THE FIGURATIVE PROGRAMME
OF THE ARCHITRAVAL FRIEZES
IN THE FORUM OF TRAJAN, ROME

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Abstract

The Figurative Programme of the Architraval Friezes in the Forum of Trajan, Rome

In Rome's Forum of Trajan fragments from architraval friezes with figurative motifs of seven different types have been discovered over the centuries: eagle-headed griffins and candelabra; eagle-headed griffins and tripods; eagle-headed griffins and cupids; lion-headed griffins, cupids and vases; cupids in acanthus; Victories killing bulls and dressing candelabra; sphinxes. The aim of this research is to investigate if there is a connection between these decorative motifs and the architectural structures where they were exhibited, and if their iconographic choice depends on their deeper significance in the Forum's wider context. Following an introduction to the history of the excavation of the Forum and to its different sections, for each frieze type is proposed a comprehensive analysis of all the fragments with an ascertained provenance from the Forum, which have never previously been studied together. Their location in the different buildings forming the Forum's complex, as identified through information from excavation reports, drawings and the relevant reconstruction of the architectural orders is discussed, as well as their iconography and comparison with other artworks and monuments, which attests that Trajan chose a traditional iconography already used in previous similar examples in contexts comparable to the various structures of Trajan's Forum. Against this background, we argue that the reliefs were part of a wider figurative programme, and Trajan expressed the messages he wanted to transmit through the traditional language of his predecessors. Griffins, cupids, Victories and sphinxes are polysemous mythological figures, attributes of different divinities: their symbolism related to diverse gods depending on their various aspects can be interpreted according to the function of the buildings forming the Forum when it is known, or can help to investigate the use of these structures when it is not known.
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Fig. 7.1. Fragment IV (1) (picture by the author).

Fig. 7.2. Fragment IV (1), detail (picture by the author).

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Fig. 7.29. Rome, Palatine Hill. Relief with pairs of griffins facing candelabra from the Palace of Domitian displayed on a wall of the Domus Augustana (picture by the author).

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Fig. 9.20 a and b. a, Denarius of Octavian, Victory flying over the globe, with standards and victory wreath (Zanker 1988: 81). b, Clay lamp with Victoria over the globe, victory wreath and palm branch (Zanker 1988: 267).


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Fig. 9.29. Arch of Trajan at Beneventum, in southern Italy. South-west façade facing the city (Rotili 1972: pl. III).

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Fig. 10.3. Fragment VII (1), left end (picture by the author).

Fig. 10.4. Fragment VII (1), back end (picture by the author).

Fig. 10.5. Fragment VII (1), back side (picture by the author).

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Fig. 10.7. Fragment VII (2), left end (picture by the author).

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Fig. 10.9. Fragment VII (2), upper side (picture by the author).

Fig. 10.10. Fragment VII (2), back side (picture by the author).

Fig. 10.11. Fragment VII (3) (picture by the author).

Fig. 10.12. Fragment VII (3), back side (picture by the author).

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Fig. 10.14. Fragment VII (4) (picture by the author).

Fig. 10.15. Fragment VII (4), detail of the hair tufts (picture by the author).

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Fig. 10.20. Fragment VII (6), detail of the candelabrum and the sphinx's tail (picture by the author).
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Fig. 10.24 a and b. Reconstructions of the scheme of the architraval Frieze Type VII on the side of the short walls of the central nave of the Basilica facing the exedras, according to several small fragments stored in the storerooms of the Basilica Ulpia (a, Milella 2004: 56; b, La Rocca et al. 1995: 124).

Fig. 10.25. Plan of the Forum of Trajan with the location of Frieze Type VII (adapted from Meneghini 2009: 118).

Fig. 10.26. Rome, Galleria Doria. Augustan marble table leg with sphinxes and vines. Ostentatious furniture with such pictorial symbols was popular in the early imperial period (Zanker 1988: 270).

Fig. 10.27 a and b. a, Augustan coin with a sphinx proclaiming a new age (Zanker 1988: 48). b, sphinx on an Augustan seal impression (Zanker 1988: 50).

Fig. 10.28. Drawing by Fra Giocondo depicting an entablature and possibly the decoration of its frieze with a sphinx in the front and in profile (Bartoli 1922: pl. 26, vol. 1).

Fig. 10.29. Detail of a drawing by Piranesi with a relief with sphinxes in Villa Borghese (Wilton-Ely 1972: pl. XIII).

Fig. 10.30. Rome, Centrale Montemartini. Frieze with vegetal spiral decoration and sphinxes (detail) (La Rocca et al. 2013: 113).

Fig. 10.31. Hypothesis of reconstructive plan of the Forum of Augustus according to new excavation (Ungaro et al. 2004: 19).

Fig. 11.1. Plan of the south-eastern corner of the square of the Forum. On the right side of the southern porticoed courtyard (F), room C was transformed into a lime kiln (Meneghini 2009: 114).

Fig. 11.2. Reconstruction of the decorative system of the courtyard of Trajan's Column (Packer 2001: 211).

Fig. 12.1. Restitution aureus with bare head of Julius Caesar and on reverse Venus standing right, leaning on column, holding helmet and spear (http://www.christies.com/lotfinder/LotDetailsPrintable.aspx?intObjectID=2014793).

Fig. 12.2. Hypothesis of reconstructive plan of the Forum of Augustus according to new excavation (Ungaro et al. 2004: 19).
Fig. 12.3. Reconstruction of the gallery of *summi viri* in the exedras of the Forum of Augustus (http://www.mercatiditraiano.it/sede/area_arceheologica/foro_di_augusto/le_esedre. Accessed 20 July 2014).

Fig. 12.4. Three-dimensional reconstruction of the southern portico of the Forum of Augustus. On the attic storey, Caryatids alternating with shields (Ungaro et al. 2004: 18).

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Fig. 12.6. Different rendering of *Cyma reversa* with normal leaf-and-dart from the porticoes of the Forum of Augustus compared to different rendering of *Cyma reversa* in buildings of the complex of Trajan's Forum (http://www.decarch.it/wiki/index.php?title=Note_sullo_stile_decorativo_del_Foro_di_Traiano. Accessed 23 September 2014).

Fig. 12.7. Fragment of frieze with vegetal spirals decorating the porticoes of Forum of Augustus (Ungaro 2007: 153).

Fig. 12.8. The architraval frieze of the porticoes of the square of Trajan's Forum, 3D reconstruction of the façade of the porticoes and graphic reconstruction of the frieze motif (Ungaro et al. 2004: 29).

Fig. 12.9. Reconstruction of the Temple of Peace (Ungaro 2007: 237-238).

Fig. 12.10. Synoptic table of cuirassed statues comparable to Frieze Type I and III (elaboration by the author).

Fig. 12.11. Synoptic table of cuirassed statues comparable to Frieze Type IV (elaboration by the author).
PART I. PROJECT, METHOD AND CONTEXT

Chapter 1.
Introduction

1.1. Circumstances and Nature of the Project

The choice of the subject of this thesis derived from discussions with the Sovrintendenza ai Beni Culturali del Comune di Roma, the Office whose team supervises the area of the Imperial Fora in Rome and with whom I had previously collaborated in the past. Dr. Ungaro, head of the Office and director of the Museum of the Imperial Fora at Trajan's Markets, and Dr. Milella, responsible in particular for the Forum of Trajan, proposed to me various topics about aspects of the Fora which they considered very interesting but which they had not yet investigated. Among those topics, I chose the specific subject of the figurative architraval friezes of the Forum of Trajan in Rome, since I already had strong interests in the art and architecture of the city of Rome’s imperial period and saw this topic as a challenging one, but one with scope to add fruitfully to wider knowledge of this core imperial zone.

1.2. Aims and Objectives

This thesis centres its research on the figurative programme of the architraval friezes which decorated the entablatures of the architectural structures forming the complex of Trajan's Forum (figs. 1 and 2), and which have been discovered over the centuries in that area. These friezes were prominent visual elements in a rich architectural complex and it is assumed that their iconography carries symbolic significance. Among these architraval friezes, not all are figurative, but where the figurative motifs are present, they conform, strikingly, to only seven different types: eagle-headed griffins and candelabra; eagle-headed griffins and tripods; eagle-headed griffins and cupids; lion-headed griffins, cupids and vases; cupids in acanthus; Victories killing bulls and dressing candelabra; sphinxes. My doctoral research seeks to question the hypothesis that the iconographies of these seven types of figured entablature friezes were related directly to the functions of the spaces they decorated and provide insights into taste and propaganda in the early 2nd century AD.
In this study the role of the architraval friezes will be considered in the wider context of the complex of the Forum. Key aspects to consider are: was there a relationship between the subjects represented on the friezes and the structures where they were exhibited? Is it possible that behind the iconographic choice of the decorative motifs there was a deeper meaning which could be inserted in a wider figurative programme? Is it possible that the messages of political propaganda were communicated not just by the statues, but even through the decoration of the friezes? What are the meanings of particular representations when placed in particular locations and how are these relevant to the propagandist messages in the rest of the sculptural decoration in Trajan's Forum? 

For example, since sphinxes had a marked apotropaic funerary meaning, especially in the Roman period, how can we explain the presence of architraval friezes representing this subject in the exedras of a building such as the Basilica Ulpia, where judiciary activities were held? Are these motifs connected to functions of these structures?

**Fig. 1.1. Map of Rome city centre. The central red dot indicates the area of Trajan's Forum.**

Thus, the aim of this research is to investigate the relationships, or correspondences, between the symbology of the subjects represented on the friezes and the function of the architectural structures they decorated, in the light of the overall messages of the
decorative scheme in Trajan's Forum. The working hypothesis of the thesis is that the symbology of the figures and their location are surely not accidental, if we consider the meaning of the decorative motifs and the importance of some sections of the Forum and its spatial configuration. In addition to the iconographic choice of the decorative motifs, it is also possible that their location could have been conceived to ascribe the wider decorative and representative system with a panegyrical meaning, conveying an homage and praise to the emperor. In the Roman world political propaganda usually gave glory to the supreme leader through decorative programmes as well as in architecture, statuary and narrative reliefs (Section 2.5). In the Forum of Trajan it is likely that the architraval friezes contributed to Trajanic propaganda by offering to the image of the most powerful man of Rome further signs of command and splendour, whose impact would have been emphasised by the architectural settings.

Fig. 1.2. General reconstructive plan of the Imperial Fora superimposed on the modern city plan. Each Forum is highlighted by a different colour: red for the Forum of Caesar, blue for the Forum of Augustus, orange for the Temple of Peace, green for the Forum of Nerva and yellow for Trajan's Forum.

1.3. Methodology

The processes of the research involved in this thesis comprise primary data collection, additional data from drawings, detailed review of previous studies, consultation of specialist literature on iconographical motifs and comparative analysis.
1.3.1. Primary Data Collection

Primary data collection employed 'autopsies' or critical re-analysis of all known fragments preserved in Roman collections (Museum of Imperial Fora and Vatican Museums), and liaison with museum curators in Paris, Berlin and Munich regarding the fragments in their collections, checking and collating technical data regarding the different scales and proportions of the fragments, the details of their imagery and their state of preservation (distinguishing original parts from modern restoration).

In most of the cases the thesis addresses and re-presents material already published, although never previously considered all together. In a few cases, though, the original pieces have not been published elsewhere, even if inventoried in the collections of the relevant museums housing them. The sole available information about these pieces is contained in the museum catalogue cards, available only when provided by the curators of the museums. In particular:

1. Rome, Trajan's Markets. Here I have personally checked the measurements and collected technical data (under the supervision of Dr. Milella).
   - Fragments Ia (1), II (1), V (1-4), Vla (1 and 2) and VII (1, 5 and 6): already published. V (2 and 3) and Vla (2) are only mentioned, with an illustration, in the excavation journal and other publications. Dr. Milella provided further information about these fragments. V (4) and VII (2-4) are not published.

2. Vatican City, Vatican Museums. Here I have personally checked the measurements and collected technical data supervised by Dr. Eleonora Ferrazza.
   - Fragments IV (1 and 2): already published.

3. Berlin, Pergamon Museum. I have personally checked the measurements and collected technical data supervised by Dr. Maischberger.
   - Fragment III (1): is often only mentioned -often just with an illustration- in the publications about IV (1 and 2), without further information. While writing this thesis, a detailed description for the Berliner Skulpturennetzwerk (Berliner sculpture network) was published (Grüßinger 2013).

4. Munich, Glyptothek. Unfortunately here Dr. Christian Gliwitzky informed me that I could not check the measurements, since the fragments are not easily available given their display location set high on the wall of the Glyptothek.
- Fragment VIb (1): this was already published in the museum sculpture catalogue.

5. *Paris, Louvre Museum.* Unfortunately here I was informed by Dr. Daniel Roger that I could not check the measurements as they are not easily available because two of them are displayed high on a wall (5 m high), one is in a crate, two are stored in racks and a final piece is wrapped in a plastic film.

- Fragments VIa (1 and 2) are already published, but VIa (1) is only mentioned, and VIa (1) with a concise description and picture in the excavation journal.

- Fragment Ib (1): this fragment is the only one that have been properly published.

- Fragments Ib (2-3): unpublished.

- Fragments Ib (4-6): already published, with a concise description and picture.

In Part II of this thesis, each fragment has been identified and described with a numbered heading, current location, museum inventory number, relevant pictures and captions, together with marble type, measurements of slab and details, state of preservation and frieze description. This description is followed by comments on the discovery and references. Finally, there is a summary statement about mode of discovery and the likely original location for the fragment.

Each fragment is what remains of a relief of a frieze. With the word 'architraval' frieze, or simply frieze, we refer, in general, to the continuous sculpted decoration of the entablature between the architrave and the cornice of a building. The relief is the section of the marble frieze depicted with different decorative motifs still surviving. The relief could be made of one single slab or block, or more fragments. Usually the fragments have been recomposed (in museums or on site), but at least in one case, Frieze Type VII, the fragments are so small and disjointed that they remain 'scattered' without any possibility to recompose them. The blocks have flat surfaces on each side: I have focused on the main sculpted face, where the decorative motifs are, but I have described the lateral edges/flanks and the reverse or back only when these offered information useful for my research.

The fragments are collected according to their different frieze types, and for each one of them in different sections we will discuss the location of the frieze type, iconography, comparison and symbolism, as outlined in Section 1.4 below.
1.3.2. Antiquarian Drawings

Additional data can be gleaned from antiquarian drawings of these friezes and reliefs. A major inspiration for my research project was the contribution of Piazzesi (1989: 125-98), which analyses architectural elements of the Forum supplying useful data to reconstruct the buildings forming Trajan's complex. In addition we found more detailed information in the sketch books and publications by De Romanis (1811-23), Albertolli (1824), Uggeri (1840), Bartoli (1924), and Bertoldi (1960-61). The books by Albertolli and Uggeri contained drawings related to Frieze Type Ib, Drawings Ib (8 and 9); IV, Drawings IV (5 and 6) and V, Drawings V (6 and 7), usually not considered in the studies concerning these friezes which help confirm their provenance from Trajan's Forum. In checking the *opera omnia* of Giovan Battista Piranesi (1720-78) published by Wilton-Ely (1994), in addition to well-known Drawings IV (3 and 4) already published and often mentioned in connection with Frieze Type IV with cupids drinking griffins, we found another one, Drawing Ib (7) which is most certainly inspired by Frieze Type Ib and has not, to date, been considered together with the other drawings representing reliefs from the Forum of Trajan. A drawing by Fra Giocondo (1433-1515) (fig. 10.28), if correctly interpreted, is the clue regarding the presence in Rome of other architraval friezes with sphinxes, not previously considered.

1.3.3. Previous Studies

This research necessarily involved a critical evaluation of published material on the Forum of Trajan and the friezes. The starting point and the most informative and thorough study of the Forum complex was published by Pensabene et al. in 1989 and forms the first complete study based on the information on the Forum accumulated until the 1980s. Pensabene et al. trace the Forum's historical and architectural construction and evolution; they also examine the history of the excavations in the Forum from the Middle Ages to the Fascist period, and among the discoveries mentioned are the noted architraval friezes and their findspots.

Publications by Packer (1997; 2001) are useful for general background and focus mainly on the architectural reconstructions of the Forum, with a specific attention to the Basilica Ulpia, according to the same sources as Pensabene et al. (1989), but also including data assembled since. Packer also summarises the history of excavations since
the Middle Ages, and in particular those of the 1800s and 1900s, and provides additional information about the most recent excavations, including those of the Americans and the Municipality of Rome in the 1980s.

The most recent and updated publications are those of Meneghini and Ungaro, describing the five Imperial Fora in light of the major 1991-2007 excavations (Meneghini and Santangeli Valenzani 2007; Ungaro 2007; Meneghini 2009). These recent publications give important background guidance on the architectural organisation of the Forum of Trajan and constitute the most up-to-date information for the survey of the different areas forming the complex of the Forum, as covered in Chapter 2. They also provide information on the architraval friezes, reviewing the reports and records according to the new reconstruction of the Forum, and in one case, at least, offer additional information on a newly discovered fragment, II (1).

For new discoveries since 2009, such as cores supplying new evidence on the controversial location of the Temple of Trajan, specific publications include Cavallero et al. (2011), and Claridge (2007; 2013; 2014) on the completion of the Forum in the Hadrianic period. The period between the French excavations and the 1920s is best covered in the original records, the excavation journals and the articles and bulletins of contemporary scholars, such as the French pensionnaires (Morey 1835; Lesueur 1877); Boni (1907); Fea (1812; 13); Richter and Grifi (1839); Uggeri (1840); Bartoli (1922; 1924); and Canina (1949; 1851). Concerning the excavations of the Fascist period (Section 2.2.3), particularly important for this study have also been the excavation journals and the records of the archaeologist Corrado Ricci (1911; 1913; 1931), who supervised the excavations of the Imperial Fora.

Concerning the friezes themselves, they are mentioned briefly in various of the above quoted publications, but further and fuller information derives from specialists' works on architectural decoration of Trajan's Forum such as those by Bartoli (1924), Bertoldi (1960-1961), Leon (1971), Amici (1982) and, more recently, Packer (1997) and in particular Milella (1989 and 2004).
1.3.4. Specialist Literature

My study of the iconography of the seven frieze types commenced with a wider reading in the specialist literature on the relevant iconographical motifs and their history from Greek to Roman world and their use in Roman architectural ornament. The iconographic analysis in this thesis uses as a theoretical framework Hölscher's fundamental concepts of the 'language of images' of Roman art (2004), and a semantic system wherein different stylistic types carry with them specific ideological meanings. Some of the most important handbooks of mythology served as a starting point for these analyses, such as Smith (1875-1890), Daremberg and Saglio (1887-1899), and Cancick and Scheider's New Pauly (2008-2010); but most prominent is the fundamental Italian publication, the Enciclopedia di arte antica classica e orientale (1957-96).

In terms of comparative analyses, of value are important studies of other Roman imperial monuments, such as the works on Flavian architecture by von Blanckenhagen (1940) and the catalogue of the 2009 exhibition in Rome about Vespasian (Coarelli 2009). A basic study for the reliefs in the porticoes of the Forum of Caesar with cupids drinking griffins is that by Maisto and Pinna Caboni (2010). The benchmark for the study of Campana plaques is the typological and style-critical investigation by Borbein (1968), as well as that by Vermeule (1950-60; 1964; 1974; 1978; 1980), by Stemmer (1978) and recently by Cadario (2004; 2006; 2011; 2012) on cuirassed statues and their iconography.

For the study of the architectural decoration and the relevant reconstruction of the architectural orders, the discussion is based on the reconstructions of the cited works of Packer (1997; 2001), those of Meneghini (2007; 2009) incorporating information from the most recent excavations, and more specific studies of the architectural structure of the Forum and their decorations (Milella 2004; Ungaro 2007). These former studies examine the reconstruction of the buildings forming the Forum, and consequently also the establishment of the location of the frieze types.

Concerning the symbolism of the decorative motifs, Frugoni Settis (1973), Flagge (1975), Delplace (1980) and Fortea Lopez (1994) have assisted in comprehending the different nuances of the griffins as attributes of gods Apollo, Dionysus, and their role as
psychopomps, in connection with the goddess Nemesis and, most of all, with the candelabrum as the symbol of *lux perpetua*.

### 1.4. Outline of the Thesis

This research about a specific aspect of the Forum of Trajan takes its inspiration from the most important studies of the archaeological discoveries in the area; these are crucial in starting to reconstruct the context that the architraval friezes were displayed in, and consequently to better understand their meaning. This work takes into account all extant theories on the decorative programme of these frieze types, and incorporates the most recently excavated fragments, never previously analysed together. To address the aims of this thesis, a detailed study of the sculptural decoration discovered during recent excavations made in the Imperial Fora and the Forum of Trajan was carried out, together with those from the older excavations in this area. The study is divided into three sections: Part I. Project, Method and Context; Part II. The Friezes: Design, Place and Meaning; Part III. Discussion and Conclusions.

In Part I, after this introductory Chapter 1, Chapter 2 provides the background to this study of the frieze types, introducing the history of excavation of Trajan's Forum and describing its different sections, briefly retracing the discoveries of the architraval friezes made in the Forum over the centuries.

In Part II, Chapter 3 introduces the different aspects to be treated in Chapters 4-10, which discuss the seven different frieze types. For each type all the available archaeological evidence, records and drawings of the fragments for the reliefs with relevant decorative motifs are considered, bringing together these decorative elements which have to date been studied separately. The following paragraphs of each chapter will centre on discussion of the meaning of the frieze types, according to their context, investigating the location of fragments of the architraval friezes, their iconography, comparisons with the use of such motifs in other imperial artworks and monuments, and their symbolism. In the relevant sections of each chapter, the provenance of these motifs will be analysed by matching information about the frieze types fragments from the excavation records, from drawings, from previous study of the architectural decoration of the Forum and from the relevant reconstruction of the architectural orders, this study will help to verify the original positions of these architraval friezes and of the particular motifs. As will be seen, this work will mostly confirm current reconstructions but in
some cases it will help upholding the identification of the provenances of some fragments which were previously unclear.

Concerning the iconography of the decorative motifs, the history of iconography of the decorative motifs depicted in the friezes, which are all mythological figures, will be traced in relevant sections. To better understand their significance in the friezes of the Trajanic era, it is necessary to discuss how their role changed in the different myths they were related to through time, and, in particular, how these motifs and their meanings were assimilated into Roman art through Greek models.

Artworks with comparable motifs that preceded or were contemporary with these Trajanic friezes will be examined in dedicated sections, to investigate their roles as models. Later examples of the same decorative motifs are also considered to identify the ways in which they imitated their Trajanic models.

In Part III, in Chapter 11, the main elements which emerged from this study are discussed, contributing to a response to the research question of whether the iconography of the friezes support the idea that they could have been tailored to the function of the particular spaces they decorated. Finally, Chapter 12 considers the architraval friezes as components of an imperial architectural 'signature', to understand firstly how much the architectural language of Trajan's Forum is inspired by or differs from that of his predecessors - i.e. Caesar, Augustus, Vespasian - and secondly if some of the decorative motifs of the frieze types constitute a recognisable Trajanic imprint, thanks to the analysis of the iconography of the breastplates of the imperial cuirassed statues (from the Augustan to late Antonine period).
Chapter 2.
The Forum of Trajan

2.1. Introduction

From an urban and architectural point of view, a forum was a monumental square surrounded by porticoes sometimes with exedras, with an axial plan. Essentially quadrangular in shape, a forum could have different dimensions and orientations, depending on the space and any pre-existing structures. Usually the one side was emphasized by a temple dedicated to the divinity protecting the emperor. The presence of the emperor was evoked repeatedly through statues representing him on horseback or on four-horsed chariots, through inscriptions bearing his name or via symbolic references of the iconographies and the decorative motifs (Carettoni 1960). The juridical and administrative activities took place in the civil basilicas when provided, while cultural activities were focused on the libraries and the galleries of statues (Morselli 1994). The architectural plan, monumentalized by the great dimension and by the luxurious decoration, became a model exported and reproduced in the Roman provinces.

Fig. 2.1. General reconstructive plan of the Imperial Fora superimposed on the modern city. Forum of Trajan (A, with an old reconstruction of the Temple of Divine Trajan), Forum of Caesar (B), Forum of Augustus (C), Forum of Nerva (D), Temple of Peace (E).
The Imperial Fora (figs. 1.2, 2.1, 2.2) in Rome constitute five monumental complexes commissioned by different emperors, in line with the topography of the monarchic - Republican Roman Forum, to support and supplement the latter's religious, political
and administrative functions. According to their inauguration, the first one was the Forum of Caesar (46 BC, restored by Trajan and re-inaugurated at the same time as the Forum of Trajan), followed by the Forum of Augustus (2 BC), the Temple of Peace (AD 75), the Forum of Nerva (AD 97), and the Forum of Trajan (AD 112 and 113) (Coarelli 1995a: 119-145). Thus, the Forum of Trajan was the fifth and last of the Imperial Fora.

This chapter is structured in four main sections: the first section is an outline of the history of excavations of the Forum as background for the identification of the setting and location of the friezes; the second section concerns the construction and organisation of the Forum as the premise to the third section, in which each component of the complex of Trajan’s Forum and its decoration is discussed. The fourth section regards context and function of the Forum, according to the construction policy of the emperor Trajan and more generally to his political propaganda.

2.2. Excavations through the Centuries

The 1991-2007 excavation campaigns were the first to consider the evidence of all chronological periods of the area of Trajan's Forum, not just the Roman (Santangeli Valenzani 2007: 115-65; Meneghini and Santangeli Valenzani 2006). For the first time it has been possible to retrace the history of this complex after it was abandoned, including its excavation over the centuries (Packer 2001; Milella and Pensabene 1989; Meneghini and Santangeli Valenzani 2007). Discoveries during this recent campaign are the evidence that at the beginning of the 16th century the area of the Imperial Fora was the most densely inhabited in this part of the city of Rome causing a considerable rise in ground level since the Roman period (Meneghini and Santangeli Valenzani 2007: 159-60). More importantly, for this thesis, this greater understanding of the overall history of the area contributes to the more secure identification of original locations of the architral friezes.

The excavation history of this Forum can be divided in five main phases:

1. After Trajan's death, down to the end of 10th;
2. Recorded discoveries between the 16th and 18th centuries;
3. Excavations of the Basilica Ulpia by the French in 1812-14;
4. Via dei Fori Imperiali 1930s;
5. Millennium excavations of Forum square.
The more significant elements for the study of the Forum of Trajan started coming to light with the beginning of the systematic excavations during the French occupation. Nevertheless, each phase of the investigation was full of unexpected discoveries and new acquisitions, which gradually added new information for the reconstruction and the comprehension of the whole Forum.

2.2.1. After Trajan's Death, Down to the End of 10th Century

There is a number of ancient textual references to the use of Trajan's Forum after his death. As we will discuss below, Hadrian commissioned the completion of the north sections of the Forum and he built a temple to deified Trajan there (Hist. Aug., Adr. 19.9; Section 2.4.10). Cassius Dio mentions a triumphal arch awarded by the Senate in AD 117 to Trajan to celebrate his victory over Dacians (Cass. Dio, Hist. Rom. 68. 29. 3). In AD 118 Hadrian burned tablets with the records of people's debts to the state treasury in a dramatic ceremony in the Forum of Trajan (Cass. Dio, Hist. Rom. 64. 8; Hist. Aug., Adr. 7. 6). In AD 170 Marcus Aurelius, so as not to impose any extraordinary tax on the provincials, held a public sale of the imperial furnishings and gold in the Forum to raise money for the Marcomannic war (Hist. Aug., Marcus 17. 4). In the 3rd century Alexander Severus and Tacitus erected statues in the Forum (His. Aug., Sev. Alex. 26. 4; Hist. Aug., Tac. 9. 2), as did Valentinian and Valens between AD 364 and 375 (see Lanciani 1894: 314). According to two manuscripts of the 5th century, between the end of the 4th and the beginning of the 5th century rhetoric was taught in the Forum, where there were also many statues of contemporary poets and rhetoricians (see Milella and Pensabene 1989: 36), and still at the end of 6th century Venantius Fortunatus wrote about comments to Vergil and poems read there (Ven. Fort., Carm. 3. 18; 7. 7; 8. 26).

The decline of the Forum started in the 7th century. Anastasius the Librarian wrote that in AD 663 Constantine III stole statues and ornaments from the Forum (see Nibby 1839: 211). However in the 8th century the Forum was probably in good condition as it is mentioned in the Einsiedeln itinerary as a place to visit (see Hülsen 1907: 417). The earthquakes of AD 801 and 896 (see Moroni 1855: 129) and the obstruction of the main sewer Cloaca Maxima surely also contributed to a progressive decay. Furthermore, Nibby (1839: 208) wrote that during the excavations 1812-14, traces of a
fire were found, dated to the 10th century because there are no records of destructions in the Forum until the end of the 9th century (see Milella 1989: 37). In the 10th century the Forum was almost completely buried under debris (Bartoli 1924: 178). The area was designated *Campus Caloleonis* or *Caroleonis* (field of Caloleo). This name, 'Campo Carleo' in Italian, used for this area until the 19th century, is possibly derived from the owner of the land, the Byzantine officer Kaloleo (Pani Ermini 1974: 16; Cecchelli 1938: 97-125).

### 2.2.2. Recorded Discoveries between the 16th and 18th Centuries

On the elevated ground level churches and monasteries were built, particularly in the 15th and the 16th centuries (fig. 2.3).

![Fig. 2.3. Churches built in the area of Trajan's Forum: 1. S. Nicolò 'ad Columnam'; 2. S. Maria in Campo Carleo or Spoglia Christi (or Cristo); 3. S. Spirito; 4. S. Bernardo; 5. SS. Nome di Maria; 6. S. Maria di Loreto; 7. S. Eufemia; 8. S. Lorenzo di Ascesa; 9. S. Urbano; 10. S. Romualdo; 11. S. Abbaciro.](image-url)
In the 16th century, during the works to build the church of S. Maria di Loreto, fragments of an architraval frieze with griffins and candelabra were found and then exhibited in the Della Valle-Bufalo Palace, Frieze Type Ib (1-6) (Uggeri 1840: 34, pl. 20) (Section 4.3.11). Between 1541 and 1547 the area of the square of the Forum where the Monastery of the Holy Spirit stood, called Spolia Christi or Spoglia Cristoi in 'Campo Carleo', was massively stripped down to find materials for Saint Peter's factory (Cascioli 1921: 367-68). In the vegetable garden of S. Maria in Campo Carleo was a 'Marble Wall', with a frieze still standing in the 15th century. In fact, Drawing III (2) attributed to Domenico Ghirlandaio (fig. 6.4) (Section 6.2.2; Bartoli 1924: 187; Viscogliosi 2000: 92, 147-50; Meneghini 2009: 128, 130) shows an architraval frieze with cupids giving drink to griffins which the artist mentioned as 'visible at Spoglia Christi', and which completes the decorative motif of the relief found in the area and now exhibited in Berlin, Fragment III (1), where only the cupid survives (Section 6.2.1). A cupid is sketched also in Drawing III (3) attributed to Cronaca (fig. 6.5), with the note that it was located at Spoglia Christi as well (Section 6.2.3). The precise provenance of Fragments IV (1 and 2) is unclear because of contradictory records referring to their discovery either during the pontificate of Clemens VIII Aldobrandini (1592-1605) near the church of S. Eufemia in the 16th century, or in excavating the foundations of the church of SS. Nome di Maria two centuries after in 1736. They were later transferred to the nearby Villa Aldobrandini (Section 7.2.8).

In 1566-1572 the area was reclaimed and the ground level rose further. The previous valley was transformed by Cardinal Bonelli into a residential area, with new buildings and streets covering the neglected Forum (see Ponti 1933: 72-75, 83-86; Farina 1994). In 1575 Gregory III built a wall enclosing the base of Trajan's Column to preserve it from the marsh surrounding it. In 1586 Pope Sixtus V gave the same Cardinal Bonelli permission to excavate in the area where the Temple of Divine Trajan was traditionally located, to rebuild his palace, the later Palazzo Valentini (see Lanciani 1902: II, 127). Many sculptures were found during those works (see Van Buren 1933: 497). In 1532-36, while in Rome, Marten Van Heemskerck sketched a drawing representing a detail of a fragment of an architraval frieze with taurochthonous Victories in the court of the Della Valle - Bufalo Palace, VIb (1) now in Munich, which came from the Forum (Hülsen and Egger 1913-1916: II, 23, pl. 8) (Section 9.3.2).
From the second half of the 17th century to the first half of the next century, the plans of the city of Rome reveal an area crowded with houses (Meneghini and Santangeli Valenzani 2007: 160) (fig. 2.4). The 15th century church of S. Bernardo near Trajan's Column was demolished in 1695 and on its site between 1736 and 1741 the Church of SS. Nome di Maria was erected (Milella 1989: 82). The church stands in correspondence with the north-eastern 'library'. During the construction of the church new fragments were discovered, and among them fragments of columns (Milella 1989: 82) and the inscription (CIL VI 966) in which Hadrian honoured Divus Trajan and Plotina as his parents (Micheli 1984; Claridge 2007: 92).
2.2.3. Excavations of the Basilica Ulpia by the French in 1812-14

Fig. 2.5. The area excavated in 1811-14 with the ruins found by Lesueur.

The first real systematic excavations in the Forum were made during the French domination of Rome (1809-14). In particular, between 1811 and 1814 the Commission of the Embellishments of the French government defined the project of an investigation in Trajan's Forum as an archaeological excavation. The Commission wanted to restore 'the second city of the empire' to its former splendour through public works (Packer 2001: 20). The original level was uncovered and the ruins were surrounded by an elliptical shaped enclosure called the 'wall of Pius VII' (1800-1823), because it was completed by that pope (Tournon 1855: 275), and which is still visible. Fragments from an architraval frieze with eagle-headed griffins and candelabra (Sections 4.3.8-4.3.10) and cupids in acanthus (Sections 8.2.5-8.2.7) were found. The excavations focused on the Basilica Ulpia (Uggeri 1840: 12). By the end of this exploration, the excavated area included the courtyard of the Column, a part of the
portico of the 'libraries', the central part of the Basilica Ulpia and the Forum's north side (fig. 2.5).

In 1824 the French Academy in Rome's Villa Medici sponsored a new excavation to explore the north-east side of the Basilica Ulpia (the area now under via Alessandrina), and to check the exact length of the central part of the building, entrusted to its pensionnaires in Architecture (Morey 1835; Lesueur 1877; Packer 2001: 26-27).

In 1838 many more inscriptions and fragments were found in the area of the eastern portico of the Basilica Ulpia, including fragments from an architraval frieze with cupids with vegetal-ending legs (Canina 1851), V (1-4). Some years later, in 1849, three other fragments of the same frieze were re-discovered in the same area (Canina 1849; Canina 1851) (Sections 8.2.1-8.2.4). The director of these new excavations was Luigi Canina, an important architect and a scholar of ancient architecture, who recognised the relationship with the different buildings of the complex and produced reconstruction drawings of the façade of the west portico, hypothesizing that the attic storey was decorated by pavonazzetto marble Dacian statues (Packer 2001: 27).

2.2.4. Via dei Fori Imperiali 1930s

Fig. 2.6. Aerial view of the Alessandrino neighbourhood in 1920s.

The next important excavation campaign was organized between 1928 and 1934, during the Fascist regime (Ricci 1911; 1913; 1931; Insolera and Perego 1983; Leone and Margiotta 2007; Leone et al. 2009; Packer 2001: 32-47), which endorsed the
proposal of the archaeologist Corrado Ricci for the exploration of all of the Fora. At that time, the Imperial Fora were covered by houses of a fairly poor neighbourhood, called Alessandrino, consisting of small buildings made of low-quality materials (fig. 2.6). Mussolini approved a project to build a street connecting the Colosseum with the balcony of his office in Piazza Venezia, the current via dei Fori Imperiali. He destroyed this neighbourhood of private dwellings, and the ruins of the Fora discovered underneath became a set design for the military parades of the dictator (Insolera and Perego 1983: 15). The excavation covered a wider area than that of the French domination, but was certainly not managed according to any systematic criterion. Indeed, it was a rushed dig, a clearance, where the archaeologists of Ricci's team were forced, given the limited time, to concentrate on the imperial evidence and not on the ruins of other historical periods (Insolera and Perego 1983: 18) (figs. 2.7-2.10).

Fig. 2.7. General view of the demolitions of the Alessandrino neighbourhood.
Fig. 2.8. The eastern exedra in 1924-1925.

Fig. 2.9. The western library, view from the top of Trajan's Column.
Fig. 2.10. Corrado Ricci inspecting the fallen architraval frieze depicting a Victory killing a bull from the Basilica Ulpia, Fragment VIa (1).

These excavations revealed some of the structures built in the area before Trajan: the walls of the western library, the south-west side of the Basilica and the eastern exedra of the square of the Forum (Ricci 1931; De Gregori 1937).

However, the excavation journals were unfortunately very brief and general, lacking any technical record of the findings and the acquired data. Indeed, only large fragments of well-preserved decoration were reported. Among the findings, the excavation journals reported two fragments from an architraval frieze with Victories killing bulls, VIa (1 and 2) in an area known as Testa Spaccata (Ricci 1931: 117-122) (figs. 2.10 and 3.2 a no. 107; Sections 9.1 and 9.2.2), and a fragment of an architraval frieze with a griffin, a vase and a candelabrum, Ia (1) (Section 4.2.1). The death of Corrado Ricci in 1934 first, and then the beginning of the Second World War stopped all the Fascist works, except for a discovery made during the construction of a fallout shelter under Palazzo Valentini, where two enormous fragments of grey granite columns 4 m long, thought to have decorated a temple, were recovered (infra, pp. 22, 49; Packer 2001: 47). After the Second World War the excavations were interrupted for some decades, until new interventions began in the 1980s.
2.2.5. Millennium Excavations of Forum Square

After some university catalogue projects and excavations of the Soprintendenza Archeologica di Roma (S.A.R.) held in the 1980s (Packer 1997: 47), the most recent and complete excavation campaign in the Imperial Fora and consequently in the Forum of Trajan, was made between 1991 and 2007 by the Sovrintendenza Comunale (Superintendency of the City Council of Rome, now Sovraintendenza ai Beni Culturali di Roma) and it is still partially going on (Meneghini and Santangeli Valenzani 2007; Meneghini 2009). As we will outline (Section 2.4), these new excavations have transformed the traditional reconstruction of the monumental complex, particularly in the north and the south areas.

Specifically, this recent project has uncovered a substantial part of the square, previously hidden by structures built on top of the ruins of the monumental complex in later historical periods. The foundation trench of the equestrian statue of Trajan was discovered towards the southern end of the square (Section 2.4.1), in line with the middle of the exedras of the porticoes (Ungaro et al. 2004: 25; Meneghini and Santangeli Valenzani: 86-87; Meneghini 2009: 118-20). At the north end of the complex, grey granite columns traditionally attributed to the façade of the Temple of Divine Trajan, according to these recent excavations, were part of a monumental propylaeum entrance to the Forum from the Campus Martius. Instead of a temple under Palazzo Valentini, ruins of brick structures were found, related to a district developed on the north side of the Forum. The question of the location of the Temple of Trajan remains yet unresolved. Very recently, though, thanks to cores under Palazzo Valentini, it is possible to hypothesize that part of the district was demolished to build the foundations of the Temple to the north of the complex of Trajan's Forum (Section 2.4.10). As we will see below (Section 2.4.11), the 2007-2010 excavations for the construction of Line C of Rome's Metro had shed light on the setting of the area on the north-west side of the Basilica Ulpia and Trajan's Column.

2.3. The Construction and Organisation of Trajan's Forum

At the end of the 1st century AD, the valley between the Capitoline Hill and the Quirinal Hill was transformed into a monumental area formed by public buildings and wide squares. The two hills delimited the area on the west and north side. On the north side it was closed by the slopes of the Quirinal Hill and on the south side by the low
Velian Hill. Fora of Caesar and Augustus, the Temple of Peace and the Forum of Nerva had completely occupied the level land, so that there was no space available for other complexes. The only solution was a total transformation of the area, cutting the hilly saddle which connected the Quirinal and the Capitoline Hills to obtain new land to widen the monumental site. Work on the construction of the Forum probably started between the end of the reign of Domitian and the beginning of Trajan's (AD 95-105) (Bennett 1997: 154). Domitian started the excavation of the area (Bennett 1997: 154; Bianchi and Meneghini 2002: 412-13) levelling the land for a fifth forum, which was later resumed and finished by Trajan (Bennett 1997: 155) to become the Forum of Trajan. This was surely a major work because the saddle started from the top of the Quirinal Hill (where Trajan's Markets stand 40 m above sea level) and went down to a street called Clivus Argentarius and the Basilica Argentaria in the Forum of Caesar, 18 m above sea level. On the south side the saddle extended until the Forum of Augustus, on the north side up to the place where later Trajan's Column was built. The area excavated to build the Forum had a volume of 316,000 m³ (Meneghini and Santangeli Valenzani 2007: 83). However, we have no information about the volume of the buildings standing above the saddle, only that among them there was the ancient Atrium Libertatis (Bianchi and Meneghini 2002: 399-400) (infra, pp. 42-44).

According to the Fasti Ostienses the Forum was inaugurated in January 112 (Vidman 1982: 48) with the Basilica Ulpia, while the Trajan's Column was inaugurated in AD 113 (CIL XIV, 4543), possibly with the southern porticoed courtyard (Claridge 2010: 181), and the Temple of Divine Trajan was dedicated by Hadrian probably in AD 125/126 (Claridge 2010: 190). The construction of the Temple was financed by the proceeds from the sale of the booty brought from the conquered Dacia (modern Romania) after two military campaigns (AD 101-102 and 105-106) (Aul. Gel, Noct. Act. 12. 25). The complex was 300 m long and 185 m wide, almost as great as all the others put together (Bennett 1997: 153). Cassius Dio explicitly mentions that Trajan's Forum was the project of Apollodorus of Damascus (Cass. Dio, Hist. Rom. 69. 4. 1-2), the military engineer who accompanied Trajan during the Dacian war and who already built great constructions for him, such as Trajan's Bridge over the Danube, Trajan's Baths, the hexagonal harbour of Ostia, triumphal and honorary arches (Calcani 2001: 4).
The north side of the complex was completed after the death of Trajan, in fact bricks dated to the Hadrianic period were found in the area of the 'libraries' (Section 2.4.9), and Hadrian commissioned the building of a temple dedicated to Divine Trajan after his adoptive father's death (Section 2.4.10). In particular, according to Claridge (2013: 10, 15; 2014) there have been three phases of the construction of Trajan's Forum: a first phase, in AD 112-113, when the courtyard of the Column was built as the extension of the Basilica Ulpia, and the Column was dedicated. A second phase was in AD 114 before the military campaign to Parthia (Cass. Dio, *Hist. Rom.* 68. 11. 3), when some changes in the 'libraries' were held, as demonstrated by bricks dated to AD 114-115 (Section 2.4.9). The third and last phase is Hadrianic, in AD 119-126, when the Senate decreed to bury Trajan in the Forum and Trajan's Column became his tomb. The Temple of Trajan was built facing it (on axis or at angle), the so called 'libraries' beside the courtyard of the Column were modified and the size of order changed.

Probably the Forum of Trajan was built not just to celebrate the emperor (Section 2.5). Rather, it was necessary to enlarge the buildings for the administration of justice, moved at the end of the Republic from the Roman Forum to the Forum of Caesar, and then to that of Augustus. Between the reigns of Augustus and Nerva the magistrates (praetores) increased from ten to eighteen. New typologies of courts (the court of the emperor, that of the senators, and that of the urban prefect) were added to the criminal courts built during the Republic (quaestiones perpetuae) and still operative (Meneghini and Santangeli Valenzani 2007: 84). The result was a need to build new structures for the civil and criminal justice; in fact it is attested that in Trajan's Forum judiciary activities also took place in courts of law (Aul. Gel., *Noct. Act.* 13. 25. 2), and new laws were frequently posted (Lugli 1950: 73-78; Packer 1995: 349).

A basilica closed the western side of the square. Since Republic Basilica and Forum associated: the square where commercial and financial businesses were transacted in open air, the Greek agora, was brought together in one construction with the typical Roman basilica, where legal business was held under cover (Bennett 1997: 154-55). Before the discovery of the true shape of the south end of the square, in Zanker's (1970) and later Coarelli's opinion (1984: 133-34; see also Gros 2000), the Forum reproduced the scheme of the principia, the headquarters building in the middle of a Roman fort, because in the squares in the middle of the military camps the front was
closed by a basilica as well. According to this interpretation, the meaning of this urban plan is that Trajan, who took power through his military career, wanted to focus on his strictly military policy, building a monumental military camp in the middle of the city, in the area reserved for the civil negotia. However, this type of plan, even if it really has military origins, had already applied to civil uses.

The architraval friezes which are the subject of this study decorated this Forum, and it is vital to give a full description of the complex, to better understand the context in which the friezes were inserted. In this description, we will discuss the current state of knowledge of each structural component of the Forum, its decoration and its function. This description is informed by past and more recent excavations, as well as by references by ancient authors and representations (e.g. on coins). It includes an indication of the locations for the architraval friezes but the reasons behind the identifications of these locations will be discussed properly in the following chapters.
Below we will describe the topography of the Forum of Trajan and the different sections of this complex, according to the studies of the scholars who excavated in those areas (Meneghini and Santangeli Valenzani 2007: 83-114, 151-58; Ungaro 2007: 192-211; Meneghini 2009: 117-63). The most recent excavations have transformed the traditional reconstruction of the monumental complex. In particular, a wide section of the square was uncovered, hidden before by other structures built over the ruins of the monumental complex in other historical periods and by the gardens of via dei Fori Imperiali (fig. 2.11, 2.12). In some cases, as we will discuss below, the scholars proposed their theories to integrate the new evidence into an architectural scheme. It is, however, now possible to draw a complete plan of the complex (Meneghini and Santangeli Valenzani 2007: 83-114; Meneghini 2009: 117-63) (fig. 2.13).

Fig. 2.12 a and b. Aerial photographs comparing the area of Trajan's Forum at the beginning of 1980s (a) with the same area after 1998-2000 excavations (b).
Meneghini's new restored plan of Trajan's Forum (fig. 2.13) is more elaborate than the previous ones. The Forum of Trajan was decorated with coloured marbles coming from all over the empire, and formed by a square (A) with towards one end the colossal equestrian statue of the emperor, lined by porticoes (B) with semicircular exedras (C). The square was closed on the north side by the Basilica Ulpia (G) with its façade (G1) and exedras (G2), and on the opposite side by a three-segmented hall (E) with its façade (D). Behind the central segment, a porticoed courtyard connected the Forum of Trajan with that of Augustus (F). Behind the Basilica Ulpia there was the courtyard where Trajan's Column still stands (H) between the so-called 'libraries' (I), and on the north side a hypothetical building on the same axis with Trajan's Column, identified as a monumental propylaeum (J), where traditionally the Temple of Divine Trajan had been located.
Fig. 2.13. Reconstructed plan of the Forum of Trajan. A. The square of the Forum and the base of the equestrian statue of Trajan; B. Porticoes of the square of the Forum; C. Exedras; D. Southern columnar façade; E. Three-segmented hall; F. Southern porticoed courtyard; G. Basilica Ulpia, G1. its façade and G2. its exedras; H. Courtyard of Trajan’s Column; I. 'Libraries'; J. Building on axis with Trajan’s Column identified as a monumental propylaeum.
2.4. The Components of Trajan’s Forum and their Decoration

2.4.1. Forum Square (A)

*Fig. 2.14. The square of Trajan's Forum (A) today.*

The square of the Forum (fig. 2.14), 110 m long and 85 m wide, was a large, open rectangular space, defined architecturally by the buildings surrounding it and the colossal statue placed on axis towards one end. It was dominated at the north end by the façade of the Basilica Ulpia (Section 2.4.7). There was an equally monumental columnar façade at the south end (Section 2.4.4), thus the two shorter sides were in dialogue with one another across the length of the open square. It was flanked on the longer sides by porticoes with *pavonazzetto* marble columns without figurative friezes but only vegetal ornament. The square was paved by white Luni marble slabs, stripped away in the Middle Ages (Meneghini and Santangeli Valenzani 2007: 86; Meneghini 2009: 118). The buildings on all sides were raised 3 or 4 steps above the level of the square, and the steps could be sat upon. One of the great discoveries of the 1991-2007 excavations, though, is that the equestrian statue of Trajan, the *Equus Traiani* had not stood in the centre of the square, but 20 m to the south, because of the evidence of the pedestal of the monument found in this position (Meneghini 2001: 253-54) (fig. 2.15). Thanks to this important information we are certain that the monument was north-oriented (facing the Basilica Ulpia), because if had been south-oriented it would have been compressed on the south wall closing the square on this side (*infra*, p. 34). The monumental façade at the south end framed it from behind, instead. Comparing the *Equus Traiani* to the proportions of the equestrian statue of Marcus Aurelius on the Capitoline Hill, it is possible to hypothesize that the statue of Trajan was 10-12 m high.
(including the pedestal) (Meneghini 2009: 120). Such a height justifies the admiration of Constantius II described by Ammianus Marcellinus, who wrote that Constantius II, while visiting Rome in AD 357, was amazed by the huge equestrian statue of Trajan and by the surrounding buildings, which evidently were still standing, in use and magnificent (Amm. Marc., Res. Gest. 16. 10. 15-16). The square was used for political, commercial and ceremonial affairs (Sections 11.2 and 11.3).

