

Special exhibition labels

Variety, Archeology,
& Ornament

*Renaissance Architectural Prints
from Column to Cornice*

August 26 – December 18, 2011

Curated by

Michael Waters

Guest Curator

University of Virginia Art Museum

PhD candidate and Erwin Panofsky Fellow

Institute of Fine Arts, New York University

Cammy Brothers

Guest Curator

University of Virginia Art Museum

Associate Professor of Architectural History

School of Architecture, University of Virginia

UVaM

University of Virginia **Art Museum**

Thomas H. Bayly Building . 155 Rugby Road . Charlottesville VA 22904-4119

www.virginia.edu/artmuseum

*Variety, Archeology and Ornament:
Renaissance Architectural Prints from Column to Cornice*

The story of Renaissance architecture is largely the story of the revival of antiquity. From the early fifteenth century onward, architects in Italy began to study and document the remains of ancient Rome. It was through this process that they came to learn the rules of ancient architecture, which they distilled in their built work and publicized widely through their architectural treatises. But what if this was only part of the story? By focusing on sixteenth-century prints of architectural details produced by unknown engravers and found outside architectural treatises, another Renaissance architecture emerges. Rather than codifying rules or promoting order, these individual prints of column capitals, bases, and cornices embraced the diversity of antiquity and celebrated ornamental variety. They were born of a tradition of sketchbook drawing in which ancient fragments were simultaneously recorded and reinvented. As such, they expanded what could be considered antique. Likewise, they subverted the narrowly defined columnar Orders at the same time as architects such as Sebastiano Serlio, Giacomo Barozzi da Vignola, and Andrea Palladio were striving to codify them. While mostly forgotten today, these engravings open our eyes to a different Renaissance, beyond the confines of the architectural treatise. They speak to an architectural culture in which prints and drawings were continuously in dialogue, perception and interpretation of antiquity was constantly changing, and ornament and variety reigned supreme. More broadly, the objects in this exhibit, many of which are on display for the first time, remind us that classicism, which often appears fixed and uniform today, was neither of these things in the Renaissance.

The exhibition is made possible through the generous support of Albemarle Magazine, Arts\$, B. Herbert Lee '48 Endowed Fund, The Hook, Ivy Publications LLC's Charlottesville Welcome Book, the Page-Barbour and Richards Lectures Committee, the School of Architecture, and the U.Va. Art Museum Volunteer Board

Text Panel

Origins

Beginning with the architecture of Filippo Brunelleschi in Florence, a new architectural language took hold in fifteenth-century Italy. Made possible in part by the graphic study of antiquity, this new architecture took inspiration from drawings of ancient fragments. Meanwhile, architects in the mid-fifteenth century began producing architectural treatises for the first time since antiquity, beginning with Leon Battista Alberti's *De re aedificatoria*. Unlike contemporary drawings, these early manuscript treatises attempted to establish architectural rules and standardize ornamental details. The rise of the printing press, which expanded the dissemination of works of architectural theory, accelerated this process. With the advent of printing also came the emergence of the single-leaf architectural print, the earliest example of which is included in this exhibit. Derived from drawings and distinct from the architectural treatise, these engravings produced in Rome rendered ancient fragments—both authentic and imagined—accessible to the greater public for the first time. As such, they were a powerful new entry point into the multifaceted world of antiquity.

Labels

Master of the Mantegna Sketchbook

Italian, active c. 1500

Decorated entablature and doorframe, c. 1510

Brown ink on paper

Courtesy of The Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles, 920097

This drawing of architectural details is a rare surviving folio by an unknown northern Italian artist possibly active in the circle of Andrea Mantegna. Known primarily through an album of drawings now in the Kunstbibliothek in Berlin called the “Mantegna Sketchbook,” this artist produced a number of drawings of architectural details and grotesques, many of which resemble prints later produced by Giovanni Antonio da Brescia.

Giovanni Antonio da Brescia

Italian, c. 1460 – c. 1520

Base, capital, and mask, c. 1515

Engraving

Courtesy of The Art Institute of Chicago, Gift of Mr. Potter Palmer, 1937.74

Engraved by Giovanni Antonio da Brescia, another artist from the school of Andrea Mantegna, this print is part of a series of at least seven prints of capitals, bases, and cornices that are the earliest known single-leaf prints of architectural details. All of the engravings in the set are labeled with a location in Rome, and at least one engraving depicts an identifiably ancient fragment. The print on view, which is a second state, refers to the Torre delle Milizie, a medieval Roman tower located near the Forum of Trajan. The accompanying mask closely resembles grotesques found in the artist's ornamental prints.

