

## HEC DOMUS EXPECTET: THE PALAZZETTO SANDER FAÇADE AND CONSTRUCTING SIXTEENTH-CENTURY GERMAN IDENTITY IN ROME

*This essay examines the chiaroscuro motifs and inscriptions included on the palazzetto Sander on via Santa Maria dell'Anima that was leased and renovated in the early sixteenth century by Johannes Sander von Nordhausen (1455-1544). While past scholarship has illuminated Sander's biography, little has considered how his role in Rome and in the church might have influenced the decoration of his dwelling's façade given the difficulty in elucidating the chronology of its development. The general assumption is that Sander proved pivotal to its design, yet scholars tend to conflate past and present when attempting to discern between the original façade and its modifications resulting from late nineteenth-century restorations. Despite this challenge, the palazzetto's façade merits further inquiry given its significant position both literal – abutting the German Nationalkircke of Santa Maria dell'Anima – and metaphorical – at the hub of German presence in sixteenth-century Rome. This essay thus revisits the façade's chiaroscuro motifs and inscriptions to argue that it played a role in fashioning Sander's public persona as patron, cleric, and German diplomat through the 'artifice' of antiquity.*

Amplifying the energy of Rome's streets in the sixteenth century was the flourishing tradition of decorated façades emblazoned with inscriptions as well as fresco and sgraffito decorations. With these additions, the façade of one's dwelling became more than just a face; it transformed, rather, into an experience of visual splendor distinct and relatively unprecedented for domestic spaces in the city. These façades also spoke of ingenuity at a time when social status and cultural identity became wrapped up in one's physical place or presence along the Eternal City's streets. Such, it will be argued, is the case for the palazzetto Sander on via Santa Maria dell'Anima (fig. 1) that was leased and renovated in the early sixteenth century by German Papal notary Johannes Sander von Nordhausen (1455-1544)<sup>1</sup>. While past scholarship has illuminated Sander's biography, little has considered how his role in Rome and in the church might have influenced the decoration of his dwelling's façade given the difficulty in elucidating the chronology of its development. The general assumption is that Sander proved pivotal to its design, yet scholars tend to conflate past and present when attempting to discern between the original façade and its modifications resulting from late nineteenth-century restorations. Despite this challenge, the palazzetto's façade merits further inquiry given its significant position both literal – abutting the German *Nationalkircke* of Santa Maria dell'Anima –

and metaphorical – at the hub of German presence in sixteenth-century Rome. This essay thus revisits the façade's chiaroscuro motifs and inscriptions to argue that it played a role in fashioning Sander's public persona as patron, cleric, and German diplomat through the 'artifice' of antiquity.

To summarize briefly Sander's trajectory: Sander reached Rome in 1494 as a nearly 50-year-old man of Thuringian origins who had devoted his career to the Catholic Church<sup>2</sup>. Ushered promptly into the Papal Curia upon his arrival, he continued to climb the ranks therein. In 1497, he was appointed notary of the Papal Sacra Rota, one of the Curia's most powerful tribunals<sup>3</sup>. Eight years later Sander joined the brotherhood of Santa Maria dell'Anima that had formed around the beginning of the century to oversee the *Beatae Mariae Animarum*, a hostel for pilgrims of the German nation (at the time annexed within the Holy Roman Empire)<sup>4</sup>. Following pope Innocent VII's bull in 1406 that granted the Holy See's protection to the brothers, the first church was erected on the site in 1431<sup>5</sup>. This church proved increasingly popular, such that by the time of Sander's arrival the brothers were preparing for a major landmark: the building of a new – and grander – Santa Maria dell'Anima beginning in 1499<sup>6</sup>. Echoing a German-style *Hallenkircke*, the new Santa Maria dell'Anima presented to its architect(s) many challenges, one

of the biggest being that of space<sup>7</sup>. The church's plot assumed an irregular shape and was penned in on all sides. Accordingly, the construction of the new church's foundation demolished portions of the property immediately to the south<sup>8</sup>. This contiguous building, owned by the confraternity and known as the *prima domus*, would be leased by Sander from 18 February 1508<sup>9</sup>.

It would seem that around this point Sander also embarked on the palazzetto façade's visual program. Unfortunately, no surviving period descriptions or depictions share insight into the timing or plan for the palazzetto's façade decoration. Giorgio Vasari's *Le Vite* (1550) mentions several frescoed façades but does not note Sander's; Gaspare Celio's *Memoria* (1638) mentions one façade frescoed with chiaroscuro designs "on the left when going from Pasquino to S. Maria dell'Anima"; while the palazzetto Sander falls in this path, it is unclear if it is the façade to which Celio refers<sup>10</sup>. Moreover, a print depicting the palazzetto almost contemporaneous to Celio's writing included in Filippo de Rossi's *Ritratto di Roma moderna* (1652) bears no façade decoration (fig. 2)<sup>11</sup>. The only documentation of façade decorations on record appears in the lease; beyond stating the financial terms of the agreement – namely that Sander agreed to an annual rent of 16 ducats and promised to spend 500 ducats in renovations – the contract also stipulates that "the usual picture of the blessed



QVOS DE THEVTONICA SOCIOS HQ GENTE TVERIS  
CONSORTES SVPERI FAC PIA VIRGO SOLI

HEC DOMVS EXPECTET LVNAS SOLESQ GEMELLOS  
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PRIMA DOMVS SOLEMNIS HOSPITALIS B MARIS ANMARINATA TONCORUM VRBIS STRUCTOR VLLVSQ EXCVTOR IO SANDER NORTHVSANVS ROTAE NOTARIVS ETC MDV III

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Fig. 1 Rome, Palazzetto Sander. Façade, 2021 (photo V. Castiello).

Fig. 2 F. de Rossi, Church of S. Maria dell'Anima (in ID., *Ritratto di Roma moderna...*, Roma 1689, p. 261).

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<sup>2</sup> K. MEYER, *Der Kurialist Johannes Sander aus Nordhausen (1455-1544)*, "Thüringisch-sächsische Zeitschrift für Geschichte und Kunst", I, 1911, pp. 272-274; H. SANDER, *Die Sander in Nordhausen und Rom im 15. und 16. Jahrhundert*, Göttingen 1939.

