Guido Carrai

Marcello Sacchetti's 1622 Description of Prague Castle

Studia Rudolphina 23–24 (2024), pp. 164–170

DOI: https//doi.org/10.54759/sr-2024-009

Marcello Sacchetti's 1622 Description of Prague Castle

Guido Carrai
(Institute of Art History, CAS, Prague)

Abstract: Written in 1622, Marcello Sacchetti's travelogue provides a detailed description of Prague Castle as it was ten years after the death of Emperor Rudolph II. Sacchetti writes about the castle complex and its rich art collections, highlighting particularly interesting artefacts such as Cornelius Drebbel's perpetuum mobile and Tycho Brahe's astronomical instruments. He also draws attention to the picture gallery, mentioning Emperor Ferdinand II's intention to destroy erotic works.

Keywords: Marcello Sacchetti – Prague Castle – Emperor Rudolf II – collections – travelogue

The text at the end of this article is an accurate transcription of a part of the handwritten travelogue now kept in the Biblioteca Angelica in Rome. To this day, the manuscript, published in Emanuela Bidese's dissertation, remains catalogued as an anonymous work.[1] In 1991, the part of the travelogue focusing on the Netherlands was studied in detail by Catherine Brölmann, who published an article about it in the *Bulletin de l'Institut historique belge de Rome*, convincingly attributing it to Marcello Sacchetti (Fig.1).[2]

Marcello Sacchetti was born on 12 October 1586 in Rome. His father was one of a group of Florentine patrician bankers who, following in the footsteps of the Tuscan popes, moved to Rome and soon attained a leading position in the economic system of the Papal States. The Sacchetti family rose rapidly up the social ladder during the pontificate of Urban VIII Barberini, who appointed Marcello as treasurer and made him his secretary. In addition to being well-versed in seventeenth-century European politics, Marcello was also an experienced traveller. There are many existing sources that document his frequent long journeys, evidenced by, among other things, the various geographical maps he owned.[3] Marcello Sacchetti died prematurely on 12 September 1629, aged 45, during a voyage to Naples. He was buried in the Sacchetti family chapel in the Church of San Giovanni de' Fiorentini in Rome.[4]

Evidence for the Attribution of Authorship

In addition to matching the inscription found on its spine ("*Sr. Marc.*"), the manuscript states that the person in question, a native of Viterbo, stayed in The Hague from 14 to 16 September. From another source it is known that on 15 September 1622 the States General of the Netherlands, via the Venetian resident minister, issued a passport to the Florentine nobleman Marcellus Sacchetti.[5] Another clue to the identity of the anonymous traveller is the fact that Sacchetti's name is

This study is part of the research project *Art for Display: The Painting Collection of Emperor Rudolf II within the Context of Collecting Practices circa 1600*, supported by the Czech Science Foundation, project no. 20-15927S. The author would like to thank Dr Emanuele Bidese, Professor Catherine Brölmann, and Professor Irene Fosi for having kindly provided important documents.

1 Emanuela Bidese, *Diario di viaggio di un anonimo viterbese* (PhD dissertation, Università degli Studi della Tuscia, Viterbo, 2010). The manuscript is kept in the Biblioteca Angelica in Rome, Fondo Antico, Ms. 1671. It is divided into two sections: the first is archived under the title "*1. Anonimii Viterbensis, Iter per Italiam*" and describes travels in Italy without any specific dates and a journey to Naples undertaken in 1613, and the second, entitled "*2. Ejusdem iter in Austriam, Belgium, Hollandiam, Galliam et Britanniam*" describes the author's 1622 European travels. The manuscript consists of 160 sheets (320 pages), of which 33 are in the first section and 127 in the second. *Per desiderio di scorrere il mondo: Libri di viaggio della Biblioteca Angelica, 1330–1835*, exh. cat., ed. by Paola Paesano (Rome, 2006), pp. 147–148, cat. no. 158 (Elisabetta Sciarra); also see the bibliographical information at: <manus.iccu.sbn.it/cnmd/0000101560>.

2 Catherine M. Brölmann, Alle soglie del Grand Tour: Il viaggio di M. S. nelle Province Unite, *Bulletin de l'Institut historique belge de Rome* 61 (1991), pp. 85–104.