Francesco di Giorgio Martini

Italian, 1439–1502

Trattato di architettura civile e militare, c. 1520, f. F Iv-F Iir

Design of the Corinthian column and capital

Brown ink

Courtesy of the Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection

Dated 1521, this is one of a number of manuscript copies of Francesco di Giorgio Martini's second treatise on architecture, originally written in the late-fifteenth century. In this treatise, the architect attempts in part to clarify the types of columns described by Vitruvius. One of the primary means by which he does this is by relating architectural forms to the human body, such as the volutes of an Ionic capital to the curls of a woman's hair. In the folio on view, he describes and illustrates the Composite order, which he notes is found in many ancient ruins but not mentioned in Vitruvius. He goes on to show how the column capital is designed and how its shape and proportions relate to the human head. While Francesco di Giorgio's treatise was never printed, it was an influential work that remained continuously in circulation through copies such as this one.

Il Cronaca (Simone di Tomaso del Pollaiuolo)

Italian, 1457–1508

Capital from SS. Apostoli, Florence (recto)

Pilaster and base from the Baptistery, Florence (verso), c. 1480

Red chalk, stylus lines, pen and brown ink on laid paper

Courtesy of Collection Centre Canadien d'Architecture/Canadian Centre for Architecture, Montréal, DR1985:0674

Ionic capital from the Baptistery, Florence (recto)

Base and entablatures from the Baptistery, Florence (verso), c. 1480

Red chalk, stylus lines, pen and brown ink

Courtesy of Collection Centre Canadien d'Architecture/Canadian Centre for Architecture, Montréal, DR1985:0678

On display are two folios of a sketchbook created by the Florentine architect Simone del Pollaiuolo in the late fifteenth century. Known as Il Cronaca, the chronicler, due to his drawings of antiquity and his vivid tales of Rome, he produced some of the earliest drawings of ancient Roman monuments. Unlike his contemporaries, he also employed measurement as well as plan, section, and elevation to depict ancient architectural details. As these folios attest, he additionally recorded in detail the buildings of his native Florence, including the Baptistery, which was believed to be an ancient temple to Mars.

Text Panel

Antiquity

Antiquity provided the architects of the Renaissance with endless inspiration. What is often forgotten, however, is that ancient Roman architecture was extremely diverse and often densely ornamented. While there were certainly ancient architectural norms, few monuments employed identical ornamental details, and few ornamental details followed a clear canon. Instead, ancient architects, especially in Rome, liberally combined elements from a variety of decorative moldings and ornament to create a multitude of different decorated bases, figural capitals, and sculpted entablatures. Confronted with this diversity, Renaissance architects set about recording these fragmentary remains, many of which they later published as single-leaf architectural prints. At the same time, some architects attempted to make sense of this chaos by turning to the only surviving architectural treatise from antiquity, Vitruvius's *De Architectura*. However, since Vitruvius wrote his treatise long before most of the great monuments of Imperial Rome were ever built, his frequently confusing Latin text was only of limited use. While Vitruvian scholarship would come to overshadow ancient ornamental diversity later in the sixteenth century, as the objects in the exhibit affirm, the lure of highly ornamented fragments remained strong throughout the Renaissance.

Labels

Anonymous

French, mid-sixteenth century

Goldschmidt Sketchbook

Composite capital, mid-sixteenth century, f. 21r

Dark brown ink, black chalk, and incised lines

Two unidentified decorated bases and base from the Temple of Concordia, Rome

mid-sixteenth century, f. 39r

Dark brown ink, black chalk, and incised lines

Pantheon, entablature and pilaster capital with other measured details

mid-sixteenth century, f. 68 r

Dark brown ink, black chalk, and incised lines

Lent by The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Purchase, Rogers Fund, Joseph Pulitzer Bequest, and Mark J. Millard Gift, 1968, 68.769.21, 68.769.39, 68.769.68

Produced by a group of anonymous French draftsmen, the so-called Goldschmidt Sketchbook is one of the best-preserved records of the study of antiquity in Rome during the mid-sixteenth century. The surviving drawings, which include a series of detailed representations of the Pantheon, are extremely systematic and minutely measured. While the sketchbook includes a number of complete ancient monuments, most folios are dedicated to architectural details represented orthogonally. Why a group of Frenchmen produced this methodical survey is still unknown, but it is clear that by the middle of the sixteenth century the hands-on study of Roman monuments had become essential training for architects beyond Italy.