Fig. 2.15. The excavation trench of the Equus Traiani found during the 1998-2000 excavations. The travertine block is the only one found in situ.

2.4.2. Porticoes (B)

On the long sides of the Forum Square (fig. 2.13 A) there were two porticoes (fig. 2.13 B) with two exedras (fig. 2.13 C). Only the foundation of the portico on the east side is visible; the other one has never been seen but is presumed to lie under via dei Fori.

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1 As Constantius II gazed in wonder at the Forum of Trajan "he abandoned all hope of attempting anything like it, and declared that he would and could imitate simply Trajan's horse, which stands in the middle of the court with the emperor on its back. (When Constantius proposed to erect an equestrian statue comparable to that of Trajan) "First emperor, quipped Hormisdas, who was standing next to the emperor, order a comparable stable to be built, if you can. For the horse which you intend to make ought to roam as widely as the one at which we are looking". 

31
Imperiali. The porticoes were 112 m long and 14.8 m wide (Claridge 2010: 184). Three steps connected the square with the porticoes, whose floor level was higher and paved by coloured marble slabs with geometric patterns. Each portico was decorated by 26 Corinthian *pavonazzetto* columns. On the top, the marble entablature was decorated on both sides by a frieze with simple vegetal motifs (Ungaro et al. 2004: 28-29; Section 12.2.2; fig. 12.8). Above the entablature there was a high attic decorated by bases in correspondence to the columns, where traditionally the scholars locate colossal statues of Dacian prisoners in Luni marble. The Dacians were depicted as proudly subdued, according to the policy of the respect for the defeated enemy (Meneghini and Santangeli Valenzani 2007: 88) (fig. 2.16).

![Fig. 2.16. Reconstruction of the eastern portico.](image)

Since antiquity, in the area of the Forum of Trajan, numerous fragments and entire statues of Dacians, in white and different coloured marbles and sizes have been found. In the attic storeys, the statues of the Dacians alternated with *clipei*, big marble shields, which portrayed members of the imperial family. Many fragments were found, and in particular three of them were discovered during the excavation of the Fascist period: an headless cuirassed bust, an incomplete colossal portrait of Trajan's father


Marcus Ulpius Traianus or his adoptive father Nerva, and an almost complete portrait of Agrippina Minor, mother of Nero (Ungaro 2007: 208). All these sculptures can be dated to Trajanic period. They would be part of a sort of gallery of images of members of the imperial dynasty and the history of the principedom, as an ideal continuation of the gallery Augustus exhibited in his Forum (Section 12.2.2, p. 367).

The porticoes are likely to have been designed to be used for law courts, as in the Forum of Augustus (Claridge 2010: 184). They were related to the function of the exedras, which had figurative friezes.

2.4.3. Exedras (C)

In the centre of the rear wall each portico opened out into a huge semi-circular exedra (figs. 2.13 C and 2.17), with a diameter of 40 m, entered through a screen wall composed of 12 Numidian yellow marble pillars. Decoration of the interior of exedra in elevation is not known in detail, only that it centred on a large statue niche, but walls presumably contained statue niches, probably on two levels, as in the Forum of Augustus. The architraval frieze of the niche was decorated by pairs of eagle-headed griffins in heraldic position facing candelabra: Fragment Ia (1) was found in 1929 (Milella 2004: 62-63) (supra, p. 23; Section 4.2.1). Meneghini (2009: 125) argues that the exedras were higher than the porticoes, because in the wall above the roof of the porticoes there was a row of windows to illuminate the internal space. In Claridge's opinion (2014) the necessary light could have been provided by a clerestorey rising on the Forum side, above the roof level of the porticoes (which may have had flat roofs, accessible as pedestrian terraces).

During the Fascist excavation two incomplete colossal marble statues of a togate man and a cuirassed one were discovered (supra, p. 23), possibly originating from the niches of the exedra. If so, the sculptures presumably were part of a gallery of illustrious men, perhaps belonging to the imperial family (Meneghini and Santangeli Valenzani 2007: 92) (supra, p. 32). In addition to statues galleries, the exedras, like those in Augustus' Forum, were designed to provide a suitably impressive venue for judicial procedures (Claridge 2010: 184).
2.4.4. Southern Columnar Façade (D)

The south side of the square was traditionally interpreted as a semi-circular wall decorated by columns; in the middle there was a majestic triumphal arch, connected with the west side of the Forum of Augustus (Bartoli 1924). However, the results of the 1998-2000 excavations demonstrated that, on the south side, the square ended with structures aggregated in a very articulated complex, whose purpose was to ensure a gradual passage between the Fora of Trajan and Augustus.

Meneghini's proposal of the elevation reconstruction (2001: 258-60) is that at the south edge of the square there was the monumental façade in three-sections, with a rectilinear central sector and two lateral oblique sectors, called southern columnar façade (fig. 2.13 D). It was decorated by 16 colossal Corinthian columns of coloured marbles, 40 Roman feet high (11.82 m, 17.5 m with base, capital and entablature), 8 on the rectilinear central sector, and 4 per side along the two lateral oblique sectors (Viscogliosi 2000: 91, 147-50). Among the finds from the new excavations is an element of architraval frieze belonging, from its features, to a continuous architrave in the central segment and not to a protruding architrave (Meneghini 2009: 93-94). The reconstruction made by Meneghini (fig. 2.18) according to this element is very similar to the monumental façade depicted on the coins with the writing *Forum Traian(um)* (fig. 2.21), although the coin image shows only 6 columns instead Meneghini's 8.
The recent excavation also revealed, in the middle of the foundation of the central sector, a large fragment of an architrave (141.5 cm x 98.2) belonging to the entablature above the central sector (Meneghini 2009: 130). The fragment has the same dimensions of those of a drawing by an anonymous of the 16th century showing the architrave of the inner side of the wall delimiting the southern side of the Forum, which was still standing at that time. In the Pergamon Museum of Berlin there is a fragment of an architraval frieze with a cupid found in the 16th century in this same area, III (1) belonging to this entablature, whose iconography is completed by Drawings III (2 and 3) of the same entablature, showing a cupid giving drink to a griffin (Section 6.2).

According to Meneghini (Meneghini and Santangeli Valenzani 2007: 86), the different dimensions of the lateral colonnades and the central one were probably due to the function of the central sector, conceived as the perspective background for the Equus Traiani, which would be proportional to the size of the statue.

2.4.5. 'Three-segmented Hall' (E)

Behind the monumental southern columnar façade (fig. 2.13 D) lies the so-called 'three-segmented hall' (fig. 2.13 E) following the line of the façade (fig. 2.19). This was a long hall, 10 m wide, roofed by a barrel vault, whose function is unknown. Nothing remains of the pavement apart from the marks of the marble slabs which covered it (Meneghini and Santangeli Valenzani 2007: 95). According to comparison between the imprints of the slabs and different marble types, those marks are compatible with porphyry marble, which would have covered 900 m². If so, Meneghini (2009: 135) hypothesizes that it can be identified with the Porticus Porphyretica mentioned by the literary sources as part of the Forum but never identified. Claridge (2007:90f) argues that the double-sided Marble Wall, and the evidence of paving in the same size of slabs as the Forum square could equally suggest and unroofed space, i.e., a street.
Fig. 2.18. Reconstruction of the monumental façade (D) of the three-segmented hall (E) on the southern side of the square of the Forum.

Fig. 2.19. Aureus with the image of a sector of the Forum, identified as the monumental façade (D) of the three-segmented hall (E).

2.4.6. Southern Porticoed Courtyard (F)

Through two doors on the rectilinear central sector it was possible to reach the area behind the three-segmented hall (fig. 2.13 E), the so-called southern porticoed courtyard (fig. 2.13 F), connecting the Forum of Trajan with that of Augustus. Trajan would have necessarily ordered the destruction of some structures of the Augustan complex to build this area, in particular the small exedra decorating the western
portico of the Forum of Augustus (Section 12.2.2, pp. 366-67). In its place a courtyard was built, surrounded on three sides by covered porticoes (fig. 5.10). The latter is a discovery of the 1991-2007 excavations (Meneghini and Santangeli Valenzani 2007: 98) (fig. 2.20; Section 2.2.5; Section 5.2.2). According to the Fasti Ostienses (CIL XIX, 4543), Trajan dedicated the rebuilt Temple of Venus Genetrix in the Forum of Caesar in May AD 113, together with something else in his own Forum whose name is not readable, and Claridge (2010: 181) hypothesizes that perhaps it could have been this courtyard and whatever it was once attached to. The courtyard, 25 m long and 27 m wide, was a sort of almost square atrium. While three sides had porticoes, the fourth was the perimetral wall of the Forum of Augustus, free of porticoes. Compared to the other buildings of the Forum, the courtyard was not that large, but its function would have been relevant because it was decorated by splendid marble decorations on the walls, the floor and the portico ceilings (Meneghini 2007: 98). The pavement of the central empty area was almost entirely removed during the late Middle Ages. Three steps connected the courtyard with the porticoes. According to the fragments discovered during the recent excavation, the three side porticoes were decorated by Corinthian Carystian or cipollino columns, 11 m high. Slabs of the same marble were used on the rear walls of the porticoes, possibly with niches maybe on two orders (Meneghini 2009: 136). In Meneghini's opinion (Meneghini and Santangeli Valenzani 2007: 98) Fragment II (1) found here reveals that the uncovered side of the courtyard (figs. 2.13 F, 5.1) was decorated along the entire entablature by an architraval frieze with pairs of griffins confronting tripods, perhaps alternated with candelabra (fig. 5.16; Section 5.2.1).
Meneghini (2009: 138) argues that in the south side of the courtyard there would have been a wide portal, framed by columns, because of the find of the marks of bases of columns, which connected the courtyard with the Augustus' Forum by some steps, and perhaps, in correspondence with the long sides of the porticoes, two other lateral smaller passages. The most recent excavation also revealed some fragments of a marble balustrade, with an inscription of bronze letters originally covered by gold leaf, 15 cm high. The inscription included the first titles of the official name of the still-living emperor Trajan, and probably was related to the construction of the Forum. This balustrade was on the top of the entablature and the inscription possibly was repeated also on the other sides of the courtyard (Meneghini and Santangeli Valenzani 2007: 99) (fig. 5.16). The presence of the steps and the central portal led the archaeologists excavating in this area to change their initial ideas about how the courtyard was used: initially they thought it could have been a restricted area isolated from the rest of the complex; their current view is that it was primarily the only direct communication between the Fora of Augustus and Trajan (Meneghini 2009: 139), since it is difficult to believe that this courtyard, possibly also richly decorated with niches all around, was conceived simply as a passage (Meneghini 2009: 139). For Claridge (2010: 181; 2014) instead, it may have been designed primarily to give access to a building on its unexcavated south west side, towards the Forum of Caesar.
2.4.7. The Basilica Ulpia (G)

The west side of the square of the Forum was formed by the monumental façade of the Basilica Ulpia. Named for the gens Ulpia, Trajan's family name, it was inaugurated on the same day as the Forum in January 112 but paid for by Trajan from his own money (Claridge 2010: 184). The Basilica Ulpia (fig. 2.13 G) faced on its south-eastern side the square of the Forum and on the north-western side the courtyard of the Column and the 'libraries'. This building was totally demolished during the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, and this is the reason why the studies about it have been problematic (Amici 1982: 65) (figs. 2.21 and 2.22). Five steps connected the pavement level of the square with that of the Basilica, which was built on a concrete platform.

It was 170 m long and 60 m wide, the biggest ever built in Rome (Coarelli 1995a: 134). The height of the entire is a matter of conjecture: according to Amici (1982) and Meneghini (2009: 146) it was 40 m high and almost completely hid Trajan's Column, which was in fact not visible from the square. In Packer's opinion (2001: 180) it was 85 Roman feet high, ca. 26 m. The interior was divided into five naves by four rows of Corinthian grey granite columns from Egypt, 8.8 m high. An upper colonnade around the central nave was decorated by Carystian marble. The central nave measured 88 m x 25 m (Claridge 2010: 185).
In the façade (fig. 2.13 G1), usually reconstructed on basis of coins (infra, p. 41) there were three entrances (corresponding to three foreparts facing the square) (Meneghini and Santangeli Valenzani 2001: 101; Meneghini 2009: 139-41) and two superimposed orders with Numidian marble columns. Facing south-east, this yellow marble will have been enhanced by sun. The main entrance, decorated by 4 columns, had greater dimensions and the two lateral entrances were decorated by only 2 columns.

Fig. 2.22. Three-dimensional location of the 2001-2004 excavations in correspondence to the eastern sector of the Basilica Ulpia (G).

On the entablature, on the architrave running above the columns, there was a frieze with cupids and vegetal elements whose fragments were found in the excavations of 1800s, V (1-4) and Drawings V (5-8) of another lost one (Section 8.2). According to Meneghini (2009: 146) on the architrave were depicted the insignia of the legions which joined the Dacian wars, and the inscriptions with their relevant names. Above the entrances there was a high attic storey, with pavonazzetto colossal statues of Dacian prisoners, aligned with the columns of the entrances. Traditionally among the statues of the Dacians are located reliefs representing stacks of weapons and trophies of the enemies at the end, fragments of which were found both in old and most recent excavations (Amici 1982: 66). The façade of the Basilica is depicted on a reverse of a Trajanic aureus of AD 113 (fig. 2.23), where above the front structures are clearly
visible statue groups, two two-horse chariots on the lateral entrances, and the four-horse chariot of the triumphant emperor on the main one (Meneghini and Santangeli Valenzani 2007: 101).

![Fig. 2.23. Aureus of Trajan with the stylized façade of the Basilica Ulpia (G1).](image)

Inside the Basilica the four lateral naves were two-storeys high and 6 m wide, the height of the central nave ceiling is estimated at almost 25 m, the height of its pitched roof was ca. 29 m. Two exedras, with radii of 22 m, closed the short sides of the Basilica (fig. 2.13 G2). Inside them, according to Milella's hypothesis there would have been the architraval frieze with sphinxes facing candelabra, whose fragments were found in the storeroom of the Basilica Ulpia, VII (1-6) (Section 10.2). Based on the fragments found in the 1932 excavations, above the lateral naves there were concrete barrel vaults covered by false ceilings. The central nave was very different, though: it was delimited by grey granite columns, and above them on the first order there would have been an architraval frieze decorated by Victories killing bulls alternating with Victories decorating candelabra, two big fragments of which were found in 1932, VIa (1 and 2) (infra, p. 22; Sections 9.2.1 and 9.2.2). On the top of this
first order of the central nave there would have been a second order, decorated by *cipollino* columns (Meneghini and Santangeli Valenzani 2007: 103). According to Meneghini (2009: 146), two staircases connected the first order with a gallery divided into two naves at the second floor. The central nave extended for another 10 m. The walls were opened by windows which may have been decorated by a third order of columns (Milella 2004: 57-58; Meneghini 2009: 146).

It provided prestigious covered space for law courts and it was also the venue for distributions of imperial largesse and other acts of generosity such as the cancelling of public debts (Claridge 1988: 163). Here Marcus Aurelius held and auction of imperial valuables to raise money for his wars (*Hist. Aug.*, *Marc Ant.* 27.4-5), and Commodus gave *congiaria* and public appearances (*Hist. Aug.*, *Comm.* 2.1).

The Basilica Ulpia was also used for the manumission of slaves (Sid. Apoll., *Pan. ad Ant.* 544), inheriting this function from the *Atrium Libertatis*. In a fragment of the *Forma Urbis*, the Severan marble plan of the city of Rome displayed on a wall of one of the libraries of the *Templum Pacis*, is represented the eastern exedra of the Basilica Ulpia (fig. 2.13 G2), with the inscription 'Libertatis' (fig. 2.24). It refers to the *Atrium Libertatis*, which in the Republican period was the archive of the censors, where the *tabulae*, the tablets with the lists of the free citizens, were safeguarded. Cicero (Cic., *Att.* 6. 17. 7) and Suetonius (Suet., *Gal.* 19) wrote that the Forum of Caesar would have extended until the *Atrium*, on the saddle connecting the Capitol Hill with the Quirinal, which was destroyed to build the Forum of Trajan. First mentioned in the 3rd century BC, it was reconstructed in the century after, and again, totally, by C. Asinius Pollio in 39 BC. It was the first public library of Rome (Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* 7. 115; 15. 10) with a gallery of sculptures described by Pliny (see Carnabuci 2006: 181). It was also the seat of the *manumissiones*, liberations of the slaves, the atrium 'of freedom' is named after (Coarelli 1993: 133-35; 1995 a: 134-35). The *Atrium* was destroyed to build Trajan's Forum and its functions were seemingly transferred to the Basilica Ulpia.
Fig. 2.24. The Basilica Ulpia according to the Forma Urbis.

Judicial documents and Pollio's book collection would have been moved to the Bibliotheca Ulpia. According to the traditional theories, they were in the libraries flanking Trajan's Column. In Meneghini's opinion (2002: 665), the legal archives of the Bibliotheca Ulpia could have been in the exedras of the Basilica Ulpia. The literary sources mention a *bibliotheca templi Traiani* (Aul. Gel., *Noct. Act.* 11. 17. 1) and a *bibliotheca Ulpia* (Hist. Aug. Aurelian. 1. 7, 10. 8. 1 and 24. 7; Numerian. 11. 3; *Prob.* 2. 1; *Tacit.* 8.1), with juridical material necessary to the activities of the courts into the Forum. Meneghini (2009: 148) hypothesizes that possibly the *bibliotheca Ulpia*, also because of the name, could have been located near the courts, perhaps in correspondence to the exedras of the Basilica Ulpia.

Scholars have different ideas about the passage from the Atrium to the Forum of Trajan: according to Castagnoli (1946: 280) the functions related to the *Atrium Libertatis* were transferred not only to the Basilica, but to the whole Forum of Trajan. Otherwise Coarelli (1995a: 113) trusts in the *Forma Urbis*, where the inscription '[Atrium] Libertatis' is exactly under the eastern exedra. At least, Lugli (1946: 284) thought that only the ceremony of the *manumissio* of the slaves was transferred to the Basilica from the archive of the censors, where it was made before. I agree with Coarelli: in the fragment of the *Forma Urbis* marble plan in correspondence to the eastern exedra there is the inscription 'Libertatis', it is reasonable that the missing word 'Atrium' could correspond to the opposite western exedra, whose *Forma Urbis* fragment is missing. Maybe the reason why the smaller exedras of the Forum of Augustus (*supra*, pp. 36-7; Section 12.2.2, pp. 366-67) could have been demolished is that the judiciary activities held in the Forum of Augustus could have been transferred.
to the Forum of Trajan. Therefore, literary sources and archaeological evidence reconstruct that the exedras of the Forum of Trajan were seats for judiciary activities just like the hemicycles of the Forum of Augustus, and in particular in the Basilica Ulpia were held those functions made before in the *Atrium Libertatis*.

### 2.4.8. Courtyard of Trajan's Column (H)

The courtyard of Trajan's Column (fig. 2.13 H) was lined on the south side by the north wall of the Basilica Ulpia, and on western and eastern sides by porticoes. According to the Severan *Forma Urbis*, on the north-west side of the Column courtyard there would have been a colonnade. In Hadrianic period this colonnade was removed and the paving extended, supported on foundations whose dating is confirmed by brickstamps from AD 123 and 125 (Claridge 2007: 85-7; 2013: 9-10).

Trajan's Column (fig. 2.25) still stands in the middle of the courtyard (figs. 2.13 H and 11.2), between the 'libraries' (fig. 2.13 I). Carved in Luni marble, the Column is 100 Roman feet high (29.60 m) without the pedestal and it is decorated by a 200 m long spiral relief representing the military campaigns against the Dacians. The 23 spirals of the bas-relief would perhaps allude to a giant *volumen* (Settis 1988, Coarelli 1999). The lower part illustrates the first campaign (AD 101-102), the top half depicts the second (AD 105-106). The two sections are divided by a Victory writing on a shield flanked by trophies.

The Column was almost completely invisible from the area outside the Forum, because it was surrounded by very high buildings. Nevertheless, some details of the episodes represented in the reliefs would have been readable from the terraces of the porticoes and the upper floors of the libraries and the Basilica Ulpia. Inside the hollow Column there is a spiral stair with 185 steps and 45 little windows giving access to the platform above, where a golden bronze statue of Trajan stood. Already represented in the coins of the Trajanic period (fig. 2.26), it went missing in the Middle Ages and was replaced in 1587 by a statue of Saint Peter. The four sides of the pedestal are decorated by reliefs representing stacks of weapons and two Victories hold the dedicatory inscription celebrating the settlement of the area (Coarelli 1995a: 135).
According to the inscription, the first function of the Column was to recall through its height the original level of the saddle cut to build the Forum, but after Trajan's death it was also used as a funerary monument: the ashes of Trajan were placed by Hadrian in a golden urn under the Column (Cass. Dio, Hist. Rom. 49. 2). Claridge (2013: 11-15) hypothesizes that the frieze could be Hadrianic in dialogue with the temple (Section 2.4.10). The door beneath the inscription leads to the internal spiral staircase, which gave the Column the nickname 'coclide', from the Latin word *cochlea*, the snail whose shell forms exactly a spiral.
2.4.9. 'Libraries'(I)
On the east and west sides of the courtyard of Trajan's Column (fig. 2.13 H) there were two halls identified as 'libraries' (fig. 2.13 I), 20 m long and 32 m wide. The western 'library' was completely excavated in 1932, while a part of the eastern one still lies under the modern road surface and the church of SS. Nome di Maria of the 18th century (Meneghini 2009: 146). During the excavations of the Napoleonic period a part of the perimeter wall was found (supra, pp. 18-19). In the 1932 excavation (supra, p. 22), the western 'library' and a part of the Basilica Ulpia were covered by a concrete flat roof (fig. 2.27). As already mentioned (supra, p. 44), according to the Forma Urbis there would have been a colonnade along the north sides of the 'libraries'. That of the north side of the east library would lie under the church of SS. Nome di Maria, and S. Maria di Loreto is close to the west one.

The so-called 'esedra arborea' (tree exedra), a garden flanking via dei Fori Imperiali, was built above the flat roof. The entrance to the 'libraries' was directly from the portico surrounding the courtyard of Trajan's Column (fig. 2.13 H), through two monumental doors decorated by two columns. In the middle of the short side of each one of the buildings, on the opposite side of the entrance, there were two niches, one above the other. The pavement was decorated by coloured marble slabs, and the walls
were divided into two architectural orders framing two rows of niches, traditionally interpreted as cupboards for the *volumina*, papyrus scrolls, the books of the Romans (Meneghini 2002: 671), with the niches of the first order reachable through some brick steps, and those of the second order through an external staircase. These 'libraries' would have housed the imperial archives and collections of laws and the *libri lintei*, linen scrolls on which the names of the magistrates were traditionally written (Coarelli 1995a: 135).

![Fig. 2.27. Structures of the western 'library' (I) covered by a concrete flat roof in 1932.](image)

Recent studies suggest that the internal decoration of the 'libraries' had been changed from the original plan (*supra*, p. 25). In the original project instead the two smaller ones, a single bigger order was planned, which would have automatically excluded the function of the niches as bookcases (Meneghini 2002). The replacement double order is reconstructed as 12.12-12.28 m high (Claridge 2007: 84 note 150). The 'libraries' were inserted, as confirmed by the recent excavations, in articulated twin constructions with stairways, towers with stairs and monumental halls (Meneghini 2009: 151). In Claridge's opinion (2007: 83), though, these two buildings appear singularly ill-
designed for the storage and consultation of precious documents and books, and they could be more likely to be *auditoria* with honorary statue galleries.

When Trajan's Forum was built, structures of a pre-existing commercial building (*horrea* or *tabernae*) of the 1st century AD were destroyed and covered by soil and concrete (forming the platform of the courtyard of Trajan's Column). Thanks to some brickstamps included in the concrete, it is possible to date this concrete between AD 125 and 128, during the reign of Hadrian (Meneghini 2002: 689-692) and it is therefore possible to trace the building phases of this sector of the Forum: either Trajan may have commissioned the building of the libraries between AD 107 and 115, and inaugurated the Column in 113, or the construction of the 'libraries' may have started slightly after Trajan's death (AD 118-19) but was interrupted in progress. In AD 125-128 his successor Hadrian completed to a modified design the courtyard (which in the meanwhile remained an open construction site) and the internal set-up of the two rooms (*supra*, p. 26; Meneghini 2009: 155; Claridge 2010: 190; 2013: 9-10).

**2.4.10. Area North of Trajan's Column (J)**

![Fig. 2.28. Sestertius of Trajan, reverse with the stylized façade of the Temple of Trajan.](image)
A temple was dedicated by Trajan's adoptive son and successor, Hadrian, to the Divine Trajan and Faustina in AD 121: it was the only building Hadrian ever constructed that he wanted his name on (Hist. Aug., Adr. 19. 9) and may have been one of the few buildings commemorated on Hadrianic coinage (Claridge 2010: 190-91, fig. 70d; 2013: 10-11). The external façade of the Temple could have been depicted on some Trajanic coins (fig. 2.28), showing a temple which could have been Trajan's one. After the discovery in 1695, in correspondence with the southern façade of Palazzo Valentini (Micheli 1984), in the foundations of the medieval church of S. Bernardo (fig. 2.3, no.4), of an inscription of Hadrian dedicated to the divine imperial couple (CIL VI, 966), traditional studies of this sector of the city place the Temple of Divine Trajan on the north side of Trajan's Column (where Palazzo Valentini stands) (fig. 2.13 J), aligned with the Column (fig. 2.13 H). This location was supported by the discovery, during many excavations under Palazzo Valentini such as the 1832 and 1865 campaigns, of several fragments of colossal Egyptian grey granite columns. A part of one of those columns, 8 m long, and the related capital, 2.08 m high, was lifted in 1836 and placed on the floor close to Trajan Column. These over-sized fragments of the column and the capital, belonging to a column 60 Roman feet high, 18 m, with a 50 feet shaft, together with other fragments, such as architectural elements of Luni marble cornice with the identical style of the decoration of the Forum, are not compatible with the other known buildings of the Forum, and were ascribed to an octastyle temple, perypterus or perypterus sine postico, arbitrarily reconstructed with horseshoe-shaped porticoes flanking it (Gatti 1934: 133).

However, since the 1991-2007 excavations and the study of documents in the archives in Rome, Meneghini (1998: 127-48) has asserted that the Temple built by Hadrian was not where it was assumed to be, because there was no evidence of the podium. In line with the Column of Trajan and the 'libraries', the ancient ground level would have been 2 m under the open courtyard of the Column. This is the place that Meneghini has identified as the platea Traiani, mentioned by Symmachus (Symm., Epist. 6. 37), proposing that the columns, attributed in the past to the façade of the Temple (e.g. Zanker 1970: 523; Settis 1988: 37-38), would have instead belonged to a monumental entrance propylaeum (fig. 2.13 J) on the north side of the complex. According to Meneghini (1998; Meneghini and Santangeli Valenzani 2007: 112) this propylaeum
would have been the main entrance to the Forum through the *platea* from the neighbourhood in the north of the city called Campus Martius.

Nevertheless, the location of the Temple is still a matter of debate: Packer (1997: 276-83) had considered the traditional hypothesis valid; La Rocca (2004) interpreted the system of Column-libraries as the real Temple of Divine Trajan; and Gros (2005) viewed this system as a dynastic sanctuary. Claridge (2007) has hypothesized the presence of a Temple dedicated to Trajan not aligned with the Forum and located in correspondence with the courtyard of Palazzo Valentini, on the north side of the Forum. As just mentioned, for the team of the Sovraintendenza ai Beni Culturali di Roma, according to the results of the 1991-2000 excavations, on the spot where this Temple has been proposed there would have been a monumental propylaeum. Thus, the very recent discovery of seven vaulted rooms in the basement of Palazzo Valentini (Cavallero et al. 2011) allow a new interpretation of the fragments of the column and the capital, which could have belonged to a temple with only one row of 6 columns in the façade (prostyle hexastyle), and on a recently found large podium with the seven cross vaulted rooms (camerelle) covered by tufa blocks (fig. 2.29). Only future cores may shed light on the sequence of the structures, and in case of discovering the foundations of the external order, to understand the real typology of the building (Corradetti 2012).

The proposed location of the Temple of Divine Trajan outside the area of the Forum, according to the most recent interpretations (Cavallero et al. 2011), is important for this study, because in the past many architraval friezes had been assumed to decorate a Temple of Trajan sited (but then unlocated) inside the (Packer 2001: 84-85, 187). Given that the friezes are not of a suitable size to fit the temple or the propylaeum, their connection with a temple must be excluded.
Fig. 2.29. Reconstruction of the Temple of Divine Trajan, in yellow, according to the 2001 discovery. No. 10: seven cross vaulted rooms (camerelle). On the left side, in red, the area on the north-west side of the Forum of Trajan.

2.4.11. Halls North-West of Trajan's Column (K)

Recently very close to the complex of Trajan's Forum, to the north-west side of Trajan's Column, the 2007-2010 excavations for the construction of Line C of Rome's Metro discovered a monumental complex ascribable to a public building of Hadrianic period in Piazza Madonna di Loreto (figs. 2.29 nos. 1 and 2; 2.30 K). It consisted of three large halls, laid out in an arc along a curved road (fig. 2.30 K nos. 1-3) (Meneghini 2009: 159-61; Egidi et al. 2010; Rea 2014: 109-11). According to Claridge (2013: 9), the halls face a monumental curving portico, in turn facing onto a square, in the area where traditionally was reconstructed a curving temple precinct with a street on the outside. This complex is identified as a two-storey high auditorium, built in AD 123-125 as attested by brickstamps dated to those years (Rea
Fig. 2.30. Plan of the complex (K) to north-west of Trajan's Column (H), identified as an auditorium formed by three halls (1-3). A fourth building (4), possibly a library, was part of the complex. I. 'Libraries' beside Trajan's Column; J. Building on axis with Trajan's Column identified as a monumental propylaeum.

2014: 109), used by rhetoricians and orators to entertain audience in cultural activities and public lectures (fig. 2.31). Two of the three halls forming the auditorium were excavated (fig. 2.30 K nos. 2-3), they contained two opposed sides of banks and fragments of the coloured marbles covering them still remain. They kept unchanged their original functions until late the 5th century, as attested by limited restorations and the discovery in both the halls of two pedestals with inscriptions mentioning the erection of statues by the prefectus Urbi Fabius Felix Passifilus Paulinus (second half of 5th century) (Orlandi 2010; Rea 2014: 109). The auditorium was part of a wider complex, which included on its south side another building, interpreted by Claridge (2007: 76-82; 2013: 9-10) as a library (fig. 2.30 no.4). However, according to Rea (2014: 109; Amici 1982: 9) the large dimensions of the presumed library, as reconstructed so far, do not fit with the street running around the western apse of
Trajan's Forum, possibly "the continuation of the curved street flanking the three halls of the auditorium, from which they could be accessible" (Rea 2014: 109). The discovery of the halls and portico affects the study of question of the architraval archival friezes because the stylobate found in these excavations attests that there was a colonnade of the portico, and the finds from S. Maria di Loreto could have come from this colonnade of the portico to the west.

**Fig. 2.31. Reconstruction of one of the halls of the auditorium.**

### 2.5. The Context and the Functions of the Forum

The aim of this section is to focus on the construction policy of the emperor Trajan and more generally on his political propaganda expressed through the monuments he commissioned during his life, to support a critical evaluation of the traditional theory that the design and decoration of the whole Forum was funerary in concept, predicting Trajan's apotheosis.

Imperial ideology was based on the specific link between the emperor and Rome. The emperor embodied the city of Rome which was the head of the state, connecting indissolubly the emperor, the city and the empire (Ael. Aris, *Enc. Rom.* 11; Palombi 2012: 35). Since the beginning of the empire, Rome was the face and the expression of
its *maiestas*. The first emperor, Augustus, commissioned the building of more than one hundred monuments, buildings and infrastructures in Rome, presenting them as a part of new foundation of the city (Staccioli 1987; Zanker 1989; Levick 2010). Augustus' successors solely controlled the urban space, and from the city centre to the suburbs the monumental and infrastructural plans reflected the political and cultural programmes of the emperors. The empire was considered eternal, guaranteed by the gods to the emperors introducing themselves as protectors, restorers or new founders of the city (Palombi 2012: 35).

The construction policy of Trajan was focused, except for his most famous monument, on works of infrastructure designed for the security and well-being of Rome and her subjects. These programmes, according to the economic, demographic and social policy of the emperor in Italy, differentiated the legitimacy of power deriving from military valour and the good governance of Trajan as *Optimus Princeps* from the conception of theocratic power of Domitian. The emperor commissioned the restructuring of the *annona*, the grain supply of Rome, the improvement of the water supply of the city and the maintenance of the thermal baths and the entertainment buildings (Aur. Vict, *Epit.* 13. 5). Trajan identified the basis of security, welfare and pleasure in his grain supply and in the entertainment programme, the well-known *panem et circenses* (Juv., *Sat.* 10.81; Palombi 2012: 36). Through this policy of consensus, Trajan was able to obtain social unity, cohesion of the people and political loyalty (Fron., *Princ. Hist.* 20. A 259). Furthermore, the programme of construction works, including his massive Forum project, will also have given work to thousands of workers: the gigantic machine of consensus nourished itself on public works, conveying enormous resources to provide the empire's capital with the scenery in which the lords of the world acted (Pensabene 2002: 11; Meneghini 2009: 117).
Fig. 2.32. Plan of Rome. Green colour indicates the buildings commissioned or restored (hatching) by Trajan in the city centre.

Not only did Trajan commission new buildings, he also completed many structures commissioned by Domitian (fig. 2.32). In the 4th century AD Ammianus Marcellinus wrote that Trajan had the habit of putting his name everywhere, not as a simple restorer but as a founder of monuments, and for this reason he was nicknamed 'pellitory': unde eum herbam parietinam iocando cognominarunt (Amm. Marc., Res Gest. 27. 3. 7), as if he were a "creeper growing over the monuments of the past" (Bennet 1997: 144). He ordered restoration of the aqueducts *aqua Marcia* and *Anio Novus* and construction of the new *aqua Traiana*. To improve the grain supply, he ordered the building of a new harbour, the *portus Traiani* (AD 106-113) and the reorganization of the river harbours along the Tiber (Ael. Arist., Enc. Rom. 7. 11-13). He also commissioned Trajan's Markets, the Baths of Trajan and those named after his friend Licinius Sura on the Aventine Hill (Cass. Dio, Hist. Rom. 68. 15. 3; Aur. Vict., Epit. 13.8), and ordered the restoration of the Flavian Amphitheatre and the *Ludus*
Magnus, the Odeon of Domitian and building of a Naumachia Traiani, a venue for the naval battles and the unusual circular shaped theatrum Traiani (Paus., Perieg. 5. 12. 6). Trajan also established the new imperial horseguards (equites singulares).

Outside Rome, the emperor commissioned the thermal baths and aqueduct of Centum Cellae (Civitavecchia), the harbours of Terracina and Rimini, the via Traiana connecting Benevento with Brindisi, the Arches of Benevento and Ancona. Moreover, in the provinces he founded colonies and ordered building of several public works (Paribeni 1926-27: 115-49; Bennet 1997: 142-43; Roldán Helvás 2010: 17-20), such as the Alcantâra Bridge and the Segovia Aqueduct in Hispania, the Temple of Nîmes in Gaul and the Nymphaeum in Miletus and the Library in Ephesus (Campo Carrasco and Pèrez Marcia 2010: 263).

In terms of his religious policy, Trajan built a few temples but most of all commissioned important restorations of existing ones. The emperor had reputedly a special link with the father of the gods: he was associated with the throne by Nerva in front of the altar of Jupiter Optimus Maximus (Cass. Dio, Hist. Rom. 68. 3. 4), and delegated by the god to reign, assuming the title of Optimus (Pliny, Pan. 10. 4). In the panegyric of Trajan, composed by Pliny the Younger to express his gratitude for having been appointed consul by the emperor, he wrote that Trajan was elected by Jupiter, ab Iove electus (Pliny, Pan. 1. 5). This divine adoption strengthened the image of the emperor, who also associated himself with the demigod Hercules (Pliny, Pan. 14. 5), related to the cult of the imperial virtue of the victory (Campo Carrasco and Pèrez Marcia 2010: 243). In addition, his wife Plotina was connected with the goddess Pudicitia (Pliny, Pan. 83). He restored the house of the Vestal Virgins and the Temple of Vesta in the Roman Forum, symbol of the most ancient civic religion which was related to Trajan's annona policy. Trajan restored the Temple of Venus Genetrix in Caesar's Forum (Vidman 1982: XIII 1,5,205) and vowed a temple to his adopted father Nerva and to his real father. We have no proof that it was ever dedicated, however not until the third decade of the 2nd century (Boatwright 987: 94, Claridge 1993: 20-22; Packer 1995: 348).

However, the most important urban enterprise of the emperor was the Forum of Trajan, the last and greatest of the Imperial Fora. This monumental complex can be
seen as the maximum expression of Trajan's political propaganda (Cadario 2012: 104). A forum, since the first 'imperial' set up under Caesar, had essentially the celebratory function to glorify its founder. In Trajan's Forum, defined by Settis (1988: 37) as "a route of extraordinary monumental eloquence", architecture and sculpture spoke of triumph (Davies 2004: 131), introducing to the viewer a dramatic propagandistic message about Trajan's enterprises. In designing the Forum of Trajan the aim was to underline the magnificence and the authority of Trajan, exalting the communicative function of the architecture (Campo Carrasco and Pérez Marcia 2010: 253). The archaeological evidence, the remaining architecture, statues and reliefs, bear witness to these building programmes of Trajan, described in the ancient sources. According to the surviving fragments of the general figurative programme, the Forum expressed the concepts of *victoria Romanorum*, *virtus Augusti* and *gloria exercitus* (victory of the Romans, military valour of the emperor, glory of the army) (Hamberg 1945: 170; Leander Touati 1987: 27). The dominating theme of Trajan's Forum is the exaltation of the victorious military leader. The great victory of the Dacian wars was celebrated by a colossal equestrian statue erected in the square, the *Equus Traiani*, probably inspired by the *Equus Domitiani* of the Flavian emperor Domitian (Cadario 2012: 105) destroyed in AD 96 after his memory was damned (Coarelli 1995a: 83). On the façade of the Basilica Ulpia there was a chariot, and also cuirassed statues of the emperor that played a part in the exaltation of the emperor. The statue on the top of Trajan's Column represented the emperor in armed nudity, and it was quite an innovation, because it was inspired by late Republican models of generals, which had been abandoned at the beginning of the Julio-Claudian age, and partially revived in the Flavian times (Cadario 2012: 105-06).

The second theme of the Forum is the commemoration of military valour, expressed by the statues of the Dacians, of generals, and the triumphant chariots. The inscriptions above the façade of the Basilica Ulpia commemorated the military troops which fought in the Dacian campaigns. Roman soldiers were able to defeat the powerful Dacians, like those visible on the attic storeys, standing proud, but with hands tied. The shields with portraits and the panels with stacks of weapons exalted the glory of the Roman army over the defeated Dacians, and other inscriptions *ex manubiiis*, from the spoils of war, underlined that the conquered enemy supported the construction of the Forum with the booty. The Great Frieze of Trajan celebrated, like the reliefs of
Trajan's Column, the end of the victorious Dacian campaigns and the conquest until the final triumph (Packer 2001: 190) (infra, p. 59; Chapter 3, p. 71).

In the complex of the Forum, the monument which merges the two topics of the exaltation of the emperor and the celebration of military strength, also linking together all the other monuments, is undoubtedly Trajan's Column. On the Column the strict link with the soldiers was displayed, highlighting the phases of the war, inventing a new monument in terms of the spiral carved column, and introducing the emperor as a real comrade-in-arms, sharing with the soldiers the same labours. In fact, Dio Chrysostom (Dio Chrys., Log. 1. 28-29) and Pliny the Younger duly described Trajan as a comrade-in-arms, and someone who even remembered the names of his legionaries (Pliny, Pan. 13; 15. 3-5; 19. 3). Trajan himself called his soldiers comrades in arms (Traj., Dig. 29. 1. 1; Pliny, Ep. 10. 20). The army had a major role in the propaganda: soldiers were not only the protagonists of the military episodes represented, but also the main audience of the messages launched by the reliefs depicting them. Trajan entrusted the army to fight the enemies of the empire, and by disciplining, organizing and improving its training he transformed it into a perfect instrument of his expansion policy (Roldán Helvás 2010: 21).

Contemporaries stated that the emperor inaugurated a new golden age, *rara temporum felicitate* (Tac., Hist. 1. 1; Agr. 3. 1), an era of happiness and well-being obtained through the victories over the enemies at the far edges of the empire. Thus, the power of the emperor was legitimised by the military valour and the exemplary rule of Trajan *Optimus Princeps*. Cassius Dio indeed called him the *philopolémos princeps*, war lover (Cass. Dio, Hist. Rom. 68. 7. 4), a professional soldier celebrated because he abandoned the barbarian 'control policy' in favour of an expansionist one (Flor., Intr. 8).
The detailed depiction of the qualities of the commander and the perfect comrade in arms on Trajan's Column gives an alternative image: if in the reliefs of the Column Trajan seemingly avoids fighting in the frontline, so as not to needlessly risk the life of the leader, the virtue of the emperor is shown in other reliefs, as in the above-mentioned Great Frieze of Trajan, later recycled in the Arch of Constantine (supra, p. 58; Chapter 3, p. 70). The emperor, this time in the frontline, leads the charge of the cavalry rapidly subduing the Dacians (fig. 2.33).

The same iconography of the central image of the Great Frieze is also on the metope VI of the Trophy of Trajan at Adamklissi, Romania (Florescu 1965) (Chapter 12, p. 369, 371) (fig. 2.34). Both the representations on the Column and on the Great Frieze together constructed the identity of the brave emperor who shared the labours of the soldiers (Cadario 2012). The decoration of the complex as a whole celebrated the conquest of Dacia, and the glorious military enterprise of the emperor whose figure was everywhere: as the almighty winner, in the Basilica Ulpia as the wise administrator and the pontifex maximus, in the column as the smart general. Trajan's Forum was in effect a stone biography where the different phases of the life of the hero were revealed (Packer 2001: 190).
Many scholars have interpreted this glorification as a prediction of Trajan's apotheosis (Zanker 1970; Settis 1988; Davies 2004; La Rocca 2000; Galinier 2007): the figurative programme would introduce to the viewer a dramatic propagandistic message about Trajan's life and afterlife. In designing the Forum of Trajan the purpose would have been to highlight the magnificence, the authority until the apotheosis of Trajan, exalting the communicative function of the architecture (Campo Carrasco and Pèrez Marcia 2010: 253). In fact, according to this interpretation the burial of Trajan in the pedestal of his column would represent the apex of a general allusion to the glorification and the future apotheosis of the emperor, who would have stood on the top of the Column as the deceased and consecrated hero (Packer 2001: 191).
Apotheosis properly signified the elevation of a deceased emperor to divine honours. This practice, which was common upon the death of almost all the emperors, appears to have arisen from the opinion among the Romans, that the souls or manes of their ancestors became deities; and it was natural to publicly pay divine honours to a deceased emperor, who was regarded as the parent of his country (Smith 1875: 105). In the earliest times Romulus is said to have been admitted to divine honours under the name of Quirinus (Plut., Rom. 27. 28; Liv., Hist. 1.16; Cic., de Rep. 2.10); but none of the other Roman kings appears to have received this honour, and in the Republican period we hear on no other instance of apotheosis. The emperor Augustus, however, broke with this tradition and had Julius Caesar recognized as a god after his death (Suet., Iul. Caes. 88); and the example thus set was followed in the case of the other emperors (Smith 1875: 106), and also extended to some women of the imperial family. The practice of worshipping an emperor during his lifetime, except as the worship of his genius, was in general confined to the provinces.

The protocol denied an emperor public burial until the Senate decreed it, and this could not happen until after his death (Davies 2004: 10). It was a voluntary gift from the state, and any attempt on Trajan's part to pre-empt the honour seems weak and unlikely in principle (Claridge 2013: 6). Claridge (2013: 10; 2014; personal communication 24/4/2014) suggests that Trajan could not think about becoming divine during his life, and affirms that the theory that he commissioned a figurative programme alluding to his apotheosis in his afterlife is incorrect. Scholars who do not accept that the Forum could have been funerary in concept with the Column designed for Trajan's burial, argue that the complex included the Column just as an honorary monument exalting Trajan for his victories across the Danube, and that it was redesigned as a tomb only after Trajan's death (Claridge 2010: 190; 2013; 2014).

This consideration will have repercussions also on the specific topic of this research. In fact, the symbolism of the architraval friezes has often been read in the light of the apotheosis of Trajan; however, as will be detailed below, a different interpretation related to the civic and not funerary function of the buildings of the complex of the Trajan's Forum can be proposed.
PART II. THE FRIEZES: DESIGN, PLACE AND MEANING

In this part of the research we will analyze 26 fragments and 14 drawings of architraval friezes that are decorated with different decorative motifs: eagle- or lion-headed griffins with tripods or candelabrum, cupids with spiral vegetal-ending legs giving drink to griffins with candelabra and kraters, cupids with spiral vegetal-ending legs with vegetal elements, Victories killing bulls and decorating candelabra, sphinxes and candelabra. Their individual iconographical types, with these seven decorative motifs, are examined across seven different chapters: Chapter 4 concerns eagle-headed griffins, candelabra and vases, Type I; Chapter 5 eagle-headed griffins and tripods, Type II; Chapter 6 eagle-headed griffins and cupids, Type III; Chapter 7 lion-headed griffins, cupids and vases, Type IV; Chapter 8 cupids in acanthus, Type V; Chapter 9 Victories killing bulls and dressing candelabra, Type VI, and Chapter 10 sphinxes, Type VII.

For each type we will provide a comprehensive physical description of the extant evidence (remaining fragments and drawings of aspects of these friezes), discuss the location of the frieze within the complex, identify the iconography, analyze the comparison with other artworks with the same subject matter, and propose hypotheses concerning the symbolism behind the choice of the decorative motifs and iconographical types of the architraval friezes in the Forum context.

Chapter 3.
The Architraval Friezes

3.1. Description

In Roman architectural decoration the entablature is the upper portion of a building, set above the columns and below the roof. The entablature has three main parts: architrave, frieze, and cornice. When the frieze and the architrave are carved in the same block, this section of the entablature is called an 'architraval frieze' (Grana and Matthiae 1957) (fig. 3.1). For the first time all the figurative reliefs of the architraval friezes with an ascertained provenance from Trajan's Forum are studied together here. Of course, many other studies have been concerned with the architectural structures of the Forum and their figurative decoration (among them, Pensabene et al. 1989; Packer 1997; Milella
1995 and 2004). Usually, among the friezes, just the most important and best-preserved reliefs are considered to exemplify the typology of decoration of the entablatures of the buildings of the Forum. Thus, the element of originality of this research is that it reunites all the known figurative reliefs, also comprising a composite of fragments related to a given frieze design, which are housed in museums in Italy, Vatican City, Germany and France and have never been studied together before. They have always been known, but relegated in the catalogues of each single museum and, except for the best known examples in the Vatican Museums and the Museum of the Imperial Fora at Trajan's Markets, are sometimes mentioned but not examined in depth and in connection with the others, as in the case of the reliefs in the Louvre.

