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The Column of Trajan: the topographical and cultural contexts

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MARTIN GALINIER, *LA COLONNE TRAJANE ET LES FORUM IMPÉRIAUX* (Collection de l'École française de Rome 382, 2007). Pp. 303, pls. 81, figs. 50. ISSN 0223-5099; ISBN 978-2-7283-0775-3. EUR. 73.15.

M. Galinier's study began life as a 1995 doctoral thesis at Université Montpellier III that, taking advantage of subsequently published work,¹ he revised as the present book. Various questions shape his inquiry: Who designed the Column? How did he/they proceed? Since the Column was "un nouvel objet historique", could the Romans understand it? Was it even designed to be comprehensible? How could it have been read? What were its sources? How, if at all, was it linked to the rest of Trajan's Forum? What were its visual links to its imperial neighbors? How did it portray Trajan? Did Trajan's death change the character of its message and that of the Forum?

Galinier begins by reviewing the conclusions of modern scholars of the frieze. Some approach it analytically. For R. Bianchi Bandinelli, it is plebeian, Italic, provincial.² Its creator, the "maestro delle imprese di Traiano" or a talented colleague, also executed the Great Frieze of Trajan, a major example of the Hellenistic style in Rome.³ According to W. Gauer, to realize the designs of Trajan and Apollodorus an art director and a sketch master collaborated with a band of sculptors; organized in specially designed groups on the Column's vertical axes, its scenes illustrate political and historical programs.⁴ V. Farinella reads the scrolls vertically, seeing a symbolic interpretation of imperial propaganda.⁵ S. Settis supposes a design carried out in three stages: Trajan and his *maestro* determined the narrative according the dictates of Trajanic ideology;⁶ a mock-up fixed the design and determined its vertical axes;

1 Some of the more important include:

• G. Martines, "L'architettura," in *Autour de la colonne aurélienne* (2000) 19-88; "Note di tecnica su Apollodoro di Damasco," *Tra Damasco e Roma* (Rome 2001) 20-30; however, Galinier did not apparently use Martines' *Colonna Traiana. Corpus dei disegni 1981-2001* (Rome 2001), two decades of on-site drawings made under Martines's direction for the Soprintendenza Archeologica.

• R. Meneghini (Responsabile dell'Ufficio Fori Imperiali della Sovrintendenza per i BBCC del Comune di Roma), "Preesistenze, cronologia, e significato architettonico dei fori Imperiali," in *I luoghi del consenso imperiale* (Rome 1995) 14-18 (= 1995a); "Ricerche archeologiche nel Foro di Traiano 1991," *ibid.* 120-23 (= 1995b); *Il Foro e i Mercati di Traiano* (Rome 1995) (= 1995c); "Nuovi dati sulle biblioteche e il templum Divi Traiani nel Foro di Traiano," *BollArch* 19-21 (1996) 13-22 (= 1996a); "Templum Divi Traiani," *BullCom* 97 (1996) 47-88 (= 1996b); "L'architettura del Foro di Traiano attraverso i ritrovamenti archeologici più recenti," *RömMitt* 105 (1998) 127-48; "La nuova immagine architettonica del Foro di Traiano," in F. Farina (ed.), *Tra Damasco e Roma. L'architettura di Apollodoro nella cultura classica* (Rome 2001) 48-65 with pls. 8-19 (= 2001a); "Il Foro di Traiano: ricostruzione architettonica e analisi strutturale," *RömMitt* 108 (2001) 245-63 (= 2001b); "Nuovi dati sulla funzione e le fasi costruttive delle 'biblioteche' del foro di Traiano," *MÉFRA* 114 (2002) 655-92.

• J. Packer, *The Forum of Trajan in Rome* (Berkeley, CA 1997); "Templum Divi Traiani Parthici et Plotinae: a debate with R. Meneghini," *JRA* 16 (2003) 108-36.

• L. Ungaro, "Figure di Daci, un puzzle di armi, 'scudi' con ritratti, statue ..." in *I luoghi del consenso imperiale* (Rome 1995) 102-8; "Il foro di Traiano: i recenti restauri e la decorazione architettonico-scultorea con particolare riferimento ai portici laterali della piazza," *ArchLaz* 12 (1995) 151-61;

• M. Milella, "Marmi del foro di Traiano," in *I luoghi del consenso imperiale* (Rome 1995) 99-243.

