cittardo, which are all most learned men, in order that the gentleman would have conversation with most learned men, which, besides speaking Italian, are most consummate in all sciences and branches of study. I believe he would have been most satisfied [with his visit], and that he would have well spent that day.”⁹⁰⁰

We have already met Drašković above [ill. 11.12; cf. ch. 7]; the others are more difficult to identify, because it is not clear whether Strada invited two Dominican friars in addition to the “Lettor del Studio” and the “Predicator Cittardo” or, more likely, that he adds these functions and names merely to specify the two Dominicans. In either case the second certainly was not Ferdinand's and Maximilian's sympathetic court preacher, Matthias Cith-

Baviera, alle nozze del Ser[enissim]o Archiduca Carlo, et della amorevolezza che V[ostra] S[ignoria] Ill[ustrissima] ha dimostrato a mio padre, bona memoria, nel venir in el nostro studio, et nel mandar di poi un inventario delle sue medaglie<...>”; on Visconti and his connections with Munich, see SIMONSFELD 1902; he has moreover the distinction to be a possible model for Prospero, Duke of Milan, the protagonist of Shakespeare's *Tempest*, cf. GOMBRICH 1990.

⁸⁹⁹ ISRAEL 1989, nr. 60, pp. 46–47. “A good example of an ‘Album Amicorum’”. I am grateful to Mr Israel to have allowed me to consult the volume. Strada's entry is on f. 111 v.: “1579 -FESTINA LENTE - Jacobus Strada”; Paolo's on f. 112 r.: “1579 - Nobilitate et virtute praestanti viro Dno Francisco à Dumstorff amicitiae ergo scribebat haec Paulo Strada Serenissimi Archiducis Ernesti aulicus, Vienna Austriae Anno MDLXXIX die vii me<n>sis VIIbris”. The connection is interesting because of Domsdorf's antiquarian interests: his *Stammbuch* also includes the signatures of Pirro Ligorio, Carlo Sigonio, Janus Sambucus, Jean Matal, Hubert Languet, Adolph Occo and Marco Mantova Benavides, and somewhat later he would contribute to Joanes Rosinus' *Romanarum antiquitatum libri decem*, printed at Basle by the heirs of Pietro Perna in 1583.

⁹⁰⁰ DOC. 1581–11–02.

ardus, who had died in 1566, but probably the Dominican Konrad Zittardus, who died in 1606 as Provincial superior of his order in South Germany and Austria⁹⁰¹.

This is a rare documented instance of the type of entertainment Strada offered his educated upper class visitors. Though it records a visit that had not actually taken place, it is valuable in sketching Strada's own aspirations of his house as a haven of educated discourse, learning, and erudite entertainment, and a place where people from different walks of life could meet for a pleasant and fruitful exchange of ideas. Strada probably cast himself as their generous host, whose urbanity served to put his guests at their ease, and whose wide range of knowledge and interests enabled him to set fruitful topics of conversation, which could moreover be enlivened and illustrated by the inspection of the various materials in his *Musaeum*. In this he must have been successful, if the letter in which Hubert Languet recommended him to the Elector August of Saxony is to be believed⁹⁰².

That this attitude was not merely the polish acquired after twenty years of court-life is evident from a letter to Strada by the learned prelate Antun Vrančić (Antonius Verantius), Bishop of Eger and Imperial Legate to the Council of Trent, in December 1558, when Strada had only recently arrived at court. This long and elegant epistle deals with the attempt of a common acquaintance, Girolamo Donzellini, to come to terms with the Inquisition, in order to be able to return safely to Venice, which provided Vrančić with the occasion for a philosophical disquisition on the love of one's homeland and the sufferings of the exile. He peppers this letter not only with classical allusions, but also with flattering epithets, addressing his correspondent as "amantissime Strada", "suavissime Strada", "urbanissime Strada" and "humanissime Strada"⁹⁰³. If such a prominent member of the ecclesiastical establishment of the Habsburg dominions and of the Republic of Letters so generously accepted Strada as an equal, there can be little doubt that he was taken seriously also by other members of these groups. Some of them would at least have been curious to see what Strada's *Musaeum*, of which he was so proud, had to offer.

11.4 | Intellectual associates

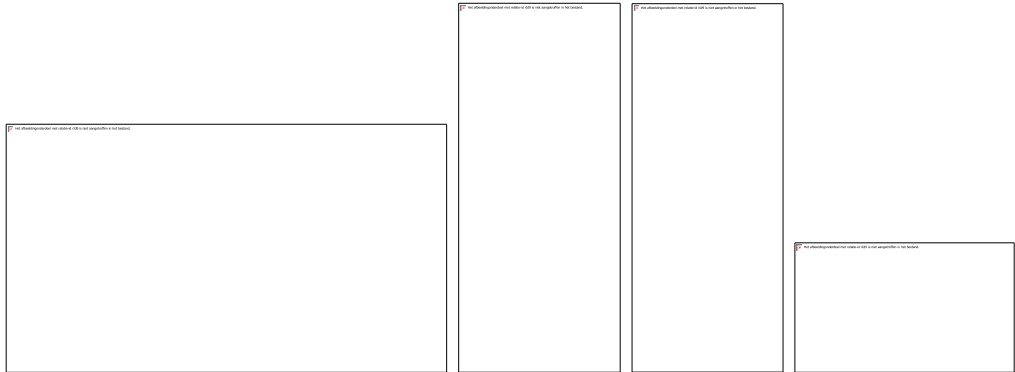
Informal neighbourly visits of course are rarely documented, but occasionally hints of visits are found in Strada's correspondence. Thus Jacopo Dani had first got to know Strada in 1558 when he arrived in Vienna - more or less at the same time as Strada himself - as

⁹⁰¹ On Matthias Cithardus, *ADB*, 34, 1892, pp. 423-424, s.v. "Sittard, Matthias"; on Konrad, *ibidem*, 45, 1900, pp. 368-369, s.v. "Zittardus, Konrad". It is interesting that Strada, in trouble with the Inquisition led by Dominicans during his visit to Mantua in 1567 (and in fact his image and that of his son Paolo had been burnt *in effigie* in Mantua, "come eretici confirmati" just a few months before the date of this letter), should in Vienna consort with members of the same order.

⁹⁰² DOC. 1576-09-07: "Est iudicio omnium praeclare versatus in iis artibus quas profitetur, ad quod accedit, quod potest sua manu elegantissime exprimere quicquid libet, cuius rei poterit V.C.^{do} facere periculum."

⁹⁰³ DOC 1558-12-04. Strada's letter to which Vrančić replies is lost: it probably involved a request for intercession on behalf of Donzellini, perhaps with Ferdinand I, whose intervention with the *Serenissima* ultimately allowed Donzellini to return home (cf. JACOBSON SCHUTTE 1992). It is not surprising that Strada took to Vrančić, who supported him in the Lazius affair; Strada heartily recommended him to Hans Jakob Fugger: "Questa settimana di qui si parte il Reverendissimo Veschovo de Agria per venir costì; certo mi si parte il più caro et il più famigliare signore che io habbia, levandone li miei signori et padroni. La Signoria Vostra conossera un signore adornato di tutte le virtù che puol haver un altro signore; egli me a comesso ch'io faccia una raccomandatione alla Signoria Vostra da sua parte, et grandemente dessidera conosserLa per il gran nome Suo, del quale non solum da me gli è stato predicato, ma anchora da tutti quelli che Vostra Signoria hanno conosciuta." (DOC. 1559-06-09). On Vrančić, see STOY 1981.

secretary of the Tuscan ambassador, remaining until 1562. He returned in 1564 to work out the agreements for the wedding of Archduchess Johanna with Francesco de' Medici. It is not impossible that Strada was involved in these preparations: he may have provided the models for the depictions of favourite Habsburg residences included in the still existing festive decoration of the *cortile* of the Palazzo Vecchio, and he may have contributed information on Imperial and Habsburg iconography.