Fig. 3.1. Architectural elements and decorations in the Forum of Trajan.
Within the parameters of this thesis, it was necessary to make a selection, and so we have considered only the friezes with figurative motifs. This means that the fragments of the cornices which could be connected to the architraval friezes are not included in the following chapters, and neither are the many other fragments of friezes with just vegetal decoration, not least because they were already analysed in other studies about the architectural decoration of Trajan’s Forum (supra, p. 62). Nevertheless these fragments are discussed below when they are compared to other records to better understand the original location of the friezes, for instance, in case of Fragments V (2-4). Furthermore, as the frieze and the architrave are carved from/in the same block, sometimes fragments of the architrave still survive with the relief. We are limited to just describing them, as they are also not part of this study.

3.2. Location

Arguments about how the available evidence has been used to establish the placement of the architraval friezes within the Forum complex are based on the works of Packer (2001), and in particular, the most recent studies by the team of the Sovrintendenza ai Beni Culturali di Roma according to the important discoveries of the excavations of the last ten years (Sections 2.2.5 and 2.3 p. 29). Their general studies and reconstructions about the Forum have also allowed the identification of the precise location of the figured architraval friezes. The hypotheses of the scholars have sometimes changed through time following new interpretations of the results of the excavations; here they are brought together. In some cases this study supports the conclusions of these scholars, further enhancing our understanding through an evaluation of resources not previously taken into account.

In this study, the locations of these friezes can be established by matching together all references concerning them, and all the available resources, which are essentially made up of excavation reports and findspots, drawings and studies of the architectural decoration and relevant reconstructions of the architectural orders.

Excavation records: as highlighted, written records of the findspots of sculpted blocks which became buried over time, together with surviving fragments of the friezes, are fundamental for understanding the general or even specific location of the architraval friezes and their correspondence to the buildings they once decorated.
**Drawings:** artists who came from other regions or countries to visit Italy used to make sketches, drawings or paintings of either ancient ruins or architectural fragments still visible in the cities they visited. It was a way to remember the highlights of their tours and to practise comparing their art to the great artworks of the artists of the past. In this specific case, some artists from the Renaissance to the 1800s visited Rome, and depicted either ancient ruins still visible in their original locations, or those moved to the palaces of the aristocratic families. Their drawings are very useful, because sometimes they accidentally represent among the other marbles, ruins and statues, the reliefs that are the subject of this research.

**Study of the architectural decoration and the relevant reconstruction of the architectural orders:** in cases where these other sources of information are missing, detailed analysis of aspects of the architectural decoration, such as the carving marks or the shape and dimensions of the block, together with an examination of the possible appearance of the ancient building, can often be the only method to reconstruct the architectural orders and propose the location for the architraval frieze.

As is evident from the discussion in Chapter 2 (Section 2.2.1), after its abandonment and over the following centuries the ground level in the Forum of Trajan rose and Roman remains became buried beneath medieval churches and other structures. This meant that collapsed sections of the buildings forming the complex of Trajan's Forum remained in their original place until their discovery (Meneghini and Santangeli Valenzani 2007: 159-160). It also meant that the main relocations of these remains after their discovery have been registered in ecclesiastical or municipality registers.

Since her first studies (1989), Milella has catalogued all the recorded discoveries such as reliefs, statues, sections of buildings and architectural decoration, columns, inscriptions found in the Forum over the centuries. She has divided the forum into 21 areas, according to the later structures built above the Forum after it was abandoned. Among these 21 areas (Milella 2004: 55), starting from the south-eastern side there are: S. Maria in Campo Carleo or Spoglia Cristo, Marble Wall, square of the Forum, square of Trajan's Column, central area of the Basilica Ulpia, via di Testa Spaccata, Macel de' Corvi, S. Eufemia, SS. Nome di Maria, Palazzo Valentini, S. Maria di Loreto (fig. 3.2). Moreover, the new excavations have added to this list the southern porticoed courtyard (Section 2.4.6). These divisions are of great assistance in structures in
Fig. 3.2 a and b. a, Trajan's Forum area in the 1748 in the map of Rome by Giambattista Nolli. b, Comparison to satellite image.
Trajan's Forum. The first historical mention of one of the areas, Marble Wall, in the vegetable garden of the church of S. Maria in Campo Carleo (fig. 3.2 no. 121), appears in a document dating to 1263 (Adinolfi 1881: 54-55; Milella 1989: 59).

The records of the other discoveries of Roman remains followed from the early 16th century, and among them it is possible to highlight those that included the architraval friezes, which were found in the following chronological order:

- 1521-27, S. Maria di Loreto: Fragments Ib (1-7) with eagle-headed griffins and candelabra and vases (Chapter 2, p. 16; Section 4.3)
- 1540, north-eastern side of the square of the Forum: architrave drawn by Antonio da Sangallo the Younger connected with Fragment Ia (1) (Chapter 4, p. 77)
- 1602, S. Eufemia: Fragments IV (1 and 2) with cupids and lion-headed griffins in the Vatican Museums, according to Fanucci (Chapter 2, p. 16; Section 7.2.4)
- 1736, SS. Nome di Maria: Fragments IV (1 and 2) with cupids and lion-headed griffins in the Vatican Museums, according to Albertolli (Chapter 2, p. 16; Section 7.2.4)
- 1838-48, south west side of the square of the Trajan's Column: Fragments V (1-5) with cupids and vegetal elements (Chapter 2, p. 19; Section 8.2.8)
- 1929, Niche of the eastern exedra of the portico of the square of the Forum: Fragment Ia (1) with eagle-headed griffins, candelabra and vases (Chapter 2, p. 22; Section 4.2.2)
- 1931, Testa Spaccata: Fragments VIA (1 and 2) with Victories killing bulls (Chapter 2, p. 22; Section 9.2.5)
- 1998-2000, southern porticoed courtyard: Fragment II (1) with an eagle-headed griffin and a tripod, (Chapter 2, p. 23; Section 5.2.2).

Thus, the classification of the discoveries, started by Milella and updated here, provides the information for establishing what was found in different parts of the Forum. It allowed Packer first, and more recently the team of Sovrintendenza ai Beni Culturali del Comune di Roma, to present the locations for the frieze types which will be compiled and discussed in the following chapters. For each of the buildings forming the complex of Trajan's Forum decorated by the architraval friezes, the available data and the correspondence of all the information permit an accurate up-to-date interpretation of the
location of the friezes. At the end of each location paragraph there are diagrams to visualise the location of each frieze type.

3.3. Iconography

An overview of the history of iconography is fundamental to understanding how the original models of the decorative motifs represented in the architraval friezes of Trajan's Forum, motifs which are found in preceding Greek art, and were absorbed into Roman art. In the following chapters we will discuss how these particular motifs are represented in Roman art and in the specific context of the Forum of Trajan. In order to understand the symbology of the architraval friezes in their context, it is first necessary to comprehend the range of possible meanings for each one since its origin, and if and how this meaning changed through time.

The common element among the main subjects of the architraval friezes is that they are all mythological figures, usually attributes of divinities. The attribute is a particular sign strictly related to a divinity, which specifies his identity, history, power and role. It is an accessory part of the representation itself, and without it the identification of the figure could be altered (Brilliant 1966). A brief survey is offered of the diffusion of the iconography of these figures, especially of the passage from Greek to Roman world, which is pertinent to an understanding how those symbols were interpreted by the Romans.

The mythological figures carved on the architraval friezes are:
- griffins, Frieze Types I, II (1), III (2 and 3), IV (1)
- cupids, Frieze Types III (1 and 2), IV, V
- Victories, Frieze Type VI
- sphinxes, Frieze Type VII

The most represented subjects are the griffins, here depicted with different objects such as tripods, vases and candelabra, which are attributes of gods such as Nemesis, Apollo and Dionysus. We will take this connection into consideration, because it will be useful in the next chapters for the interpretation of the symbolism of these figures.

From a stylistic point of view ancient Rome was a melting pot of diverse peoples, artistic styles and beliefs which makes it complicated to define what constitutes 'Roman'
art, especially in the debate over Roman originals, Greek originals, and Roman copies from Greek works (Kampen 2003). Unlike the 'organic' development and stylistic progression of Greek art, the art of Rome varies among Greek art types of different eras, and also swings from the plebeian to elite styles within the same works (Kampen 2003: 371).

In his fundamental study, Hölscher (2004) treats Roman art as a semantic system wherein different stylistic types carry with them specific ideological meanings. Rather than considering the choice of one particular artistic model as influenced by the prevailing taste of the day, Hölscher argues that the Romans used a figurative language inspired by the various styles of the heterogeneous models of the different periods of Greek art. For each level of communication all the repertory of Greek art was available, applicable according to the content of the message to be transmitted. Depending on what the Romans wanted to represent, they could make a selection from the readily available models of the different styles, which could be used one close to the other in a synchronic way. In this semantic system the shapes of Greek art were filtered not according to stylistic criteria but basically to semantic ones, and they could be used in a totally new way, in what Hölscher calls a 'semantization of the styles' (Hölscher 2004: 67).

This is the fundamental difference between the diachronic development in Greek art until the 2nd century BC and the synchronic system used in Roman art from the archaic to the classical and Hellenistic styles, with the warning that the models originally taken from classical predecessors might have lost the association to that original to become simply 'commonplace formulae' (Hölscher 2004: 121-25). This awareness is very important, especially for the following stages of this research, to better comprehend the influence of similar iconographies of precedent artworks and monuments on the decorative motives of the Trajanic architraval friezes, and to understand their relationship despite different styles. Moreover, this approach is relevant for the interpretation of the symbology of the figures decorating the reliefs, which could be various and polysemous.
3.3.1. The Engineering of the Friezes

We will not focus here long on the art and engineering of the friezes, because these topics have been considered in depth in specific studies, such as that of De Nuccio and Ungaro (2002) and Milella (2004). However, we can outline that the friezes were mostly carved in white Luni marble, whose quarries in the Alpi Apuane correspond to present Carrara (Tuscany). Luni marble was chosen to imitate the prestige deriving from the use of white marble in the palaces of the Hellenistic monarchs (Pensabene 2002: 3) and was mainly used in Rome in the first and second century AD, with Augustus as the main initiator (Pensabene 2002: 55). Chemical analysis confirmed that the elements of architectural decoration of the buildings of the Forum of Trajan were all made of Luni marble except for architraves of the lateral naves of the Basilica Ulpia made of Pentelic marble, possibly left over from works on the nearby Forum of Nerva only recently completed and so 'borrowed' for this new work (De Nuccio and Ungaro 2002: 143). According to the different way of rendering capitals, architraves, friezes and cornices, Leon identified two groups of stone cutters working contemporarily in different buildings of the Forum and one on the Trajan's Column, mixing motifs of the Flavian tradition to other new elements, realized expressly for Trajan's Forum (1971: 85). From the stylistic point of view, for Milella (2004: 67-69) the skill of the workers allowed a clear definition of the design lines, without losing the rich and plastic surface articulation with chiaroscuro, exalting the design in perfect balance, and representing possibly the highest point of the urban decorative art.

3.4. Symbolism

Architraval frieze types were part of the wider figurative programme of the Forum of Trajan statuary 'system', whose current knowledge unfortunately is only partial because of the loss of materials from the Forum over the centuries. However, among them are the reliefs of the Column illustrating the history of the Dacian military campaigns (Settis 1988, Coarelli 1999), the Great Frieze of Trajan reused in the Arch of Constantine² (Leander Touati 1987; Galiner 2007: 185, 187; Claridge 2014: 11) (Chapter 2, pp. 59-60), the statues of the Dacians on the attic storeys of the porticoes²

² Leander Touati (1987) wrote the most accurate analysis of this frieze, without hypothesizing a precise location in the forum. In a conference in 2000 she proposed to locate it along the exterior of the side free of porticoes of the courtyard of the Trajan's Column, at the same level on the inner *matroneums* of the Basilica Ulpia (Meneghini 2009: 154, 163). For Galiner it could have been displayed on the north-west wall of the Basilica Ulpia (Galiner 2007: 185, 187).
around the square of the Forum (Packer 2001: 27; Meneghini and Santangeli Valenzani 2007: 88), the clpei with portraits and the panels with stacks of weapons and the statues representing unidentified noble men (Amici 1982: 66; Ungaro 2007: 208) (Chapter 2, pp. 32, 40). These sculptural decorations all celebrated the military power of Trajan.

3.5. Comparanda

In each of the following chapters, artworks and monuments with decorative motifs related to the relevant motif from the particular of the architraval friezes in Trajan's Forum will be compared. Some of them chronologically precede the friezes and could be considered their models, while others are contemporary. It is possible to compare the iconography of the friezes with similar examples of the periods of Caesar, Augustus, and Vespasian. Augustus was considered the re-founder of Rome and the constant ideal reference point for the following dynasties (Palombi 2012: 36) (Chapter 2, p. 54). The Julio-Claudian emperors ruled according to the dynastic legitimacy and continuity established by Augustus, following the construction policy of the first emperor, so that the new city of Nero after the AD 64 fire (Tac., Ann. 15.43) was conceived according to urban parameters which were a point of no return in the subsequent urban planning (Palombi 2012: 36). The Flavians introduced themselves as the restorers of the Neronian usurpations, and promoted a radical urban reorganization. Trajan was extremely wise in choosing the kinds of buildings he wanted to put up, because he followed in the footsteps of Vespasian and Titus, by favouring major public architecture in Rome, and by eschewing private architecture. He wanted, above all, to disassociate himself from Nero, and from Domitian, who had favoured personal palatial architecture (Kleiner 2009: 1). Therefore, he commissioned grand public architecture in Rome, and allied himself in this regard to such earlier emperors as Augustus and the Flavians (Kleiner 2009: 1). Later artworks give important examples of how the same typologies were inspired by previous models.
Chapter 4.
Trajanic Frieze Type I: Eagle-headed Griffins, with Candelabra and Vases

4.1. Introduction

As discussed, the Forum of Trajan has yielded a variety of impressive decorative architraval elements that bear a range of specific motifs. In this chapter we catalogue and describe those fragments of architrave that feature crouching eagle-headed griffins, and specifically those with accompanying candelabra and vases. These can be divided into two principal groups: Frieze Type Ia of height c. 65 cm; and Frieze Type Ib of height c. 71-72 cm including the plinth. They have probably exactly the same height. The different provenance of all these surviving fragments justifies the attribution of this frieze type to different architectonical orders in the buildings forming the complex of Trajan's Forum. Below are considered also additional archival or excavated data that add to the extant sculptural finds. Discussion below will then identify how this arrangement of friezes may have been organised and consider also the iconography; consideration of the significance of these varied iconographies will come in Chapters 11 and 12.

The purpose of the measurements of all the details of griffins and candelabra of Frieze Type Ia is to compare common elements to those of Frieze Type Ib at the Louvre. Since we will not be able to examine personally the Louvre friezes, we are unable to carry out this comparison for this study, and we postpone this comparison which needs to be checked in the future.

4.2. Frieze Type Ia

Type Ia comprises those reliefs of crouching eagle-headed griffins with candelabra and vases set on friezes of height dimensions ca. 65 cm. The only fragment of this frieze type survives in the Museum of the Imperial Fora at Trajan's Markets of Rome.
4.2.1. **Fragment Ia (1)**

Entablature block


*Museum inventory number:* FT4000.

![Fragment Ia (1) in its current location.](image)

*Fig. 4.1. Fragment Ia (1) in its current location.*
Fig. 4.2. Fragment Ia (1), right end.

Fig. 4.3. Fragment Ia (1), back side.
Fig. 4.4. Fragment Ia (1), left end. On the bottom left side an oblique cut is visible.

Marble type: Luni marble.

Measurements of block: height including architrave: 80 cm (maximum 85); section on the right side without frieze: 91 cm; height of frieze panel: 65 cm (min. 60 cm); width: 108 cm; thickness: maximum 72 cm on the right side, 75 cm on the left side.

Measurements of griffins: Left griffin: tail height: 30 cm. Right griffin: height: 61 cm from the head to the right forepaw; width: 55 cm from the tail to the right forepaw; tail height: 36 cm; crouching hind legs height: 18 cm; right wing's width: 41 cm; left wing's width: 20 cm; feathers in wing (5 rows of feathers) - short feathers' length: 2 cm first row, 2.5 cm second row, 4 cm third row, long feathers' length: 4 cm fourth row, 5 cm fifth row; height between head and throat: 31 cm; height of head: 14 cm; head width: 23 cm; crest height: 5 cm; beak's width: 9 cm; beard height: 9 cm; right forearm's height: 28 cm, ribs' height: 10 cm; chest's width: 14 cm. Distance between griffins: 15 cm.
Measurements of other motifs: candelabrum: height: 53 cm with the pedestal, 39 cm without; right festoon height: 40 cm; left festoon height: 36 cm. Right vase: height: 64 cm; pedestal height: 33 cm. Vegetal element behind forepaws: width: 14 cm. width of flower with 6 petals: 8 cm.

State of preservation: good state of preservation. It looks stunning in the quality of the carving.

Description: frieze of a griffin, with double superimposed feathers with curl-ending wings and an eagle head is sitting on its haunches and leaning the left forepaw on a vase, a kantharos, with an emerging calyx of acanthus leaves (figs. 4.1-4.4). The foot of the vase is formed by an acanthus fascicle ending with spirals decorated with rosettes. Behind the griffin there is a candelabrum decorated with pendant laurel garlands. Just the tail of the second mirror image griffin with its back towards the first griffin is present on the left side of the broken slab, very close to its left edge. Only a little fragment of the architrave survives, comprising a Cyma reversa with normal leaf-and-dart moulding, and two smooth and plain bands alternating with half round with bead and reel.


Discovery and likely location: written records and photographs of the excavations attest that this relief slab was found in 1927 during the Fascist excavations (Chapter 2, p. 22; fig. 4.5), in correspondence to the central niche of the exedra (fig. 2.13 C) behind the porticoes of the square (fig. 2.13 B) (as also demonstrated by the photographs of that time in Palazzo Braschi archive, as D/3A21) (Milella 2004: 63).
4.2.2. Location of Frieze Ia

In a report he wrote, the architect Antonio da Sangallo the Younger (1484-1546) connected an entablature and a frieze with griffins with an architrave found "i(n) l'orto dello emiciclo delle Militie", "in the vegetable garden of the exedra of the Milizie" (Bartoli 1914-22: 72). The Milizie tower is within the complex of Trajan's Markets, thus the "exedra of the Milizie" would be the area in front of the semicircular façade of the Markets; that is, in the Forum of Trajan. If the architect attributed the frieze and the architrave to the same entablature because they were found in the same area, this fragment certainly came from the north-eastern portico (Piazzesi 1989: 134).

It is possible to acquire more information on the location of this frieze from drawings of it and from some of the decoration of the architrave associated with this frieze still preserved *in situ*. In the square of the Forum (fig. 2.13 A) there are still on display two groups of fragments decorated with a *Cyma reversa* with normal leaf-and-dart moulding, and two smooth and plain bands alternated with half round with bead and reel. They have different heights: in the first group the *Cyma reversa* is 10 cm high, in
the second it is 16 cm high. Two drawings depict the higher fragments of the second group. One of them is by Antonio da Sangallo the Elder, who drew an architrave comparable to the fragments, as discussed below (infra, p. 98).

Concerning the smaller fragments of the first group, on another drawing Antonio da Sangallo the Younger wrote the note "cavata nel 1540 i(n) l'orto dell'emiciclo delle Militie", "excavated in 1540 in the vegetal garden of the exedra of the Forum of Trajan", where Sangallo reported the frieze with griffins (Bartoli 1922: 384). This is a clue that the smaller fragments could have been located on the entablature of the exedra of the north-eastern portico above the frieze Ia (Piazzesi 1989: 136).

Thus, a definitive solution for the correct location of frieze Ia seems to come from the study of Fragment Ia (1), other architectural decoration and the relevant reconstruction of the architectural orders: frieze Ia was traditionally attributed to the portico of the courtyard of the column (fig. 2.13 H), but this Fragment Ia (1) was found in 1927 in correspondence to the central niche of the exedra (fig. 2.13 C) behind the porticoes of the square (fig. 2.13 B), as explained above. There had always been the possibility of mistaken the correct location of the figurative friezes because the dimensions of the orders of the porticoes of Column's courtyard, of the square and of the southern courtyard are the same. Once it had been ascertained that Fragment Ia (1) was in the area of the exedra because of its findspot, the study of the architectural decoration led to a breakthrough about the precise position of the frieze in the exedra. The last and consequent phase of this process was the reconstruction of the architectonical order which sheds light in a definitive way on the location of the architraval Frieze Ia. In fact, from careful study of Ia (1) it is possible to ascertain that it could not have been on a continuous architrave, as that of the courtyard of the Column, because on the bottom left end of the block there is a little section with an oblique surface (fig. 4.4). This means that it was flanked by another orthogonal block, to form the external corner of the architrave. The oblique cut on the left side means that the frieze was flanked on this side by another block to form an internal corner. These elements suggest that the architraval frieze was located to the right side of a protruding avant-corp of the niche of the exedra. In front of the niche there were two grey granite columns which held the architrave turned to the exedra to decorate its bottom wall. Ia (1) belongs to the right side of this avant-corp (Milella 2004: 63) (fig. 4.6).
From comparison with all the other architraval friezes with other decorative motifs, such as Victories and cupids and sphinxes; and, in particular, the other longer architraval frieze Ib with griffins and candelabra and vases in the Louvre, it is possible to affirm that Ia (1) is a fragment of a frieze with a longer sequence of pairs of griffins facing each other in front of vases, flanked by candelabra decorated with acanthus leaves with pendant laurel garlands.

Thus, the combination of the excavations, drawings and study of the architectural decoration and the relevant reconstruction of the architectural orders permit a precise understanding of the location of the frieze with griffins and candelabra in the eastern exedra of the portico of the square of Trajan's Forum (figs. 2.13 C, 4.7). The overall height of the order to which Frieze Type Ia belongs is ca. 11 m (37 Roman feet) (Ungaro et al. 2004: 32; Milella 2004: 63), 10.56 for Packer (1997: f. 32).
Fig. 4.6. Frieze Type Ia from the order framing the niche in the middle of the exedra (C): preserved Fragment Ia (1), planimetric scheme of its position and reconstruction drawing of the order, with the right side of the avant-corp of the niche of the exedra.
Fig. 4.7. Plan of the Forum of Trajan with the location of Frieze Type Ia in the niches of the exedras (C).
4.3. Frieze Type Ib

Type Ib comprises those reliefs of eagle-headed griffins with candelabra and vases set on friezes of height dimensions ca. 71-72 cm including the plinth. Six fragments of this frieze type survive in the Louvre Museum of Paris; to this number can be added three drawings representing sections of the same frieze.

4.3.1. Fragment Ib (1)

Entablature block

*Current location:* Paris, Louvre Museum.

*Museum catalogue number:* Ma 3127 a; *Museum Inventory number:* LL 400.

![Fig. 4.8. Fragment Ib (1).](image)

*Marble type:* Luni marble.

*Measurement of block*:

  - height (including the plinth): 72 cm
  - width: 280 cm
  - thickness: 17 cm

*State of preservation:* the surface of this frieze showed several lacunae, which have been completed in marble and stucco by the restorer P. Klein in 2005. In the museum catalogue card it is considered part of a block formed by two recomposed fragments with Ib (2).

*Description of frieze:* the relief is decorated with three pairs of confronting griffins facing a vase flanked by candelabra (fig. 4.8). The only complete group is in the middle, those on the left and right side are lacunous because of the missing edges of the slab. The central motif is the first pair of confronting griffins, with double superimposed feathers, curl-ending wings and an eagle head, sitting on their haunches, and leaning a forepaw on a vase, a *kantharos*, with an emerging calyx of acanthus leaves. The foot of the vase is formed by an acanthus fascicle ending with spirals decorated with rosettes. The pair of griffins is flanked by a candelabrum standing behind each one of them,
decorated with pendant laurel garlands and fruits above. It has a square base decorated with vegetal elements and the upper side is decorated with leaves. On the left side of the slab, only one griffin of the second pair remains. Just the end of the spirals of vase's acanthus fascicle faced by the griffin is visible behind its left forepaw, because of the broken left edge of the slab. On the right side of slab, just the tail and the end of a wing of one of the griffins of the third pair are visible, because the slab is broken off here.


Discovery and likely location: found in the 16th century, this fragment belonging to the Della Valle Collection was later bought by Cardinal Fesch with Ib (2). Ib (1 and 2) were recomposed and brought to Paris in the 1800s. This fragment, together with Ib (2 and 3), was acquired by the Louvre in 1824 with a part of the Fesch Collection. It is currently exhibited in the Salle 31 Cour du Sphinx.

From comparison with the other longer architraval friezes with griffins and candelabra and vases, Fragments Ia (1), Ib (3-6), it is possible to affirm that Ib (1) is a fragment of a frieze with a longer sequence of pairs of griffins facing each other in front of vases, flanked by candelabra decorated with acanthus leaves with pendant laurel garlands.
4.3.2. **Fragment Ib (2)**

Entablature block

*Current location:* Paris, Louvre Museum.

*Museum catalogue number:* Ma 3127 b; *Museum Inventory number:* LL 400.

![Fragment Ib (2)](image)

**Fig. 4.9. Fragment Ib (2).**

*Marble type:* Luni marble.

*Measurement of block:* height (including the plinth): 72 cm; width: 150 cm; thickness: 17 cm.

*State of preservation:* this fragment could be either a Roman artwork heavily restored, or more probably a modern relief (Daniel Roger personal communication 11/3/2013). In the museum catalogue card it is considered part of a block formed by two recomposed fragments with Ib (1).

*Description of frieze:* two winged griffins with eagle heads, sitting on their haunches, face each other and each lean one forepaw on a *kantharos*, with a calyx of acanthus leaves (fig. 4.9). The foot of the vase is formed by an acanthus fascicle ending with spirals decorated with rosettes. On the left side of the slab the lowest side of the body and the end of the right wing of the left griffin are missing because the left edge of the slab is broken off.

*References:* as Ib (1)

*Discovery and likely location:* as Ib (1).
4.3.3. Fragment Ib (3)

Entablature block

*Current location:* Paris, Louvre Museum.

*Museum catalogue number:* Ma 3126; *Museum Inventory number:* LL 400, same as Ib (1 and 2).

![Fragment Ib (3)](image)

*Fig. 4.10. Fragment Ib (3).*

*Marble type:* Luni marble.

*Measurement of block:* height (including the plinth): 72 cm; width: 285 cm; thickness: 17 cm.

*State of preservation:* the surface of this frieze shows several lacunae.

*Description of frieze:* the relief is decorated with two pairs of confronting griffins facing a vase and flanked by candelabra (fig. 4.10). The only complete pair is on the left side, that on the right side is partial because of the cut edge of the slab. The complete pair on the left is formed by two confronting griffins, with double superimposed feathers with curl-ending wings and an eagle head, sitting on their haunches, and leaning a forepaw on a *kantharos*, with an emerging calyx of acanthus leaves. The foot of the vase is formed by an acanthus fascicle ending with spirals decorated with rosettes. The griffins are flanked by a candelabrum standing behind each one of them, decorated with pendant laurel garlands and fruits above. It has a square base decorated with vegetal elements as well as the upper side. On the slab's right side, there is only one griffin of the second pair, and the right side of the vase's spirals are cut by the right edge of the broken slab.

*References:* Clarac 1853: 284, 285 no. 54; museum catalogue card and other information courtesy of Daniel Roger.

*Discovery and likely location:* as Ib (1 and 2).
4.3.4. Fragment Ib (4)

Entablature block


Museum catalogue number: Ma 986; Museum Inventory number: 1036.

![Fig. 4.11. Fragment Ib (4).]

Marble type: Luni marble.

Measurement of block: height (including the plinth): 71 cm; width: 165 cm; thickness: 17 cm.

State of preservation: it is in good condition. The relief was recently restored and the lacunae have been completed in marble: the upper edge of the relief with the end of a wing and a forepaw of the left griffin, the upper side of the candelabrum, and most of the right griffin except for the original lower side. It is possible that the architrave of this frieze was reused to decorate Fragment Ib (6).

Description of frieze: on the right side a griffin, with double superimposed feathers with curl-ending wings and an eagle head, is sitting on its haunches and leaning the left forepaw on a kantharos, with an emerging calyx of acanthus leaves and the foot formed by an acanthus fascicle ending with spirals decorated with rosettes (fig. 4.11). Just half of the vase is visible because of the cut of the right edge of the slab. Behind the griffin there is a candelabrum decorated with pendant laurel garlands. It has a square base decorated with vegetal elements and leaves on the upper side. On the left side of the candelabrum there is a second mirror like griffin with back toward whose right forepaw is no longer visible because it corresponds to the left broken edge of the slab. Only the
end of the missing vase's acanthus fascicle spirals is visible in front of the left forepaw of the griffin.

References: Michon 1922: 56; Capodiferro 1985: 38; Packer 1997: 335; museum catalogue card and other information courtesy of Daniel Roger.

Discovery and likely location: found in the 16th century, it belonged to the Della Valle Collection, later bought by the Borghese family. It was erroneously mentioned as part of the Fesch Collection in the museum general catalogue reference. Otherwise, it was bought by Napoleon in 1807, together with Ib (5 and 6) for the Louvre which he renamed the Musée Napoléon. It is currently exhibited in the Salle 31 Cour du Sphinx.
4.3.5. Fragment Ib (5)

Entablature block


Museum catalogue number: Ma 982; Museum Inventory number: MR 1035- N 1203.

Marble type: Luni marble.

Measurement of block: height including architrave: 82 cm; height without architrave: 71 cm; width: 161 cm; thickness: 21 cm. These measurements must be reviewed: this slab is missing the top edge and the height without the architrave, if the slab belongs to the same set as the others cannot be 71 cm, but it should be considerably less.

State of preservation: it is in good condition. The relief was recently restored and the lacunae have been completed in marble: most of the head above the beak, the upper side of the wings and the right forepaw of the left griffin, most of the acanthus calyx of the candelabrum, and most of the right griffin except for the right forepaw.

Description of frieze: the frieze is decorated with a pair of facing griffins in front of a vase (fig. 4.12). The winged griffins with eagle heads sit on their haunches and each leans a forepaw on a kantharos, with an emerging calyx of acanthus leaves and the foot formed by an acanthus fascicle ending with spirals decorated with rosettes.
References: Clarac 1853: 285, no. 55; Michon 1922: 56; Capodiferro 1985: 38; Packer 2001: 72,76; Martinez 2004: 435, 436, no. 0880; Fabrega-Dubert 2009: 113; museum catalogue card and other information courtesy of Daniel Roger.

Discovery and likely location: found in the 16th century, it belonged to the Della Valle Collection, later bought by the Borghese family. It decorated the façade of the Borghese Palace with Ib (6). It was bought by Napoleon in 1807, together with Ib (4 and 6) for the Louvre (then Musée Napoléon). This fragment is mentioned in the catalogue of 1810 (called Catalogue MR) as part of the items coming from the Borghese Collection, but oddly the drawing following the description does not represent the architrave under the frieze. It is currently exhibited in the Salle 31 Cour du Sphinx.
4.3.6. Fragment Ib (6)

Entablature block


Museum catalogue number: Ma 3129; Museum Inventory number: MR 1036.

Marble type: Luni marble.

Measurement of block: height: max 150 cm; width: 227 cm.

State of preservation: heavily recarved to insert it in a semicircular decoration above the door of the Salle 24 Romain II of the Louvre Museum. It is not known how much of this decoration is made of original fragments and how much is modern. The relief is also painted (probably as a result of the modern restoration).


Description of frieze: the relief is decorated with a pair of griffins with back towards each other and separated by a candelabrum decorated with pendant laurel garlands (fig.
4.13), very similar to Ib (4), with a square base decorated with vegetal elements and leaves on the upper side. On the top of the candelabrum there is a brazier where copious flames are burning. Both the eagle-headed griffins are sitting on their haunches and leaning one forepaw on an object that looks like the lower side of another candelabrum with a square base. According to comparison with other similar Fragments la (1) and Ib (1-5), this object was possibly originally a vase, with an emerging calyx of acanthus leaves. The foot of the vase formed by an acanthus fascicle was heavily recarved to transform it into a squared base, but the very end of its vegetal decoration is still visible behind one of the forepaws of the griffins. In fact, without its original connection with the vase, the vegetal elements seem now attached behind the forepaws of the griffins without any sense. The upper sides of the vases and the candelabrum, whose flames are certainly recarved as well, were probably erased when, at an unknown moment, the fragment was cut and transformed into a semicircular slab.

*Discovery and likely location:* as Ib (5). It was exhibited above the entrance door of the Room of the Peace, previously called Room of the Emperors and later Room 14 of Mycenae. It is currently exhibited in the Salle 24 Romain II.
4.3.7. **Drawing Ib (7)**

Drawing by G. B. Piranesi

In the 18th century the architect Giovan Battista Piranesi saw and drew Frieze Type Ib in the garden of the Della Valle Palace (fig. 4.14).

![Fig. 4.14. Drawing Ib (7) by Piranesi.](image)


**Description:** Piranesi sketched two superimposed elements of friezes. On the relief of the upper one, on the right side there is a pair of winged crouching eagle-headed griffins leaning a paw on a foliate vase, flanked by two festooned candelabra. On the left side only the right griffins and the vase of the same scheme are represented.

**Discovery and likely location:** in the caption above the drawing Piranesi wrote "fregio antico di marmo con grifi si vede nel Cortile del Palazzo della Valle a Sant'Andrea detto della Valle", ancient marble frieze with griffins visible in the Courtyard of Della Valle Palace.
4.3.8. Drawing Ib (8)

Drawing by F. Albertolli

Another fragment of the same Frieze Type Ib was found during the 1811-1814 excavation (Chapter 2, p. 18). Albertolli saw and drew it in the garden of the Della Valle Palace (fig. 4.15).

![Drawing Ib (8) by Albertolli.](image)

**Fig. 4.15. Drawing Ib (9) by Albertolli.**

**Measurement:** in the caption Albertolli noted "L'altezza del marmo è di pollici Parigini 23 1/4", the height of the marble is 23 1/4 Parisian inches, c. 77 cm.

**References:** Albertolli 1824: 5.

**Description:** Albertolli sketched a section of a frieze with two pairs of winged crouching eagle-headed griffin leaning a paw on a foliate vase with a festooned candelabrum topped by fruit behind. The only complete griffin is the right one of the left pair, the others are cut by the broken off edges of the relief depicted in the drawing.

**Discovery and likely location:** in the caption Albertolli wrote "Fregio antico del Foro Trajano volgarmente detto del Palazzo Valle in Roma, ora nel Regio Museo di Parigi", ancient frieze of the Forum of Trajan known as Palace Della Valle in Rome, now in the Royal Museum of Paris.
4.3.9. Drawing Ib (9)

Drawing by A. Uggeri

This fragment of Frieze Type Ib was described and drawn by Uggeri (fig. 4.16).

Fig. 4.16 a and b. a, Drawing Ib (9) by Uggeri. b, detail.
**Measurement:** Uggeri recorded that the frieze has the same measurements of Ib (1-6) visible at that time in the courtyard of Della Valle Palace.

**References:** Uggeri 1840: 33-34, pl. 20; Bartoli 1922: III, 72, pl. 224.

**Description:** on the left side of the drawing is a frieze with a winged crouching eagle-headed griffin leaning the left paw on a vase with a festooned candelabrum behind.

**Discovery and likely location:** Uggeri recorded that during the 1811-1814 excavation (Chapter 2, p. 18) in the Column's courtyard (which he called 'Atrio', atrium) (fig. 2.13 H) a fragment was discovered, which led him to think that the missing section of the frieze was that decorating the courtyard of the Della Valle Palace, Ib (1-6). This fragment sketched in Drawing Ib (9), now lost, "was located on the wall of the fence on the left side of the inscription of Pius VII" (Uggeri 1840: 34)³.

³ "Ma chi direbbe che tra questi sterramenti si fosse trovato un frammento da dire che il fregio mancante era quello stesso che decorava il Cortile del Palazzo Valle?" (Uggeri 1940: 34).
4.3.10. Drawing Ib (10)

Drawing by A. De Romanis

De Romanis proposed a graphical reconstruction of the porticoes of Trajan's Column according to the 1811-1814 excavation (Chapter 2, p. 18) (fig. 4.17).

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*Fig. 4.17. Drawing Ib (10) by De Romanis.*
Measurement: as Ib (8).

References: De Romanis 1811-1823.

Description: the sketch shows the reconstruction of an architectonical order, with three fluted columns and an entablature with cornice, frieze and architrave, with relevant measurements. On the entablature De Romanis represented a frieze with three pairs of confronting eagle-headed griffins leaning a paw on a vase, divided by candelabra with festoons.

Discovery and likely location: in the caption De Romanis wrote "elevazione generale dell'ordine dei portici, nel cavedio che rinchiude la colonna coclide del Foro Trajano", "general elevation of the order of the porticoes of the courtyard surrounding the spiral Trajan's Column" (fig. 2.13 H).

4.3.11. Location of Frieze Ib

Many friezes with griffins, candelabra and vases, Ib (1-6), whose precise provenance is unknown, are housed in the Louvre and come from the Forum of Trajan. The subject represented is always the same: pairs of confronting griffins leaning a forepaw on a vase, flanked by candelabra. Unfortunately we do not have proof of the location of the decorations of the courtyard of Trajan's Column (figs. 2.13 H; 2.27). The records are often contradictory or unclear. According to the record of an excavation, relief blocks from a frieze with griffins and candelabra were found in 1521-26 in S. Maria di Loreto (Chapter 2, p. 16) (fig. 2.3 no. 6), the area corresponding with the western side of the portico of the Column courtyard (Milella 1989: 97).

Concerning the drawings which could help identifying the location of Frieze Ib, as previously mentioned for Frieze Ia (supra, p. 78), in the square of the Forum are displayed two groups of fragments of different heights decorated with a Cyma reversa with normal leaf-and-dart moulding, and two smooth and plain bands alternating with semicircles with bead and reel. As already explained, according to Antonio da Sangallo the Younger, the smaller fragments of the first group, found in the exedra of the Militie (figs. 2.13 C; 2.17), could be located on the entablature of the north-eastern portico above the Frieze Ia. Two drawings depict the taller fragments (16 cm high) of the second group: Antonio da Sangallo the Elder drew an identical architrave found "a piè
della Colonna Traiana", "at the foot of the Trajan's Column", in the area we are currently discussing (Piazzesi 1989: 136) (figs. 2.14 H; 2.25).

Drawing Ib (7) by Piranesi represents the subjects of the Fragments Ib (2-5). It is a confirmation of their presence in the Della Valle Collection, even if it does not represent exactly any one of those reliefs. It is very similar to Ib (3) and most of all to Ib (4). In Ib (3) there is a complete pair of griffins on the left side separated by a candelabrum from a second group on the right, whereof only a griffin is surviving. In Piranesi's Drawing Ib (7) there is an opposite scheme, with the complete group on the right and the other single griffin on the left. The sketch by Piranesi seems to be a mixture of Fragments Ib (3 and 4), although Piranesi seems to add more details to the incomplete figures in correspondence with the cut edges of the slabs, however not attested in any surviving fragment. As in the case of the previous Piranesi's Drawing Ib (7), also Drawing Ib (8) by Albertolli does not represent exactly any one of the Fragments Ib of the Della Valle Collection now in Paris, Ib (1-6). It seems that Albertolli would have chosen only the detail of the griffin on the right side of Ib (1) or that of the griffins in the middle of Ib (2), the only ones where also the fruits above the candelabra are well visible as in Albertolli's sketch.

In the description of the plate of Drawing Ib (9) Uggeri (1840: 34) wrote that it was said by members of the Della Valle family that the other Fragments (Ib 1-6) of the same Frieze Ib were discovered during the construction of the church of S. Maria di Loreto built over the ruins of the Forum in 1593 by Antonio da Sangallo, in the area of the courtyard of Trajan's Column. During the 1811-1814 excavation fragments of the whole entablature of the courtyard surrounding Trajan's Column were discovered: the architrave, the frieze with griffins and candelabra and a block of the original cornice, moreover ruins of columns and their bases. Unfortunately most of the frieze was moved to Paris, and the columns were reused in the reconstruction of the Church of S. Paul outside the Walls (Packer 2001: 22). According to these new discoveries, in Drawing Ib (10) De Romanis (1811-1823) sketched the reconstruction of the portico and its frieze, which, however, does not correspond to any surviving slab.
From these different forms of evidence, we can conclude that Frieze Type Ib possibly decorated the small porticoes surrounding the courtyard of the Column (figs. 2.13 H, 11.2). We can also conclude that the same frieze type and decorative motif were used to decorate orders belonging to different buildings in the Forum of Trajan. These porticoes surrounding the courtyard of the Column (fig. 2.13 H) were decorated with the same motif of the friezes of the exedras (fig. 2.13 C) of the porticoes of the square (fig. 2.13 B). Amici (1982: 13; see Milella 2004: 57-58) reconstructs the entablature of the portico around the Column according to the height of Ia (1), which is attributable to the entablature of the portico of the square of the Forum. Again, matching together all the available information is helpful to understand the provenance of the fragments. Thanks to Drawings Ib (7-10) we know that the friezes with griffins were part of the Della Valle Collection and were found in the area of S. Maria di Loreto, corresponding to the present area of the portico along the north-western side of the courtyard of Trajan's Column (figs. 4.18, 11.2). We also know that the Della Valle friezes were moved to Paris and those representing griffins are exhibited in the Louvre. Thus, this study confirms that the Della Valle reliefs in Paris came from the courtyard of Trajan's Column. The excavations and the drawings help shed light on the identification of the correct provenance of the frieze with griffins, candelabra and vases in the Louvre, Ib (1-6). The overall height of the order to which Frieze Type Ib belongs is ca. 11 m, 10.723 for Packer (1997: f. 25).

Since there is good reason, given the quantity involved, that the Paris Friezes Ib, when found in the 16th century, were close to their original location - collapsed in situ - and (given the properly recorded discoveries in 1811-14 of more examples) that they came from the area of Trajan’s Column, this raises doubts about whether Ia should really be attributed to the Exedra C. According to Claridge (personal communication 13/5/2015), it is only one block, and we do not know at what level it was found in the excavations. Although Milella proved that the block can't be located in the Column Courtyard because its sides are not decorated, that is belongs to the flank of protruding avant-corp, and identified that it fits into the entablature of the central niche (Ungaro et al. 2004: 31), in Claridge's opinion that may not be necessary and it is possible that it is a corner block from the portico which ran around the Column courtyard, or those along the north side of the 'libraries'. Question of the location of Ia possibly needs to be revisited.
Fig. 4.18. Plan of the Forum of Trajan with the location of Frieze Type Ib in the courtyard of Trajan's Column (H).
4.4. Iconography

The griffin is a mythological figure with eagle and lion features. Its most common representation is the result of the mixture of a feline body (though sometimes the forearms can be bird feet) and an eagle head, as in this frieze type. Less frequently, the griffin is depicted with a lion head and forearms (i.e. in Frieze Type IV), while it resembles a bird in its wings and the rest of the body. Another version is the griffin-demon, with bird head and wings and human body. In the jug of Aegina (fig. 4.19) the griffin has little excrescences, or pimples, immediately above the eyes, which are also on the most ancient bronze griffin heads (protomes) decorating the lebetes since the 7th century, which perhaps at the beginning had an apotropaic meaning.

![Jug from Aegina](image)

**Fig. 4.19. London, The British Museum. Jug from Aegina.**

The evolution of Greek archaic griffin type, wherein the beak has a hawk look, the pimples on the forehead disappear, the skull flattens and the neck slims, is used until the 5th century with variations and is conceived just as a decorative element.
In the 5th century the griffin changes until the definitive type stabilizes at the end of the Hellenistic period: the wings are represented in a naturalistic way, the protuberance on the forehead disappears, and a long crest straightens up on the neck. Since the archaic period, at least since the 6th century BC, the griffin was connected with the god Apollo (Delplace 1980: 365). Therefore, it is assumed that the lost archaic statue of Delian Apollo by Tectaios and Angelion known through Athenian tetradrachms of the 2nd century BC would have been flanked by two griffins sitting on the hind legs, facing the god (Delplace 1980: 366). Since the 4th century BC the depictions of griffins as companions of Apollo increased, especially representing Apollo riding a griffin, as seen on red-figure pottery and on a coin from Cyzicus (Delplace 1980: 372), where the griffin is no longer the attribute only of the god Apollo, but it also becomes that of Dionysus. In fact, either the griffin is also ridden by Dionysus, or draws the chariot of the god (Delplace 1980: 372).

The griffins were attributes of Apollo and Dionysus, but as guardians of the right measure, fighting against excess and arrogance, protecting the theatre, the circus and the venationes, they were also the zoomorphic symbol of Nemesis (Delplace 1980: 412). Originating in Smirna, Nemesis is a Hellenistic goddess with an oracular nature who embodies, with Themis, Ate, Tyche and the Moirai, some aspects of the sense of the divine justice, inescapable and fatal (Fortea Lopez 1994: 39), the compensation and the fate of mankind. In particular Nemesis represented the functions of punishing injustice and restitution of the order compromised by Hybris, the goddess of arrogance and presumption, the Greek ὑβρις. Initially it was an abstract concept without any precise cult or iconography (Paribeni 1963: 404). During the Hellenistic period there was a new phase of the cult and of the conception of the divinity itself. Besides Tyche, Nemesis becomes more and more important, even if not exactly as a real goddess but a daemon which it is better to have on one's side. The cult became magic and propitiatory. It was difficult to distinguish the peculiarities of Nemesis, often fused with other divine figures such as Tyche, Isis, Victory and Psyche. The multifunctional attributes were the symbols of the fate and the destiny of men, always changing, as the wings, the wheel, the sword and other gladiators' weapons, and the griffin or the chariot drawn by the griffins. Sometimes Nemesis is directly represented as a female griffin leaning on a wheel, symbol of the sun. Helped in her role of justice-keeper by the griffin, the goddess punishes the proud, impious, ambitious, envious, the convict and the
presumptuous, but also reduces and diminishes the excessively positive results. She is attracted by the worst adversity as the full happiness, because her duty is to maintain the equity. The chastisement is against the υβριστές, the insulter or abuser, the paradigm of what the goddess punishes or persecutes. The υβριστές is considered in a negative sense as the different compared to the same, also in the meaning of barbarian, enemy, culprit, defeated, prisoner, and this is the reason why this motif was so diffused during the empire. Nemesis, is the goddess of righteous avenge and retribution, who shows her power re-establishing the altered order, when the correct way of thinking and behaving is infringed. The extreme consequence of one of the aspects of her nature of justice and ineluctable fate is death (Fortea Lopez 1994: 41-50). The goddess, or the griffin substituting her, acts in the world of the living people, punishing them, sometimes with the death penalty. In this way the griffin enters in the world of the dead, defending the sepulchres, showing that all the human beings could be touched by Nemesis (Delplace 1980: 413).

In Roman art the griffin goes beyond the simple decorative aspect and acquires a deeper and more concrete religious value (Manganaro 1960). The motif of the griffin with a religious meaning was very popular in Roman art, because of the Greek background of the mythological figures as attributes of the gods Apollo and Dionysus. The ancient connection between the griffin and divinities was more obvious when the mystery and oriental religions were adopted widely in Roman society and became widespread in art, as demonstrated by the numerous discoveries of griffin-decorated tripods (Zanker 2002: 27). The prevalent representation was that with a lion's body, a head with sharpened ears and big hawk wings. After the 1st century AD the griffin is depicted with a lion head or with the head and the body of a panther. The parts of the body where the Romans expressed their decorative taste, often in a bizarre way, were the wings, sometimes very extended, as indeed in this Frieze Type I. If the animal is resting, sometimes one of the forelegs is raised. This favourite motif is repeated on the decorated imperial armours, such as the statue of Augustus of Prima Porta in the Vatican Museums (fig. 4.28), with Apollo on this mythical animal.
This subject is very common in funerary symbology, according to the most ancient nature on the griffin as a psychopomp animal and guardian of the grave and the urn, as in a sarcophagus in Palermo (fig. 4.20). Thus, from the origins through Greek art, and also in Rome, the griffin is connected with Apollo, Dionysus and Nemesis, especially in funerary contexts. This figurative motif is repeated so many times that it is hard to distinguish when it is used as a simple decoration and when there are deeper symbolic and religious meanings.