2 R. Bianchi Bandinelli, *Storicità dell'arte classica* (Florence 1950) 214-23.

3 R. Bianchi Bandinelli (transl. P. Green), *Rome. The centre of power* (London 1970) 249-50.

4 W. Gauer, *Untersuchungen zur Trajanssäule, Teile I: Darstellungsprogramm und künstlerischer Entwurf* (Berlin 1977) 6, 13-25, 45-48, 55-75.

5 V. Farinella, "La colonna Trajana: un esempio di lettura verticale," *Prospettiva* 26 (1981) 2-9.

6 S. Settis, "Umweltproblem des Archäologie am Beispiel der Trajanssäule in Rom," in B. Andreae (ed.), *Archäologie und Gesellschaft* (Stuttgart 1981) 109-31; "La colonne Trajane: invention, composition,

finally, sculptors executed reliefs that Roman observers could never have seen in the order in which Trajan and his *maestro* had conceived them. For P. Veyne, the frieze freely expressed Trajan's grandeur and impressed theoretical viewers with its size and decoration; since, however, it was (and still is) for the most part illegible, it cannot transmit his propaganda.⁷ G.-Ch. Picard tried to harmonize these views by proposing that in antiquity the frieze could have been read, but only on the scrolls in the adjacent libraries.⁸ Focusing specifically on the frieze's style, P. Rockwell interprets the varying height of its spirals as evidence for a freely-organized design that specialists executed by subject: figures, landscape, decorations; only some scenes would have been pre-planned.⁹ Finally, given differences between the architecture of the column and the character of its frieze, A. Claridge and M. Wilson Jones suggest, contrary to Trajanic coins that show the spirals of the frieze on the shaft, that Hadrian, not Trajan installed the frieze.¹⁰

Other scholars have emphasized the frieze's realism and thematic character. S. Reinach, C. Cichorius, and K. Lehmann-Hartleben documented and divided the reliefs into 155 successive panels, some repetitive and stereotypical,¹¹ all apparently form a continuous, realistic historical narrative. Comparing these scenes, S. Stuart-Jones connected them with literary sources and with Roman topography.¹² I. A. Richmond made a study of the military equipment of the Romans.¹³ For G. Hamberg, the frieze's military biography of Trajan emphasized his cardinal virtues.¹⁴ I. S. Ryberg characterized the reliefs as an exceptional collection of traditional motifs,¹⁵ while G.-Ch. Picard saw them as a revival of Augustan *virtus* in Trajan's real and symbolic acts.¹⁶ Accepting the view of O. Brendel, for whom Roman art was based not on style or taste but on content and themes,¹⁷ T. Hölscher explains the frieze's scenes as illustrations of *virtus* and *pietas* that attribute victory in Dacia to the Romans' moral superiority.¹⁸ Thus, for Settis its scenes are *exempla* of Trajanic ideology.¹⁹

For Galinier, these scholarly views establish a modern conceptual framework: Trajan and his advisors (including Apollodorus?), a *maestro* of the frieze(?), a committee of sculptors(?), or all three(?) conceived and organized the reliefs and architecture. Using traditional *exempla* (probably the paintings in triumphs), he or they employed visual styles familiar to both senators and commoners. Several preparatory steps laid out scenes grouped vertically on the sides of the Column. That configuration and the progressive images in the continuous scrolls must have been closely related to the architecture of the Column and its surroundings — but how?

disposition," *AnnESC* 5 (1985) 1151-94; S. Settis, A. La Regina, G. Agosti e V. Farinella, *La colonna Traiana* (Turin 1988) (= 1988a); S. Settis, "Fuga e morte di Decebalo," *Festschrift für Nikolas Himmelmann* (Bonn 1988) 377-83 (= 1988b); "La colonne Traiane," *RA* 1991, 186-98.

7 P. Veyne, "Propagande Expression Roi, Image Idole Oracle," *L'Homme* 114, 30.2 (1990) 7-26; *La société romaine* (Paris 1991) 311-42.

8 G.-Ch. Picard, "L'idéologie de la guerre et ses monuments dans l'Empire romain," *RA* 1992, 133-41.

9 P. Rockwell, "Preliminary study of the carving techniques on the Column of Trajan," *Marmi antichi* (StMisc 26, 1985) 101-11.