11.14 | Giovanni Antonio Dosio, drawings of a Roman stèle and a caryatid; the note top left indicates that the drawings marked with a star were copied for Jacopo Strada

11.15 | Antique Roman female statue, now in Palazzo Pitti in Florence, as copied after Dosio by Battista Naldini (?), in an album that belonged to Jacopo Dani

11.16 | The same statue as copied in Strada's workshop

11.17 | The owner's mark in Jacopo Dani's copy of Strada's *Epitome Thesauri Antiquitatum*, Lyon 1553

During this visit Dani must at least have heard and probably have seen something of Strada's plans for his grand new house, the plot of which he had just acquired. In any case it can be assumed that Dani visited Strada at home during both his visits, since the letters they later exchanged explicitly underline their friendship. This is not surprising because Dani shared Strada's antiquarian interests, possessing a manuscript with finished drawings of antique altars, sarcophaguses and their inscriptions copied after designs by Giovan Antonio Dosio [ill. 11.15]⁹⁰⁴. This volume provides another link to Strada: in an album of Dosio's drawings in Berlin, which provided some of the models for Dani's collection, an annotation tells the reader that "all the objects marked with little crosses had been copied on behalf of M^cesse^r Jacopo Strada" [ill. 11.14]. And in fact several drawings are found copied both in Dani's album and in Strada's *Statuarum antiquarum* in Vienna [ills. 11.15 and 11.16]⁹⁰⁵.

⁹⁰⁴ Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, N.A. 1159, discussed in RUBINSTEIN 1989 and integrally published in CASAMASSIMA/ RUBINSTEIN 1993; the drawings possibly by Battista Naldini (*ivi*, p. xxii).

⁹⁰⁵ Berlin, Kupferstichkabinett, 79 D 1, fol. 8v., quoted in HÜLSEN 1933, p. 7: "Tutti quegli ch(e) avran(n)o u[na + / p(er) contrassegno so(n) fatti [per mr.] / Jac(omo) Strada. Lo fo a causa [che non si / pigl(i) errore." Cf. TEDESCHI GRISANTI 1983, p. 70; AMADIO 1988, p. 39; CASAMASSIMA/RUBINSTEIN 1993, p. xii; this shows that Strada himself had acquired such drawings from Dosio when in Rome in the 1550s, and suggests that Dani may have obtained his album through Strada's mediation. Five of the drawings in his own ms album *Statuarum antiquarum* (Vienna, ÖNB, Cod. min 21,2) correspond to drawings in Dani's album (*ibidem*, pp. 155-156).

Jacopo Dani also possessed a copy of Strada's own *Epitome Thesauri Antiquitatum*, doubtless directly acquired from its author [ill. 11.17]⁹⁰⁶. So it is not surprising that he was happy to hear from a compatriot returning to Florence in 1573 that Strada was doing well, "having finished your beautiful building, and accommodated your children and your affairs". If he could provide such detailed information, Dani's informer, Antonio Girolami, a Florentine merchant resident in Vienna, must have been an acquaintance of Strada himself⁹⁰⁷.

Another learned diplomat among Strada's early acquaintance in Vienna was Bernardin Bochetel, Bishop of Rennes, who was sent to the Imperial court in 1562 as French Ambassador to negotiate a possible marriage between the Dauphin Charles and one of Maximilian's young daughters. Bochetel had been educated by the noted humanists Jacques Amyot, Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples and the Scotsman Henry Scrimgeour. He cherished humanist interests himself, in particular in Greek poetry, and left a huge library at his death in 1570. So, like Dani, he would both have been interested in, and interesting to, Jacopo Strada⁹⁰⁸. We do not know how close their contacts were: Strada's letter that documents it is devoted to an urgent business matter - Strada marked its outside "Cito Cito Cito". In it he informs Bochetel that the Nieri, merchants from Lucca at Nuremberg, had informed him that they had received a letter of exchange from Antwerp for a huge sum of money destined for the ambassador, which he could have sent at his convenience. But then Strada continues conversationally "I myself and my family are all well, and I have become quite philosophical, and always remain at home and attend to the building of my little house"⁹⁰⁹. This suggests a cordial relationship between the two men and may imply that the Bishop even had visited Strada at home. At this time this was not yet the huge house in the Vordere Schenkengasse, but a smaller one Strada must have acquired when he first arrived in Vienna, probably identical with the house in the suburb of St Ulrich he possessed and lived in when he drafted his last will in 1584⁹¹⁰.

On the other hand it is not likely that such relations with a prelate and ambassador can have been quite as intimate as those with Jacopo Dani, whose status as secretary to the ambassador was probably closer to Strada's own. The letter does suggest a patronage relationship, since Strada rather ambiguously offers to continue his services to Bochetel, provided that the latter were satisfied with them⁹¹¹. But it is not clear whether these services were rendered in his capacity as a learned antiquary, as a bookseller and purveyor of antiquities and works of art, or purely as a merchant and commercial agent, assisting the am-

⁹⁰⁶ The copy of the *Epitome Thesauri Antiquitatum* carrying Dani's owner's mark on its title page was offered for sale by Antiquariat Wolfgang Braecklein, Berlin, in the Autumn of 2011, a description was found on the internet: <http://www.zvab.com/displayBookDetails.do?itemId=141548677&b=1> (8 October 2011). I am grateful to Mr Braecklein for sending me a photograph. For a brief biography of Dani, see VIVOLI 1986.

⁹⁰⁷ DOC. 1573-05-27. The website Medici Archive Project provides some information on Antonio Girolami: http://documents.medici.org/people_details.cfm?personid=5041&returnstr=orderby=Name@is_search=1@result_id=0.

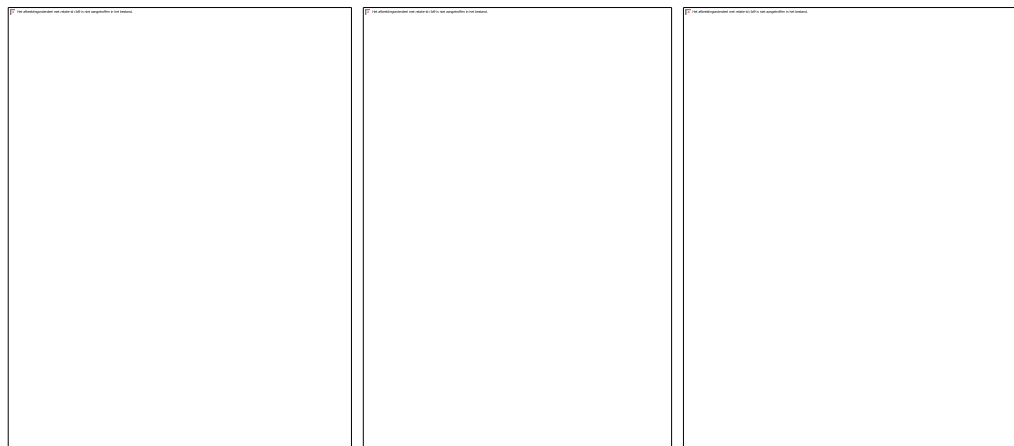
⁹⁰⁸ On Bochetel, see *Dictionnaire de biographie française*, 6, 1954, p. 750.