There is also a strict link of the griffins with objects they are often represented with, such as candelabra and tripods. First in Greek and then in Roman art, these objects would have been very well known to the observer: the elements in the middle of the scenes are not abstract, but common items of daily life or related with the cults and attributes of gods (Flagge 1975: 67). The connection is stronger when the protagonists touch them (Flagge 1975: 68), as in the case of a pair of griffins touching a central shield-like element, from Achaia, in the National Archaeological Museum of Athens (Delplace 1980: 285, fig. 278) (fig. 4.21); or a winged griffin leaning the forepaws on a cage in the mosaic of Piazza Armerina in Sicily (Levi 1942; Manganaro 1960).
In particular, griffins are often depicted with candelabra and vases. In different types of monuments candelabra are represented as isolated symbols, generically related to the *pietas*, piety, and the religious sphere, as on the imperial coins, in the cuirassed statues, on the Campana plaques (Section 7.4.1.2) and in the funerary monuments (Cain 1994). In particular, as explained below, the candelabrum represents the *lux perpetua*, the eternal light the dead people will live in (Cumont 1949; Flagge 1975: 68-82) (Section 4.6). In the sarcophagus of the griffins in Baltimore dating to the 2nd century AD the mythological creatures face candelabra (Flagge 1975: 85; Manganaro 1960); in the frieze of the Temple of Antoninus and Faustina griffins lean a forepaw on candelabras (fig. 4.27) as well as in these Trajanic architraval friezes griffins face candelabra or are flanked by candelabra, Ia (1) and Ib (1-7), alternated with vases.

In the cult sphere the vase has a role in the sacrifices and offerings to the divinities. The relationship with the gods is expressed by the drinks and the food offered into vases. Liquids, like water, oil, wine, perfume and milk, especially need proper recipients to pour from and, preserve and donate them in (Scheibler 2004: 9). Even if the contents are not visible, the vases themselves represent the connection with the cult. Sometimes the cult function is clear because the vases are surrounded by other cult objects, e. g. in the frieze of the Temple of Vespasian and Titus in the Roman Forum (inventory no. MC 1918) (Coarelli 1995a: 77-78) (fig. 4.22), but often in imperial time this motif became purely decorative (Milella 2004: 66), except for specific cases where there are images with symbolic meaning, such as the *krater* with Dionysian maenads and a satyr on Fragment IV (2).
4.5. Comparanda

In this section we will take into consideration friezes and decorations with eagle-headed griffins dated before the Trajanic period which could be considered models for the iconography of this Frieze Type I. Then we will consider contemporary Trajanic artworks and monuments with the same subject or part thereof, and finally later examples of this subject matter showing its continuity. The section will end with a focus on breastplates of cuirassed imperial statues decorated with eagle-headed griffins with or without candelabra from Augustan to Hadrianic period.

4.5.1. Reliefs with Eagle-headed Griffins in Pre-Trajanic Monuments

4.5.1.1. Flavian Relief with Eagle-headed Griffins from Templum Gentis Flaviae

Reliefs with griffins, along with other marbles, were found in a building excavated in 1901 in Piazza della Repubblica in Rome, whose decoration was scattered. Some of the relief fragments were bought by Kelsey and merged into the Kelsey Museum in Ann Arbor, Michigan (fig. 4.23). Nine others were bought by Hartwig and donated to the National Roman Museum - Palazzo Massimo alle Terme (known as Donation Hartwig) (Paris and Borrelli 1994; Paris 2009 a: 460-62). These reliefs were studied for more than a century, starting from Kelsey, and were consequently ascribed to a Flavian monument mentioned by the sources as the Templum Gentis Flaviae (Paris 2009 a), the funerary monument of the Flavian family.
Fig. 4.23. Ann Arbor, Michigan, Kelsey Museum of Archaeology. Fragment of a frieze with griffins from the Templum Gentis Flaviae.

Among the fragments are three with reliefs with pairs of griffins facing candelabra, with crossing wings and tails (fig. 4.23 and 7.25 a and b). Two fragments with lion-headed griffins are part of the Donation Hartwig and are discussed in Section 7.4.1.5 (fig. 7.25 a and b), this third is housed in the Kelsey Museum in Ann Arbor. A fourth fragment was part of a private collection in Florence, but it is lost (Paris 2009 a: 460). This relief includes a section of the upper attic storey, decorated with a bas-relief representing an eagle-headed griffin, larger than other lion-headed griffins on the lower level (fig. 4.23). The griffin is crouching in front of a candelabrum and turning its head back, and its tail crosses that of a lost second griffin (Gazda 2009). As these fragments likely belong to the imperial funerary monument, in this specific context they possibly had an apotropaic function related to the funerary sphere and in particular to the apotheosis of the Flavian emperors buried there (supra, p. 101). This relief fragment provides a precedent for the Trajanic Frieze Type I. It is similar but not identical, though, because the griffin is crouching as those of Type I, but it turns the head back and crosses the tail with another one. Thus, even if its iconography has substantial differences, it can be considered a model for the Trajanic Frieze Type I.
4.5.2. Reliefs with Eagle-headed Griffins in Trajanic Monuments

4.5.2.1. Relief with a Eagle-headed Griffin in the Temple of Venus Genetrix Restored by Trajan

Fig. 4.24. Plan of the Temple of Venus Genetrix in the Forum of Caesar.
The same iconography of this Trajanic architraval Frieze Type I played an important role in the figurative language of contemporary Trajanic art, as attested by this relief with a griffin from the Temple of Venus Genetrix in the Forum of Caesar, which was entirely rebuilt at the time of Trajan (Coarelli 1995a: 121). The Temple restored by Trajan could have been similar to that commissioned by Caesar, but with more precious decorations and materials. Like Caesar's first Temple, it was octastyle, *perypterus sine postico* (Coarelli 1995a: 124; Meneghini 2011: 245) (figs. 4.24 and 4.25). The external wall was decorated with panels with cupids (Section 8.4.6). On the walls of the interior of the cellar there were two superimposed orders. The architrave of the lower one was decorated with a frieze with cupids holding objects and in different attitudes (fig. 6.10).
Fig. 4.26. Fragment of a Trajanic relief with a eagle-headed griffin turning back his head, flanked by a candelabrum from the Temple of Venus Genetrix.

Among the decorations of the interior of the temple there were also panels representing eagle-headed griffins (Ungaro 2007: 108-15), a fragment of which is now in the storerooms of the Capitoline Museums (inventory no. MC S 924) (fig. 4.26). Found in 1872-73, it is a section of a longer panel, representing a griffin turning back his head, with a festooned candelabrum on his left side (Leone and Margiotta 2007: 334). A similar pose is visible on the short side of a contemporary sarcophagus from Ostia, with a griffin with turned head, which is interpreted as the guardian of the sacred flame of the candelabrum close to him (Flagge 1975: 82). The iconography of this relief with a griffin and a candelabrum is very similar to Frieze Type I, but is again not identical. In Frieze Type I the variation of the griffin turning the head back is not attested, and the way of rendering the wings and the candelabrum is different. On this fragment from the Temple of Venus Genetrix there are flames above the brazier, which are less visible in Frieze Type I from Trajan's Forum. This relief confirms that the iconography of griffins and candelabra was used not only in the Forum of the emperor, but at least in the other imperial complex of the Forum of Caesar, reconstructed and re-inaugurated at the same time (Chapter 2, p. 37).
4.5.3. Reliefs with Eagle-headed Griffins in Post-Trajanic Monuments

The iconography of eagle-headed griffins and candelabra was common also after Trajan's period, as demonstrated by the Hadrianic cuirassed statues discussed in the following Section 4.5.4.3. However, the only monument with architraval friezes comparable to Frieze Type I built after Trajanic date is the Temple of Antoninus and Faustina, which is probably the most shining example of the influence of the themes and the decorative motifs of the Trajanic architraval friezes on the choices of the later emperors. The Temple was erected in AD 141, dedicated first to Anna Galeria Faustina, wife of Antoninus Pius, who was deified after her death, and later to the emperor as well (Coarelli 1995a: 109). The frieze (fig. 4.27) is well preserved and very recently restored. The griffins have lion bodies, eagle heads and wings, with one forepaw on a candelabrum (Pensabene 1996: 248). Comparing this frieze of Antoninus Pius' date with Frieze Type I, the carving of the reliefs from Trajan's Forum is more refined and the order of the vegetal elements is more complex. In the frieze of this Temple the rendering of the figures is particularly rigid, with the contrast of the static bodies of the griffins and the accentuated chiaroscuro of the vegetal elements of the too robust candelabra. The decoration is ascribable to workshops inspired by the tradition of the Forum of Trajan, but with an oriental inspiration, as the entablature carved in two sections is typical of the East (Corradetti 2012).

Fig. 4.27 a and b. Rome, Roman Forum. Details of the frieze with griffins and candelabra of the Temple of Antoninus and Faustina.
Temples dedicated to the divine emperors are always decorated with funerary motifs of divinizing value, as the griffins, which also had meaning as psychopomp (supra, p. 104), or the burning fire on the candelabra, symbol of the permanent sacrifice in honour of the new god (Pensabene 1996: 249). In this context, the vegetal candelabra allude not only to the light, but to the eternity reached by the deified emperors. The general significance of the frieze was the apotheosis of Faustina and her veneration, and then that of the emperor, also indicated by the dedicatory inscription (Coarelli 1995a: 109). According to Flagge (1975: 69), under the Antonine emperors the flame was one of the most important imperial emblems. In an official monument of the imperial cult the symbolism griffin-light is not purely ornamental, as the fire is an essential part of each sacrifice, a symbol of purity, order and life par excellence. In Flagge's opinion (1975: 70), the permanent flame immortalizes gratitude and veneration of the Romans for the imperial couple leading them with clemency and dignity. The language is that of the tradition of an iconography well known and used since the early imperial period, but undoubtedly the immediate model for this frieze is the Trajanic Frieze Type I.
4.5.4. Eagle-headed Griffins on Cuirassed Statues

Roman portraits should express most of all a person's identity and physiognomy, more or less realistically, to also communicate the character and the qualities of the person portrayed. The body of the statue should express, instead, not realism but information on his or her public office, career and enterprises (Cadario 2011: 209). To help decode the message sent by the body, the sculptors used a conventional repertoire of statue types, with ideal bodies which could vary with different dresses, poses, gestures and attributes. The result of the standardisation of the statue bodies and their meanings was the creation of a statue-types language, which took shape in the Hellenistic period and stabilized in the early imperial period. The main element of this 'body language' was the *habitus*, the dress, strictly linked to the social class, completed by the *insignia*, the attributes. Especially in the case of male figures, since the codification in the early imperial age, the standard in their representation had a few variations. The meaning of the *habitus* was integrated by the attributes in their hands and the objects used to support the statues. Toga, cuirass and nudity symbolized the civil, military and 'heroic' role of the portrayed (Cadario 2011: 210-11). The first cuirassed statue was probably that of Caesar in his Forum, and the cuirass was reserved most of all for emperors or their heirs with *imperium* to highlight their military duties and valour (Cadario 2011: 214). On the breastplate of such cuirasses was usually a standard decorative repertoire that used Neo-attic symbolic and abstract language to communicate the themes of the imperial propaganda, adapted to contemporary events. The other great model is namely the cuirassed statue of Augustus of Prima Porta (now in the Vatican Museums). The Augustus of Prima Porta (fig. 4.28), is the first certain example of an imperial cuirassed statue with enriched breastplate (Vermeule 1980:17) (fig. 4.40).

This repertoire started in the Augustan and Julio-Claudian period, but variations went on until the Hadrianic period. Thereafter the use of cuirasses turned from a figurative vehicle into a charismatic meaning of the pure evocation of military success. In fact, the same type of cuirass with pairs of confronting griffins half covered by the *cingulum*, the belt, was used from the second half of the 2nd to the 4th century AD (Cadario 2011: 216).
All the cuirassed statues of Roman emperors are larger than life-sized (ca. 2 m high) and show the emperor as a general, wearing a suit of abundantly decorated armour and a cloak. The armour each has two details in common: first, *pteryges* or tabs under the armour feature figures from the mythological story of the establishment of Rome, as the god of war, Mars, his sons Romulus and Remus and the she-wolf. Second, each shows a Medusa head (*gorgoneion*) under the throat of the emperor with the Jupiter's thunderbolt. These kinds of images traditionally underlined the qualities and virtues of the wearer (Bianchi Bandinelli and Torelli 1979: 145).

A brief survey of the most impressive example of cuirassed imperial statues preceding, contemporary with and after Trajan's period could help better understand the role of the griffin iconography of the Trajanic architraval friezes in the political propaganda of the emperor (eagle-headed in this Section, lion-headed in Section 7.4.3). In this case the comparison is not with other architraval friezes of other monuments, but with artworks
decorated with similar iconography. In fact, Trajan introduced himself wearing a cuirass usually decorated with pairs of griffins facing each other in front of a central element as a candelabrum: the griffin is par excellence the main decoration of the emperor's cuirass.

4.5.4.1. Eagle-headed Griffins on Pre-Trajanic Cuirassed Statues

- Eagle-headed Griffins on Cuirassed Statues of Other Julio-Claudian Predecessors of Trajan

This kind of breastplate's decoration is attested on cuirassed statues of several other emperors preceding Trajan, such as the Julio-Claudian statue of Drusus Major from Caere in the Museum Gregoriano Profano in the Vatican Museums (inv. no. 9963), dated to the reign of Tiberius (Vermeule 1959-60: 35; Stemmer 1978: 111-12; Cadario 2010: 212) (fig. 4.29); a cuirassed statue with a modern bald head (identified as 'Tiberius') in the storerooms of the Louvre Museum in Paris (inv. no. 2763) dated to the period ca. AD 30-60 (Vermeule 1959-60: 37; Stemmer 1978:57) (fig. 4.30), and a fragment of a statue of Nero, now in the Archaeological Museum of Istanbul (inv. no. 506) (fig. 4.31), discovered at Tralles without the head. On the plinth of the latter there is the dedicatory inscription to Nero son of divine Claudius neither erased nor altered. The mention of deified Claudius in the inscription suggests that the statue was dedicated early in Nero's reign (Varner 2004: 71-71). The iconography of the griffins on these three cuirassed statues is similar to that of the griffins of Frieze Type I, because on all their breastplates there is a pair of facing eagle-headed griffins, even if they are standing and not crouching as those of Trajanic friezes. On the first two Julio-Claudian statues in Vatican and Paris the griffins lean a paw on a foliate candelabrum in front of them. On the statue of Nero in Istanbul the mythological creatures are neither flanked nor separated by any candelabrum.
4.29. Vatican City, Vatican Museums, Statue of Drusus Major from Caere.

### 4.5.4.2. Eagle-headed Griffins on Trajanic Cuirassed Statues

The inspiration for the cuirassed statues of Trajan in the pose and decoration of the cuirass, is actually the Augustan statue of Mars *Ultor* which stood in his temple in the Forum of Augustus, although the griffins are lion- and not eagle-headed and discussed in the following chapter (Section 7.4.3.1, pp. 214-15; fig. 7.33). In this way he associated his figure with both the father of the gods and the first emperor. Some of these statues were erected after the death of Trajan to glorify the deified emperor (Gonzàles and Saquete 2003: 33) in the monuments erected to the deified Trajan all over the empire, such as the Temple in the Forum of Trajan in Rome (Section 2.4.10) and the Trajaneum in Pergamon (Section 12.3.2).
- Statue of Trajan in the Museum of Samnium

In 1936, very close to the western façade of the Arch of Trajan of Beneventum (Section 9.5.2.1), two big headless and armless statues were found, identified as Trajan and Plotina and now in the Museum of Samnium (Rotili 1972: 113). This statue of Trajan (fig. 4.32) would have stood with that of his wife on the top of the Arch of Beneventum (Rotili 1972: 117). The breastplate on Trajan's statue has leather straps at the shoulders, and longer leather straps around the thighs. On the upper right side, not covered by the mantle, it has a moving female figure, and in the centre there is a gorgoneion. Under the gorgoneion two standing eagle-headed griffins face each other, partially covered by the cingulum tied in two bows around Trajan's waist (Rotili 1972: 115).
Fig. 4.32. Museum of Samnium (Beneventum), cuirassed statue of Trajan.
- Statue of Trajan in the Ny Carlsberg Museum of Copenhagen

This statue was previously in the Villa Barberini of Castelgandolfo, so possibly comes from the adjacent suburban imperial villa of Domitian. Trajan stands wearing a *paludamentum* on the left shoulder and an elaborate cuirass with long leather *pteruges* at both shoulders, and even longer ones around the thighs (fig. 4.33). On the breastplate, under a *gorgoneion*, two standing eagle-headed griffins face each other in front of a candelabrum with burning flames above. At their feet, vegetal elements rise from an acanthus fascicle. The portrait of the emperor derives from a type dated after the conquest of Dacia (Felletti Maj 1966).
This headless and limbless statue of a man wearing a cuirass (FT 6121) (fig. 4.34) is housed in the Museum of the Imperial Fora at Trajan's Markets of Rome. Made of a particularly precious white marble from the Greek island of Thasos (Ungaro 2007: 211), it was found during the 1928-1934 excavations of the exedra on the eastern portico of the Forum of Trajan (Chapter 2, p. 23) and was almost certainly one of the Forum's decorative elements. The decoration of the breastplate, with a pair of standing eagle-headed griffins facing each other in front of a long stalk emerging from a fascicle of acanthus leaves, echoes a decorative motif of many friezes found throughout the complex (Ungaro 2007: 211). According to Packer (2001: 63), it surely represents Trajan, because it is quite similar to the previous one in Copenhagen (fig. 4.33). This statue, with the fixed iconography of the emperor wearing a cuirass with griffins, imitating that of Mars *Ultor* (fig. 7.33), attests to the presence of this model first of all in the fulcrum of the power of Trajan, his Forum, from which it disseminated to the provinces of the empire, where so many copies were found (figs. 4.35 and 4.36).
- Statue of Trajan from Perge in Antalya Museum

![Statue of Trajan from Perge in Antalya Museum](image)

**Fig. 4.35. Antalya Museum. Cuirassed statue of Trajan from Perge.**

This statue (inventory no. 11.13.79) (fig. 4.35) was discovered in 1979 in Turkey, at Perge, an ancient Greek city in Anatolia and the capital of Pamphylia. Now it is exhibited in Antalya Museum. Modelled after the statue of Mars *Ultor* (fig. 7.33), Trajan is portrayed in all his dignity with a wreath on the head to celebrate his victorious return march from Dacia. On his right side there is a Dacian war prisoner, represented in the smaller proportions of the loser. At the neck of the breastplate there is a *gorgoneion*, and in the middle a pair of standing eagle-headed griffins facing each other and leaning a paw on a burning candelabrum in front of them. On the lower side there are vegetal elements emerging from an acanthus fascicle. A *cingulum* tied in two bows around his waist partially covers the mythological animals (Pehlivaner 1996: 31). Identical cuirasses are depicted in other statues found in Perge and now in the Antalya Museum, such as three statues of the emperor Hadrian (figs. 4.38 and 4.39) and one of Septimius Severus (Pehlivaner 1996: 32, 35-36, 38).
This armless statue (fig. 4.36) was found in Utica (Bou-Chatter), Tunisia, in the 19th century. It represents the emperor as a general, wearing a cuirass and the *paludamentum*. The statue is supported by the palm tree trunk, symbol of victory. On the breastplate, the emblems of the emperor's power: a pair of standing eagle-headed griffins leaning a paw on a candelabrum, the head of Medusa with Jupiter's thunderbolt above, and on the *pteryges* figures related to the mythological foundation of Rome, such as the Mars accompanied by his twin sons Romulus and Remus and the she-wolf. As mentioned, many busts and statues were dedicated to Trajan also after his death. In this case, Felletti Maj (1966) identifies the date palm of the support trunk as a celebration of the wars in the East, considered proof of late production.
- Trajanic Statue of Julius Caesar

This statue in *grechetto* marble (fig. 4.37 a) was in possession of Alessandro Ruffini Bishop of Melfi and then, in the discharge of a debt, it became part of the Capitoline Collection between 1562 and 1573. It is said to have been found in the Forum of Caesar before 1550, but according to Stuart Jones (1926: 2; see Fittschen 2010: 23-26) the provenance is unknown, because Maffei’s conjecture that it came from the Forum of Caesar is not supported by evidence. The Julius Caesar Hall in Palazzo Senatorio, where it is exhibited, is named after it. Dated to the Trajanic period (AD 98-117) (Fittschen 2010: 23), it represents Julius Caesar standing and wearing a *paludamentum* and a cuirass with long leather *pteryges*, at the shoulders, and longer ones around the thighs. On the breastplate, two eagle-headed griffins face each other and lean a paw on a candelabrum in front of them, springing from an acanthus fascicle with vegetal elements (Stuart Jones 1926: 1-2; Johansen 1967: 38; Fittschen 2010: 23) (fig. 4.37 b). The head was broken but it belongs to the statue and repeats the portrait of Caesar of Tusculum
type, common in the age of Caesar especially in most of his portraits on contemporary coins. The statue is not a copy, but an interpretation according to the taste of 2nd century AD (Fittschen 2010: 24).

4.5.4.3. **Eagle-headed Griffins on Post-Trajanic Cuirassed Statues**

- Statues of Hadrian from Perge in Antalya Museum

The theme of the eagle-headed griffins continues on breastplates of imperial statues after the Trajanic period, such as in two famous cuirassed statues of Hadrian.

![Cuirassed Statue of Hadrian from Perge](image)

*4.38 a and b. Antalya Museum. a, cuirassed statue of Hadrian from Perge. b, detail.*
As with the previous cuirassed statue of Trajan (fig. 4.35), this statue (fig. 4.38) was found in 1971 in the nymphaeum of Perge, Turkey, and now is exhibited in Antalya Museum. The emperor wears a large oakwreath on his head, and the portrait is the standard type of the emperor at the height of his career in the late 120s (Vermeule 180: 16). On the breastplate there is Medusa's head and, covered by a cingulum, a pair of confronting, standing eagle-headed griffins without the central candelabrum, witnessing that this subject was known and used in the armour decoration also in Hadrianic period. The other statue of Hadrian found in Perge and now at the Antalya Museum has the same iconography of eagle-headed griffins on the breastplate (Vermeule 1959: 56-57) (fig. 4.39).
Fig. 4.39. Antalya Museum. Cuirassed statue of Hadrian from Perge.
4.6. Symbolism

Concerning Frieze Type Ia, the entablature of the porticoes surrounding the square (fig. 2.13 B) was decorated on both sides with a frieze with vegetal motifs, as in the Forum of Augustus, of which only a fragment survives (Meneghini and Santangeli Valenzani 2007: 88; fig. 12.6). However, as discussed above (Section 4.2.2), in the exedras (fig. 2.13 C) there was the figurative architraval Frieze Type Ia. This frieze, decorated with pairs of griffins facing each other separated by vases and flanked by candelabra, contributed to circumscribing this section of the portico. In the first order of the curved walls there were niches, in the second windows (Chapter 2, p. 33). The windows framing and illuminating the area, and the niches marking it together with the friezes helped isolate the exedras, which evidently needed to be distinguished from the rest of the portico.

According to the civilian context of the Forum as a seat for judiciary activities (Chapter 2, p. 25), the griffins could in the first instance be related to the exaltation of the emperor as the leader of the Roman army against the Dacians first and the Parthians later, because they are attributes of Nemesis. As already mentioned (supra, pp. 102-103), Nemesis supervised the sphere of justice, helped in her role as justice keeper by the griffins (Fortea Lopez 1994: 41). Nemesis, guardian of what she considers right and measured, re-establishes the infringed and altered order. As attendants of Nemesis, with the acute eagle eyes and the pointed ears seeing and hearing everything, these griffins in the portico of the courtyard of the Column could recall the military campaigns of Trajan in Dacia and symbolize the military might and the unavoidable necessity of revenge and punishment of the enemies for their ὕβρις (Packer 2001: 187). According to Claridge (2014), the griffins helped the process of justice. In Cadario's opinion (2004: 145-46; 2006: 478), the iconographic tradition of the griffin must be read also in the light of the symbolic and political importance this mythological creature acquired since the Augustan period because of its relationship with Apollo. According to this background the vases could be interpreted with a function of separating elements, even if maintaining a generic association with the cultual sphere (supra, p. 105).

For Frieze Type Ib, as seen, we suggested their correct provenance from the courtyard of Trajan's Column (fig. 2.13 H) (Section 4.3.11). The iconography of Frieze Type Ib
with griffins and candelabra of the courtyard is the same as Frieze Type Ia in the exedras of the porticoes of the square of the Forum (fig. 2.13 B).

After his death Trajan was buried in the Forum he built, in or beside the pedestal of the Column (Chapter 2, p. 45). A grave within the *pomerium* was an extraordinary honour, reserved in the Republican period to the *summi viri*, topmost men whose virtues Trajan was intent upon reviving (Davies 2004: 33). According to the change of function of the courtyard of the Column, the significance of the griffins could have changed through time as well. We would argue that the figures of the griffins could initially allude to Nemesis goddess of justice and of the revenge through the punishment of the Dacians, exalting the Roman victory, as in the case of Type Ia. But after Trajan's death Frieze Type Ib surrounding the courtyard of the Column (fig. 2.13 H) need not have been replaced because it was polysemous and it could also be interpreted with a funerary connotation. However, the evidence for the demolition of the colonnade on the north side of the Column courtyard (Amici 1982) and the two phases of the 'libraries' (Chapter 2, p. 22, 49) might suggest that the colonnades around the Column, if not replaced, could have been modified and extended to run along the north side of the 'libraries' (Claridge 2007) Possibly it contributed to circumscribing and distinguishing this section of the Forum, which gained a considerable value, as it became the sacred area where the grave of the emperor was. People entering in the courtyard could recognize the griffins surrounding the burial of Trajan also as the guardians of his grave. In this second phase the frieze with griffins could have been maintained because of their allusion to Apollo as psychopomp, guide of the souls to the afterlife, and in this case of the soul of Trajan in his apotheosis. In fact, when they were associated with Apollo and Dionysus, the griffins were symbols of the sphere of the afterlife, the watchful guardians of gods, rulers or the dead (Delplace 1980: 366-72). Apollo and Dionysus guarantee immortality to their adherents (Davies 2004: 188), and often also cupids accompany the griffins in their iconography of psychopomps, guides of the dead.

After Octavian defeated Mark Antony, the griffin became one of the most important attributes of Apollo in Roman art, abandoning Dionysus (Delplace 1980: 397). With Trajan, Hadrian and Antoninus Pius the cult of Dionysus, together with that of Apollo, become popular again as a religion of the highest social class (Delplace 1980: 385) and there was a further passage from the iconography of the griffins carrying Apollo or
Dionysus, to the funerary imperial image, symbol of the last journey of the dead (Delplace 1980: 417-18) (Section 4.4).

After Trajan's apotheosis, candelabra with burning flames (supra, p. 105) are the elements which connote the griffins as psychopoms in the funerary sphere. Candelabra were associated with gods because they are temple furniture, and they also recalled the first emperor Augustus because they belonged to the new figurative language of the Augustan era. They are represented with the laurel branches in the friezes of the Temple of Apollo Sosianus, built as homage to the god by a supporter of Mark Antony in the civil war who was later pardoned by Augustus. In those years the incense burner was also an allusion to the supplicatio thure et vino celebrated since 30 BC in honour of the genius of Augustus. On his birthday the ritual included the supplicatio, when the Genius of the emperor was invited to dine at the altar (La Rocca 1985: 88). Later the candelabra turned to a general meaning of religious pietas, and they also decorated the cinerary urns of the deceased as a symbol of a god fearing life (Zanker 1989: 93-95).

Griffins flanking candelabra enforce the magic power of those same objects, and increase the omnipotence of the god Apollo and the goddess Nemesis who were their patrons. This is very clear in the later friezes of the Temple of Antoninus and Faustina in the Roman Forum (Section 4.5.3), whose model was the friezes of the Forum of Trajan: the permanent flame shows the gratitude and veneration of the Romans for the imperial couple who ruled with mercy (Flagge 1975: 69). The inextinguishable flame of life is linked both to this world and to the underworld: after birth we see the sun light and when we die we leave it, therefore the light is considered the expression of life after death as well. The lux aeterna, the eternal light, is typical of the afterlife, where the humans as the gods are only eternal clarity (Flagge 1975: 70). Thus, the fire burning in the candelabra of the frieze is the symbol of the light of eternity.

The reference to the clarity of the after-world expressed by the candelabra is further specified by the colour of the griffin, which was usually white. The ancient literary and figurative tradition about the griffins often underlines the white colour, which in our minds immediately translates the immaterial essence of the light (Frugoni Settis 1973: 39). The psychopomp griffin carried the souls to the sky, and this ascension is the link between this mythological creature and the symbology of the light.
In Roman art the relation of the griffins to the symbolism of the light in the cult of the dead is mediated through the figure of Apollo who had a light essence (Flagge 1975: 73). Behind the figure of Apollo in the imperial era there is often a subtle reference to Augustus. Probably the fire in the imperial ceremonies is the result of the influence of the Hellenic cult of the emperor, especially under Augustus, with the presence of symbols of the god in the form of griffins, tripods, swans, cithara, and laurel (Flagge 1975: 73). The Roman poets celebrated Augustus as son of Apollo, and Apollo was considered as the god of the golden age, announced by the Sibylline books. Again, the cuirass of the statue of Augustus of Prima Porta (fig. 4.28) is a great example that allows us to better understand the propaganda which always matched the figure of the first emperor to his protector Apollo. Among the figures of the elaborated decoration of the breastplate, we focus on the detail of the path of the morning sun with Apollo riding a griffin (fig. 4.40). Here the griffin, attribute of Apollo the sun god, protecting Augustus and his stock, represents the power of the imperial authority (Delplace 1980: 386).

The iconography chosen by Trajan reconnects him to the model of his predecessors and in particular to the first emperor Augustus, as we will discuss below in Section 12.2.2. The griffins took part in the celebration of the emperor in the buildings which would have represented the peak of his exaltation, and only after his death, because of their polysemous meaning, they could have been interpreted as an allusion to his apotheosis.
Fig. 4.40. Detail of the breastplate of Augustus of Prima Porta. The arrows highlight Apollo riding a griffin and the sphinxes on the shoulders.
5.1. Introduction

In this chapter we catalogue and describe the only fragment of architrave that features eagle-headed griffins with accompanying tripods: the dimensions of this fragment provide the reason for attributing it to a specific architectonical order of a building on the south side of the complex of Trajan's Forum.

5.2. Frieze Type II

Type II comprises a relief of eagle-headed griffins with tripods set on friezes of height dimensions ca. 60 cm which survive in Trajan's Forum.

5.2.1. Fragment II (1)

Entablature block

Current Location: Rome, southern porticoed courtyard of Trajan's Forum.

Inventory number: FT 9151.

Fig. 5.1. Fragment II (1) when discovered in the 1998-2000 excavations.
Fig. 5.2. Fragment II (1) in situ.
Fig. 5.3. Fragment II (1), left end.
Fig. 54. Fragment II (1), back side.
Fig. 5.5. Fragment II (1), right end.
**Fig. 5.6.** Fragment II (1), upper side.

**Fig. 5.7.** Fragment II (1), detail of the griffin.
Fig. 5.8. Fragment II (1), detail of the tripod.

Fig. 5.9. Meneghini’s drawing of Fragment II (1) and relevant measurements.
Measurements of block: height including architrave: 79 cm (max. 119 cm); height of frieze panel: 60 cm; width: 102 cm front, 98 cm back; thickness: maximum 55 cm on the right side, 75 cm on the left side.

Marble type: Luni marble.

Measurements of griffins: height: 60 cm, 50 cm from the chest to hind leg; tail height: 32 cm; crouching hind legs height: 24 cm; right wing's width: 42 cm; left wing's width: 10 cm; feathers in wing (4 rows of feathers) - short feathers' length: 2 cm first row, 4 cm second row, 6 cm third row, 7 cm fourth row, long feathers' length: 20 cm fifth row; beard height: 10 cm; beak's width: 5 cm.

Measurements of other motifs: tripod height: 32 cm, bars under the tripod height: 3 cm.

State of preservation: the surface of this frieze shows numerous lacunae.

Description: an eagle-headed griffin turning left is crouching on its haunches and leaning its left forepaw on what is probably a tripod (figs. 5.1-5.9). The architrave is decorated with a Cyma reversa with normal leaf-and-dart moulding, and on the lower side half round with bead and reel.


Discovery and likely location: this block was found during the 1998-2000 excavations in the area of the southern porticoed courtyard (figs. 2.13 F, 5.1). It had been incorporated in a wall which has since been demolished, and the frieze still stands upside down, close to its original location, on the south-eastern side of the courtyard (Chapter 2, p. 24).

5.2.2. Location of Frieze II

The southern porticoed courtyard (fig. 2.13 F) is one of the major discoveries of the 1998-2000 excavations (Section 2.2.5; figs. 2.12 and 2.20). If we assume that the block found essentially in situ decorated one of the architectures of that area of the Forum, the likely original location for this frieze is the southern courtyard itself. As already discussed in Section 3.2, sometimes study and reconstruction of architectonical orders can be the only method to establish the location for the architral friezes. In this case, while Meneghini's study of the architectural decoration (Meneghini and Santangeli Valenzani 2007: 96) does not add to our understanding of where Frieze II was exactly located originally, it provides a very useful reconstruction of the architectural orders in
this sector of the Forum to help us visualize its general position (figs. 5.10 and 5.16). Because of the smooth surface of the back of this piece of block (fig. 5.4), without any hole to connect it to upper structures, Meneghini does not ascribe the frieze to any of the three porticoed sides of this courtyard, but to the fourth southern one, free of porticoes and uncovered (fig. 5.11), which was the perimeter wall of the adjacent Forum of Augustus (Meneghini 2007: 98; 2009: 137). In fact, from comparison with measurements of the other architraval friezes with other decorative motifs as Victories (Type VI) and cupids (Type V) and sphinxes (Type VII), and in particular with the other longer architraval friezes with griffins and candelabra and vases (Frieze Type Ia and Ib), Meneghini argues that the evidence for such a frieze attests the presence of an entablature running around the porticoed courtyard, decorated with friezes representing pairs of winged eagle-headed crouching griffins facing each other flanking tripods, which maybe alternated with others with candelabra. Meneghini hypothesises that the background of the frieze could have been lightly coloured to emphasise the whiteness of the griffins, because in the Roman popular imagination the griffins were perfectly white (Meneghini 2007: 98). The overall height of the order to which Frieze Type II belongs is ca. 11.16-11.34 m (Meneghini 2001: 59).

Fig. 5.10. Reconstruction view of the southern porticoed courtyard (F). The red arrow indicates the likely location of Frieze Type II.
Fig. 5.11. Plan of the Forum of Trajan with the location of Frieze Type II in the southern porticoed courtyard (F).
5.3. **Iconography**

The iconography of the eagle-headed griffins in Frieze Type II is the same as Frieze Type I, and is discussed in Chapter 4 (Section 4.4).

In the relief of Fragment II (1), in front of the griffin is a fragment of a not very legible object that can be identified as a tripod, the sole example from the Forum of Trajan. The tripod is a typical attribute of Apollo and highlights the connection between the griffin and the god. As previously discussed (Section 4.6), the griffin was sacred to Nemesis, but also attendant of Apollo. The chariot of Apollo could be drawn by griffins or the god could ride them (as in the breastplate of the Augustus of Prima Porta) (fig. 4.40). According to the widespread legend ascribed by Herodotus to Aristeas of Proconnesus, they often struggled with the one-eyed Arimaspi (Her., *Hist.* 4. 13-15), who lived in Scythia and tried to steal the gold of Apollo, protected by the gold-guarding griffins. Herodotus also recalls that beyond them there were the Hyperboreans who lived in Hyperborea (beyond Borea, the north wind), illuminated by the sun light six months a year, loved by Apollo who considered it a perfect land. Otherwise the Arimaspi were associated with the outlands of the north. The legend of the griffins and the Arimaspi underlines either the apotropaic function of the mythological figures as protectors of the gold mines of Apollo, or their connection to the far edges of the known world. Because of the diffusion of the legend, the griffin as a beast of prey plays the role of the extraordinary wild and fierce animal.

Apollo dedicated a bronze tripod to the sanctuary of Delphi and bestowed divine powers on one of the priestesses, known as 'Pythia'. She sat on the tripod and delivered oracles (Giannelli 1935). Delphi became the most important oracle centre of Apollo. Hercules tried to steal the tripod, and Apollo struggled with him for its possession (fig. 5.12). The popular episode of the fight for the Delphic tripod was represented on 110 black-figured vases and on the shield armband of Olympia (Sichtermann 1960). Since the most ancient examples, either Apollo and Hercules hold the tripod between them, or, especially in the red-figured vases, Hercules holds the tripod and escapes while Apollo tries to block him. Sometimes Hercules is depicted alone with the tripod. In Greece, the tripods consecrated at Delphi were symbols of victory. In the very famous case of the golden tripod of Gelo tyrant of Syracuse, an inscribed pedestal found in Delphi attests
that he dedicated it after winning the battle of Himera over the Carthaginians in BC 480. Another tripod was dedicated by his brother and successor Hieron (D'Amelio 1966).

*Fig. 5.12. Rome, Antiquario Palatino. Campana plaque with Apollo and Hercules struggling for the possession of the Delphic tripod.*

In the Roman period, tripods were strictly connected with Apollo, as well as the griffins, and especially in the Augustan era the tripods were among the most recurring themes. For example, they are represented in several private houses such as Poppaei's Villa of in Oplontis (Ling 1991: 26), in frescoes, as well as in Roman public buildings. Also, Augustus wrote in his memoirs that he removed from Rome his statues, the equestrian monuments and the statues with four-horsed chariots, 80 in total, and with the revenues put votive offerings, in particular golden tripods, in the Temple of Apollo he built on the Palatine Hill (Aug., *Res. Gest.* 1.40); and on the marble frame of the door of the Temple of Apollo there were two tripods flanked by the griffins of Apollo and Nemesis goddess of the revenge (Zanker 1989: 92-93).

5.4. **Comparanda**

The only example of a pre-Trajanic relief with an iconography comparable to that of Frieze Type II is a fragment of a relief from the Palatium of Domitian; two post-Trajanic reliefs are in Villa Albani.
5.4.1. Relief with an Eagle-headed Griffin and a Tripod in the Palatium of Domitian

Fig. 5.13. Rome, storerooms of the Criptoporticus, Palatine Hill. Fragment of a relief with an eagle-headed griffin and a tripod.

The Palatium of Domitian was the project of the architect Rabirius, and it was inaugurated in AD 92. With the Palatium, the residence of the emperors, the architectural typology of the dynastic palace reached its classical formulation (Coarelli 1995b: 166). The wide complex is divided in two sections, the Domus Flavia, the representative and official palace, and the Domus Augustana, the private residence. It was heavily restored and extended by Septimius Severus at the beginning of the 3rd century AD. Several friezes or fragments of friezes with griffins facing candelabra, belonging either to the original Domitianic project or to the Severan refurbishment, were found in many areas of both the sections of the imperial palace (Iara 2009; 2014c) (Section 7.4.1.7).

Among the reliefs ascribable to the Domitianic era, only one fragment is comparable to Frieze Type II, as it depicts an eagle-headed griffin leaning a paw on a tripod, inventory
no. 12535 (fig. 5.13). It was part of the collection of marbles of the archaeologist Pietro Rosa, one of the first to excavate on the Palatine Hill. It is made of Luni marble and it was surrounded by a frame with acanthus leaves. The body of the griffin is vivaciously represented, and the tripod is richly decorated, and also topped with a laurel wreath. According to the carving and the comparison to other reliefs of the same chronological period, it can be dated to the Flavian era (Iara 2009; 2014c). It attests that in the Flavian imperial palace there were decorations representing this subject which could have been considered models and precedents of the Trajanic Frieze II.

5.4.2. Reliefs with Eagle-headed Griffins and Tripods in Villa Albani

![Relief with a pair of eagle-headed griffin and a tripod.](image)

*Fig. 5.14. Rome, Villa Albani. Relief with a pair of eagle-headed griffin and a tripod.*

![Relief with a pair of eagle-headed griffin and a tripod.](image)

*Fig. 5.15. Rome, Villa Albani. Relief with a pair of eagle-headed griffin and a tripod.*
These reliefs are displayed on the back wall of the Gallery of Leda in Villa Albani (Bol 1988-98) (infra, p. 189). They were mentioned for the first time in 1869 in the third edition of the catalogue, thus possibly they come from one of the several excavations commissioned by Alessandro Torlonia in the Roman territory. The first relief (Bol 1992: cat. nr. 359, pp. 286-87, pl. 186) (fig. 15.14) is decorated with a pair of crouching and confronting eagle-headed griffins, leaning a paw on a tripod. The second relief (Bol 1992: cat. nr. 361, pp. 288-89, pl. 187) (fig. 15.15) was broken in two parts and sections such as the head of the left griffin and the left hind led are missing. A pair of crouching and confronting eagle-headed griffins lean a paw on a tripod and are flanked by pear-shaped candelabra. In this relief is the variation of the tails of the griffins wrapped around the vases behind them, which are not comparable with other similar examples. Both the reliefs are thought to come from the same workshop and have the same style, with rigid bodies and the same chiaroscuro highlighting paws, ears, eyes, beards, feathers and hair tufts. The style of the Cyma and the ovolo with egg-and-dart allow to date these reliefs to the Severan Period, thus they witness the spread of the subject even after Trajanic period.

5.5. Symbolism

The frieze of the southern porticoed courtyard (fig. 2.13 F) decorated with continuous, uninterrupted pairs of winged eagle-headed griffins in heraldic position, confronting Apollo's tripods, perhaps alternating with candelabra as Meneghini hypothesizes (Meneghini 2007: 98), optically would have helped isolate this structure, which was compressed between the three-segmented hall (fig. 2.13 E) and the adjacent Forum of Augustus. In the context of this courtyard, the griffins could be interpreted as attributes of Apollo in terms of their apotropaic function as protectors of Apollo's gold mines, and their connection to the far edges of the known world.

In the Augustan era the tripod was a double allusion not only to Apollo but also to Augustus, who decorated the Temple of Apollo with tripods and griffins (supra, p. 146). According to Zanker, later on from the Temple of Apollo this subject spread as a more general motif of religious piety and hope in a new beginning (1988: 87-88; 1989: 92-93).
In my opinion, the griffins and the tripods were chosen to decorate the porticoed courtyard because they were both connected with a 'stealing attempt'. We have no evidence to identify the function of the southern porticoed courtyard (fig. 2.13 F), but Meneghini, who excavated in this area, informally often made the working hypothesis that the courtyard could be the place where the booty brought from Dacia could have been exhibited (personal communication 23/09/2013). However, problematically the booty would have been displayed in the middle of the uncovered courtyard under the attack of atmospheric agents. Possibly it could have been stored in niches, but the presence of niches in the perimetral walls of the covered porticoes is also hypothetical (Section 2.4.6, p. 37).

Fig. 5.16. Detail of the architraval Frieze Type II with eagle-headed griffins and tripods in the reconstruction view of the southern porticoed courtyard (F).

The subject of Frieze II could have been chosen to relate the griffins as guardians of Apollo's gold to the necessity of protecting the booty and the treasures of the Dacians brought by Trajan to Rome. Furthermore, it is known that senators carried out their economic activities in the area of the Forum, which was also used as a senatorial bank,
even if there is no information about how this deposit procedure worked. A commentator of the poems of Juvenal wrote: "Up until the prefecture of Cerealis, senators kept strongboxes in the Forum of Trajan, in which they deposited silver or money more safely; accordingly, the place in which the strongboxes were kept was called Opes (Wealth)\(^4\) (Schol. Juv., ad Sat. 10. 24; Packer 1995: 349; Chenault 2008: 125). According to Ungaro, the banks could instead have been in Trajan's Markets - a polyfunctional complex strictly connected with the Forum. In some restricted areas of the complex there could have been the arcae, the banks of the senators where they deposited their valuables and accumulated their financial capital (Ungaro et al. 2004: 36). As the presence of the senatorial banks in the Forum is demonstrated, perhaps the architraval friezes with griffins in other areas of the Forum (Frieze Type I) could also have a similar connotation, maybe even those in the exedras of the porticoes (Type Ia). Thus, the griffins as gold protectors could be connected, depending on the areas of the Forum's complex, not only with the booty from Dacia but also with the use of the Forum as a bank of the senators where their deposits would be carefully defended.

\(^4\) "Usque ad Cerealem praefectum in foro Trajani arcas habuerunt senatores, in quibus argentum aut pecunias tutus deponebant, propterea et locus ipse, in quo erant arcae positae, 'Opes' dictae sunt". In fact, during his prefecture from September 352 to December 353 Cerealis abolished the safe-deposit boxes reserved to the senators in the Forum (Chenault 2008: 125). This is a comment of this passage of Juvenal, so there is the possibility that it could have been glossed.
Chapter 6.

Trajanic Frieze Type III: Eagle-headed Griffins and Cupids

6.1. Introduction

In this chapter we catalogue and describe those fragments of architrave that feature standing eagle-headed griffins with cupids. Through the comparison of additional archival data and extant sculptural finds it is possible to attribute these friezes to the architectonical order of a specific building forming the complex of Trajan's Forum. Consideration on the significance of the variation of iconography of similar Frieze Type IV will come in Chapters 11 and 12.

6.2. Frieze Type III

Type III comprises reliefs of height dimensions c. 120 cm with cupids giving drink to standing eagle-headed griffins. A fragment of this frieze type survives in Berlin's Pergamon Museum. To this fragment can be added two antiquarian drawings. In the fragment in Berlin, III (1) only a cupid survives, but the complete iconography with the addition of griffins can be inferred from Drawings III (2 and 3). Concerning the griffins, the iconography of this Frieze Type III differs from that of Type I because here we not only have griffins but also cupids. Furthermore, while in Frieze Type I griffins are crouching, in this type they stand. Eventually, although the pose of cupids giving drink to griffins of this Frieze Type III is the same of those in Type IV, here griffins are eagle-headed and not lion-headed as in Type IV.

6.2.1. Fragment III (1)

Entablature block

Current location: Berlin, Pergamon Museum.

Inventory number: Sk 903.
Fig. 6.1. Fragment III (1).
Fig. 6.2. Fragment III (1), detail.

Fig. 6.3. Fragment III (1), detail.
Marble type: Luni marble.

Measurements of block: overall height of the slab: 165 cm; height of frieze panel: 124 cm (max. preserved); width: 53.8 cm; thickness: 25 cm.

State of preservation: formed by 6 different fragments with modern restorations. The right forearm and part of the right wing of the cupid are missing. The surface shows numerous lacunae although it was recently restored.

Description of frieze: cut slab of a bigger architraval frieze, where a winged cupid turns to the right presumably to pour water from a _kantharos_ in a _patera_ (missing) (fig. 6.1) to drink an eagle-headed griffin (missing). The lower part of the body of the cupid is transformed into a fascicle of acanthus leaves, ending with spirals decorated with rosettes. Behind the cupid there is a vegetal spiral element.


Discovery and likely location: found in the Forum. Transferred to Villa Aldobrandini (Chapter 2, p. 16), it was part of the Giustiniani Collection from 1635, sold between 1684 and 1757, and in 1826 was bought by C. J. von Bunsen from Carlo Fea and moved to Germany. Before the Second World War the relief was exhibited in the western wing of the Alten Museum in Berlin, in the Roman room. Although it was exhibited in the Pergamon Museum from 1960 and moved to the new section of Roman art in 1982, it was for a long time considered lost during the Second World War. Later the relief lay at length in the deposits of the Antiquities Collection, but it was restored in 2011 and put on display again during the redevelopment work of the Pergamon Museum. It is now in the Miletus room on the back wall of Trajan's room (Grüßinger 2013).
6.2.2. Drawing III (2)

Drawing by D. Ghirlandaio

Another fragment of the same Frieze Type III was drawn by Domenico Ghirlandaio (1449-1494), the famous Renaissance painter master of Michelangelo (fig. 6.4). It does not correspond to any surviving slab.

Fig. 6.4. Drawing III (2) by Ghirlandaio.
References: Bartoli 1924: 185-86; Bertoldi 1960-61: 27, pl. 19.

