

On sixteenth-century copies of the reliefs from the Column of Trajan – Two new drawings from an unknown rotulus

Volker Heenes

Editing and peer review managed by:

Susanne Kubersky-Piredda, Bibliotheca Hertziana, Max-Planck-Institut für Kunstgeschichte, Rome

Reviewers:

Ingo Herklotz, Arnold Nesselrath

Abstract

This article presents two recently discovered drawings of the reliefs on the Trajan's column. To put them in their proper artistic context, the drawings are compared to known examples of such reproductions of the sixteenth century. Current research questions the attribution of codex ms. 254 in the Biblioteca dell'Istituto Nazionale di Archeologia e Storia dell'Arte in Rome to Jacopo Ripanda. The two series with representations of the column's entire frieze preserved in the Biblioteca (mss. 254 and 320) are therefore considered as two different strings of transmission of a yet to be identified original, from which derive all other drawings of the reliefs on the Trajan's Column. Research directed at the contextualisation of the newly published drawings has confirmed this view. The drawings belong without doubt to one of the two strings of transmission. In addition, an archaeological examination of representational details of this depiction has resulted in the suggestion of a new date for the rotuli from a private collection in Paris.

Contents

Introduction

New drawings

The second strand of tradition

Conclusion

Introduction

[1] Single reliefs from Trajan's Column have attracted scholarly interest from as early as the mid-fifteenth century onwards: Filarete had studied some of the reliefs on the column in some detail and mentioned this fact in his *Trattato d'architettura*;¹ drawings after the reliefs are known in six exemplars now at Chatsworth.² Other drawings dated to the beginning of the sixteenth century are preserved as part of Amico Aspertini's *Codex Wolfegg* and in the *Codex Escorialensis*.³ None of these copies, however, depicts a part of the relief located above the first few spirals.⁴

¹ Giovanni Agosti and Vincenzo Farinella, "Nuove ricerche sulla Colonna Traiana nel Rinascimento," in: Salvatore Settis, ed., *La Colonna Traiana*, Turin 1988, 550-552.

² Michael Jaffé, *The Devonshire Collection of Italian Drawings. Tuscan and Umbrian Schools*, London 1994, 160-161.

³ For a survey of the fifteenth- and sixteenth-century drawings preserved see: Phyllis Pray Bober and Ruth Rubinstein, *Renaissance Artists and Antique Sculpture*, 2nd ed., London 2010, 208-210. A short survey up to the nineteenth century can be found in: Agosti and Farinella, "Nuove ricerche," 590-597; more detailed Giovanni Agosti and Vincenzo Farinella, "Il fregio della Colonna Traiana. Avvio ad un registro della fortuna visiva," in: *Annali della Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa: Classe di Lettere e Filosofia*, ser. 3, 15 (1985), 1103-1150. A schematic if incomplete representation with questionable traditions is offered in Vincenzo Farinella, *Archeologia e pittura a Roma tra Quattrocento e Cinquecento. Il caso di Jacopo Ripanda*, Turin 1992, 128.

⁴ Agosti and Farinella, "Nuove ricerche," 552.

[2] The first artist to have copied the entire frieze of the Column of Trajan was Jacopo Ripanda in c.1505, who abseiled from the column whilst sitting in a basket in order to copy the reliefs in their entirety. These drawings are allegedly preserved in the so-called *Codice Ripanda* (codex ms. 254, Biblioteca dell'Istituto Nazionale di Archeologia e Storia dell'arte, Palazzo Venezia, Rome) and can be dated to the first half of the sixteenth century.⁵

[3] Recent research,⁶ however, contradicts the attribution of the drawings in this codex to Ripanda and, therefore, makes the traditional interpretation, according to which all other drawings depend on these as model, a rather unlikely one. The codex has been dated to the first two decades of the sixteenth century – i.e. to the pontificate of Julius II – and is considered the product of the workshop of either Raphael or Ripanda. The two sequences at Palazzo Venezia – apart from codex ms. 254 another codex, ms. 320 also offers a copy of the entire frieze in three rotuli – are supposed to represent two different strands of tradition: while the first is regarded as the work of an unknown northern Italian draughtsman and is now dated to the second quarter of the sixteenth century, the second has been attributed to an anonymous Italian draughtsman active during the middle of the sixteenth century.