3 For an overview of the Sacchetti family relationships, refer to the relevant entry in the *Dizionario biografico degli italiani*,

DOI: https//doi.org/10.54759/sr-2024-009
Contact: gucarr912@gmail.com

1. Pietro da Cortona, Portrait of Marcello Sacchetti (Rome, Galleria Borghese)

edited by Irene Fosi, see: <https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/marcello-sacchetti_%28Dizionario-Biografico%29/> (includes a bibliography).

4 The ship's log with a description of Sacchetti's last days was published in Alberto Guglielmotti, *Storia della marina pontificia*, Vols. 7–8 (Rome, 1892), p. 379.

5 The resolution of the States General, preserved in the National Archives in The Hague, concerns the issuance of a passport authorising its holder to travel through enemy territory, namely the Spanish domain, and the anonymous author mentions this document. a full reference to the resolution is provided in Brölmann (note 2), p. 88, note 9.

recorded as "*Marcellus Sacchettus florentinus*" in the *Album Amicorum* of the Dutch scholar and naturalist Bernard Paludanus, who owned the famous *Wunderkammer* in Enkhuizen.[6] It was specifically this cabinet of curiosities that our unidentified traveller visited on the 19th of September, and he enthusiastically mentions this encounter in his diary.[7]

A comparison of personal information suggests that the anonymous author of the diary is in fact Marcello Sacchetti. In addition to the numerous genealogical studies about the family, which provide only brief biographical data, there is a short contemporary biography of Sacchetti contained in the *Pinacotheca Imaginum, Illustrium* by Erythraeus, the pseudonym of Giovanni Vittorio Rossi.[8] Rossi explicitly mentions a trip to Europe which, in terms of both length and the visited countries, corresponds to the journey described in the travelogue. Similarly, there are a number of references to the important individuals Sacchetti met and regarding his friendly relationships, particularly with Emperor Ferdinand II's brother, the Archduke Leopold V, who was able to obtain permission for Sacchetti to visit Prague Castle.

From the facts presented, there is no doubt that the diary was written (or possibly dictated) by this cosmopolitan and educated noble banker during his extensive journey through Europe, which began with his departure from Viterbo in the Papal States. It is clear from the account of the journey that it was a Grand Tour *ante litteram*. Brölmann suggests that after Marcello's untimely death, his brother Giulio Sacchetti had the travel diary, together with two other texts, copied and bound in memory of the deceased. It also remains possible that Giulio later commissioned Erythreaus to write Marcello's biography.[9]

Travelogue Contents

The document is of interest to Rudolphine researchers chiefly because it describes the state of Prague Castle ten years after the death of Rudolf II. The description is dated 4 August 1622, and this precise dating makes it particularly valuable. Sacchetti's overall impression of the castle architecture seems to be similar to those of other Italians, such as Costantino dei Servi[10] and Vincenzo Scamozzi.[11] Although Sacchetti had encountered a number of luxurious residences during his travels, here he specifically points out the absence of a large suite of rooms arranged in a single row, which would be worthy of a monarch. On the contrary, he perceived the layout as a jumble of disorderly and unfinished spaces that give the impression of a disparate result, as if there was no unifying plan at all.

After an interesting and unprecedented reference to Vladislav Hall, describing it as "full of battles",[12] Sacchetti goes on to provide brief descriptions of individual rooms. He writes of "*diverse loggie*", probably referring to the Kunstkammer corridors lit by the windows on one side, one of which housed several tables made of semi-precious stones.[13] In one of the rooms he mentions there is a fountain consisting of "silver statues, various animal shapes made from different minerals, precious stones, and other beautiful natural curiosities, which move together with the water in various ways." This raises the question of whether this might have been the famous Jamnitzer fountain.[14] Worth noting

6 Friedrich Wilhelm Tobias Hunger, Bernardus Paludanus (Berent ten Broecke) (1550–1633), *Janus* 32 (1928), pp. 353–364; recently Marika Keblusek, Listing the Wunderkammer: Order and Narrative in Catalogues of the Paludanus-Collection (c.1600), in *Gelistete Dinge: Objekte und Listen in der Frühen Neuzeit,* ed. by Elisabeth Harding and Joëlle Weis (Cologne, 2024), pp. 29–41.