⁹⁰⁹ DOC. 1562-10-21. Paolino and Francesco Nieri or Neri from Lucca, resident in Nuremberg, were business partners of Strada: they are mentioned in Ottavio Strada's letter to his father from Nuremberg in December 1574 (DOC. 1574-12-5) and Strada's last will mentions "Paulinuss Nijeri von Lucca" als "meiner Gefährte", who seems to have functioned as banker for Strada and his "Genossen" - both words are translations of the Italian "compagno", a business partner.

⁹¹⁰ Cf. above, ch. 7.

⁹¹¹ DOC 1562-10-21: "Dessidero che la Signoria Vostra Reverendissima mi faccia favore di farmi avisare se avera riceputo li detti danari et se crede di ritornare più in queste nostre bande come sua Maestà Cesarea viene; che per la parte mia La voria pur ancor servire qual che anno, ma che fosse con Sua sadiffatione <sic>".

bassador in arranging the financial details of his mission. That the latter option is not impossible is indicated by the fact that Strada at one time was approached for a huge loan by the Papal Nuncio, Zaccaria Dolfin, which he decided to refuse. Strada himself later suspected that this refusal had prompted Dolfin to denounce him to the Inquisition, thus causing the big trouble he was in during his visit to Mantua in the summer of 1567⁹¹². In fact it may well be that both types of services intermingled. Doubtless Strada was not a merchant and banker such as Fugger, but through his connections with Fugger and because of his own experience as a merchant and book dealer, he was sufficiently aware of international commerce and financial dealing occasionally to advise or assist some of his patrons in this field.



11.18 | The printer's mark of Pietro Perna, from the title page of Pietro Vermigli Martire, *In Epistolam S. Pauli ad Romanos*, Basle 1558

11.19 | Lodovico Castelvetro's Italian translation of Aristotle's *Poetica*, Viena 1570, titlepage

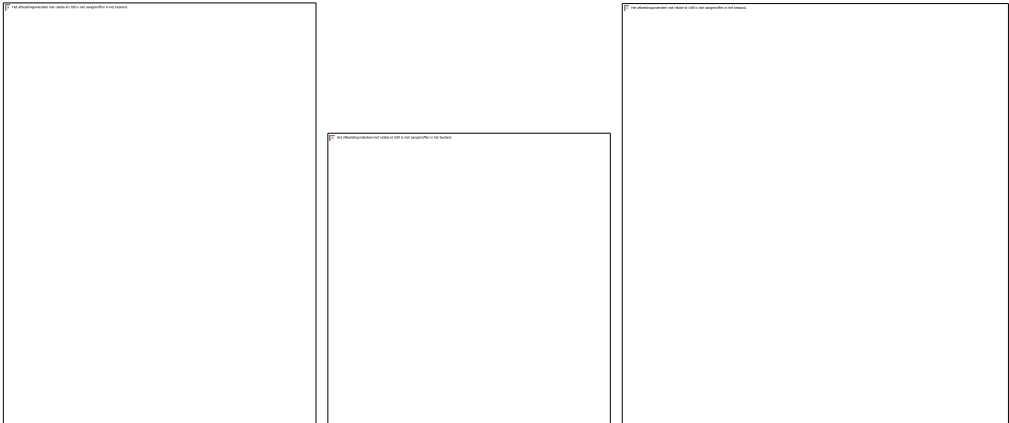
11.20 | Giovan Bernardino Bonifacio, Marquis of Oria, on his deathbed

There are many other instances of people who visited Strada's house or at least were in contact with him when in Vienna - they cannot all be discussed in detail. Thus when Strada tried to persuade Vilém z Rožmberka to buy his house and collections, he refers to his patron's personal knowledge of both. When he makes the same offer to the Elector of Saxony, he refers him to his own "Kammersekretär" Hans Jeniß or Jenitz, "who had seen it the time that Your Electoral Grace has been here at Vienna" (in February 1573). In a letter of recommendation for Strada to the Elector of Saxony in this same affair, Hubert Languet amply praises Strada's house, which presupposes that he saw it during his visits to the Imperial court, as did his pupil and dearest friend, the English diplomat, soldier, poet and

⁹¹² DOC. 1568-00-00, Strada's undated draft for a letter to an unnamed fellow refugee from the Mantuan Inquisition: "Ma poi che voi cominciate a cantare, dite tutto l'istoria, e dite come il Delfino Cardinale [patriarca crossed out, corrected into: essendo Vescovo], non gli volendo prestar mille <duca>ti, ne tampoco farla sigurtà, esso à fatto questo ufizio; ma ancora lui è conossuto." Dolfin was created a cardinal after his return from the Imperial court in 1565, where he spent four years.

national hero, Sir Philip Sidney, whose name and family device, “Quo fata me vocant”, is, as we saw, inscribed in Ottavio Strada’s *Stammbuch* [ill. 11.10]⁹¹³.

The Flemish humanist Nicasius Ellebodius, who had settled in Hungary as a canon of Esztergom cathedral, visited Strada’s house to buy copies of Lodovico Castelvetro’s brand new Italian translation of Aristotle’s poetics for his Milanese colleague, Gian Vincenzo Pinelli. Pinelli had told Ellebodius that the book could be had at Strada’s house, and thus must at least have heard of Strada’s activities – perhaps his source was Ellebodius himself, who elsewhere mentions Strada as a friend⁹¹⁴. The fact that the book was sold at Strada’s house strongly suggests that he had been instrumental in its printing, with Maximilian II’s support, by the Viennese printer Gaspar Stainhofer, and at least it implies his personal acquaintance with its author, who lived in Vienna from 1569 until shortly before his death in 1571. That was to be expected: many an Italian of some rank visiting the Imperial court would seek the acquaintance of compatriots employed by the Emperor. Strada himself would be eager to meet a man of letters as erudite, as well connected and as famous as Castelvetro. In view of his own knowledge of the book trade he would be eager to help him print what he realized was going to be a bestseller [ill. 11.17]⁹¹⁵.



11.21 | Rembertus Dodonaeus, woodcut from his *Cruijdeboeck*, 1554

11.22 | Hugo Blotius, anonymous portrait medal, ca 1593

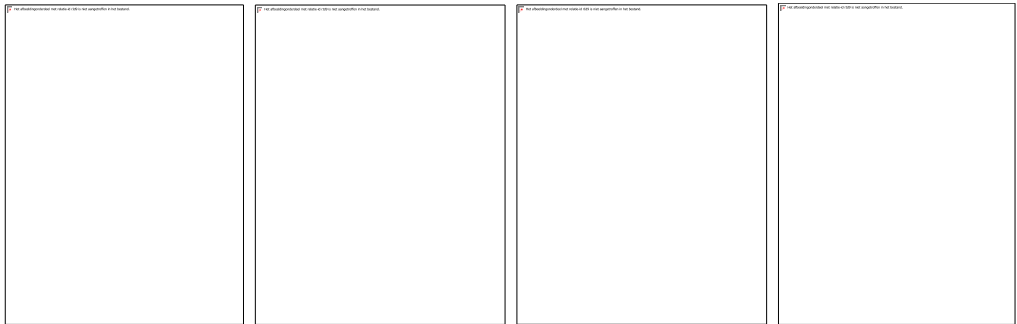
11.23 | Christophe Plantin, engraving by Hendrick Goltzius

⁹¹³ DOC. 1576-09-28: “Eur C.F.G. Secretari, der H[err] Jeniß, der khan Eur C.F.G. einen bericht darvon geben, der hatt sie das mal gesehen, wie eur C.F.G. alhie zu Wien gewesen sendt”; cf. LIETZMANN 1997, p. 397. Languet’s letter DOC. 1576-09-07.