10 A. Claridge, "Hadrian's Column of Trajan," *JRA* 6 (1993) 5-22; M. Wilson Jones, "One hundred feet and a spiral stair: the problem of designing Trajan's Column," *JRA* 6 (1993) 32-38.

11 C. Cichorius, *Die Reliefs der Traiansäule* vols. 2-3 (Berlin 1896 and 1900); K. Lehmann-Hartleben, *Die Traiansäule. Ein römisches Kunstwerk zu Beginn der Spätantike* (Berlin 1926); S. Reinach, *La colonne Traiane au Musée de Saint-Germain* (Paris 1886) and *Répertoire des reliefs grecs et romaines 1: Les ensembles* (Paris 1909).

12 S. Stuart-Jones, "The historical interpretation of the reliefs of Trajan's Column," *PBSR* 5 (1910) 435-59.

13 I. Richmond, "Trajan's army on Trajan's Column," *PBSR* 13 (1935) 1-40.

14 G. Hamberg, *Studies in Roman imperial art* (Uppsala 1945; 2nd edn. Rome 1968) 18-40 and 116.

15 I. S. Ryberg, *Rites of the State religion in Roman art* (MAAR 22, 1955) 109-13.

16 G.-Ch. Picard, *Les trophées romains* (BÉFAR 187, 1957) 371-91.

17 O. Brendel, "Prolegomena to a book on Roman art," *MAAR* 21 (1953) 7-73.

18 T. Hölscher, "Römische Bildsprache als semantisches System," *AbhHeid* 2 (1987); *Monumenti statali e pubblico* (Rome 1994) 91-136.

19 Settis *et al.* 1988b (supra n.6) 190-92.

Observation of the 24 lower scrolls shows that the frieze may be read either by scene (episodically, chronologically, or rhetorically) or vertically. Was the proximity of the flanking libraries significant? Could Romans on terraces of the libraries have read the frieze from center to top? Would they thus have seen the whole frieze, and, even if not, was its meaning clear? Perhaps, as Picard assumed, only by viewing the frieze's episodes in nearby Trajanic *volumina* could they have understood its program. Since the Column was dedicated before the Forum, should we assume that both represent the same program? Can we harmonize the frieze with ancient literary sources, chiefly the history of Dio Cassius, since Trajan's personal memoir on the Dacian Wars and the *Getic History* of his physician, T. Statilius Crito, are lost.

To answer these questions, Galinier first examines the 155 scenes of the frieze in 24 scrolls that, if unrolled, would extend for 200 m. It is, he finds, a remarkably-preserved, "diachronic" (historical) record of Trajan's times and, to some extent, of his 5 campaigns in Dacia (A.D. 101-2, 105-06). All 5 include scenes of travel (crossing a river on a bridge permanent or temporary, sailing across the sea in ships), of cities, and of military departures from an arch or a city gate. They sacrifice to the gods; they listen to speeches by Trajan. As *optimus princeps*, Trajan appears at least 58 times on the frieze, usually in armor (*loricatus*), rarely in a tunic or, sacrificing, with covered head or in a *toga*. Whatever the dress, his portraits contrast markedly with those of his rival, the Dacian king Decebalus, a warlord characterized by *superbia*, broken treaties and, finally, suicide. The details in the individual scenes gradually build up a picture of Trajan's successes against this dangerous and uncontrolled enemy. However, they also embody a Roman "system of values" that views the final conquest of Dacia as the introduction of the full benefits of Roman culture to a partially civilized country. The sculptors use realistic visual details and accurately show some of the actual events of the Dacian Wars. Yet, for the frieze as a whole, events specially selected from the historical record give the narrative a particular form, "une sélection de thèmes à développer dans le discours" (68).

