Shaping the book and the building: text and image in Dietterlin’s Architectura

KIMBERLEY SKELTON

In the sixteenth-century printed architectural book, text and image together evoked a wide variety of interpretations from readers. Authors of these books explicitly invited highly individual readings from readers by assigning separate information to text and image as well as by instructing their readers to analyze the book with their own knowledge. Yet in suggesting how readers might critique a book, both historians of the book and architectural historians have considered text and image separately from each other and have often stressed single rather than various readers. Studies in the history of the book consider how readers can generate multiple interpretations from the text, its annotations and indices. Scholars in architectural history, on the other hand, have considered the illustration but have assumed that it outlines prescriptive rules.

Among architectural books, Wendel Dietterlin’s Architectura of 1598 in particular suggests that authors even assumed multiple interpretations from different readers; together, his fantastic engravings and limited text create space for the questions of audiences ranging from elite readers to master builders. By exploring how these readers of Architectura created their own interpretations, I will argue that the text–image relationship in Architectura expands sixteenth-century ideas about the Orders as well as designing buildings and, in turn, suggests the rich array of interpretations available to early modern readers of printed books.

A variable text–image relationship and its audience: Architectura in context

From even a cursory survey of Architectura, it is clear that Dietterlin presents his readers with a paradox that they can unravel only through close analysis of his engravings. On the one hand, he situates Architectura alongside other contemporaneous architectural books; he claims patrons as well as master builders for his audience, explicitly sets out to clarify previous architectural writings, and imitates the structure of other books. Yet, on the other, he includes engravings that contrast strikingly with those of other books in their profusion of ornament and in the absence of explanatory text.

Despite this apparent contradiction, however, Dietterlin and his publisher assumed an unusually wide readership for Architectura; three folio editions were printed in 1598. Most sixteenth-century architectural books were published in a single edition and then subsequently translated into other languages. Architectura, in contrast, appeared at the same time in an expensive German edition with red and black type, a less costly version also in German but with only black ink, and a combined Latin and French
version. As their different cost and languages suggest, these editions were directed to a range of audiences — from wealthy readers to master builders. By publishing an edition in Latin, the language of academic texts, Dietterlin specifically addressed elite readers seeking an education in a range of intellectual disciplines, from history and philosophy to architecture. Printed in the vernacular German and at a lower cost, the edition only in black ink would have been available to less wealthy readers who could have been either patrons or craftsmen.

The expensive German edition, on the other hand, simultaneously addresses both patrons and master builders. Not only is it at once more costly and printed in the vernacular but it is dedicated to Daniel Soriau, an art dealer turned master builder. Since Soriau became a master builder only after migrating to the German area of Hanauer Neustadt, he would have had a patron’s knowledge of architecture primarily from books but simultaneously would have assumed a builder’s responsibility for overseeing construction. Moreover, by including a dedicatory letter only in this edition, Dietterlin implies that these patrons and master builders are his primary audience. Thus, he situates Architectura both within an elite reader’s library and within building practice, yet simultaneously stresses the relationship to designing buildings.

Across these audiences, Dietterlin clearly assumed a constant interest in the information that he provides yet one that would vary in the detail desired by the reader. Throughout these three editions, Dietterlin changes only the text to exclude references to Vitruvius in the Latin and French edition. Consequently, he implies that the readers of his German editions would pursue comparative reading of architectural books, while those of his Latin and French version would consider Architectura by itself. Since the references to Vitruvius cite specific passages, it would be easy to move between Architectura and Vitruvius. Without such references, however, readers would need to accomplish the lengthier and more difficult task of reading Vitruvius in order to locate the appropriate passage. According to Dietterlin, then, patrons and master builders or craftsmen would seek highly detailed information from Architectura, while wealthy readers of the Latin and French version would desire a more summary knowledge of architecture.