7 "Veddi lo studio del dottor Palludaro medico et uomo intelligentissimo delle cose naturali, delle quali ha tutte quelle che sono più rare et esquisite e dell'artificiali [...]" – *Diario del viaggio dell' anno 1622* (note 1), fol. 139v–139r.

8 Gian Vittorio Rossi, *Pinacotheca Imaginum, Illustrium, doctrinae vel Ingenii laude, Virorum, qui, auctore superstite, diem suum obierunt* (Cologne, [1729], pp. 568–575. See <https://archive.org/details/bub_gb_IQzxFSYzQ2kC/page/568/mode/2up>.

9 Brölmann (note. 2), pp. 89 and 91.

10 Guido Carrai and Simone Bardazzi, Costantino de' Servi, architetto e informatore mediceo, alla corte di Rodolfo II. Nuovi documenti circa le relazioni tra Praga e le corti principesche italiane, *Studia Rudolphina* 21–22 (2022), pp. 86–114 (p. 107, note 92).

11 Vincenzo Scamozzi, *L'idea della architettura uniuersale*, Vols. 1–2 (Venice, 1615), p. 251.

12 This may have referred to tapestries.

13 Sacchetti uses the term "*loggione*" for the large hall for playing ball games (Velká míčovna) located in the Royal Garden of Prague Castle.

14 Regarding Jamnitzer's Fountain, see Ralf Schürer, Wenzel Jamnitzers Brunnen für Maximilian II.: *Überlegungen* zu Ikonographie und Zweck, *Anzeiger des Germanischen Nationalmuseums* (1986), pp. 55–59; Klaus Pechstein, Kaiser Rudolf II. und die Nürnberger Goldschmiedekunst, in *Prag um 1600:*

in the description of the Prague Castle's picture gallery are both the estimated number of paintings (more than 1,500) and the comment about Emperor Ferdinand II's intention to destroy the lewd paintings. In the author's text documenting his stay in Vienna, he describes this emperor as follows: "He is a very pious monarch, perhaps too fastidious, so that he has torn and cut up with his own hands many lascivious paintings of incalculable value in his palace in Vienna, and could not be persuaded to donate them, or at least to cover them, so as not to destroy such brilliant works of art."[15]

Explicitly mentioned in the diary are two paintings by Correggio: *Leda and the Swan* (now in the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin) and *Danaë* (now in the Galleria Borghese in Rome), although the traveller, like Giorgio Vasari before him, mistook the second painting as a depiction of Venus.[16] Among "the other interesting things" the visitor saw in the Kunstkammer, a mechanism demonstrating endless motion caught his attention. In all likelihood, this was Cornelius Drebbel's *Perpetuum Mobile*,[17] which, from the time it was first presented in October 1610 in Prague, aroused not only the curiosity but also the envy of the court's scientists, including Johannes Kepler.[18] Drebbel's instrument most probably functioned on the basis of changes in temperature and air pressure, which caused the liquid in the closed system to move. This motion could be interpreted as "perpetual", since it did not require any apparent external energy source. In reality, however, the instrument drew energy from the surrounding environment and was thus not an actual perpetual motion machine, which would violate the laws of thermodynamics.

It is not certain whether Sacchetti saw the original model or a replica, which according to one account was commissioned by Emperor Matthias of Habsburg after the prototype had been dismantled out of curiosity

Kunst und Kultur am Hofe Kaiser Rudolfs II., exh. cat. (Freren, 1988), pp. 232–243; most recently, J. Zimmer, *Die Schatz-und Kunstkammer Kaiser Rudolf II. in Prag: Inventare und Liste im Kontext weiterer Quellen von 1576 bis 1860* [= Studia Rudolphina Sonderheft 3] (Prague, 2021), p. 37, note 39 and p. 136, note 28. Zimmer summarises the entries about the fountain made in the Kunstkammer inventory, mentioning the fact that in 1612 it was dismantled in boxes in Prague, and that, in 1619–20 it was still recorded as being in boxes in a separate room. However, there were a number of other, smaller fountains in the Kunstkammer – for instance in the inventory from 1607–1611, the entry for no. 1532 specifies a large silver fountain, also made by Jamnitzer, which is described as having two basins, animals, and decorated with depictions of mountains; cf. Rotraud Bauer and Herbert Haupt (eds.), Das Kunstkammerinventar Kaiser Rudolfs II. 1607–1611, *Jahrbuch der Kunsthistorischen Sammlungen in Wien* 72 (1976), p. 82, no. 1532.

