CHAPTER 2

Travel: Rome, Landshut, Nuremberg—Strada’s Connection with Wenzel Jamnitzer

2.1 Early Travels

STRADA, florentes prope Mantuani
Mincii ripassate, Romulaeque
Urbis ornandae studio per annos
Dedite multos

rhymed Paulus Melissus in the second (1586) edition of his Schediasmata poetica.\(^1\) Strada’s first steps on the soil of Rome, seat of the venerable Republic and triumphant Empire that he had been taught to revere even in his earliest years, must have filled him with the same emotions that have been registered in the memoirs of so many students and tourists both before and after him. Melissus implies that Strada had spent many years in Rome, information that he probably obtained from Strada himself. Though it is possible that it refers chiefly to Strada’s later sojourn, between 1553 and 1554, there are sufficient indications that he had spent some considerable time there even before he definitely settled in Germany in the early 1540s.

Unfortunately, the lack of data concerning Strada’s early life does not allow a reconstruction of the sequence of his artistic training, his hypothetical visits to the universities of Bologna and/or Pavia, and his more extensive travels in Italy. Considering the usual curriculum of the journeyman or student, who would normally set out on his travels only after having acquired his basic training, I think we can assume that Strada likewise only thought of widening his horizon when he had already acquired some basic proficiency both in his art and in his erudite studies. That would have him set out from Mantua at the latest towards the middle of the 1530s, when he was about twenty years old. These travels appear to have covered a large part of his native country, if we may believe Strada’s claims in the preface of his Epitome thesauri antiquitatum, the illustrated numismatic treatise that he published in Lyon in 1553. To find the greatest quantity possible of ancient coins to include in his book, Strada

\(^1\) Melissus 1586 p. 293; on Melissus (Paul Schede, 1539–1602), see Nolhac 1923; Fechner/Denhard 1994.
had gone to look for them ‘in quite distant places, both in Italy and elsewhere; such as are Rome, Naples, Venice ...’.

It is likely that the young Strada indeed spent an increasing amount of his time on purely erudite studies of a geographical, topographical and antiquarian character, and may well have begun to specialize in numismatic research already at an early date. Yet I suspect that by 1553, when he had developed his ambition to be regarded as a man of letters and a learned antiquary rather than as an artist, he exaggerated their importance when he claimed these studies to have been the exclusive motive for his travels. It is more likely that his trip was intended at least in part to increase his artistic skill and experience, and he may occasionally have actually worked as an assistant or apprentice, in the traditional manner of the wandering journeyman. As a direct or indirect member of Giulio’s circle he would have had easy access to the artistic circles of the towns he visited, and this appears to have been the case with Giulio’s former colleague, Perino del Vaga, whom Strada describes as ‘in vita sua amicissimo’.

Since Perino had died in 1547, when Strada had already been in Germany for some years. Strada must have got to know him either in Genoa, where Perino had worked for Andrea Doria until his return to Rome by the end of 1537, or during a sojourn in the Urbs after that date. It is very likely that Strada remained in Rome for a long period, perhaps even for some years, but it remains an open question whether he also worked for Perino, who in fact employed a great number of assistants. Strada certainly was sufficiently interested in Perino’s work later to acquire a large quantity of his drawings from his widow.

On the other hand, Strada, being relatively well-to-do, had less need to earn his living than other young artists and craftsmen, and his itinerary certainly was much more extensive than was usual. Apart from Rome, Venice and Naples, which he mentions explicitly, he probably visited the other principal centres of culture in Italy, such as Milan, Bologna and Florence, possibly Genoa, and, nearer home, Verona and Ferrara. It is less certain that he also visited the

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2 Strada 1553(b), p. aa 4 v: ‘en lieux fort lointains, tant en Italie, qu’autre part; comme est Rome, Naples, et Venize <...>’.

3 Strada’s preface to Serlio 1575, fol. a iii-i.

4 On Perino del Vaga’s return to Rome and the work he did there, see Elena Parma Armani in *Polittico di Sant’eramo* 1982, pp. 7–10, and Parma Armani 1986, pp. 176–236. It is of course not impossible that Strada had first met Perino earlier in Genoa, which he may well have visited; though it is possible that he visited Rome in the 1540s as an agent of Hans Jakob Fugger and may have got to know Perino only then, this seems unlikely. Among the Strada material in Vienna there are some copies of Perino’s designs for the sopraporte in the Sala Paolina in the Castel Sant’Angelo; on these and on Strada’s acquisition of Perino’s drawings, see below, Ch. 3-7.
rest of Southern Italy and Sicily, but since he appears to have been an indefatigable traveller even when he was quite old and plagued by the gout, this is not impossible. Doubtless he carefully studied what ancient remains he could find in the towns he visited. Thus, he claims to have executed a series of measured drawings of the remains of principal classical monuments of the *Urbs*; if so, this activity should probably be assigned to his earlier visit rather than to his shorter, very busy sojourn of 1554–1556. Judging from his later interests, however, we can rest assured that he paid at least equal attention to the artistic achievements of his contemporaries.

### 2.2 Residence in Germany

Strada's subsequent trips in foreign countries—that is, in Germany and in France—appear to have been characterized by a comparable attitude of enlightened and informed tourism, judging from the preface to his *Epitome thesauri antiquitatum* quoted earlier. Here Strada claimed that he had undertaken his travels partly for the sake of collecting numismatic material for his book, and partly ‘to know the manners of the foreigners, and the beauty of the landscape of their country’. Yet it is rather likely that he had some more pressing and specific reasons to choose Germany, rather than to follow in the footsteps of Primaticcio, towards that haven of emigrant Italian artists, Fontainebleau.

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5 Melissus’ poem praises Strada’s knowledge of antiquities from Asia Minor and Northern Africa; whether this implied travel (for instance to Constantinople, and/or participation in Charles V’s expedition to Tunis in 1535) must remain open to question: Strada was competent in using his network of friends and acquaintances to collect his materials. It should be noted that at this time Strada’s study of ancient coins had not yet assumed the systematic form which it would acquire during his first years in Germany, under the guidance of Hans Jakob Fugger: in his numismatic mss. Strada describes coins from collections he saw during his later visits to Rome and Venice (in the 1550s), while he does not mention any Neapolitan collection.

6 cf. Appendix ii, *Index sive catalogus*, nr. 34. On Strada’s later visit to Rome, partly on behalf of his patron Hans Jakob Fugger, see below, Ch. 3.6–7.

7 Strada 1553(b), p. aa 4v: ‘pour connoître les moeurs des estrangers, et la beauté de l’assiette de leur région’. Strada may in fact have visited France even in the thirties, if one can believe a reference in a letter of his son Ottavio to Belisario Vinta, secretary of Grandduke Francesco I of Tuscany, dated Prague 6 December 1588, in which he offers to sell ‘donzine de belissimi medaglioni <…> che mio padre bona memoria, già avanti 50 anni comprò in Franza <…>’ [*ASF, Medici del Principato* 810, fol. 129]. It seems unlikely that Ottavio, who must have known, would have confused a visit in the late 1530s with his father’s certain visits to Lyon in the 1550s, i.e. during Ottavio’s childhood. The style of Strada’s few certain designs are in fact quite close to that of Primaticcio’s and his contemporaries in France.
In the following paragraphs some hypothetical explanations of this choice will be advanced.

For more advanced, talented Northern artists of Strada’s generation a visit to Italy was becoming far from exceptional, and many of them actually settled in Italy. But it was far less common for Italians to settle in the North, unless—like Leonardo, Serlio or Primaticcio—they already had made a name for themselves, and could expect patronage of an exalted kind—in their case the French King. Exceptions are the architects, in particular the military architects, whose specific know-how was in demand wherever there was a war—that is to say almost everywhere in Europe—and the builders and master-masons from Lombardy who had traditionally been working on either side of the Alps, often for generations within the same family. Strada’s background does not conform to this, so the reasons why he went to Germany remain somewhat of an enigma. The scanty documentation on Strada’s earlier years does not allow us to resolve the problem, but a review of some hypothetical explanations will, I hope, make his choice more comprehensible.

The most obvious possible motive for Strada’s transfer to Germany is its relative proximity to Mantua, which had always maintained good contacts with the Empire: the town was situated on the principal road from the Brenner to the Po, to Bologna and to Rome. So in case Strada was looking for an opportunity to perfect his technique as a goldsmith it came natural to him to try his luck in Nuremberg, widely renowned for the quality and technical virtuosity of its goldsmiths. Less likely, but not impossible, is the supposition that Strada—who at a later date would be in trouble with the Inquisition—as early as 1542 maintained sufficiently heterodox opinions to have lost his nerve in the general panic that followed the sensational defection and flight of Bernardino Ochino, General of the Capuchin Order, which forced so many Italian evangelicals into exile.8

It is, on the other hand, perfectly possible that Strada was expressly invited to come to Germany by Hans Jakob Fugger, a member of the Augsburg banking dynasty, who would be Strada’s principal patron in the 1540s and with whom he would remain in regular contact until Fugger’s death. Strada may have first met Fugger during the latter’s stay in Italy, for instance in Bologna, where Fugger, who was Strada’s exact contemporary, attended the university from 1534 to 1535. Unfortunately, we have no positive indications of such a meeting, and any formal employment by Fugger implied by such an invitation is perhaps

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8 On Ochino’s flight and the Italian Reformation in general, see Cantimori 1939; Welti 1985b; on Strada’s religious position, see below, Ch. 11.5.
contradicted by the fact that Strada—though he did receive a stipend or some other form of monetary recompense—did not settle in Augsburg, as a Fugger creature or *familarius*, but maintained an independent establishment in Nuremberg.\(^9\)

### 2.3 The Landshut Hypothesis

Lack of precise information prevents us from deciding which of these hypotheses is the right one, and to some extent they all may have contributed to Strada’s decision. In addition to these, it is possible to suggest a more concrete occasion that may have furnished the immediate cause for Strada’s transfer across the Alps. Though it must likewise remain hypothetical, I think this supposition sufficiently probable and important to discuss it in detail. This occasion is the construction and decoration of the so-called ‘Italienische Bau’ of the ‘Stadtresidenz’ in Landshut, one of the principal seats of the Dukes of Bavaria.\(^10\)