Antonio Labacco

Italian, 1495 – after 1567
Engraved by Mario Labacco
Italian, before 1547 – after 1589

Libro d'Antonio Labacco appartenente a l'architettura nel qual si figurano alcune notabili antichità di Roma
Rome: 1559, Plate 1

Title page

Engraving

Courtesy of Avery Architectural and Fine Arts Library, Columbia University, *Speculum Romanae Magnificentiae* Collection
1951.001.00344

Antonio Labacco

Italian, 1495 – after 1567
Engraved by Mario Labacco
Italian, before 1547 – after 1589

Libro d'Antonio Labacco appartenente a l'architettura nel qual si figurano alcune notabili antichità di Roma
Rome: 1559, Plate 15

Pegasus capital and decorated base from the Temple of Mars Ultor, Rome

Engraving

Courtesy of Avery Architectural and Fine Arts Library, Columbia University, *Speculum Romanae Magnificentiae* Collection
1951.001.00356

Antonio Labacco

Italian, 1495 – after 1567
Engraved by Mario Labacco
Italian, before 1547 – after 1589

Libro d'Antonio Labacco appartenente a l'architettura nel qual si figurano alcune notabili antichità di Roma
Rome: 1559, Plate 21

Capital and base from the Temple of Castor and Pollux, Rome

Engraving

Libro d'Antonio Labacco appartenente a l'architettura nel qual si figurano alcune notabili antichità di Roma
Rome: 1559, Plate 22

Entablature of the Temple of Castor and Pollux, Rome

Engraving

Courtesy of Avery Architectural and Fine Arts Library, Columbia University, *Speculum Romanae Magnificentiae* Collection
1951.001.00362, 1951.001.00363

Antonio Labacco

Italian, 1495 – after 1567
Engraved by Mario Labacco
Italian, before 1547 – after 1589

Libro d'Antonio Labacco appartenente a l'architettura nel qual si figurano alcune notabili antichità di Roma
Rome: 1559, Plate 36

Composite capital and decorated base from the Temple of Apollo Sosianus, Rome

Engraving

Courtesy of Avery Architectural and Fine Arts Library, Columbia University, *Speculum Romanae Magnificentiae* Collection
1951.001.00374

First published in 1552, Antonio Labacco's book of antiquities, along with Sebastiano Serlio's treatise, is the published result of the study of antiquity in High Renaissance Rome. Derived in large part from drawings made by the architect Baldassare Peruzzi in the early-sixteenth century, Labacco's treatise is composed of copperplate engravings of a handful of ancient monuments and their architectural details.

Many of these fragments, such as those on view, also employ the same methods of representation used by Master G.A. with the Caltrop and Master P.S. While Labacco's prints are more archeologically accurate than their predecessors, they are clearly indebted to a tradition of single-leaf engravings.

Francesco Colonna

Italian, 1433–1527

Hypnerotomachia Poliphili, Venice: 1499, p. IIIv

Poliphilo and Polia view the ancient ruins

Woodcut and letterpress

Courtesy of Special Collections, University of Virginia Library, M 1499 .C65

Torello Saraina

Italian, 1475–1547

Woodcuts by Giovanni Caroto

Italian, c. 1488 – c. 1566

De origine et amplitudine civitatis Veronae, Verona: 1540, p. 31v-32r

Ancient capitals and frieze from Verona

Woodcut and letterpress

Courtesy of Stephen Chan Library, Institute of Fine Arts, New York University, DG975.V51 S23

Torello Saraina's book on ancient Roman Verona is a rare sixteenth-century treatise on antiquities found outside of Rome. Published in the same year as Sebastiano Serlio's book on antiquities, Saraina in his introduction guaranteed that his reproductions, unlike those of Serlio, were true and accurate. The woodcuts by Giovanni Caroto include Verona's famous amphitheater, several arches and gates, and numerous architectural fragments. While Serlio's treatise is often celebrated as making Roman antiquities available for the first time through print, Torello Saraina at the very same moment was disseminating a whole separate corpus of ancient material through his treatise.