In 1926 Lehmann-Hartleben (supra n.11) pointed out that, on the several faces of the Column, some reliefs aligned vertically with one another. More recently, scholars have noted that these alignments emphasize the figure of Trajan.²⁰ Following these suggestions, Galinier divides the frieze into 8 vertical faces: N, NE, NW, S, SE, SW, E and W, each with its own themes:

SUBJECTS OF THE VERTICALLY POSITIONED SCENES ON THE COLUMN'S 8 FACES (M. Galinier)

Face	Themes
SE	"Trajan and the Dacians" alternating with "Trajan and the Roman world"
E	"Trajan and Decebalus"
NE	"Trajan," "Conquest and Romanization of Dacia"
N	"Trajan and the army"
NW	"The Roman Victory"
W	"Trajan and the transformation of Dacia"
SW	"Arrival and passage through Dacia", "Superior Roman technology" (vertical correspondences)
S	"Trajan and the Dacians: Roman progress"

All the faces insist on imperial success, the passage of the frontier, the increase of empire. Exalting Trajan, recording the submission of the Dacians, the scenes on the SE face chronicle the conflict. On the N face are Trajan's *pietas* and victory; on the W and SW, the *fides exercitus*: its close support of the emperor, its hard work in conquering Dacia. The SE and NW faces show war, Roman victory and, with the help of the gods, the transformation by Romanization of Dacia and the Dacians. Visible at the foot of the Column, the clear organization of these scenes shows precise plotting with respect to their internal dimensions and to their positions in the SE and NW vertical faces and in the spirals. In terms of its program, each vertical section conveys the same narrative as the sequential scenes in the spiral reliefs. Whatever its position, each

20 Gauer (supra n. 4); R. Brilliant, *Visual narratives: storytelling in Etruscan and Roman art* (New York 1986) 103.

scene reflects the same technique: the selection and re-organization of varied masses of material into a carefully laid-out, artfully-constructed, propagandistic narrative — a pattern typically Roman found in both literature and architecture.

From recent photographs and measured drawings, moderns can easily observe the smallest details of any given scene. That was impossible in antiquity, but should we then assume, as F. Coarelli suggests of the *Forma Urbis*,²¹ that, while the frieze is meticulously executed, it was only decorative? Could visitors have deciphered its meaning only from original drawings in the adjacent libraries? Not according to Galinier. The very characteristics that make reading the frieze difficult (the height of the Column, its shape, the spiral frieze) identify it on Trajanic coins. Considered together, these numismatic images and the easily-read inscription on the base suggest a frieze that was legible in antiquity, a conclusion that depends on the original character of the surrounding buildings.

Assuming terraces on the colonnades in front of the libraries, taking into account the terrace above the NW lateral colonnades of the Basilica Ulpia, and supposing a similar viewpoint from the northwest,²² an ancient visitor could have seen the friezes on all 4 sides from positions at roughly half the height of the shaft. Even if (as Galinier suggests) these terraces were not all at the same height,²³ each would have provided excellent views of scenes carefully configured for viewing. The importance of the image determined the size of its scroll. Vertical axes established story-lines. Colors set off scenes and, within each, visual features (massed Roman or barbarian shields, successive portraits of Trajan as general or bearer of civilization) led the eye from one position to the next. As comprehensibly as possible, these techniques acquaint the visitor with the main points of the frieze: Trajan's victory, the expansion of empire, Dacia's pacification and civilization — themes that index Trajanic ideology.

Galinier also examines that ideology in the rest of Forum. Most of the areas he describes have recently been studied exhaustively (see the works cited in n.1 above), but he makes a number of new and interesting points. He accepts the numismatic representations of Trajan's equestrian statue, the sculptural focus of the *area Fori*, as striding peacefully in a pose close to that

21 F. Coarelli, "La cultura artistica," *Storia di Roma* (1992) 644-45.

22 Galinier carefully skirts (187-88) the question of the Temple of Trajan: "en l'absence de vestiges plus circonstanciés, il est impossible de détailler l'aspect de l'édifice." We now have more information. Lacking any remnants at the SE side of the Forum, at least one scholar has again repositioned the temple northwest of the libraries: A Claridge, "Hadrian's lost Temple of Trajan," *JRA* 20 (2007) 54-94; and the recent, as-yet-unpublished excavations under Palazzo Valentini (for a tour of which, in 2006, I am deeply grateful to E. La Rocca) give us far more information about wall PV7a that I have interpreted as part of the podium of the Temple of Trajan: Packer 2003 (supra n.1) 122-26. Claridge (*JRA* 2007, 68) says: "to judge by the scar of vaulting visible in the drawing made for Packer of wall PV7A, the chambers [of which the wall formed part] stood only 4 m high", but the new excavation show that this "scar" is post-antique(?) facing and that the wall supports a groin vault that may rise as high as (and, indeed, may form part of) the surface of the small court on the SE side of Palazzo Valentini. The now-exposed foundations of the wall are of rectangular blocks of travertine, and, as currently visible, the whole wall seems to be a transverse wall in the temple podium. The architect for the Provincia di Roma, who oversaw the new excavations, told me that the Provincia di Roma possesses the plan (presumably by the architect Gabet) of the façade as cleared in the excavations of 1869 (cf. Packer 1997 [supra n. 1] vol. 1, 457). We should thus be able to locate the position of the façade precisely and show that it was not, as Claridge suggests (ibid. 84-88), at an angle to the central axis of the Forum.