The direct stimulus for the construction of this purely Renaissance dwelling, which had no precedent in Germany, had been the trip to Italy made by Duke Ludwig x of Bavaria-Landshut in the spring of 1536. Shortly before his trip, the Duke had decided to have a new residence built in the centre of the little market town on the banks of the Isar: construction of its entrance wing, later known as the ‘Deutsche Bau’, had already begun, under the supervision of the local architects Niclas Überreiter and Bernhard Zwitzel or Zwietzel. During his trip, Duke Ludwig first visited Trent, where he was received in the *Magnano Palazzo*, the residence that had been recently refurbished by the Prince-Bishop, Bernhard Cles.\(^11\) By the middle of April Ludwig had arrived in Mantua, and if the advanced taste of Cles’ apartments had already impressed this very cultured and erudite Prince, he was virtually blown over by the splendour of Federico Gonzaga’s plaything, the Palazzo del Te. This is borne out by the enthusiastic letters he wrote to his brother, Duke Wilhelm IV of Bavaria:

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9 On Hans Jakob Fugger and Strada’s relationship with him, see below, Ch. 3.
11 Cles (or Clesio) was in Rome at the time of Ludwig’s visit. On Cles and the decoration of his apartments in the Castello di Buonconsiglio, see a.o. *Bernardo Cles* 1985; Frangenberg 1993, and below, Ch. 5.2.1.
Afterwards we have eaten dinner out of town in the new palace he is building, the equal of which, I believe, cannot be seen anywhere, for sumptuous rooms and buildings, and also for painting; about which there is much that could be written or said. I have written to you from Trent by means of Lienhart Zeller, about the residence of the Bishop of Trent, this really cannot be compared to it, this is far superior….  

Ludwig’s trip, and his direct experience of the most advanced architecture and decoration of the Italian courts he had visited, in particular the Palazzo del Te, inspired him fundamentally to modify the projects for his new Stadtresidenz. Though in 1537 the Deutsche Bau was finished according to the original plans, the remaining wings, enclosing the central courtyard, were constructed according to a new design, which is not only certainly of Italian origin, but also of a truly exceptional quality [Figs. 2.01–2.09].

The attribution of the design of this Italienische Bau is still a matter of dispute, though its Mantuan origin is generally accepted. It is likewise generally agreed that the two totally unknown architects or master-masons from Mantua—‘Meister Sigmund welscher paumeister sambt Anthonien sein Mitgesellen, baid Wahlen von Mann tua’—who arrived already in January 1537 to supervise its construction, cannot have provided a design of such obvious excellence.  

Kurt Forster in fact has proposed that the design was commissioned from Giulio Romano himself: he explains the relatively orthodox classicism of its architecture, which incorporates little typically Giuliesque mannerist detail, by considering it as a preliminary exercise for the Palazzo Thiene in Vicenza. Forster follows Scamozzi and Inigo Jones in attributing the original conception of this grandest of Palladian palaces to Giulio. Though other specialists,
such as Howard Burns and Christoph Frommel, have accepted Forster's thesis, others have perceived less direct similarities with Giulio's work. Rasp and, following him, Sarzi, propose an architect of a more conservative stamp who, to be sure, had not been able to escape the influence of Giulio's work, but who felt little at home with its unclassical elements. Sarzi proposes Giulio's second in command, Giovan Battista Covo, as perfectly fitting this profile, and this is no implausible suggestion. It is true, for instance, that the use of a truly colossal order is very untypical for Giulio. In addition, as Sarzi indicates, the main façade facing the courtyard of Landshut seems to be inspired by Falconetto's Loggia Cornaro in Padua, which suggests that the architect felt more at ease with local or regional precedent, than with the most advanced solutions of Raphael's followers. On the other hand an artist of Giulio's sophistication may

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15 I am grateful to Howard Burns for communicating his opinion on the subject to me.
16 Rasp 1984; Sarzi 1984/1985. Note Erichsen's analysis of the mannerist 'licence' found both in the Palazzo del Te and in Landshut, proposing that the introduction of wilful mistakes and deviations from the rule would blur or render invisible the distinction between high and low quality of architecture. But surely the difference between the refined capriccio of a brilliant and intellectual master such as Giulio and the mere ineptness of an untalented epigone would remain visible to the informed eye?
well have considered—and with justification!—that the project as executed was surely sufficiently advanced for its location. Moreover, the function of the Stadtresidenz, as the Duke’s principal dwelling, would in any case have allowed less artistic licence than was admitted in the stately pleasure dome decreed by Federico II.

Whereas for the architecture of the Landshut Stadtresidenz the example of the Palazzo del Te must therefore be invoked with caution, the dependence of its splendid and sumptuous interior decoration from Giulio’s grandest creation is unmistakable. Not only is the type of decoration in general clearly derived from the Palazzo del Te, but in many details—lay-out of the compartmented ceilings, stucco ornaments etc.—and even in its iconographical programme, the Mantuan model is closely followed. It comes as no surprise that the documents show that at least part of this decoration was executed by the same stucco workers that had worked in the Te a few years earlier. The painted decoration, on the other hand, was entrusted to the local painters Ludwig Refinger and Hans Bocksberger the elder, and to the Dutchman Herman Posthumus, who appears already to have entered Ludwig’s service before he made his documented trip to Rome and Mantua.17

What is striking about Landshut is—except for the manner of the painted decoration—the totally Italian spirit which infuses the palace into its smallest details: examples are the purely Venetian chimneys on the low-pitched roof, and—even more significant—the lantern of the chapel, which can only be seen from some back-windows [Fig. 2.4]. Can this Italian spirit still be explained by the fact that the Stadtresidenz appears to have been constructed and decorated almost exclusively by Italian artisans, its unity of conception

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17 Sarzi 1988, pp. 131–133.
and perfectionism is astounding if one presumes, as appears to have been the case, that the designing architect never set foot in the place. To my mind this unity of conception, this lack of compromise with local usage even in unimportant details, presupposes that the execution of the plans—be they Giulio’s or Covo’s—was regularly supervised by someone who perfectly understood the requirements of the building, and had sufficient comprehension and experience of Giulio’s style to be able confidently to resolve any unforeseen contingencies that might arise during construction.

Even if ‘Meister Sigmund’ can be identified with Sigismund da Preda, who twenty years later was a highly respected Imperial architect in Vienna—this plausible identification is proposed by Sarzi—it is very unlikely that he would have been capable of such supervision.\(^{18}\) The solution to this enigma must be

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\(^{18}\) Sarzi relates De Preda’s surname (he was also known as ‘de Pretitis’) with the Mantuan locality Breda, ignoring that according to Thieme-Becker De Preda was a native of Pisa, while other sources refer to Pratovecchio, in the Casentino, as his birthplace, cf. Wartenf/ Erichsen 2009, p. 97. This would certainly not have prevented him from arriving in Landshut by way of Mantua. De Preda’s best known work is the Kaiserspital in Vienna (demolished in 1903), construction of which began shortly after his death in 1549. If Benedikt
sought, in my opinion, in the regular, if not continuous, presence in Landshut of someone to whom Meister Sigmund and his helpmate Antonio, who were charged with the day-to-day supervision of the work, could refer any particular problem arising on the site, and who in general kept an eye on the correct execution of the entire project. This must not necessarily have been a professional builder: it may well have been a gentleman from Mantua who coupled a developed taste and some personal artistic ability to a more than superficial understanding of the most advanced — e.g. Roman — architecture and decorative design and a thorough acquaintance with Giulio's work. He should be a gentleman both in birth and education, not a mere craftsman, in order to overcome the prejudices of Ludwig’s court-officials and to meet the Bavarian erudites who advised Ludwig in his plans on their own level. Because he was a gentleman, and present in a more or less informal way at the Landshut court, any financial gratification that he may have received for his work would not be found in the actual building accounts: it is not impossible that he should even be regarded as an informal envoy of Federico to his Wittelsbach cousin.\(^{19}\)

Christoph Frommel, who attributes the design of the Italienische Bau unreservedly to ‘Giulio Romano’s Mantuan architect’s office’, postulates the existence of an assistant:

... a great talent <...> who was more than a purely executive collaborator, whose presence, though it left no further traces, explains why the effect of the building, notwithstanding the perfection of its execution, nevertheless differs from that of Giulio's certain works.\(^{20}\)

\(^{19}\) John Bury has formulated a similar answer to the question of the problematical relationship between designer and executor of a stylistically advanced project in an out-of-the-way location, in his case the Palace of Charles V in Granada, which he holds to be a design after Raphael or Giulio transmitted, or even actually made by Baldassare Castiglione— at the time resident in Spain as Papal Legate to Charles V — and merely executed by Pedro Machuca (Bury 1987).

\(^{20}\) Lauterbach / Endemann / Frommel 1998, p. 84: ‘Giulio Romano’s Mantuaner Baubüro’, postulates the existence of an assistant, ‘ein großes Talent <...> das mehr als nur ausführende Kraft war, das keine weitere Spuren hinterließ, aber doch erklären wurde, wieso

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\(^{19}\) Kölbl’s design for its archaic, arcaded facade—began in 1560, after its model had been examined by a commission of which Strada, by that time himself architect in Imperial service, was a member—still reflect De Preda’s plans, it is clear that though he may have been a good master-mason, he would have been incapable of independently supervising, much less designing a structure of the quality of the Stadtresidenz. See Kühnel 1959, pp. 324–325; Kühnel 1971, pp. 37–38, Abb. 6.