By retaining the same structure and illustrations in all three editions at the same time, Dietterlin suggests that any of his readers would seek knowledge of the five Classical Orders and the designs which they could spark. His preface to each edition predicts that Architectura will clarify the confusion of previous architectural writings on the Orders. Moreover, Architectura consistently includes a chapter of designs for each Order. By organizing his book in this way, Dietterlin locates it alongside the growing number of books about the Orders and, consequently, encourages comparison with these other published writings. Like these books, he begins each chapter with a description of the Order’s origins and proportions. Then, as do other authors, such as Hans Vredeman de Vries and Sebastiano Serlio, he moves to designs that incorporate the Order, such as doors and chimneypieces. Thus, all of Dietterlin’s readers would both be able to compare his illustrations with those of other contemporaneous books and have the same engravings with which to accomplish those comparisons.
At the same time, however, Dietterlin also presents his readers with the problem of how *Architectura*, in fact, relates to these other books since he expanded both the content and format of a book on the Orders. Alongside the usual designs for doors, windows, and chimneypieces are also incorporated fountains and tombs. Likewise, he shows the greater complexity of designs for the Ionic, Corinthian, and Composite differently than do most authors. Customarily, for instance, a Corinthian window might have more intricate curves or carved detailing than its Tuscan counterpart. Dietterlin’s window designs, on the other hand, move from entire windows in the Tuscan and Doric chapters to single elements of a window surround, such as Caryatid figures, in the Ionic, Corinthian, and Composite. Consequently, a reader could compare *Architectura* with other books on the Orders but would also realize that Dietterlin was expanding both the designs of an Order and the role of the illustration in conveying those designs.

However, readers’ interpretation of *Architectura* would depend largely on their own individual questions. Unlike most sixteenth-century printed architectural books, *Architectura* does not contain a passage of text for each illustration. Instead, Dietterlin included only two pages of text at the beginning of each chapter; the first page describes the Order’s origins according to Vitruvius and the second sets out the Order’s proportions. Consequently, his readers needed to construct their own texts for the subsequent designs of doors, windows, chimneypieces, fountains, and tombs.

Even within his engravings, Dietterlin suggests multiple interpretations to his readers; potentially, the engravings could simultaneously be architectural designs, theatrical backdrops, or ways of organizing types of ornament for an Order. In his design of a Doric portal, for instance, he suggests that the column shafts into cannons. In this light, Dietterlin’s portal is not a structure itself to be built but rather the framework on paper for displaying diverse types of Doric ornament.
The illustrations of other architectural books, however, appear to present designs to be built; rather than ongoing scenes or ornament, they clearly emphasize relationships among structural elements. For instance, in his *Regole generali dell’architettura*, Sebastiano Serlio centers his designs on the page and places narrative details in the margins. The engraving of a Doric façade shows the prow of a Venetian gondola barely visible at the left-hand corner of the palace (figure 2). Moreover, within the façade itself, Serlio clearly displays the relationships of openings to walls by isolating ornament to the area above the windows. Not only are there consequently few details to obscure the arched openings, but there is little gradation of shading to diminish the sharp contrast between dark opening and white wall. In Dietterlin’s Doric portal, on the other hand, the profusion of ornament created a web of hatch marks that blurred the outlines of the portal. Dietterlin, therefore, appears to emphasize precisely what Serlio and other authors gave less attention to — the events occurring around the structure and ornament.

Yet, although Dietterlin’s emphasis differed, he used similar, and thus easily recognizable, techniques to convey his ideas clearly to his readers. Not only did he center the gentleman, as façades were centered in Serlio’s book, but he compared types of ornament with the familiar approach of juxtaposing two designs on a page. Frequently, like the façade designs in Hans Vredeman de Vries’s *Architectura* of 1583, the two designs being compared were separated by a white margin to make the comparison of differently proportioned designs more apparent (figure 3). In his engraving, Dietterlin varies the left-hand and
right-hand sides within the portal — for instance, the differing arrangements of armor from the right to left bays and the oval window or arched niche above the door. At the same time, however, he incorporates these contrasts into a single portal; no white margin separates the left and right sides. As a result, he appears to compare not two Doric portals but rather different ways of articulating details within a Doric portal.

The sixteenth-century conceptions of the Orders as well as of the illustration admitted, and even encouraged, the multiple and unusual interpretations suggested by Dietterlin’s engravings. Both Dietterlin and other writers implicitly considered the Orders as catalysts rather than prescriptive rules — whether for building designs or, in Dietterlin’s case, for varieties of ornament. Literally, the Orders were the genesis of a building’s design and use; according to Vitruvius, a column’s diameter governed the proportions, while the Order’s origins determined the deity on whose temple it was appropriate to use the column.12 Sixteenth-century authors, in turn, incorporated this notion into their books on the Orders by explicitly inviting readers to consider the book only an initial point in their own thinking about architecture.13 For instance, John Shute entitled his book The First and Chief Groundes of Architecture.14 As the ‘first and chief’ basis for architectural designs, the Orders are not a limited set of rules; instead, Shute provides his readers with fundamental tenets from which they can then develop their own
‘second’ and ‘subordinate’ ideas. In organizing their books around the Orders, therefore, sixteenth-century authors were suggesting principles from which readers could then develop their own associated ideas and designs.