Léon Davent

French, active 1540–1556

After Francesco Primaticcio

Italian, 1504/5–1570

Composite capital

Etching

Lent by The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1941, 41.72 (2.11)

Vitruvius

Roman, c. 85 – c.15 BC

M. Vitruvii De architectura libri decem, ed. Fra Giocondo, Florence: 1522, p. 55v–56r

Doric and Ionic bases

Woodcut and letterpress

Courtesy of Special Collections, University of Virginia Library, NA2515 .V5 1522

Vitruvius

Roman, c. 85 – c.15 BC

M. Vitruvii Pollionis de Architectura Libri Decem, ed. Daniele Barbaro, Venice: 1567

p. 112–113

Parts of a column base and Ionic base

Woodcut and letterpress

Courtesy of Special Collections University of Virginia Library NA2515 .V5 1567

Vitruvius

Roman, c. 85 – c.15 BC

I dieci libri dell'architettura, trans. Daniele Barbaro, Venice: 1567, p. 146–147

Doric order

Woodcut

Courtesy of Special Collections, University of Virginia Library NA2515 .V83 1567

Master P.S.

French, active mid-sixteenth century

Top left

Entablatures from Santa Pudenziana and the Arch of Camigliano, Rome, 1537

Engraving

Top middle

Entablature from the Forum of Trajan, Rome, 1537

Engraving

Top right

Entablature from Santa Bibiana, Rome, 1537

Engraving

Bottom left

Entablature from the Temple of Castor and Pollux, Rome, 1537

Engraving

Bottom middle

Entablature from the Temple of Antoninus and Faustina, Rome, 1537

Engraving

Bottom right

Entablature from the Temple of Vespasian, Rome, 1537

Engraving

Courtesy of National Gallery of Art, Washington, Rosenwald Collection,

1946, 1946.11.97, 1946.11.98, 1946.11.99, 1946.11.100, 1946.11.101, 1946.11.103

Master P.S., a French engraver often identified as Jacques Prévost, produced eleven prints of ancient architectural details between 1535 and 1537. All of these prints are measured, using either the Florentine *braccio* or the Roman *palm*, and inscribed with their location in Rome. Moreover, many

represent identifiably ancient cornices and entablatures. Originally printed two to a page together with the prints of Master G.A. with the Caltrop, these prints continued to be published in Rome into the late-eighteenth century.

Master G.A. with the Caltrop

Italian, active mid-sixteenth century

Top left

Corinthian base from the Lateran Baptistery, Rome, c. 1537

Engraving

Top right

Corinthian base from the Forum of Augustus, Rome, c. 1537

Engraving

Bottom left

Corinthian base from the Temple of Mars Ultor, Rome, c. 1537

Engraving

Bottom right

Corinthian base from the Temple of Concordia, Rome, c. 1537

Engraving

Museum Purchase, 1984.22.13, 1984.22.18, 1984.22.21, 1984.22.23

Little is known about the engraver Master G.A. with the Caltrop, who used his initials along with a four-sided spike weapon as his monogram. Active in Rome in the mid-1530s and sometimes identified as Giovanni Agucchi, he produced twenty-nine engravings, mostly of column capitals and bases. While many of these fragments are measured, only five can be confidently linked to known ancient monuments. Of the others, some may be ancient, but many are likely inventions produced by combining various ancient forms and decorative moldings. For Master G.A., antiquity was an open-ended point of departure. Just as he embellished the Pegasus capital from the Temple of Mars Ultor by adding the figure of triumphant Fame, he freely mixed the genuine with the imagined to create new antiquities.

Text Panel

Variety

In the 1530s, Rome witnessed an explosion in the production of single-leaf architectural prints. Created largely by two unknown artists—Master G.A. with the Caltrop and Master. P.S.—these new copperplate engravings disseminated a plethora of fragments that ranged from the fantastical to the proto-archeological. Some even have the distinction of being the earliest known measured prints of ancient Roman architecture. While a number are labeled with the name of an architectural order, they do not define the Orders, nor do they promote a clear theoretical agenda. They are by their very nature ambiguous objects without an author to explain them or rules to govern them, united only by their diversity. Rather than attempting to establish a canon or trying to distinguish what was worthy of imitation, these engravers freely published a variety of fragments that some deemed licentious. These fragments thus became important objects of architectural transmission that expanded the domain of antiquity and propagated ornamental variety.