Description: on a paper Ghirlandaio sketched two drawings: that on the lower level is irrelevant to this research, the other on the upper level represents an entablature held by two columns with just outlined capitals with volutes. The entablature is completed with detailed cornice, architrave and frieze. Two bells hang down the cornice. On the left side of the frieze there is a cupid, whose lower body is transformed into a schematic fascicle of acanthus leaves. The cupid turns left with a raised right arm, as to pour water from an object in the right hand to another in the left hand, both not sketched, to give drink to a standing eagle-headed griffin facing him with a raised forepaw. On the right side the spiral vegetal-ending right leg only of another cupid is sketched. On the corner block of the architrave is depicted another cupid with spiral vegetal-ending legs in front position.

Tummarello (1989: 102) describes the griffin as an eagle-headed griffin. The sketch is very synthetic and what is drawn on the griffin's head can be interpreted either as the horns of a lion or the crest of an eagle, but it seems to me to recognize the profile of an eagle with a sharp beak rather than the muzzle of a lion.

Discovery and likely location: between the columns Ghirlandaio wrote the note "a spoglia christo", (visible) at Spoglia Cristo.
6.2.3. Fragment III (3)

Drawing by Cronaca

Frieze Type III is also sketched on an anonymous drawing attributed to Cronaca\(^5\) (1457-1508) (fig. 6.5).

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\(^5\) Simone del Pollaiolo called Cronaca. His identity is controversial and recently scholars prefer to call him "Pseudo-Cronaca" (Viscogliosi 2000: 91, 147-150; Meneghini 2009: 128, 162).
Measurement: height of frieze panel: in the drawing the author annotated that the frieze is 19 times higher than the modulus he adopted of 54 mm (Bartoli 1924: 187). Thus, the frieze should have been 1.026 cm high, ca. 20 cm smaller than III (1), but Bartoli (1924: 187) justified this height difference (he connected the fragment to Frieze Type IV) with the choice of the author of using a perspective height instead of the geometric one, "to better respond to the theoretic proportions of the order".

References: Bartoli 1924: 186-88; Bertoldi 1960-61: 27, pl. 19.

Description: the drawing represents an architectural order with an entablature held by a Corinthian column. The entablature has an outlined cornice, architrave and frieze, with only some details sketched to record their decorative motifs, and measurements. On the right corner of the architraval frieze a standing eagle-headed griffin is sketched, turning right with the left paw raised.

Discovery and likely location: on the left side of the column, under the cornice, the artist wrote the note "de palazo di Nerva Traiano", from the palace of Nerva Trajan, and "cuesto si chiama ispoglia cristo o vogliamo dire del palazo di Nerva Traiano chosi e", this is called Spoglia Christi or of the palace of Nerva Trajan.

6.2.4. Location of Frieze III

There is a report concerning reliefs from architraval friezes with cupids and griffins having been found in the 16th century in S. Maria in Campo Carleo or Spoglia Cristo (figs. 2.3 no. 2 and. 3.2 no. 121), a church built in the area of the east segment of the three-segmented hall (Milella 1989: 97). The determining evidence to identify the correct location of this frieze is the drawings. In fact, as already mentioned (Chapter 2, p. 16), a section of the east lateral segment of the wall still standing in the 16th century (fig. 6.6, again with the note "de palazo di Nerva Traiano") which was depicted by Ghirlandaio and Cronaca, attests that Fragment III (1) with a cupid, with a supposed missing eagle-headed griffin (fig. 6.1), belongs to this order, together with other lost fragments, III (2 and 3). In his drawing, III (2), Ghirlandaio wrote the note "(visible) at Spoglia Cristo": the area of Santa Maria in Campo Carleo or Spolia Christi or Spoglia Cristo corresponds to the eastern lateral side of the three-segmented hall at the south end of the Forum (fig. 3.2 no. 121). Even if there are inaccuracies, the frame and the
architrave in the drawings match with the fragments which are undoubtedly from the Forum of Trajan (Tummarello 1989: 106).

Fig. 6.6. An anonymous drawing, probably by Cronaca, of the southern perimetral wall of Trajan’s Forum in the 16th century.

Traditionally the reliefs in Berlin and the Vatican, respectively III (1) and IV (1 and 2), were incorrectly considered as three fragments of the same architraval frieze in the reconstructive drawings of the scholars of the 1800s (Section 7.2.7). In fact, the dimensions of Frieze Type III (1) are larger than those of IV (1 and 2): the slabs in the Vatican Museums are 112 cm, and Fragment III (1) is 124 cm high. Moreover, the differences in the way in which the details are rendered and in the height of the slabs
imply that the slabs could not have come in linear succession (Piazzesi 1989: 130). In particular, in addition to stylistic differences (Section 7.2.7), in Ghirlandaio's Drawing III (2) the griffin is eagle-headed and not lion-headed, and the spiral ends of fascicle of acanthus leaves of the lower part of the body of each cupid are so close, that possibility of a krater dividing the figures of the cupids can be excluded. Thus, while Ghirlandaio's report helps us identify the location of this frieze, his drawing does not aid fully in its reconstruction.

An element of originality of this research is that for the first time we can separate this Fragment III (1) from IV (1 and 2) and relate them to different sections of the complex of Trajan's Forum: for the reasons discussed above III (1) is ascribed to the three-segmented hall (figs. 6.7 and 6.8), while, as we will explain below, Frieze Type IV decorated a less clearly identified area in the north of Trajan's Column (Section 7.2.8). The overall height of the order to which Frieze Type III belongs is ca. 17.53 m (Meneghini 2009: 130).

Fig. 6.7. Reconstruction of the monumental façade (D) of the three-segmented hall (E) on the southern side of the square of the Forum (A). The red arrow indicates the location of Frieze Type III.
Fig. 6.8. Plan of the Forum of Trajan with the location of Frieze Type III on the monumental façade (D) of the three-segmented hall (E).
6.3. Iconography

6.3.1. Cupids

*Fig. 6.9. Athens, Museum of the Akropolis. The frieze of the Parthenon. Artemis, Aphrodite and Eros on block E VI.*

The iconography of the eagle-headed griffins in Frieze Type III is the same as Frieze Type I and is discussed in Chapter 4 (Section 4.4).

Eros was probably the most represented god of the Greek pantheon. In the early myth (according to sources such as the cosmogonies and especially Hesiod, the earliest philosophers, and texts concerning the mystery religions) he was one of the primordial gods, born at the beginning of time, and was present at the birth of Aphrodite. In later sources his parentage was unsure for the Greek themselves (Rudhardt 1986: 13-15; Venant 1990: 467). For example Pausanias contradicts himself by saying first that Eros welcomed Aphrodite into the world, and then that he was her son and the youngest of the gods (Paus., *Per.* 5. 11. 8-10; see Mulryan and Brown 2006: 332). Therefore Eros became the constant companion, associate, assistant and child of Aphrodite (Vernant 1990: 467; March 2014: 62). This subject was depicted most of all on vases, but also in statues, reliefs, mirrors, frescoes, coins, gems. In the first representations of the 7th
century BC still surviving, the god always flanked Himeros and Aphrodite, his mother. At the end of the 6th century BC his figure became autonomous and was represented alone. From the second half of the 5th century Eros sometimes appears as 'plural', and frequently is shown as the server of his mother. For example, the god is found on the Parthenon marbles: on the northern frieze on the left shoulder of Aphrodite crowing Menelaos, and in the southern frieze in a serious attitude close to his mother (fig. 6.9). In the 4th century Praxiteles, Skopas and Lysippus made statues depicting Eros, currently known only through Roman copies. Their complex and fluid balance shows the passage from the Classic to the Hellenistic period (Spier 1960: 430).

During the Hellenistic period the figure of the god becomes more and more decorative, as the attribute of Aphrodite and other figures, especially of the sphere of Dionysus. From the Hellenistic to the Roman period there is a passage without interruption: many cupids are used for the architectural decorations, on sarcophagi, frescoes, gems, jewels, lamps. In Italy and Rome, the influence of Hellenistic and Etruscan art led official Roman art to represent the Greek god Eros as Cupid, a winged child often with allegorical meanings: many cupids are used as architectural decorations, as we can see on the architravel friezes of the Forum of Trajan Types III, IV and V, on the Temple of Venus Genetrix in the Forum of Caesar restored by Trajan (fig. 6.10), and also on the later friezes of Hadrian's Villa (Salerno 1954: 123).

Eros is represented according to Hellenistic tradition in different ways: as a single god or a symbolical archetype to describe allegorical figures, like the winged genius in the apotheosis at the base of the Column of Antoninus and Faustina, or the cupids on funerary monuments to represent love and abundance. This tradition was used as well in Republican Roman art, and later developed in the imperial period both in official and private art.

The role of Eros in Etruscan art, where he is depicted between winged demons, has not yet been established: Eros never had a religious importance and was replaced by Lasas, or female winged figures related to the goddess of love Turan, often represented with the meaning of victory, immortality, virtue (Spier 1960: 431). The Hellenistic way of representing Cupid and Eros in the Etruscan world is a sort of trait d’union with the conception of Eros in Roman art, both as god and allegorical figure (Bianchi Bandinelli 1979: 147). In Latin literature, Cupid is usually considered as the son of Venus. For
Seneca, Venus’ husband Vulcan was the father (Sen., *Oct.* 560); for Cicero there were three Cupids and three Venus, the first son of Mercury and Diana, the second of Mercury and the second Venus, the third of Mars and the third Venus (Cic., *De Nat. Deo.* 3.59-60). In the later classical tradition Cupid is most often regarded as the son of Venus and Mars (Grafton et al. 2010: 244).

![Architraval friezes with cupids holding objects attributes of Diana, Apollo, Minerva, Dionysus, from the first order of the inner decoration of the cella of the Temple of Venus Genetrix restored by Trajan.](image)

**Fig. 6.10. Rome, Museum of the Imperial Fora at Trajan's Markets. Architraval friezes with cupids holding objects attributes of Diana, Apollo, Minerva, Dionysus, from the first order of the inner decoration of the cella of the Temple of Venus Genetrix restored by Trajan.**

The connection with Venus *Genetrix*, Cupid being her son, is particularly important in Roman art under Augustus (Charbonneaux 1966): the statue of Augustus of Prima Porta (fig. 4.28) represents the *princeps* flanked by a cupid on a dolphin, recalling - according to Zanker - the divine ascendance of the *gens Iulia* (Zanker 2002: 95) (Chapter 4, p. 113).

Traditional Greek forms in the Roman world are used to represent allegorical figures, as the winged 'genius' of the apotheosis (as on the above-mentioned pedestal of the Column of Antoninus Pius and Faustina), seasons, death geniuses with the lowered torches and other generic figures of cupids depicted until the 5th century AD, in fact in Greek-Roman mythology it is not always easy to distinguish divine figures which have a properly religious significance from those with only an ornamental function (Charbonneaux 1966). Among the latter, are Venuses in Pompeian frescos and in many mosaics of the 1st and the 2nd century around the whole Empire: Venus at her toilet or playing with cupids, rising from the sea, in the judgement of Paris. On the contrary, on the sarcophagi Venus is often part of the funerary symbolism and of the civil and
imperial cult (Charbonneaux 1966). Zanker also highlights the high quantity of cupids in funerary monuments. They are represented in two main scenes: holding a shield together with Psyche, which is a portrait of the dead, or following the procession of Dionysus, as on the sarcophagus of Dionysus and Ariadne in the Ny Carlsberg Museum of Copenaghen. Both the scenes, according to the author represent the concepts of love and happiness, the Roman goddess/allegory Felicitas. Thus, from Greek to Roman art there was a passage from the figure of Eros to Cupid son of Venus, often with a mere decorative and allegorical function, but also in funerary contexts. The allegorical use of cupids, pointing at abundance, eternity and peace, is probably the main concept that was translated from Hellenistic to Roman art (Zanker 2008:112).

**6.3.2. Cupids in Acanthus**

Figures rising up from acanthus scrolls or with vegetal-ending legs were already typical of Hellenistic and Neo-Attic art: griffins in acanthus of the capitals of the 'Small Propylea' of Eleusis have been interpreted also as the illustration of the primigenial nature born in chaos (Barresi 2003: 294), and related to the philosophical theories of the Roman élite supervising the caves of Pentelic marble and the production of architectural elements (Sauron 2001: 160). In Asia Minor, since the Augustan period the 'Rankenfrau', interpreted as the Anatolian Mother Goddess, rose up from acanthus tufts as on reliefs in Antioch in Pisidia and Ancyra. In the Baths of Hadrian of Aphrodisias and in the Severan Theatre of Hierapolis Aphrodite rose from acanthus tufts. In Barresi's opinion (2003: 294), above the architrave of the cella of the Ephesus' Temple of Hadrian this figure is transformed into a male figure with vegetal-ending legs, possibly Dionysus, which seems not to have a purely decorative function. When cupids and animals people vegetal scrolls, the representation could have had a less symbolical meaning.

In particular, Cupids with vegetal-ending legs, also known as cupids in acanthus, are part of the so-said 'peopled scrolls'. Toynbee and Ward Perkins (1950: 2-3) have defined them:

"The peopling of floral scrolls with living creatures is a decorative device which enjoyed unrivalled popularity throughout the whole history of [Roman] Imperial art and in almost every country of the Empire. Its full cultivation and flowering were
achieved in the Roman age; but its roots, like those of nearly every Roman art-motif, are in the late classical Greek and Hellenistic worlds. These roots were varied and complex. [...] Some of the constituent elements can certainly be traced back to religious symbolism; and more immediate was the influence of the naturalistic trend of 4th century art, which favoured the idea of rendering birds, insects, and small beasts in their native setting".

Among the possible forms of floral scrolls, in this frieze type we have single scrolls with a single stem looped alternately to fill a narrow vertical strip of pattern with figures conjoined with these scrolls in various ways, such as either emerging, knee-high, from the flowers in the centre of each whorl, or standing or hovering at a spring of a scroll, sometimes the figure itself constituting the root of the scroll (Toynbee and Ward Perkins 1950: 2-3). This subject of cupids or winged geniuses emerging from acanthus tufts was known among the artists of the Renaissance as 'arpaia', harpy (Picozzi 2010: 25-28).

6.4. Comparanda

Unfortunately there are not specific comparanda for this subject with cupids pouring water from a kantharos in a patera to give drink to eagle-headed griffins. The motif is very similar to that of Frieze Type IV, wherein the griffins are all lion-headed. Thus, for a discussion about comparanda of a similar iconography, we can refer to Section 7.4 concerning Frieze Type IV with the variation of lion-headed griffins instead of eagle-headed griffins of this Frieze Type III.

6.5. Symbolism

The symbolism of the griffins in general is discussed with Frieze Type I in Chapter 4 (Section 4.6).

In Zanker's opinion (1970: 514) the vegetal elements growing out of the legs of the cupids are inevitably connected with the theme of fertility and abundance and the blessings of children in the aurea aetas, the golden age inaugurated under the reign of Augustus. According to Packer (2001: 187), the Trajanic cupids ending in acanthus leaves, clearly imitating the Augustan models, in the specific context of the Forum of
Trajan recalled the Hellenistic origins of Eros linked to Nemesis and Victory. They participate in the general celebration of the emperor and his military conquests; in fact the griffins given drinks by cupids are tamed, alluding to the future pacification of the East, which would have been obtained with a military campaign, as already happened in Dacia (La Rocca et al. 1995: 92).

Inside the empire, Trajan re-established and guaranteed peace and prosperity with his victories. The architectural decoration of the Forum expresses this happiness. For Settis (1988: 185) this message is explicit in reliefs with the cupids and griffins, this Frieze Type III with eagle-headed griffins and Type IV with the variation of lion-headed griffins, where the cupids give drink to griffins pouring a liquid in the beak, perhaps wine, as a symbol of abundance. For Packer too (2008: 476), they celebrate the abundance assured by defeat of the barbarians and they were signs of Rome's felicitas after Trajan's victories (2008: 477), in fact the conquest of Dacia was a way to guard against raids on the north-east frontier of the empire, but also to stabilise territories, such as Moesia, which the Romans considered an immense granary.

The symbolism of the cupids giving drink to griffins as an allusion to the exaltation of the military conquests of the emperor can be strengthened by the presence of other symbolic elements, such as the Dionysiac krater on Frieze Type IV, which is discussed in Chapter 7 (Section 7.5).

The symbolism of the cupids in acanthus can be strengthened by vegetal elements, which are discussed with Frieze Type V in Chapter 8 (Section 8.5).
Chapter 7.
Trajanic Frieze Type IV: Lion-headed Griffins, Cupids, Vases

7.1. Introduction

In this chapter we catalogue and describe those fragments of architrave that feature lion-headed griffins, and specifically those with cupids and accompanying vases. Below are considered also additional archival data that add information to the extant sculptural finds. Consideration on the significance of the variation in these fragments of iconography of similar Frieze Type III will come in Chapters 11 and 12.

7.2. Frieze Type IV

Type IV comprises those reliefs of lion-headed griffins with cupids and vases set on friezes of height dimensions ca. 115 cm. Two fragments of this frieze type survive in the Vatican Museums; to this number can be added four drawings representing sections of the same frieze.

7.2.1. Fragment IV (1)

Entablature block

Current location: Vatican City, Vatican Museums, Museo Gregoriano Profano.

Museum Inventory number: VM 9648.
Fig. 7.1. Fragment IV (1).

Fig. 7.2. Fragment IV (1), detail.
Fig. 7.3. Fragment IV (1), detail of the lion-headed griffin.
Fig. 7.A. Fragment IV (1), detail of the lion-headed griffin.
Fig. 7.5. Fragment IV (1), detail of the lion-headed griffin.
Fig. 7.6. Fragment IV (1), left end.
Marble type: Luni marble.

Measurements of block: overall height 115 cm; width: 158 cm at the top, 168 cm at the bottom; thickness: 12 cm at the top, 20 cm at the bottom.

Measurements of griffins: height: 88 cm from the tuft on the head to the left forepaw; width: 64-66 cm from the tail to the right forepaw; tail height: 40 cm; left hind leg height: 34 cm (this is the only original and not recarved leg); horn width: 9 cm; tufts
flanking the muzzle height: 18 cm; right wing's width: 32 cm; left wing's width: 33 cm; feathers in wing (5 rows of short feathers, 1 row of long feathers) - short feathers' length: 5 cm first and second row, 6 cm third row, 7 cm fourth and fifth row; long feathers' length: 15 cm.

Measurements of cupid: height: 72 cm from the shoulder to the rock; head height: 15 cm from forehead to chin; ear height: 5 cm; right wing's width: 33 cm; left wing's width: 32 cm; feathers in wing (4 rows of short feathers, 1 row of long feathers) - short feathers' length: 4 cm first and second row, 5 cm third and fourth row; long feathers' length: 14 cm.

Measurements of other motifs: flowers' diameter: 16 cm; water jet: 18 cm; distance between cupid and griffin: 5 cm.

State of preservation: the surface of this frieze is ruined in many points. Modern restorations completed in marble and stucco the lacunae in the right arm of the cupid, the end of the acanthus leaves, the muzzle, the left wing, the left foreleg and the left hind leg of the griffin.

Description of frieze: slab of a cut architraval frieze (figs. 7.1-7.7), wherein a winged cupid facing to the right pours water from a kantharos in a patera to give drink to a winged lion-headed griffin standing in front of him and leaning its right forepaw on the patera. The lower part of the body of the cupid is transformed into a tuft of acanthus leaves, ending with spirals decorated with rosettes with five petals and a double corolla. Between the wings of the cupid there is a stalk with long smooth leaves. The griffin has a lion's head and goat-like horns.


Discovery and likely location: the modern scholarly literature gives two conflicting accounts: either it was discovered during the pontificate of Clemens VIII Aldobrandini (1592-1605) near the church of S. Eufemia in the 16th century, or while excavating the foundation of the church of SS. Nome di Maria, and transferred to Villa Aldobrandini (Chapter 2, p. 16; Section 7.2.8). In 1812 the fragments that constitute this frieze, this one with IV (2), were bought by Camuccini and in ca. 1825 they were moved to the Vatican, first in the Borgia Apartments, then in the Lateran Museums and finally the collections of the Lateran were moved to the Vatican Museums, in the Museo Gregoriano Profano.
7.2.2. Fragment IV (2)

Entablature block

Current location: Vatican City, Vatican Museums, Museo Gregoriano Profano.

Museum Inventory number: VM 9760 (not 7600 as reported in the 1980-90s catalogues).

Fig. 7.8. Fragment IV (2).
Fig. 7.9. Fragment IV (2), detail of the left cupid.
Fig. 7.10. Fragment IV (2), detail of the krater.
Fig. 7.11. Fragment IV (2), detail of the krater.
Fig. 7.12. Fragment IV (2), detail of the right cupid.
Fig. 7.13. Fragment IV (2), left end.

Marble type: Luni marble.

Measurements of block: height 115 cm on the right side, 112 cm on the left; width: 202 cm at the top, 196 cm at the bottom; thickness: 17 cm at the top left, 12 cm at the top right, 20 cm at the bottom.

Measurements of cupid: Left cupid: height: 70 cm; waist width: 20 cm; face height: 35 cm; right wing's width: 32 cm; left wing's width: 33 cm; feathers in wing (5 rows of short feathers, 1 row of long feathers) - short feathers' length: 3 cm first row, 5 cm the other rows; long feathers' length: 10 cm; Right cupid: height: 90 cm; left wing's width: 31 cm; right wing's width: 32 cm; distance between cupids: 116 cm.

Measurements of other motifs: flowers' diameter: 15 cm (that of the only original flower, on the right side of the base of the krater, the others are recarved); water jet: 22 cm; patera's diameter: 12 cm; kantaros height: 12 cm; krater's height: 92 cm.
State of preservation: the surface is quite ruined. Modern restorations completed in marble and stucco the lacunae in the lower frame of the relief, left hand, part of the left arm, feathers of the left wing, end of the acanthus leaves of the left cupid; right hand, part of the right arm, feathers of the right wing, end of the acanthus leaves of the right cupid.

Description of frieze: slab of a cut architraval frieze (figs. 7.8-7.13) featuring two similar winged cupids, one turning to the right and one to the left, that pour liquid from a kantharos into a patera. The lower part of the body of each cupid is transformed into a tuft of acanthus leaves, ending with spirals decorated with rosettes. The cupids are separated by a big krater with curved handles, decorated with a finely carved scene representing a satyr and two dancing maenads, followers of Dionysus (figs. 7.10 and 7.11). The spaces between the cupids and the krater are decorated with spiral vegetal elements, springing from the same fascicle of acanthus leaves of the lower part of the body of the cupids. At the end of the stalk there are three flowers per side, the biggest with six petals and a double corolla, the smaller with four petals.


Discovery and likely location: as IV (1).
7.2.3. Drawing IV (3)

Drawing by G. B. Piranesi

In the 1700s the architect Giovan Battista Piranesi saw Fragments IV (1 and 2), in the garden of Villa Aldobrandini and made a sketch of IV (1) (fig. 7.14).

![Drawing IV (3) by Piranesi.](image)

**Fig. 7.14. Drawing IV (3) by Piranesi.**


*Description:* as Fragment IV (1), Section 7.2.1, p. 176.

In this drawing Piranesi sketched Fragment IV (1) with additional vegetal motifs behind the cupid. We do not know if Piranesi completed the relief in this way using his imagination, or if he could see more completed edges, now lost. However, this extra foliage does not match with any other fragment with vegetal decoration found in the area.

*Discovery and likely location:* in the caption Piranesi wrote "Parte di un fregio che era anticamente in una fabbrica del Foro di Trajano, ed oggi è sulla muraglia del palazzo del Giardino di Sua Eccellenza il Sig. Principe Aldobrandini", part of a frieze which in the past was in a building of the Forum of Trajan and today is on a wall of the palace of the Garden of the Prince Aldobrandini.
7.2.4. Drawing IV (4)

Drawing by G. B. Piranesi

In another drawing Piranesi made a sketch of IV (2) (fig. 7.15).

![Fig. 7.15. Drawing IV (4) by Piranesi.](image)


Description: as Fragment IV (2), Section 7.2.2, p. 183.

Also in this case Piranesi sketched Fragment IV (2) with additional vegetal motifs beyond the kneeling cupid on the left side, and more space on the right side between the cupid and the edge of the block. Again, it is impossible to determine if it is an arbitrary addition of the artist or if Piranesi could see a more complete block whose edges were later cut, which could not be matched with any surviving vegetal fragment.

Discovery and likely location: in the caption Piranesi wrote "Bassorilievo antico di marmo che si vede nel Giardino Aldobrandini vicino a SS. Domenico e Sisto a Monte Magna Napoli", marble bas-relief visible in the Aldobrandini garden close to the churches of SS. Domenico and Sisto at Monte Magna Napoli.
7.2.5. Drawing IV (5)

Drawing by F. Albertolli

In the early 1800s Albertolli saw Fragments IV (1 and 2) in the garden of Villa Aldobrandini and made a sketch of IV (1) but added the *krater* of IV (2) (fig. 7.16).

*Fig. 7.16. Drawing IV (5) by Albertolli.*

*Measurement:* in the caption Albertolli noted "l'altezza del marmo è di 36 2/3 del piede parigino", the height of the marble is 36 2/3 Parisian inches, c. 100 cm.

*References:* Albertolli 1824: pl. 3.

*Description:* on the right side a cupid in acanthus gives drink to a griffin, as in Fragment IV (1), Section 7.2.1, p. 176, and seems to represent the cupid on the right side as Fragment IV (2), Section 7.2.2, p. 183, of IV (2) with the *krater* with the Dionysiac retinue behind him.

*Discovery and likely location:* in the caption Albertolli wrote "Fregio antico del Foro Trajano in Roma era posseduto dal celebre pittore Cav. Camuccini", ancient frieze of the Forum of Trajan in Rome owned by the famous painter Knight Camuccini.

As we will discuss below, Albertolli reported (Section 7.2.8, p. 190) that the frieze he made a sketch of was discovered during the construction of the foundations of the church of SS. Nome di Maria in 1736. He also wrote that after the discovery the frieze
was located above the walls of the Aldobrandini garden, and then become part of the collection of the painter Vincenzo Camuccini and that it was about to be moved to the Vatican Museums. He noticed that in his drawing Piranesi (fig. 7.15) distanced from the original frieze modifying the style and "infrescarlo di tratti al buon gusto contrari", adding traits adverse to good taste (Albertolli 1824: 1). Otherwise, Albertolli (1824: 1) preferred conforming to the original frieze and he was proud that the owner Camuccini appreciated his choice, as attested by a commendation the painter sent him. However, also Albertolli did not conform to the original frieze, because he added to IV (1) the element of the krater of IV (2).
7.2.6. Drawing IV (6)

Drawing by A. Uggeri

Uggeri also saw Fragments IV (1 and 2) in the garden of Villa Aldobrandini and made a sketch of IV them assembled together (fig. 7.17), as Albertolli had (fig. 7.16).

![Fig. 7.17. Drawing IV (6) by Uggeri.](image)

*References:* Uggeri 1840: 49, vign. no. 4.

*Description:* as Drawing IV (5).

*Discovery and likely location:* in the caption Uggeri wrote "Fregio tratto dalle rovine del Foro Trajano, già nella Villa Aldobrandini d'indi dalla collezione Camuccini, alle Sale Borgia del Vaticano", frieze from the ruins of the Forum of Trajan, previously in the Villa Aldobrandini and then from the Camuccini Collection to the Borgia Rooms of the Vatican Museums.
7.2.7. Misconceptions about Frieze Type IV Fragments

Traditionally, Fragments IV (1 and 2) were considered parts of a unique composition, together with III (1), but that, as argued above in Section 6.2.4, is not possible. Fragments IV (1 and 2) belong to a different frieze, though they probably come from different parts of it, for there are some slight differences between them:

1. the rosettes inserted in the superimposed vegetal spirals springing from an acanthus tuft are different.
2. in IV (1) the vegetal element between the wings of the cupids is a stack with long and smooth leaves springing from it, in contrast, in this Fragment IV (2) between the wings of each cupid there is a demipalmette.
3. in IV (2) there are no marks of a griffin's paw on the *patera*, as in IV (1), so even if there were griffins in these architraval friezes, they would have been standing.
4. The maximum height of both IV (1 and 2) is 115 cm, but IV (2) has a lower end (112 cm) on one side. Because of the variations in heights of these two slabs, they are unlikely to have been in linear succession, but as Tummarello supposed (1984: 240; 1989: 102), one slab was possibly on the most external side of the entablature, lie on a corner, and the other on one of its lateral sides, depending on the dimensions.

However, the friezes and their sketches drawn by Albertolli and Uggeri, Drawings IV (5 and 6), help in reconstructing the complete original motif of Frieze Type IV with a sequence of cupids with vegetal-ending legs pouring a liquid from a *kantharos* to a *patera* to give drink to lion-headed griffins, each pair flanked by a *krater*.

Furthermore, according to Leon (1971: 67), another fragment related to Fragments III (1) and IV (1 and 2) traditionally considered part of the same architraval frieze, is in the Coffee House of Villa Albani (fig. 7.18). Its precise height is not specified in any literary source. Because of bureaucratic obstacles it is unfortunately not possible to study the fragments in Villa Albani, which is a private property of the Torlonia family. The block in Villa Albani has a definite provenance from Trajan's Forum, as it was discovered in 1765 during the excavations at Palazzo Bonelli (now Palazzo Valentini), under the entrance passage in the south west wing (Claridge 2007: 64-5, note 48; Chapter 2, p. 16). According to Benndorf and Schöne (1867: 40) who studied the collections in Lateran Museums, of which IV (1 and 2) were part before being moved to
the Vatican Museums, this fragment could not be associated with IV (1 and 2) because it is smaller than them and the workmanship is not as good. The findspot is closer to the church of SS. Nome di Maria then to Trajan's Column, and possibly for this reason Leon erroneously associated the Villa Albani relief with III (1) and IV (1 and 2). The location of the findspot would also suit the Temple of Trajan. Because of the difference in the dimensions Tummarello (1989: 102) argued that it could possibly have decorated the courtyard of Trajan's Column along with the other fragments now in the Louvre Museum, Ib (1-5), which are also smaller than III (1) and IV (1 and 2).

Fig. 7.18. Drawing of a fragment related to Frieze Type IV by Leon.

7.2.8. Location of Frieze IV

Records concerning the place and the period of the discovery of IV (1 and 2) are confusing and contradictory (Chapter 2, p. 16). Albertolli (1824: 1), a scholar who wrote books about archaeological discoveries in his time, wrote in the 18th century that the fragments were found in 1736 during the excavation of the foundation of the church of SS. Nome di Maria (supra, pp. 186-87), in the north-eastern side of the Forum (see Piazzesi 1989: 129) (figs. 2.3 no. 5 and 3.2 no. 272). Previously Fanucci, who lived in the 1600s and was interested specifically in properties of the Church, in a book concerning the latter had affirmed that the blocks were found at the end of the 16th century while excavating the foundation of the monastery of S. Eufemia in the north-eastern side of the square of the Forum (see Piazzesi 1989: 130) (figs. 2.3 no. 7 and 3.2 no. 115). From the available information, it is not possible to establish which is the most reliable report, but it is necessary to pinpoint that the works in the area of S. Eufemia monastery are not mentioned anywhere else. If Fanucci and Albertolli wrote about the same friezes, Piazzesi (1989: 130) and Milella (1989: 82) argue that Albertolli's report
is credible only if we admit that Albertolli mistook the church of SS. Nome di Maria for its twin church S. Maria di Loreto (Galinier 2007: 169; figs. 2.3 no. 6 and 3.2 no. 274). In fact, S. Maria di Loreto was built in the 1500s, Fanucci lived in the 1600s and he could not have described the church of SS. Nome di Maria whose foundations were excavated in 1736-8. In the catalogue of the Lateran Museums, where the friezes were later moved, the only mentions of the discovery are the records of Fanucci, ignoring those of Albertolli (Milella 1989: 97). Thus, we have written records about the presence of friezes representing cupids and griffins which attest that similar friezes were known since the 1500s, but they are not helpful because they are not conclusive.

The drawings help to define the correct location of the friezes. The captions of Drawings IV (3-6) confirm that Fragments IV (1 and 2) were found in the Forum and then transferred to Villa Aldobrandini, in the area of the Forum as well (Chapter 2, p. 16), and that they were late moved from the Aldobrandini Collection to the Camuccini Collection.

The records of the discovery, even if controversial, together with Drawings IV (3-6) allow us to determine that Fragments IV (1 and 2) were from a frieze that decorated a building in the north end of the complex of the Forum. If these slabs were found during the construction of the church of S. Maria di Loreto, the discovery place would correspond to the area where traditionally the Temple of Divine Trajan was supposed to have stood, that area of the Forum completed by Hadrian after Trajan's death (Chapter 2, p. 22; Section 2.4.10). In case the fragments were found during the excavations under S. Eufemia, the church stood in the area excavated in the French period corresponding to the central section of the Basilica Ulpia, but Milella (1989: 74) has argued that an attribution to this building is unknown and unlikely. Although its provenance was not identified, the frieze had been traditionally attributed to the Temple of Divine Trajan or to its precinct (Packer 2001: 84-85). However, for Claridge (2007: 87) it is too small for the Temple, but of the right height to fit the entablature of an order of ca. 17.10 m. high, with columns ca. 14.20 m high, and theirs shafts ca. 11.80. Claridge (2007: 86) argues that in the final Hadrianic phase the colonnade on the north side of the Column courtyard was converted into an external portico around the 'libraries' with increased size and decoration of the order, and Frieze Type IV (1 and 2) would suit the size and the richness of the order used for the colonnades. In Claridge's opinion the findspot...
could coincide closely with a colonnade along the north-east 'library', which would lie under SS. Nome di Maria, as she trusts in Albertolli's controversial report of the discovery of the frieze blocks in 1736 under this church. However, in case SS. Nome di Maria was mistaken for S. Maria di Loreto, the findspot of Frieze Type (1 and 2) would be close to the west 'library'. Thus, there is the possibility that the friezes from SS. Nome di Maria and/or S. Maria di Loreto could have come from colonnades along the library north side.

Despite the records locating the frieze in the northern side of the Forum, the most recent studies (Ungaro 2007: 209; Menghini 2009: 131) consider this Frieze Type IV to have been part of the decoration of the façade of three-segmented hall (fig. 2.13 D). Thus, an element of originality of this research is to locate them in an area behind Trajan's Column. As already mentioned (Sections 2.4.10 and 2.4.11), the reconstruction of the northern side of the complex is still obscure. Therefore, unfortunately, we do not have enough evidence to specify the precise provenance of the reliefs now in the Vatican Museums (fig. 7.19).
Fig. 7.19. Plan of the Forum of Trajan with the hypothetical location of Frieze Type IV in the north end of the Forum of Trajan.
7.3. Iconography

The iconography of the cupids is the same as that as Frieze Type III (Section 6.3).

The iconography of the griffins, in general, is discussed in Chapter 4, with Frieze Type I (Section 4.4). In this frieze type the griffin has the variation of the lion-head instead of the eagle-head of Frieze Types I and III.

In the specific case of this frieze type, as I discuss below (Section 7.5), there is a krater in the middle of Fragment IV (2), decorated with maenads and a satyr holding a thyrsus. A krater is a large vase used by the Greeks to mix wine and spices, and these figures are members of the retinue of Dionysus. Griffins were sacred to Apollo, Nemesis and also to Dionysus representing his retinue, the thiasos, following him in his wanderings to the edges of the world introducing his worship, teaching the people cultivation and wine production. The god travelled around Egypt, Syria, through Asia until India, then considered the eastern end of the world. Dionysus would have been to India three times, according to different traditions. Euripides mentions in his tragedy the first time the god moved as an adolescent to Greece, after his birth in India and the childhood on the Mount Meros or Nisa (Eur., Bac. 1-23). Later he moved from Greece to his campaign to conquer the East, he went back to India and after the victory, he returned in triumph trough Phrygia, Thrace and back to Greece. Diodorus Siculus wrote about the second return trip of the god as a conqueror (Diod. Sic., Bibl. Hist. 4. 3). Nonnus of Panopolis mixed the description of the triumphal return of Dionysus back from India with the memory of the final triumph of Alexander the Great (Non. Pan., Dion. 40. 247-265) (see Grossato 2008: 277-78). In fact, Alexander consciously and wilfully adopted some Indian symbols and myths, according to his political project of constructing an empire definitively uniting Asia and Europe, most of all from the religious point of view. When he was 18 years old Alexander attended with his mother a thiasos, and this experience, with the teaching of Aristotle about geography, history and religion, convinced him that the cultural and spiritual origins of the Greek civilization could be researched in Asia and in particular in India. Alexander made sacrifices to Greek, Egyptian, Babylonian, Indian and perhaps Persian gods, an idea later recalled by Caesar and Augustus, who assimilated the religious model of the power maintained in the Ptolemaic Egypt after Alexander (Grossato 2008: 275). After Alexander's expedition in India, the cult of Dionysus spread until the far East, and consequently the legend of an Indian Bacchus or
conqueror of the East was added to the myth of the god. In fact, if previously Dionysus was described wandering until Persia, Moesia, Arabia, after Alexander's conquest of the East the god reached the Indian territories, where he taught his cult before coming back to the West (Ramorino 1998: 197).

7.4. Comparanda

In a number of Roman artworks and monuments dated before and after Trajan's era, there are friezes and decorations with lion-headed griffins and/or cupids with or without vases which can be compared to the iconography of this Frieze Type IV. Furthermore, lion-headed griffins are also on the breastplates of cuirassed imperial statues of emperors from the Augustan period to the age of the Antonines.

7.4.1. Reliefs with Lion-headed Griffins in Pre-Trajanic Monuments

7.4.1.1. Friezes with Cupids drinking Lion-headed Griffins in the Forum of Caesar

In the Forum of Caesar (fig. 7.20) there were friezes with the same decorative motifs of Trajanic Frieze Type IV. The Forum of Caesar was the first of the Imperial Fora and it was inaugurated in BC 46 (Coarelli 1995a: 120-21). Its plan became the model for all the other imperial Fora. It was formed by a square surrounded by porticoes, with the backside closed by a temple dedicated to Venus Genetrix (Section 4.5.2.1; figs. 4.24 and 4.25). The Temple of Venus and the square were inaugurated while they were still incomplete, and the works were completed by Augustus after the death of his adoptive father (Aug., Res. Gest. 20).

Recently, thanks to the study of the excavators working at the Forum of Caesar and in particular that by Maisto and Pinna Caboni, the overall analysis of the fragments found in the excavations of the Forum of Caesar and Nerva in the 1930s, in 1998-2000 and 2006-2008 have permitted reconstruction of the architectural motifs of the porticoes of the Forum of Caesar at the time of Caesar and Augustus. Matching together some of the fragments, it has been possible to reconstruct a frieze with the iconographic motif of couples of cupids drinking griffins, and separated by kraters (Maisto and Pinna Caboni 2010: 441-43) (fig. 7.21). One small fragment indicates the lower side of the body of the cupids ending in acanthus leaves and spiral vegetal elements.
The frieze of the Forum of Caesar could have been a model for the supposed complete iconography of Frieze Type IV with pairs of cupids drinking lion-headed griffins flanked by *kraters*, even if there are some stylistic differences. In fact, according to Maisto and Pinna Caboni (2010: 444) the style of the frieze of the Forum of Caesar recalls a more classical taste and a more essential rendering typical of the Augustan age, closer to the Hellenistic models, with less details in the wings and the vegetal elements, and the bodies of the animals with a soft way of rendering the surfaces of the anatomy of the muscles. Also the *kraters* flanking the couples of cupids and griffins in the fragments of the Forum of Caesar are similar but not comparable to others already known: the surface is not as deeply carved as in the Trajanic decorative motifs, but the
decoration is elegant and sober (Maisto and Pinna Caboni: 444). Because of these stylistic considerations, this frieze of the porticoes of the Forum of Caesar was probably realized in the original decorative context of the Forum. Alternatively, it could have been conceived during the Augustan works of the thirties of the 1st century BC to complete the Forum, 'translating' into marble the previous clay models of the Greek workshops which influenced so much the artistic and architectural culture of Rome (Maisto and Pinna Caboni 2010: 444).

Fig. 7.21. Top: fragments of a figurative frieze with cupids, griffins and vases decorating the porticoes of the Forum of Caesar; below: hypothesis of reconstruction.

7.4.1.2. Campana Plaques with Cupids drinking Lion-headed Griffins

The presumed completed iconography of Frieze Type IV is comparable to that on a Campana terracotta plaque from Lungotevere Pietra Papa, in the Portuense district of Rome, now in the National Archaeological Museum of Naples (Borbein 1968: pl. 21, 2; Rizzo 1977: 36-49) (fig. 7.22), that is Augustan in date. This plaque depicts a winged cupid springing out of acanthus plants, pouring water from a kantharos in a patera to give drink to a winged lion-headed griffin with goat-like horns standing in front of him and leaning its right forepaw on the patera. Campana plaques are clay reliefs, originally
painted. They are a type of architectural clay decoration, fixed with metal nails on the walls of inner rooms or external porticoes in public and private buildings, that were widespread, from the late Republican period, in various regions on the Italian peninsula (Borbein 1968). They are named after the Marquise Giampietro Campana who, in the first half of the 19th century had a rich collection of these plaques. The best examples are those of the Augustan age, but their use continued in the 1st century and went on until the 2nd century AD (Borbein 1968: 14). The plaques were made serially as tiles and bricks, using moulds. They are reminiscent of artworks visible in Rome from the Republican to the Augustan age, on stuccos, gems (as on those in the British Museum of London and the National Museum in Berlin), pottery and silver objects (Borbein 1968: pl. 10). They share many iconographic themes with decorative marble reliefs, such as

Fig. 7.22. Naples, National Archeological Museum. Augustan Campana plaque from Lungotevere Pietra Papa.
mythological or cult scenes, Dionysiac themes, chariot races, scenes of the theatre, allegories of Victories, figures, animals and vegetation in various combinations.

The Campana plaque in Naples has the same iconography of Frieze Type IV, attesting to the commonness of the motif, as a sort of model and prototype for the decorations in stone, as a development of earlier bricks and tiles, of the imperial age, because of its strong symbolic value related to the sphere of cult (Maisto and Pinna Caboni 2010: 443). This type of artefacts could have been a model for Trajanic Fragments IV (1 and 2) with cupids giving drink to griffins and kraters.

7.4.1.3. Frieze with Cupids with Vegetal-ending Legs and Kraters in the Museo de Burgos

*Fig. 7.23a and b. Burgos, Museo de Burgos. Frieze with cupids with vegetal-ending legs and kraters.*
These fragments of a frieze (fig. 7.23), displayed in the Museo de Burgos in Spain, come from a funerary monument of the end of the 1st century AD in Clunia, one of the most important Roman cities in the province *Hispania Tarraconensis*. They represent cupids with vegetal-ending legs and spirals holding a *patera*, separated by *kraters*, whose belly's surface is plain with only a cornice (De Palol 1994: 53). They demonstrate how the iconographies from Rome spread over the provinces and were interpreted and revisited by local artists (Calcagni 1993: 10-11, 17-22).

7.4.1.4. A Neronian Relief with a possibly Lion-headed Griffin from the Palatine Hill

On the Palatine Hill there is archaeological evidence for structures built by Nero before and after the fire of AD 64 (sections of the *Domus Transitoria* and the *Domus Aurea*), which extended to the top of this hill (Coarelli 1995a: 148-78). Many fragments of the decoration of these Neronian buildings have been found in different periods. On this fragment, of Numidian yellow marble and now in the Palatine Museum, is depicted the central section of the body of a crouching griffin (fig. 7.24). In the past it was wrongly identified as a sphinx (Tomei 1997: 82), but recently it has been recognised as a griffin (Iara 2014c), without specifying if it was lion- or eagle-headed. In my opinion it is lion-headed, because it appears to represent lion's coat tufts on the griffin's head.
Fig. 7.24. Rome, Museo Palatino. Fragment of moulded pilaster capital with a winged griffin of the Neronian buildings on the Palatine Hill.

The fragment (inventory no. 379572) is only 16 cm high. Some scholars have dated this and the other fragments to the Flavian age, as part of the original decoration of the Palatium of Domitian (Tomei 1997: 82; Mathea-Förtsch 1999: 54-55, 144). In particular, according to Fogagnolo (2009 a and b) they could have decorated the opus sectile decorative system of the lower floor of the Flavian Domus Augustana. For von Hesberg (2004), though, all the fragments are Neronian according to stylistic comparisons. Apart from the dating, this relief is supposed to be part of a moulded pilaster capital because of the height. The Neronian lion-headed griffin can be compared with Frieze Type IV only because of the similar subject, but there are substantial differences. First, it has very small dimensions and is part of a moulded pilaster capital and not of an architraval frieze. Second, the material is not Luni marble or white marble, but Numidian yellow. Third, this griffin is crouching and not standing as that in IV (1). Finally, the style is very different, especially in rendering the body of the figure and the feathers of the wings. However, this relief is a further proof of the spread of the iconography of the griffins, including lion-headed ones, in the imperial decorative programmes before Trajan.
7.4.1.5. Friezes with Lion-headed Griffins from the Templum Gentis Flaviae

As already mentioned in Section 4.5.1.1, on the same fragments with eagle-headed griffins from the Templum Gentis Flaviae there are reliefs with pairs of lion-headed griffins, which either lean a paw on a candelabrum or face each other in front of a candelabrum (figs. 4.23 and 7.25 a and b).

Fig. 7.25 a and b. Rome, Palazzo Massimo alle Terme. Fragments of a frieze with griffins from the Templum Gentis Flaviae known as Donation Hartwig.
The two fragments now in Palazzo Massimo alle Terme belong to an angular entablature, decorated with a frieze with alternating pairs of griffins. In particular, on one fragment (fig. 7.25 a) crouching lion-headed griffins lean a paw on a candelabrum with crossing tails. On the other fragment (fig. 7.25 b) the pairs of lion-headed griffins stand, facing a candelabrum and separated by a betilus (Paris 2009 b). The lower side of a fragment in Ann Arbor, which also has eagle-headed griffins (Section 4.5.1.1, fig. 4.23), is very similar to this second fragment in Rome, with a pair of standing lion-headed griffins facing each other in front of a candelabrum. The iconography of these three fragments from the Templum Gentis Flaviae is similar to that of Frieze Type IV but not identical; in fact the pairs of griffins without crossing tails are standing and not crouching as those in Trajan's Forum. This is further evidence that lion-headed griffins were also well known in Flavian times and could have influenced the choice of this variation in the Trajanic Frieze Type IV as well.
7.4.1.6. Architraval Frieze with a Cupid with Vegetal-ending Legs and a Patera in front of a Candelabrum from the Palace of Domitian

Fig. 7.26. Naples, National Archaeological Museum. Frieze with a cupid with vegetal-ending legs and a patera in front of a candelabrum from the Palace of Domitian.

The context of the Palace of Domitian is discussed in Chapter 5, Section 5.4.1.

On the short side of a corner block of an architraval frieze I will discuss below in Chapter 9 (Section 9.5.1.6), there is a winged cupid with acanthus-ending legs pouring a liquid in a patera in front of a candelabrum (fig. 7.26). Even if the iconography is only partially comparable to that of Fragment IV (1) of Trajan's Forum, because there are no traces of griffins in this relief, it attests to the spread of this motif at the end of the Flavian era, during the Domitianic reign (Blankenhagen 1940: 67). Because of its stylistic features, Blankenhagen (1940: 68) has assigned it to the original project of the Palatium by Domitian, and not to Septimius Severus' refurbishment, and in particular to a 'minor frieze' in the Aula Regia (Dodero 2010: 52).
7.4.1.7. Friezes with Lion-headed Griffins facing a Candelabrum from the Palace of Domitian in Naples and Rome

From the Palatium of Domitian on the Palatine Hill there are also many fragments from further friezes with lion-headed griffins facing candelabra, which could equally be considered as sources of inspiration for the Trajanic Frieze Type IV representing a similar subject. Many of them are on display attached on the external walls of the structures of the Domus Augustana, others are now in the National Archaeological Museum in Naples. Iconographic and stylistic studies by Blanckenhagen (1940) and Leon (1971) have distinguished those friezes belonging to the original project of Domitian from those of the Severan refurbishment. As in other cases of Severan restorations, Leon (1971) argued that there would have been a sort of coexistence of Flavian and Severan styles, re-proposing the same motifs and sequences through a less refined and more current rendering (see also Meneghini et al. 2009: 198).