Moreover, the relationship between text and image across printed architectural books required precisely this active interpretation from readers. Consistently, readers needed to insert their own ideas in order to link the separate pieces of information assigned to text and image. At the beginning of *Les trois livres d’architecture*, Jacques Androuet du Cerceau explicitly instructs his readers to derive for themselves the proportions from his engraved illustrations of house and chimneypiece designs. He claims, ‘you will easily know [the proportions] by the compass … you will take the lengths and widths of the building on the said plan or elevation’.15 In the following illustrations, Androuet du Cerceau does not include even a scale to aid his readers in finding the measurements; only in the text accompanying each illustration does he give specific dimensions. As a result, readers can observe with their eye relationships among doors and windows on the façade and among rooms in the plan. However, to gain the further knowledge of dimensions, they must combine text with their own measurements from a compass. Similarly, each text passage also often lists the types of room on each floor, yet the rooms in the engraved plan are unlabelled (figure 4).16 Consequently, readers must use their own knowledge of French houses to pair each space in the engraved plan with a room from the list in the text. While the engraving shows relationships among doors and windows on the

---

15 – ‘… ce que facilement cognoistrez par le compas, … prendrez les longueurs, & largeurs de l’édifice sur ledict plan, ou Ichnographie.’ Androuet du Cerceau, ff. Aiiiir.

façade and among rooms on the plan, the text provides additional descriptive details — precise measurements and the names of rooms.

Within the books organized around the Orders, readers frequently need to close this gap between text and image by constructing the column according to the author’s textual instructions. For instance, in his *Regola delli cinque ordini d’architettura*, Giacomo Barozzi da Vignola shows numerous lines intersecting at his plan of a Corinthian capital but does not explain these lines with the accompanying text (figure 5). Instead, he instructs his reader merely, ‘in the angle marked + put the point of the compass and draw the curve of the abacus’ and concludes that ‘the rest can be easily understood with a little consideration’.17 By executing Vignola’s directions, readers are able to realize that the vertices of the triangle are the endpoints of the compass’s sweep when they trace the outermost line of the capital’s curve. To understand the remaining details, such as the semicircle in the plan, the reader must independently combine knowledge of geometry with further use of the compass. Thus, Vignola clearly expects his readers to analyze his illustration largely with their own knowledge; his text clarifies only the information not apparent from the engraving.

In this context of the Orders and the text–image relationship as catalysts for the reader’s interpretation, Dietterlin’s fantastic engravings do not block but rather invite questions from the reader. Moreover, his limited use of text

---

17 – ‘nel angolo segnato + si ferma la punta del compasso, e tirasi il cavo dell’abaco’, ‘il resto con un poco di considerazione si può facilmente intendere’. Vignola, f. XXVr.
potentially opens up yet further the variety of possible interpretations; both Androuet du Cerceau and Vignola used text to add details that would focus the reader on specific topics — on the types of rooms or on drawing a capital. Without text to guide their interpretation, however, Dietterlin’s readers could approach his illustrations with their own wide-ranging questions. On the one hand, the sheer profusion of detail suggests the engravings as playful improvisations on an Order’s origins. Yet, on the other, Dietterlin carefully structures his engravings to guide the reader’s interpretation; in the Doric portal, he centers the gentleman figure and suggests a comparison between left and right sides of his design. By examining the structure of Dietterlin’s engravings, therefore, readers can open up an even broader range of questions and ideas.

Shaping the book: the varied questions in Dietterlin’s engravings

Throughout Architectura, Dietterlin’s illustrations expand each Order beyond its Vitruvian definition set out in his text. In these expanded definitions, the text provides only the initial information with which Dietterlin’s reader can begin to understand individual pieces of the engraving. His reader must then
turn to the format of the engraving itself in order to understand the broader questions encouraged by Dietterlin.