⁹¹⁴ Lodovico Castelvetro, *Poetica d’Aristotele vulgarizzata, et sposta*, Vienna (per Gaspar Stainhofer), 1570. It was soon reprinted (Basle, Perna, 1576). Pinelli had at first written to Janus Sambucus to go and buy two copies of the book, which Ellebodius could pick up when he arrived in Vienna. Ellebodius first visited Strada, whom he elsewhere calls his friend, and found him ill. When it turned out that Sambucus had not yet picked up the books, Ellebodius bought the two copies for Pinelli and one for himself from Strada directly. A few months later Pinelli asked Ellebodius to get another copy for a friend, “il gentilissimo Monsignor del Bene”. By now back in Pressburg Ellebodius wrote to the young Hugo Blotius, who had just arrived in Vienna, telling him that either Sambucus or (the sculptor Mathias) Manmacher could tell him where to find Strada’s house (“aedes”), and asking him to greet him in his name; cf. DOCS. 1571-05-14; 1571-07-04; 1571-09-27a, b and c.; on the sympathetic Ellebodius (also: Elleboudt, Van Ellebode), see SIVIRSKY 1976; ALMÁSI 2009, pp. 72-73; 202 and *passim*.

⁹¹⁵ That Strada’s name is not mentioned in the book does not rule out his participation: in view of Castelvetro’s heretical reputation, and his own first hand experience of the rigors of the Inquisition, he may not have wished to have published their connection.

Perhaps because of his own persecution by the Inquisition in Mantua in 1567, Strada appears to have felt some sympathy for Italian Evangelical exiles, such as Castelvetro. But even before that he had had business deals with the famous Calvinist printer Pietro Perna from Lucca, who had settled in Basle, though these were not very satisfactory, because Perna did not pay his dues [ill. 11.18]⁹¹⁶. Perhaps it was through Perna that Strada came in contact with the Lombard physician Girolamo Donzellini, whose contacts with supposed heretics had forced him to flee Venice in the mid 1550s. At the relatively safe haven of Ferdinand's court he was helped by, among many others, Antun Vrančić, and by Strada himself. A few years after his contacts with Castelvetro Strada employed two other famous, learned and noble exiles, the Sienese reformer Mino Celsi and the vagrant prince, Bernardino Bonifacio, Marquis of Oria, in his editions of Serlio's manuscripts. In his youth Celsi had commissioned Baldassare Peruzzi to build a villa and a beautiful circular chapel at Sovicille, near his hometown Siena. So he was sufficiently conversant with architectural terminology to edit Serlio's Italian of the *Settimo Libro*. The prodigiously learned Bonifacio [ill. 11.18] likewise had some architectural experience as the patron of the restructuring of the Castle and Fortress of Francavilla Fontana (1547), his principal residence before his flight from Italy; he provided the Latin translation of Serlio's text⁹¹⁷. Such services were doubtless rendered not only out of mutual sympathy, but also because - apart from a possible financial remuneration - Strada had offered help, advice, or even hospitality, and had used his own formal and informal contacts on behalf of such friends.



11.24-27 | Some luminaries employed at Maximilian's court that Strada regularly rubbed shoulders with: the physician and natural historian Pier Andrea Mattioli; the physician and humanist Joannes Crato; the botanist Carolus Clusius and the court composer Philips de Monte; engravings by Theodor de Bry from Jean Jacques Boissard's *Icones Quinquaginta Virorum illustrium doctrina et eruditione praestantium ad vivum effictae, cum eorum vitis descriptis* (1597-1599)

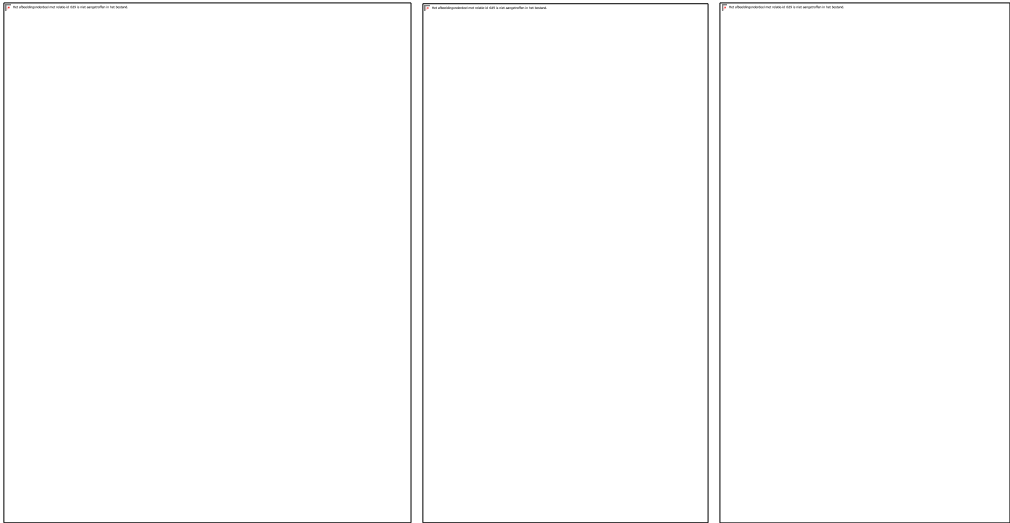
Strada's circle was not limited to his compatriots. In the summer of 1578 he wrote a letter to the famous Flemish botanist Rembertus Dodonaeus, who had been appointed Imperial Physician at the end of 1574, but had recently returned to the Netherlands [ill. 11.21]. Earlier

⁹¹⁶ DOC. 1564-00-00: Strada's request to Maximilian II for a permit to travel to Germany. Strada had sold Perna, printer and bookseller, the remaining copies of his editions of Panvinio's *Fasti et triumpho* and *Epitome pontificum* in commission, against payments at each Frankfurt book fair. Strada request a letter of recommendation to the Frankfurt authorities to help him regain this debt, and offers to obtain books from his creditor for Maximilian's library. Perna would also print the second edition of Castelvetro's *Poetica* (Basle, 1576).

⁹¹⁷ On Celsi: BIETENHOLZ 1979; on Bonifacio and his incredible travelling library, see CACCAMO 1970; WELTI 1970; WELTI 1976; WELTI 1983; WELTI 1985<a>.

he had advised Strada to contact the Antwerp printer Christophe Plantin, whom he thought might be persuaded to print some of Strada's projected publications, and he was willing to serve as an intermediary. Strada took him up on this offer, and his letter, though addressed to Dodonaeus, was really directed at Plantin [ill. 11.23]⁹¹⁸. Dodonaeus' offer was made after inspecting or even studying the materials relating to Strada's projects in his *Musaeum*. Another Netherlandish friend was the Imperial Librarian, the Dutchman Hugo Blotius, who had been appointed early in 1575, and had briefly visited Vienna some years previously: Strada trusted him sufficiently to serve as reference for Plantin as to the quality of the books Strada proposed to have printed [ill. 11.22]. Here again the advice and recommendations such scholars were willing to give him doubtless reflect the services he had rendered them earlier.