[4] In addition to these two series of copies, nine further complete depictions of the frieze are known today.⁷ Such quantity attests to an increased demand for copies of the complete frieze during the course of the sixteenth century.⁸ Drawings of the Column of

⁵ Maria Grazia Pasqualitti, "La Colonna Traiana e i disegni rinascimentali della B.I.A.S.A.," in: *Accademie e Biblioteche d'Italia* 46 (1978), 157-201. The attribution to Ripanda goes back to Roberto Paribeni, "La Colonna Traiana in un codice del Rinascimento," in: *Rivista dell'Istituto di Archeologia e Storia dell'Arte* 1 (1929), 9-28; it is based on several inscriptions on the first page of the parchment volume written in Bolognese dialect, i.e. the Italian spoken in Ripanda's home region. The fact that the original pagination of the sheets goes against the reading order as well as the sequence of the drawings, is regarded as additional proof that the drawings were created by Ripanda for he abseiled from the top and, therefore, drew the scenes downwards contrary to the order of the narrative; Francesca Zannoni, "Jacopo Ripanda (attribuito) e sua cerchia (prima metà del XVI secolo), Disegni del fregio della Colonna Traiana," in: Maria Grazia Bernadini and Marco Bussagli, eds., *Il '400 a Roma: la rinascita delle arti da Donatello a Perugino*, exh. cat. Rome 2008, vol. II, 175 No. 26.

⁶ Arnold Nesselrath, "XVI secolo, rilievo e fregio della Colonna Traiana," in: Maria Cristina Misti and Simonetta Prosperi Valenti Rodinò, eds., *Le meraviglie di Roma antica e moderna*, exh. cat. Rome 2010, 35-36.

⁷ These are, according to Nesselrath, "XVI secolo," 32-33, the following eight: twelve drawings in the Galleria Estense at Modena (inv. 8129-39); the rotulus, bound to a codex, now at the Österreichische Nationalbibliothek at Vienna (inv. Cod. 9410); the codex at the Royal Library, Windsor (inv. 7786-7917); 31 drawings, distributed over two rotuli at a private collection, Paris (incomplete); drawings mounted as a frieze at the Sir John Soane's Museum, London (Lynda Fairbain, *Italian Renaissance Drawings from the Collection of Sir John Soane's Museum*, London 1998, nn. 372-487); an album from a private collection discovered in 2006 (Nesselrath, "XVI secolo," 33 and Fig. 1a); a codex in the library of the Escorial (inv. 28-II-15); and, finally, the copper engravings published in Alfons Chacon's *Historia utriusque belli Dacici a Traiano Caesare gesti, ex simulachris quae in columna visuntur collecta* (Rome, 1576). In addition there is another rotulus from a Roman private collection which has remained unpublished so far; Pasqualitti, "La Colonna Traiana," 200, note 41; Farinella, *Archeologia e pittura*, 130, note 25.

⁸ Nesselrath, "XVI secolo," 32.

Trajan after the copies made originally by Ripanda obviously constituted a must-have coveted by the antiquarian libraries of the time.⁹ Artists needed them to give their own creative reconstructions of Classical Antiquity a higher degree of historical authenticity.¹⁰ The earliest archaeological publication to make extensive use of the representations on the reliefs of the Column of Trajan was the work by Guillaume Du Choul: *Discours sur la castramétation et discipline militaire des romaines* (Lyon, 1557). 25 woodcuts illustrate the book, providing visual evidence on arms and weapons as well as on the equipment of the Roman army which had up to this point only been known from written sources. The reproductions are, however, very imprecise and contain numerous deviations from the original model,¹¹ never referred to by Du Choul.¹² The first publication to rely mainly on the monument itself as the visual source rather than on written texts was the series of copper engravings published in 1576 by Alfons Chacon in Rome under the title of *Historia utriusque belli Dacici a Traiano Caesare gesti, ex simulachris quae in columna eiusdem Romae visuntur collecta*.¹³ Its publication fulfilled a widespread demand. The dominant interest in the column was directed less at the history or at the development of the Dacian Wars rather than at details of military history such as military action, arms and armour,¹⁴ and – more in general – at the ancient rites and customs as explained by Chacon in his foreword.¹⁵ Accordingly, Cassiano dal Pozzo in the seventeenth century still possessed a rotulus with the frieze of Trajan's Column.¹⁶ In 1643 he even managed to persuade his employer, Cardinal Francesco Barberini, to have scaffolding erected in order to have the painter and draughtsman Francesco Refini execute the long-awaited illustrations of the column of Marcus Aurelius.¹⁷