\(^{20}\) Lauterbach / Endemann / Frommel 1998, p. 84: ‘Giulio Romano’s Mantuaner Baubüro’, postulates the existence of an assistant, ‘ein großes Talent <...> das mehr als nur ausführende Kraft war, das keine weitere Spuren hinterließ, aber doch erklären wurde, wieso
If such an assistant did indeed exist, it is likely that he also would have been entrusted with the diplomatic supervision of the Mantuan crew in the manner here suggested. Frommel does not give names, but for such a hypothetical function two candidates spring to mind: the exact contemporaries Giovanni Battista Bertani and Jacopo Strada, who both in all probability received their artistic education in Giulio’s studio. As an outstanding architect of great originality and profound theoretical erudition, moreover as Giulio’s successor as Prefetto delle Fabbriche in Mantua, Bertani seems to hold the better cards. But in view of Strada’s own interest and proficiency in architecture—as demonstrated by his designs for the Munich Antiquarium and for his own house in Vienna (modelled on Giulio’s Palazzo Stati-Maccarani in Rome) and by his edition of Serlio’s Settimo Libro—he certainly remains a serious candidate for such a function. In my opinion, his documented presence in Germany shortly after the completion of the Stadtresidenz tips the balance in his favour.

It remains the question whether such a responsibility would have been entrusted to such quite young assistants: both Strada and Bertani were hardly twenty-two years old when construction started in 1537. Even if Strada had been charged with this responsibility, it is unlikely that he was directly involved in the design itself, because in that case he would probably have referred to it in the preface of his 1575 edition of Serlio’s Settimo Libro. If he did have some role in supervising the execution of the building, he probably also was involved in the execution of the decoration. Work on this continued until 1542, shortly before his presence in Germany is securely documented. In any case, he cannot have been unaware of the project: on a second brief visit to Mantua in October 1536, Ludwig x had conferred with Niccolò da Milano, and had studied the gesso models kept in Niccolò’s studio.

This suggests that Niccolò was asked to organize a team of stucco-workers to execute the decoration, and in fact many of the colleagues that had collaborated with him in the Palazzo del Te can be identified in the accounts. Among these we find Giovanni Battista Scultori, better known as an engraver, who...
would later occasionally be employed by Strada himself.\textsuperscript{23} There is likewise some circumstantial evidence which suggests contacts between Strada and

\textsuperscript{23} Sarzi 1988. It is significant that Niccolò had also been involved with the decoration of Cles’ \textit{Magno Palazzo} in Trent, which had been likewise admired by the Duke. Strada refers to his contacts with Scultori in a letter to Guglielmo Gonzaga, Doc. 1574-10-04(a).
Herman Posthumus, who appears to have been chiefly responsible for the pictorial side of the decoration. Strada might possibly be identified with either of the two Jacopo’s who received payments for their work in the Stadtresidenz; but it is perhaps more likely that he was delegated to keep an eye on the execution of the stuccoes in a similar diplomatic manner as has been suggested for the architecture: in particular to ease the contacts and enhance the mutual comprehension of the artists and the German erudites of Ludwig’s court who bore the final responsibility for the iconographic scheme.

2.4 Romance in Franconia: Strada’s Marriage and his Settling in Nuremberg

If this hypothesis is right, than Strada would have been released from his tasks at Landshut at the latest by the middle of 1543, when the last payments for the decoration of the Stadtresidenz were made. It can be assumed that he had managed in the meantime to obtain a sufficient foothold in the region to decide not to return to his native country. This would tally with his contention, in a letter to Archduke Ferdinand I of Tirol of December 1556, that he had been employed by Hans Jakob Fugger for over twelve years, that is since 1544. In a letter of September 1574 to Jacopo Dani Strada announced the death of his wife, adding that they had been married for thirty years. By 1544, therefore, Strada must have been present in Germany at least sufficiently long to meet his bride, to woo her, and to gain the confidence of her parents. She was Ottilie, daughter of Christoph Schenk von Rossberg, the last male representative of a Franconian noble family which reputedly was mentioned already in the tenth century.

Long-time owners of the Schenkenschloß or Schenkenturm on the Roßberg just outside Würzburg, the family had fallen on hard times: apart from the

24 On Posthumus, see Dacos 1985; Dacos 1989; Boon 1991. Posthumus has been identified as the so-called ‘Anonymous A’ responsible for a number of drawings (several of them of Mantuan subject-matter) in the so called Berlin-Sketchbooks of Maarten van Heemskerck. The same hand has been recognized in some drawings in the Strahov-codex, which once made part of Strada’s collection: see Bukovinská/Fučíková/Konečný 1984; Juřen 1986; Dacos 1989.


26 Doc. 1556-12-22: ‘<…> appresso al Signor Jo[an] Jacopo Fochero in Augusta, et passano dodeci anni ch’io son stato occupato neli suoi lavori <…>’; Doc. 1574-09-09; ‘siamo stati 30 anni insieme’. Strada’s responsibility at Landshut as suggested above would also have contributed to his eligibility, particularly if he had been sent as a Gonzaga courtier.
actual tower, the Schenkenschloß was destroyed in the peasant uprising of 1525, and the Schenks lacking means to rebuild it, the fief had reverted to its suzerain, the Prince-Bishop of Würzburg.\footnote{Kessler 1851; though it happened in the Bauernkrieg, it were actually townsmen from the Pleichachviertel, a neighbourhood of nearby Würzburg, who plundered and burnt down the castle. Ottilie’s grandfather Georg obtained a meagre compensation of about 1.000 Gulden, insufficient to repair the damages. Instead, they rented part of the Antonitenkloster in Würzburg as a residence.}

It is not known in how far Ottilie’s father may have redressed his fortunes before his death in 1559, and Ottilie appears to have had sisters, one of whom was married, and one of whom was a nun.\footnote{Georg Schenk ceded the Rossberg in 1537 to Konrad II von Thüngen, Prince-Bishop of Würzburg, in return for a pension of 100 Gulden each for himself, his wife Margarethe von Thünfeld, and his son Christoph [Dittrich 2006, s.v. Burg Schenkenschloss, cited on the site Burgenwelt.de, http://www.burgenwelt.de/schenkenschloss/ ge.htm, cons. 2014-01-13]. Ottilie appears to have had two sisters, Juliana, married to Georg von Leuzenbrunn zu Baldersheim, but who appears to have died by 1551, and Katharina, a nun who moved in 1542 with Magdalene von Berlichingen from the monastery of the poor Clares in Würzburg to the monastery of noble Benedictine nuns in Kitzingen [Denzinger 1855, p. 57]. In all, it seems unlikely that Ottilie, though an heiress, was a rich heiress.}

The chances are that Ottilie’s impeccable lineage was the most substantial part of her dowry and later her heritage. There can be no doubt that Strada, as an antiquary and genealogist, will have esteemed it highly, as he will have appreciated the prestige he gained by this aristocratic connection. At a later date, Strada’s second son and eventual successor, Ottavio,
applied to Rudolf II to add name and coat of arms of his mother’s extinct family to his own.\textsuperscript{29}

The first unequivocal proof of Strada’s presence in Germany, however, only dates from 1 November 1546, when the Council of Nuremberg inquired into his activities as an artist; the next day he was officially authorized to keep his own house, which implies that he had already been present in Nuremberg for some time.\textsuperscript{30} Some years later, on the 13th of March 1549, and after payment of a fee of 4 gulden, he obtained the citizenship of the town. In spite of occasional absences, some of which were of considerable length, Nuremberg would remain his basis of operation for well over a decade.

It is not clear why Strada chose to settle in Nuremberg rather than in Augsburg, the residence of Hans Jakob Fugger, his principal patron in the 1540s and early 1550s. Perhaps the close connections of the town’s ancient and powerful patriciate with the landed aristocracy of the surrounding region, to which his wife belonged, made it easier for him to gain admittance and to obtain the support he needed for his projects. If he had left Italy because of heterodox religious opinions, he may have been attracted by the city’s uncompromising adherence to the Reformation. But other factors will have been of greater importance: with about thirty thousand inhabitants the old Imperial \textit{Reichsstadt} was, after Cologne, the second largest city of the Empire, and one of the wealthiest mercantile centres of Europe. Sitting as a spin in a web consisting of the great towns of Southern and Central Germany—Regensburg, Frankfurt, Augsburg—it was situated on the crossroads of the great trading routes: those from the North, from Saxony and beyond, to the South, to Bavaria and across the Brenner to Italy and through Swabia and Switzerland to Lyon; and those from the East, from Prague and beyond and from the Habsburg court at Vienna along the Danube, to the West, through the Rhineland onward to Strasbourg and Paris, and to Cologne and Antwerp. Its merchants travelled widely and maintained extensive contacts throughout Europe, its manufacturers and craftsmen produced high quality merchandise that was exported all over the Empire and beyond. Though lacking both bishop and university, it had considerable renown in the world of learning, which it chiefly owed to humanists such as Hartmann Schedel, Willibald Pirckheimer and other Nuremberg lawyers—most of whom

\textsuperscript{29} Rudolf II confirmed Ottavio’s nobility and granting him the right to add the arms of his mother’s extinct family to his own on 18 May 1598 (JdKS 15, 1894, II, pp. clviii–clix, \textit{Regest} nr. 12420). Strada himself never used the name Rossberg or Rosberg (which indicates that the fief itself was no longer part of his wife’s heritage). Jacopo’s and Ottavio’s lineal descendants survive in France as Strada d’Arosberg, a name due to a misunderstanding of Ottavio’s signature, Strada da Rosberg [Pascuito 1978; Chabot de l’Allier 1990].

\textsuperscript{30} Docs. 1546-11-01, 1566-11-02.
studied in Italy—and to the printing presses of Anton Koberger and Johannes Petreius. Several of its artists—Veit Stoss, Adam Krafft and Peter Vischer in the late fifteenth century, Wenzel Jamnitzer in the sixteenth century—had international reputations. Printers and publishers all over the Empire employed its engravers, and its most famous son, Albrecht Dürer, was and is rightly considered the greatest non-Italian artist of the Renaissance. Coupled to the political stability guaranteed by its conservative patriciate, this all made Nuremberg a place that offered a wealth of opportunities to any talented and enterprising young man.