<sup>3</sup> On the Sacra Rota, see: K. SALONEN, *Papal Justice in the Late Middle Ages: The Sacra Romana Rota*, London 2016. On Sander's palazzetto, see: L. CALLARI, *Casa del Notaio Sander*, in *I Palazzi di Roma e le case d'importanza storica e artistica*, Roma 1932, pp. 445-446; and M.T. IANACONE, *La Casa del Notaio Sander a Roma*, "Bollettino d'Arte", VI, 29, 1985, pp. 91-100.

<sup>4</sup> Dutch transplants Johannes Peters and Katharina Loder donated three properties that were converted into the hospice between 1350-1398. For more, see: S. PUTEO, *Le domus nell'isola di S. Maria dell'Anima: politica dell'espansione immobiliare teutonica a Roma*, in *S. Maria dell'Anima: Zur Geschichte einer deutschen Stiftung in Rom*, herausgegeben von M. Matheus, New York 2010, pp. 327-368; A. KERSCHBAUMER, *Geschichte des deutschen Nationalhospizes Anima in Rom: Aus authentischen, bisher unbenützten Quellen bearbeitet*, Wien 1868; F. NAGL, A. LANG, *Mitteilungen aus dem Archiv des deutschen Nationalhospizes S. Maria dell'Anima in Rom: Als Festgabe zu dessen 500jährigen Jubiläum*, Rom 1899.

<sup>5</sup> T. DANIELS, *La chiesa di Santa Maria dell'Anima tra Papato e Impero (secoli XV-XVII)*, in *Chiese e "Nationes" a Roma*, a cura di A. Molnár, G. Pizzorusso, M. Sanfilippo, Roma 2017, pp. 77-95.

<sup>6</sup> Growth could have been driven by the merger of another German hostel, Sant'Andrea, with that of Santa Maria dell'Anima; the development of the confraternity of Campo Santo Teutonico also seems to have driven congregation growth: DANIELS, *La chiesa di Santa Maria dell'Anima...* cit.; C. SCHUCHARD, *I tedeschi alla curia pontificia nella seconda metà del Quattrocento*, in *Roma capitale 1447-1527*, atti del convegno (San Miniato, 27-31 ottobre 1992), a cura di S. Gensini, Ospedaletto 1994, pp. 51-71; E. GATZ, *Jahre Bruderschaft am Campo Santo Teutonico bei St. Peter in Rom: Geschichte, Gegenwart, Perspektiven*, Rom 2004; C. SCHUCHARD, *Das päpstliche Exemptionsprivileg für das Anima: Hospital vom 21. Mai 1406*, in *S. Maria dell'Anima. Zur Geschichte einer "deutschen Stiftung" in Rom*, herausgegeben von M. Matheus, Berlin 2010, pp. 1-20.

<sup>7</sup> Giuliano da Sangallo, Donato Bramante, and Baldassarre Peruzzi have all been implicated in the design. Vasari proposes that Bramante began work on the church but then handed the project over to an unnamed German architect. For more on church history and design, discussion of which falls beyond this article's scope, see: J. SCHMIDLIN, *Geschichte der deutschen nationalkirche in Rom, S. Maria dell'Anima*, Freiburg im Breisgau 1906; B. BAUMÜLLER, *Santa Maria dell'Anima in Rom: Ein Kirchenbau im politischen Spannungsfeld der Zeit um 1500*, Berlin 2000, pp. 39-45; DANIELS, *La chiesa di Santa Maria dell'Anima...* cit.; S. Maria dell'Anima: *Zur Geschichte...* cit.

<sup>8</sup> This wall was rebuilt in 1500, but Karl Schäfer notes that the repair work was so shoddy that the property was deemed unlivable. For more, see: K. SCHÄFER, *Johannes Sander von Northusen. Notar der Rota und Rektor der Anima. Ein deutsch-römisches Lebensbild an Ausgang des Mittelalters*, Rom 1913, p. 23.

<sup>9</sup> For contract, see: Roma, Archivio di Santa Maria dell'Anima (henceforward ASMA), Litt. B, I, ff. 283-289; see also ASMA, Litt. C., I, n. 10; ASMA, *Expenses et Confessiones de Recepto ab an. 1496 ad an. 1549*, n. 142. The records suggest that no one leased the property from 1500 to 1508 (see note 6). Letarouilly states that construction began in 1506. See P.



Virgin Mary, with other associated inscriptions and titles, is first to be painted and preserved on the face of said house<sup>12</sup>. While such imagery of the Madonna would have been shared across the buildings associated with the brotherhood, it nevertheless merits pause. Specifically, it calls into question whether this initial kernel of decoration served as the springboard for a more ambitious program of imagery and inscriptions to enliven the palazzetto's façade, particularly as it is known that Sander spent lavishly on his home's resurrection. An addendum dated 9 February 1509 refers to his expenditure of 1,000 ducats – double his required investment – on the home<sup>13</sup>. No receipts accounting for this lavish sum survive, so it is impossible to say where these funds were applied. With no surviving evidence of elaborate interior decorations or modi-

fications that would have merited the entirety of this amount, however, it is plausible that Sander earmarked a greater sum to cover a more extravagant frescoed façade.

Doing so would have allowed Sander to add his dwelling to a growing network of homes across Rome's urban landscape adorned with chiaroscuro and sgraffitto motifs as well as inscriptions derived from antiquity. These faces emphasized the fictive illusion of surface and built upon the ephemeral decorative traditions inherent in sixteenth-century design, from theatrical scenography to temporary triumphal arches installed for Papal *possessi* across the city, where chiaroscuro design was essential at conveying grandeur (while minimizing cost). Some of these earliest examples, like Pinturicchio's designs for a series of frescoes for the Vatican's Casino di Belvedere



Fig. 3 Map approximating the locations of frescoed façades documented in Gaspare Celio's *Memoria dell'i nomi... di Roma* (Napoli 1638) overlaid on a portion of Giovanni Battista Nolli's *Nuova pianta di Roma* (Roma 1748); (graphic elaboration A. Culotta).

(circa 1487) or Baldassarre Peruzzi's 1503 'Corridoio di chiaroscuro' for pope Julius II's chambers, were designed for semi-private viewing and were included in spaces that blurred the line between interior and exterior decoration<sup>14</sup>. Even more public-facing frescoed façades, though, were appeared the streets near Sander's home (fig. 3)<sup>15</sup>. Some offered more general decorations, like a *palazzetto* on vicolo Cellini that comprised frescoed fictive ashlar stones on the *piano terreno* along with frieze courses of *groteschi* and scenes of battle and armor that extended across the façade<sup>16</sup>. Others bore more personal connections, like the palazzo Millini. Just steps from Sander's *portone*, this abode included a façade frescoed around 1491 with merged family crests in preparation for the wedding of Ginevra Cibo, granddaughter of Innocent VIII<sup>17</sup>. Perhaps most relevant to Sander would have been the palazzetto Burcardo, the home of Johannes Burckardt at via del Sudario, no. 44. A native of Strasbourg who served as the Papal Master of Ceremonies, Burckardt had by 1500 completed construction of a bold *palazzetto* complete with tower featuring a crenelated parapet and the inscription ARGENTINA, a reference to Burckardt's Alsatian origins (as Strasbourg, in antiquity, was known as *Argentoratum*)<sup>18</sup>.