Some years later, in 1581, a young polyglot scholar from Saxony, Elias Hutter, when passing through Vienna not only appears to have visited Strada, but also offered himself to convey another request for subvention for Strada's publishing projects to his patron, the elector August of Saxony. It is not known what was the result of his intervention, but his presence shows that Strada's efforts were taken seriously also by a younger generation⁹¹⁹.



11.28 | The neo-Latin poet and Imperial diplomat Paulus Melissus, engraving from Boissard's *Icones Quinquaginta Virorum illustrium*
 11.29 - 11.30 | Paulus Melissus, *Schediasmata poetica*; Paris 1586:
 title page and encomium on Jacopo Strada

Even when there is no concrete written evidence, it can be assumed that Strada was also in contact with the scholars and artists more or less permanently employed at Maximilian's court and thus often resident in Vienna, whom he must have regularly met when discharging his duties at court, such as the Imperial Physicians Pier Andrea Mattioli and Joannes

⁹¹⁸ DOC. 1578-08-13. It was Plantin, rather than Dodonaeus who answered him (DOC. 1578-10-10); on Strada's publishing projects, see below, ch. 14.

⁹¹⁹ DOC. 1581-01-04. Hutter was born in 1553; his interest in Strada's linguistic materials, in particular the polyglot dictionary, is not surprising in view of his own project to produce a polyglot bible, a first instalment of which, a New Testament in no less than twelve languages, was published in Nuremberg in 1599.

Crato, the botanist Carolus Clusius and the composer and Master of the Imperial Chapel Philips de Monte [ills. 11.24-11.27]. Strada was very much aware of the lustre the presence such luminaries afforded the Imperial court, and was proud to be associated with them, as he had expressed to Ferdinand I in his very first bid for Imperial patronage: “Hora se la Maestà Vostra li piace di acetarmi nel numero de li suoi virtuosi, del canto mio farò ogni debito per farmi honore.” Unfortunately Strada is rarely, if ever, mentioned in the correspondence of these well-known personalities. Nevertheless one of his associates, the German neo-Latin poet Paul Schede, also known as Paulus Melissus, who spent several years at Maximilian’s court and served him as an ambassador, was sufficiently impressed to give Strada a highly laudatory entry in his *Schediasmata poetica*, a fat book of Latin poems in praise of the men of letters and learning of his time [ill. 11.28 and 11.29-11.30]⁹²⁰.

This survey of people with whom Strada was in contact and who visited his house is an arbitrary survey, its entries randomly selected by the vicissitudes of time - it should be handled with caution. But given the fact that it is only a minimal selection, the tip of the proverbial iceberg, it provides sufficient evidence to conclude that at least during Maximilian’s reign Strada’s house and *Musaeum* functioned as a meeting point for members of and visitors to the Imperial court who shared some of Strada’s manifold intellectual and artistic interests. Next to the court itself, it provided one of the places suitable to the informal exchange of information and opinions and the occasional relaxation necessary to the efficient dispatch of affairs.

To some extent Strada’s ambiguous status must have facilitated this function of his *Musaeum*: he cannot be easily allocated to any one group of courtiers, diplomats, noblemen, officials, clerics, scholars or artists, though he belonged to most of these to some extent. He was Italian, but also at the same time fully rooted in Germany, through long experience, through his marriage and his contacts. Because of his considerable wealth he was relatively independent. Though he does occasionally intercede for his contacts, he did not represent any outside interest (except perhaps Hans Jakob Fugger’s) and his faithful service to his Imperial patrons, in particular for Maximilian II, cannot be doubted. It was his rigorous impartiality and careful treading in the political and confessional fields that made him fit so well into court life during the reigns of Ferdinand I and Maximilian II.

11.5 | Strada’s confessional position

About Strada’s position in the religious troubles of his time little is known, and though this information does not allow certain conclusions about his real opinions, it is of some interest in view of the important role of the confessional situation at Maximilian’s court. It is not for nothing that - together with the Imperial physician Johannes Crato, the librarian Hugo Blotius and the general Lazarus von Schwendi - Strada was chosen as one of four key figures in Howard Louthan’s treatment of a complex of opinions at the Imperial court adding up to what he considers an irenic *via media*, reflecting ideals of religious compromise and moderation followed by Maximilian and, to a lesser extent, by Rudolf II⁹²¹. Key document for Strada’s attitude is a letter of September 1576 to his old friend Jacopo Dani, secretary of Grand Duke Francesco I of Tuscany, in which he defends himself against accusa-

⁹²⁰ MELISSUS 1586, p. 283; on Melissus, see FECHNER/DEHNHARD 1994.

⁹²¹ LOUTHAN 1997; a summary of Strada’s position on pp. 124-125.

tions of heterodoxy Dani had reported back to him. Proclaiming himself an assiduous Catholic, he nevertheless refused to boycott those of other persuasions:

"You should know <...> that from the day I was born I have never changed my religion, nor will I ever do so until I die. At great expense I have kept my sons in the house of the Jesuits, together with other noblemen, and these Jesuits are regular guests in my home, as are Monsignor the Nuncio and the Spanish Ambassador as well as many other lords whom it would be too much to mention all. My house is a house for all sorts of people, and if it was known for otherwise, there would not be so many gentlemen who come and visit me, and the world can judge that very well because lately when my wife died, God bless her soul, I had her buried according to our custom; and the funeral cost me over 300 *Thaler*, and His Imperial Majesty and His Majesty the King [of the Romans, Rudolf II], sent their gentlemen of the Chamber to accompany her, and there were a host of noblemen present; and in contrast, if I would have been of the other religion, I would have sent her out of town to their church, and would have buried her for ten pounds, as they do with the gentlewomen of their religion"⁹²².

It is difficult to judge the sincerity of this protestation: considering that many members of the Austrian and Bohemian nobility were Protestant at the time, Strada would have been wise to leave religion out of his dealings with such potential patrons, even if he were a devout Catholic. On the other hand it is obvious that Strada did not wish to loose the possibility of ecclesiastical preferment for his sons. Thus he managed through Duke Guglielmo of Mantua to have his son Paolo elected to a benefice in Mantua cathedral, thanks to the insistent recommendation of Maximilian II; Rudolf II would later recommend his second son Ottavio to a benefice in a cathedral chapter in Germany.

Ironically, at the very moment when Duke Guglielmo conceded the benefice to Paolo Strada, Jacopo was in Mantua and was caught up in the clamorous persecution of heretics in that town launched in 1567 by the Dominican friar Camillo Campeggi. It involved many high officials of the Gonzaga administration and even some members of minor branches of the dynasty. There is evidence that Strada was in contact with Mantuan evangelicals, including Lucretia Manfrona Gonzaga and Vittoria Gonzaga Martinengo, who "privately abjured" in the presence of, among other gentlemen, one "dottor Strada", who appears to have been Jacopo⁹²³. Strada's colleagues, the Duke's *prefetto delle fabbricche*, Giovanni Battista Bertani, and the engraver Giovanni Battista Scultori, with both of whom he was collaborating at that time, were also among the accused⁹²⁴. Strada himself attributed his persecution to the ill-will of the Papal Nuncio at the Imperial Court, Zaccaria Dolfin,

⁹²² DOC. 1576-09-28: "Sappiate, Signor Secretario, che dal giorno che nacque non ò mai mutato religione, ne sono per mutarla, insino alla morte tampoco. In casa delli Jesuiti ò tenuto in donzina alle spese in compagnia d'altri gentilhuomini gli miei figliuoli; et essi Jesuiti praticano in casa mia domesticamente, et Mon Signor Nuncio et l'Ambassador di Spagna, et altri Signori che sarebbe troppo a volervi qui tutti nominare. La mia casa e casa per hogni sorte d'huomini, et quando fossi cognosciuto per altro, non verebbono tanti Signori a visitarmi; et di questo il mondo ne puol far giudicio perchè ultimamente morse mia moglie (Iddio habbi l'anima sua) io la feci interrare al modo nostro; et mi costò piu di 300 talleri il mortorio, et Sua Maestà Cesarea con la Maestà del Re vi mandorno accompagnarla gli gentilhuomini della Camera, et vi era un monte di signori. Et pel contrario, s'io fosse stato de altra religione, la mandavo fuori della terra alla loro chiesa; con x L. la sotteravo, sì come fanno le gentildonne loro della loro religione."