Again, very little is known about what Strada actually did in Nuremberg. At the time he certainly already was occupied with his antiquarian studies financed by Hans Jakob Fugger. Nuremberg was no unfavourable location for such research. The wealth and intellectual interests of her citizens is best illustrated by the fact that Samuel Quiccheberg, in his Inscriptio vel tituli theatri amplissimi of 1565, lists no less than nineteen collectors; by no means all of these belonged to the few old and extremely wealthy families from whose ranks the town’s government was co-opted. For several of the Roman coins described in Strada’s manuscript A.A.A. Numismaton Antiquorum Διασκευέ a provenance from some of these same Nuremberg collectors is given: apart from an anonymous Paduan erudite, he mentions Johann Starck, a patrician and member of the Council, Georg Römer, Johann Kandler and (his son?) Georg Kandler. The Kandlers were merchants who chiefly dealt in copper and brass from Northern Italy: sharing other interests with Strada beside numismatics, they probably made him feel welcome. In the first five volumes of his Διασκευέ he in fact describes over sixty coins from their collections. Since Georg Kandler was only born in 1531, Strada’s knowledge of his coins must at least in part date from later visits to Nuremberg, but his first contacts with the family doubtless dated from his period of residence.

The most important collection in Nuremberg, from which Strada described about ninety coins in the Διασκευέ, belonged to the Nuremberg patrician Willibald Imhoff (1519–1580). An almost exact contemporary of Strada’s, Imhoff shared his interests: in an autograph inventory of his collection of 1573 he confessed that he had ‘from earliest youth onward, an innate and great

31 Quiccheberg 1565, pp. H i r. –v.; Quiccheberg knew some of these collections from his own visits, some he owed to Hubertus Goltzius’ appendix on collectors of antiquities in his Julius Caesar.

inclination towards medals and antiquities’. He owed this inclination to his maternal grandfather and namesake, the celebrated humanist and close friend of Albrecht Dürer, Willibald Pirckheimer (1470–1530). In part directly, in part through his aunt, Imhoff inherited both the important library and the collection that his grandfather had brought together; the latter consisted of antique coins and sculpture and of contemporary works of art, and included many works by Dürer. During his visits to Imhoff’s studio, Strada doubtless did not limit his attention to the coins: he must also have got to know the large collection of prints and drawings Imhoff at that time was beginning to bring together. For this, he could build on the drawings and engravings his grandfather had been given by Dürer himself, or had obtained from the artist’s widow after his death; these were already in Imhoff’s possession. Probably it was here that Strada began to appreciate Northern draughtsmanship, an appreciation which later expressed itself in the acquisition of a considerable quantity of the works of German and Netherlandish engravers, including Dürer and Lucas van Leyden. In any case his interest in the graphic arts was bound to be strongly stimulated in Nuremberg, which boasted a tradition going back to the splendid woodcuts of the illustrated Bible (1483) and the Nuremberg Chronicle (1493) published by Anton Koberger; the work of Dürer and his followers had established the town as the principal centre of printmaking in Germany. Understandably, local collectors attached great value to prints, and Quiccheberg praised them specifically for their activities in this field.

2.5 Strada and Wenzel Jamnitzer

Quiccheberg singled out one group of collectors that appears to have been particularly in evidence in Nuremberg, the goldsmiths, with whom Strada would have felt some affinity because of his own early training in their craft. Several of them collected prints, which is understandable in view of the close relationship between the two arts, and the practical use that prints were put to in their workshops. Stimulated by the example of artists such as the Augsburg

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34 On Pirckheimer, see Willibald Pirckheimer 1970; on his collection, see Pilz 1970; Johne 1981.

35 Shortly after his father’s death, Ottavio Strada attempted to sell some of this material to the Grandduke of Tuscany; for Strada’s collection, see below, Ch. 13.3.

36 Quiccheberg 1565, H i recto.
painter and engraver Hans Burgkmair the Elder (1473–1531), some Nuremberg goldsmiths and other craftsmen built up real studio collections ‘of outstanding variety’. Quiccheberg mentions Wenzel Jamnitzer and one Mositzer, doubtless the medallist Hans Maslitzer (1503–1574). Apart from engravings, such collections were probably particularly rich in ancient and modern coins and medals, as well as in gems, cameos and intaglios. Moreover, it cannot always have been very easy to maintain the distinction between private collection and stock-in-trade. With such colleagues Strada will have consorted regularly—partly to satisfy his erudite interests, partly because of his interest in their professional skills.

2.5.1  A Commission from Gian Giacomo de’ Medici, Marquis of Marignano

The extraordinary fame of its goldsmiths and its pre-eminence as a centre of artistic creation in general were probably among the principal reasons why Strada chose to settle in Nuremberg. The entries in the minutes of the City Council of Nuremberg, in which Strada is repeatedly mentioned as ‘Künstler’ or ‘Künstner’ and as ‘Maler’, indicate that he at least occasionally exercised the arts he had been taught at Mantua. The entry of 12 March 1547, though brief, is of particular interest because it provides the identity of one of Strada’s earliest patrons, and at first sight seems to suggest that he set up a goldsmith’s workshop:

Jacoben di Strada, the artist, to allow him, at the request of the Marquis de Malingan, to make in his own house for His Grace the silver and gilt work that he intends to commission from him; and also that he can employ a master goldsmith or journeyman...

The ‘Markess de Malingan’, whose request on behalf of Strada was thus granted, can be identified with a notorious condottiere, Gian Giacomo de’ Medici, Marchese of Marignano (1495–1555). [Fig. 2.13] After his unsuccessful attempts to create a feudal state in the Brianza, and even to substitute the extinct Sforza Dukes of Milan, ‘Il Medeghino’, as he was also called, had made his peace with

37 Quiccheberg 1565, p. D ii-r.
38 Docs. 1546-11-01; 1546-11-02; 1547-03-12.
40 This identification was first proposed by Hayward 1976, p. 47.
his most serious opponent, Charles V, who invested him with the marquisate of Marignano, and subsequently made grateful use of his military experience. The Marquis conducted the Imperial armies in France, Flanders, Hungary and Germany, and crowned his career—in the year of his death—with the conquest of Siena on behalf of his Florentine namesake, Cosimo I, who in consequence allowed the Milanese Medici to assume the arms of the Florentine dynasty. Their version of the Medici palle was, like its Florentine counterpart, crowned with the tiara, when in 1559 Marignano’s saintly brother Giovanni Angelo was elected to the Chair of St. Peter’s, taking the name Pius IV.

Unfortunately, not much is known of Marignano as a patron of the arts, though it is not impossible that he shared some of the tastes of his erudite and intelligent brother: Pius IV commissioned Leone Leoni to execute Marignano’s tomb in the Duomo in Milan, reconstructed the family palace in the Via di Brera, and as a patron is best known for the refined and elegant Casino that Pirro Ligorio built for him in the Vatican Gardens.41 Marignano’s decision to commission an ambitious piece of representative silverware at this rather

41 The modest extensions added to the Marignano country residence at Induno Olona certainly do not presuppose tremendous patronage; see ‘Induno Olona, Frascatolo: Villa Medici di Marignano’, in Langé / Vitali 1984, pp. 134–143. On Marignano, see: Bignami 1925; Ravegnani Morosini 1984, pp. 308–309; Giannini 2009. On the Casino Pio, see Fagiolo / Madonna 1972(a) and Fagiolo / Madonna 1972(b); Smith 1977; Smith 1988; on Leoni’s project for the tomb of the Marquis of Marignano, which—according to Vasari—was based

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**Figure 2.9** Gian Giacomo de’ Medici, Marquis of Marignano, the statue of his tomb by Leone Leoni commissioned by his brother, Pope Pius IV; Milan, Cathedral.

**Figures 2.10–2.11** Wenzel Jamnitzer, The so-called ‘Merkelsche Tafelaufsatz’ and its case, ca. 1548–1549; Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum.
untoward moment—a few weeks before the Battle of Mühlberg!—must have been stimulated by the extraordinary splendour of the Imperial camp. In connection with the war, Charles’ train was unusually extensive, and included many generals who were princes in their own right: doubtless Marignano felt it due to his standing not to be outdone. It was his good fortune that an introduction by mutual acquaintances or a chance meeting brought him into contact with the one Italian gentleman in Germany who was perfectly able and willing to help him plan and realize some such tangible symbol of his status. Unfortunately, it is not known whether this work was ever completed; and if so, what exactly was Strada’s contribution to its conception and execution.

2.5.2 Was Strada Himself Active as a Professional Goldsmith?
It has been indicated that Strada had received some training as a goldsmith, probably in his native Mantua. The principal source for this is a letter of June 1559 to Maximilian, the titular King of Bohemia on whose recommendation Strada had entered the service of his father, Emperor Ferdinand I, about a year earlier. He indignantly related to the King how the Imperial Historiographer Wolfgang Lazius, at the time his chief rival at the Imperial court, in a polemical publication had indicated him as a goldsmith, instead of mentioning him by name and giving him the title of Antiquary, which he felt was his due:

Doctor Lazius, wanting to impute to me a lack of knowledge of Antiquity, avoids mentioning me by name and surname, describing me by the art of the goldsmith, which I have learned as a boy to enable me in time better to learn what I have, thanks be to God, learnt with great effort and expense, in the field of antique marbles and medals ....