Sander must have been familiar with Burckardt's home, given both his origins and that he was also a member of the brotherhood of Santa Maria dell'Anima. In fact, Burckardt's role as provost

of the confraternity would have ensured his role in the decision to rebuild the church in 1499 that prompted the very renovations that Sander initiated on the *prima domus*<sup>19</sup>. Thus, between Burckardt's home and others nearby, Sander would have had ample visual references to inspire him, and scholarship seems to agree that he played a significant hand in his own façade's decoration. The dearth of documentation in relation to his plans, though, combined with significant façade renovations in 1873 that purportedly included extensive repainting has led many scholars to gloss over the evolution of this imagery without exploring its genesis or meaning. While definitive conclusions cannot be reached, this façade merits a renewed look, as its themes could be positioned as a means to define a new space for German identity in the landscape of Renaissance Rome.

Marie Letarouilly's 1863 *Édifices de Rome Moderne* (fig. 4) gives some sense of how the façade appeared prior to the 1873 restoration<sup>20</sup>.

Stretching across the architrave of the *piano terreno's portone* was the inscription: IO(HANNES) SANDER NORTHUSANUS ROTAE NOTARIUS FEC(IT) MDVIII (Johannes Sander of Nordhausen, Rota notary, built this in 1508)<sup>21</sup>. This dedicatory phrase is one of the only complete façade inscriptions actually incised into stone; below it, the initials IL and PT appear carved in the small roundels that protrude from the spandrels above the *portone* (fig. 5)<sup>22</sup>.

LETAROUILLY, *Édifices de Rome moderne ou recueil des palais, maisons, églises, couvents et autres monuments publics et particuliers les plus remarquables de la ville de Rome*, II, Paris 1868, p. 667.

<sup>10</sup> G. VASARI, *Le vite de' più eccellenti architetti, pittori, et scultori italiani*, Firenze 1550. For a more recent, translated edition, see: G. VASARI, *The lives of the most excellent painters, sculptors, and architects*, trans. by G. du C. De Vere, New York 2006. G. CELIO, *Memoria dell'i artefici delle pitture che sono in alcune chiese, facciate, e palazzi di Roma*, a cura di E. Zocca, Milano 1967, p. 44. Celio attributes these chiaro-scuro elements to Perino del Vaga; scholars disagree in interpreting the exact façade included in Celio's account.

<sup>11</sup> F. DE' ROSSI, *Ritratto di Roma moderna [...] & altre cose notabili*, Roma 1652, p. 259. Note that De' Rossi also omits Sansovino's sculpture of the *Madonna and Child* perched over Santa Maria dell'Anima's main portal, suggesting that he simplified the façades overall.

<sup>12</sup> "signum debet solita pictura ymaginis b. Marie virginis cum aliis adiunctis ac scriptura et titulo solitis in facie dicte domus prime depingi et conservari": ASMA, Litt. B, 1, ff. 283-289.

<sup>13</sup> ASMA, Litt. B, 1, ff. 289-293. For comparison, Lohninger proposed a total cost of 30,000 ducats for the building of Santa Maria dell'Anima: J. LOHNINGER, *S. Maria dell'Anima, die deutsche Nationalkirche in Rom: bau- und kunstgeschichtliche Mitteilungen aus dem Archiv der Anima*, Rom 1909.

<sup>14</sup> For more, see: C. LA MALFA, *Dating Pinturicchio's Roman Frescoes and the Creation of a New All'Antica Style*, "Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes", 70, 2007, pp. 119-141.

<sup>15</sup> Pertaining to Figure 3: the green dot represents the location of the palazzetto Sander. There is no indication that Celio's musings offer a complete account of frescoes and inscriptions visible in his day.

<sup>16</sup> Similar façade decorations appear at via della Fossa 14a-17, which was another *domus* owned by the dell'Anima confraternity; the dating of these designs, though, requires greater research.

<sup>17</sup> U. GNOLI, *Facciate graffite e dipinte in Roma*, Arezzo 1938, p. 17.

<sup>18</sup> The frescoed ashlar blocks that decorated the interior courtyard and a frescoed courtyard corridor were added when the *palazzetto* was under later Cesarini ownership. For more on palazzo Burcardo: D. GNOLI, *La Torre Argentina in Roma*, Roma 1908; P. TOMEI, *L'architettura a Roma nel Quattrocento*, Roma 1942, pp. 271-273; *Il Palazzo del Burcardo: testimonianze di un restauro*, a cura di A. Masi, Roma 2006; M. FICARI, *Il Palazzo di Giovanni Burcardo: tardologico oltremontano e Roma rinascimentale*, "Arte medievale", IV, 6, 2016, pp. 247-254.