[<top>](#)

New drawings

[5] Two new drawings (Figs. 1-2) have recently come to my attention, which had been acquired c.1970 at a small auction in Franconia. The measurements of the two parchment sheets are c.30 x 56 cm, brown ink, grey wash, with traces of glue on both margins. On

⁹ Ingo Herklotz, *Cassiano dal Pozzo und die Archäologie des 17. Jahrhunderts*, München 1999, 222-223 is referring to "Desideraten der altertumswissenschaftlichen Bibliotheken."

¹⁰ Ingo Herklotz, "Bellori, Fabretti e la Colonna Traiana," in: Ingo Herklotz, ed., *Cultura e erudizione tra Cinquecento e Settecento* (= Studi sulla cultura dell' antico 8), Rome 2012, 157.

¹¹ Herklotz, "Bellori, Fabretti," 157.

¹² Volker Heenes, *Antike in Bildern. Illustrationen in antiquarischen Werken des 16. und 17. Jahrhunderts* (= Stendaler Winckelmann-Forschungen 1), Stendal 2003, 137.

¹³ Herklotz, "Bellori, Fabretti," 158.

¹⁴ Herklotz, *Cassiano dal Pozzo*, 222-223.

¹⁵ Heenes, *Antike in Bildern*, 135. On Chacon's methodology, details of his interpretation as well as misunderstandings, see Herklotz, "Bellori, Fabretti," 160-161.

¹⁶ Herklotz, *Cassiano dal Pozzo*, 222-223.

¹⁷ Herklotz, *Cassiano dal Pozzo*, 63 and 148. These drawings are today at the Royal Library, Windsor (RL 8151-8180) and are being published by Eloisa Doderò within the Cassiano dal Pozzo Project as Part A.III (Sarcophagi and other Reliefs) of the *Paper Museum catalogue raisonné series*.

the first sheet (Fig. 1) the number "8" is written on the bottom right in black ink; on the second sheet (Fig. 2) can be found the number "68" on the top left, also written in black ink. Both sheets were obviously mounted together in the form of a rotulus in order to view the sequence of the reliefs. Apparently, once a third sheet existed which continued the sequence after a certain interruption; this sheet is not traceable at present.



1 Anon. Italian draughtsman, *Relief, Trajan's Column: Attack of the Dacians on a Fortified Roman Camp* (Cichorius, *Die Reliefs der Trajanssäule*, scenes XCIII (248) – XCV (252)), mid-/second third of the sixteenth century, brown ink with grey wash on parchment, c.30 x 56 cm, private collection



2 Anon. Italian draughtsman, *Relief, Trajan's Column: Attack of the Dacians on a Double Fortified Wall* (Cichorius, *Die Reliefs der Trajanssäule*, scenes XCV (253) – XCVII (257)), mid-/second third of the sixteenth century, brown ink with grey wash on parchment, c.30 x 55 cm, private collection

[6] Scenes from the second Dacian War (105-106 AD) whose content follows one another in the sequence of the series (Cichorius scenes XCIII (248)-XCVII (257));¹⁸ Settis Figs. 169-175;¹⁹ Coarelli Figs. 112-116²⁰) are represented from the height of the

¹⁸ Conrad Cichorius, *Die Reliefs der Trajanssäule 2. Die Reliefs des zweiten dakischen Krieges*, Berlin 1900.

¹⁹ Settis, *La Colonna Traiana*, 427-433.

