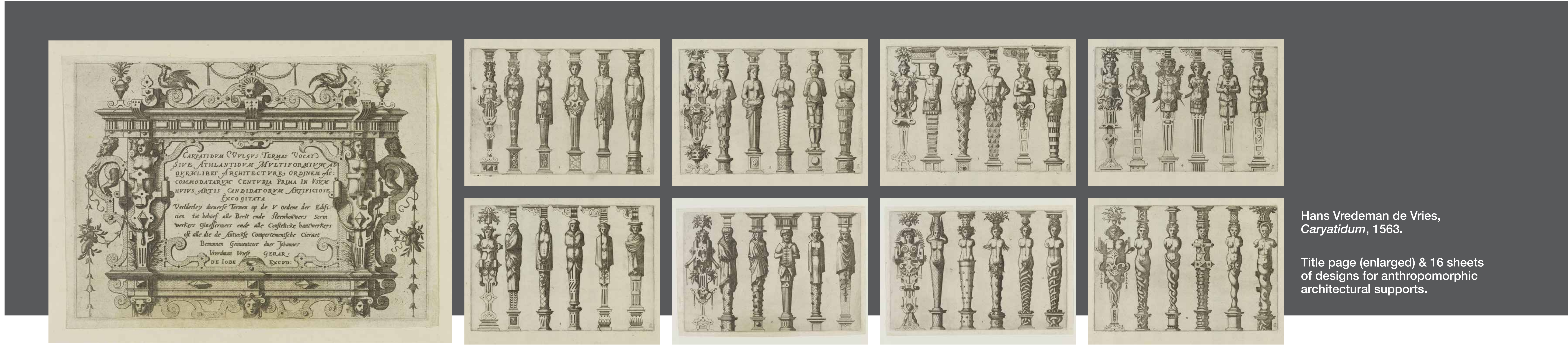




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Hans Vredeman de Vries,  
*Caryatidum*, 1563.  
  
Title page (enlarged) & 16 sheets  
of designs for anthropomorphic  
architectural supports.

# ORNAMENT : DESIGN : TRANSLATION

An open-access digital corpus of ornament print series and their title pages, ca. 1540–1620



O:D:T analyzes the shared visual and rhetorical features of a never-before assembled corpus of European ornament prints, ca. 1550–1620. Issued in series introduced by title pages, these prints claim that their designs are useful for particular yet divergent artists, from sculptors and painters to goldsmiths and embroiderers. O:D:T queries its corpus for visual cues indicating how designs on paper could be translated by artisans carving wood, brushing paint, casting silver, and embroidering threads.