Labels

Master G.A. with the Caltrop

Italian, active mid-sixteenth century

Pegasus capital from the Temple of Mars Ultor and decorated base, c. 1537

Decorated capital and base, c. 1537

Engraving

Courtesy of The Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles, 91-F104.c2.v1

Master G.A. with the Caltrop

Italian, active mid-sixteenth century

Basket capital with fruit and satyr head, c. 1537

Engraving

Museum Purchase, 1984.22.1

Master G.A. with the Caltrop, attributed

Italian, active mid-sixteenth century

Decorated capital and base, c. 1537

Engraving

Museum Purchase, 1984.22.2

Master G.A. with the Caltrop

Italian, active mid-sixteenth century

Doric capital, c. 1537

Engraving

Museum Purchase, 1984.22.3

Master G.A. with the Caltrop

Italian, active mid-sixteenth century

Ionic capital, c. 1537

Engraving

Museum Purchase, 1984.22.4

Master G.A. with the Caltrop

Italian, active mid-sixteenth century

Ionic capital, c. 1537

Engraving

Museum Purchase, 1984.22.5

Master G.A. with the Caltrop

Italian, active mid-sixteenth century

Capital with peapod volutes and satyr head, c. 1537

Engraving

Museum Purchase, 1984.22.6

Master G.A. with the Caltrop

Italian, active mid-sixteenth century

Composite capital, c. 1537

Engraving

Museum Purchase, 1984.22.8

Master G.A. with the Caltrop

Italian, active mid-sixteenth century

Capital with rams heads and masks, c. 1537

Engraving

Museum Purchase, 1984.22.9

Master G.A. with the Caltrop

Italian, active mid-sixteenth century

Corinthian base, c. 1537

Engraving

Museum Purchase, 1984.22.10

Master G.A. with the Caltrop

Italian, active mid-sixteenth century

Composite capital, c. 1537

Engraving

Museum Purchase, 1984.22.12

Master G.A. with the Caltrop

Italian, active mid-sixteenth century

Decorated base, c. 1537

Engraving

Museum Purchase, 1984.22.14

Master G.A. with the Caltrop

Italian, active mid-sixteenth century

Ionic base, c. 1537

Engraving

Museum Purchase, 1984.22.15

Master G.A. with the Caltrop

Italian, active mid-sixteenth century

Ionic base, c. 1537

Engraving

Museum Purchase, 1984.22.16

Master G.A. with the Caltrop

Italian, active mid-sixteenth century

Corinthian base, c. 1537

Engraving

Museum Purchase, 1984.22.17

Master G.A. with the Caltrop

Italian, active mid-sixteenth century

Corinthian base, c. 1537

Engraving

Museum Purchase, 1984.22.19

Master G.A. with the Caltrop

Italian, active mid-sixteenth century

Corinthian base, c. 1537

Engraving

Museum Purchase, 1984.22.20

Master G.A. with the Caltrop

Italian, active mid-sixteenth century

Corinthian base, c. 1537

Engraving

Museum Purchase, 1984.22.22

Text Panel

Order

As the architects of the early sixteenth century attempted to make sense of the inherent variety they found in ancient fragments, they began to classify, systematize, and normalize the architecture of antiquity. It was through this process that a regularized architectural system known as the Orders emerged. Based on a graduated sequence of five orders each with defined proportions and ornament, the Orders—Tuscan, Doric, Ionic, Corinthian, and Composite—were created to standardize classical architecture. While types of columns and styles of building existed in antiquity and were described by Vitruvius, these were only loose classifications that allowed for flexibility, expansion, and variation. The Renaissance Orders, as first theorized by Sebastiano Serlio, were instead a rigid system that attempted to give clarity to the often contradictory architecture of antiquity. Despite Serlio's best efforts, however, his architectural Orders remained just one of many competing options. Not only did other architects such as Vignola and Palladio produce treatises with their own Orders, but also engravers such as Master G.A. with the Caltrop co-opted the language of the Orders with limited theoretical rationale to label their single-leaf prints. Rather than being a standardized, codified norm, the concept of the architectural Orders remained perpetually in flux throughout the Renaissance.