⁹²³ DOCS. 1567-06-1 and 1567-06-30; DAVARI 1879, pp. 34 and 68-69; PAGANO 1991; BERZAGHI 2011, p. 10.

⁹²⁴ On Campeggi's mission in Mantua, see PAGANO 1991; on Campeggi, see MARCHETTI 1974.

whom he had once refused a substantial loan⁹²⁵. Strada appealed for protection for himself and the people he employed to Duke Guglielmo, who notwithstanding the Emperor's express recommendation appears not to have dared to give him a safe-conduct, so Strada escaped to Verona, in Venetian territory, where the Inquisition was less powerful⁹²⁶. By June 1568 the Holy Office had been sent a detailed personal description of Strada which perfectly fits Titian's portrait, for which he was sitting at the time, and it even employed spies in Venice to figure out where Strada was⁹²⁷. A later attempt by Maximilian II to obtain a more permanent safe-conduct on his behalf from Duke Guglielmo appears to have been equally unsuccessful⁹²⁸.

It is not clear in how far Strada's persecution was justified by actual evidence in the hands of the Holy Office; from another document it appears that two brothers, "Thomas et Rubertus Auserstulfer" from Tirol had been found prepared to testify against him⁹²⁹. Strada appears not to have hidden his opinions to his contemporaries, so it may merely be a coincidence that we are not better informed about them: already in October 1567 Niccolò Stopio - himself a suspect, as results from an anonymous report to Philip II - had responded to a query from Hans Jakob Fugger about Strada's trouble with the Inquisition:

⁹²⁵ DOCS. 1568-00-00: Strada's undated draft for a letter to an unnamed collaborator in Mantua: "Ma poi che voi cominciate a cantare, dite tutto l'historia, e dite come il Delfino Cardinale ["patriarca" crossed out, corrected into: "essendo Vescovo"], non gli volendo prestar mille <duca>ti, ne tampoco farla sigurtà, esso à fatto questo ufizio; ma ancora lui è conosiuto."

⁹²⁶ DOCS. 1568-00-00: Strada's undated draft for a letter to an unnamed collaborator in Mantua who had likewise been forced to flee the Inquisition: "Vi sete voi scordato la benevolenza ch' io vi portò di quel atto ch' io feci di volervi pagar il cocchio e darvi danari per mandarvi a Verona; ma di già avevate fatto vella e tanto miseramente essendovi fugito a piedi da Mantova a Verona [inserted above the line: a digiuno], avendo lassato la tavola parechiata per desinare. Ma la mia fuga è stata da da gentiluomo, perchè prima mi volsi valere del grado mio, e come servidor del primo signore del mondo andai a parla<r> al Ducha, che mi assicurasse me e li mei huomini, che per me lavoravano; e voi eravate il primo posto sulla lista, tanto era l'amor ch'io vi portò. Infine vedendo le scuse di non potere, me ne vene a Vinetia." Niccolò Stopio to Hans Jakob Fugger, Venice, 5 October 1567, HStA-LA 4852, f. 169-70: "essendo esso Strada p<ar>tito per Verona, per paura della Inquisitione, che li frati di San Domenico l'havevano cercato una volta ò 2 in casa sua, et andando lui dal Duca a dolersene, il Duca li rispose che con loro non se n'impacciarò, se bene era huomo dell'Imperatore, che 'l guardasse lui il fatto suo, dovendo lui medes<imo> saper meglio come stava che nessun altro; per il che se ne andò subito via per Verona, lassando il suo puto [= Ottavio Strada] in Mantua<...> et non fidandosi ne anche ivi [= Verona] venne poi a Ven<eti>a, ove per rispetto de l'Imperatore non li haveriano lasciato dare molestia; benchè non ho inteso che'l sia contrario alle cose Romane, se non che'l è molto libero di ragionare, et intrando in colera non ha rispetto alcuna sia di chi essere si voglia<...>".

⁹²⁷ PAGANO 1991, cites various documents preserved in the Archivio del Sant'Offizio/ Congregazione per la Dottrina della Fede, Città del Vaticano; p. 197, n. 15, Camillo Campeggi to Scipione Rebiba, Mantua 18 June 1568: "Mandarò li contrassegni di Giacobbo Strada e vi porrò anche delle spie dietro per saper ove sarà"; id. p. 199, n. 22, Campeggi to Rebiba, Mantua 25 June 1568: "Mando la descrittione che ho potuta havere di quel Giacobbo Strada antiquario dell'Imperatore, accioché si possi procurar di haverlo nelle mani"; in the attached "identikit" Strada is described as "mantovano antiquario; è di pelo rosso che tiro al nero overo al scuro, comincia a far la barba canuta, può havere cinquanta anni, di statura mezzana, et è prosperoso. Habita in Vienna et ha una moglie alemana; era questa Assensa passata in Venetia et alloggiava a mezzo la marzaria in casa di uno che dà il lustro alli specchi, apresso di una chiesiola che qual credo si dimandi San Giuliano. Egli in Venetia facea lavorare delle teste di marmore per lo imperatore, e forse vi sarà anchora al presente". Pagano reads "Assensa" as the name of Strada's wife, which is obviously mistaken; I take it to refer to the feast of the Ascension at which time Strada had been spotted in Venice.

⁹²⁸ DOCS. 1568-10-01 and 1568-10-11. Strada's phrasing thanking Duke Guglielmo for his decision as to the safe-conduct Maximilian II had requested on his behalf does not make quite clear whether the request had been accorded or refused; if so, Strada did not trust it sufficiently to make use of it, and appears never to have returned to his native city.

⁹²⁹ PAGANO 1991, p. 200, n. 23.

“<...>though I have never heard from his talking that he is against Rome, except that he is very free in his reasoning, and once he gets angry he respects no one, whomsoever it may be”⁹³⁰.

Strada’s “free” verbal criticism probably included the Pope himself, Pius V: he did not hesitate to write it down in a letter to Duke Guglielmo of Mantua⁹³¹. After the death of Emperor Maximilian II, Strada’s protector, Duke Guglielmo had even less reason to interfere, and in 1581 Strada was burnt in effigy, together with his son Paolo, canon of Mantua cathedral. Even though Rudolf II had withdrawn his support of Strada already by 1578, it remains a moot point whether Duke Guglielmo would have allowed the two Strada’s to be burnt in the flesh, had they been so careless as to let themselves be caught⁹³². It is quite ironical that at about the same time that he was burned in effigy, Strada planned the entertainment for Riccardo Riccardi already described, including among the guests not only the Archbishop of Kalocsa, the later Cardinal Juraj Drašković, but also two Dominican friars, belonging to the order intensively involved in the eradication of heresy⁹³³. There can be no doubt that Strada maintained at least the pretence to have remained faithful to the Roman Catholic Church until the end of his life, indicating in his will of 1584 that he wished to be interred in the Minoritenkirche, the Franciscan church near to his house⁹³⁴.