²⁰ Filippo Coarelli, *La Colonna Traiana*, Rome 1999, 157-160.

column's fourteenth to fifteenth spiral. The exact spatial division of the episode is under debate, since normally a change of scene is announced by trees which here, however, are missing; instead rocks, a mountain range and walls are visible.²¹ In the first drawing (Fig. 1) eleven Dacians attack a Roman auxiliary camp with two gates.²² The Romans – visible on top of the walls – defend the fort and simultaneously attempt a sortie in order to push back the enemy. The Dacians suffer a defeat. The second drawing (Fig. 2) shows another Dacian attack, aimed at a double wall situated in a gorge surrounded by mountains. Soldiers belonging to an auxiliary cohort²³ defend the wall; above them one can glimpse a bare headed high officer approaching in the company of eight legionaries,²⁴ to inspect a Dacian prisoner. In another fort nearby, situated next to the previous one in a mountain region, a Dacian corps is defending itself against a troop of legionaries coming from the right and attempting to breach the walls with the help of pickaxes (*dolabrae*).²⁵ Further down on the right a group of soldiers wearing tunics (*classarii*)²⁶ is working on the construction of a road through the forest by levelling the ground with the help of pickaxes (not visible in this part of the image). A soldier is mixing lime in a square pit (*mortuarium*).²⁷ Above, the Emperor Trajan is visible on horseback, riding towards the left in the direction of the Dacian fortress under attack and accompanied by four equestrians wearing chainmail (*equites singulares Augusti*, outside this part of the image).²⁸

[7] The material used attests to a dating to the sixteenth century, since parchment was rarely used for drawings in the seventeenth century.²⁹ Therefore, it seems logical to compare the two sheets³⁰ (Figs. 1-2) with the corresponding scenes of the other examples that provide a complete series overview and are known so far.³¹ The

²¹ Frank Lepper and Sheppard Frere, *Trajan's Column*, Gloucester 1988, 144.

²² On what follows see: Gerhard M. Koeppel, "Die historischen Reliefs der römischen Kaiserzeit IX. Der Fries der Trajanssäule in Rom, Teil 2: Der Zweite Dakische Krieg, Szenen LXXIX-CLV," in: *Bonner Jahrbücher* 192 (1992), 75-77.

²³ Regarding the auxiliary cohorts and their equipment as represented on Trajan's Column, see: Danae Richter, *Das römische Heer auf der Trajanssäule*, Ruhpolding 2010, 184-188 and 444.

²⁴ Lepper and Frere, *Trajan's Column*, 144, recognise this as a portrait of Pompeius Longinus, Trajan's general, who was later taken prisoner by the Dacians.

²⁵ For the legionaries' *instrumentarium* see: Richter, *Das römische Heer*, 152-178. Settis, *La Colonna Traiana*, 432, interprets this scene not as a breach of the wall but rather as Roman soldiers defending it with the help of axes. Lepper and Frere, *Trajan's Column*, 145, also interpret the scene as the defence of the camp by the Romans but, nonetheless, point out the difficulties of providing an unambiguous interpretation.

²⁶ Lepper and Frere, *Trajan's Column*, 146. Regarding this army force see Richter, *Das römische Heer*, 444.

²⁷ Lepper and Frere, *Trajan's Column*, 146.

²⁸ In this context see Richter, *Das römische Heer*, 339-342.

²⁹ I wish to thank Ingo Herklotz and Jörg Martin Merz for this information.

³⁰ Based on the records from the estate of Stefan Wildt.