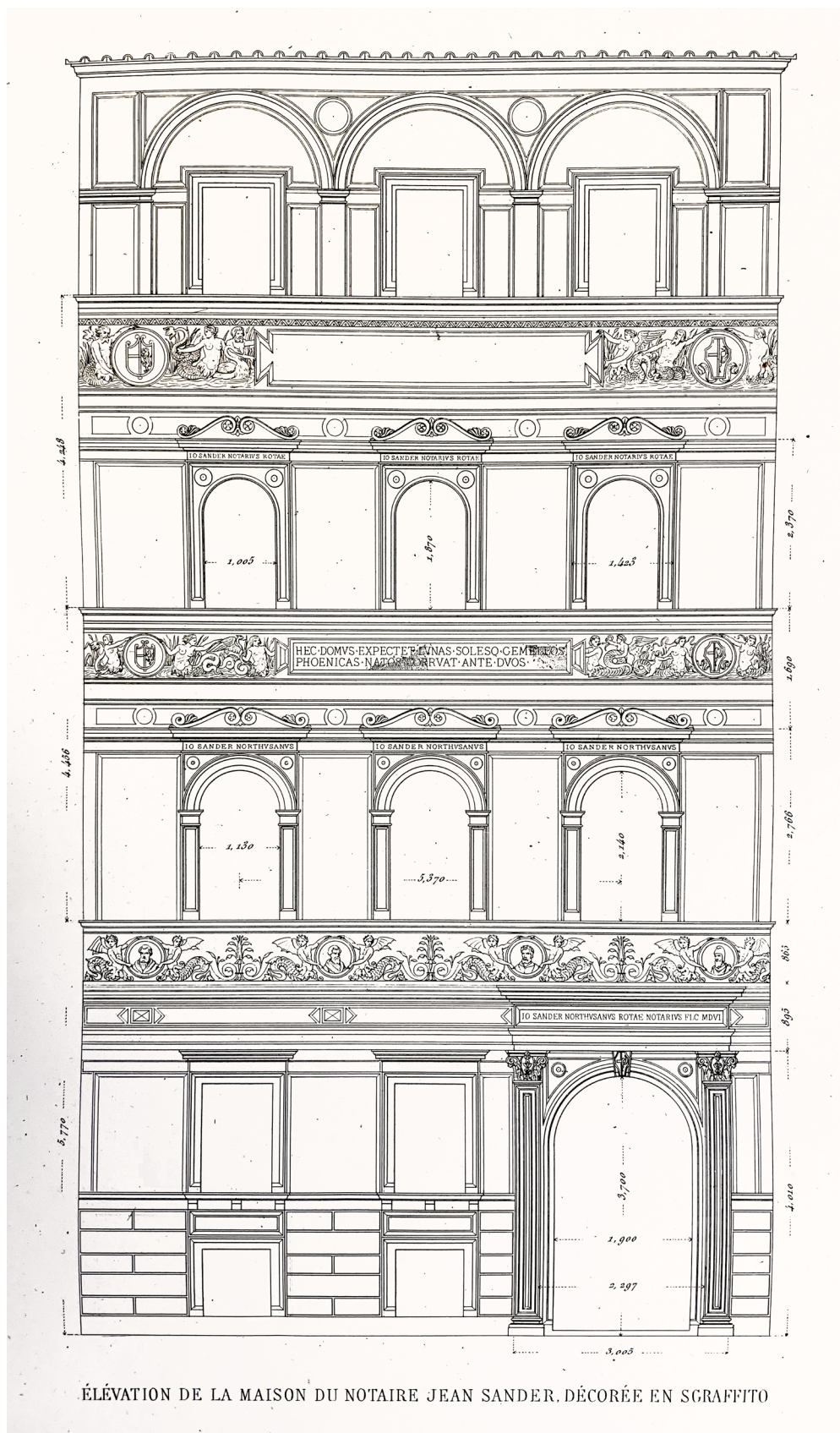
<sup>19</sup> For more, see: T. DANIELS, *Giovanni Burckardo e l'immagine dei curiali tedeschi a Roma nel primo Rinascimento*, "Archivio della Società Romana di Storia Patria", 136, 2013, pp. 37-59; DANIELS, *La chiesa di Santa Maria dell'Anima...* cit.

<sup>20</sup> LETAROUILLY, *Édifices de Rome moderne...* cit.

<sup>21</sup> Today the remainder of the *piano terreno's* architrave reads: PRIMAE DOMUS SOLEMNIS HOSPITALIS B(EATAE) MARIAE ANIMARUM TEUTONICORUM URBIS STRUCTOR ILLIUSQ(UE) EXCULTOR (Founder and benefactor of the Prima Domus of the *Beatae Mariae Animarum*, where the Germans residing in Rome were located). This is presumed to be an addition from the 1873 restorations.

<sup>22</sup> Iannacone proposes these initials indicated I(U)L(IUS) P(ON)T(IFEX); meanwhile, Puteo and Schäfer argue they are the initials of artists Giuliano Leto and Pietro Torrigiano. Though Torrigiano would have worked in the early sixteenth century, neither Puteo nor Schäfer offer evidence to support this connection. Moreover, the placement of these letters and the connection of the *palazzetto* to the Catholic Church makes Iannacone's interpretation more plausible. For more see: IANNAZONE, *La Casa del Notaio Sander...* cit.; PUTEO, *Le domus...* cit.; SCHÄFER, *Johannes Sander von Northausen...* cit.

Fig. 4 P. Letarouilly, *Elevation de la Maison du Notaire Jean Sander, Décorée en Sgraffito* (in *ID., Edifices de Rome Moderne...*, Liège 1784, pl. 324).



<sup>23</sup> C.E. Schäffer identified two of these as emperor Maximilian and pope Julius II, respectively; K. Schäfer proposed the middle two portraits depicted Sander himself as well as fellow Anima provisor, Johannes Weydemann. For more, see: C.E. SCHÄFFER, *Lo Stemma e la casa Johannes Sander Nortusano*, "Rivista Araldica", X, 1912, p. 724; SCHÄFFER, *Johannes Sander von Northausen...* cit., p. 29. Replacing these portraits in the 1873 restorations were excerpts from the writing of Julius Caesar and Tacitus, respectively. As nineteenth-century additions, these inscriptions fall beyond the scope of this essay.

The former phrase reiterates the date of Sander's lease while also leading the eye upward to a continuous chiaroscuro frieze featuring a series of paired *grotteschi marini* separated by unfurling acanthus. These *grotteschi* supported four portrait roundels evenly spaced across the façade.

The bearded men that appeared in these roundels remain inconclusively unidentified<sup>23</sup>. A similar frieze appeared along the *primo piano*; however, replacing the two central roundel groups was a *tabella ansata* that relays the distich: HEC DOMUS EXPECTET LUNAS



Fig. 5 Rome, Palazzetto Sander. A detail of the portone of the Palazzetto Sander, showcasing the spandrel roundels inscribed with the letters “IL” (left) and “PT” (right); (photo A. Culotta).

SOLESQ(UE) GEMELLOS / PHOENICAS NATOS CORUAT ANTE DUOS (This house will endure, falling into ruin only when two moons and two suns appear together and after the twins of the phoenix are born)<sup>24</sup> (fig. 6). At either end of the frieze, additional pairs of *grotteschi marini* hold roundels that feature the Sander crest. Furthering this personal celebration are inscriptions over each window architrave of the patron’s name – IO(HANNES) SANDER NORTHUSANUS. The frieze of the *secondo piano* was virtually identical to that of the *primo piano*, featuring a central *tabella* flanked by paired *grotteschi* supporting roundels showcasing the family crest. However, Letarouilly’s print leaves this inscription absent<sup>25</sup>.