23 Unfortunately, Galinier (theoretically) assumes (147-52, figs. 36-38) that the terraces above the colonnades in front of the libraries and that of the Basilica were of the same height (15.10 m). Given his convincing arguments for the legibility of the frieze, and the disagreement by A. Viscogliosi (*JRA* 12 [1999] 605) with my own original reconstruction of the libraries (Packer 1997, vol. 1, 120-26, 450-51), I now accept such terraces. Reached chiefly from the stairways in the back of the libraries in the Basilica Ulpia, the proportions of their fragmentary remains suggest an order 9.408 m high, the approximate elevation of the terrace pavements above the court around the Column. The library terraces would thus have been about 5.50 m (19¹/₃ Roman feet) lower than the terrace on the NW side of the Basilica Ulpia, as indeed is shown in I. Gismondi's model of the city in Rome's E.U.R. Museum of Roman Civilization and in his larger model of the SW Library (Packer 1997, vol. 2, pls. 57.2-3).

of the more famous statue of Marcus Aurelius. He notes that Trajan holds an orb crowned with a victory and lance, an essentially peaceful posture; he literally has victory in hand, but the lance points at the sun, indicating that, as a result of the long wars in Dacia, peace has come. After the excavation in 2000 of the foundation for the statue, the excavator, R. Meneghini suggested that, since the foundation was not centered on the NW-SE axis of the Forum but displaced toward the southeast, the statue must have faced northwest towards the Basilica Ulpia;²⁴ but for Galinier, since the 6 statues along the façade of the Basilica Ulpia faced southeast, "une disposition différentielle de la statue équestre nous parait donc peu probable" (172). Pausanias (5.12.7) also mentions statues in the hemicycles, an Augustus in electrum (an amalgam of silver and gold) and a King Nicomedes of Bithynia in ivory. Since the statues of "Trajan" and the *togatus*, now in the Museum of the Imperial Fora in the Markets of Trajan, were originally in the NE hemicycle,²⁵ Pausanias' statues may have been (as Galinier does not say) in the SW hemicycle; there, the election of the Augustus (a colossal figure in the central niche?) may perhaps have been associated with the Baltic Sea and thereby with the northerly regions that Augustus pacified. Nicomedes (probably Nicomedes IV who ruled 94-74 B.C.) had been an enemy of Mithradates; and, since he had left his kingdom to the Romans, they may have regarded him as one of the founders of Roman fortunes in the East. The ivory of his statue symbolized oriental luxury; together, both statues represent Trajan's "rhétorique des matériaux" (178).

For the two buildings that faced one another just north of the Column, Meneghini has suggested three building phases of which the final versions (Hadrianic, not Trajanic) were the temples of Trajan and Plotina. The lateral niches in the rooms were for statues, not library scrolls, and the "libraries" would have been in the apses of the Basilica Ulpia.²⁶ To Galinier, however, the identical plans of the two buildings look like the usual divisions between Greek and Latin collections, and the two probably served for the preservation of documents related to the Forum. The discovery, in 1695, near the Column of part of the pediment and, in 1765, of part of Hadrian's dedication suggests that the Temple was somewhere near the Column, and the mention of the *Atrium Libertatis* on the *Forma Urbis* implies that the Forum's official activities took place in the apses of the Basilica Ulpia, while rhetors and philosophers used the hemicycles in the Forum, as we know from inscriptions and literary sources. Thus, to remove the Temple of Trajan and libraries attested by ancient sources seems ill-judged: "Bref, nul besoin, à notre avis, de changer les bibliothèques d'emplacement et de fonction pour disposer d'un *templum* au nord de la colonne Trajane" (185).