With the very first engraving of each chapter, Dietterlin begins to suggest alternative interpretations to his text (figure 6). In his text, he presents the proportions and Vitruvian origins of the Order, yet in his illustration, he suggests the development of a column as it moves from a drawing on paper to built form. When considering the engraving alongside Dietterlin’s text, therefore, the reader can understand the proportional diagram at the left of his engraving and the figure column as well as final column at the right. At the beginning of his Corinthian chapter, for instance, Dietterlin describes the Vitruvian myth of how the sculptor Callimachus designed the Corinthian Order after seeing an acanthus plant growing out of a basket on a young girl’s tomb. In his introductory Corinthian engraving, he then shows a young girl supporting on her head a basket with an acanthus plant (figure 6). Moreover, he explicitly connects this girl with the final column by aligning the bottom rim of her basket with the base molding of the capital and her waistband with the upper molding of the ornament on the column’s shaft. In addition, the leafy ornament itself on the shaft and pedestal suggest allusions to the acanthus leaf. As a result, Dietterlin implies how both the forms of the Corinthian column and its type of ornament derive directly from the figure of a girl and the acanthus plant.

It is clear, however, that he also asks a question independent of the

18–Vitruvius, pp. 104–6; Dietterlin, Architectura von Außtheilung, f. 135r.
Corinthian Order’s Vitruvian origins, for the sequence of columns in the engraving directly contradicts his text and he blatantly ignores the central column. According to Vitruvius, and as set out by Dietterlin, the Greeks selected the appropriate human figure and then derived the Order’s proportions. However, Dietterlin’s engraving places the diagram of proportions before the figure of the girl. Even more problematically, his text does not address the half-dotted and half-perspectival column between the diagram and the statue column of the girl. Since Dietterlin centers this column in his illustration, moreover, he suggests that it represents the key to understanding his engraving. Half in the dots of the diagram and half in the shading of the perspectively rendered columns to the right, this column appears to be in a moment of transition from a two-dimensional diagram to a free-standing building element. Its cornice explicitly suggests this development since the upper line of the proportional diagram continues unbroken as first a dotted cornice outline and then the hatched, three-dimensional cornice. By centering the half-dotted and half-perspectival column, therefore, Dietterlin raises the question of how a column moves from drawing to building.

With the group of columns at the right, he then traces out in detail the steps by which the column emerges finally into its built form. Immediately following the transitional central column, the girl in the Vitruvian origin myth appears as a Caryatid figure and signals the shift to three dimensions; like the following columns, she has clearly delineated areas of light and shade. Yet the girl provides only a parenthetical explanation in Dietterlin’s narrative, for Dietterlin recesses both Caryatids behind the planes of the diagram as well as the central and final columns. Not only are the cornice and podium of the second Caryatid stepped back but the skirt of the first Caryatid extends behind the half-dotted, half-perspectival column. As a result, these two statues do not appear as a specific stage in the transition from drawing to building; the human figure explains the shift to three dimensions but an architect would not draw it in designing a building.

Dietterlin makes this shift to a three-dimensional building explicit by tracing out how the Caryatid figure gradually emerges from the plane of the wall into the final column. With the first Caryatid, he explicitly draws a parallel between the wall and the girl’s body. Like the wall, this Caryatid supports the cornice. More literally, however, she appears to grow out of the wall since she faces in the direction of the wall’s plane and occupies a space cut from the wall. The second Caryatid continues to support the cornice but resembles more the final free-standing column. She faces perpendicularly to the wall’s plane and even has legs which she uses to step forward from the wall; her step then stretches the base into a cruciform shape. The final column becomes yet more independent from the wall since the cornice above it projects forward and its white shaft contrasts sharply with the dark hatching on the wall behind. Thus, through his introductory engraving, Dietterlin not only uses specific columns to illustrate his text but explores a question outside his text — the development from drawing to building — through relationships among the columns.