On the other hand Strada may have had some sympathy for the Reformation: as we have seen, he maintained contacts with many Protestants, and in particular with Italian Evangelical exiles, such as Mino Celsi and Giovanni Bernardino Bonifacio, Marchese di Oria, who both collaborated on his edition of Serlio’s *Settimo Libro*, the printer Pietro Perna in Basel, and the humanist Lodovico Castelvetro, whose translation of Aristotle Strada sold and may have been instrumental in publishing. The extent of such sympathy is indicated by his attempt to enlist Antun Vrančić to provide counsel and support to Girolamo Donzellini, in order to help Donzellini to return to Italy and clear himself with the Holy Office⁹³⁵.

Summing up, a preliminary conclusion could be that Strada participated to some extent in the confessional debate of his time. He had both lived in a largely Protestant environment in Germany and moved in the circle of prelates who represented or at least tried to formulate the Catholic response to the Reformation, in Rome in the 1550s. In contrast to Hans Jakob Fugger, whose orthodoxy was never doubted notwithstanding his ample patronage of Protestant scholars, Strada must have expressed his doubts about “le cose Romane” sufficiently often and openly to have attracted the attention of the Inquisition.

⁹³⁰ Niccolò Stopio to Hans Jakob Fugger, Venice, 5 October 1567, quoted above. Niccolò Stopio was himself suspect, as results from an anonymous report to Philip II preserved at Simancas (Archivo General, *Papeles de Estado*, Venecia, *legaja* 1548, nr. 52, fol. 248).

⁹³¹ DOC. 1568-10-11, cited above: Strada tells the Duke that he will not for the moment make use of a safe-conduct to come to Mantua, “si per non haver io di presente da negotiar costà, come anche di non voler L’Excellenza Vostra importunare, e tanto più in questi tempi di questo Pont[efice], il quale non à rispetto a niun Principe dove si puole attaccare (quantunque dal canto mio la mia consienza sia netta)”.

⁹³² DOC. 1578-07-16: Already in 1578 Rudolf had indicated he did not care if “Giacomo Strada antiquario” were to be deprived of [his son Paolo’s] benefice in Mantua, “perchè non lo tiene per buon cristiano, anzi per heretico<...>”.

⁹³³ Above, Ch. 11.3.

⁹³⁴ DOC. 1584-07-01; Appendix 3b.

⁹³⁵ On these contacts, see above, Ch. 11.4; on Donzellini, see JACOBSON SCHUTTE 1992.

Taken altogether, it seems likely that Strada may have shared a certain confessional leniency with his patron, Maximilian II.

11.6 | Contacts with members of the dynasty

Together with Strada's erudition, his curiosity and his enthusiasm, it was perhaps also his moderation in the confessional field that gained him Maximilian's sympathy: a sympathy which was expressed in the Emperor's enduring patronage, and which is reflected in Strada's own letters⁹³⁶. There is little or no evidence of a direct contact with Empress Maria and the members of her own immediate circle, but other members of the dynasty did frequent his house - or at least wrote their motto in his "memoria di casa mia"⁹³⁷. Chief among them was Maximilian himself, who first visited it in 1565 at the instigation of Duke Alfonso II of Ferrara, who had praised it as the most beautiful house in Vienna, though at the time it was only partially finished, construction having begun only a year earlier. Apparently the Emperor was pleasantly surprised, because he would occasionally or regularly return, at least according to Strada himself:

His late Majesty, of blessed memory, often used to come in my studio, and would remain from after lunch until dinner-time; and His Imperial Majesty called it the delight and museum of Strada, because he saw there so many rare and various things as ever struck the eye.⁹³⁸

Maybe Maximilian came now and then to inspect Strada's collections, probably incited by Strada himself, who could have let drop a hint of new acquisitions when in attendance on the Emperor, as was sometimes the case⁹³⁹. It is difficult to guess what material would have appealed most to the Emperor: the little we know about his intellectual interests suggests an orientation towards natural history and technical topics. Natural history seems to have had little attraction for Strada, though he did possess a book of drawings of animals; but

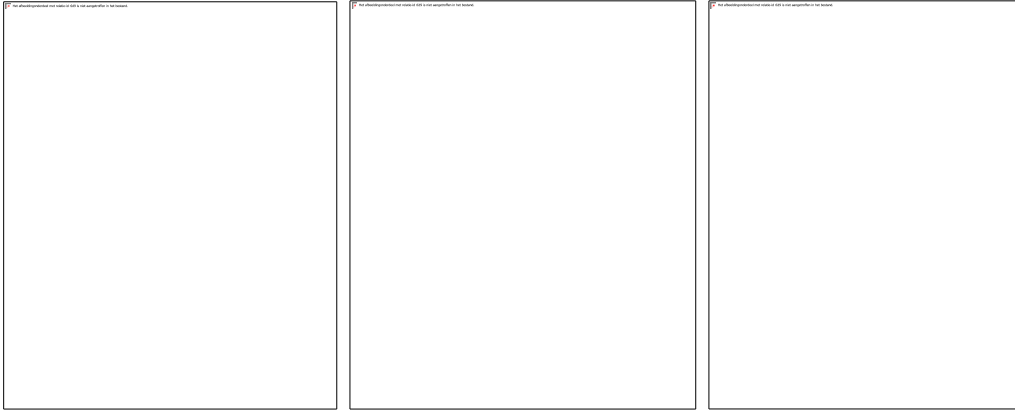
⁹³⁶ Maximilian's intervention with the Duke of Mantua in the affair of Paolo Strada's benefice in Mantua Cathedral is a case in point, involving an explicit *motu proprio* to Duke Guglielmo, impressed by an accompanying letter by no less a personage as Vratislav z Pernštejn, the Bohemian Chancellor, and presented to the Duke in person by Paolo Emilio Bardelone, the Mantuan envoy at the Imperial court (DOCS. 1565-05-12 and 1565-05-15).

⁹³⁷ It is difficult to say whether the rumour of Strada's alleged heresy as reported back to him by Dani in 1576 circulated widely. In Mantua it remained alive, given the fact that in 1583 both Strada and his son Paolo, as canon of San Pietro, were burned *in effigie* as "eretici confirmati". This probably merely implies that they had not taken the risk to go and defend their case in person: it is very doubtful whether the Duke would have allowed them to be burnt in the flesh. Of course at the Imperial court, where there was much more direct contact between the various confessions, such accusations would have been taken with a grain of salt. There is no indication that Strada's career at court was hampered by his religious position, and it should be noted that the Spanish ambassador, *ex officio* chief of the Catholic party, did add his name to Ottavio's *Stammbuch*.

⁹³⁸ DOC. 1581-11-02: Jacopo Strada to Jacopo Dani: "Nel mio studio Sua Maestà morta, pia memoria, sovente vi veneva, et vi stava dal doppio cossinare per insino all'ora della cena; et lo chiamavo Sua Maestà Cesarea le dellitie et museo del Strada, perchè Sua Maestà vedeva tante cose rare et varie che mai si straccava l'hocchio".