Labels

Sebastiano Serlio

Italian, 1475–1554
Engraved by Agostino Veneziano
Italian, c. 1490 – c. 1540

Doric base, 1528

Engraving

Ionic base, 1528

Engraving

Ionic capital, 1528

Engraving

Lent by The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Harris Brisbane Dick Fund,
1941, 41.72 (2.12), 41.72 (2.13), 41.72 (2.14)

Sebastiano Serlio

Italian, 1475–1554
Engraved by Agostino Veneziano
Italian, c. 1490 – c. 1540

Corinthian base, 1528

Engraving

Ionic entablature, 1528

Engraving

Corinthian entablature, 1528

Engraving

Lent by The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Harris Brisbane Dick Fund,
1941, 41.72 (2.29), 41.72(2.30), 41.72 (2.31)

In 1528, the architect Sebastiano Serlio and the engraver Agostino Veneziano published a set of nine prints of the Doric, Ionic, and Corinthian orders, six of which are on view here. Rather than depicting ancient fragments, these prints present a sequence of idealized architectural Orders composed of three component parts. As Serlio explained in his request for copyright, these prints were to be part of a larger set of engravings produced specifically “so one could better understand this profound science of

architecture and know how to distinguish the styles of buildings—Tuscan, Doric, Ionic, Corinthian, and Composite.” While Serlio would only produce engravings of three Orders, these prints—devoid of an associated explanatory text—are the earliest attempt to publish the now canonical five Orders. The Latin phrase at the top of each engraving refers to the ten-year Venetian copyright granted to these prints and translates to “Beware not to copy as it is covered by a privilege.”

Sebastiano Serlio

Italian, 1475–1554

Regole generali di architettura sopra le cinque maniere degli edifici, Venice: 1537, p. VIr

The five architectural orders

Woodcut and letterpress

Courtesy of Special Collections, Simpson Library, University of Mary Washington

Sebastiano Serlio

Italian, 1475–1554

Règles générales de l'architecture, sur les cinq manières d'édifices, trans. Pieter Coecke van Aelst, Antwerp: 1545, p. 59v–60r

Ancient capitals and bases of the composite order

Woodcut and letterpress

Courtesy of National Gallery of Art Library, David K. E. Bruce Fund, N44.S389 A53214 1545

Almost ten years after Sebastiano Serlio produced his set of single-leaf engravings, he published the first part of his architectural treatise. Designed so that “not only exalted intellects could understand architecture, but also every average person,” this book on the general rules of architecture largely concerns the five Orders, now fully illustrated and theorized. While this treatise and his subsequent book on antiquities (published in 1540) include variations found among the ruins, it was his desire to limit the scope of antiquity and “instruct those who know nothing on how to select perfect and well conceived ancient objects and reject things which are too licentious.” Thus Serlio not only promoted the new language of the Orders through his treatise, but also attempted to combat uncanonical antiquities, such as those propagated by Master G.A. with the Caltrap and his contemporaries.

Leon Battista Alberti

Italian, 1404–1472

L'architettura di Leonbatista Alberti, trans. Cosimo Bartoli, Venice: 1565, p. 224–225

Corinthian capital

Woodcut and letterpress

Courtesy of Special Collections, University of Virginia Library, NA2515 .A33 1565

Andrea Palladio

Italian, 1508–1580

I quattro libri dell'architettura, Venice: 1581, Book I, p. 20–21

Tuscan order

Woodcut and letterpress

Courtesy of Special Collections, University of Virginia Library, NA2515 .P25 1581

Giacomo Barozzi da Vignola

Italian, 1507–1573

Regola delli cinque ordini d'architettura, Rome: 1563, Plate I

Title page

Engraving

Courtesy of Avery Architectural and Fine Arts Library, Columbia University, Speculum Romanae Magnificentiae Collection, 1951.001.00375

Giacomo Barozzi da Vignola

Italian, 1507–1573

Regola delli cinque ordini d'architettura, Rome: 1563, Plate XVIII

Ionic order, plinth and base

Engraving

Regola delli cinque ordini d'architettura, Rome: 1563, Plate XVIII

Ionic order, capital and entablature

Engraving

Courtesy of Avery Architectural and Fine Arts Library, Columbia University, Speculum Romanae Magnificentiae Collection, 1951.001.00392, 1951.001.00393