Two architraval friezes, each one divided in two blocks, with pairs of lion-headed griffins, were discovered between 1720-1735 during excavations in the possessions of the Farnese family on the Palatine Hill (Dodero: 50-51), and moved to Naples at the end of the 18th century (figs. 7.27 and 7.28). On the first block of the first frieze (fig. 7.27 a) two pairs of crouching winged lion-headed griffins with goat-horns lean a paw on a vegetal candelabrum and are separated by a different shaped festooned candelabrum. Only the lower side of the body of the right griffin of both the pairs is visible, the left griffin of the left couple is lost, and only that of the right couple is in good condition. On the second block the same motif is repeated, with an inverse scheme (fig. 7.27 b). Considered in the past to have been part of the Severan refurbishment of the Palace (Blanckenhagen 1940: 93), Dodero (2010: 53) has recently dated this frieze, according to a new study of its stylistic features, to the Flavian phase, when the Palace was built.

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6 The only studies about the architectural decoration of the Palatium are by Blanckenhagen and Leon (1971). A new research of Swiss scholars (Wulf-Rheidt, Sojc and Winterling 2013) only concerns the buildings and not the decorations.
On each one of the two blocks of the second frieze from the Palace of Domitian now in Naples (fig. 7.28 a and b), there is a pair of crouching winged lion-headed griffins facing a female figure with open arms springing from acanthus tuft tendrils. The pair is flanked by festooned candelabra, and behind each one of them there is another lion-headed griffin. Those at the edges of the frieze turn their head back. According to Dodero (2010: 53), this block could have been from a Severan copy.
Other fragments are still in Rome and displayed on the wall of a corridor leading to the hall facing the peristyle of the Domus Augustana. The most complete fragment (fig. 7.29), S.A.R. inventory no. 574433, shows on the left side a pair of winged lion-headed griffins with goat-horns crouching on their hind legs and leaning a paw on a decorated candelabrum. The tail of the right griffin has a double vegetal-ending spiral with a flower in each spiral. Behind the right griffin there is a different shaped candelabrum separating this left pair of griffins from another one on the right, of which only a fragment of a wing and a hind leg is visible because of the broken right corner of the relief. The iconography is similar to that of Fragment IV (1), but here griffins are crouching and not standing as the Trajanic fragment. In Dodero's opinion (2010: 53), because of its stylistic features it could be ascribed to the Severan refurbishment of the Palace, whilst recently S.A.R. personnel responsible for these artworks have noticed a correspondence between the material of the reliefs and their dating: Domitianic friezes in Rome are all made of Luni marble, those dated to the Severan refurbishment are made of Proconnesian marble.  

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7 Information courtesy of Dr. Stefania Trevisan, S.A.R. (personal communication 17/11/2014).
Fig. 7.29. Rome, Palatine Hill. Relief with pairs of griffins facing candelabra from the Palace of Domitian displayed on a wall of the Domus Augustana.

All the fragments of reliefs with pairs of griffins facing candelabra (figs. 7.29 and 7.30), S.A.R. inventory nos. 574430-43, were found during the 1892-93 excavations in the so called 'Stadium' on the Palatine Hill (Cozza and Mariani 1895: 11). Cozza and Mariani (1895: 35-38) assigned them to the decoration of the architectonical order of their findspot, the so called 'Stadium', and in particular to the Severan refurbishment of the first order of the portico, but it is also possible that they could have fallen from the Domus Augustana (La Torre 1977).

Fig. 7.30 a-i. Rome, Palatine Hill. Fragments of reliefs with griffins with vegetal-ending tails facing candelabra from the Palace of Domitian displayed on the walls of the Domus Augustana.
7.4.1.8. A Presumed Flavian Relief with a Griffin, possibly Lion-headed

Fig. 7.31. Fragment of a relief with a griffin and a candelabrum found in Piazza della Chiesa Nuova during the excavations for Rome's Metro Line C.

During the 2007-2010 archaeological excavations for the construction of Line C of Rome's Metro, in a core in Piazza della Chiesa Nuova in western Campus Martius a fragment of a relief with a crouching griffin with spiral vegetal decorations and a candelabrum was found (Filippi 2010) (fig. 7.31). The slab is broken off at the head, but it seems to show lion's coat tufts on the throat and the beginning of a lion's jaw rather than that of an eagle's beak. It was found in a pit wherein it had been thrown. It is dated to Domitianic period (Filippi 2010: 70) and Filippi and von Hesberg (2014; in press) hypothesize that it could be ascribable to the decoration of the *scaenae frons* of the Theatre of Pompey, restored by Domitian after the AD 80 fire in the Campus Martius (Coarelli 1995a: 325). It is considered a Flavian precedent of IV (1 and 2), which recall its subject and setting (Filippi 2010: 70).
7.4.2. Reliefs with Lion-headed Griffins in Post-Trajanic Monuments

7.4.2.1. A Severan Frieze with Lion-headed Griffins and Candelabra from Baia

Fig. 7.32. a and b. Bacoli (Naples), Archaeological Museum of Campi Flegrei (Phlegraean Fields). a, Frieze with lion-headed griffins and candelabra. b, detail.

Fragments of this frieze were found in Baia's harbour during dredging in 1923-24, and they are attributed to the so-called 'Severan buildings' (Demma and Valeri 2008: 119). In this section of Baia's coast, likely corresponding to the sea frontage of the palace owned by the emperors in this area, in Severan period there would have been porticoes, colonnades and monumental façades decorated with friezes such as this one (Demma and Valeri 2008: 122). In this frieze fragments pairs of winged crouching lion-headed griffins, with vegetal element springing from their tail, lean a paw on festooned candelabra in front of them (fig. 7.32). They have been dated to the 3rd century AD (Demma and Valeri 2008: 130) and compared to the reliefs from the Palace of Domitian now in Naples (Section 7.4.1.7) and a lacunous fragment from Puteoli, dated to Marcus Aurelius' reign, where however the griffins are eagle-headed (Demma 2007: 261-62). This frieze bears witness to the use of this decorative motif also outside Rome over the centuries. It is similar to Frieze Type IV, but it differs in the pose of the griffins which are crouching and not standing as in Trajanic friezes.
7.4.3. Lion-headed Griffins on Cuirassed Statues

A general introduction to cuirassed statues of emperors is presented in Section 4.5.4, pp. 114-15. In the breastplate of statues of the emperors there could be the variation of lion-headed griffins instead of eagle-headed ones (Vermeule 1980: 6-28) (Section 12.4.1).

7.4.3.1. Lion-headed Griffins on Pre-Trajanic Cuirassed statues

- Statue of Mars Ultor (Flavian Copy of an Augustan Statue)

Fig. 7.33 a and b. a, Rome, Capitoline Museums. Statue of Mars Ultor. b, detail of the cuirass.
The statue of Mars *Ultor* (fig. 7.33) was found in the 16th century near the Forum of Nerva in two pieces, torso and head disconnected. On the breastplate there is Medusa's head and a pair of standing lion-headed griffins turning their heads back, and leaning a paw on a candelabrum. The head of the god, with curly head and beard and Corinthian helmet allows us to date the sculpture to the Flavian period. It is a copy of the lost statue of Mars *Ultor* that would have once stood in his Temple in Augustus's Forum. Possibly this statue stood outside the Temple and could be ascribed to a restoration after a fire (Sommella Mura 2005: 31). According to Cadario (2006: 478), the griffins confronting a candelabrum on this statue of cult, ideologically the most important and worshipped in Augustan Rome, should be interpreted as an allusion to Apollo, the personal god of Augustus.
Fig. 7.34 a and b. a, Rome, Museum of the Imperial Fora at Trajan's Markets. Copy of a cuirassed statue with lion-headed griffins in the Archaeological Museum of Cordoba. b, detail.
This cuirassed statue was recently acquired by the Archaeological Museum of Cordoba from the private collection Tienda. In Rome there is a modern copy of this statue (inv. no. FA 2492) (fig. 7.34). The identification is controversial: a male figure in motion, as Aeneas, wears a cuirass with a pair of standing lion-headed griffins leaning a paw on a candelabrum in front of them and vegetal elements, and a *paludamentum* without *pteryges* and a short cloth, typical of mythological figures (Ungaro 2007: 167). Romulus held the *spolia opimia*, literally rich spoils, taken as a trophy when he defeated and stripped Acro, king of the Caeninenses, following the Rape of the Sabine Women. On the right shoulder of the statue there are traces which could be related to the *spolia opimia.*
It is well known that the 'politics of images' expressed by Augustus in his Forum culminated in the gallery of statues representing eminent historical and mythological figures considered as ancestors of the family of the emperor, the Julia family. The statues stood in the niches of the exedras and the porticoes, on pedestals with tituli and elogia, inscriptions recording the name, magistracies held, and a brief account of the achievements of the individuals, according to a programme with a clear political aim (Zanker 1989: 208). The cycle of statues of the Forum of Augustus was conceived with a double purpose: on one hand celebrating the myth of Troy, to claim the line of descent of the Julian family from the stock of Aeneas, on the other hand, exalting the legend of Romulus as the founder of Rome and the illustrious Republican leaders (Zanker 1984: 15-18) (Section 12.2.2, p. 367) (figs. 7.34 and 12.3). Just a few fragments of the statues of this cycle survive, but the model of the figurative programme of the Forum of Augustus was exported to the imperial provinces, and in particular to the Iberian peninsula, where better preserved statues inspired by the model of the capital of the empire had been discovered, such as in Merida and Cordoba. This statue in particular is part of the copy of the Augustan model of the statues of the Forum of Augustus, which decorated the Forum of Cordoba, the ancient capital of the Senatorial province of Baetica (Ungaro 2007: 164) (Section 12.2.2, p. 368).

- Statue of Holconius Rufus in Naples' National Archaeological Museum from Pompeii

The model for this statue from Pompeii (inv. no. 6233) (fig. 7.35) of the Augustan period (Vermeule 1990: 34-35) is the statue of Mars Ultor in his Temple in the Forum of Augustus (supra, pp. 213-14). It represents the most important citizen of Pompeii, Marcus Holconius Rufus. Although he was not a knight, he wears military clothes alluding to the office of tribunus militum a populo, military tribune by popular demand, which was a honorary rank he was given by the emperor. He is depicted wearing the boots of a senator. On his breastplate is the same decoration as on that of Mars Ultor, with Medusa's head and a pair of standing lion-headed griffins turning their heads back, and leaning a paw on a candelabrum. Signs of paint on the surface were visible when the statue was first found in 1853: the tunic was white edged with yellow, the cloak red, the shoes black, and the tree trunk supporting the statue was green. Hair, eyes and eyebrows were also coloured (Cooley 2004: 128-30).
Fig. 7.35. Naples, National Archaeological Museum. Statue of Holconius Rufus from Pompeii.
- Julio-Claudian Cuirassed Statue with Lion-headed Griffins and Julio-Claudian Head in Villa Albani

This statue is displayed in Villa Albani (supra, p. 189), in the niche of the rear wall of the central portico. It is called 'Tiberius', because of a head, dated to Julio-Claudian period, which has been added to the coeval body (Bol 1988-1998: 148). On the breastplate, under a gorgoneion, two lion-headed griffins stand on tendrils springing from an inverted palmette and lean a paw on a candelabrum in front of them (fig. 7.36).

Fig. 7.36. Villa Albani, Julio-Claudian cuirassed statue with lion-headed griffins.

- Julio-Claudian Cuirassed Statue with Lion-headed Griffins from the Arena of Verona

This fragment of a cuirassed statue (inv. no. 1848) (fig. 7.37) was found in 1955 in Vicolo S. Clemente in Verona, and would have stood under an arch of the Arena (Vermeule 1980: 37). Two lion-headed griffins with heads turned back stand on tendrils springing from an inverted palmette and lean a paw on a foliate candelabrum. It is dated to the Julio-Claudian period (ca. AD 30-60) (Vermeule 1980: 36).
Fig. 7.37. a and b. Verona, Archaeological Museum. a, Cuirassed statue with lion-headed griffins. b, detail.
- Julio-Claudian Cuirassed Statue with Lion-headed Griffins in Baltimore

This torso of a cuirassed statue (fig. 7.38) was found in Rome and became part of the Don Marcello Massarenti Collection. It was purchased by Henry Walters in 1902 and is now exhibited in The Walters Art Museum of Baltimore (Walters Art Museum Catalogue inv. no. 23.80). On the breastplate, under a bearded head at the neck of the cuirass, two lion-headed griffins confront each other but with heads reversed, leaning a paw on each other's one and standing on tendrils springing from an inverted palmette. According to stylistic comparisons, it is dated to Julio-Claudian period (ca. AD 30-60). The statue would have portrayed one of Augustus' successors of the Julio-Claudian family, perhaps Caligula (Gergel 1987).
Fig. 7.38. Baltimore, The Walters Art Museum. Julio-Claudian cuirassed statue with lion-headed griffins.
Fig. 7.39 a and b. Naples, National Archaeological Museum. a, Cuirassed statue of Titus with lion-headed griffins. b, detail of the breastplate.
This statue (inv. no. 6059) (fig. 7.39) is exhibited in the National Archaeological Museum of Naples and comes from the so-called Basilica of Herculaneum, the Augusteum, excavated in the 1700s, a building dedicated to the imperial cult where various statues of the Julio-Claudian dynasty were found. The statue was recently dated to a period before AD 79, thus it does not represent Titus at the beginning of his reign (AD 79-81), but Titus Caesar after coming back from conquering Judea. On the breastplate is a pair of standing lion-headed griffins facing each other and leaning a paw on a burning candelabrum (fig. 7.39 b). This motif is frequently represented (attested in 50 examples) and spread throughout the western provinces of the empire between the Julio-Claudian and the Trajanic period (Cadario 2004: 152, note 220). For one of the first times here instead of the inverted palmette there is an acanthus tuft from which tendrils spring (Rosso 2009: 481).
7.4.3.2. Lion-headed Griffins on Trajanic Cuirassed statues

-Trajanic Cuirassed Statue with Lion-headed Griffins in Lugano

Fig. 7.40. Lugano, private collection. Trajanic cuirassed statue with lion-headed griffins.
This fragment of a cuirassed statue (fig. 7.40) is part of a private collection in Lugano, Switzerland, owned by the art dealer Pino Donati. Presumably from Sicily or Italy, it has been argued (Vermeule 1990: 96) that it represents Trajan and can be dated to the height to the end of his reign. The complete cuirassed statue of Trajan in Leiden (fig. 4.36) is the model which shows what this statue would have looked like. On the breastplate a pair of standing griffins lean a paw on a candelabrum in front of them, but they are lion-headed and not eagle-headed as those in the Trajan's statue in Leiden. A circular cutting and rectangular dowel-hole was made in the centre of the statue possibly to use it as a bedding for a colonette in the Middle Ages or to reuse it with a Christian emblem (Vermeule 1990: 97), or simply a repair to a fault in the carving of the marble.

7.4.3.3. Lion-headed Griffins on Post-Trajanic Cuirassed Statues

- Hadrianic Cuirassed Statue with Lion-headed Griffins in the Louvre

This statue (fig. 7.41) was discovered between 1792 and 1795 at the Pantano site near Gabii, Italy. Part of the Borghese collection, it was moved to Paris in 1807 and is now exhibited in the Louvre (inv. no. 305). It was restored in the 18th century adding an antique head of Agrippa Postumus, the son of Agrippa and Livia adopted by Augustus. At that time it was mistaken for the head of Caligula, and for this reason this statue is known as the Caligula of the Louvre (Giroire and Roger 2007: 82). On the breastplate, two standing lion-headed griffins lean a paw on a candelabrum in front of them (fig. 7.41 b). It was traditionally dated to Titus' period, but the Hellenistic character of the decoration and the gorgoneion's benevolent type allow a date for the statue in Hadrian's period (Vermeule 1959: 1; De Kersauson 1986: 148).
Fig. 7.41. a and b. Paris, Louvre Museum. a, Hadrianic cuirassed statue with lion-headed griffins. b, detail of the breastplate.
- Late Antonine Cuirassed Statue in Leptis Magna

This statue (fig. 7.42) is of a high official dated to ca. AD 185, possibly the emperor Commodus at the midpoint of his career. The emperor wears a breastplate of the standard Antonine type, with large winged lion-headed griffins facing each other below the cingulum. On the lower side there is a damaged figure of an eagle, perhaps alluding to the rising fortunes of Commodus (Vermeule 1966: 110).
7.5. Symbolism

The symbolism of the griffins in general is discussed with Frieze Type I in Chapter 4 (Section 4.6); that of the cupids giving drink to griffins in general is discussed with Frieze Type III in Chapter 6 (Section 6.5).

Unfortunately, the imprecise provenance of Frieze IV does not allow us to clearly identify the symbolism of its decorative motifs, but as will be discussed in Section 12.3.2, basically there are two possible interpretations of their iconography: either they represent a Trajanic variation of Frieze Type III, or they are Hadrianic and must be connected with the funerary transformation of the area around Trajan's Column to host the emperor's burial.

In IV (2) a Dionysiac krater stands between two cupids turning right and left. If the fragments are Trajanic, the vases could allude to Alexander the Great, who retraced the journey of Dionysus to conquer the East, and Trajan's celebration of the Roman
conquest of the East to the far edges of the empire. Thus, the reliefs could express a double reference to the conquest of the East connected with the great precedents of Alexander in the human sphere, and of Dionysus in the divine sphere. The griffins, attributes of Dionysus, have an oriental origin as well (Section 4.4).

In a Trajanic context the frieze could allude to the exaltation of the emperor who expanded the Roman Empire to become larger than ever before, conquering the Far East as Dionysus in the myth and Alexander in the past (Zanker 1998) (Section 12.2). Since the time of Alexander, Dionysus was considered the forerunner of all the conquerors of the East. Following the example of Dionysus meant retracing his mythical journey to India (Section 7.3): probably Alexander conceived his conquest of the East as the repetition of the triumphal journey of the god. In the historical context in which Trajan evolves, what distinguishes the emperor from his Republican predecessors emulating Alexander, is that Trajan is inspired by Alexander more as reverence than as imitation. The rise of the Tiger by Trajan is a conscious act of renewal of the enterprise of Alexander in a similar condition. But despite all the discreet and latent references to Alexander, Trajan remains a Roman emperor and not the emulator of Alexander (Marquaille: 1996). According to Settis (1988: 185), the *kraters* could be interpreted in connection with the prosperity that resulted from Roman victories. Trajan, the *Optimus Princeps*, because of his exceptional qualities ensured with his politics to put in order the world. Beyond the borders of the empire, which were enlarged, Trajan defeated the barbarians and made them Romans.

In Chapter 2 we mentioned the three construction phases proposed by Claridge (Chapter 2, p. 26) Thus, if Frieze Type IV is Hadrianic, its symbology could be related to the transformation of this area into a cult place of the deified emperor Trajan after his death. In fact, cupids were also symbols of the afterlife, because their figures were related to sacrifice and cult attendance (Stuveras 1969: 139). The griffins were vehicles of apotheosis and Dionysian regeneration, as they were often represented on the sarcophagi and in funereal iconography (Davies 2004: 35). In particular, according to Delplace (1980: 420), the cupid master of the griffins represents the connection between the forces of the guardians of the world of dead, hostile to men.
Also the polysemous *krater* could not only allude to the conquest of the East linking Dionysus to Alexander first and Trajan later, but as attribute of Dionysus, like Apollo's tripod, had a role in funerary religion too. The beverage of the *krater* as well as the incense burnt in the tripod inspired the same enthusiasm, accessible only by the initiates (Delplace 1980: 421). In Claridge's opinion (2007: 87) the *kraters*, and perhaps also the lion-headed griffins, might have been chosen for their funerary connotations, especially appropriate to colonnades which framed Trajan's tomb. The cup could contain a Dionysian beverage, which could please the deceased or the believer as a way to face the underworld (Delplace 1980: 416-17).
Chapter 8.

Trajanic Frieze Type V: Cupids in Acanthus with Candelabra

8.1. Introduction

In this chapter we catalogue and describe the only fragment of architrave that features cupids in acanthus with others with vegetal decoration belonging to the same frieze, as well as drawings depicting it: the dimensions of this frieze provide the reason for attributing it to a precise architectonical order of a specific building of the complex of Trajan's Forum.

8.2. Frieze Type V

Type V comprises a fragment of cupids in acanthus with candelabra set on friezes of height dimensions ca. 75 cm which survive in the Museum of the Imperial Fora at Trajan's Markets of Rome. To this fragment can be added another three fragments with only vegetal decoration belonging to the same architrave, and three drawings representing another lost fragment.

8.2.1. Fragment V (1)

Entablature block


*Museum Inventory numbers:* FT 2671, FT 2672 (the slab was broken after the discovery, *infra* p. 237).
Fig. 8.1. Fragment V (1).

Fig. 8.2. Fragment V (1) in its current location in the storeroom of the Basilica Ulpia, upper side of FT 2671 on the right, FT 2672 on the left.
Fig. 8.3. Fragment V (1) in its current location in the storeroom of the Basilica Ulpia, detail of the frieze of FT 2671.

Fig. 8.4. Fragment V (1), detail of FT 2671.
Fig. 8.5. Fragment V (1), detail of the frieze of FT 2672 with a cupid in acanthus.

*Marble type:* Luni marble.

*Measurements of block:* I could only partially check the measurements of FT 2671 and 2672 because they are stored wrapped in a plastic film which it is not possible to totally remove (figs. 8.2-8.5). *Height including architrave:* 144 cm; *height of frieze panel* (a small area of the top of the block is preserved): 73 cm; *width:* 194 cm approximately; *thickness:* 116 cm on the upper side (measurements from Packer 1997: 350 no. 133, pl. 95.1).
**Measurement of right cupid: feathers in wing** (3 rows of short feathers, 5 rows of long feathers) - short feathers' length: 2 cm; long feathers' length: 10 cm; height between from hip and leg: 22 cm.

**State of preservation:** the surface shows numerous lacunae. The architraval frieze slab is made of rejoined fragments. After the discovery in 1838 it was damaged while cutting only the frieze surface from the block, perhaps to sell it to a collector of antiquities. On the lower level some hollows were made to insert wooden wedges. Once the wedges had soaked in water, they would have broken the marble block. But the stonemasons did not consider the natural veins of the marble, thus they cut the block not as they wanted and probably broke the block into three fragments. These were abandoned and two of them were found again during an excavation in 1849 (the third fragment on the bottom side between FT 2671 and FT 2672 went lost).

**Description:** the relief slab (figs. 8.1-8.5) comprises two rejoined fragments. At their edges, a pair of winged cupids in acanthus turns respectively right and left. Between them a pair of identical foliate candelabra formed by several calyxes of acanthus leaves superimposed frames another different vegetal candelabrum standing in the middle. Superimposed spirals decorated with rosettes spring from either candelabra or cupids. On the left edge only the very end of a wing and the acanthus leaves of the left cupid survive. On the right edge only the lower section of the body of the right cupid is visible. Below the relief there is the architrave with *Cyma reversa* with normal leaf-and-dart and a smooth moulding. On the back of the slab, only the back side of the architrave is decorated. This back side of the frieze is rough and slightly oblique (*infra*, p. 247).


**Discovery and likely location:** found in 1838 in the south-western side of the courtyard of Trajan's Column, broken in three fragments and then neglected, and found again with another element of cornice with shelves (inv. no. FT 2780) during an excavation in 1849 (Chapter 2, p. 19).
8.2.2. Fragment V (2)

Entablature block


*Museum Inventory number:* FT 2578.

*Fig. 8.6. Fragment V (2).*

*Marble type:* Luni marble.

*Measurements of block: height including architrave:* 147 cm; *height of frieze panel:* 72.5 cm; *height of architrave* (on both the decorated sides): 74 cm; *width:* 135 cm approximately; *thickness:* 97 cm on the upper side.

*State of preservation:* broken on the left edge, the surface shows numerous lacunae. Only a very small section of the upper side survives.
Description: a foliate candelabrum formed by several calyces of acanthus leaves is framed on both sides by two superimposed spirals decorated with rosettes. On the right edge only half of a different shaped vegetal candelabrum survives. Under the relief there is the architrave with Cyma reversa with normal leaf-and-dart and a smooth moulding (fig. 8.6).


Discovery and likely location: found on 1838 in the south-western side of the courtyard of Trajan's Column, as V (1).
8.2.3. **Fragment V (3)**

Entablature block


*Museum Inventory number*: FT 2657.

![Fragment V (3)](image)

*Fig. 8.7. Fragment V (3).*

*Marble type*: Luni marble.

*Measurements of block*: height: 56 cm; width: 49 cm; thickness: 50 cm on the top.

*State of preservation*: broken on all the sides.
Description: this small fragment is decorated with a vegetal candelabrum formed by several calyces of acanthus leaves superimposed, on both sides of which there are traces of vegetal spirals (fig. 8.7).

References: Bertoldi 1960-61: pl. XVII, 2; museum catalogue card courtesy of Marina Milella.

Discovery and likely location: as V (2).
8.2.4. Fragment V (4)

Entablature block


*Museum Inventory number:* FT 2721.

![Image of Fragment V (4)](image)

**Fig. 8.8. Fragment V (4).**

*Marble type:* Luni marble.

*Measurements of block:* height: 96 cm; width: 60 cm; thickness: 104 cm.

*State of preservation:* broken on right and left side. Half of the lower surface survives. On the back side there is an arc-shaped fracture, caused by an attempt to cut the block in two inserting wooden wedges, as witnessed by a hollow on the fracture surface.

*Description:* fragment of an architrave decorated with a *Cyma reversa* with normal leaf-and-dart moulding. Three smooth and plain bands are alternated with three half round with bead and reel (fig. 8.8).

*References:* museum catalogue card courtesy of Marina Milella.

*Discovery and likely location:* as V (2).
8.2.5. Drawing V (5)

Drawing by F. Albertolli

Another fragment of the same Frieze V, now lost, was found, according to Albertolli (1824: 1) in 1812 during the excavations commissioned by the Commission of the Embellishments of the French government (Chapter 2, p. 18). Albertolli described and drew it (fig. 8.9).

**Fig. 8.9. Drawing V (5) by Albertolli.**

*Measurement:* in the caption Albertolli wrote: "L'altezza del fregio è di pollici parigini 27 1/2", the height of the frieze is 27 1/2 Parisian inches, corresponding to ca. 74 cm.

*References:* Albertolli 1824: 1, pl. 1; Uggeri 1840: 22-23, pl. 10.

*Description:* on the left of the frieze Albertolli sketched a winged cupid standing on the left edge, turning to his left. The lower part of the body is transformed into acanthus leaves, ending with two superimposed spirals decorated with rosettes on the left side of the cupid, only the lower spiral on the right side of the cupid is visible. In the middle of the frieze there are two different-shaped vegetal candelabra formed by several calyxes of acanthus leaves, flanked by two superimposed spirals decorated with rosettes. Only half of a third candelabrum on the right corner is visible, because it corresponds to the right broken edge of the slab. Below the relief there is the architrave with *Cyma reversa* with normal leaf-and-dart and a smooth moulding. Albertolli (1824:1) wrote that he sketched the drawing "dopo lungo studio su quei logori e malconci frammenti", after a long study on those shabby and battered fragments.
*Discovery and likely location:* in the caption Albertolli wrote "Fregio antico nel Foro Trajano in Roma dissotterrato negli scavi dell'anno 1812", ancient frieze in the Forum of Trajan in Rome discovered in 1812 excavations.
8.2.6. Drawing V (6)

Drawing by J. B. C. Lesueur

In 1824 Lesueur sketched this complete entablature (fig. 8.10).

References: Uginet 1985: no. 82, 162.

Description: a winged cupid in acanthus stands on the left edge, turning to his left. Pairs of superimposed spirals decorated with rosettes, two of them spreading from his own legs, surround the cupid, who is flanked by same shaped vegetal candelabra formed by several calyxes of leaves. Below the relief there is the architrave with Cyma reversa with normal leaf-and-dart and a smooth moulding, and three smooth and plain bands are alternated with three half round with bead and reel. In V (5) Albertolli drew only half the arms of the cupid, in this Drawing V (6) Lesueur possibly completed the missing arms, adding also the hands, imagining that the cupid could have been in the pose of decorating the vegetal scrolls.
8.2.7. Drawing V (7)

Drawing by P. M. Morey

Also Morey, ten years after Albertolli and Lesueur, sketched a detail of the same fragment in Drawing V (7) (fig. 8.11).

Fig. 8.11. Drawing V (7) by Morey.


Description: Morey drew a winged cupid with broken arms turning left, with the lower part of the body transformed in acanthus leaves, ending with two superimposed spirals decorated with rosettes. On the left side, only the lower spiral on the right side of the cupid is visible, and on the right side only half of a foliate candelabrum.
8.2.8. **Drawing V (8)**

Drawing by A. Uggeri

Uggeri confirmed the discovery of a frieze with cupids in acanthus in 1812, at that time visible in the Basilica Ulpia, and sketched a detail in a reconstruction drawing (fig. 8.12).

*Fig. 8.12 a and b. a, Drawing V (8) by Uggeri. b, detail.*
Measurement: in the caption Uggeri wrote "p. 2.3", 2.3 royal feet. A royal foot corresponds to 32.4 cm, thus the frieze should be 74.52 cm high.

References: Uggeri 1840: 22-23, pl. 10.

Description: on the left side of the drawing is a frieze with a standing winged cupid with vegetal ending legs with two superimposed spirals and flowers, turning to the left, almost like the cupid in acanthus on the left corner of Drawing V (5), except for the arms. In V (5) Albertolli drew only half the arms of the cupid, in this Drawing V (8) Uggeri, as Lesueur in V (6), possibly completed the missing arms, adding also the hands, imagining that the cupid could have been in the pose of decorating the vegetal scrolls.

8.2.9. Location of Frieze V

Drawings V (5-8) do not correspond to any surviving slab. However, they are similar to Fragment V (1), with the same dimensions, as attested by the caption in Drawing V (8), and same range of differently shaped vegetal candelabra and spirals. In V (1) is a cupid in acanthus missing his head and arms on the right corner, and only a small section of the left vegetal ending leg and wing. In Drawings V (5 and 7) instead there is only an almost complete cupid in acanthus, with just half the arms and hands missing, standing on the left corner of the frieze. In V (6 and 8) the arms of the cupid are fully
reconstructed. Furthermore, the authors of the drawings could not have seen V (1) because it was discovered respectively 25, 14 and 9 years after Albertolli and Lesueur, Morey and Uggeri made their sketches. Thanks to their description we know that another fragment from the same Frieze Type V was found in the Basilica Ulpia.

The identification of the location of Frieze Type V on the façade of the Basilica (figs. 2.13 G1 and 8.15) is confirmed by Drawings (5-8) and by excavation records. In 1849 in the square of the Trajan's Column fragments of an architraval frieze representing cupids and vegetal elements were found during the excavations directed by Canina (1849: 177-79; 1851: 131-35), V (1-4) (Chapter 2, p. 18). The dimensions of these fragments fit perfectly in the first order of the façade of the Basilica Ulpia. In particular, the architectonical order can be reconstructed thanks to this group of fragments forming Frieze Type V: V (1) rejoined in a modern restoration, belonging to the figurative architraval frieze with cupids and vegetal elements, and other Fragments V (2-4) (Milella 1989: 97). The backside of the frieze was coarsely chiselled and carved with an oblique cut on the lower side, forming the recess for the small concrete vault which covered the avant-corps of the façade of the Basilica Ulpia (Amici 1982: 18-19). In V (2) the lower side is chiselled but not carved obliquely. The right side is formed by two smooth oblique surfaces converging to form a right angle, probably because of the location of the block as an element orthogonal to the façade, on the short sides of the avant-corps (Bertoldi 1960-61: pl. III, 2). The thickness of the fragments is different, 111-16 cm in V (1) and 97 cm in V (2). In V (3), just a small part of the frieze is still visible, 50 cm thick and with a smoothed back (Bertoldi 1960-61: pl. XVII, 2), probably because of a specific and particular location on the entablature (Piazzesi 1989: 148). In this case therefore the drawings together with excavations and the study of the findings were the main source of information to understand where the figurative blocks were located. From those data Packer made a reconstruction of the façade of the Basilica (figs. 8.13 and 8.14). The overall height of the order to which Frieze Type V belongs is 13.07 m (Packer 1997: f. 25, 33; Meneghini 2002: 62).
Fig. 8.13. The west portico of the Forum and the reconstructed façade Basilica Ulpia with one of the avant-corps. The red arrow indicates the location of the Frieze Type V on the first order of the façade.

Fig. 8.14. Graphic reconstruction of the south façade of the Basilica Ulpia and cross section. The red arrow indicates Frieze Type V on the lower first external order.
Fig. 8.15. Plan of the Forum of Trajan with the location of Frieze Type V on the façade of the Basilica Ulpia (G1).
8.3. Iconography

In regard to the general iconography of the cupids and cupids in acanthus, see discussion for Frieze Type III (Section 6.3).

8.4. Comparanda

Fragment V (1) is not complete and it does not allow us to understand what the cupids are doing. In particular, the hands are missing and it is impossible to reconstruct which is the precise gesture of the cupids. In Drawings V (5 and 7) Albertolli and Morey sketched half of the arms of the left cupid in the slab they could see in the Forum but which later went missing (figs. 8.9 and 8.10). If Lesueur represented V (5) in his Drawing V (6), as well as Uggeri in his Drawing V (8), they could have arbitrarily completed the pose of the arms, suggesting that the cupid could have decorated vegetal scrolls or dressed candelabra missing in his sketch (fig. 8.11). Apparently there are no evident architraval friezes with a very similar iconography comparable to that of this Trajanic Frieze Type V, but the motif of cupids springing out of acanthus plants dating from the Republican to the imperial period is common in paintings, stuccos, reliefs, vases, etc. We selected some examples of artwork before Trajan's period and contemporary to focus on how this subject developed (Sections 8.4.1-8.4.3) until the variance of the theme of pairs of cupids with vegetal-ending legs flanked by candelabra (Sections 8.4.4-8.4.6).

8.4.1. Stucco Frieze with Cupids in Acanthus and Vegetal Scrolls in the Forum Baths of Pompeii

In Pompeii the Forum Baths are dated to the foundation of Sullan colony in 80 BC, as attested by the building technique typical of that period (La Rocca and De Vos 2002: 138). The tepidarium is the most suggestive room of the structure, because of the beautiful stucco decoration still surviving. The wall is divided by telamones supporting a rich cornice into a number of niches or compartments perhaps for the reception of bathers' unguents. The niches are ascribable to the period of the construction of the Baths in ca. 80 BC. Above them, there is a white stucco frieze with cupids in acanthus from which vegetal scrolls spring (fig. 8.16), dated to the last building phase of Pompeii, after AD 62 (La Rocca and De Vos 2002: 139-40).
Fig. 8.16. Pompeii, tepidarium of Forum Baths. Stucco frieze with cupids in acanthus and vegetal scrolls.
8.4.2. Cupids Springing out of Plants on an Augustan Krater

Fig. 8.17 a and b. Museo della Civiltà Romana. a, copy of a krater with spiral vegetal decoration and cupids. b, detail of the cupids.
This is a copy in the Museo della Civiltà Romana of Rome (fig. 8.17) of a silver vase lost during the World War II. It was found in Hildeseim, Germany, with another 70 items of silver tableware (La Rocca et al: 244). The theme of spiral vegetal decoration is inspired by the same subject decorating the lower panels of the Ara Pacis (infra, p. 265), demonstrating that the workshops working for private individuals could adopt, simplify and spread the figurative language elaborated by official art. In this case on this Augustan vase the vegetal decoration in moved in a underwater world floating on stem volutes with marine creatures (La Rocca et al: 245).
8.4.3. Cupids in Acanthus in Frescoes of the Domus Transitoria

The Domus Transitoria is the first house of Nero, built between AD 54 and 64, called 'transitory' because it connected the emperor's possessions on the Palatine Hill to those on the Esquiline Hill (Coarelli 1995a: 205). The AD 64 fire destroyed a great part of this residence. After the fire, pavilions of the Domus Aurea (Section 8.4.4), the new house of Nero, were built above the ruins of the Domus Transitoria (Section 7.4.1.4, p. 200), burying them until the excavations in 1721. The lower floors, visible under the levels of the Domus Flavia (Section 5.4.1, p. 147) hiding them, contained sunken gardens, two pavilions, a nymphaeum and an art gallery. The rooms were decorated with gold and gems, blue glass as corollas of golden flowers imitated lapis lazuli, alluding to the blue of the sky and the gold of the sun rays. The frescoes represent bloomy stems and plant shoots with sphinxes and griffins, dolphins, panthers, marine monsters and winged figures instead of leaves or together with them (Tomei 1997: 67). On a fresco stripped off the walls of the nymphaeum there are foliate candelabra framed by shoots with spiral-ending stems with cupids springing out of them (fig. 8.18) (Tomei 1997: 69). They are an evidence of how this theme spread in the Neronian period.

*Fig. 8.18. Rome, Museo Palatino. Frescoes from the Domus Transitoria, detail with cupids in acanthus.*
8.4.4. Winged Cupids with Vegetal-ending Legs in Frescoes of the *Domus Aurea*

After the great fire in AD 64, Nero commissioned the building of a new residence, which had walls decorated with coloured marbles and vaults with precious stones and gold leaf, giving it the name of *Domus Aurea* (Golden House). The enormous complex included boundless vineyards, pastures and woods and an artificial lake (Coarelli 1995a: 205-06).

Vegetal scrolls, linear elements transformed into floral garlands, candelabra decorated ceilings and walls, and the repertoire of decorative elements was repeated in an infinite number of different combinations. Often they recall suspended draperies divided in sections by vegetal bands, where plant motifs abound, as well as masks alternating with palmettes, fantastic animals, draped herms growing out of vegetal candelabra, shields, marine monsters, dolphins in unending series of decorative bands (fig. 8.19). For example, in the case of the Room of the Yellow Vault the decorative motif framing the ceiling represents cupids with vegetal-ending legs alternated with fantastic winged animals (fig. 8.19) (Segala and Sciortino 1999: 5).

![Fig. 8.19. a and b. Rome, Domus Aurea. a, Frescoes with winged figures with vegetal-ending legs in the Room of Hector and Andromache. b, detail.](image-url)
Fig. 8.20. Engraving by Nicolas Ponce (1986) representing the Room of the Yellow Vault in the Domus Aurea. Cupids with vegetal-ending legs frame the ceiling.
8.4.5. Reliefs with Cupids in the Palatium of Domitian

The context of the Palace of Domitian is discussed in Chapter 5, Section 5.4.1.

This 'peopled scroll' fragment (Section 6.3.2) with a cupid in acanthus and an animal (fig. 8.21) was found by the archaeologist Pietro Rosa during the excavations in 1861-1870 commissioned by Napoleon III. The cupid seems to stretch his right arm to ward off a unidentifiable animal jumping in his direction, surrounded by vegetal spirals. Because of the style, it can be ascribed to the Severan phase of the Palace (De Polignac 2009; Iara 2014a). According to De Polignac (2009) it could have decorated the walls of the Aula Regia in the Domus Flavia, because its iconography with a cupid in frontal position and surrounded by symmetric plant shoots is different from that of other fragments, as the following ones (infra, pp. 260-61), with cupids in profile ascribed to the major and minor order of the Aula Regia.

Fig. 8.21. Rome, Museo Palatino. Frieze with a winged cupid in acanthus and an animal from the Aula Regia.
Fig. 8.22. Naples, National Archaeological Museum, frieze with a winged cupid in acanthus from the Aula Regia.

Fig. 8.23. Naples, National Archaeological Museum, frieze with winged cupids in acanthus dressing a candelabrum from the Aula Regia.
Fragments of friezes with cupids in acanthus were part of the original Domitianic architectural decoration of the Palace of Domitian, and in particular of the Aula Regia in the Domus Flavia. They were displayed in the Farnese Gardens, and most of them are now at the National Archaeological Museum of Naples, except for a few still in Rome. A fragment of a corner block of an architraval frieze with a winged cupid with vegetal-ending legs springing out of acanthus plant close to an animal on the long side and a female figure on the short side (fig. 8.22), and another with a pair of similar winged cupids in acanthus dressing a candelabrum (fig. 8.23), both in Naples, are variances of 'peopled scrolls' friezes. According to De Polignac (2009; see also Blankenhagen 1940: 64-70), the dimension and the typology of the friezes allow us to identify both of them as elements of a 'minor frieze' running along the walls of the Aula Regia in correspondence with the second order of columns, superimposed above a first order with a 'major frieze'. In Dodero's opinion instead only this second frieze is ascribable to the 'minor frieze' (2010a: 52), while the first is "certainly pertinent" to the 'major frieze' (2010a: 51).

8.4.6. Reliefs with Cupids in Acanthus Dressing Candelabra in the Temple of Venus Genetrix Restored by Trajan

![Fig. 8.24. Rome, Villa Albani. Relief with winged cupids in acanthus dressing a candelabrum from the Temple of Venus Genetrix.](image-url)
The Temple of Venus *Genetrix* restored by Trajan, is discussed in Section 4.5.2.1.

In the Trajanic phase of this temple there were panels with reliefs, framed by a *Cyma* with acanthus leaves, with at least five subjects including cupids: pairs of cupids killing bulls facing each other or turning back, isolated cupids, cupids bearing garlands and cupids in acanthus dressing a candelabrum (Floriani Squarciaino 1948: 67-74; Milella 2010: 457). One of these reliefs, now in Villa Albani in Rome (fig. 8.24) and belonging to the Torlonia Collection (Chapter 7, p. 189), represents this last scheme and can be compared with Frieze Type V with cupids in acanthus in Trajan's Forum. Some panels were larger, others smaller and could have been located alternatively either on the external side walls of the cella (fig. 8.25) or among the columns decorating the inner walls (Milella 2010: 458).

*Fig. 8.25. Reconstruction of the external order of the Temple of Venus Genetrix, reliefs with cupids decorating tripods and candelabra.*
8.4.7. Relief with Cupid in Acanthus in Palazzo Colonna from the Severan 'Frontispiece' of Nero

Fig. 8.26. Rome, Palazzo Colonna. Relief with a cupid in acanthus known as 'arpia'.

This frieze with the lower section of the body of a cupid in acanthus decorated a temple on the Quirinal Hill, Rome, whose south-western corner of the pediment and cella's back wall were still standing until the 17th century. It was called 'Frontispiece' of Nero, and it has been identified as the Severan Temple of Hercules and Dionysus, gods protectors of Caracalla and Geta (Picozzi 2010: 13-15). After 1629 the ruins were demolished, and the relief became part of the Colonna Collection in Palazzo Colonna (Picozzi 2010: 23). Artists such as Giuliano da Sangallo, Pietro da Cortona, van Hemskeerck sketched the relief, then known as 'arpia' (Section 6.3.2), helping reconstruct the original motif of a winged cupid in acanthus turning right, possibly holding an object like a chest (Picozzi 2010: 25-28). According to stylistic features the relief is dated to the end of the 2nd-the beginning of the 3rd century AD (Picozzi 2010: 29), and attests to the diffusion of this theme also after Trajanic period.
8.5. Symbolism

The symbolism of the cupids in acanthus is discussed with Frieze Type III in Chapter 6 (Section 6.5).

Zanker defines the vegetal elements as 'vines of paradise'. As a symbol of growth in nature the vine is one of the most recurring themes of the new figurative language of Augustus and followed by his successors, an icon of the new golden age inaugurated by the first emperor, the *saeculum aureum*. Zanker (1988: 180) wrote that for Augustan artists the vine was a most welcome motif that could be used virtually anywhere, on a frieze, ceiling coffer, or door frame, and could be fitted into even the most awkward places. From the sandals of the gods to the cuirassed generals, it proclaims the fertility and prosperity of the new age, with the purpose to characterize the new age as a paradise on earth. The vegetal elements are everywhere in the monuments of the early empire: for example, in the carefully planned decorative program of the Ara Pacis, vines, acanthus and garlands occupy more than half the surface of the altar enclosure (Zanker 1989: 175). The description of Zanker (1988: 180) of the vegetal decoration of the Ara Pacis could be considered the key to the interpretation of this motif even in the later friezes of the Forum of Trajan:

"On the exterior walls the vines grow from broad acanthus calyxes into treelike forms, which send out new shoots in all directions, leading the eye through an endless pattern of infinite variety. Signs of fertility and abundance are set directly into this framework [...] Jagged leaves, flowers of all sorts, and fruits and plants both real and fantastic, even crawling little creatures, all suggest nature's growth, so alive that it seems to be. But one steps back again and takes in all the vines at once, one has the strong impression of a strictly observed order governing every detail. In fact, allowing for minor variations, the vines do adhere to a precisely calculated arrangement in mirror image. However wildly the plants and blossoms seem to burst forth and grow every tendril, every bud and leaf has its prescribed place. [...] The abundance of nature is rendered in strictly symmetrical arrangement order. Perhaps this peculiar phenomenon reflects on the aesthetic level the almost fanatical preoccupation of the Augustan age with law and order".
As we will discuss below (Section 12.2.2), in this section of the Forum, the façade of the Basilica Ulpia (fig. 2.13 G1), there is a clear reference to the decoration of the previous fora, and in particular the direct model of that of Augustus. We agree with the interpretation of Zanker (1989: 192-97) and Packer (2001: 187) that this decorative motif recalls the propaganda of Augustan classicism. Vegetal shoots framed the door of the Temple of Apollo built by Augustus on the Palatine Hill (Coarelli 1995: 161). Connected with the tripods, they had a symbolic meaning dedicated to victory and hope (Section 5.3). The ornamental motif became a symbol of happiness and divine benediction related with the golden age inaugurated by Augustus (Zanker 1989: 192-193), and evoked abundance and prosperity promoted, guaranteed and spread by the Augustan peace (Zanker 1988: 172-92).

The frieze of the façade of the Basilica Ulpia was related to the inscriptions with the names of the military units fighting in the Dacian wars and the bronze and marble statues on the attic storey of the portico around the square (Chapter 2, pp. 32, 40): they all celebrated the conquest of an enemy once haughty (Packer 2001: 187), and the abundance assured by defeat of the barbarians (Packer 2008: 476).

Therefore, the message Trajan wanted to send through this Frieze Type V could be interpreted as a symbol of fertility and abundance, but most of all victory connected again with the glorification of the victorious military campaigns of the emperor. Victory but also hope for the inauguration of a new golden age, alluding to the same concept that was the main subject of the political propaganda of Augustus. Trajan used the language codified by the first emperor to express the same kind of political messages and reinforce his own propaganda.
Chapter 9.
Trajanic Frieze Type VI: Victories Killing Bulls and Dressing Candelabra

9.1. Introduction

In this chapter we catalogue and describe those fragments of the architrave that feature victories killing bulls and dressing candelabra. These fragments can be divided into two principal groups, based on the extant panel heights: Frieze Type VIa of height ca. 75 cm; and Type Ib friezes of height ca. 66-68 cm. According to extant sculptural find and the dimensions of these fragments, it is possible to attribute them to the architectonical order of different sections of a specific building forming the complex of Trajan's Forum.

The fragments were discovered in the 16th century and were part of the Della Valle Collection together with Frieze Type Ib (Section 4.3). They were later brought to Paris: two of them from Frieze Type VI are in the Louvre Museum, VIa (3) with a taurochtonous Victory, and VIa (4) with a Victory clasping a candelabrum. Other ones with smaller dimensions were bought by the Prince of Bavaria and are now housed in Munich Glyptothek, VIb.

9.2. Type VIa

Type VIa comprises those reliefs of victories dressing candelabra and killing bulls set on friezes of height dimensions ca. 75 cm. Four fragments of this frieze type survive in museums in Trajan's Forum in Rome and in the Louvre Museum in Paris.

9.2.1. Fragment VIa (1)

Entablature block


*Museum Inventory number:* FT 3197.
Fig. 9.1. Fragment VIa (1).

Fig. 9.2. Fragment VIa (1) in its current location.
Fig. 9.3. Fragment VIa (1), detail of the left taurochtonous Victory.

Fig. 9.4. Fragment VIa (1), detail of the right Victory dressing a candelabrum.
Fig. 9.5. Fragment VIa (1), right end.

Fig. 9.6. Fragment VIa (1), back side.
Fig. 9.7 a and b. Fragment VIa (1), left end. a, detail of the right corner. b, detail of the left corner.
Marble type: Luni marble.

Measurements of block: height including architrave: 146 cm on left side; height of frieze panel: 75 cm (fully preserved at left); width: 192 cm; thickness: maximum 120 cm on the left side, 119 on the right side.