³¹ As far as the copies mentioned in note 7 are concerned, I failed to gain access to the drawings from a private collection (Nesselrath, "XVI secolo," 33 with Fig. 1a), nor was I able to consult the rotulus from a private collection in Rome; the drawings of the codex in the library of the Escorial (inv. 28-II-15) do not go beyond the sixth spiral of the column (end of the first campaign against

comparison confirms the divergence of two strands of tradition documented by the two codices at Palazzo Venezia (ms. 254 und ms. 320), ascertained by recent research.³² The two new sheets correspond well with ms. 254 (Figs. 3-4)³³ in terms of material and measurements (ca. 29.5 cm x 56.5 to 57 cm), as well as in the distribution of the relief scenes (image margins) and motifs. Moreover, these drawings also give the impression that they were executed with the help of ruler and compass, as has been ascertained for codex ms. 254,³⁴ for example as regards the walls of the camps and fortresses. The joints in the walls of the middle fortress were – in contrast to ms. 254 – corrected on subsequent occasion, as can be clearly seen in the parchment's primer coat: originally they were depicted obliquely and only in a second moment corrected to an upright position. The size of the window openings behind the emperor approaching on horseback (Fig. 2) were also corrected,³⁵ which can be interpreted as a clue in favour of critical revision by an expert. Such editing had in principle already been postulated for the above-mentioned codex.³⁶



3 Anon. Northern-Italian draughtsman, *Relief, Trajan's Column* (Cichorius, *Die Reliefs der Trajanssäule*, scenes XCIII (248) – XCV (252)), second quarter sixteenth century, pen drawing with brown wash on parchment, c.27 x 59 cm, Bibliotheca dell' Istituto Nazionale di Archeologia e Storia dell' arte, Rome, ms. 254 c. 70r., ©B.I.A.S.A.

the Dacians). Since the scenes depicted in the drawings newly published in the present article are situated at the height of the fourteenth and fifteenth spiral (Cichorius, *Die Reliefs der Trajanssäule*, scenes XCIII [248]-XCVII [257]; Settis, *La Colonna Traiana*, pls. 169-176, Coarelli, *La Colonna Traiana*, pls. 112-116), the drawings of the fifteenth and sixteenth century will also remain excluded from this discussion.

³² Nesselrath, "XVI secolo," 35-36.

³³ Bibliotheca dell'Istituto Nazionale di Archeologia e Storia dell'Arte Ms. 254 c. 70r; Ms. 254 c. 71v. Pasqualitti, B.I.A.S.A., 179 Ms. 254 c. 34r; 180 Ms. 254 c. 34v.

³⁴ Nesselrath, "XVI secolo," 36.

³⁵ This type of correction of the window opening cannot be found on any other copy. Usually, the opening is only hinted at (e.g. in the Vienna codex, in the drawings at the Sir John Soane's Museum, London, in the Codex Windsor) or is completely missing (ms. 320, private collection, Paris, Muziano).

³⁶ Nesselrath, "XVI secolo," 36.



4 Anon. Northern-Italian draughtsman, *Relief, Trajan's Column* (Cichorius, *Die Reliefs der Trajanssäule*, scenes XCV (253) – XCVII (257)), second quarter sixteenth century, pen drawing with brown wash on parchment, c.27 x 59 cm, Bibliotheca dell' Istituto Nazionale di Archeologia e Storia dell' arte, Rome, ms. 254 c. 71v., ©B.I.A.S.A.

[8] By contrast, the kind of parallel hatchings and shadings typical for the newly-discovered drawings can hardly be found in the codex of Palazzo Venezia. In the new drawings the figures are executed more softly, less three-dimensional and differentiated than in ms. 254; the draughtsman gave weight and body to the figures and managed to stagger the area views by a more generous application of wash.

[9] In sum, the similarities are so far-reaching that one might well postulate the same model for both series. It is not possible to prove a dependency from one on the other, though. Therefore, it is possible to suppose a similar date as for codex ms. 254. Given that no comparable data can be found on the new drawings, which would allow for a regionally limited placement of the draughtsman as happened in the case of ms. 254,³⁷ it is impossible to attribute the drawings with any greater geographical precision than to a draughtsman from the Italian peninsula.

[10] The drawings from the Sir John Soane's Museum (vol. 113, fols. 74-75) belong to this group of rotuli as well;³⁸ here the picture frames have been slightly moved to the right. What the drawings have in common is, firstly, that emblems are visible on all the shields rendered in frontal view; they were illustrated in this way almost in their entirety later on in the publication created after a new recording of the frieze undertaken by Giovanni Pietro Bellori;³⁹ secondly, that the weapons of the warriors are the same; and,

³⁷ Nesselrath, "XVI secolo," 36.