Like the Column, the other parts of the Forum, for Galinier, celebrated Roman, and specifically Trajanic, ideology. Following Republican precedents, the builders financed the project from the spoils of war (*ex manubiis*), and their inscriptions on the façades of the colonnades commemorated that fact. By its materials and decor, the forum, in typically Roman fashion, exalted the peoples of the empire, a custom that went back to the *Porticus ad Nationes* in the peristyle of Pompey's theater or the *ethne* celebrated in the Sebasteion at Aphrodisias. The frieze of the Column represented a complex geographical discourse continued in the hemicycles by the statues of Nicephorus and Augustus. The site's building materials extended and emphasized this rhetoric of space. Colored marbles enlivened the Forum, but their expense and imported character emphasized also the power it represented, the emperor's mastery of nature, along with the sophistication of his architects and sculptors who were acquainted with, and could work, such materials. More specifically, the colored marbles represented the riches of the empire, recalling the provinces of their origins: N Africa, Greece, W Asia Minor. Less obvi-

24 Meneghini 2001a, 55; 2001b, 253, fig. 5 (both cited supra n.1).

25 Both statues were found, during the excavations of 1925-26, in the NE Hemicycle: Packer 1997, vol. 1, 382-83. They are both over-lifesize and, since the *togatus* is not completely finished in the back, were probably originally displayed in the niches of the hemicycle. The cuirassed statue may have been of Trajan; perhaps he was shown in both figures. Alternatively, these statues may have honored staff members, while the emperor could have been shown as an even larger figure in the central niche. Statues honoring Trajan or Trajan and his staff would have left no room for the Augustus and Nichomachus.

26 Meneghini 2001a, 51-52; 2002, 676-79 (both cited supra n.1).

ously, the white marbles made the same arguments. In a self-consciously plebeian style, the column in Italian marble from Carrara celebrated Roman military power. Displayed probably on the NW facade of the Basilica, the Great Frieze of Trajan had the same militaristic message, but its lively, Hellenistic style in prestigious Pentelic marble also appropriately commemorated the Empire's universality. With a similar message, the portrait heads framed by *clipei* in the colonnades' attics in the *area Fori* were again in a Hellenistic style well suited to their expensive Greek marbles.

The style of the Forum celebrated also Trajan's resemblance to the great conquerors of the past. Trajan's restoration of a Caesarian coin type shows an elephant trampling a dragon, a reference to Caesar; like Trajan, Caesar had intended to campaign in Dacia, and, when assassinated, like him he was preparing a campaign in Parthia. As the frieze on the Column shows, the Dacians fought under banners with dragons; in this way the coin cites Caesar in the East and his connection with Dacia. Trajan's successes abroad also reminded Romans of Augustus and contrasted with the foreign failures of Domitian, Trajan's recent predecessor.

The Forum's iconography is richly varied. In the *area Fori*, the *equus Traiani*, a focal point for the *imagines clipeatae*, celebrated successful opposition to the *superbia* of the Dacian warriors arrayed along the attics of the flanking colonnades. Nemesis does not appear on the Column or in friezes, but griffins, her frequent companions, are present in several of the surviving friezes; the symbols of riches, they also represent Rome's struggles with the barbarians. Like the griffins, sphinxes in a frieze from the peristyle around the Column record punishment of the proud, unambiguously identified as Dacians by the Atlantes on the attics around the *area Fori*. Inside the Basilica, the frieze of victories killing bulls refers to the conquest of Dacia, a visual metaphor initially used by Augustus on an *aureus* of 20-18 B.C. to celebrate his capture of Armenia. On the Column, Trajan appears as a victorious general before Senate and People. By his *labor*, he increases Rome's *gloria* or *fama*. His work and that of his army are major chapters of his official biography, his *res gestae*. As the new Hercules, Trajan ordered the world. As *optimus princeps*, he had defeated the barbarians and created the province of Dacia. Within the empire he restored peace. A traditional Stoic in the style of the Republic, he was an individual prince without a complicated dynastic background. Ruling with the Senate, he guaranteed liberty and prosperity, that *felicitas* commemorated throughout the Forum by several friezes with plant motifs and by one with Dionysiac scenes, showing cupids watering griffins that celebrated the abundance assured by defeat of the barbarians.