The reader’s analysis of this engraving, however, does not halt with the illustration and its accompanying text alone; instead, Dietterlin suggests further interpretations from comparisons with other engravings within and
beyond the Corinthian chapter. In these comparisons, the reader must assume a yet more active role of interpretation; text is used only when the possible comparison is not immediately apparent. For instance, Dietterlin never alludes to parallels between the introductory engravings of each chapter (figure 7). From the engravings themselves, it is clear that they should be compared as summaries of their respective Orders. Not only are they consistently placed at the front of each chapter but they have similar formats of a proportional diagram, half-dotted and half-perspectival column, and group of perspectivally rendered columns. When the comparison with a subsequent engraving of Corinthian capitals is not swiftly apparent, however, Dietterlin specifically directs his readers to this engraving in his text on proportions (figure 8). In the proportional diagram of the introductory engraving, the circle holding the place of the capital does not suggest that Dietterlin will explore the Corinthian capital’s proportions on a subsequent page. As a result, Dietterlin commands his readers to ‘make the divisions’ in the capital as this subsequent engraving shows. 19 With both of these comparisons, however, Dietterlin again provides only the initial step in the reader’s analysis; he suggests the connection between the engravings, but the reader must then extrapolate what questions are raised by this juxtaposition.

In comparing the Corinthian introductory engraving with those of other Orders, the reader turns specifically to how intricate detail distinguishes the Corinthian from the lower Orders. The introductory engraving of the

---

Tuscan, as the lowest Order in the hierarchy, presents the sharpest contrast to the Corinthian. Here, Dietterlin includes roughly finished stone on the pedestal as well as shaft and places large-scale ornament above the cornice line (see figure 7). The Corinthian engraving, on the other hand, is finely carved to reveal the tiny foliage details and has smaller-scale ornament that is only between the pedestal and cornice. Moreover, the engraving itself has become more complicated: the Corinthian engraving has an additional Caryatid figure, while its Tuscan counterpart has only a single statue column. Thus, through these two illustrations, Dietterlin’s reader can infer how fine, detailed carving and greater complexity of design set the Corinthian off from the lower Orders.

Just as the comparison between introductory engravings thus suggests an additional interpretation of the entire illustration, the Corinthian capitals engraving evokes a further role for the final column (see figure 8). The end of Dietterlin’s narrative about drawing and building, the final column now becomes also a symbol of the wide variety of possible Corinthian designs. In his text, Dietterlin claims that the engraving will show the Corinthian capital’s proportions. However, understanding the capital’s proportions is only the initial step in unraveling Dietterlin’s engraving, for the diagram of proportions occupies merely the left-hand third of the engraving. Five capitals, on the other hand, occupy the other two-thirds. Moreover, these capitals in turn both stand in for a seemingly limitless variety of designs and
suggest the Corinthian capital’s origins. Since the two right-hand capitals extend off the edge of the illustration, readers need to complete them with their own ideas. Consequently, the capitals could vary widely among readers as well as among times when a single reader analyzed the engraving. At the same time, Dietterlin transforms these capitals into steps outlining the eventual profusion of designs. With the horizontal sill, he divides the capitals into two groups — one containing the capital of intertwined vines and its carved counterpart and the other of the three highly carved capitals. The capital of intertwined vines clearly appears a precursor to its stone counterparts; not only is it set back behind a step but it alone is of vines rather than stone. In this light, the capital immediately to the right suggests the transformation to stone. Then, those capitals above the sill display the variety of possible designs; both their carved foliage and volutes differ markedly from each other. The Corinthian capital on the final column of the introductory engraving thus no longer represents a definitive design but instead calls to mind both its origins and possible variations.

By sparking multiple interpretations through his illustrations, Dietterlin not only raises a range of questions about each engraving but, simultaneously, broadens the Vitruvian and sixteenth-century definitions of the Orders. The Composite Order, for instance, he defines according to Vitruvius in his text — as a blend of the Doric, Ionic, and Corinthian Orders. With his engravings, however, he suggests that ‘Composite’ can also describe how his readers would combine two illustrations and how materials as well as Gothic and Classic forms can be intertwined. Other sixteenth-century authors also expanded the Composite Order to include combinations other than the Doric, Ionic, and Corinthian Orders. However, these combinations consistently remained within Classical architecture; for instance, Serlio considered both the superposition of the Orders and then the technique for bonding a stone Classical facing onto a brick building. Dietterlin is unusual, therefore, in defining ‘Composite’ as a way of reading his book and of extending the five Orders beyond Classicism.