³⁸ The drawings at the Sir John Soane's Museum were originally glued together and were only subsequently bound into a volume during the nineteenth century; Nesselrath, "XVI secolo," 33.

³⁹ Giovanni Pietro Bellori, *Colonna Traiana, eretta da Senato e Popolo Romano all' Imperatore Traiano Augusto nel suo foro in Roma. Scolpita con l'histoire della guerra dacica, la prima e la seconda espeditione, e vittoria contro il re Decebalò. Nuovamente disegnata et intagliata da Pietro Santi Bartoli con l'espositione latina d' Alfonso Ciaccone, compendiata nella vulgare lingua sotto ciascuna immagine accresciuta di medaglie, inscrittioni e trofei da Gio. Pietro Bellori*, Rome 1672, pls. 70-73: <http://bellori.sns.it/cgi-bin/bellori//blrCGI?cmd=18&v=ct070.jpg>; <http://bellori.sns.it/cgi-bin/bellori//blrCGI?cmd=18&v=ct071.jpg>; <http://bellori.sns.it/cgi-bin/bellori//blrCGI?cmd=18&v=ct072.jpg>; <http://bellori.sns.it/cgi-bin/bellori//blrCGI?cmd=18&v=ct073.jpg>. On pl. 71 the shield of the second soldier on the circular wall – next to the

thirdly, that all drawings show a legionary on the right (Figs. 2 and 4r), who is trying to breach the wall of the Dacian fortress together with a fellow soldier. The pickaxes they originally held are, however, missing from the hands clasped together over their heads.

[11] By virtue of these attributions, an extension of the tradition of Ripanda's copies documented by codex ms. 254 might be postulated to include one further rotulus.⁴⁰

[<top>](#)

The second strand of tradition

[12] The second strand of tradition, confirmed by recent research as regards ms. 320,⁴¹ concerns the codex at the Royal Library in Windsor,⁴² the codex at the Österreichische Nationalbibliothek (Vienna),⁴³ the drawings at the Galleria Estense in Modena,⁴⁴ as well as the copper engravings by Girolamo Muziano.⁴⁵ They all share the distribution of diverse scenes as well as particular motifs; moreover, in all of these cases the emblems are missing from three shields in the battle scene in front of the curving fortification wall. They also reconstruct a heavy club in the raised right arm of a soldier standing in front of the wall turned to the right, even though in the original relief a sword is visible.⁴⁶ Furthermore, in the case of a legionary, fighting towards the left in front of the auxiliary cohort which is about to arrive, a sword is added, although it is not depicted on the column.⁴⁷ There, the soldier holds a stone in his hand. Another legionary on the right

window – bears shield emblem no. 84 rather than no. 11; Richter, *Das römische Heer*, 270-273. On Bellori's work see: Massimo Pomponi, "La colonna Traiana nelle incisioni di P. S. Bartoli: contributi allo studio del monumento nel XVII secolo", in: *Rivista dell'Istituto nazionale d'archeologia e storia dell'arte* 14/15 (1991/1992), 347-377; most recently Herklotz, "Bellori, Fabretti," 161-164.

⁴⁰ In my view the drawings of ms. 254 were also originally mounted as a rotulus. Nesselrath, "XVI secolo," 36 to the contrary regards the representations of the reliefs in volume ms. 254 as a sequence of double pages and therefore devised as a codex. In my view there is no foundation for such an assumption. If this volume had been planned as a sequence of double pages, the pagination would have been marked accordingly, i.e. it would not have been numbered contrary to the reading order (Zannoni, "Jacopo Ripanda," 175, no. 26), but in accordance with it. Moreover, such a procedure would be rather unique, for all the other tradition strands, as listed in note 7, were composed as rotuli and only in some cases later bound to a codex, as happened for example to the codex in Vienna, to the drawings at the Sir John Soane's Museum or to the codex in Windsor, in the case of which the later binding resulted in the partial loss of figures: in the case of RL 7871 and RL 7872 some parts of the second and third legionary trying to breach the walls of the Dacian fortress with pickaxes are missing.