Inevitably, Column and Forum both displayed important Roman cultural motifs. As many scholars have observed, with the piles of weapons on its base and its historical frieze the Column memorialized both triumph and funerary procession. The decorations of the Forum — the trophies that decorated the entrance, the rows of dejected Dacians bearing on their heads heavy cornices on either side of the *area Fori*, the friezes of weapons on the attic of the Basilica, the portrayal in the Great Frieze of the military, civil, and religious duties of the emperor — were further triumphal and biographical signs. Column and Forum together were nothing less than "la pétrification de la *pompa* triomphale, un triomphe perpétuel sculpté dans le marbre" (220). With the decoration and layout of the Forum, they exalted Trajan as *optimus princeps* and, after his death, commemorated him as the only emperor buried inside the *pomerium*.

This, says Galinier, was also a rhetorical design. Just as 'comparison to surpass' was a fundamental principle in rhetoric, so the Forum of Trajan, with its *ex manubiis* inscriptions, recalled Republican antecedents but far outdid them in size and complexity. As Pliny the Elder distinguished between 'simple' and 'ornate' styles of writing, so the Forum mixed the richness of colored marbles with the simplicity of gray granite floors and column shafts. As the purposes of rhetoric were *memoria* and *pronuntiatio* (public announcement or publication), so the Forum created memorable, lasting images. Some were in friezes or in the Column's reliefs, and these joined to others even more striking (*equus Traiani*, *imagines clipeatae*, colossal statues in the hemicycles and apses, lifesize statues along the basilica's façade), fitting together in an eternal *res gestae*, a three-dimensional memorial of the *virtus* and *sapientia* of the *optimus princeps*. Forms derived from a Greek iconographic vocabulary partially represented these elements, but, to render them comprehensible not just to the Senatorial aristocracy but to the

Roman public as a whole, the Forum's designers revised many of the constituent elements according to Roman intellectual and visual traditions. A sumptuous historical record while Trajan lived, after his death the Hadrianic temple to Trajan transformed Forum and Column into one of the most extraordinary commemorative monuments in the Roman world.

Although it had its own visual rhetoric during his lifetime, his forum was also closely associated with the other imperial fora. Trajan rebuilt the temple of Venus Genetrix in the Forum of Caesar, and its dedication on the same date as his Column (May 12, 113) emphasized the close association between their friezes. The Trajanic relief of cupids watering griffins, signs of Rome's *felicitas* after Trajan's victories, echoes that of the cupids in the Forum of Caesar that celebrates Caesar's *pietas* and *fides* and, with the victory of the Julian *gens*, the return of peace to the empire. Trajan's career was an *imitatio* of Caesar's. Like Caesar, he had ambitions against Parthia but, unlike Caesar, he had renewed the world and initiated a new Golden Age.

Like the Forum of Augustus, that of Trajan was constructed *ex manubiis* and commemorated the Golden Age inaugurated by the conquests of its namesake. Both honored *summi viri*; in both, colonnades flanked the central space. In the attics, figures stood above the columns to frame bays with *imagines clipeatae*. Yet the differences between the two fora were considerable. The *clipeatae* in Augustus' Forum set off images of Jupiter Ammon that exalted Augustus' conquests and resembled the *clipei* suspended or painted on the walls of private atria; those in Trajan's Forum publicly honored *summi viri*. Freed from the internal niches in which the Forum of Augustus displayed its *summi viri*, they were not, like Augustus' statues, connected with portraits of ancestors in noble atria. Most obviously, Trajan's Forum lacked an aristocratic shrine such as the temples of Venus Genetrix or Mars Ultor: in their place stood the manifestly Republican Basilica Ulpia. On its steps, statues of Trajan repeated the types of dress seen on Augustus' *summi viri*. On its attic toward the *area Fori*, panels of Dacian arms recalled his conquests. These alterations suggested a new Rome equally balanced between Liberty and Principate. Only the immense size and novel character of the Column expressed Trajan's sense of divine inspiration.

Galinier's answers to the questions with which he began his study may thus be summarized as follows. The reliefs of the Column were always visible to the Roman public: visitors could see the upper sections from flanking terraces. Given the inscription on the base of the Column, the Senate was probably closely associated with the project. Provincial fora and military camps provided the architectural models; the whole empire, the materials. Literary and numismatic sources suggest the decorative themes, some drawn from the earlier fora but all re-interpreted and re-arranged in a manner so satisfying that Trajan's successors never needed to construct another imperial forum.