15 Bidese (note 1), p. 43. The issue of the alleged destruction of lascivious artworks from Rudolf II's art collection by Emperor Ferdinand II requires more detailed research. Another source that matches Sacchetti's account is the mention in *Relatione dello stato dell'imperio e della Germania: fatta dopo il ritorno della sua Nuntiatura appresso l'imperatore dal Nunzio Carlo Caraffa e datata al 1628*, which states: "Non vi è in questo palazzo alcun tesoro di consideratione, come è in Vienna, fuor che quello de' quadri esquisitissimi, ch'è maggiore di qualsivoglia e'habbi città d'Europa, ancor che nelle ribellioni passate ne siano stati rubbati molti, e molti Sua Maestà ne habbia fatto abrugiare per esser lascivi." Joseph Godehard Müller (ed.), Carlo Caraffa, vescovo d'Aversa: Relatione dello stato dell' Imperio e della Germania fatta dopo il ritorno della sua Nuntiatura appresso l'imperatore 1628, *Archiv für Kunde österreichischer Geschichts-Quellen* 23 (1860), pp. 101–450 (132).

16 "Fece [...] due quadri in Mantova al duca Federigo II, per mandare a lo imperatore, cosa veramente degna di tanto principe. Le quali opere vedendo Giulio Romano, disse non aver mai veduto colorito nessuno ch'aggiugnesse a quel segno: l'uno era una Leda ignuda, e l'altro una Venere, sì di morbidezza colorito e d'ombre di carne lavorate, che non parevano colori ma carni. [...]", in Giorgio Vasari, *Le vite de' più eccellenti architetti, pittori, et scultori italiani, da Cimabue insino a' tempi nostri* (Florence, 1550), Parte III, p. 32.

17 Regarding Drebbel, see: Vladimír Karpenko and Ivo Purš, Cornelius Drebbel: Inventor, Mechanic and Alchemist, in Ivo Purš and Vladimír Karpenko (eds.), *Alchemy and Rudolf II: Exploring the Secrets of Nature in Central Europe in the 16th and 17th Centuries* (Prague, 2016), pp. 625–646; Vera Keller, How to Become a Seventeenth-Century Natural Philosopher: The Case of Cornelis Drebbel, in *Silent Messengers: The Circulation of Material Objects of Knowledge in the Early Modern Low Countries*, ed. by Sven Dupré and Christoph Lüthy (Berlin, 2011), pp. 125–151.

18 "Non voglio restare di dirle ancora che qui ci è un fiammingo che viene d' Inghilterra che pretende avere trovato il moto perpetuo, ed avendone solo prima dato un istrumento al Re d' Inghilterra, ne ha adesso dato un altro a S. M. Ces. che mostra di pregiarsene molto, ed ha caro che non lo comunichi con altri; e censiste questo moto d' equa che in un cannello fatto quasi in forma di luna va ora in sa ed ora in giù da una banda a l' altra ed il sig. Gleppero [Johannes Kepler] non ci ha una fede al mondo se non vede come gli sta." – Giuliano de Medici a Galileo Galilei, 16 ottobre 1610 in *Carteggio Galileano inedito con note ed appendici*, ed. by Giuseppe Campori (Modena, 1881), p. 38, doc. XLII.