If one accepts these elements noted by Letarouilly as being relatively close to the original visual program, the *palazzetto*’s chiaroscuro ‘*all’antica*’ decoration and inscriptions would have been commensurate with other similarly adorned façades. For instance, the sgraffito scrolls of flora and *grotteschi*, an amalgam of motifs borrowed from ancient Roman wall painting, are strikingly reminiscent of those employed upon the *palazzetto* of vicolo Cellini (fig. 7). Moreover, Sander echoed Burckardt’s emphasis of self in the Latinate inscription as if to metaphorically ground each man in the rich fabric of antique Rome<sup>26</sup>. Concluding, though, that he was simply following trend in his façade design for the *prima domus* falls short in two sig-

nificant ways. The first is that it overlooks that this dwelling was literally attached to Santa Maria dell’Anima and owned by the confraternity who saw to its maintenance (along with nearly twenty other properties that comprised the city block). This means that decisions pertaining to the façade’s decoration could not merely be made with Sander in mind; the messaging would need to balance signifiers of Sander’s largesse with themes paying homage to both the church, its brotherhood, and its connection to the German nation amid the political and religious tensions of the day.

Relatedly, the second issue left unresolved is the curious distich that proclaims the enduring presence of the dwelling. Though no scholar has identified any historical origins for this vexing inscription, the common consensus is that it serves as an adynaton, a hyperbolic declaration of the dwelling’s eternal existence by stating that its downfall can only result from two naturally impossible events. The appearance of this particular adynaton on a sixteenth-century Roman façade was, to this author’s knowledge, unprecedented<sup>27</sup>. Hyperbolic language put on public display, though, would not have been unusual for the period. For instance, soon after the 1501 unearthing of the antique sculptural fragment later dubbed “Pasquino” in 1501 Burckhardt noted in the Papal accounts the anonymous posting of satirical commentaries lambasting then pope Alexander VI, thereby launching the tradi-

<sup>24</sup> When repainting the *primo piano* inscription, the restorers erred in truncating CORRUAT to CORUAT, as is visible on the façade today.

<sup>25</sup> Today this reads: QUOS DE THEUTONICA SOCIOS HIC GENTE TUERIS, / CONSORTES SUPERI FAC, PIA VIRGO, SOLI (Let those belonging to the Teutonic people whom you, oh Virgin, protect in this place, become partakers of the celestial sun). Letarouilly’s print reveals no decorations on the *terzo piano*, perhaps because this was once an open-air loggia only enclosed in the seventeenth century. Today, this level depicts a fictive arcade of pilasters emblazoned with *grotteschi* motif panels. A central roundel bearing the imperial crest is paired with two roundels featuring profile portraits of Virgil and Dante, respectively; interspersed are three small *tabella* reading SALVE.

<sup>26</sup> This was not new to this generation; for example, Lorenzo Manlio’s inscriptions on his late fifteenth-century home on via del Portico d’Ottavia (nos. 1 and 2) performed a similar historicizing of his family name. For more, see: TOMEI, *L’architettura a Roma nel Quattrocento*... cit., pp. 267-269.

<sup>27</sup> For more, see: L.A. SONNINO, *A Handbook to Sixteenth-Century Rhetoric*, London 1968; V.C. ROBERT-NICOUD, *The World Upside Down in 16th Century French Literature and Visual Culture*, Leiden-Boston 2018, particularly Chapter One.

<sup>28</sup> J. BURKARDT, *Liber notarium*, in *Rerum Italicarum Scriptores*, XXXII, 1, 2, p. 296; A. REYNOLDS, *Cardinal Oliviero Carafa and the Early Cinquecento Tradition of the Feast of Pasquino*, “Roma humanistica”, 1985, pp. 178-208.

<sup>29</sup> The courtyard of castello Fénis in Valle d’Aosta includes a similar inscription that dates roughly to the fourteenth century (A. MELANI, *Dell’ornamento nell’architettura*, Milano 1892, p. 223). Meanwhile, Urbino’s roughly contemporary palazzo Passionei Paciotti purportedly relayed a similar distich above the *primo piano* of the northern wing: MANEAT DOMUS DONEC FORMICA AEQUOR BIBAT ET LENTATA TESTUDO PERAMBULET ORBEM. The inscriptions runs twice on the frieze seamlessly. Francesco Ferraironi noted that distich also appears on a former palazzo at via Silvio Pellico, no. 10 (F. FERRAIRONI, *Iscrizioni ornamentali su edifici e monumenti di Roma, con appendice sulle iscrizioni scomparse*, Roma 1937, p. 45). The dating of this latter example, though, is problematic.

<sup>30</sup> F. ALBERTINI, *Opusculum de mirabilibus novae et veteris urbis Romae*, Romae 1510. Albertini notes a third line, reading QUAM POSTEA R. FRANC. DE RIO CARD. PAPIEN. EXORNAVIT, which suggests that Francesco Alidosi of Imola augmented the decorations upon his occupation of the palace in 1510. That Alidosi “beautified” the palace is also noted in: F. GREGORIOUS, *History of the City of Rome in the Middle Ages*, trans. by A. Hamilton, VII.11, London 1900, p. 688. See also: F. MARTINELLI, *Roma ricercata nel suo sito, nella scuola di tutti gli antiquarii*, Roma 1644, pp. 25-26. Pinturicchio’s frescoes in the palace included this phrase, which might mean that this epigram was incorporated earlier, around 1490 when Pinturicchio was at work on the *Soffitto dei Semidei*. For more, see: A. SCHMARSOW, *Pinturicchio in Rom*, Stuttgart 1882, pp. 32-33.

<sup>31</sup> It was included, for instance, in the following: as a coda to the 1507 *Pragmatic Sanction of Bourges*, a decree that at the time limited Papal power (C. GUYMIER *et al.*, *Pragmatica sanctio: continet tabula amplissima materias plures hic delitentes*, Paris 1507); as a coda for a 1610 sermon given in Oxford (for digitized version in the Bodleian Library, see: J. RAWLINSON, *The Roman Ludes: A Sermon Preached at Saint Maries in Oxford the Fifth of November 1610*, London 1611); in eighteenth-century discussions of the ancient *domus* offered by Johann Schütze (J. SCHÜTZE, *Apparatus Curiosus et Practicus [...] cum indice Quadruplici Paratus*, I, Dresden-Leipzig 1710, p. 1011).