In this Lazius had in fact rendered him a service, rather than an injury,

<...> showing in his writings to Your Majesty and to all the world how much I know and am capable of in my profession, in which I have not contented myself to understand the names and identify the portraits of the people of the past, but have also obtained by patient effort that I cannot only draw them on paper, but can also sculpt them in gold and other metals as well as in marble ... so in case he considers ignoble [‘vituperosa’] the knowledge and competence [‘saper et intender’] of the craft of the goldsmith (as he shows he does), it was not appropriate to the service on a design by Michelangelo, see Pope-Hennessy 1963, 111, pp. 100–101; on Pius IV’s patronage in general, see Smith 1977; Celluaro 1995.
he owes to the Imperial Majesty and to your own, nor to the duties of civility, to call me by that name in his writings <...>42

Strada’s ‘saper et intender’ of the art of the goldsmith, that is of a menial occupation as a craftsman, would even a decade later lay him open to the attack of an invidious rival, the minor poet Niccolò Stopio, who in a letter of 1567 to their common patron, Hans Jakob Fugger, scoffed that:

Strada has no connections here with sculptors, but only with goldsmiths and print-designers, or miniaturists, which is his trade.43

It must be conceded that it is doubtful whether Strada’s original motivation to learn the craft of the goldsmith was a mere desire better to comprehend the intricate new discipline of ancient numismatics. It might be that Strada’s antiquarian interest was itself partly due to his training in a goldsmith’s workshop; such shops after all were habitually also the repositories of the smaller and more valuable antiquities such as cameos, intaglios, small bronzes and ancient coins. The craft enjoyed a relatively high social distinction, since it was a ‘clean’ craft and, moreover, required a capital investment to set up an independent workshop, an investment which Strada’s family would have been able to provide. In his letter to King Maximilian Strada certainly does not deny

42 Doc. 1559-06-00, printed in Jansen 1993(a), Annexe 2, pp. 233–235: ‘Il Dottor Lazio <...>, volendomi tassar di puocha cognizione nelle cose de l’Antichità, fugge descrivere et palesar il proprio mio nome et cognome, et mi descrive dall’arte ch’io ho da putto imparato, per meglio poi col tempo venir ad apprendere quello che per gratia di dio ho con gran fattica et spesa apresso, in parte dal[m] antichità de marmi et medaglie <...> scoprendo con li scritti suoi a Vostra Maestà et a tutto’l mondo quanto io so et vaglia nella mia professione, nella quale [non] sol mi son contentato di voler intendere i nomi, et conosse i ritratti degli [uom]ini antichi, ma ancora ho fatto si con la fattica e l’tempo, che li so non so[l]o ritrarre in carta, ma li so anche sculpire tanto in oro et metalli, quanto in marmo <...> essendo che egli per caso ha per cosa vituperosa (come mostra d’haver) il saper et intender l’arte delorefice, non era conveniente né a la servitù che deve a la Cesarve et Vostra Maestà, né al debito del viver civile, il volermi chiamar ne suoi scritti di tal nome <...>’.

43 Stopio to Fugger, Venice 15 June 1567: ‘Il Strada non pratica qui con scultori, senon con orrefici o disegnatore di stampe in rame, o miniatori, che è il suo mestiere’ [BHStA-LA 4852, fol. 35–36/29–30]. Stopio deliberately deluded Fugger, for from his own reports a few weeks later it appears that Strada had close connections with the best Venetian sculptor of the time, Alessandro Vittoria, idem, 24 August 1567: ‘Io volevo che quella mattina fusse venuto meco il Strada, ma mi disse hiersera il suo figliuolo che mi portò letter da mandare a Monaco a S. Gio., ch’l va a desinare con Alessandro Vittorio [sic] scultore che fa queste sue cose <...>’ [ibid. fol. 60/53].
that he was competent in the craft, and his obtaining the commission from the Marquis of Marignano suggests at first sight that he actually exercised it. That Strada chose to settle in Nuremberg is of importance in itself, because the town was famous for the high quality of the gold- and silverware that was produced in its shops. In the Zistelgasse Strada was the next-door neighbour of Wenzel Jamnitzer: his collaboration with this best known of Nuremberg goldsmiths is the subject of the next paragraph.

On the other hand, there are arguments that support Strada's contention that he was no professional goldsmith. In the Nuremberg Council minutes he is indicated, as we have seen, as 'Maler' (painter) or 'Künstler' or 'Künstner' (artist), never as a goldsmith. In contrast to the more or less independent guilds in other Imperial towns, the Nuremberg goldsmith's craft was—like all corporations—administered and strictly supervised by the Council itself. The decision of the Council strongly suggests that Strada, though he had already been settled in Nuremberg for some time, had never become a member of the local goldsmith's craft, since in that case he would hardly have needed special permission to accept the Marquis of Marignano's commission. He certainly is not mentioned in the list of master-goldsmiths active in Nuremberg, a list that includes many foreigners, in particular from the Low Countries, but no Italians at all. Only master-goldsmiths inscribed in the local craft were allowed to run their own workshop: apprentices and journeyman were expected to work in the workshop—and under the supervision—of the master who employed them. Even as late as 1556 Strada is referred to—by the prince of Nuremberg goldsmiths, Wenzel Jamnitzer, who must have known exactly—as

'an industrious journeyman, quite competent in the art of painting and suchlike, with the name of Jacob Strote'.

Ein fleissiger Gesellen: I am not sure whether Jamnitzer just meant 'a keen fellow' or more literally 'an industrious journeyman', but surely he would not have used the term 'Gesell' had Strada been a recognized master in his craft. Even then, the craft Jamnitzer mentions is that of a painter, not that of the goldsmith. My own interpretation of these facts is that Strada basically told the truth to King Maximilian: he had learnt the basics of the goldsmith's craft as a

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44 Strauss pp. 97–106; Schürer 1985(a).
45 A list of recorded names of Nuremberg goldsmiths is given in Schürer 1985(b).
46 Doc. 1556-12-22: 'ein fleisiger, des malens und anderer dergleichen kunsten wol verstendiger gesellen, mit namen Jacob Strote'.
part of his more general artistic training, and his interest in coins and medals was the principal motive for his doing so. But he had never obtained any formal qualification in the craft, nor exercised it himself in any commercial way.

Nevertheless Strada rented or even owned a house which was spacious enough to house a goldsmith’s workshop, and he had acquired sufficient experience and name to obtain—and sufficient financial security to be able to accept—a very grand commission from a most illustrious patron. Though employing one or more collaborators, Strada thought he would need a year to complete the work planned.\footnote{Doc. 1547-03-12. Strada would take some financial risk in engaging other goldsmiths, less in the purchase of the raw material, which for a commission on this scale was probably provided by the patron himself.} This may have been a splendid liturgical object intended for Marignano’s brother, Cardinal de’ Medici, such as a set of liturgical vessels, a set of candelabra or a reliquary, but it is more likely that it was a secular object intended to increase Marignano’s personal prestige. One thinks of a table-centrepiece or—fountain, or a sumptuous Credenz similar to, for instance, Wenzel Jamnitzer’s \textit{Merkelsche Tafelaufsatz} now in the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam [Fig. 2.10–2.11]. Purchased from the artist in 1549 by the Nuremberg Council, this grandest of Jamnitzer’s early works appears to have been intended as a diplomatic gift to Charles v.\footnote{The \textit{Merkelsche Tafelaufsatz} was acquired by the Nuremberg Council in 1549 from the artist himself for the sum of 1228 Gulden and 10 Schillinge. Jamnitzer’s beautiful, coloured design (‘Visierung’) has been preserved, as has a wooden model of the supporting figure of the Earth, and the splendid morocco case (‘Futteral’). Though probably intended as a gift to Charles v, it remained in the possession of the town. It is tempting to suppose that it is identical with Marignano’s commission, which the Marquis may have failed to actually pay for. See: Pechstein 1974; Wenzel Jamnitzer 1985, cat. nr. 15, pp. 219–221; nr. 299, pp. 342–343 and nr. 502, pp. 406–408.}

Several reasons can be suggested why the Council was prepared to relax its rules in favour of Strada’s project. Marignano’s rank, his connection with the Imperial court, possibly even a formal request from Charles v on behalf of his general, would have sufficed to obtain something akin to \textit{Zunftfreiheit} for the artists he employed.\footnote{On the liberty of guild’s restrictions accorded to official court-artists and purveyors to court, see Warnke 1985, pp. 85–96.} Moreover, the opportunity to secure such an exceptional commission for Nuremberg craftsmen—Strada planned to employ a local master or journeyman for about a year in this one project—warranted an occasional exception to the rules. Yet the jealous care with which the Council guarded both the correct alloy of the material and the standard of craftsmanship of the products that left the Nuremberg workshops, suggest that it would
not have lightly made such an exception. It would not have entrusted the fame of the craft to a recent arrival lacking all formal qualification, and it is rather likely that the collaboration of a local master who could vouch for the quality of material and workmanship, such as proposed by Strada, was a condition for its consent.

Yet Strada obviously did not intend to act merely as an agent for Marignano: in that case, he would have placed the commission with a goldsmith he deemed capable of executing it to satisfaction, such as Jamnitzer, and have left the details to him. His insistence on having the work made in his own house indicates that he rather acted as a contractor, who undertook to organize the execution of the commission and held himself fully responsible for the result. This means that he not only purveyed the materials and engaged the necessary artisans, but that he also provided the designs and supervised their execution closely. But it remains an open question whether he himself participated in the actual forging of the object to any considerable extent.

2.5.3 Strada’s Contacts with Wenzel Jamnitzer

Strada’s colleagues cannot have been too happy to see such a large commission go to a foreigner, who was not even a member of their craft. Yet the most obvious competitor, the celebrated goldsmith Wenzel Jamnitzer (1508–1585)
Fig. 2.12], appears to have been on excellent terms with him, and at a later date would propose a collaboration on a similar commission. This lack of professional jealousy will have been partly due to Strada's intention to employ a local master or journeyman in the execution of the piece.\(^{50}\) Probably Strada intended to employ Jamnitzer himself, and in case the latter was already too busy with the \textit{Merkelsche Tafelaufsatz}, he presumably remained Strada's chief consultant in the choice of a suitable collaborator. Strada lived in the Zistelgasse, the present Albrecht-Dürer-Straße, and was therefore an immediate neighbour of the famous goldsmith: their contacts of necessity must have been very close.\(^{51}\)

It is very likely that Strada's taste and experience of Italian art and the artistic documentation—drawings, prints, perhaps even small casts—that he must have possessed even at that date, directly influenced Jamnitzer's style. The presence of Italianate Renaissance motifs in, and the general classicist appearance of so many of Jamnitzer's works, clearly distinguish his manner from the more vernacular style of most of his contemporaries.\(^{52}\)

A good example is the little coffer for jewellery in the Munich \textit{Schatzkammer} dated ca. 1560–1570, with its Doric frieze that is typical for Jamnitzer [Fig. 2.13]. The panels with small classical figures in relief against a dark background bring Italian, in particular Mantuan, examples to mind: they are very close to the small panels in the ceiling of the \textit{Camera degli Stucchi} in the Palazzo del Te, in which Strada later would show a special interest.\(^{53}\) [Fig. 2.14]

Other examples are the \textit{Kaiserpokal} now in Berlin—possibly a present of the Nuremberg Council to the Emperor Maximilian II, on the occasion of his visit in 1570—and the gorgeous reliquary now in Madrid which was certainly given to Maximilian's consort, the Empress Maria, on that occasion [Fig. 2.15]. The general proportions and the detail—such as the Doric frieze found again both along the rim of the cup, and as dominant feature of the architecture of

\(^{50}\) In fact the guild usually did not allow foreigners to exercise their craft: see Hayward 1976 pp. 40–44; Warnke 1985 pp. 86–92.