2. Cornelius Drebbel's Perpetuum Mobile, Illustration from Jindřich Hýzrle z Chodů, *Kniha o cestách a o životě*, fol. 49 (Prague, National Museum)

after Rudolf's death.[19] The description in the diary ends with a sarcastic remark about the utter uselessness of the mechanism considering its high price. The Czech nobleman and imperial officer Jindřich Hýzrle z Chodů provided an illustration of Drebbel's instrument in his diary (Fig. 2).[20]

From the rooms containing the collections, the traveller proceeded to the garden, where he observed, among other things, the exotic animals in the imperial menagerie, still alive after ten years. The Royal Summer Palace is an important structure on the premises, containing "all of the mathematical instruments and a huge map in gilded brass made by Picone [Tycho Brahe]". It is difficult to say what sort of map it was. Since at that time the word "*mappa*" was used both for a map and for a globe, where the latter was also called a *mappa-mondo*,[21] it is possible that this was the brass *Globus Magnus Orichalcicus* designed by Brahe, an illustration of which is found in *Astronomiae instauratae mechanica* (Fig. 3).[22] According to the eye-witness account of Brahe's assistant, Christen Sørensen Longomontanus, after the Danish astronomer's death in 1601, the large brass globe, measuring about one and a half metres in diameter, was first taken to the house of Curtius (Imperial Secretary Jacob Kurz of Senftenau), which Tycho Brahe used in Prague.[23] It was later taken by the Jesuits to Nysa (Neisse) in Silesia and subsequently, in 1632, Prince Ulrik of Denmark moved it to the Round Tower (*Rundetaarn*) in Copenhagen, where it was destroyed

19 "When the Emperor Rodolf died and the archduke Mathias was elected in his place, several philosophers and mathematicians asked to see the invention of this globe from Drebbel and convinced the Emperor to allow them to break it, reassuring him that they would easily make a similar one afterwards. Having obtained this permission, they gathered for this matter but none of them dared breaking this item, which they thought miraculous. Nevertheless, eager to see the invention they had it broken by one of the king's jokers. But while breaking it he broke several small glass pipes that were inside this (sic) globe, so that they did not learn anything from it and were incapable of piecing it back together. The emperor begged the King of England to send him back to repair this (sic) globe and sent a coach to pick him up but Drebbel never agreed to go back." – Nicolas-Claude Fabri de Peiresc, *Relation de ce que j'ay appris de la vie et inventions de Cornelius Derbbel, de la ville d'Alcmar en Hollande, par Abraham Kuffler son gendre et Gilles Kuffler son frere, à Paris, au commencement de septembre 1624*. Carpentras, Bibliothèque Inguimbertine, Ms. 1776. Cited according to: <https://drebbel.net/Peiresc%20about%20Drebbel%20according%20to%20Jaeger%20English%20translation.pdf>.

20 For issues regarding this illustration, see Purš and Karpenko (note 17), pp. 633–636; *Cestopis Jindřicha Hýzrleho [Travelogue of Heinrich Hiesserle]*, Library of the National Museum in Prague, sign. VI a 12, fol. 49r.

21 In the dictionary *Vocabolario degli Accademici della Crusca* (Venice, 1612), p. 510, the entry for "*Mappa mondo*" defines it as a map or globe describing the world.

22 "*Orichalcum*" is the ancient designation for an unknown rare metal mined in Atlantis, as mentioned by Plato in his *Kritias*. It was generally believed that it is an alloy along the lines of brass or bronze. During the Renaissance, the term was used poetically to refer to brass. See Ib Rønne Kejlbo, Tycho Brahe und seine globen, *Der Globusfreund* 18–20 (1970), pp. 57–155.

23 For more about Kurz's house, which stood on the site of today's Johannes Kepler Grammar School, see Rudolf Hlubinka, Úmrtní dům Tychona Braha, *Zprávy památkového sboru hlavního města Prahy* 9 (1931), pp. 131–147; Adolf Janoušek,

3. Tycho Brahe's Great Brass Globe, Illustration from *Tychonis Brahe Astronomiæ instauratæ mechanica* (Wandsbek, 1598), p. 27

in 1728.[24] Nevertheless, some version of a large celestial globe remained in the Royal Summer Palace – a *globus coelestis* is listed in the 1621 inventory of the collections.[25]

The tour continued to the armoury, and Sacchetti provides a brief description of the arms and armour he saw. He also mentions the Stromovka Royal Game Reserve and the game park with the Star Hunting Lodge.