⁹³⁹ Strada's attendance upon the Emperor is documented in his letter thanking the Duke of Mantua for the benefice accorded to his son Paolo (DOC. 1568-12-28): "E la prima volta ch'io mi truovo con Sua Maestà me ne voglio rallegrare di questa cortesia di Vostra Eccellenza Illustrissima"; and in his answer to Jacopo Dani's letter reporting the gossip about Strada's alleged heresy (DOC. 1576-09-28): "Et io un giorno con commodità la monstri la lettera a Sua Maestà Cesarea in Camera, et Sua Maestà si misse a ridere, et poi mi disse alcune parole di lui, ch'io non vorebbe già, che Sua Maestà dicesse di me." The latter passage makes it clear that such attendance was sufficiently relaxed to allow Strada to obtrude his own affairs on Maximilian. The willingness to favour Strada on the part of princes such as the Dukes of Florence and Mantua likewise indicate that he was perceived to have some influence with the Emperor.

technique, as a branch of architecture, was well represented in Strada's library and even among his own works. Maximilian's interest in the Laziis controversy suggests that he would also have been particularly interested in Strada's "small but choice" collection of ancient medals. His ambition as a patron of the arts as indicated by his Prater *Lusthaus*, the Stallburg and the Neugebäude suggests that he would have been interested in documentation of the projects of other patrons, such as the documentary drawings of Raphael's Vatican *Loggia* and Giulio Romano's Palazzo del Te.



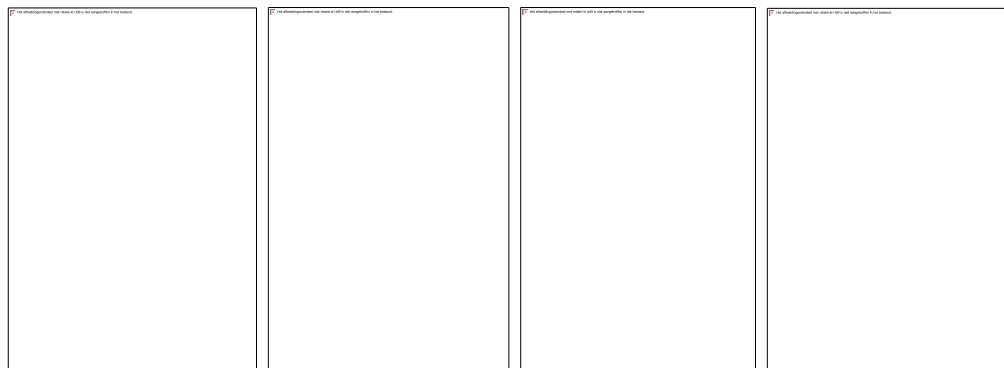
11.31 - 11.33 | Alonso Sánchez-Coello, Portraits of Archdukes Rudolf and Ernest, ca 1568, and their preceptor Adam von Dietrichstein, anonymous eighteenth century engraving from F.C. Khevenhüller, *Annales Ferdinandeae*, Leipzig 1721-1726

Another fascinating passage in a letter by Strada explicitly states that Maximilian II highly esteemed the exercise of the arts, in particular draughtsmanship or design. The letter was written in the November 1566 to Adam von Dietrichstein, one of Maximilian's most trusted courtiers, whom he had appointed to oversee the education of his two eldest sons, Archdukes Rudolf and Ernest. When these were sent to Madrid in 1563 to receive part of their education at their uncle's court, Dietrichstein was appointed to head their household, and doubled as Imperial ambassador in Spain [ills. 11.29-11.31]. Strada wrote to thank him for having presented in his name a numismatic manuscript to Philip II, and to ask him to further his attempt to obtain a benefice or pension from the king for one of his sons. The tone of the letter suggests that he had got to know Dietrichstein quite well. As an afterthought he continues:

I don't know if your lordship after his departure has continued the study ["delectatio"] of medals, and of drawing ["disegno"]; for certainly it would be good not to abandon that, the more so because you made such a good start; and also their Serene Highnesses the princes, it would be well if they would be reminded of that practice ["delectatione"]; for in truth, dear Sir, by drawing one obtains knowledge of an infinite number of things, and one's judgment becomes much more excellent in all subjects, and it far surpasses that [obtained by] other studies, the more so when practiced by a learned gentleman such as you are. Now if your lordship reassures me of that, I will always send you something by my hand to draw ["ritrarre" = to

copy], begging you not to abandon a practice highly esteemed by many ancient emperors, as well as by our present Emperor and patron.⁹⁴⁰

From this passage it can be deduced that Dietrichstein had had drawing lessons from Strada, and that the Archdukes also had been having drawing lessons. It is not impossible that these lessons were likewise given by Strada, who may have received the two princes with their preceptor in his own studio. It moreover explains that these lessons consisted of the careful copying of two-dimensional examples. These drawings were provided by Strada himself, and the link with the “delettatio dele medaglie” suggests that Strada’s numismatic drawings often were used to this purpose.



11.34 - 11.37 | Anonymous, frontispiece and drawings from a sixteenth-century numismatic album, possibly after drawings by Jacopo Strada (Real Biblioteca de El Escorial)

This supposition is strengthened by the presence in the library of the Escorial of a sixteenth-century numismatic album, consisting of about hundred and forty rather primitive drawings of numismatic images on large-size sheets, sketched in pencil or chalk and finished in pen and ink. In its lay-out and its topic it is similar to Strada’s numismatic albums, one of which Dietrichstein had presented to Philip II in his name [ills. 11.32-11.35]. This volume includes not only Roman emperors, but also some Popes, some men of letters, and a number of contemporary Italian princes. Notwithstanding their less than adequate quality, these drawings deserve a special investigation: it is tempting to see them as the results of a similar didactic practice. Since the title page is taken up by a coat of arms - drawn equally awkwardly - that is neither that of Dietrichstein nor that of one of the archdukes, it is unlikely that the volumes is connected with them. But the moustache drawn onto the face of the angel supporting the escutcheon does suppose its later use in a similar - apparently rather boring - didactic context [ill. 11.32]⁹⁴¹.

⁹⁴⁰ DOC. 1566-03-01: “Non so se Vostra Signoria Illustrissima doppo la Sua partita abbia continuato la delettatio dele medaglie, et il disegno, che certo sarebe bene a non lo abandonare, e tanto più che avea un bonissimo principio; et anche le Maestà deli Serenissimi Principi, saria bene che tal deletatione li fosse raccordata, che invero, Signore, per il disegno si viene in cognitione di infinite cose, et il giuditio è molto più eccelente in tutte le cose, e sopravanza tutti gli altri di gran longa; e tanto più quanto è in un Signore litterato come Lei. Ora Vostra Signoria me ne farà certo, et io li manderò sempre qualche cosa di mia mano da rittrare, suplicandoLa a non voller abolire quello che molti imperadori antichi, et il nostro presente e padrone fa gran stima.”

⁹⁴¹ Real Biblioteca del Monasterio de San Lorenzo de El Escorial, *Códices Latinos* h.I.4. 1; cf. ANTOLIN 1911, pp. 301-303. The volume contains an ex-libris of Philip II; the coat of arms is identified in a later pencilled note as that of the Spanish family Lanuza. At first sight the drawings seem to be in different hands, one of which is more expe-

There can be no doubt that the materials collected in Strada's *Musaeum*, illustrated by their owner's explications and comments, interested Maximilian II greatly and perhaps helped him develop his critical judgment or even provided some inspiration for the projects he undertook. So it is time to attempt at least to get an impression of what he may have seen there.

rienced and sophisticated than the other(s). The added moustache looks as if it was added in the seventeenth century.