⁴¹ Nesselrath, "XVI secolo," 35-36.

⁴² RL Inv.nr 7870-7872.

⁴³ Cod. 9410 cc. 43r-44r.

⁴⁴ Inv. 8128-39.

⁴⁵ Chacon, *Historia utriusque*, pl. 83-85. Since this depiction did not include the column's base – this was only excavated under Pope Paul II in 1540 – Muziano must have based his work on a previously existing model; Matthias Winner, *Zeichner sehen die Antike*, Berlin 1967, 71. On the genesis of Muziano's work see most recently P. Tosini, *Girolamo Muziano 1532-1592. Dalla Maniera alla Natura*, Rom 2008, 200.

⁴⁶ The depiction of this detail in the drawings connected to ms. 254 is unclear. It is possible to recognise little more than an oblong object, which, however, is unlikely to represent a club.

⁴⁷ Some of the warriors' weapons were made of metal and added to the frieze; the material turned brittle over time, see Gerhard M. Koeppl, "Die historischen Reliefs der römischen Kaiserzeit VIII. der Fries der Trajanssäule in Rom, Teil 1: Der Erste Dakische Krieg, Szenen i-LXXVIII," in: *Bonner*

behind the Dacian fortifications is represented on all the drawings of this strand with a stone grasped in a hand raised above the head, even though he holds an axe on the column's relief.⁴⁸ On the rotulus ms. 320 as well as on the codex in Windsor the breach of the wall in front of the arriving officer of the auxiliary cohort is missing, so that in this case there is proof of a direct connection, i.e. the codex in Windsor as well as ms. 320 are in all likelihood copies of the same model.

[13] The representations on the rotuli from the private collection in Paris,⁴⁹ however, contain some details which are significantly different from the other copies.⁵⁰ They – differently from ms. 254 – show only a round *umbo* in the centre as the emblem on the three shields in the battle scene raging in front of the curved fortification wall, whereas in ms. 320 shield emblems are altogether missing. Moreover, the Paris series depicts – as the only exemplar of this tradition – a soldier in the fortification between the first two walls who grabs with his hand a Dacian by the head as if he wished to present him to the legate arriving at the scene.⁵¹ On all the other drawings it is impossible to attribute this arm to a particular figure; it seems to be floating freely in mid-air. Only in the case of Bellori's version this soldier is also included.⁵² In addition, the copies from Paris correctly depict the curved sabre in the raised right hand of a Dacian fighting between the second and third wall; this detail is missing from all the other versions with the exception of Bellori's.⁵³ For the legionary standing further in the back of the pictorial plain the draughtsman of the codex reconstructed a club in the raised right hand which is missing from all the other versions – including Bellori's – as well as from the original. Finally, the drawings in the Paris rotuli represent two crescent moon pendants hanging from the harness of the imperial horse⁵⁴ – a detail not to be found in any of the other codices which depict only one such pendant.

[14] The above-mentioned differences on the drawings from the codex in Paris, may seem – in the light of artistic licence – very slight; these drawings nonetheless represent

Jahrbücher 191 (1991), cat. no. 13, 24, 25, 32, 40. In the case of the new drawings, the weapons are missing from the following scenes: Koeppel, "Die historischen Reliefs ..., Teil 2: Der Zweite Dakische Krieg," cat. no. 94, 95, 96.

⁴⁸ In the depictions of the copies of the first strand of tradition the hands of this soldier are empty.

⁴⁹ Catherine Monbeig Goguel, "Dal marmo alla carta. Dalla spirale verticale al rotolo orrizzontale," in: *Caesar triumphans*, exh. cat. Florence 1984, 29-30.

⁵⁰ Farinella, *Archeologia e pittura*, 131, n. 29 already labelled this an "atypisches Werk" [atypical work]: For example, scenes are grouped differently and one scene is depicted as mirroring its original version.

⁵¹ This interpretation of the scene is offered in Settis, *La Colonna Traiana*, 430. On the drawing of this scene at the Galleria Estense in Modena a round object – perhaps a helmet, but no face – can be recognised.

⁵² Bellori, *Colonna Traiana*, pl. 72.