Transcription of the Diary[26]

Il palazzo, come ho detto, è in sito eminente, e scopre tutta la città. è fabrica lunghissima, et al certo ha una fila di molte facciate, che sono lunghe più di dui tiri di moschetto,[27] ma con ordini diversi, e dentro non vi è un appartamento seguito, che abbia del grande. Vi sono però molte comodità et un grandissimo, e bel salone fabricato di nuovo da Ridolfo e sostenuto nel mezzo per la sua larghezza da un ordine di grosse colonne, con statue di stucco in nicchie attorno, e bellissimi adornamenti, ma non è finito. Ve n'è un altro avanti alla cappella et alla sala, dove si sogliono ragunar li stati, ch'è pieno di battaglie, et è grandissimo, e quando risiede la corte, vi si va la mattina come in luogo pubblico a passeggiare. Vi sono diverse loggie, et in una delle quali vi sono alcune tavole di pietre pretiose. In un altra stanza, sta una fontana tutta di statue d'argento, e di diversi animali, d'ogni sorte di minerali, gioie, et altri capricci naturali bellissimi, e con l'acqua, ogni cosa fa diversi moti.[28] Vi sono due gallerie, et un salone pieno

O zachování zbytků tzv. domu Tycha Braha, *Ochrana památek. Sborník Klubu za starou Prahu* (1960), pp. 52–58; Michal Flegl, Tycho Brahe a Kurzův letohrádek na Hradčanech, *Muzejní a vlastivědná práce – Časopis Společnosti přátel starožitností* 42/112 (2004), pp. 113–115. Christian Mengel et al., *Lebensbeschreibung des berühmten und gelehrten dänischen Sternsehers, Tycho v. Brahes*, transl. by Philander von Weistritz, 2 Vols. (Copenhagen and Leipzig, 1756), p. 214, specify that all of Tycho's instruments remained in this house until 1619. The instruments in the Royal Summer Palace were described by, for instance, Pierre Bergeron; see Eliška Fučíková, The Belvedere in Prague as Tycho Brahe's Musaeum, in *Tycho Brahe and Prague: Crossroads of European Science. Proceedings of the International Symposium on the History of Science in the Rudolphine Period. Prague, 22–25 October 2001*, ed. by John Robert Christianson et al. (Frankfurt am Main, 2002), pp. 276–281.

24 At that time, the astronomer Christoph Scheiner was active at the Jesuit monastery in Nysa; see Anton von Braunmühl, *Christoph Scheiner als Mathematiker, Physiker und Astronom* (Bamberg, 1891); Peder Hansen Resen, *Inscriptiones haffnienses latinae, danicae et germanicae, unà cum inscriptionibus [...]* (Copenhagen, 1668), pp. 240–243; Clarence Augustus Chant, Notes and Queries: Tycho Brahe's Great Globe, *Journal of the Royal Astronomical Society of Canada* 44 (1950), pp. 124–125.

25 Heinrich Zimmermann, Das Inventare Prager Schatz- und Kunstkammer vom 6. December 1621: Nach Akten des k. und k. Reichsfinanzarchiv in Wien, *Jahrbuch der Kunsthistorischen Sammlungen des Allerhöchsten Kaiserhauses* 25 (1905), p. LI, Reg. 1424.

26 *Anonimii Viterbensis, Iter per Italiam Ejusdem iter in Austriam, Belgium, Hollandiam, Galliam et Britanniam*, 82r et seq. See note 1.

27 According to some calculations, at the beginning of the seventeenth century the distance of a musket shot corresponded to a distance of 70–90 metres.