<sup>32</sup> For more, see: T.A.T., *Foreign Correspondence*, “The Athenaeum: Journal of English and Foreign Literature, Science, and the Fine Arts”, 1459, 13 October 1855, p. 1188.

<sup>33</sup> J. D’AMICO, *Roman and German Humanism 1450-1550*, Aldershot 1993.

<sup>34</sup> L. KEILEN, *Coryciana. Epigrammata, 1524: introduction, texte, traduction et notes. Les Classiques de l’Humanisme*, 55, Paris 2020; and P.P. BOBER, *The Coryciana and the Nymph Corycia*, “Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes”, 40, 1977, pp. 223-239; for more on *Saint Anne*: G. AMATO, *Un ‘San Giovannino’ in terracotta di Andrea Sansovino*, “Prospettiva”, 163-164, 2016, pp. 124-143.

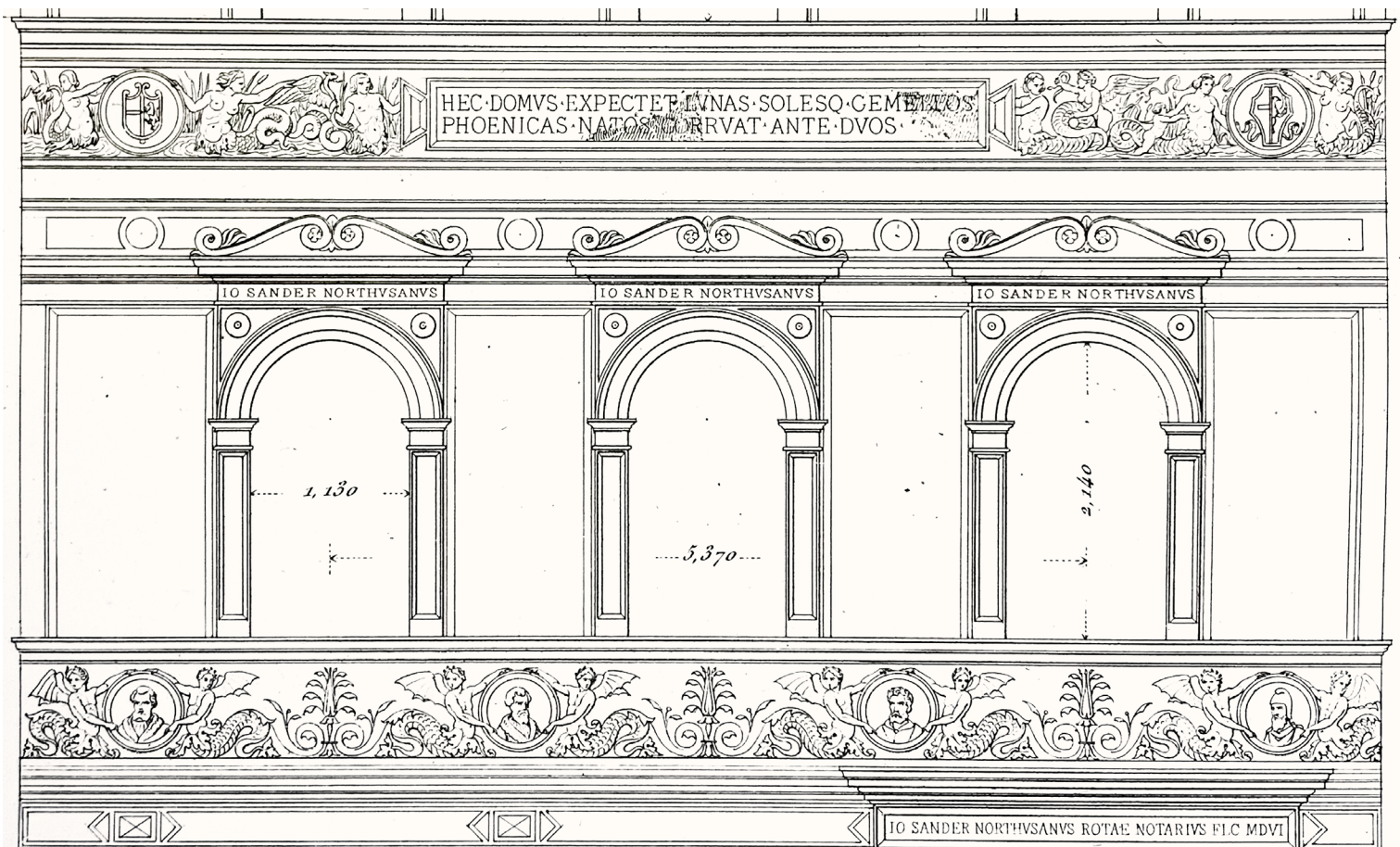
<sup>35</sup> For more on the monument’s original plans, see: V.A. BONITO, *The St. Anne Altar in Sant’Agostino in Rome: A New Discovery*, “The Burlington Magazine”, 122, 1980, 933, pp. 805-812.

<sup>36</sup> Connections with Fugger seem particularly likely, given Fugger’s patronage for Santa Maria dell’Anima, however, the *Pala Fugger* was not installed until 1520, most likely after the façade decorations were complete.

tion of the bombastic pasquinades that would appear on this “speaking” statue<sup>28</sup>. Moreover, other hyperbolic inscriptions appeared in contemporary architectural adornment. Another distich, for instance, commonly written STET DOMUS HAEC DONEC FLUCTUS FORMICA MARINOS / EBIBAT, ET TOTUM TESTUDO PERAMBULET ORBEM (This house will stand until the ants drink the seas dry and the tortoise circumnavigates the world), appeared in the Italian peninsula around the fourteenth century; by the fifteenth century, this phrase had made its way to Rome<sup>29</sup>. For example, Francesco Albertini and Giacomo Mazzocchi noted the presence of the phrase – most likely conjured in the 1490s – within the palazzo della Rovere (known since the seventeenth century as the palazzo dei Penintenzieri) in their 1510 publication<sup>30</sup>. By this time, the phrase had also become a well-developed flourish for publishers to add to their books as well as for priests to conclude their sermons as a means to preserve them for all eternity<sup>31</sup>. Given the popularity of this adynaton, it is perhaps not surprising to find a similarly hyperbolic phrase on the palazzetto Sander as a means to safeguard the dwelling for all time. One could go further to hypothesize that this distich speaking of ants and tortoises could have once accompanied that documented by Letarouilly on Sander’s façade (as the upper *tabella* in his rendering had been lost). This proposal is speculative at best, as only one passing reference to this combined double couplet has been mentioned<sup>32</sup>. Regardless, the rare nature of this distich suggests that the selection of both inscriptions and imagery for this *palazzetto*’s façade was carefully tailored to underscore the enduring presence of the structure and, in turn, Sander and his web of connections between the Holy Roman Empire and the Catholic Church. On the one hand, Sander’s celebration of self through a decorated façade echoed similar celebrations of intellectualism and prestige per-