\(^{51}\) Doc. 1552-07-30; on Jamnitzer's house, see Mulzer 1974.

\(^{52}\) Pechstein 1966, p. 260, touches on the question of Jamnitzer's sources, and suggests Strada as a possible purveyor of motifs.

\(^{53}\) \textit{Wenzel Jamnitzer} 1985, pp. 224 (cat. nr. 19); the original design (‘Visierung’) has been preserved in Berlin: \textit{ibidem}, p. 343 (cat. nr 300). On the \textit{Camera degli Stucchi}, see Verheyen 1977, pp. 123–127; \textit{Giulio Romano} 1987, pp. 364–374, passim; Belluzi 1998: \textit{Saggi}, pp. 422–439, cat. nrs. 782–842; \textit{Atlante fotografico}, pp. 394–423. Among the Strada material some copies of Giulio's designs for these panels have been preserved: the originals Strada had brought in his possession in about 1555 (see below, Ch. 13.4).
FIGURES 2.13–2.14  Wenzel Jamnitzer, silver-gilt cassette, ca 1550–1560 (Munich, Schatzkammer der Residenz), compared to the ceiling of the Camera degli Stucchi in the Palazzo del Te, Mantua.

FIGURE 2.15  Wenzel Jamnitzer, reliquary for the Empress Maria, ca 1570; Madrid, Monasterio de las Descalzas Reales.
the reliquary—of such objects presuppose a familiarity with Italian architecture which Jamnitzer probably obtained through his contacts with his Italian neighbour.\footnote{The \textit{Kaiserpokal}, which celebrates the Landsberger Bund, is now in the Kunstsammlungen in Berlin. It is not documented, but some alternative designs for the relief of the cup have been preserved; see: \textit{Wenzel Jamnitzer} 1985, pp. 230 (cat. nr.25) and 346 (cat. nrs. 305–307); \textit{Reichstädt in Franken} 1987, cat. nr. 318; Pechstein 1988, p. 232, pl. 2. The Madrid reliquary, for which the \textit{Visierung} as well as some studies and models of individual motifs have been preserved, was given by the Empress to her daughter, the Archduchess Anna, on the occasion of her marriage to Philip II; it is now in the Monastery of the Descalzas Reales in Madrid and contains relics of St. Victor. See Pechstein 1966, pp. 263–277; \textit{Wenzel Jamnitzer} 1985, pp. 61–63. The Doric frieze is found already in the design for the \textit{Merkelsche Tafelaufsatz} (cf. below).}

The few ornamental designs that can be attributed with certainty to Strada himself epitomize a similar ‘stylish’, cosmopolitan elegance as Jamnitzer’s work. Compare, for instance, the title-page of Strada’s \textit{Epitome thesauri antiquitatum}, printed in Lyon in 1553 [Fig. 2.16], and that of Jamnitzer’s \textit{Perspectiva corporum regularium}, published in Nuremberg in 1568 [Fig. 2.17], the design of which he also used in a silver-gilt mirror frame now in the Metropolitan Museum of Art.\footnote{\textit{Nuremberg, A Renaissance City}, pp. 284–285, cat. nr. 197; Jamnitzer 1568: a facsimile was published in Graz, 1973.} Likewise, the winged Victories crouching over the arches in the niches

\textbf{Figure 2.16} Jacopo Strada, his publisher’s mark, from his \textit{Epitome thesauri antiquitatum}, Lyon 1553.

\textbf{Figure 2.17} Wenzel Jamnitzer, title page of his \textit{Perspectiva corporum regularium}, Nuremberg 1568.
of the reliquary in Madrid—which repeat a print Jamnitzer published already in 1551 [Figs. 2.15 and 2.18]—bear some relation to those filling a similarly precarious position on the title page of the first volume of Strada’s manuscript, Magnum ac novum opus in the Forschungsbibliothek at Gotha, which is dated 1550.⁵⁶ [Fig. 2.19]

The connection between Strada and Jamnitzer was in any case sufficiently close for the latter to propose Strada as a collaborator, and in particular as a designer, for a quite ambitious work, a Tafelaufsatz or Credenz in silver, representing the Creation of Adam and Eve in Paradise. Archduke Ferdinand I of

⁵⁶ Gotha, Fbg Ms. A 2175, vol. 1. The date is interesting in view of the fact that the Visierung for the Madrid reliquary consist partly of prints of aediculae by Jamnitzer which are dated 1551 (Wenzel Jamnitzer 1985, pp. 371–372, cat. nr. 368–369). An illuminated version of the design was used as the titlepage of Strada’s ms. in Paris, Bibliothèque de l’Arsenal, ms. 1019, which is dated 1554.
Tirol had commissioned this from Jamnitzer in 1556, just after Strada’s return to Nuremberg from his travels to Lyon and Rome. At the time Jamnitzer was fully occupied with some commissions from the Archduke’s elder brother, Archduke Maximilian, King of Bohemia, and suggested that meanwhile some ‘künstlichen Maler’, or ‘artful painter’, could execute one or more designs (‘Visierungen’) for the Archduke’s project. For this job he proposed Strada, whose letter to the Archduke on this account he enclosed with his own.

Strada’s letter provides a detailed impression of his own conception of his task: he maintained that for such a large piece of work a single drawing was not sufficient. First, it was necessary to be informed in detail about the Archduke’s own wishes, after which it would be possible to prepare a detailed design; in fact the best thing would be to prepare a three-dimensional model, to which the several masters charged with the execution could be referred.

A well-considered iconography, closely following Holy Scripture, was of great importance, and special care should be taken about the relative proportions of the various parts, in particular the many ‘geschmelzte Thierlein’, little animals cast in silver, that were intended to inhabit this splendid representation of the Garden of Eden. It was, moreover, essential that the Archduke would appoint some expert ‘sopradicapo’ or superintendent to coordinate and supervise the eventual execution. Strada was obviously quite prepared to take on that job, on the condition that he would be charged with the work as a whole, and that he would be subordinated to no one but the Archduke himself.

This letter has been interpreted as an attempt to oust Jamnitzer as a designer of the piece, a suggestion that is not warranted by the text. After all, it was Jamnitzer himself who proposed Strada to provide designs, which implies that he did not object to leave the supervision at least of the visual appearance of the work to his one-time neighbour. Apart from providing the actual design and a model of the piece, Strada considered himself capable of conceiving its iconographical programme; his letter to the Archduke should be read not as an attempt to oust Jamnitzer as a designer, but as an attempt to avoid having to deal with some court-official instead of discussing his proposals with the

57 Docs. 1556-12-22(a); 1556-12-22(b); 1557-01-07; 1557-01-26; 1557-01-27; see Schönherr 1888; Hayward 1976, pp. 46–48.
58 Docs. 1556-12-22(a); 1556-12-22(b).
59 Jamnitzer himself habitually prepared models of individual parts of his more important commissions (Wenzel Jamnitzer 1985, pp. 405–419), such as the wooden model for the Mutter Erde supporting the dish in the Merkelsche Tafelaufsatz (ivi pp. 406–408, cat. nr. 502) and figures and decorative parts for the Descalzas Reales reliquary (Pechstein 1966, pp. 270–274).
60 This reading proposed in Schönherr 1888 and Hayward 1976, p. 46.
Archduke in person. This conception of his function as ‘sopradicapo’ closely corresponds to the task he had undertaken when he accepted the commission of the Marquis of Marignano, as sketched above, though now he would not be responsible to acquire the materials and would leave the actual execution of the piece to Jamnitzer and his helpmates.61

The young Archduke accepted Strada’s offer by return of post, requesting him to come to Prague and to take with him all materials that might be useful, and Strada immediately set out. But though the vicissitudes of the project—which for lack of silver never seems to have been realized in its entirety—can be followed in the Archduke’s correspondence with Jamnitzer for several years, we find no further reference to Strada. We know that by March 1559 several ‘Visierungen’, designs, had been proposed, none of which had been found entirely satisfactory, but we do not know whether Strada had a hand in their conception—or in their rejection. Possibly Strada was not able to continue the general supervision of the project as a whole after he received his appointment as a court architect to the Archduke’s father, the Emperor Ferdinand I, in the spring of 1558.62 Yet it is rather more likely that, being present at the Imperial court, he remained involved in the continuation of the project—parts of which appear to have been executed at court—and was at least occasionally consulted by the Archduke.63

2.5.4 The ‘schöner Brunnen’ Commissioned by Maximilian II

Strada’s planned collaboration with Jamnitzer on this project has been one of the arguments advanced to support the assumption of Strada’s participation in a project commissioned a decade later from Jamnitzer by the Archduke’s elder brother, King Maximilian, who had by that time acceded to the Imperial throne. This extremely ambitious object, nowadays referred to as the ‘schöner Brunnen’ or ‘Prager Brunnen’, was commissioned in 1568, but was only

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61 It seems surprising that Jamnitzer, of whom several splendid designs (Visierungen) for works executed by him (including the Merkelsche Tafelaufsatz) have been preserved, should wish to work after drawings provided by others. On the other hand it may well be that for this important commission he liked to have some erudite assistance. Strada’s artistic experience and worldly wisdom made him suitable for that task, and Jamnitzer must have known him sufficiently well to know what to expect of him. I think it most probable that the two planned to discuss the technical and artistic aspects of any sketches and designs in detail, before submitting them to the Archduke.