As architect, Apollodorus of Damascus probably co-ordinated work on Column and Forum. Although probably Trajan and Apollodorus deliberately separated the style of the reliefs on the Column from the Hellenistic character of the rest of the Forum's reliefs and sculpture, identification of the "master of the Column of Trajan" with Apollodorus is of secondary importance. The Forum's main theme, its rhetoric of excellence, centered on Trajan as *rex iustus*, exceptional general, and wise administrator. The Roman public could precisely interpret his images; visitors, reading all the architecture and decorations in a culturally exact manner, could have compared Trajan's Forum with its imperial neighbors. During his lifetime, Column and Forum exalted Trajan as *optimus princeps*; after his death, his burial in the pedestal of the Column, and Hadrian's construction of the Temple of Trajan, showed his conquest of death and apotheosis. For his successors and for posterity, he had become an extraordinary *exemplum*.

This learned and sophisticated investigation of Trajan's Column judiciously uses all available sources: ancient literature, numismatic evidence, recent archaeological discoveries, modern scholarly research. Yet, while it does not formally say so, this is a work that could only have been written early in the 21st c., thereby highlighting the difficulties that beset scholars interested in the site following the end of the Fascist excavations in 1932. A. M. Colini (1903-

90),²⁷ who supervised the excavations, made no attempt to publish them,²⁸ and, until the late 1990s, a single guard oversaw Markets and Forum for the Comune di Roma. Under such circumstances, there was little information available on the character of the Forum as a whole. Without conducting extensive research in the archives of the Comune or its storerooms, P. Zanker could offer good general interpretations of the surviving remains,²⁹ but for those then interested in details of the Forum's design only the Column was readily available. Since it could not be convincingly connected with any of the Forum's other monuments, the earlier interpretations of its reliefs, discussed by Galinier, are entirely reasonable. It was the work of P. Pensabene and his students in the 1980s,³⁰ study of the Basilica Ulpia by C. Amici,³¹ my own articles and books on the Forum, and the new archaeological investigations by R. Meneghini for the Comune di Roma, that changed the situation. Galinier has now shown that the Column of Trajan is an important and integral part of the Forum. He has indicated how both Column and Forum realized Trajanic ideology. Summarizing and clarifying the results of all previous work, his study takes a major place in Trajanic research. His synthesis of, and conclusions drawn from, scholarly inquiries of the last 75 years mark the end of that difficult period and decisively open the way for new scholarly investigations in the 21st c. and beyond.³²

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- 27 Cf. S. Dyson, *In pursuit of ancient pasts. A history of classical archaeology in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries* (New Haven, CT 2006) 181.
- 28 Yet Colini probably had most of the site records. He had apparently kept meticulous lists of the finds. During my work in the storerooms in the 1970s, I came upon a notebook (probably Colini's) entitled roughly *Quaderno 140. Oggetti rinvenuti nei scavi del foro di Traiano*. On my next visit, the notebook had disappeared, and I never again saw it or any of the other 139+ notebooks from that collection. Photographs could have illustrated the most important objects, and the list may have included find-spots. The modern administration of the Forum knows nothing of these lists. They are not in the Archivio Colini at the Ufficio Monumenti Antichi e Scavi del Comune di Roma and have not been published with Colini's other notes on Roman monuments in the series that began in 1998: C. Buzzetti, G. Ioppolo and G. Pisani Sartorio (edd.), *Appunti degli scavi di Roma 1* (Rome 1998). Colini presumably kept his notes on the Forum of Trajan at his summer house, and they probably perished when it burned.
- 29 P. Zanker, "Das Trajansforum in Rom," *AA* 85 (1970) 499-544.
- 30 P. Pensabene *et al.*, "Foro Traiano. Contributi per una ricostruzione storica e architettonica," *ArchCl* 41 (1989) 27-292.
- 31 C. Amici, *Il Foro di Traiano: Basilica Ulpia e Biblioteche* (Studi e Materiali dei Musei e Monumenti Comunali di Roma 10, 1982).
- 32 Cf. A. Claridge at *JRA* 20 (2007) 468: "The short passage of time since 2000 has so transformed our perception of the rest of Trajan's Forum complex that it cannot be long before approaches to the Column undergo a similar revolution".