formed via the patronage of other significant German merchants and patrons in Rome<sup>33</sup>. Jakob Fugger, for example, who made his incredible fortune monopolizing silver mining and also playing escort to shipments of indulgences on their way south into Rome, commissioned works for Santa Maria dell’Anima. Among his patronage was Giulio Romano’s *Pala Fugger* that graces the main altar of Santa Maria dell’Anima, thereby placing Fugger’s largesse literally at the forefront of the *Nationalkirche*’s congregation each Mass. Additionally present was Johann Goritz, an Apostolic protonary whose fascination with humanist culture prompted his adoption of a Latinized moniker, “Corytius” and the establishment of his own humanist academy. It was this intellectual network that published *The Coryciana* (1524), a volume of nearly 400 poems that can be read as an encomium to Goritz’s commissioned sculpture of *Saint Anne* by Andrea Sansovino housed within the church of Sant’Agostino<sup>34</sup>. This work, originally part of a funerary monument for Goritz, would have staked a claim for German nationals not only in the church but in the larger intellectual landscape of the era<sup>35</sup>. That Sander would have known Goritz and Fugger seems likely given the fact they would have associated with similar circles and thus these compatriots could have served as models for artistic patronage<sup>36</sup>. At the same time, though, Sander seems to carry these ideas even further, transforming the very public face of his home into an ‘*all’antica*’ veil that secured Sander’s – or perhaps the brotherhood’s, or even the Germans’ – place in Rome.

This Classical emphasis is underscored in the very architecture of the palazzetto Sander that keenly borrowed from the popular ‘*all’antica*’ architectural vocabulary that mediated between antique reference and modern magnificence. For example, the arch-headed windows



that appeared on the *primo* and *secondo piano* seem borrowed from those of cardinal Raffaello Riario's palazzo della Cancelleria (1483-1513) by incorporating rounded arches springing from modified Tuscan order pilasters and spandrels anchored with decorative rosettes. Furthermore, the *palazzetto*'s ground level *portone* featured Corinthian pilasters and a sculpted architrave reminiscent of Classical design, while a hint of rustication that originally extended across this lower level also recalls that employed at the Cancelleria, perhaps even that incorporated by Leon Battista Alberti at the Florentine palazzo Rucellai (1446-1451). The *palazzetto* also echoes elements of Santa Maria dell'Anima's façade. The main architraves of the church align with those of the *palazzetto*'s first and third floors, respectively, to create a visual sense of architectural continuity. Furthermore, the same Classicizing elements of the Sander *portone* are echoed in the main Anima portals as if to continue an architectural dialogue. Recall that the adjacent church's interior resembled that of the German *Hallenkirche*; the church's façade, however, resonates with Classical references. While there is not space here to consider if the architecture of Sander's home achieved a similar ten-

sion between interior-exterior styles, it seems that whomever was responsible for the *palazzetto*'s design aimed to create a noble and visually unified structure that harmonized with the design of the adjacent church while also incorporating the Classical architectural language starting to dominate palace design<sup>37</sup>.

These decisions are significant in that this '*all'antica*' flair would have stood in strong contrast to the previously-mentioned *palazzetto* Burcardo, whose design has been noted by scholars as bearing a strikingly German sensibility. As Giovanni Masi has noted, the incorporation of German Gothic elements, from the arched windows and slender cornice moldings, created a dwelling "rather aligned with what was created in the German-speaking countries; a Gothic island in the sea of Renaissance Rome"<sup>38</sup>. Given that Sander certainly was aware of Burckardt's design, it seems deliberate that Sander would instead embrace the emerging language of Renaissance architectural design rather than following in the modes of his fellow confraternity brother. Furthermore, the addition of frescoed detail to complement this Classical architectural language seems to further push potential of the bold statement made by Sander's dwelling.

Fig. 6 P. Letarouilly, *Elevation de la Maison du Notaire Jean Sander, Décorée en Sgraffito* (in ID., *Edifices de Rome Moderne...*, Liège 1784, pl. 324). Detail of the façade.

<sup>37</sup> Though merited, a greater exploration of the architectural design of Sander's remodeled domus is beyond this essay's scope.

<sup>38</sup> "[...] *allineata piuttosto con quanto si creava nei paesi di lingua tedesca; un'isola gotica nel mare del Rinascimento Romano*" (FICARI, *Il Palazzo di Giovanni Burcardo...* cit., p. 252).





Fig. 7 Rome, Palazzetto at vicolo Cellini, n. 31, 2021 (photo V. Castiello).

The impetus for such a prominent statement can perhaps be found in the seismic shifts in Rome's political and religious landscapes of the era. In addition to tensions brewing in the Catholic Church over the rising sale of indulgences, Julius II was also sparring with the Holy Roman Empire<sup>39</sup>. Maximilian I, intended heir to the Holy Roman Empire, yearned to be officially crowned to shore up political dominance. He was eventually anointed *Erwählter Römischer Kaiser* ("Elected Roman Emperor") on 8 February 1508 but only after a delayed coronation. Moreover, when finally bestowed, the crowning occurred at a makeshift ceremony in Trent, not in Rome, the customary host city for such coronation celebrations. It would seem Julius II played a key role in orchestrating this displeasing change of venue<sup>40</sup>. This break from century's old tradition, combined with Maximilian's worries over allegiances within the Hapsburgian political dynasty, resulted in Rome becoming the metaphorical center of his attention.