His design for a Composite tomb memorial, in particular, suggests this unusually broad definition of ‘Composite’ (figures 9–10). By separating the tomb memorial into two pages and cutting the design across the central scene, Dietterlin encourages his readers to combine the two engravings. Only by superposing the pages can his readers even understand the scene since the figures are cut off at their waists. However, Dietterlin clearly also extends ‘Composite’ beyond a mode of reading to the content of his engraving. By setting the tomb memorial off-center in his engravings, he invites his readers to consider the details of how vines and stone as well as Gothic and Classic forms intertwine. Since the engraving shows only the central and left-hand sections of the memorial, readers focus less on the memorial as a whole than on the resultantly enlarged details. In these details, stone and vines are assigned separate roles yet simultaneously appear inextricably linked together. The stone provides the basic structure for Dietterlin’s memorial, while the vines articulate its more intricate details. For instance, in the arch over the central scene, stone channels guide the vines which then develop into delicate curves. At the same time, however, these vines appear part of the stone since they literally grow out of it; Dietterlin

20 – Dietterlin, Architectura von Außtheilung, f. 176r.
21 – For similar pairs of engravings, see Dietterlin, Architectura von Außtheilung, ff. 187r–188r, 196r–197r.
shows materials bound together only in connecting two pieces of vine. He hints at a similar fluidity between Gothic and Classic forms, for the vines over the central arch emerge from stone volutes to form an ogee arch and then themselves attach to a curved vine that has Classical scroll-like forms at its sides. Thus, through this memorial design, Dietterlin expands the Composite Order to a mode of reading and of articulating relationships among materials as well as Gothic and Classic forms.

More broadly, the Composite chapter suggests how the Orders in Architectura are as much categories for Classical designs as ways of suggesting broader architectural issues. A blend of Doric, Ionic, and Corinthian, for instance, the Composite becomes a chapter for considering mixtures — of architectural illustrations, materials, and Gothic as well as Classic forms. The four other Orders, in contrast, would raise issues appropriate to their particular origins or position in the hierarchy of the Orders.

It is in this light that readers can understand more fully Dietterlin’s Doric portal (see figure 1). Alone among the five Orders, the Tuscan and Doric chapters include engravings with human figures and, consequently, suggest how spaces or structures might be used (figure 11). Here, in this Doric engraving, the gentleman on the threshold implies interior spaces for the elite; he appears to be either entering or leaving what lies behind the portal. Not only are his cloak and feathered hat the expensive clothing of a wealthy man but he gazes directly out at the reader. Such a gaze would be
appropriate to a member of the elite since the reader would either be the
man’s equal, another wealthy individual, or his inferior, a master builder. In
contrast, the man before a portal in the Tuscan Order is clearly a servant
figure; he is clothed simply in shirt and trousers, turns his back to the reader,
and carries a bucket as if he is completing a task. As the two lowest Orders in
the hierarchy, the Tuscan and Doric would be the most appropriate
chapters for discussing the use of space. Like the larger scale of the ornament
in their designs, the arrangement and use of spaces involve broader
questions about a building because they would affect the configuration of the
entire structure; in contrast, the intertwined materials and forms of the
Composite Order would then provide the details to articulate the building.
At the same time, since the Tuscan is below the Doric, it could be used to
consider the less ornate and often literally lower service spaces — in the
basement beneath the ground floor. In this way, through his highly detailed
engravings and limited text, Dietterlin’s readers can evoke multiple
interpretations which, in turn, expand the Orders into catalysts for designs
as well as discussions of broader architectural questions.

Shaping the building: Architectura, the patron, and the master
builder
While Architectura would thus easily ignite conversations in a patron’s library,
it is at first unclear how patrons and master builders could use its engravings
to design buildings. Consistently, Dietterlin suggests only vague proportional relationships. His illustration of a Doric portal, for instance, does not show how the volutes in the pediment relate to the inscription plaque and the pediment’s molding (figure 12). On the one hand, the plaque is recessed behind the pediment molding since the edges of the molding are visible on either side of the plaque. At the same time, however, the volutes ambiguously are attached to this plaque and extend out to the plane of the upper pediment molding; only the shading at the base of the left-hand volute suggests how far the volute might project forward. More generally, the hatching to suggest shadows often obscures edges and, therefore, the relationships among various elements. In particular, the shadows cast by the columns hide the innermost edge of the left-hand shaft and the outermost edge of the right-hand shaft. As a result, a reader would have difficulty in measuring both the diameter of the column and the distance to the inner or outer edge of the portal. With his shading, Dietterlin invites his readers to consider the portal in three dimensions but does not provide precise proportional relationships.