Measurements of Victories: Left Victory: height: 69 cm; height of head: 11 cm; right wing's width: 58 cm; left wing's width: maximum 55 cm; feathers in right wing (6 rows of short feathers, 6 rows of long feathers) - short feathers' length: 1 cm first row, 2 cm second and third rows, 5 cm fourth row, 6 cm fifth and sixth rows; - long feathers' length: 35-37 cm; feathers in left wing (5 rows of short feathers, 5 rows of long feathers) - short feathers' length: 1-3 cm; - long feathers' length: 31 cm; waist: 14 cm; right arm width: 26 cm; dagger's width: 7 cm; left arm width: 25 cm; right foot width: 26 cm.

Right Victory: height: 38 cm; right foot width: 12 cm; left foot width: 10 cm; distance between right knee and foot: 25 cm.

Measurements of bull: height: 55 cm; width: 77 cm; muzzle width: 21 cm; ears width: 3 cm; left horn height: 3 cm; eye diameter: 3 cm; right and left forepaw's width: 23 cm; tail height: 20 cm.

Measurements of other motifs: candelabrum height: maximum 34 cm with the pedestal, 23 cm without; pedestal height: 11 cm, width of left flower: 6 cm; width of right flower: 5 cm; right festoon height: 16 cm; left festoon height: 22 cm.

Measurements of architrave: Cyma's height: 12 cm; bead's width: 4 cm; reel's width: 4 cm; first band's height: 21 cm; second band's height: 17 cm; third band's height: 12 cm.

State of preservation: the relief looks stunning in the quality of carving. In this slab the original surface is particularly well preserved, thus it is possible to appreciate the contrast of the bull's coat scraped by the rasp and the smooth skin of the Victories. In the architrave, only the upper and lower edges of the big plain marble bands were polished, to obtain a chiaroscuro effect. There is no sign of paint.

Description: fragment of an entablature whose frieze and architrave still survive (figs. 9.1-9.7). Concerning the frieze, on the right side of the relief there is a couple of kneeling Victories, each wearing a chiton and a mantle, decorating a candelabrum or thymiaterion with pendant laurel garlands. The Victory on the left side of the candelabrum is preserved, only the right foot and a few draperies of the chiton of the mirror-like Victory on the right is visible, cut by the edge of the broken slab. The candelabrum has a square base decorated with rosettes, the upper side is decorated with
leaves and its top is missing. Behind the Victory dressing the candelabrum, on the left side, another Victory, perfectly preserved with naked breasts and turning to her right, is preparing to sacrifice a bull. Holding the bull to the floor with the left knee, the Victory is pulling back its muzzle with the left hand ready to cut its neck with the dagger held in the right hand. The architrave is decorated with a *Cyma reversa* with normal leaf-and-dart moulding, and three smooth and plain bands are alternated with three half round with bead and reel.


*Discovery and likely location*: found in 1931 during the via dell'Impero excavations (Chapter 2 p. 22, fig. 2.10), at Testa Spaccata/Macel de'Corvi, south west side of Basilica Ulpia, together with Fragment VIa (2).
9.2.2. Fragment VIa (2)

Entablature block

Current location: Rome, Museum of the Imperial Fora at Trajan's Markets, storeroom of the 'Aule di Testata'.

Museum Inventory number: FT 3198.

Fig. 9.8. Fragment VIa (2).
Fig. 9.9. Fragment VIa (2), left end.
Fig. 9.10. Fragment VIa (2), right end.
Fig. 9.11. Fragment VIa (2), detail of the bull.

Marble type: Luni marble.

Measurements of block: overall preserved height including upper part of architrave: 120 cm; height of frieze panel: 75 cm; width: maximum 59 cm; thickness: 43 cm on the bottom left, 21 cm on the bottom right.

Measurements of Victories: Left Victory: height: 41 cm; arm length: 18 cm; left leg's height: 18 cm. Right Victory: feathers in right wing (4 rows of long feathers) - right long feathers' length: 25 cm first row, 20 cm second row, 18 cm third row, 9 cm fourth row; right wing's width: 2 cm; feathers in left wing (4 rows of long feathers) - left long feathers' length: 26 cm first and second rows, 25 cm third row, 21 cm fourth row; left wing's width: 2 cm.

Measurements of bull: height: maximum 51 cm; width: 58 cm; muzzle width: 14 cm; ears width: 3 cm; left horn height: 4 cm; eye diameter: 3 cm; right forepaw's width: 23 cm; left forepaw's width: 13 cm; right hoof's width: 6.5 cm.

Measurements of architrave: Cyma's height: 12 cm; bead's width: 3 cm; reel's width: 2 cm; first band's height: 22 cm, second lower band covered by support.
State of preservation: incomplete, the surface shows numerous lacunae and there is no sign of paint on it.

Description: the slab represents two Victories. The left Victory turns to her right to kill a bull (figs. 9.8-9.11). Just a few elements of the figure are visible, and in particular the left knee used to hold the bull to the floor, a small part of the chest and fragments of the left arm pulling back the muzzle of the bull to cut its neck with the dagger held in the right hand. On the right side of the slab the ends of the wings of another Victory are visible, which would be in front of the bull turning left. The architrave is decorated with a Cyma reversa with normal leaf-and-dart moulding, and on the lower side half round with bead and reel.


Discovery and likely location: as VIa (1).
9.2.3. Fragment Vla (3)

Entablature block

*Current location:* Paris, Louvre Museum.
*Museum Catalogue number:* Ma 307; *Museum Inventory number:* MR 864-1136.

![Fragment Vla (3)](image)

*Fig. 9.12. Fragment Vla (3).*

*Marble type:* Luni marble.

*Measurements of block:* overall preserved height including upper part of architrave: 93 cm (Packer: 94 cm); *height of frieze panel:* 72 cm; *width:* 109 cm; *thickness:* 20 cm.

*Measurements of bull:* *height:* 54 cm.

*Measurements of Victory:* *height:* 70 cm.

*State of preservation:* the surface was ruined in several points, the relief was very recently restored including its lacunae, which are completed in marble. In particular, the left upper side of the slab with the right arm and dagger and a big part of the head, the lower left side of the slab with the muzzle and the right forepaw. The left arm, broken in three parts, has been fixed.
Description: a Victory with naked breasts, turning to her left, is about to sacrifice a bull (fig. 9.12). The Victory holds the bull to the floor with the right knee and pulls back the left ear of the bull to cut its neck with the dagger held in the right hand. The architrave is decorated with a Cyma reversa with normal leaf-and-dart moulding, and on the lower side half round with bead and reel.

On the upper and right edge of the slab there are the traces of lost modern metal clamps which would have held it in place in its 16th century or Borghese setting. There are traces of black pigment on the bull's body (Capodiferro 1985: 37), attesting that the reliefs should have been painted. In this fragment there is the only variation of the pose of the taurochtonous Victory in Type VI. In fact, usually the Victories pull back the bull's muzzle to cut its neck, here instead the Victory pulls back the ear of the bull and not the muzzle. This is the original pose and not an arbitrary reconstruction of a restoration, because while other sections of the same relief were heavily recarved, the left side of the Victory was not, and even if the left arm was broken in three parts, it was only fixed again without any addition.


Discovery and likely location: together with VIa (4), this fragment was found in the 16th century and belonged to the Della Valle Collection which was later bought by the Borghese family. They both decorated the façade of the Borghese palace (Fabrega-Dubert 2009). They were bought by the Louvre Museum in 1807 and brought to Paris in 1810.
9.2.4. Fragment VIa (4)

Entablature block


Museum Catalogue number: Ma 591; Museum Inventory number: MR 865 - N 1160.

Fig. 9.13. Fragment VIa (4).
Marble type: Luni marble.

Measurements of block: overall preserved height including architrave: height of frieze panel: 77 cm; width: 55 cm; thickness: 40 cm.

State of preservation: the lower side of the body of the Victory is in good condition, the right edge and the end of the wing and all the lower edge are more ruined. The upper side and the wings are not original because they were lacunous and have been completed in marble during a restoration in an unknown moment. Claridge (personal communication 24/4/2014) hypothesizes that the Victory could originally have decorated a candelabrum, as in VIa (1), and its pose could have changed in clasping a candelabrum when the relief was heavily restored. There is no sign of paint on the surface.

Description of frieze: a winged kneeling Victory turning left, is firmly clasping a candelabrum (fig. 9.13). The figure wears a chiton without sleeves leaving her breast naked, and a mantle slipping from the shoulder to the leg. The candelabrum has a square base and the upper side is decorated with leaves. On the top of the heavily restored candelabrum there is a brazier where copious flames burn.


Discovery and likely location: as VIa (3).
9.2.5. Location of Frieze VIa

The location of the frieze (fig. 9.18) is identifiable thanks to excavation records and photographs attesting that Fragments VIa (1) (fig. 2.11) and VIa (2) were found in 1931 in an area corresponding to the south western side of the Basilica Ulpia (Ricci 1931: 117-22, Milella 1989: 97) (Chapter 2 p. 22, fig. 3.2 a nos. 107 and 112). The dimensions of the architraval frieze VIa fit perfectly into the first lower order entablature of the central nave of the Basilica Ulpia (Meneghini 2009: 145). Thus, only Fragments VIa (1 and 2) very likely decorated the central nave, because they were discovered in correspondence to this section of the Basilica Ulpia.

Fragments VIa (1 and 2) can be compared with the other Fragments VIa (3 and 4) and VIb (1) representing the same subject, exhibited in Paris and Munich. Even if VIa is larger than VIb (ca. 7 cm higher), according to Tummarello (1989: 108) Fragments VIa (3 and 4) in Paris and VIb (1) in Munich, in addition to the analogy of the subject, have the same carving technique as VIa (1 and 2) in Rome.

In the 16 century van Heemskerck, as we will discuss below in regard of Frieze Type VIb, sketched Drawing VIb (2) with a taurochtonous Victory in the Della Valle Collection (Sections 9.3.2 and 9.3.3) (fig. 9.17). The drawing confirms that Fragments VIa (3 and 4) in Paris and VIb (1) in Munich come from the Forum of Trajan, because they were all part of the Collection of the Della Valle family, in whose palace the artist saw VIb. The comparison of the subject to the identical one of VIa (1 and 2) found in the Forum of Trajan, demonstrates that the fragments in Paris and Munich have the same provenance.

Using the available data Packer (2001: 178-89) and Meneghini (Meneghini and Santangeli Valenzani 2007: 103) have made a reconstruction of the interior of the Basilica including the friezes (fig. 9.14). The overall height of the order to which Frieze Type VIa belongs is ca. 13 m (13.074) (Packer 1997: f. 25, 33).
Fig. 9.14. The reconstructed Basilica Ulpia: the central nave from the north side. The red arrow indicates the location of Frieze Type VIa and possibly VIb.
9.3. Frieze Type VIb

Frieze Type VIb comprises those remains of reliefs of victories dressing candelabra and killing bulls set on friezes of height dimensions ca. 66-68 cm. A length of frieze of this type, sawn off from four entablature blocks, survives in Munich Glyptothek. To this relief can be added a drawing representing a detail of the same frieze.

9.3.1. Fragment VIb (1)

Entablature block

Current location: Munich, Glyptothek.

Museum Inventory number: Gl. 348.

![Fig. 9.15. Fragment VIb (1).](image_url)

Fig. 9.16 a, b and c. Fragment VIb (1), details.
Marble type: Luni marble.

Measurements of block\(^8\): height (Fuchs 2002: 142): 66,5-68 cm; width: 5,89 m.

Measurements of Victories (from the left to the right) (Packer 1997: 337): height of the second Victory, dressing a candelabrum: 64 cm; height of the third Victory, killing a bull: 58 cm.

Measurements of bull: height of the second bull: 57 cm.

Measurements of other motifs: candelabra: height of the preserved section of the first candelabrum: 7,5 cm; height of the second festooned candelabrum: 21,5 cm; height of the third candelabrum: 15,5 cm.

State of preservation: the architraval frieze slab is made of four rejoined fragments, whose surface shows numerous lacunae.

Description of frieze: the relief decoration (figs. 9.15 and 9.16) comprises three repeated motifs, symmetrically framing a central one. Two facing Victories decorate a

\(^8\) In Munich Glyptothek Museum's catalogue cards no other measurements of the friezes are noted than the information in Fuchs 2002. Unfortunately, the slabs are placed very high on the wall of the Glyptothek and Dr. Christian Gliwitzky informed me that it is not possible to measure them without great effort (personal communication 25/3/2014). For this reason I was not able to check personally the measurements and I used those taken by Packer and Fuchs.
candelabrum with garlands and behind them two other antithetical Victories kill bulls. The group of four is framed by tall candelabra. The central motif is formed by two kneeling winged Victories, each wearing a *chiton* without sleeves and a mantle slipping from the shoulder to the leg. They decorate with laurel garlands a candelabrum standing between them, with a square base decorated with rosettes and the upper side with leaves. On its top there is a brazier where some small, barely visible, flames burn. The second lateral motif is that of facing Victories killing bulls. The Victories, with naked breasts, are turned towards the Victories dressing candelabra, and going to sacrifice a bull. They hold the bull to the floor with the knee and pull back the muzzle of the bull with the one hand to cut its neck with the dagger held in the other hand. The third and last motif is a tall candelabrum separating the group of four Victories, which is pear-shaped with a tapered rounded belly and a long neck.

The sequence of the two Victories decorating candelabra followed by another two taurochtonous Victories flanked by candelabra is repeated three times. Only the central sequence is complete even if some details of the figures are missing. On the left side of the slab, only the lower side of the body of the taurochtonous Victory of the second group is visible, as well as the back and the tail of the bull, because the left edge of the frieze is cut diagonally at exactly this point. On the right edge of the slab, only the left side of the candelabrum of the third group is preserved, because it is cut in correspondence with the edge of the broken slab.


*Discovery and likely location*: the findspot is not known. As V1a (3 and 4), V1b (1) was found in the 16th century, belonged to the Della Valle Collection and was later bought by Cardinal Fesch. It was recomposed and brought to Paris together with Fragments Ib (1-6) with griffins, candelabra and vases of the same collection, which are still visible in the Louvre. In 1815 it was bought by Crown Prince Luis of Bavaria and now is exhibited in the Munich Glyptothek.
9.3.2. Fragment VIb (2)

Drawing by M. van Heemskerck
During his stay in Rome in the 16th century (1532-1535), the Dutch painter Marten van Heemskerck saw Frieze VIb in the courtyard of the Della Valle-Bufalo Palace and drew a detail (fig. 9.17).

Fig. 9.17. Drawing VIb (2) by van Heemskerck.

Description: a winged Victory with naked breasts, turning right, holds a bull to the floor with the left knee and pulls back the muzzle of the bull to cut its neck with the dagger held in the right hand. In the sketch is also clearly visible an isolated candelabrum decorated with laurel garlands and burning flames, almost completely lost in the frieze because of their fragility and thinness.
9.3.3. Location of Frieze VIb

The drawing is an important source of information about this frieze. The detail sketched in Drawing VIb (2) belongs to Frieze Type VIb and precisely to Fragment VIb (1). In fact, van Heemskerck could not have sketched Frieze VIa, because VIa (1 and 2) were discovered in 1931 and VIa (3 and 4) of the same Della Valle Collection have a different iconography: in VI (3) the Victory turns left and not right as in Drawing VIb (2), and in VI (4) there is Victory and a candelabrum and not a bull.

The fragments of this frieze have smaller dimensions than the other fragments with the same subject in Rome and Paris, Frieze Type VIa. The difference in the height of Friezes VIa and VIb could be explained with the misleading restored state of this Munich Frieze Type VIb with the top cut off: possibly the slabs were all on the entablature of the same architectonical order, but from different sections. In this case, the overall height of the order to which Frieze Type VIb belongs should be the same as VIa (supra, p. 282).

As the provenance from the Basilica Ulpia is demonstrated for Frieze VIa and reasonably supposed for Frieze VIb (Section 9.2.5), alternatively Frieze VIb with an identical subject could have been located somewhere else in the nave of the Basilica Ulpia (fig. 9.18). Moreover, the only block which provides the definite height is VIa (1), and VIa (3) fits very well. We have not been able to measure personally VIb, and we do not have enough detailed measurements of key elements to compare. All the blocks miss the top edge and possibly have been trimmed along the bottom, thus in the future it will be necessary to check the measurements of VIb, which could have had the same size of VIa.
Fig. 9.18. Plan of the Forum of Trajan with the location of Frieze Type VIa and possibly VIb.
9.4. Iconography

Fig. 9.19 a and b. Athens, Museum of the Akropolis. a, The parapet of the Temple of Athena Nike. b, Two Nikai leading a bull to sacrifice on Slab north IV.

According to Fuchs and Bertelli (1963), the Greek Nike, and Roman Victory, is the goddess who grants victory. In Greece Nike is represented especially on reliefs and statues as a female figure, a winged woman wearing long clothes and four wings, later replaced by only two wings. The attribute is the gift the goddess brings to the winner: bandages, branches, wreaths, and since the 4th century also palm branches. She is also represented as a noble sacrificial handmaiden of the gods holding a phiale, a thymiaterion, a sacrificial basket or the torch. As a speedy messenger of victory she has affinities to other winged figures of Greek art such as Iris, the real messenger of the gods who usually wears short clothes, Eos, Keres, and the Harpies. As goddess of the victory she can hold a helmet or a shield, raise a symbol of victory, or lead bulls for sacrifice (Fuchs and Bertelli 1963). The archetypical actions of Nike developed since the 5th century BC, culminating at the end of the century in the friezes of the parapet of
the Temple of Athena-Nike (Bell Dinsmoor 1926). The Nikai in these friezes lead bulls for sacrifice (fig. 9.19), kneel on the back of the animal, sacrifice a bull on an altar, make an offering, and erect trophies, while Athena is seated on a rock. The parapet (reliefs dating to BC 409-06) glorifies the victory of Alkibiades on the ground and sea. The influence of these motifs on the contemporary minor arts is remarkable. In vases of the 5th century BC Nike was represented as the cupbearer of the gods, in particular close to Zeus and Hera, Athena, Poseidon, Dionysus, and as part of the Eleusis' divinities. The goddess is also depicted among the humans, erecting trophies, leading bulls to the sacrifice, pouring drinks to the warriors ready to leave or bringing sacrificial gifts to the grave of a warrior. The types of Nike of the Greeks were used by the Etruscans (in the inscriptions on Etruscan mirrors Nike is already named Victoria) (Fuchs 1963), fusing Greek models with the indigenous figure of Lasa.

The Romans resume the Victory/Nike artistic archetype from the Hellenistic period, without further elaborations of her basic features. They portrayed the goddess as a female winged figure not only in statues but also in frescoes, gems and coins. Nevertheless they expanded the meanings of the allegorical figure: several coins between the 1st century BC and 2nd century AD were issued with Victories and attributes like 'abundance' and 'prosperity' and, more rarely, 'happiness' (Grant 1954: 22, 150, 193, 200). During the Second Punic War Hieron sent to Rome a golden Victory, welcomed by the Senate as an omen, hoping that it could be propitious for the Roman people (Koehler 1966). In Rome Victory acquired political significance through Lucius Cornelius Sulla, who in 86 BC built a Tropaeum for Mars, Venus and Victory after his victory over Mithridates (Plut., Sulla 19. 9). He also introduced public games (Ludi Victoriae) after the victory over the Marians (Riederer 2010). These games became constitutive for the Ludi Victoriae Caesaris that Caesar celebrated in 45 BC after the battle of Munda. In 29 BC after the victory of Actium Octavianus had the statue of Victory from another district of Rome placed on a globe in the newly dedicated Curia Iulia (Suet., Aug. 106), where in the same year he consecrated to Victory an altar, which was the site of sacrifices made prior to Senate meetings (Riederer 2010). In this way the emperor was indissolubly related to the figure of Victory in balance on a globe on a foot (Koehler 1966: 1192) (fig. 9.20).
Victories become frequent in gems, coinage, daily life objects and imperial official art: in the right hand Victory held a wreath, in the left one a palm (fig. 9.20), sometimes a military insignia or a clypeus virtutis. This kind of representation definitively expands the meaning of the Nike in Roman art: not only victory as military success, but also as triumphs of personal virtue and divine ascendance. In Roman art, the figures were often transformed into Victories by adding wings. According to Zanker (2008: 44), this is mostly due to the typical iconographic meaning of the wings, connected with the higher spheres: the wings are often represented as eagle wings, related in particular to the sphere of the supreme god Jupiter (whose main attribute was the eagle) and thus, to apotheosis.

A new symbol of the Augustan age was a little statue of Victory, put as the Greeks did in the hand of important divinities as Jupiter, Mars, Minerva, Venus, Hercules, the personification of Rome and the emperor himself, as attested by Augustan coins: on an aureus in the hand of the statue of divine Caesar there is a Victory (Zanker 2003: 38-39), and on a denarius Augustus holds a statue of Victory (Zanker 2003: 61). This symbol represented the victorious impetus of the Roman people. The symbolic power of Victory is witnessed by the disputes concerning Christian imperial will to relocate the statue of the divinity from the Curia, culminating in its removal in AD 357. Symmachus, a strong supporter of Victory, was conscious that her disappearance would have corresponded to the end of the Roman Empire (Koehler 1966).
Fig. 9.21. London, British Museum. Gem of transparent green glass paste, engraved with a winged Victory sacrificing a bull.

Fig. 9.22. Augustan aureus dated to 20-18 BC with a taurochtonous Victory celebrating the capture of Armenia.

In particular, the iconographical variation of the taurochtonous Victory, as already mentioned, inspired by Greek model of the friezes of the parapet of the Temple of Athena-Nike (supra, p. 291), spread under the reign of Augustus, and became a popular topic especially in minor arts, as gems (fig. 9.21), coins and Campana plaques (Section 9.5.1.1). This motif of Victory as imperial triumph over the East is depicted on the verso of gold coins dated to 20-18 BC, celebrating the capture of Armenia (fig. 9.22) (Koehler 1966). In the non-official artworks of minor arts the taurochtonous Victory became a symbol of the new idea of peace of Augustus, related to the new golden age inaugurated by the emperor. Later this motif strengthened in official State Roman art as a symbol of triumph, especially under Trajan (Schneider 1990: 277). Specifically, the eagerness
expressed by this representation corresponds to the force required for the cultual sacrifice of the animal and exalts the ritual meaning of this iconographic motif, which represents the victorious power of the emperor and the celebration of his triumph, directed to the pacification of the empire (Pinna Caboni 2009: 447).

In Roman religion, as in the Hellenistic period, Victory is often represented close to the cult of Mithras and also of Nemesis (Schneider 1990: 277). As the griffins, so also the Victories are strictly connected with Nemesis and have similar features. Thus in Rome this motif maintains the Greek original meaning of Nike granting victory, also linked with other divinities, adding further nuances of abundance and personal virtue until apotheosis.

9.5. Comparanda

The iconography of taurochtonous Victories was very common on different types of artworks, as attested by gems and Campana slabs, in friezes before and contemporary with Trajan's period, and also on cuirassed statues.

9.5.1. Reliefs with Taurochtonous Victories in Pre-Trajanic Artworks and Monuments

9.5.1.1. Campana Plaques with Taurochtonous Victories

Many objects of daily life, such Campana plaques, represent taurochtonous Victories (Borbein 1968: 43-118). Among them, we chose two examples in Copenhagen and London to represent them all (fig. 9.23). They illustrate that, while in the case of Campana plaques with cupids and griffins the iconography is very similar to the relevant Trajanic Frieze Type IV with stylistic variations (Section 7.4.1.2), for the Campana plaques with Victories we can observe that there are iconographic differences compared with Frieze Type VI. The way of rendering the wings, the chiton and the drapery of the Victories, the pose of their arms and legs, the pose of the bull, the shape of candelabra are similar but never identical. Moreover, the variation of iconography of Fragment VIa (3) with the Victory pulling back the ear of the bull and not the muzzle is not attested in any Campana plaque. These Campana plaques confirm that this motif was already diffused since the late Republican-early imperial period but Victory is nude, in archaistic style.
Fig. 9.23 a and b. Examples of Campana plaques with a taurochtonous Victory. 
a, Copenhagen, Ny Carlsberg Museum. b, London, British Museum.
9.5.1.2. Julio-Claudian Relief with a Victory killing a Bull in Villa Albani

On a relief of the Torlonia Collection in Villa Albani (Chapter 7, p. 189) there is a winged Victory turning right with naked breasts, holding the bull to the floor with the left knee and pulling back the muzzle of the bull with the left hand while cutting its neck with the dagger held in the right hand restored in the relief - only the down-turned handle survives - (fig. 9.24). On the bull's neck the blood gushes in big drops and the genitals of the animal are clearly visible (Schneider 1990: 275). According to Schneider (1990: 276) the relief can be stylistically dated to the Julio-Claudian period, especially because of the way of rendering the drapery and the feathers of the wings. Specifically, the relief should be dated to the Claudian period, from the curved folds of the drapery, the way of wrapping it on the hips of the Victory, and the presence of highlighted hair on the bull's hoof. Victory does not reach the serenity of the peace time under Augustus' reign, but is of a dynamic and combative type, with the action focussing on the realistic and intense moment of the bull's sacrifice, with the blood gushing from the wound,
possibly highlighted by paint (Schneider 1990: 276-77). Thus, the iconography is similar to that in Frieze Type VI and could be considered a precedent and a model from Julio-Claudian age, but with a substantial difference not attested elsewhere. In this relief the Victory is not about to kill a bull holding the dagger in the hand, but already sacrifices the animal cutting its neck with the dagger turned down.

9.5.1.3. Early Imperial Frieze with Taurochtonous Victory in the Storerooms of the Theatre of Marcellus

This fragment of a frieze with a taurochtonous Victory (DAI inventory no. 52254) (Malter 2013) is stored in the storerooms of the Theatre of Marcellus, in Rome (9.25). A dressed winged Victory turning right, holding the bull to the floor with the left knee and pulling back its muzzle with the left hand, is about to sacrifice the animal, cutting its neck. The edges of the relief are broken. Victory is headless, her arms are broken and the right foot is missing. Only the central section of the bull's body survives. The fragment does not belong to the Theatre of Marcellus and its provenance is unknown. It is dated to the early imperial period (Malter 2013), and like the previous relief (fig. 9.24) could be considered a precedent for Frieze Type VI, witnessing the diffusion of its iconography, even if here we have the alteration of a fully draped Victory.
9.5.1.4. Relief with a Taurochtonous Victory in the Capitoline Museums

This relief (fig. 9.26) is stored in the Caffarelli Gardens of Rome's Capitoline Museums (inventory no. MC 1036/S)⁹. It represents a winged Victory in a long dress, with one naked breast turning right, who is going to sacrifice a bull, holding it to the floor with the left knee. In the right hand she would have held a dagger (missing). Rather than pulling back bull's muzzle with the left hand (missing), the Victory seems to be bending her left arm, but the pose is unclear because of the broken arm. The only photograph available is not clear, the marble's surface is very dirty and it is difficult to distinguish the details. However, despite of the photograph's poor quality, the style of the Victory suggests that the relief could date to a pre-Trajanic period. If this is correct, this relief, as well as the previous ones (figs. 9.24 and 9.25) are evidence of the spread of this theme in the imperial period before Trajan's age.

Fig. 9.26. Rome, Capitoline Museums, Giardino Caffarelli. Fragment of a relief with a taurochtonous Victory.

⁹ Unfortunately the relief is not published and it is not currently accessible because it is being restored and cleaned. The brief museum catalogue card does not specify its provenance (http://capitolini.net/object.xql?urn=urn: collectio:0001:scu:01036). Furthermore, the curators of this section of Capitoline Museums could not give me further information because they are reviewing Caffarelli Garden's materials at the moment (personal communication 29/10/2014).
9.5.1.5. Architraval Friezes with Victories Killing Bulls from Templum Pacis

Fig. 9.27 a and b. Rome, area of the Templum Pacis, fragments of architraval friezes with a taurochtonous Victory. a, Flavian fragment. b, Severan fragment found in the area of the western portico of the Temple.
The Trajanic friezes can also be compared with architraval friezes of Vespasian's period from the *Templum Pacis*, built by Vespasian between AD 71 and 75 and rebuilt after AD 192 fire (Cass. Dio, *Hist. Rom.* 72. 24. 1-2). This temple was dedicated to the personification of Peace after the bloody period of the Jewish War. The plan of the Temple of Peace resembles that of a forum, with a big square in front of it surrounded by covered porticoes (Coarelli 1995 c: 142). The dating of these friezes to the original project of Vespasian or to its Severan reconstruction is only stylistic. A first fragment of an architraval frieze with a taurochtonous Victory (fig. 9.27 a) (inventory no. FP 975) was found during the 1998-2000 excavations. It represents a Victory (just the lower side of the body survives) turning left and killing a bull, whose only visible part is its back. The Victory wears her mantle wrapped around her hips, and the drapery of the mantle covers the background. The figure is preparing to sacrifice a bull, holding it to the ground with the right knee. The upper side of the bull's body is missing but it is likely that the Victory is pulling back the muzzle of the bull to cut its throat. Just a few feathers of the wings of the Victory survive. It is impossible to ascertain the original location and to reconstruct the architectonical order, though stylistic comparisons with other Flavian reliefs suggest the frieze is of Flavian date (Pinna Caboni 2009: 446). The iconography is very similar to Trajanic Friezes VIa and VIb, except for the rendering of the drapery and the leg.

Another fragment (fig. 9.27 b) shows a taurochtonous Victory and a candelabrum behind her, confirming the presence of this decorative element to divide the figures (Meneghini et al. 2009: 198). The decorative language is so different (for example in the rendering of the drapery) that this other fragment seems to belong to the Severan period, when the Temple of Peace was restored after the fire of AD 192. In this case, as well in the Palatium of Domitian (Section 5.4.1) this fragment would confirm that part of the Flavian architectures survived in the Severan restorations and that the decorative motifs of the Severan period were adapted from the previous model (Pinna Caboni 2009: 447). The theme of the taurochtonous Victories, generally facing each other and separated by a dividing element, could reasonably be part of the decorative programme of the Temple of Peace with motifs clearly related to the pacified empire. The politics of Vespasian to guarantee the re-established order seems to be represented by a sacred action, propitiating a new and long period of peace (Meneghini et al. 2009: 198). This is the best example of comparison to the Trajanic architraval friezes so far, because the
reliefs have the same subject and the same function, as they are architraval friezes as well, even if their location is not certain. We will discuss the connections between Temple of Peace and Trajan's Forum also below, in Section 12.2.3.

9.5.1.6. Architraval Friezes with a Victory Killing a Bull from the *Palatium* of Domitian

*Fig. 9.28 a and b. Naples, National Archaeological Museum, fragments of architraval frieze with a taurochtonous Victory from the Palatium of Domitian.*
The context of the Palace of Domitian is discussed in Chapter 5, Section 5.4.1.

Two reliefs from the Palace of Domitian, now in the National Archaeological Museum of Naples (von Blankenhagen 1940: 66; pl. 23, 67; Dodero 2010a) are examples of architraval friezes preceding the Trajanic friezes which could have inspired the iconographical choices of the decoration of the Forum of Trajan. The first relief with a Victory turning left killing a bull in front of a candelabrum is on the long side of a corner block of an architraval frieze (fig. 9.28 a). On the short side is a cupid in acanthus previously analyzed (Section 7.4.1.6). According to von Blankenhagen (1940: 66), because of the stylistic features it could belong to the original project of Domitian, and not to the refurbishment of Septimius Severus. For Dodero (2010a: 51) it is ascribable to the 'minor frieze' of the Aula Regia (Section 7.4.1.6).

The second relief on the long side of another corner block of an architraval frieze (fig. 9.28 b) is partially preserved, and only the lower sections of the bodies of the taurochtonous Victory turning left and the bull, as well as a small section of the candelabrum's base, are visible. Dodero (2010a: 52) affirms that both the reliefs can be dated to the late Domitianic period because of the stylistic features.
9.5.2. Reliefs with Taurochtonous Victories in Trajanic Monuments

9.5.2.1. Architraval Friezes with Victories Killing Bulls on the Arch of Beneventum

Fig. 9.29. Arch of Trajan at Beneventum, in southern Italy. South-west façade facing the city.

The Arch of Beneventum (fig. 9.29) is the only great Trajanic monument whose figurative programme includes friezes comparable with those of the Forum of Rome. This arch was built to celebrate the opening of the *via Traiana*, connecting Beneventum (Benevento) with Brundisium (Brindisi) with the aim of shortening considerably the route of the Appian Way. It was the quickest way to the East. According to the inscription, it was inaugurated in AD 114 (Pietrangeli 1943). The Arch of Titus in Rome is the model of the scheme and the decoration of this arch and the other arch commissioned by Trajan, the Arch of Ancona, which lacks figurative motifs. However, the measurements are different, and in the Arch of Titus there are no friezes with taurochtonous Victories. The figurative programme of the Arch of Beneventum exalted the figure of the emperor who ensured the perfect balance expanding and reinforcing the
edges of the empire with the victorious Dacian military campaigns, and increasing the prosperity with a wise public administration, welfare and economy (Pietrangeli 1943, Rotili 1972).

Fig. 9.30 a and b. Arch of Beneventum. a, South-west face facing the city, right pillar, detail of the relief of the taurochtonous Victories. b, North-east face, facing the country, right pillar, detail of the relief of the taurochtonous Victories.

On the entablature there is a frieze with the triumph of Trajan over Dacia. On each of the pillars there are superimposed panels with scenes and allegories of imperial activities, alternating in the middle with decorative reliefs with Victories killing bulls (fig. 9.30) (Rotili 1972: 75). They are very similar to those of the Temple of Peace (fig. 9.27) and the Forum of Trajan, V1a (1 and 3) and V1b (1). Framed by candelabra decorated with garlands, they hold the bull to the floor with the knee and pull back the muzzle of the bull to cut its neck with the dagger held in one hand. The typology is basically the same one widely repeated on Frieze Type VI in the Basilica Ulpia, but in these reliefs on the Arch of Trajan of Beneventum the naked Victories no longer have the softness of plasticity of the Roman friezes, although they maintain a certain vitality (Palma 1977: 109). The taurochtonous Victories of the arch seem to be participating in the exaltation of the pacification and the good welfare of the Optimus Princeps (Section 2.5).
9.5.3. Victories Dressing Candelabra or Killing Bulls on Cuirassed Statues

A general introduction on cuirassed statues of the emperors is provided in Section 4.5.4, pp. 113-14. Victories dressing candelabra or killing bulls are rarely found among the motifs which decorated the breastplates of statues of the emperors (Vermeule 1980: 6-28).

- Victories Dressing Candelabra on the Breastplate of a Colossal Statue of Titus in the Louvre

*Fig. 9.31 a and b. Paris, Louvre Museum. a, Colossal statue of Titus. b, detail of the breastplate with Victories dressing a candelabrum.*
This colossal statue of Titus (MR 358) (9.31), 2.36 m high, was one of the first pieces of the Royal Collections given by Henry IV to the Salle des Antiques in the Louvre in 1609. It is Flavian and dated to ca. AD 80. The head, probably ancient, shows evidence of reworking in the Renaissance, especially in the hair and the eyes, with additions to the armour, restoration of the sword and the shield, perhaps by Girardon in 1685, when it was at Versailles. It was transferred back to the Louvre in 1798 (De Kersauson 1996: 30-31). On the breastplate two winged Victories dress a candelabrum standing on an inverted palmette.
- Victories Killing Bulls on the Breastplate of a Cuirassed Statue of Trajan in the Museum of Ostia

Fig. 9.32 a and b. a, Statue of Trajan in the Museum of Ostia, from the Schola del Traiano. b, detail of the taurocthonous Victories on the breastplate.
A Trajanic artwork with the same iconography of the friezes of the Forum of Trajan of this Type VI is the statue of Trajan in the Museum of Ostia (Museo Ostienese). This cuirassed statue (fig. 9.32 a) was found on May 5th 1938 in fragments in the so-called 'schola del Traiano'. When the statue was discovered, on the breastplate there were traces of pigments of colour, which were recorded but are no more visible. On the top of the cuirass there is a gorgoneion, and in the middle Victories killing bulls (fig. 9.32 b). This decorative motif is not so frequent as an ornament of cuirasses, in fact it is known only in two other statues both of the time of Hadrian (Calza 1964: 57). According to R. Calza (1964: 58), the manner of rendering the details of the breastplate as well as the features of the portrait of the emperor could be related to the first years of the empire of Hadrian, because of the plasticity of the locks of the head of Medusa and the poignant gaze of the hollow eyes. The delicate and soft carving of the Victories with small heads on extended bodies covered by transparent cloths, the low protrusion of the relief without defined contours could be compared to other Hellenistic-styled Hadrianic reliefs. According to these features, either the statue was carved in the last years of the empire of Trajan, or it is posthumous and made after the death of the emperor.
The breastplate with taurochtonous Victories confirms the diffusion of this iconography in Trajanic art, not only in the Trajanic Frieze Type VI, as a vehicle of its traditional message of celebration of a military triumph (Section 2.5).

9.6. Symbolism

Frieze Type VI decorated the inferior order of the main nave of the Basilica Ulpia: Packer (2001: 187) calculated that a scene of four winged Victories, two central candelabra and two sacrificial bulls at the edges was repeated 65 times. If VIa (4) really represented a Victory clasping a candelabrum and was not a Victory decorating candelabra which has been transformed during recarving of the block, Frieze Type VI should have had a more complicated design with variations. However, a variation is already attested by VIa (3), the only fragment where the Victory does not pull back the muzzle of the bull but its ear.

The frieze helped in the delimitation of the area of the central nave of the Basilica Ulpia, and in particular the Victories dressing candelabra allude to the emperor's power. As demonstrated by the Campana plaques with the same subjects and variants also decorating private residences (Section 9.5.1.1), the theme was already widespread in the late Republican-Augustan period, when it was considered a ciphered code for the unconditional submission to the power of Roman Empire (Simon 1962: 769-75); in fact, it symbolised the victories of Augustus and exalted the military triumph over defeated enemies, in the euphoric climate after the conquest of Egypt in the battle of Actium (Borbein 1968: 65). According to Packer (2008: 476), the friezes with Victories killing bulls are a visual metaphor initially used by Augustus on an aureus of 20-18 BC to celebrate his capture of Armenia (fig 9.22), and here related to the conquest of Dacia.

Architraval friezes with the same iconography also decorated the Temple of Peace (Section 9.5.1.5) built by Vespasian and the Palatium of Domitian (Section 9.5.1.6): Trajan was evidently also inspired by the figurative programme of his Flavian predecessors (Section 12.2.3). The specific meaning of the taurochtonous Victories in the Temple of Peace, built by Vespasian to celebrate the return of peace after the victorious repression of the Jewish insurrection and the pacification of the East (Meneghini 2009: 61), must be interpreted as the victorious power of the emperor and the exaltation of his triumph, oriented to the pacification of the empire. The choice of
this motif in the Forum of Trajan could have been used by Trajan to express the same concept, to remark the victorious end of the Dacian campaigns.

The taurochtonous Victories celebrate a military triumph and the sacrifice of bulls to Jupiter Optimus Maximus, whose title Trajan shared. In the architravial friezes of the central nave of the Basilica Ulpia (fig. 2.13 G), as well later in the Arch of Beneventum (Section 9.5.2.1), the Victories maintained the original meaning of exaltation of the triumph of the earlier Greek model. In Roman art the Victories were attributes of the winner and therefore of the emperor by definition. According to Packer (2001: 187), they alluded in particular to the victories of the emperor over the enemies (Section 2.5), and perhaps also recalled and commemorated those of Augustus, constantly harking back to the iconography of the founder of the empire.

In the past this iconographic motif has also been interpreted as an allusion to the victory over the death of the emperor prefiguring his apotheosis, as highlighted by the presence of the candelabra (La Rocca et al. 1995: 101) (Section 4.4, p. 105). But, in a civic context as that of the Basilica Ulpia, the prefiguration of the deified emperor could not be accepted (Chapter 2, pp. 61-62).

In Roman art the scheme of the taurochtonous Victory is lightly changed. Instead of the single Victory there is a symmetrical composition with a pair of Victories facing each other divided by a central element. In this way the focus is no longer on the mortal stroke but on the sacrifice dagger. The dagger, already on the neck of the bull exalts the aspect of the slaughter. Borbein (1968: 46) elaborated this change of significance and message: Victories killing bulls symbolize the sacrifice held to thank Jupiter for the victories led by the emperor, they are the symbol of the perpetual victory which ensures empire's survival. The meaning of the sacrifice and the fire burning in the candelabra complete the message of the frieze. The iconography of Nikai kneeling in front of the animal victim of the sacrifice is different from the taurochtonous Victory, which matches a classical background with a Roman feature. The fire of the candelabra alludes to the ignis eternus, the eternal fire, evoking the aeternitas imperii, eternity of the empire (Fuchs 2002: 142). The laurel festoons and garlands dressing the candelabra is related to the theme of the victory, considered permanent, as perpetuus triumphus (Fuchs 2002: 143). Triumph is the real meaning, then.
Chapter 10.
Trajanic Frieze Type VII: Sphinxes

10.1. Introduction

In this chapter we catalogue and describe those fragments of architrave that feature sphinxes. The dimensions of all of these surviving fragments provided the proposal for attributing this frieze type to a specific architectonical order in a specific building forming the complex of Trajan's Forum.

10.2. Frieze Type VII

Studies dating back to the 1990s (Milella 1994; La Rocca et. al. 1995) focused on about twenty little fragments forgotten in the storerooms of the Basilica Ulpia. Their provenance is unknown. Among them, those analyzed here are undoubtedly ascribable to sphinxes, others depict sections of wings, crouching hind legs and paws which could belong to sphinxes as well, but also to griffins, and for this reason they are only mentioned but not taken into consideration in this research (Section 10.2.7). The fragments represent parts of the body of at least five sphinxes. Long hair tufts on the chest together with female breasts and a thinner body allow to identify the subjects and distinguish them from griffins.

There are some stylistic differences between these reliefs and those representing griffins: the torso is slimmer and lengthened, with underlined ribs, the tail is not so close to the body, with more evident tufts of coat on the lower side, and the wings are bigger. There are soft lines made by a hand drill, surrounding the contour of the figures. The chiaroscuro is most emphasised and among the figures there are more empty areas of the background, probably not because of a chronological difference, but different workshops carving the slabs (Milella 2004: 284). Also the dimensions are bigger than those of Friezes Ia and Ib with griffins, candelabra and vases, and refute the hypothesis made in the past by some scholars of a unique frieze with alternated pairs of sphinxes and griffins (Packer 1997: 346, nos. 126 and 445; Ungaro et al. 2004: 27). According to the measurements, in particular of the architrave, Frieze Type VII with sphinxes is larger than Frieze Type Ia with eagle-headed griffins (Section 4.2) (Milella, personal
Milella's estimated original height of Frieze Type VII with sphinxes is 65 cm (Milella 1994: 284, note 15; 2004: 55). On some fragments there are the upper and the lower sides of the body of the mythological animal, skinny and with the ribs showing. The wings consist of double superimposed feathers with a curl ending, like the griffins in the other architraval friezes of Trajan's Forum (Frieze Types Ia and Ib). Then there are sections of crouching paws and hind legs, and two fragments of candelabra with vegetal decoration without garlands. The fragments of the sphinxes all look left: either all the figures turned in the same direction, which is unlikely; or simply, by chance no fragments with sphinxes turning to the right survived. This material allows the reconstruction of the decoration of the frieze as pairs of sphinxes facing each others, crouching on their haunches and raising a front paw. Probably the paw rested on a central element which is missing. Behind their shoulders, the pairs of sphinxes were separated by candelabra (Milella 2004: 283) (fig.10.24).

10.2.1. Fragment VII (I)

Entablature block

*Current location:* Rome, Museum of the Imperial Fora at Trajan's Markets, storeroom of the 'Aule di Testata'.

*Museum Inventory number:* FT 3662.

*Fig. 10.1. Fragment VII (I).*
Fig. 10.2. Fragment VII (1), right end.

Fig. 10.3. Fragment VII (1), left end.
Fig. 10.4. Fragment VII (1), back side.
Fig. 10.5. Fragment VII (1), back side.

Marble type: Luni marble.
Measurements of block (max. preserved): height including architrave: 65 cm; height of frieze panel (max. preserved): 39 cm; width: 54 cm in high, 42 cm below; thickness: 13 cm on the right side, 18 cm on the left side.
Measurements of sphinx: feathers in wing (2 rows of feathers) - feathers' length: first row not readable, 5 cm second row; ribs' height 15 cm; body's width: 38 cm; crouching left hind leg height: 20 cm; crouching right hind leg height: 16 cm.

Measurements of architrave: Cyma and half round and bead and reel height: 10 cm, Cyma height: 5 cm, half round height: 4 cm; band with the inscription height: 10 cm.

State of preservation: good state of preservation even if on the surface there are some lacunae.

Description: the lower body of a skinny winged animal with ribs showing is crouching on its hind legs and looking left (figs. 10.1-10.5). The architrave is decorated by a Cyma reversa with normal leaf-and-dart moulding, and on the lower side half round with bead and reel, very similar to those of the other architraval friezes of the Forum of Trajan. In the first band of the biggest fragment there is an inscription with few letters, surely carved later (Milella 2004: 284) (fig. 10.5).

References: La Rocca et al. 1995: 222-23; Milella 1994: 283-85; further information courtesy of Marina Milella.

Discovery and likely location: this fragment, together with Fragments VII (2-6) and others which could not surely be parts of sphinxes were found in 1990s during the cataloguing of the marble materials of the Forum of Trajan in the storerooms of the Basilica Ulpia, where they were stored.
10.2.2. Fragment VII (2)

Entablature block


Museum Inventory number: FT 3671.

Fig. 10.6. Fragment VII (2).
Fig. 10.7. Fragment VII (2), left end.

Fig. 10.8. Fragment VII (2), right end.
Fig. 10.9. Fragment VII (2), upper side.

Fig. 10.10. Fragment VII (2), back side.
Marble type: Luni marble.

Measurements of block (max. preserved): height: 38 cm; width: 31 cm; thickness: 10 cm on the right side, 15 cm on the left side.

Measurements of sphinx: feathers in wing (3 rows of feathers) - feathers' length: 5 cm first row, 7 cm second row, 7 cm third row; ribs' height: 10 cm.

State of preservation: as VII (1).

Description of frieze: the upper body of a skinny winged animal looking left with ribs showing (figs. 10.6-10.10).

References: Galinier 2007: 183; information courtesy of Marina Milella.

Discovery and likely location: as VII (1).
10.2.3. Fragment VII (3)

Entablature block

*Current location:* Rome, Museum of the Imperial Fora at Trajan's Markets, storeroom of the Small Hemicycle, level 1.

*Museum Inventory number:* FT 1411.

*Fig. 10.11. Fragment VII (3).*
Marble type: Luni marble.

Measurements of block (max. preserved): height: 30 cm; width: 19 cm; thickness: 14 cm on the right side, 12 cm on the left side.

Measurements of sphinx: feathers in wing (3 rows of short feathers four rows of long feathers) - short feathers' length: 3 cm first and second rows, 7 cm second row, 5 cm third row; long feathers' length: 3-6 cm; twist height: 6 cm; ribbon behind height: 3 cm.

State of preservation: as VII (1).

Description of frieze: small section of the back side of the head of a winged figure, with hair twist (figs 10.11-10.12).

References: information courtesy of Marina Milella.

Discovery and likely location: as VII (1).
10.2.4. Fragment VII (4)

Entablature block


Inventory number: FT 1606.

Fig. 10.13. Fragment VII (4).
Fig. 10.14. Fragment VII (4).
Marble type: Luni marble.
Measurements of block (max. preserved): height: 27 cm; width: 27 cm; thickness: 25 cm.
Measurements of sphinx: feathers in wing (5 rows of feathers) - feathers' length: 2 cm first and second rows, 4 cm third row; 5 cm fourth and fifth rows; right tuft's height: 11 cm; left tuft's height: 10 cm; height between breast and paw: 11 cm.

State of preservation: as VII (1).

Description of frieze: a section of the upper body of a winged animal looking left, with two long tufts flanking the neck and breasts (figs. 10.13-10.15).

References: information courtesy of Marina Milella.

Discovery and likely location: as VII (1).
10.2.5. **Fragment VII (5)**

Entablature block


*Museum Inventory number*: FT 3684.

![Fragment VII (5)](image-url)

*Fig. 10.16. Fragment VII (5).*
Fig. 10.17. Fragment VII (6), left end and detail of the chest with breasts.
Marble type: Luni marble.

Measurements of block (max. preserved): height: 41 cm; width: 41 cm; thickness: 5 cm on the right side, 4 cm on the left side.