Meanwhile, the city was under a wave of major building campaigns employing 'all'antica' theo-

ry and symbolism as a means to mediate international presence. Fueling this trend was the realization emerging among European powers that presence and diplomacy with(in) Rome was a necessity. For example, when the new Santa Maria dell'Anima's cornerstone was laid by Emperor Maximilian I's envoy on 11 April 1500, it joined the ranks of several other national churches renovated across Rome between 1500 and 1520. San Pietro in Montorio, commissioned by king Ferdinand II and queen Isabella I of Spain, was consecrated in 1500. In 1506, the church of San Giacomo dei Spagnoli, only steps from Santa Maria dell'Anima on the piazza Navona, was deemed the Spanish national church in Rome<sup>41</sup>. By the time construction was completed on Santa Maria dell'Anima in the 1520s, the French national church, San Luigi dei Francesi, and the Florentine church of Sant Giovanni dei Fiorentini would both be on the cusp of similar renovations thanks to pope Leo X<sup>42</sup>. Maximilian I may have sensed this trend and seen its strategic merit, particularly as he had attempted similar strategic moves earlier in his career to ally himself

<sup>39</sup> This coincided with Julius II's declaration to build the new Saint Peter's Basilica (as noted with the horoscope of Saint Peter's Basilica crafted by astrologer Luca Guarico that established the foundation date of 18 April). For more, see: LUCAE GAURICI [...] *Tractatus astrologicus in quo agitur de præteritis multorum hominum accidentibus per proprias eorum genituras ad unguem examinatis...*, Venetiis 1552.

<sup>40</sup> For more, see: BAUMÜLLER, *Santa Maria dell'Anima in Rom...* cit., p. 60. According to Greg Steinmetz, Maximilian saw this coronation as a sham (Steinmetz argues that inordinately wealthy Augsburgian Fugger himself convinced Maximilian to pursue this hasty coronation as Fugger bankrolled both Maximilian's campaigns and Vatican endeavors). For more, see: G. STEINMETZ, *The Richest Man Who Ever Lived*, New York 2015.

<sup>41</sup> For more on this church's design, see: P. BAKER-BATES, M. PATTENDEN, *The Spanish presence in sixteenth-century Italy: images of Iberia*, Farnham Surrey-Burlington 2015.

<sup>42</sup> S. ROBERTO, *San Luigi dei Francesi: la fabbrica di una chiesa nazionale nella Roma del '500*, Roma 2005; S. BENEDETTI, *S. Giovanni dei Fiorentini a Roma: (1508-1559); da celebrazione mondana a significazione Cristiana*, "Relazioni Artistiche", 1983, pp. 959-976.

with the pope to both curry favor and edge out other European competition. He teamed with pope Alexander VI, for instance, in January 1494 to create the “Holy League of Venice” in an effort to rein in the French king Charles VIII, who had invaded portions of Italy. He also would enter into another Holy League alliance with pope Julius II in 1512 despite the fact that the arrangement favored Julius’ aims rather than his own<sup>43</sup>. Maximilian’s tireless efforts to strategize could have even factored into the siting of Santa Maria dell’Anima<sup>44</sup>.

Given Sander’s role in the church and as an advocate for the German nation, he too must have sensed the importance of reinforcing German national presence in Rome and in the Catholic Church. It is perhaps mere coincidence, that Sander signed his *palazzetto* lease less than three weeks after Maximilian’s imperial coronation, but his subsequent renovations that transformed his home into an ‘*all’antica*’ assemblage – complete with bold adynaton – seems a deliberate exaltation of the enduring German presence in Rome. In other words, the façade would have reminded viewers of Sander’s (and by association the Holy Roman Empire’s) beneficence both to the people of the German nation and to the Catholic Church. It is perhaps for this reason, during his visit to Rome around 1510, Martin Luther sang the virtues of Santa Maria dell’Anima when he visited for Mass<sup>45</sup>. Thus, these chiaroscuro motifs along with the adynaton defined an eternal space in which Germanic identity became interwoven with the very fabric of antiquity while at the same time claiming allegiance with both the modern Catholic Church and key political players.

The significance of such symbolism would shift once again following Maximilian I’s death in 1519 and the subsequent coronation of Charles V, whose troops would march on Rome and sack the city in 1527. Sander and his *palazzetto*

survived relatively unscathed, and he continued in his roles until his death in 1544<sup>46</sup>. From that point, the prominence of Santa Maria dell’Anima began to fade from the Curia’s attention<sup>47</sup>. One can imagine that the chiaroscuro decorations also began to fade, given the ephemerality of the medium when exposed to the natural elements. These images, that once were designed to proclaim the dwelling’s eternal presence, where themselves not up to the task of such longevity. The 1873 restorations may have revived the palazzetto Sander façade, but these restorations also permanently barred understanding of how this façade appeared from Sander’s day. Despite these lingering uncertainties, the palazzetto Sander façade presents a unique case in which to examine how the invocation of ‘*all’antica*’ language – architectural, visual, and textual – made it more than a pretty face; it transformed into a symbolic statement of personal and national presence in the larger footprint of an evolving Eternal City.

<sup>43</sup> For more, see: C. O’REILLY, ‘Maximus Caesar et Pontifex Maximus’ Giles of Viterbo Proclaims the Alliance between Emperor Maximilian I and Pope Julius II, “Augustiniana”, 22, 1972, 1-2, pp. 80-117; T.E. MOMMSEN, *The Accession of the Helvetian Federation to the Holy League: An Unpublished Bull of Pope Julius II of March 17, 1512*, “The Journal of Modern History”, 20, 1948, 2, pp. 123-132.

<sup>44</sup> Baumüller has noted the potential significance of the proximity of Santa Maria dell’Anima to the Church of San Giacomo degli Spangoli (BAUMÜLLER, *Santa Maria dell’Anima in Rom...* cit., p. 82).

<sup>45</sup> In his writings, Luther noted how much he enjoyed this mass and even called it the “best” church in Rome. For more, see: D. Martin Luthers Werke *kritische Gesamtausgabe*, Weimar 1912, p. 47, 425; H. VOSSBERG, *Im heiligen Rome: Luthers Reiseindrücke 1510-1511*, Berlin 1966, pp. 86-87; C.P.E. SPRINGER, *Luther’s Rome, Rome’s Luther: How the City Shaped the Reformer*, 2021, p. 15.

<sup>46</sup> Though beyond the scope of this article, Sander’s patronage extended to other projects during the early sixteenth century. One worth mention here was Sander’s commission for a crypt in Santa Maria dell’Anima in 1533, as included in his inscription was a nod to his role in renovating his *palazzetto* (PRIMAE DOMUS HOSPITALIS TEUTONICORUM URBIS STRUCTOR). This inclusion recalls just how significant a landmark this domus renovation was for him.

<sup>47</sup> This fracture was perhaps owed to the break that Martin Luther’s calls for reform had encouraged between Germany and the Papacy. For more on this relationship, see: SALONEN, *Papal Justice...* cit., p. 129.