The more usual technique of orthogonal projection and limited shading, however, appears to suggest exact proportions and, therefore, to present clearly viable building designs.23 From Andrea Palladio’s woodcut of the Pantheon in I quattro libri, a reader could easily measure the relationships between the upper and lower pediments (figure 13). Not only does the

---

orthogonal projection avoid the complexities of projection and recession, but Palladio has rendered the elements even clearer through his more limited and regular use of hatching. The hatch marks are lighter than those used by Dietterlin and the lines do not occur at irregular, varying angles. For instance, in depicting shadow on the door itself, Dietterlin uses a mix of diagonal lines slanted to the right and left together with stippling. To show the shadow in the right-hand arch of the Pantheon, in contrast, Palladio employs first carefully gridded horizontal and vertical lines and then a series


of vertical lines. Consequently, he appears both to show proportional relationships more clearly than Dietterlin and, in addition, to suggest precisely delineated recessed areas.

However, like Dietterlin’s engraving, orthogonal projection complicates the connection between illustration and building. Palladio’s woodcut distorts the relationship between the Pantheon’s two pediments and, in so doing, produces an alternative interpretation for patrons and their master builders. In the Pantheon itself, the lower pediment covers a free-standing portico, and the upper one is merely traced out in raised bricks on the building’s façade. Palladio’s woodcut, however, implies that the two pediments are on the same plane, with one slightly higher than the other. Consequently, he presented patrons and master builders with the choice of returning to the original appearance of the Pantheon or of using his superimposed pediments. For the façade for Il Redentore in Venice, Palladio himself used his illustration (figure 14). Just as the two pediments in the Pantheon woodcut overlap slightly, Palladio suggests that the pediment over the entrance of the Redentore covers a wider pediment behind. The front pediment projects forwards only slightly, and the corners of the potential second pediment are visible on either side of it. Consequently, Palladio transferred to the façade not simply the information on the woodcut, the two pediments, but also the way of thinking about relationships among architectural elements on the printed page. In this way, an

24 – I am grateful to Christy Anderson for pointing out this discrepancy and its connection to the Redentore façade. For an analysis of how orthogonal projection opened up new interpretations for Palladio in designing buildings, see Howard Burns, ‘The Lion’s Claw: Palladio’s Initial Project Sketches’, *Daidalos*, 5 (1982), pp. 73–80.
Illustration in orthogonal projection is not solely a diagram to be applied to a building; instead, it opens up a rethinking of ways of designing buildings.

It is precisely this role of raising questions rather than prescribing answers that Dietterlin’s engravings assume for patrons and their architects. Designing a gate at the English country house of Wentworth Woodhouse, for instance, Sir Thomas Wentworth and his master builder explored the issue of projection and recession suggested by Dietterlin’s Doric portal design (figure 15). Not only did they experiment with the ambiguous pediment but they transformed the question of what projects or recedes into the dominant theme for most changes to the portal. In the pediment of the gate, the hole in the volute is no longer a shadowed circle but instead a light ring of stone at the end of a projecting cylindrical form. Similarly, Wentworth and his builder shifted the plaque from a projecting to a recessed panel. Beyond the pediment area, however, they changed the projection of the columns framing the entrance by using rectangular piers rather than round shafts. In addition, they altered smaller details, adding medallions to the wall outside the piers and filling the hollow diamond shapes with smaller diamonds of stone. For Sir Thomas Wentworth and his master builder; therefore, the ambiguous projections and recessions of Dietterlin’s engraving became an opportunity to experiment with light and shadow across the gate.

The text and image of sixteenth-century printed architectural books together suggest multiple interpretations of the information presented and diverse approaches to designing buildings. When pairing the image with a
passage of text, authors direct the readers’ attention to specific details but then, in their illustration, hint at further information which readers must extrapolate. For instance, Vignola’s readers can use his text to focus on particular proportions and steps for drawing each Order; from his illustration, they then calculate further measurements or derive additional stages in constructing a capital. Readers of Dietterlin’s _Architectura_ also needed to execute additional analysis yet did so by exploring a variety of topics, from the Order’s origins to the use of interior spaces. Patrons and master builders in their turn explored the possibilities raised by the image and its disjunction with the three-dimensional building, whether in the implicit contradictions of orthogonal projection or in Dietterlin’s more overtly ambiguous engravings. Thus, by inviting the reader’s own interpretations, text and image opened up a highly fluid understanding of both the printed architectural book and its role in building practice.