Giacomo Barozzi da Vignola

Italian, 1507–1573

Regola delli cinque ordini d'architettura, Rome: 1563, Plate XX

Ionic order, capital detail and volute construction

Engraving

Regola delli cinque ordini d'architettura, Rome: 1563, Plate XXX

Composite order, two ancient capitals and a base

Engraving

Courtesy of Avery Architectural and Fine Arts Library, Columbia University, Speculum Romanae Magnificentiae Collection, 1951.001.00394, 1951.001.00404

Giacomo Barozzi da Vignola's architectural treatise has become without a doubt the most popular treatise of the Renaissance, with over 250 editions appearing in at least seven languages. First published in 1562, his treatise, like Serlio's before it, presents the five Orders and their various applications. As Vignola makes clear in the introduction, his modular Orders were based on the writings of others and the ruins of antiquity, which he "reduced to an easy to use, concise and quick rule." Yet even Vignola acknowledged near the end of his treatise that "one finds among the antiquities of Rome an almost infinite variety of capitals," which he categorized as Composite, but could neither name nor incorporate into his Orders.

Text Panel

Afterlife

Architectural prints and treatises were never fixed, sacrosanct objects in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Instead, they were continuously reconstituted and transformed, and, like drawings, were often a starting point for invention. Illustrations in architectural treatises, for example, were frequently reprinted in other publications and even translated into single-leaf prints. Architectural treatises themselves, moreover, were regularly given new meaning by their users both through the act of reading and the practice of drawing and annotating. Occasionally, these same users even physically cut and pasted prints from treatises and single-leaf engravings into sketchbooks and albums to create compendiums of architectural details. Even works that were designed to regulate architecture and protect against license, such as Sebastiano Serlio's treatise, were susceptible to this type of user modification. Thus, the story of Renaissance architectural prints only begins with their production. They were always volatile, mutable objects that were consistently transformed through their use, replication, translation, and physical appropriation.

Labels

Vitruvius

Roman, c. 85 – c. 15 BC

De architectura, trans. Cesare Cesariano, Como: 1521, p. LXIIIr

Six types of columns with additional capitals

Woodcut and letterpress

Courtesy of Stephen Chan Library, Institute of Fine Arts, New York University, NA2515.V76

Cesare Cesariano was a Milanese architect active in the early-sixteenth century. In 1521, he produced the first Italian translation of Vitruvius, accompanied by an extensive commentary. On view is Cesariano's print of six types of columns—two types of Doric with a third alternate capital, Ionic, Corinthian, Attic with two different capitals, and Tuscan—together with seven additional capitals. While the influence of this treatise was limited, many of the illustrations, especially this one, were later reprinted in numerous Italian, French, and German treatises. This same illustration was also translated into single-leaf prints by the German engraver Hans Sebald Beham and the unidentified Master B.M., and was likely the inspiration for Serlio's comparative print of the Orders.

Vitruvius

Roman, c. 85 – c. 15 BC

Architettura, trans. M. Gianbatista Caporali, Perugia: 1536, p. 90v

Column capitals after Cesare Cesariano

Woodcut and letterpress

Courtesy of Special Collections, University of Virginia Library, NA2515.V44 1536

Walther Hermann Ryff

German, c. 1500–1548

Furnembsten, notwendigsten, der gantzen Architectur angehörigen mathematischen und mechanischen Künst, Nuremberg: 1547, p. 14v & 15 r

Column diagram after Sebastiano Serlio

Doric columns and other capitals after Cesare Cesariano

Woodcut and letterpress

Courtesy of National Gallery of Art Library, David K. E. Bruce Fund, NA2515.R95

Hans Sebald Beham

German, 1500–1550

Designs for column capitals and bases, 1543–1545

Engravings

Courtesy of Avery Architectural and Fine Arts Library, Columbia University, Avery Classics, AA2870 B39 F

These four engravings are part of a series of seven architectural prints by the prolific German artist Hans Sebald Beham. Based in part on illustrations from Cesariano's 1521 edition of Vitruvius, these engravings are prominently titled "VITRVVIVS" and described in both Latin and German as being of the Doric Order, despite their heavily decorated capitals. Published only a year after the first German edition of Serlio's treatise, the prints of Beham are a testament to both the spread of Italian architectural culture north of the Alps and the enduring appeal of Cesariano's earlier, highly ornamented prints.