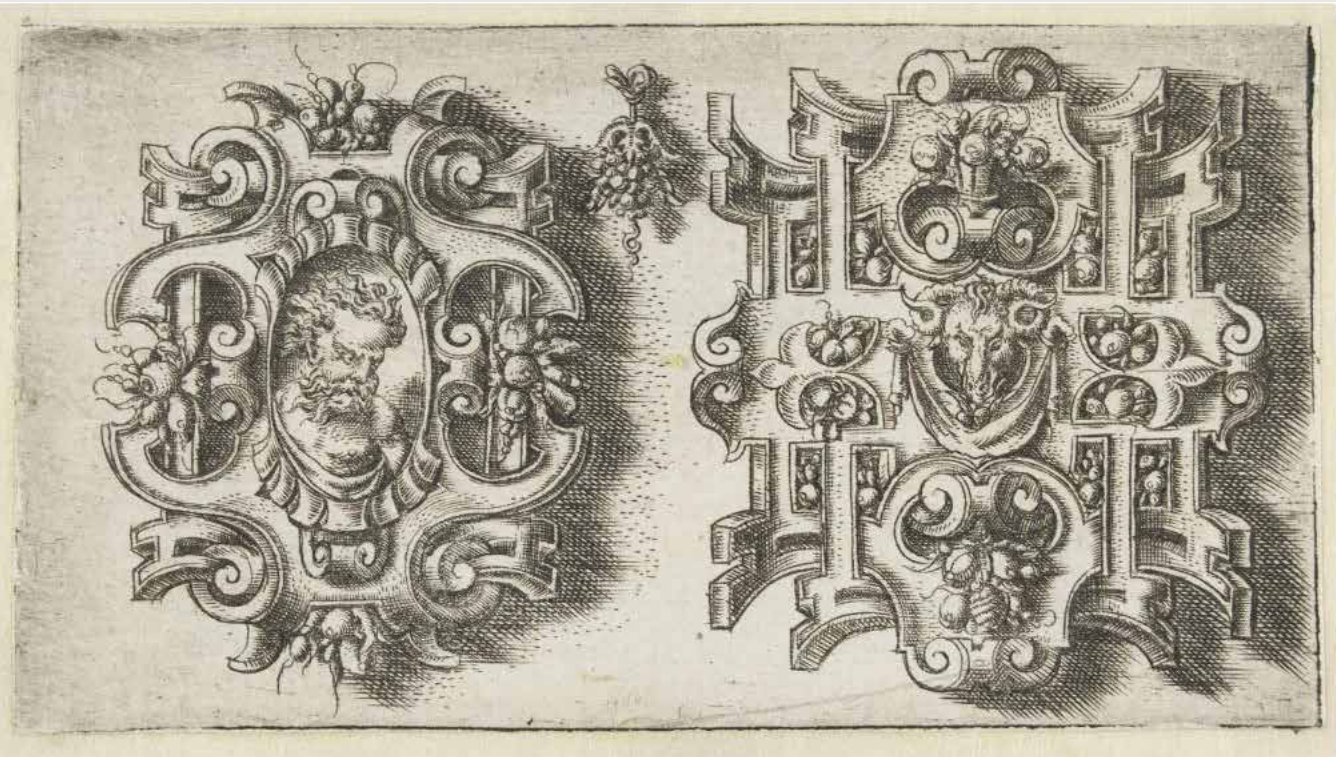
## BACKGROUND

### WHAT IS AN ORNAMENT PRINT?

Ornament prints include woodcuts, engravings, and etchings of creative designs for embellishing objects and expressing an artist's powers of invention. This new genre of imagery flourished across Renaissance Europe, and the designs were often inspired by the art and ruins of ancient Greece and Rome.

### WHAT WERE ORNAMENT PRINTS FOR?

These prints were admired for their inventive designs and used as tools for art making. They offered patterns for artists to translate into various media (wood, metal, textiles). They could also serve as loose inspiration for the development of one's own ornamental design.



### WHY ARE THE TITLE PAGES SPECIAL?

From the 1540s, ornament prints were increasingly published in series. Some print series were introduced by multi-lingual title pages, which:

- specify the designer, printmaker, publisher, and city of publication
- convey the theme, from designs for monuments, mantels, and frames to armor, textiles, jewelry, and tableware
- use Renaissance rhetorical tropes to distinguish a series' noteworthy features
- use various languages and list addressees that suggest an intended audience

## METHOD

Images and metadata compiled in Corpora data studio. Title pages transcribed, translated, and encoded in TEI. IIIF images annotated using FairCopy. Project data to be visualized with a custom instance of EditionCrafter in Summer 2025.

	Image	Series	Title Page?	Sequence Number	Transcription	Translation	Languages	Months	Holdings	Notes	Permission to Share?
		Various protectionum formae, quas vocat Mausus vocat, ad antiquum (ca. 1555-1565)	true	1	LATINE: Varium protectionum formae, quas vocat Mausus vocat, ad antiquum	ENGLISH from FRENCH: Forme of various protections.	Latin, French, Italian, German		Designations: Darmstadt (A668 inv. 204-206)	ICCD 1.0j	true
		Passo Verdigrae (1560 - 1600)	true	1	PASSIO VERDIGRAE QVAE NOTITIA REPERTIO CHRISTI NOS DIXIT AD OMNEM	The Passion of Christ, the whole was born of the word, our redemption.	Latin		Rijksmuseum (pp. 2-26-600-601), Rijksmuseum (pp. 2-26-601- 1000)	ICCD 1.0j	true
		Vredeman Verderinghe van grotsen ende (1560)	true	1	Vredeman Verderinghe van grotsen ende Conspirationen ghemaect tot	Many variations of grotesque and Conspirationen ghemaect tot	Dutch		The Victoria and Albert Museum (201715), The Victoria and Albert Museum	© The Trustees of the British Museum	true
		Vredeman Verderinghe van grotsen ende (1560)	true	1	Vredeman Verderinghe van grotsen ende Conspirationen ghemaect tot	Many new variations of antique motifs which is now very useful.	Dutch		The Victoria and Albert Museum (201715), The Victoria and Albert Museum	© The Trustees of the British Museum	true
		Grottesco: in diversis manieris (1565- 1570)	true	1	Grottesco: in diversis manieris (1565- 1570)	Grottesque: in diverse ways, very decorative, skilled, and	Dutch		Rijksmuseum (pp. 2-26-601- 1000), Rijksmuseum (pp. 2-26-601- 1000), The Metropolitan	ICCD 1.0j	true
		Libro de Moreques (1560)	true	1	Libro de Moreques Tres libros &	Book of Moreques	French		The Metropolitan Museum of Art	ICCD 1.0j	true

## RESULTS

### WHAT DOES THIS DIGITAL CORPUS HELP US SEE?

- 1. The Rhetorical Tropes and Claims**  
The title pages make claims for the utility, abundance, variety, novelty, and inventiveness of the designs.
- 2. The Variety of Artists Addressed by the Prints**  
The title pages name painters, glaziers and stained-glass workers, printmakers, architects, masons, sculptors (of statuary, images, or antique ornament), cabinet makers, reliquary makers, goldsmiths, silversmiths, glass and gem makers, jewelers, button makers, embroiders, weavers, and makers of hanging textiles as well as “similar artists” and “all other” artists.
- 3. The Shared Vocabulary of Motifs**  
The prints draw on a common stock of monstrous, animal, vegetal, architectural, object-based, and pattern-based motifs.
- 4. Motifs may Hint at Remediation Methods**  
Typical features, such as holes, hollows, studs, and rivets, may indicate how to join multi-part constructions.



## What happens when we treat ornament prints as epistemic objects rather than mere pretty things?

### KEY PROJECT INSIGHT

If some of the print series were, as they claim, useful for wildly divergent artists, then scholars must shift their attention from visual patterns to making processes, from design aesthetics to design thinking. The prints show evidence of iterative, experimental, and cross-medial thinking encoded in the prints, raising new questions about craft making and opening these sources toward historians of science and technology.

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