62 See Jamnitzer’s letter to Archduke Ferdinand, Nürnberg 27 March 1557, quoted in Schön- herr 1888, p. 296; for Strada’s appointment at the Imperial court, see below, Ch. 4.

63 Schönherr 1888.
delivered to Maximilian's successor, Rudolf II, in 1578, when it aroused the admiration of Duke Ferdinand of Bavaria, who found it so sumptuous and beautiful: ‘das ichs nit describiren kann’. Key to its interpretation is a description copied in the seventeenth century, which appears to reproduce a summary description of the complicated object by Jamnitzer himself. This includes a concise explanation of its significance, which is a clear exposition of the Imperial theme that was so dear to many of the aspiring absolute princes of the sixteenth and early seventeenth century, and which was particularly apposite at the court of the ruling Holy Roman Emperor. Independently Ralf Schürer and Hilda Lietzmann have suggested the probable function of this explicit example of Imperial *representatio*: they assume, probably correctly, that it was intended to be placed in the central room of the Neugebäude. Both authors suggest that Strada may have been involved in the conception and possibly the design of the *Prager Brunnen*.

Though the sources on Strada have not yet yielded the confirmation of this suggestion that Schürer wished for, many arguments can be advanced for its acceptance. In the first place, though there is little factual evidence that definitively proves Strada's involvement as an artistic adviser to the Emperor, it will be argued below that his role as such, already postulated by Lhotsky and Lietzmann, was an important component of his court functions. In view of his historical studies, which specialized in the iconography of the Roman Emperors and their successors, it is rather likely that—with other court humanists such as Johannes Sambucus, Gerard de Roo and Hartmann Jobst von Enenkel—he was consulted on the iconography of Maximilian's dynastic fountain, in a similar manner as when he had been asked, shortly after his arrival at court, to give his opinion how best to finish the tomb of the Emperor

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64 On the so-called 'Prager Brunnen', which was commissioned by Maximilian II in 1568, but only delivered to Rudolf II ten years later, see: Kaufmann 1978(b), pp. 120–121; *Wenzel Jamnitzer* 1985, pp. 231–235 (cat. nrs. 26–30); Schürer 1986; Lietzmann 1987, pp. 170–173; Pechstein 1988, pp. 232–235.

65 Schürer 1986; Lietzmann 1987, pp. 170–173. Lietzmann has argued that this room was decorated by the court painter Giulio Licinio, and she tentatively proposes that a series of twelve of his panels—now divided up between London, St. Petersburg, Turin, and two private collections—could have formed part of this decoration. These paintings represent several scenes from Greek mythology and Roman history, respectively; they would more or less complement the iconography of the 'Prager Brunnen'. They were probably commissioned shortly before Maximilian's death, when the fountain was nearing completion; cf. Lietzmann 1987, pp. 149–151; detailed description of the panels in Vertova 1976. I do not completely agree with Lietzmann's valuable suggestion, and hope in future to be able to publish an alternative view of this very intricate question.
Maximilian I in the Hofkirche in Innsbruck, a commission of even greater dynastic importance than the younger Maximilian's fountain.\textsuperscript{66} Strada's interest and expertise in mechanical inventions connected with waterworks—which is indicated by the treatise that his grandson Ottavio II published under Jacopo's name in 1617–1618—is an additional reason why he would have been consulted.\textsuperscript{67}

In case of the Schöner Brunnen, moreover, his personal expertise and experience in the goldsmith's craft as outlined above provides a second argument for his involvement. Strada's continuing interest in goldsmith work is attested by his possession of Giulio Romano's designs for such objects—which he had acquired in 1555 together with the other drawings that remained of Giulio's estate—and by the fact that it were chiefly these drawings that he selected for the libri di disegni that were produced in his workshop.\textsuperscript{68} That such interest was not limited to Giulio's work is borne out by his acquisition or commission of (copies of?) a large number of designs for goldsmith work formerly attributed to Erasmus Hornick (1520–1583), a Flemish goldsmith who was active in Nuremberg from about 1550, drawings which Strada used for similar ends.\textsuperscript{69}

Finally, there is no reason why Strada's good contacts with Jamnitzer would not have continued after he moved to Vienna. Strada kept in touch with other Nuremberg artists, such as Erasmus Hornick and Jost Amman, both of whom he employed in his projects, as well as with other business associates in Nuremberg and in Frankfurt.\textsuperscript{70} In fact Strada would have been a valuable contact for Jamnitzer: he was well placed to ease the artist's contacts with his Imperial patron whenever the latter could not himself be in Vienna. As discussed

\textsuperscript{66} On the tomb of Maximilian I, see below, Ch. 6.2; on the historical research done at the Habsburg court, much of which was occupied with genealogical and dynastic questions relating to the 'Felix Domus Austriacae', see Coreth 1982; Evans 1979.

\textsuperscript{67} Strada 1617–1618; cf. Jansen 2002. Strada had contacts with the famous engineer Hans Gasteiger, and owned a clock which had been the latter's masterpiece, a gift from Duke Albrecht V [Doc. 1584-07-01].

\textsuperscript{68} On Strada's acquisition of Giulio's drawings, see below, Ch. 13.2.

\textsuperscript{69} On Hornick, see Hayward 1968a and Hayward 1968b; Wenzel Jamnitzer 1985, p. 132 en cat. nrs 386–390; the attribution to Hayward of many of these drawings has been shown to be without clear foundation in Reiter 2012, pp. 183–184; 213–214, 241–242 and passim.

\textsuperscript{70} Strada's employment of Jost Amman is documented in Doc. 1574-09-09; his connection with Hornick is discussed in Hayward 1968b. Moreover we know from Strada's last will that he disposed of a 'Gewelb' at the Frankfurt book fair, and had a business relationship with Paolino Nieri, a Lucca banker resident in Frankfurt [Doc. 1584-07-01]; cf. below, Chs. 4.3.4 and 14.5.5.
elsewhere in this book, such more or less informal mediation was one of Strada's tasks at court. It is unlikely that such mediation was limited to members of the dynasty: Strada's house probably functioned as an exclusive, high-class shop for luxury objects—books, prints, works of art, antiquities—catering to the intellectual, artistic and representative requirements of members of the Imperial court and its many visitors. Strada's acting as a dealer or informal representative of Jamnitzer's workshop must have been quite lucrative for both of them, in view of the great importance at court of sumptuous status symbols, including both personal jewellery—such as golden chains and medallions—and the cups, vases and dishes intended to grace a nobleman's dresser or Kredenz. The splendour of Strada's *libri di disegni* indicate that his designs were intended for patrons, rather than for the artist's workshops: it is quite conceivable that such albums functioned as catalogues from which a patron could select the object(s) he wished Strada to order for him.

### 2.5.5 Strada as a Designer for Goldsmith's Work

All together, there is sufficient direct and circumstantial evidence to accept a very close collaboration between Jacopo Strada and Wenzel Jamnitzer. Connecting the data we have I think it is possible to credit Strada with a substantial contribution to the design of at least one preserved object from Jamnitzer's studio: the so-called *Merkelsche Tafelaufsatz* preserved in the Rijksmuseum at Amsterdam [Fig. 2.21 and cf. Figs. 2.10–2.11].

This was made for an unknown patron at exactly the time Strada was asking permission to engage a master or journeyman goldsmith to work on a splendid commission for the Marquis of Marignano. It is inconceivable that Strada and Jamnitzer, near neighbours, and seven years later close collaborators in the project for Archduke Ferdinand, would not have exchanged ideas about these two important commissions—if they were in fact two: the hypothesis that the *Merkelsche Tafelaufsatz* is in fact the object commissioned by the Marquis cannot be excluded.

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71 Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, inc.nr. BK-17040. I am grateful to Dirk Jan Biemond, curator of metals at the Rijksmuseum, for an interesting discussion of the *Tafelaufsatz*, its Visierung and its possible connections with Jacopo Strada. On the *Tafelaufsatz*, see Pechstein 1974; Wenzel Jamnitzer 1985, cat. nrs. 15 (pp. 219–221) 299 (pp. 342–342).

72 Though the *Tafelaufsatz* was bought ready made by the Nuremberg Council, the Council appears not to have commissioned it—in that case their city's coat of arms or some other distinguishing feature might have been added. There is a real possibility that Marignano returned to Italy without actually paying for his commission—in which case the Nuremberg Council would have helped an esteemed citizen in financial difficulties, as well as have acquired an extremely prestigious object. A recent scientific examination
of the *Tafelaufsatz*, moreover, provides quite substantial stylistic evidence that Strada had a hand in it.

Examination of this huge (90 cms high), elaborate, and in some respects rather crude drawing makes clear that it certainly is not in the hand of Jamnitzer himself, who was a consummate draughtsman, nor for that matter in Strada’s. In fact the drawing [Figs. 2.20, 2.30 and 2.34] must be a full-size

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has discovered traces of an original inscription on the plaque screwd to the bottom of the piece, which was erased at some later date. This might have resolved the enigma, but it proved not possible to reconstruct the text (Bennekom/ Lemasson et al. 2014).
modello prepared by one of Jamnitzer's assistants on the basis of one or more designs provided by others.\footnote{Nuremberg, Germanisches Nationalmuseum, Graphische Sammlung, inv. nr HZ 5360, Kapsel 1055; on line: http://objektkatalog.gnm.de/objekt/HZ5360; cf. Wenzel Jamnitzer 1985, cat. nr 299 (pp. 342–342); In den hellsten Farben 2003, cat. nr 11, pp. 3839.}

Merely on the basis of Strada's later close connection with Jamnitzer it might be supposed that he had a hand in this design. But that is rendered even more plausible by a comparison between the Visierung [Fig. 2.20 and 2.22] and Strada's autograph drawings, such as the title page of Strada's Magnum ac novum opus in Gotha [Fig. 2.23–2.24]. Just like the Visierung, the title page is drawn in pen and brown ink and a lighter wash; the title page of Strada's Imagines omnium numismatum antiquorum in Paris, dated 1554, repeats the Gotha design, but is coloured in watercolour and gouache, and therefore even closer to the spirit of the Visierung.\footnote{Paris, Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, Ms 1019; on-line http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b525049095.r=Strada%2C%20J}. Both drawings include motifs also found in the Visierung, such as the garlands of fruits and flowers and the putti in precarious positions. Moreover it seems to reflect an artistic sensibility that is quite close to that of the design of the Tafelaufsatz. The ‘German’ character of the Visierung in general, and of certain details, such as the cartouches for the inscriptions, does not exclude the involvement of Strada: it can easily be explained as the effect of the collaboration between an Italian and a German artist. Even if Strada should not have been present at Landshut in the late 1530s, he had
been living and working in Germany at least since 1544 and was married to a
German noblewoman: reason enough to have begun appreciating the arts of
his adoptive country. In fact he had become sufficiently appreciative of these
to leave at his death a ‘big book bound with gold’ which contained ‘the greater
part of the printed designs of that great man Albrecht Dürer, both those in
copper engraving and those in woodcut, and there are 216 sheets in all, all of
prime quality’.  