Wolfgang Engelbert, Graf von Auersperg

Austrian, 1641–1696

Wolfgang Engelbert, Graf von Auersperg collection of architectural prints, c. 1528–1585, f. 34

Master B.M.

Italian, mid-sixteenth century

Column capitals

Engraving

Anonymous after Master B.M.

Column capitals

Engraving

Master G.G. (Georg Glockendon the Younger?, German, 1492–1553)

Corinthian column

Engraving

Hans Vredeman de Vries

Dutch, 1526–1609

Das ander Buech, gemacht auff die zway Colonnen, Corinthia und Composita, Antwerp: 1565, p. 1

Composite and Corinthian plinths

Engravings

Courtesy of The Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles, 870672

Assembled by Wolfgang Engelbert, Count of Auersperg, or an earlier collector, this album demonstrates how enthusiasts freely collected and modified architectural prints. The album consists of prints taken from the treatises of Antonio Labacco, Hans Vredeman de Vries, and Jacques Androuet du Cerceau, as well as a number of single-leaf prints, including those of Serlio and Veneziano, the Master of 1515, Master G.A. with the Caltrop, Enea Vico, Hans Sebald Beham, Peter Flötner, and others. It also contains two previously unknown prints: an etching by Master G.G. of a Corinthian column and a woodcut of architectural details from the Maison Carrée in Nîmes. In addition to these prints, its creator also cut and pasted together half-capitals from a print by Master B.M. and a later reverse copy of that same print. Just as artists would often copy drawings into their sketchbooks, the author of the Engelbert album deliberately intermixed a variety of prints from various sources to create something distinctly new.

Vitruvius

Roman, c. 85 – c. 15 BC
Sextus Julius Frontinus
Roman, c. 40–103 AD

Vitruvius iterum et Frontinus à locundo revisi repurgatique quantum ex collatione licvit, Florence: 1513,
p. 58v & 59r

Doric and Ionic columns

Woodcut and letterpress

Antonio da Sangallo, the Younger
Italian, 1484–1546

Drawings and annotations

Brown ink

Lent by The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Bequest of W. Gedney Beatty, 1941, 41.100.556

The architect Antonio da Sangallo the Younger was one of the chief proponents of Vitruvianism in early sixteenth-century Rome. He designed palaces, such as the Palazzo Farnese, based on the ancient text and planned in 1531 to publish his own illustrated edition of that text. While this project never came to fruition, two copies of Vitruvius annotated by the architect do survive: a 1524 edition now in Parma and the earlier 1513 edition displayed here. In this small book, we can see the process by which Sangallo interpreted Vitruvius and interacted with the printed treatise. In addition to writing in the margins, he also liberally modified Fra Giocondo's illustrations, adding measurements and changing architectural forms. It was through this hands-on revision that the architect came to understand the writings of Vitruvius.

Giovanni Battista Montano

Italian, 1534–1621

Architettura con diversi ornamenti cavati dall'antico, Rome: 1636, p. 40r

Ancient composite capitals

Engraving

Renier Panhay de Rendeux
Belgian, 1684–1744

Decorated mouldings, p. 39v

Black chalk and brown ink

Courtesy of Vincent Buonanno

Giovanni Battista Montano was a Milanese woodworker and architect who produced a number of drawings of antiquities and other subject matter in Rome during the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Believed to be preparatory designs for an architectural treatise, these drawings were only published after his death by his student Giovanni Battista Soria, beginning in 1624. In the treatise on display, the first in the series, the architectural Orders are presented interspersed with examples from antiquity. The Belgian artist Renier Panhay de Rendeux likely purchased this particular copy on his trip to Rome, during which time he filled its pages with drawings of architectural details and Baroque churches, as well as prints of ancient statues. He also used the blank pages at the end of the treatise to record everything from a treatise in Latin on art to recipes for curing hemorrhoids.

Diego de Sagredo

Spanish, c. 1490–1528

Raison d'architecture Antique, Paris: 1555, p. 36v–37r

Decorated capitals

Woodcut and letterpress

Courtesy of National Gallery of Art Library, J.P. Getty Fund in Honor of Franklin Murphy,
NA260 .S2314 1555

Philibert de l'Orme

French, c. 1514–1570

Le premier Tome de l'Architecture, Paris: 1567, p. 208v & 209r

Composite capitals

Woodcut and letterpress

Courtesy of Special Collections, University of Virginia Library,
NA2517 .D4 1567