28 See note 14.

di quadri antichi e moderni, in numero secondo me, fra grandi e piccioli di più di millecinquecento. Ve ne sono la maggior parte lascivi, che però saranno distrutti forse da sua maestà del imperatore Ferdinando, fra gli altri dui grandi del Coreggio, una Leda con alcun'altre figure, et una Venere in un altro quadro con certi putti, che sono cosa maravigliosa, e che vagliono tesori. Vi ne sono molti di Titiano, del Tintoretto, e di moderni assaissimi d'Alberto Duro [Albrecht Dürer]. Vi è un Adamo et Eva ignudi al naturale opera rarissima, et una tavola d'altare finita esquisitamente. Vi sono un'infinità di paesi, capricci, grottesche opere di grandissima patienza e finemente raccolti tutti da Ridolfo con spesa grandissima, e son certe cose da principe grande. Vi sono molti ordini, e galantarie in alcune stanze, e fra l'altre cose curiose il moto perpetuo, cioè è dentro a un [l'autore inserisce un disegno rudimentale] di vetro in questa forma, cioè [altro disegno] del acqua che ne riempe la metà, la quale va sempre girando per quel cannonino a forza de flati o venti ch'esce da instrumenti di vetro, e d'acqua che sta nel fondo d'una cassetta, e dicono che costò all'imperatore Ridolfo gran denari, non serve però a nulla. Dal palazzo si passa al giardino che è contiguo, dove sono molte gentilezze, per quel che porta il paese, cui è un grandissimo loggione, dove si gioca al pallone, coperto, et un altra casetta in sito bellissimo, che scopre tutta la città, circondata da bellissimo ordine di loggie, e sopra coperta tutta di bronzo con corridoi a torno molto ben fatti, dove sono parecchie stanze a più piani, nelle quali Ridolfo attendeva all'alchimia chimica, all'astrologia, a gli orologi, e diverse altre virtù, de quali si delettava, et imparticolare vi sono tutti gli istrumenti matematici, et una mappa grandissima d'ottone indorato, ch'erano di Picone [Tycho Brahe] eccellentissimo matematico de nostri tempi, quali stanno oggi per terra alla peggio con vergogna grande. Dal giardino si va al serraglio di conigli, et uccelli. Vi sono de cigni assai, et un occellario bianco con un gozzo grandissimo [probabilmente un pellicano bianco], che dicono esser venuto dall'indie, e magna carne e pesce in gran quantità, et è avvezzato da uno che lo governa a fare molte baie seco,[29] quando gli dà da magnare, ma più maraviglioso è un corbo marino, o vogliamo dire gravina delle nostre di mare [probabilmente un cormorano], che ha sopra venti anni che è governata da uno, il quale quando gli dice che la sua moglie è viva, la fa ridere stravagantemente, et è cosa gratiosissima vedere fare così pazzi gesti a quall'animale. Lo conduce poi dove intende di farlo giacere con la moglie, ne qual luogo quell'animale fa molti atti, in particolare, coma farebbe all'ingravidare [una danza di corteggiamento tipica di questa specie n.d.r.], et altre bagattelle, che hanno veramente del maraviglioso in un uccello. Nel palazzo dell'imperatore sono fino a quaranta in cinquanta pezzi d'artiglieria, tutta d'inventione, e stravagantissima forma, e veramente bellissima perché Ridolfo se ne delettò sommamente, e vi ne sono che portano molte palle, che si caricano dalla coda, che sono rigate dentro, come gli archibusi, che tirano palle quadre, che sono palle catenate, e veramente in questo genere non credo si possa vedere machina più bella, più polita e più capricciosa. Così di diverse sorti di moschetti, mortai, et altri istrumenti da guerra. Vi sono dell'armature e molte bandiere, fra le altre quelle di Cisca Boemo [Jan Žižka of Trocnov], dove è il calice depinto. Vi è l'arsenale della città, il quale però adesso è spogliato, essendo tutte l'armi in mano all'imperatore, che non sono però in molta quantità. Fuori della città, molto vicino al castello è un barco con una gran peschiera, e gran quantità di daini, con un casino di ricreatione assai ameno. Evvi poi il barco della stella, ch'è molto grande e murato con boschi bellissimi, et una casa da farne di stalli mezzi angoli, della quale però una parte riguarda per ciascuno un grande stradone, fuori del barco, dove seguì la battaglia, nella quale restò l'esercito dell'imperatore, e della lega cattolica vincitore, et ancora oltre al porto vi è forte dell'artigliaria, si veggono molt'ossa, et altre reliquie di corpi morti e certo che chi vede con quanto disavantaggio del sito combatterono i nostri è forza, che confessi che la vittoria non fu senza miracolo.

29 "*Baia*" is a synonym for "joke" (*scherzo*, *burla*, *lazzo*).