All this seems to justify the hypothesis that Strada provided Jamnitzer with
designs for the Tafelaufsatz, or at least for one or more of its elements. As
Rainer Schoch has pointed out, the Visierung consists of five separate sheets,
each of which corresponds to one of the elements constituting the object. The
lack of stylistic unity between these sheets made Schoch suspect that here, as
in the course of other phases of the production of the Tafelaufsatz, Jamnitzer
employed various ‘specialists’.  

Whereas Jamnitzer himself, or another of his ‘specialists’, provided the naturalistic and metallic elements of the piece, Strada
would have been the specialist who provided Jamnitzer with the Italianate
design for the caryatid figure, representing Ceres or Abundantia [Fig. 2.26].
This supposition becomes a virtual certainty when one compares the Ceres of
the Tafelaufsatz with a Diana, the drawing of a character in a joust or masque
at the Imperial court for which Strada designed the costumes some years later.  

Though the coarseness of the draughtsmanship of this element of the
Visierung shows it is due to one of Jamnitzer’s (German) assistants, it
seems very likely that he copied a Strada design. The female type is exactly
the same as in Strada’s Diana: note the elegant profile of both faces; the place-
ment of the eyes, the rather muscular shoulders and arms, the limp grasp of
the hands, and the rather heavy knee-joints. Moreover the manner of drawing
is very similar, both in the outlines and in the shading.  

That Strada collaborated on the design of the Tafelaufsatz reinforces the
supposition that he also furnished designs for other works from Jamnitzer’s
workshop. That Jamnitzer’s designs seem to be closer to Primaticcio than to,
for instance, Giulio Romano, in itself corresponds to Jacopo’s own stylistic
persona. In any case the link is to Mantuan examples, which Jamnitzer could
have got to know thanks to the drawings and prints among his neighbour’s

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75 Ottavio Strada to Prospero Visconti, Praga, 1 November 1590, Firenze, ASF, Medici del Principato 825, fol. 317, ‘un grande libro ligato con oro’ in which ‘<…> sono li maggior parte
delli disegni stampati di quel valenthuomo Alberto Durero, cusi quelli in rame, come
quelli in legno, et sono da 216 pezzi; et tutti sonno delle prime stampe’.
76 In den hellsten Farben 2003, cat. nr. 11, pp. 38–39.
77 ÖNB-HS, Cod. min. 213, fol.41; this particular figure cannot be assigned with certainty to
any of the known festivals at court; cf. below, Ch. 4.3.4.
materials. A good example is the small *cassetta* in the *Schatzkammer* of the Munich Residenz already referred to [Fig. 2.13]. This seems inspired by or even copied from the ceiling of the *Camera degli Stucchi* in the Palazzo del Te, which was realized after designs by Primaticcio [Fig. 2.14]. Of these Strada possessed (some of?) the original drawings, as is clear from copies of these preserved in a volume from his workshop now in the Nationalbibliothek in Vienna [cf. below, Figs. 13.54–13.58]. The stress on correctly executed architectural motifs—for instance the Doric friezes in this *casseta*, in the *Tafelaufsatz* [Fig. 2.22], in the *Kaiserpokal*, and in the shrine for Empress Maria [Fig. 2.15]—also presupposes

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78 Vienna, ÖNB-HS, *Cod. min. 21.3, passim*; cf. below, Ch. 13.6.3.
a designer well schooled in classical architecture: again something in which Strada could tutor his one-time neighbour. 79

Somewhat closer to Giulio’s or more in general to Italian designs, is another work signed by Jamnitzer, which is now preserved in the Museo Diocesano of Milan. It consists of an ewer and a basin that are dated to ca 1565 on stylistic grounds. Executed for an unidentified patron, the set can be traced back in the sources to the middle of the seventeenth century, when it was in the treasury of the church of Santa Maria presso San Celso in Milan. At that time the original round salver was converted into an oval basin to serve as an aquamanile for liturgical use. 80 [Fig. 2.27–2.28]

In view of the triangle Jamnitzer–Strada–Marignano, it is tempting to identify the object with the commission the Marchese had given to Strada in 1548, and to suppose that it was intended as a gift to his brother, Cardinal de’ Medici. Alternatively, if the set really dates only to the 1560s, one might suppose that the latter, as Pope Pius IV, continued his family’s patronage of the Nuremberg goldsmith: in these years he was reconstructing his family’s palace at Milan. And even when the set had ab origine been destined for Rome, rather than for Milan, it always could have been presented to Santa Maria presso San Celso by the

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79 Is it a coincidence that these ‘architectural’ objects were all commissioned by or for Strada’s own patrons?
Pope’s more or less remote heirs, such as his nephew, Saint Carlo Borromeo, Cardinal-archbishop of Milan. Its manner is rather more classicist than was usual for Jamnitzer, probably one argument for it being dated around 1565. But this might equally well be explained by Strada’s participation in its design, which is quite Italianate—if not outright Italian. Its most distinct feature, the female head decorating—or rather constituting—the neck of the ewer, can be found elsewhere among the goldsmiths’ designs collected by Strada and copied in his workshop.  

2.5.6 Conclusion: Strada an Entrepreneur Rather Than a Goldsmith

Strada’s commission from the Marquis of Marignano; his close relationship with Wenzel Jamnitzer, who proposed him as a designer for an important commission for Archduke Ferdinand II of Tirol; and the collection of designs for goldsmith’s work from various Italian masters he built up and had copied in his *libri di disegni*: all these together perhaps do not prove, yet they make it extremely likely that Strada regularly acted as a purveyor of works of the goldsmith’s art to high-ranking patrons. Though he had received some training as a goldsmith, in general he would not himself have executed any of the works commissioned from him, except perhaps for trifles such as casts from ancient coins etc. Rather he would have acted as an intermediary or broker between patron and artist. He would have played an active role in the grander commissions: discussing purpose, iconography and style of the piece with the patron; providing sketches and perhaps finished designs; selecting and supervising the masters charged with its execution, and at least occasionally advancing the money—either to the patron or to the master employed—to undertake the project. It is a pity that we have no clue as to Strada’s private finances, but there can be no doubt that he was a merchant, an entrepreneur, a businessman, as much as he was a scholar and an artist, and that the *Musaeum* he brought together in his spectacular house in Vienna served at least in part as stock-in-trade. As such, he was particularly well placed to represent his old neighbour and collaborator Wenzel Jamnitzer at the Imperial court, not only informally paving the way for new commissions extended by the Emperors and members of their family, but also passing down smaller commissions from members of their court and dealing in ready made objects—such as silver cups and plates, all sorts of jewellery, medals and scientific instruments—for which the Nuremberg craftsmen were famous.

81 Cf. ÖNB-HS, Cod. min. 21,3, fols. 417r/126r. and 419r/128r, both satyr’s heads integrated in the neck of a vase. Other anthropomorphic forms are very common among the designs from the Stradas’ workshop.
These considerations support the hypothesis that Strada was at least informally involved in the coordination of the intricate politico-dynastic iconography of the Schöner Brunnen, Maximilian II’s biggest artistic commission next to the Neugebäude, for which it was probably intended, and Wenzel Jamnitzer’s absolute chef d’œuvre. The same holds for the Madrid reliquary, which Maximilian commissioned for his beloved wife, the Empress Maria, a commission that was hardly less important than the Schöner Brunnen, and for the Kaiserpokal, a luxury object celebrating the Landsberger Bund, and therefore of particular political significance to its intended recipient: again the Emperor Maximilian II. A role of Strada as an intermediary would perfectly explain the relative scarcity of written sources on these important commissions. Both as Imperial Antiquary and as a material expert he would have participated in the deliberations about these commissions at court. Both as a material expert and as a close acquaintance of Jamnitzer he would have been charged with conveying the Emperor’s resulting oral instructions to Jamnitzer. This he could do either in a private letter or in person—we know he regularly travelled to the Frankfurt book fair, and would spend some time in Nuremberg on the way.

In all these cases it can be excluded that Strada participated in the physical execution of the objects. On the contrary, it can be assumed that even in 1547, when he accepted the Marquis of Marignano’s commission, Strada considered himself rather as the ‘sopradicapo’ of the project, on the lines of his later proposal to Archduke Ferdinand, rather than as a mere goldsmith. Though he may have participated in the actual execution of the object to some minimal extent, his chief task would have been the design of the object, the elaboration of its iconography, and the coordination and supervision of the masters charged with its execution. Had he done more, he would hardly have had time left for the other activities that occupied him during his stay in Nuremberg, and in particular for the erudite studies that were stimulated and commissioned by his chief patron in the late 1540s, Hans Jakob Fugger, which will be the subject of the next chapter.

82 Czogalla 2007. It should be noted that Strada’s patron and friend, Hans Jakob Fugger, as a representative of Duke Albrecht V of Bavaria, had been very closely involved in the negotiations that led to the institution of the Landsberger Bund.