⁵³ Bellori, *Colonna Traiana*, pl. 72

⁵⁴ Bellori, *Colonna Traiana*, pl. 73. On the horse's harness on Trajan's Column see Richter, *Das römische Heer*, 222-241.

every detail correctly at a level of accuracy not to be found again until the later copy executed by Bellori in 1672. A detailed comparison of this codex with Bellori's engravings ought to be able to clarify whether its present dating and attribution can be confirmed or whether a creation during the last quarter of the seventeenth century / at the beginning of the eighteenth century is more likely, and thus while the power of King Louis XIV was at its highest point. The material used – cream-coloured paper⁵⁵ – also seems to point at a creation date during the seventeenth century.⁵⁶ The collector's stamp on the back of one of two old canvases onto which the drawings had been transferred, represents three lilies crowned by an open crown, a device which can be connected to the duke of Orleans, brother of Louis XIV, also to be found on tapestry created after a drawing by Charles Lebrun, the outfitter of Versailles.⁵⁷ It is known that Louis XIV adopted the persona of a "Trajan of France" as part of his royal imagery.⁵⁸

[15] Moreover, the traditional attribution of this codex to Giulio Romano is being questioned by recent research.⁵⁹ Nonetheless, it seems rather doubtful that a third strand of tradition needs to be added to the two already recognised. Further research as well as a detailed comparison of the drawings in the Paris codex will in due course provide more precise information regarding its models and, thereby, clarify its chronological context.

[<top>](#)

Conclusion

[16] The drawings published in this article act as additional proof of the exceptionally lively interest in the reliefs of Trajan's Column. Such attention can be traced in France, starting with François I, Louis XIV and Napoleon II, well into the twentieth century.⁶⁰ The editing of the representations in the copies also attest to a wish for accuracy and provides, therefore, proof of the patron's antiquarian interest in the monument. It also allows for a more detailed insight into the practical aspects of the creation and revision of such copies as well as into their documentary aspiration. The drawings, as is still clearly attested by evident traces of glue on the margins, had originally been mounted into a rotulus which could be scrolled down in the order of the relief's sequence. Therefore, they

⁵⁵ Monbeig Goguel, "Dal marmo alla carta," 13.

⁵⁶ As discussed in the text above and in note 29.

⁵⁷ R. Chevallier, "Dessins du XVIIe siècle de la Colonne Trajane dans une collection parisienne," in: *Rendiconti della Pontificia Accademia Romana di Archeologia* 50 (1977-1978), 28-32.

⁵⁸ Agosti and Farinella, "Nuove ricerche," 591.

⁵⁹ Nesselrath, "XVI secolo," 35. Moreover, the comparison between the Vienna codex which has equally been attributed to Giulio Romano (Cod. 9410) and the drawings at Modena (M. Macrea, "Un disegno inedito della Colonna Traiana," in: *Ephemeris Dacoromana. Annuario della Scuola Romana di Roma* 7 (1937), 110) documents considerable differences between the two mss. (see above). The attribution of these two codices to Giulio Romano is, therefore, debated for good reason; Nesselrath, "XVI secolo," 33.

⁶⁰ Nesselrath, "XVI secolo," 36.

are proof of an additional complete sequence of the reliefs on Trajan's Column in the form of a scroll and confirm the two traditions recognised by recent research.⁶¹

[17] It is to be hoped that additional parts of this ensemble will come to light in due course and that they will allow for a more precise historical contextualisation.⁶²

[<top>](#)

⁶¹ Nesselrath, "XVI secolo," 35-36.

⁶² I wish to thank Rhea Alexandratos (London) for comments and suggestions as well as Jens Dolata (Mainz), Andrea Gáldy (Munich/London), Jörg Martin Merz (Münster), Marion Tenbusch und Carel van Tuyll (both based in Paris). My particular thanks go to Arnold Nesselrath (Rome) and his colleagues at the *Census of Antique Works of Art and Architecture known in the Renaissance*, Birte Rubach and in particular Timo Strauch (both based in Berlin), and last but not least to Ingo Herklotz (Marburg).