Measurements of sphinx: feathers in wing (3 rows of short feathers, 3 rows of long feathers) - short feathers' length: 2 cm first row, 6 cm second and third rows, long feathers' length: 8 cm; ribs' height: 12 cm; right tuft's height: 8 cm; left tuft's height: 2 cm.

State of preservation: as VII (1).

Description of frieze: a section of the upper body of a skinny winged animal looking left, with two tufts flanking the neck and breasts (figs. 10.16-10.18).


Discovery and likely location: as VII (1).
10.2.6. Fragment VII (6)

Entablature block

*Current location:* Rome, Museum of the Imperial Fora at Trajan's Markets, storeroom of the Small Hemicycle, level 2.

*Museum Inventory number:* FT 5954.

*Fig. 10.19. Fragment VII (6) stored upside down.*
Fig. 10.20. Fragment VII (6), detail of the candelabrum and the sphinx's tail.
Fig. 10.21. Fragment VII (6), detail of the candelabrum and the sphinx's tail.

Marble type: Luni marble.

Measurements of block (max. preserved): the block is upside down and it was not possible to put it standing up because of its weight. Height: 60 cm; width: 24 cm; thickness: 44 cm, maximum 50 cm.
Measurements of sphinx: feathers in wing (4 rows of feathers) - feathers' length: 6-9 cm; tail height: 10 cm.

Measurements of other motifs: candelabrum height: 48 cm.

State of preservation: as VII (1).

Description of frieze: a block with a small section of a wing and the tail of a winged mythological animal. Behind it there is a candelabrum with vegetal decoration (figs. 10.19-10.21). According to the comparison with VII (5) with a sphinx with wings with a smooth surface, it is likely to represent a sphinx because of the same height and the similar wings (Milella, personal communication 26/4/2014).


Discovery and likely location: as VII (1).

10.2.7. Other Fragments not Definitively Recognizable as Sphinxes

In the storerooms there are other fragments of wings and crouching hind legs, which we do not take into consideration because it is not possible to establish if they belonged to griffins or sphinxes, such as Fragment FT 3685 representing wings with a curling end (fig.10.22). On Fragment FT 3666 (fig. 10.23) there are crouching hind legs which are hypothesized to belong to sphinxes, because of the style and the dimension comparable to other fragments depicting sections of mythological animals identified as sphinxes (Milella, personal communication 24/4/2014).
Fig. 10.22. Fragment from architraval frieze FT 3685 with wings with curling end.
Fig. 10.23. Fragment from architraval frieze FT 3666.
10.2.8. Location of Frieze VII

This is probably the best example of how, when sources of information such as excavation records and drawings are missing, the study of the architectural decoration becomes fundamental for the reconstruction of the architectural orders and the location of the relief. In this case, this reconstruction is not the final result of the elaboration of all the data coming from the excavation, but of meticulous work using the limited information inferable directly from some fragments of a relief, which are the starting point of all the subsequent theories. To understand which area of the Forum the friezes decorated, it was necessary to adopt a process of elimination.

The measurements of the fragments and the cornice still survive in Fragment VII (1) and allowed Milella (2004) to reconstruct the iconography of the frieze, with pairs of sphinxes separated by candelabra (fig. 10.24). The dimensions of the blocks are the same as the other known architraval friezes of the first order of the Basilica Ulpia, that is 65 cm. Through study of the dimensions of the architraval friezes of the Basilica Ulpia, it was ascertained that the lower order of the façade of the Basilica facing the square of the Forum (fig. 2.13 G1) was decorated by Frieze Type V with cupids in acanthus, such as Fragment V (1) (Section 8.2.8). On the lower order of the long walls of the central nave there was Frieze Type VI with Victories killing bulls and dressing candelabra, such as VIa (1 and 2) (Section 9.2.5). Thus, by process of elimination Milella (2004: 55) has argued that the only possible location for this third frieze with the same measurements could be on the colonnade on the short side of the Basilica Ulpia, which separated the lateral naves from the area of the exedras, with the figurative decoration looking at the exedra (figs. 2.13 G2 and 10.25). Packer (1997: 346, no. 126) thought that the frieze decorated the architrave of the portico of the courtyard of Trajan's Column (fig. 2.13 H), but the dimensions of the blocks are bigger than those which could fit there. Milella (2004: 57) hypothesised that in the wall of the exedra there could have been two superimposed orders of the same dimensions of the two orders of the naves, as in the exedras of the porticoes of the square of the Forum (fig. 2.13 C). The frieze with sphinxes could also have continued along the curved wall of the exedras. In this way this particular kind of decoration could have helped to define the space of the exedras of the Basilica, separated from the naves as an independent and separate unit for specific functions. The overall height of the order to which Frieze Type VII belongs is ca. 9 m (9.368) (Packer 1997: f. 34).
Fig. 10.24 a and b. Reconstruction of the scheme of the architraval Frieze Type VII on the side of the short walls of the central nave of the Basilica facing the exedras, according to several small fragments stored in the storerooms of the Basilica Ulpia.
Fig. 10.25. Plan of the Forum of Trajan with the location of Frieze Type VII.
10.3. Iconography

In the mythologies of the ancient civilizations of the central-eastern Mediterranean region, the sphinx was a creature with a lion's body and a human head. In Egypt since the archaic period the king was compared to a lion and represented as the feline, and since the 4th dynasty a human head was given to the beast to underline the metaphoric meaning of this depiction. From that moment the sphinx was represented with the head of the pharaoh and a typical hat as a royal attribute. Sometimes the royal personifications could be feminine, in case the figure portrayed was a queen. A deeper divine value was soon added to the function of the royal image, and the sphinx was also considered a solar divinity. It could be represented with a ram or a hawk's head, and possibly it could derive its wing from this union with the hawk (Donadoni 1966: 231).

From Egypt the image of the sphinx spread around the eastern territories. From the male and wingless Egyptian figure to the female and winged Greek one. In particular, in Greece the sphinx had a female head and long hair tufts, lion chest, paws and tail, and bird wings. It was no longer completely crouching, but seated on its hind legs with erect forelegs. In Greece the sphinxes were attributes of the gods Apollo, Dionysus and Aphrodite. They were represented on pottery, combs, coins, little bronze statues, funerary steles and from the 6th century in monumental statues, as the most famous example of the votive statue offered by the citizens of Naxos at the sanctuary of Delphi dated to 560 BC. They were depicted on temple acroteria and on the top of Attic funerary steles, such as the stele in the Metropolitan Museum of Art of New York, that from Sparta and the stele in the Museum of Fine Arts of Boston (Picozzi 1973). This subject, on the previous orientalising Greek pottery and the archaic metallurgy and through the handcrafted products of the period, spread to the West as well, in Etruria and generically in Italy.

In Roman art the sphinx is represented according to the fixed classic Greek type, but breasts are often added to the body. In Rome the sphinx could have a secondary decorative role, as on a relief from the Horti Sallustiani of Augustan period (fig. 10.30). Since the 30s BC, the sphinx had been a symbol of hope (Zanker 1988: 270). In the imperial age, sphinxes decorated legs of tables or other furniture (fig. 10.26); sometimes just a detail of the figure is represented, as the base of candelabra or tables with only a
big lion paw or the head or the female winged chest (Zanker 1988: 271).

More often the sphinx is present in funerary art on altars and sarcophagi. In a Flavian altar from Cales (Aurigemma 1925-26) four sphinxes are at the corners of a squared base holding the cylindrical altar. From the 2nd century AD the sphinx is frequently on sarcophagi, connected with the myths, particularly those of Meleager, as on the sarcophagus with Meleager in the Louvre, and of Oedipus, and the lid of a sarcophagus in the Vatican Museums (Picozzi 1973). This subject was chosen on the sarcophagi as an apotropaic symbol, as the guardian of the grave and the urn warding off evil (Flagge 1975; Ungaro and Milella 1995: 222; Packer 2001: 279). For instance, the shoulder braces of the cuirass of the Augustus of Prima Porta are the only example decorated by sphinxes (fig. 4.40). According to Parisi Presicce (2013: 128) they neither look at Augustus nor at the observer, but to the right and the left side. The statue could be a copy of the bronze one above the Mausoleum of Augustus (Parisi Presicce 2013: 127), and according to this interpretation the sphinxes could be the protectors of the sepulchre preserving the ashes of the emperor under his statue.

Also in the art of the provinces there are several examples, from Germany to Britain and Dacia. Some of them have a certain expressive power, as the sphinxes from Alba Julia of the 3rd century AD, with Gorgon heads (Ferri 1933: 283). As previously explained (supra, p. 339), in the eastern world sphinxes were royal images, thus also in Rome this
motif could have another deeper implied meaning, maintaining its traditional connection with royalty. For example, in the cuirass of the Augustus of Prima Porta the relationship of the figure of the first emperor with the sphinx merits particular consideration, because it shows how this motif goes beyond the apotropaic function. In fact, Augustus started to use the sphinx as his first personal seal (fig. 10.27 b), as demonstrated by coinage after the battle of Actium (31 BC) (fig. 10.27 a) (Picozzi 1973). The Romans immediately associated the Egyptian origins of the sphinxes to the conquest of Egypt over Mark Antony and Cleopatra. Augustus sponsored the diffusion of this symbol according to his political propaganda programme. In the intentions of Augustus, according to Zanker (2002: 178), the sphinx was used in the role of attribute of Apollo, son of the sun god, invested in religious and divine authority.

Fig. 10.27 a and b. a, Augustan coin with a sphinx. b, sphinx on an Augustan seal impression.

Apollo is the god of moderation and also represents the legal or statutory meaning of religion, in fact, "under his most important and influential aspect may be included everything that connects Apollo with law and order" (Bolen 1989: 130). Apollo is foremost a god of law, described by Plato as the source of law (Giglioli 1929). Apollo was both the giver and interpreter of the laws of the cities, and Greek states attributed their constitutions to him, as he was the divine authority for law and order (Giglioli 1929). Apollo's power in Greece was only second to Zeus's: not only the cities sent emissaries to Delphi for legal advice, but ministers of Apollo were sent to cities of Greece from Delphi as interpreters of civil and religious law. He gave cities their legal institutions, interpreted law, was a great advocate of order and moderation, and
provided the structure necessary for communities to work together, and to work out disputes. His roles as a musician and a lawmaker both express the Apollo archetypes instinctual love for order and form. Apollo's ordinances decreed what was allowed and what was not (Giglioli 1929). Thus, as will be discussed below, sphinxes were also attributes of Apollo in this specific aspect of god of law (Section 10.5).

However, it must be remembered that first of all, before other meanings, this motif was perceived and used as a symbol of golden age (fig. 10.27), or keeper of a sacred allegorical future or space (Kerenyi 1994: 66) both in Greek and Roman mythological and artistic imagination.

10.4. Comparanda

Apparently no friezes with a very similar iconography comparable to that of the friezes with sphinxes of Trajan's Forum have survived. Except for Fragments VII (1-6), the only other evidence of another architraval frieze with sphinxes is a drawing by Fra Giocondo (1433-1515) (fig. 10.28) representing an entablature without any decoration (Bartoli 1922: pl. 26). Next to it on the same page, the sketch of a winged sphinx, with a human head, chest with breasts and a lion body, in the front and in profile, could be related to the frieze of the entablature. In a note Fra Giocondo wrote that these ruins were close S. Maria Maggiore, on the lower side of the wall of the church, in the street. Thus, another frieze, now lost, whose provenance and chronology is unknown, with an iconography similar to that of Type VII, could have been in the area of the church of S. Maria Maggiore in Rome.
Fig. 10.28. Drawing by Fra Giocondo depicting an entablature and possibly the decoration of its frieze with a sphinx in the front and in profile.

A drawing by Piranesi attests to the presence in Rome of at least one other architectural element decorated with a similar subject, a pair of winged crouching sphinxes in front of a foliate candelabrum (fig. 10.29), which he sketched in Borghese Villa (Wilton-Ely 1972: pl. XIII).

Fig. 10.29. Detail of a drawing by Piranesi with a relief with sphinxes in Borghese Villa.
Moreover, there are reliefs with sphinxes dated before Trajanic age, which help understanding that this recurring theme spread in the imperial age, but none has the same iconography.

10.4.1. Augustan Frieze with Sphinxes

The only relief with sphinxes which gives an idea of the diffusion of this motif is a frieze of the Museum Centrale Montemartini in Rome. The frieze with vegetal spiral elements and sphinxes (fig. 10.30) is part of the decoration of the Horti Sallustiani, a property which in ca. 20 BC became the private property of the emperor. According to stylistic comparison the relief is dated to the beginning of the Augustan period. The decorative scheme with the exuberant vegetation flanked by delicate figures of sphinxes, with a female head, eagle wings, lion body with breasts, in the Augustan date is a metaphor of the victory over Egypt, and gives to this elegant transenna a very interesting symbolic value and historical allusion (Bertoletti et al. 2003: 95; Talamo 2013).

Fig. 10.30. Rome, Centrale Montemartini. Frieze with vegetal spiral decoration and sphinxes (detail).
10.5. Symbolism

By process of elimination, as Milella has argued, the only possible location for Frieze VII with sphinxes with the same dimensions of Frieze Types V (reasonably located on the façade of the Basilica Ulpia) and VI (on the first order of the central nave) could be in the exedras (Milella 2004: 55) (fig. 2.13 G2; Section 10.2.8). This particular iconography would have participated in defining and isolating the exedras, and so can help to explain their function.

In Roman art sphinxes could have just a decorative and apotropaic meaning, connected with their function of guardians of the grave: often they are represented on sarcophagi coupled with griffins (supra, p. 340). In the past this frieze was interpreted with an exclusively funerary meaning and was thought to have decorated the courtyard of Trajan's Column, which became the grave of the emperor (La Rocca et al. 1995: 101). The sphinxes were assumed to decorate an alleged portico on the opposite side of the façade of the Basilica Ulpia facing the Column, and the friezes with griffins and candelabra of the exedras of the porticoes of the square (fig. 2.13 C) were supposed to decorate the lateral porticoes of the courtyard of the Column (Milella 1995) (fig. 2.13 H). In Packer's opinion (2001: 187), the sphinxes on the colonnade surrounding the Column would have highlighted the relationship between Trajan and Augustus, as the sphinx was one of the favourite symbols of the first emperor (supra, p. 341), they would have been associated with the apotheosis of Augustus and would have been considered an anticipation of the apotheosis of Trajan. However, if we accept that the correct location was not the courtyard of Trajan's Column, but in the exedras of the Basilica Ulpia, consequently the meaning of the friezes would not have alluded to the afterlife, but would have been strictly connected with the function of the area of the Forum they decorated.

We already mentioned that, thanks to a remarkable number of literary and epigraphic sources, it is attested that in the exedras of Trajan's Forum were held judiciary activities (Chapter 2, pp. 26, 45), just like in the hemicycles of the Forum of Augustus (Section 12.2.2). In the Forum the senators deposited their valuables, the lawyers tried their cases and learned of new laws, large groups gathered for congiaria or distribution of largesse and ex slaves took their first steps in freedom (Davies 2004: 128). The sphinxes
perfectly match this context because they were related to Dionysus and Aphrodite, but also to Apollo as messengers of divine justice. They did not have just apotropaic functions, and in this specific case we argue that they are attributes of Apollo, and in particular symbols of Apollo 'god of law' (supra, p. 341).

Trajan's Forum was built to enlarge the available areas for the administration of justice, transferred though the years from the Roman Forum to the Forum of Caesar and then to the Forum of Augustus, where the courthouses of the urban and peregrine praetors were. Because of the increasing number of the courts, it was necessary to build new structures for the civil and criminal justice, and the new courts of the emperor, of the senators and of the urban prefect were established, competing with the criminal courts established during the Roman Republic and still working (questiones perpetuae). Moreover, in the new complex of Trajan there would have been structures related to the administration of justice replacing the similar ones of the two demolished exedras of the four of Augustus' Forum (Chapter 2, p. 44; Section 12.2.2). Civil courthouses managed by the praetors and criminal courts as quaestiones and the senatorial court would have been in the two exedras of the Basilica Ulpia, whose semicircular shape is traditional for judges' benches set up in a portico, basilica or other public space used for this aim (Meneghini 2007: 84-85) to isolate areas with these functions linked to the administration of justice. Most of all, as already mentioned, it is demonstrated that, after the destruction of the Atrium Libertatis, its functions were transferred to the exedras of the Basilica Ulpia, even if we do not know exactly which of those functions, such as the archive of the censors, the public library of Rome and the seat of the manumissiones (Section 2.4.7, pp. 42-43).

A polysemous figure like the sphinx must be interpreted according to the function of the structure it decorated. According to Packer (2008: 476), the sphinxes would record punishment of the proud, but he located the friezes with this subject in the courtyard of the Column. If we accept the location of the sphinxes in the exedras of the Basilica connected to judicial activities (Section 10.2.8), their meaning should necessarily be connected with the figure of Apollo god of law as messengers of divine justice.
Furthermore, a signum of Apollo iuris peritus, 'expert at law'\textsuperscript{10}, stood in the Forum of Augustus, strictly related to the judiciary activity held there (Section 12.2.2). The presence of a statue of Apollo in the pre-existing Forum of Augustus where seats for judiciary activities were, could support this interpretation of the connection between the sphinxes attributes of Apollo and the exedras of the Basilica Ulpia related to the administration of justice.

\textsuperscript{10}According to some clay tablets from Herculaneum (Carabuci 1996: 16), the appointments in the Forum of Augustus were fixed in front of the tribunal of the praetor urbanus at the Temple of Mars Ultor or in the western exedra decorated with the statues of the descendants of Venus and Aeneas, probably close to the signum of Apollo 'expert at law'. Pliny described the presence of an ivory statue of Apollo in the square of the Forum (see Carnabuci 1996: 51). Juvenal defined the signum of Apollo of Actium with the incisive epithet of iuris peritus, expert at law, evidently because the statue was located close to the house of court of the praetor urbanus (Carnabuci 1996: 51).
PART III. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

This is the part of the research reserved to the discussion of the data proposed in Chapters 4-10. It is divided in two chapters. Chapter 11 proposes the response to the research question: does the iconography of the friezes support the idea that they were tailored to the function of the particular spaces they decorated, confirming or challenging the locations to which they are currently allocated? Chapter 12 investigates whether the architraval friezes could be considered as components of an imperial architectural 'signature' according to their precedent models, and in particular if some of their decorative motifs could constitute a recognisable Trajanic imprint.

Chapter 11.
Responses to the Research Question

This study started with a set of specific research questions: is there a relationship between the subjects represented on the figurative friezes of the Forum of Trajan and the structures where they were exhibited? Is it possible that behind the iconographic choice of the decorative motifs there is a deeper meaning which could be part of a wider figurative programme? Were the messages of political propaganda communicated not just by the statues, as in the Forum of Augustus, but also through the decoration of the architraval friezes? In this chapter an overview of locations of these friezes is provided, and then the relationship of the friezes to the functions of the particular spaces is discussed.

11.1. Location

It could be possible to object that the location of the friezes rely on the findspot matching roughly their original settings, thus more than the location in the Forum, often we can ascertain only the provenance from the Forum. In fact, the fragments could have been dragged away to be recycled in lime kilns. The only attested lime kiln found in the area was discovered in 1997 in the south-eastern corner of the square, in correspondence to room C (fig. 11.1), at the foot of the so-called 'Terrazza Domizianea' (outside the Forum), which is far from the friezes' fallen spot. It is dated to the end of the 7th- beginning of the 8th century (Meneghini and Santangeli Valenzani 2007: 121-22; Meneghini 2009: 200-01). According to current knowledge, some of the documented frieze fragments excavated during the clearances in the 15th-18th centuries
were transferred to private collections and then bought by the museums where they are housed now, some others have been sketched in drawings or described in notes subsequently lost, and some of them possibly were transformed into quicklime. Those fragments which were found in situ probably were not recycled in the past because they were part of surviving structures, as in the case of Frieze Type II, whose Fragment II (1) was incorporated in a wall, or the lost fragments of Frieze Type III sketched in Drawings III (2 e 3) decorating a section of a wall still standing in the 16th century. Often these structures, when not demolished, were reused as foundations of buildings built in the area over the centuries (Section 2.2.1).

**Fig. 11.1. Plan of the south-eastern corner of the square of the Forum. On the right side of the southern porticoed courtyard (F), room C was transformed into a lime kiln.**

Sometimes a limitation in the reconstruction of the figurative programme is that the decorative setting of entire sections of the buildings is reconstructed according to a few fragments. The decoration of the southern porticoed courtyard (fig. 2.13 F) is inferred from only one slab from an architraval frieze; as well as that of the façade of the three-segmented hall (fig. 2.13 D); of the façade of the Basilica Ulpia, plus other non figurative Fragments V (2-4) (fig. 2.13 G1), and of the exedras of the porticoes of the square (which is just a specific section of the porticoes) (fig. 2.13 C).
Is the sample sufficient to reconstruct the whole? In some cases the reconstructions are particularly hypothetical and partial and must take into consideration the possibility of a variation of the motifs, which could be alternated with others which are lost. The variation was not uncommon. In the past, Frieze Type VII with sphinxes was considered part of a unique frieze with alternated pairs of sphinxes and griffins, and most of all Frieze Type VI has some variations. In fact, Fragment VIb (1) shows victories killing bulls alternated with others dressing candelabra. Fragment VIa (3) has the variation of the Victory pulling back the ear of the bull and not the muzzle, and if Fragment VIa (4) were original and not recarved as supposed, it would represent a further variation with a Victory clasping a candelabrum instead of dressing it.

In this study the frieze fragments have been grouped and analyzed separately depending on their subject matter and their measurements, and they are located according to the architectural reconstructions of the Forum's buildings, taking into account their form and dimensions: Frieze Ia 65 cm high; Ib 71-72 cm; III 60 cm; IV 115 cm; V 72-73 cm; VIa 75 cm; VIb 68 cm; VII 68 cm. Unfortunately, excluding the Column, the archaeological remains of the Forum and the decorative details are fragmentary and in some cases insufficient for useful or more specific reconstructions. Often nothing stands above ground and the only evidence is at the foundation level. The discovery of statues, reliefs and fragments of architecture helps in re-creating the original setting and look of the Forum. Most of the friezes were located on the basis of excavation records, drawings and the study of the architectural decoration and the relevant reconstruction of the architectural orders. Matching information from different resources is essential: when incontrovertible excavation data are not available or helpful, the drawings of the artists of the past, such as Ghirlandaio, van Heemskerck and Piranesi, who immortalized the research subjects, and the reconstructions of the architectural structures are of great assistance in establishing the precise locations for each motif. In some cases there are no doubts about the provenance of the friezes, because their findspots are documented in the excavation records/journals and correspond to the buildings forming the complex of the Forum. That is why Frieze Type II can be attributed to the southern porticoed court (fig. 2.13 F), where Fragment II (1) with an eagle-headed griffin and a tripod was found in the 1998-2000 excavations. Fragments of Frieze Type VI with taurochtonous Victories killing bulls, VIa (1 and 2), were found in 1931 in the area corresponding to the south western side of the Basilica Ulpia, and this is the clue that this type decorated
the central nave of the Basilica (fig. 2.13 G), since the dimensions of its fragments are compatible with the known size of the lower order.

In some other cases when there are contrasting records about the place and the period of the discovery of the reliefs, the determining elements to identify the correct location of the friezes are the drawings sketched since the 16th century by artists, who could have seen the reliefs on structures still standing at that time and later collapsed. The certainty that Frieze Type III can be located on the façade of the three-segmented hall (fig. 2.13 D) derives from Drawings III (2 and 3), depicting a wall (fig. 6.6) with an architraval frieze with cupids and eagle-headed griffins, and notes on the drawings recording the presence of this frieze type in the area corresponding to the three-segmented hall, which Fragment III (1) belongs to. Furthermore, we confirmed that Frieze Type Ib with eagle-headed griffins, candelabra and vases, whose Fragments Ib (1-6) are now in the Louvre, come from the courtyard of the Column (fig. 2.13 H), combining information from excavation records and Drawings Ib (7-10). This is the same for Frieze Type V with cupids in acanthus. It is located on the adjacent façade of the Basilica Ulpia (fig. 2.13 G), because Fragments V (1-4) were found in 1838-1849 in the square of Trajan's Column near where the Basilica once stood, and Drawings V (5-8) confirm the presence of this frieze type in the area, and provide the clue of another lost fragment previously found in 1812 excavations.

Frieze Type VII with sphinxes and candelabra is probably the best example of how, when all the other sources of information are missing, the study of the architectural decoration could supply reconstructions of the architectural orders. Milella's hypothesis is that Fragments VII (1-6), stored in the storerooms of the Forum of Trajan, could be attributed to the exedras of the Basilica Ulpia (fig. 2.13 G2) because of their measurements by process of elimination, since the other friezes with the same dimension were already certainly located on the façade and the central nave of the same building.

Finally, the location of Frieze Type Ia with eagle-headed griffins and candelabrum was identified according to excavation records, drawings and reconstruction. Fragment Ia (1) was found in the 1927 excavations, in correspondence with the central niche of the exedra behind the porticoes of the square, and notes in drawings of the 16th century
attest to the presence of reliefs of the same type in the area. Traditionally this architraval frieze was attributed to the portico of the courtyard of the Column, but Milella's study of the architectural decoration and the relevant reconstruction of the architectural orders confirm the correct location exactly in the area where its Fragment Ia (1) was discovered, in the niche in the middle of the eastern exedra of the porticoes of the square of the Forum (fig. 2.13 C).

In contrast, in the case of Frieze Type IV with cupids giving drink to lion-headed griffins and *kraters*, controversial discovery records, together with Drawings IV (3-6) of various artists, only allow us to determine that Fragments IV (1 and 2) of this frieze type decorated a building in the north end of the complex of the Forum, but the evidence is not enough to specify their precise provenance.

11.2. Function of the Buildings and Significance of the Architraval Friezes

Thus, if in most of the cases it is possible to locate the architraval friezes in particular buildings forming the complex of Trajan's Forum, understanding of the function of these building is more difficult, since no relevant archaeological evidence has been recovered. In fact, the main sources of information, literary sources and archaeological evidence, have permitted the reconstruction of the architectures forms of the Forum's complex, but not their specific use. The descriptions of ancient authors are limited because they concern only in general terms the decoration of the Forum without details, and scholars could only suppose reconstructions following accurately the measurements of the architectural structures discovered. Among them are also the architraval friezes in question. However, sometimes it is possible to hypothesize what those buildings were used for, and consequently the architraval friezes could be interpreted according to the symbolic appropriateness of each frieze for each building or space.

In the case of the southern porticoed courtyard (fig. 2.13 F), we have considered Meneghini's theory of identifying this sector of the Forum as the area where the war booty from Dacia could have been exhibited, but it is not supported by any evidence, as the specific function of the porticoed courtyard is unknown; however Frieze Type II with eagle-headed griffins and tripods displayed in the courtyard is appropriate in such a context. Griffins in connection with tripods allude to Apollo, in fact they are both attributes of the god. Griffins, as keepers of Apollo's gold mines, could extend their
protection to the booty from Dacia, if it was housed in the courtyard, or perhaps to the money of the senators whose arcae were attested in the Forum. The tripod was a reminder of the preserved treasure.

We know that the three-segmented hall (fig. 2.13 E) was a monumental building, but the specific function of its structures is obscure and neither the results of the excavations nor the ancient sources shed light on this. In Frieze Type III with cupids and eagle-headed griffins, which decorated the forum façade of the three-segmented hall (fig. 2.13 D), the griffins are attribute of Nemesis. In fact, cupids with vegetal-ending legs give drink to eagle-headed griffins and tame them, alluding to the military power defeating the enemies and the pacification of Dacia through a military campaign. The pose of the cupids giving griffins a drink is similar to that of Frieze Type IV, which is the only one whose provenance is still unknown. From the decorative motif with lion-headed griffins and cupids and kraters we can only deduce that griffins are attributes of Nemesis participating to the general meaning of the whole Forum, the celebration of the conquest of the East through the myth of Dionysus, exalted by Alexander who ideally connected his conquest of the East with that of his mythical predecessor. Trajan's conquest of the Dacia is glorified using the same language as Alexander.

Also the specific function of the exedras of the porticoes of the square of the Forum (fig. 2.13 C), over whose niches Frieze Type Ia with eagle-headed griffins, vases and candelabra was displayed, is unknown. In the porticoes there was a sort of gallery of images of members of the imperial dynasty and summi viri, probably conceived as an ideal continuation of the gallery Augustus exhibited in his Forum. But we do not know anything else about its primary function. In the Forum of Trajan the administration of justice was held, and possibly also the exedras of the porticoes were involved. In fact, the versatility of the model of the large exedras with central rectangular niches, closed by the columns of the porticoes, is connected with their use also as seats of the administration of justice (Carnabuci 2006: 182). According to the Lex Calpurnia repetundarum of 146 BC, the trial of the jury of the criminal lawsuit would be held in a cavea with steps to hold up to 100 people: the shape of the hemicycle or exedra was functionally important for trials and it was the main requisite to gather the judging consilium (Carnabuci 2006: 179). According to Zanker (2010: 57), the porticoes formed
a unity, closed off by walls from the hustle and bustle of the surrounding other structures, and were in themselves closed architectural complexes.

Frieze Type I, and in particular Frieze Type Ib, decorated the Column courtyard (fig. 2.13 H), whose function after Trajan's death was related to the transformation of the Column into a funerary monument, attached to whose pedestal was the tomb of the emperor. Frieze Type I, specifically Ia in the exedras of the porticoes and Ib in the courtyard of Trajan's Column is appropriated in these contexts, because it is connected to the exaltation of the power of the emperor, whereas griffins as an attribute of Nemesis embodied the emperor celebrating him as the leader of Roman army against the Dacians. After the death of Trajan, Ib could also have assumed a funerary connotation, with the griffins serving as attributes of Apollo, guardians of Trajan's tomb in the Column and the candelabra symbol of the lux perpetua, eternal light of the afterlife.

The Basilica Ulpia (fig. 2.13 G), was the seat of the administration of justice: we know that the functions of the Atrium Libertatis were transferred to the exedras of the Basilica (fig. 2.13 G2), but we do not have more specific details about the use of the other sectors of the building. Three different frieze types decorated different sections of the building, possibly also helping to separate and distinguish them. Cupids in acanthus and vegetal decoration of Frieze Type V on the façade of the Basilica Ulpia (fig. 2.13 G1) belong architecturally and spatially to the Forum square, rather than the interior of the Basilica. Here, they were a traditional symbol of fertility, abundance, but most of all victory, and because of this connection with the glorification of the victorious military campaigns of Trajan, they could be referred to as the 'sphere of action' of Nemesis. Also Victories killing bulls and dressing candelabra of Frieze Type VI in the central nave alluded to the victorious end of Trajan's military campaigns, exalting his triumph over defeated enemies, aspects supervised by goddess Nemesis. Eventually, we proposed the interpretation of the sphinxes of Frieze Type VII in the exedras of the Basilica Ulpia (fig. 2.13 G2) as attributes of Apollo god of law and justice, in relation to the judiciary functions moved from the Atrium Libertatis. We proposed that this subject, polysemous and an attribute of several divinities, in this case could not be related to Nemesis, as traditionally, but to Apollo god of law and justice precisely by virtue of the function of the building it decorates.
Many of the buildings of the complex faced the square of Trajan's Forum (fig. 2.13 A): even if their specific function is unknown, they took part in the general message of the exaltation of the figure of the emperor tangible in the whole forum, expressed by the reliefs of the architraval friezes, as well as in the statues of the Dacians on the attic storeys of the porticoes around the square of the Forum, the clipei with portraits and the panels with stacks of weapons and the statues representing noble men no more identifiable.

It is argued here that the key to the interpretation of the symbolism of the architraval friezes is that the subjects chosen to decorate them are polysemous and could be referred to various gods supervising different aspects, which they could evoke in connection with the functions of the buildings where they were displayed. As Davies (2004: 2) writes:

"Roman art is by nature polysemous, but in few areas are there greater possibilities for mixed significances than in the funerary, where beliefs are often confused and illogical; in few areas are there greater possibility for accrual of meaning than in ritual practice, funerary or otherwise, since a pervasive conservativism allows rituals to persist long after their original meanings have been lost, necessitating the creation of new meaning. Different levels of meaning for a symbol of practice, then, might appear contradictory, but we should not for that reason alone consider them mutually exclusive".

These figurative motifs had multiple meanings, and could be referred to various divinities they were attributes of:
- Griffins (in both the variations, lion-headed and eagle-headed): they could be attributes of the gods Apollo, Dionysus and Nemesis. As attendants of Apollo and Dionysus they are psychopomp, guides of the souls to the afterlife, related to the funerary sphere. As attributes only of Apollo, they could be guardians of the gold mines of the god. Finally, as attributes of Nemesis they embody the goddess of righteous avenge and retribution, punishing the enemies and exalting the power of the emperor.
- Cupids: they are related to Venus, but they could also represent abundance, fertility, victory and as attributes of Dionysus they have a funerary meaning.
- **Victories**: related to sacrifices, in the meaning of victory over the enemy, they represent military triumphs over the defeated enemies, otherwise in the sense of victory over the death, they are related to the funerary sphere, to the concept of the afterlife and in particular of apotheosis.

- **Sphinxes**: they are attributes of Apollo, Dionysus and Venus. Usually they have an apotropaic and funerary meaning, but they can have particular different nuances, as in the case of attributes of Apollo, god of law.

The objects that the figurative subjects of the architraval friezes touch or are flanked by could be just decorative or could have been chosen for their deeper cultual meaning: tripods are related to the god Apollo, candelabra often are the symbol of piety and the eternal light of the afterlife, but their flames could also allude to the eternal fire, recalling the eternity of the empire. Also vases could be related to the cultual sphere, and sometimes they are decorated with elaborated scenes, which could evoke specific meanings, such as the kraters of Frieze Type IV decorated as already mentioned (*supra*, p. 353) with a scene of maenads and satyrs, related to the conquest of the far East as Dionysus in the myth and in the divine sphere, and Alexander the Great in the history and in the human sphere.

Basically, the decorative motifs are connected with two divinities, Nemesis and Apollo. The buildings which the decorative motifs related to Nemesis and Apollo were displayed on seem to be relatively more separated and secluded, perhaps in connection with their function. This is the case of Frieze Type Ia in the exedras of the porticoes of the square of the Forum (fig. 2.13 C), and Ib in the courtyard of the Column (fig. 2.13 H), where the griffins could refer to Nemesis as goddess of righteous avenge as they are symbols of the military victory of Trajan and the Roman army over the Dacians. Regarding the decorative motifs related to Apollo, Frieze Type VII with sphinxes, attributes of Apollo god of law, were in the exedras of the Basilica Ulpia divided from the main nave also by columns (fig. 2.13 G2), and griffins as guardians of Apollo's gold mine and Apollonian tripods surrounded the southern porticoed courtyard (fig. 2.13 F). Possibly the friezes contributed to the setting of the spaces, surrounding and isolating the different buildings and sections forming the complex of the Forum.
An element of originality of this research, compared to the traditional interpretation, is precisely in the role of Nemesis and Apollo. The connection of the reliefs with the griffins with Nemesis or Apollo as psychopomp has previously been considered, but not in the context of a wider decorative system, where the same subjects could be interpreted differently according to their various aspects, depending on the function of the architectural structures they decorated. For example, as discussed above (supra, p. 353), griffins of Frieze Type II in the southern porticoed courtyard (fig. 2.13 F) would not have had a funerary meaning, but considering the function of the structure they were displayed on, they could be interpreted as attributes of Apollo, not psychopomp this time but guardians of the god's gold and consequently the Dacian booty or senators' arcae. Moreover, the function of the exedras of the Basilica Ulpia (fig. 2.13 G2) related to judiciary activities allowed us to propose the interpretation of the sphinxes of Frieze Type VII according to the building where they had been located: these would not be apotropaic attributes of Nemesis as in the tradition, but attributes of Apollo in his aspect of god of law and justice (supra, p. 354).

According to the extant evidence of the decorative system of the Forum, and within this also the fragments of the seven different architraval frieze types, it seems that the main message expressed by them is the exaltation of the emperor in his military role, the one who guarantees the ordo terrarum, the law and order in the pacified territories conquered by Rome (Section 2.5). The geographical allusion to the Far East of the Dionysiac krater of Frieze Type IV highlights, by contrast, the role of Rome as the centre. This is the key to explaining the frieze types related to Nemesis, wherein all the decorative motifs seem to outline the military glory of Rome. Nemesis is always the goddess of righteous retribution, punishing the Dacians who infringed the order daring to invade Roman Moesia and fighting against the Roman army. However, the aspects supervised by Apollo could be more varied, as in the southern courtyard the griffins do not have a funerary meaning but could allude to the protection of the gold, and in the exedras of the Basilica could be connected with Apollo god of law and justice.

Among the other subjects, the key role of the griffins surely stands out, in both the variations with the lion or the eagle head. The mythological animal is the attribute of various divinities and these figures are repeated in the architraval friezes more than the other decorative motifs: possibly this polysemous subject could have been chosen as a
distinguishable trait d'union among the buildings forming the complex of Trajan's Forum, in all its different symbolic variations.

11.3. Visual Impact

The friezes were just a part of a more extensive decorative system we can only partially reconstruct because of the scarcity of the available data, combining archaeological evidence, literary sources, drawings and studies of the architectural decoration, as previously discussed. According to these reconstructions, even if sometimes incomplete, we can reflect on the visual impact of the friezes in the wider context of the figurative programme of Trajan's Forum. For example, among the several entrances to the complex, reputedly from north to south one could enter into the courtyard of Trajan's Column (fig. 2.13 H), surrounded by porticoes decorated with Frieze Type Ib with eagle-headed griffins and candelabra (fig. 11.2). From the courtyard of the Column people could reach the Basilica Ulpia (fig. 2.13 G). The first order of the central nave of the basilica was decorated with Frieze Type VI with Victories killing bulls and dressing candelabra (fig. 9.14). In the exedras closing the Basilica Ulpia on the short sides there would have been Frieze Type VII with sphinxes and candelabra (fig. 2.13 G2). The façade of the Basilica Ulpia facing the square (fig. 2.13 G1) was decorated with Frieze Type V with cupids in acanthus and vegetal elements (figs. 8.13 and 8.14). The square (fig. 2.13 A) was surrounded by porticoes (fig. 2.13 B), and in the niches of the exedras of the porticoes (fig. 2.13 C) Frieze Type Ia with eagle-headed griffins, vases and candelabra was displayed (fig. 4.6). On the south of the square, there was a three-segmented hall closing it on this side (fig. 2.13 E). Its façade (fig. 2.13 D) was decorated with Frieze Type III with cupids drinking eagle-headed griffins and kraters (fig. 6.7). Crossing the three-segmented hall one could reach the southern porticoed courtyard (fig. 2.13 F), surrounded by Frieze Type II with eagle-headed griffins and tripods (figs. 5.10 and 5.16).

It would not have been so easy to see the architraval friezes, because they were located high on the entablature of porticoes, façades and exedras of various buildings of the complex, as demonstrated by their reconstructions (figs. 4.6, 5.10, 5.16, 6.7, 8.13, 8.14, 9.14, 11.2). At least one of them was painted, as attested by the presence of black pigments on Fragment Va (3) (Capodiferro 1985: 37), and in the hypothesis that details of all the friezes could be painted (Meneghini 2007: 98), the colours could have helped
to distinguish the shape, the contours and sections of the figures. The 'partial' view was a characteristic of Roman art, whose greatest example is another monument of the Forum, Trajan's Column. Nowadays we are impressed by the open view of all the details of the long spiral relief, painted as well (Bianchi Bandinelli 2003) adorning the Column from base to capital, but it was not conceived to be observed without interruptions. In fact, it was surrounded by buildings, and only from their windows of roof-top terraces it was possible to see the different sections of the reliefs a little at a time (Calcagni 2001: 269). Romans were used to this kind of 'sectioned view', and we can presume that the first time they entered into the Forum they could not appreciate *in toto* the reach of the language of the imagery, as they were overwhelmed by the visual stimuli.

![Reconstruction of the decorative system of the courtyard of Trajan's Column.](image)

*Fig. 11.2. Reconstruction of the decorative system of the courtyard of Trajan's Column.*

Depending on the typology of the buildings they were displayed on, the architraval friezes could be more or less visible. Apparently, the architraval friezes in the smaller sections could have been more visible because, according to the current state of knowledge, there were no structures overlooking them and diverting attention from them. That was the case for frieze types with eagle-headed griffins of both the southern
porticoed courtyard, II (figs. 5.10, 5.16), and the one of Trajan's Column, Ib (fig. 11.2). Above Frieze Type VI with taurochtonous Victories of the central nave of the Basilica Ulpia (fig. 9.14) there were other architectural orders, but they decorated the lower orders and they would have been easily visible and relatively close to eye level, 11 m high (Bianchi and Meneghini 2011: 117). In the exedras of the porticoes, above Frieze Type Ia with eagle-headed griffins, vases and candelabra (fig. 4.6) there are supposed to be only windows framing and underlining them. Otherwise, the architraval friezes decorating the façades, such as Frieze Type III with cupids and eagle-headed griffins of the three-segmented hall (fig. 6.7) and Type V with cupids in acanthus and vegetal elements of the façade of the Basilica Ulpia (figs. 8.13 and 8.14), would have been less visible because of massive attic storeys with imposing statues, friezes and inscriptions above them (Milella 2007: 208-09), which surely at first sight drew all the attention of the viewers. The presence in the wall of the exedras of the Basilica Ulpia, possibly decorated with friezes with sphinxes (fig. 10.24), of two superimposed orders is only hypothetical, thus it is not possible to speculate about them.

Trajan's Forum was a public space frequented by city dwellers for the purposes of politics, administration of justice, education and cultural activities. Small and large groups of visitors hurried to keep an appointment, looked for an acquaintance, or stood idly by, observing (Zanker 2010: 52). In the Forum the senators deposited their valuables, the lawyers tried their cases and learned of new laws, large groups gathered for congiaria or distribution of largesse and ex slaves took their first steps in freedom (Davies 2004: 128). As the audience entered the Forum, the visual programme would have had a strong impact. Undoubtedly people were first attracted by the great carved monuments and statues, such as the Column (fig. 11.2) and the equestrian statue of the emperor set in the middle of the square, but slowly with time their eyes could take in all the other details and decode the meaning of all the elements of the system, including the architraval friezes. The architraval friezes, inserted in a wider figurative programme, would have had a role in distinguishing the various structures of the complex of the Forum, helping to separate them with different decorative motifs, as a sort of continuous stripe on the high part of the structures distinguishing them and making their different functions clearer and more evident to everyone (Zanker 2010: 50, 52).
Chapter 12.
The Architraval Friezes as Components of Imperial Architectural 'Signatures'

12.1. Introduction

In Chapter 11 we analyzed in which way the architraval friezes were part of a wider figurative programme of the whole complex of Trajan's Forum. The comparison of the iconography of the Forum's frieze types to preceding artworks and monuments discussed in Chapters 4-10 helped clarify that the language Trajan adopted to express the messages he wanted to transmit through this programme was influenced by the tradition of great models. In this last chapter, we first discuss how much Trajan was inspired by these previous models and in which aspects this imitation of the models of reference is particularly evident, and then we investigate whether the friezes could be considered components of Trajan's architectural 'signature', and in particular if some of the decorative motifs of the architraval friezes could constitute a recognisable Trajanic imprint. We will deal with these questions by discussing first the great models which could have inspired the decoration of the Forum of Trajan, and then we will consider the hypothesis of the griffin friezes as specifically Trajanic architectural 'signatures', analyzing the motifs of the eagle- and lion-headed griffins on the imperial cuirassed statues, and in particular their development after Trajan, in Hadrianic period.

12.2. The Influence of the 'Great Models'

The iconographic motifs chosen by Trajan are essentially not original, since they follow 'Great Models', earlier imperial precedents (and will be followed by other examples of artworks and monuments with the same motifs): Frieze Type I with griffins, vases and candelabra has an iconography comparable to that of the previous Flavian Templum Gentis Flaviae (Section 4.5.1.1), of the contemporary Temple of Venus Genetrix restored by Trajan (Section 4.5.2.1), of the decoration of cuirassed statues from the Julio-Claudian to Hadrianic periods (Sections 4.5.4 and 12.3.1) and of later monuments such as the Temple of Antoninus and Faustina (Section 4.5.3).

The iconography of Frieze Type II with griffins and tripods was a recurring theme under Domitian (Section 5.4.1) and after Trajan in Severan period (Section 5.4.2);
cupids giving drink to lion-headed griffins of Frieze Type IV (and the variation with eagle-headed griffins of Frieze Type III) are in pre-Trajanic artworks and monuments such as the Forum of Caesar (Section 7.4.1.1), late Republican-early imperial Campana plaques (Section 7.4.1.2), 1st century AD funerary monument in Burgos (Section 7.4.1.3), Neronian buildings on the Palatine Hill (Section 7.4.1.4), the Templum Gentis Flaviae (Section 7.4.1.5) the Palace of Domitian (Sections 7.4.1.6 and 7.4.1.7), possibly the Theatre of Pompey restored by Domitian (Section 7.4.1.8). They were also in post-Trajanic structures such as Severan buildings in Baia (Section 7.4.2.1) and on cuirassed statues from the Augustan to late Antonine periods (Section 7.4.3), witnessing the diffusion of this decorative motif also after the Trajanic age.

Cupids in acanthus of Frieze Type V are one of the most common decorative subjects from the Republican to the imperial period, as demonstrated by countless examples, such as, among them, those in pre-Trajanic Forum's Bath of Pompeii (Section 8.4.1), on an Augustan krater (Section 8.4.2), in the Domus Transitoria (Section 8.4.3), in the Domus Aurea (Section 8.4.4), in the Palace of Domitian (Section 8.4.5); in the contemporary Temple of Venus Genetrix restored by Trajan (Section 8.4.6) and in the later Severan 'Frontispiece' of Nero (Section 8.4.7).

The same iconography of Frieze Type VI with taurochtonous Victories was on pre-Trajanic artworks and monuments, such as Campana plaques (Section 9.5.1.1), an Augustan relief in Villa Albani (Section 9.5.1.2), an early imperial frieze stored in the Theatre of Marcellus (Section 9.5.1.3) and another in the Capitoline Museums (Section 9.5.1.4), friezes from the Temple of Peace (Section 9.5.1.5) and from the Palace of Domitian (Section 9.5.1.6), as well as on the contemporary Trajanic Arch of Beneventum (Section 9.5.2.1) and on cuirassed statues of Titus and Trajan (Section 9.5.3). Concerning the sphinxes, we did not find comparable architraval friezes of imperial date with the same subject, though friezes of Augustan date (Section 10.4.1) give an idea of the large diffusion of the theme, also attested by drawings of other lost reliefs with sphinxes (figs. 10.28 and 10.29).

Thus, these reliefs indicate that these subjects had precedents during the earlier imperial period and were already widespread before Trajan. According to Galinier (2007: 37), the architecture and figurative arts must be interpreted as a consequence of the society
which produced them, but also reflecting on the agents which influenced them. Certainly the choice of the decorative motifs of the Forum was influenced by the tradition of certain already codified and strengthened subjects to express certain specific meanings in a domestic context such as the Palatium of Domitian and a funerary one such as the *Templum Gentis Flaviae*, but most of all the other Forum of Caesar and the Temple of Peace, and is related to the necessity of expressing political messages through architectural structures, using the same language of the traditions borrowed from the great models of Trajan's predecessors, such as Caesar, Augustus and Vespasian (Section 3.4). Possibly over time some of the art become just artistic fashion and standardised style, but the choice of a traditional iconography could be interpreted as a process of imitation and identification with previous emperors, to justify Trajan's power strictly connecting his figure and his enterprises with those of other great emperors. In fact, the emperors operated under competitive pressure, measuring their projects against those of the predecessors: "the same, but bigger, better and more expensive seems to have been the watchword" (Zanker 2010: 80).

In Packer's opinion (2001: 182) the Forum was conceived as a contemporary literary essay. Although it was an original monument, it comprised already known elements repeating those used for the construction of other close famous buildings. The competition determined in a fundamental way the stylistic development of imperial art and fashionable taste in several periods of Roman art (Zanker 2010: 80). The architectural quotes from the Temple of Peace, the Forum of Augustus and other monuments strictly connected the Forum of Trajan with adjacent structures and placed the architect of the Forum Apollodorus directly within the local architectural tradition, but most of all ensured for the observers that the stability of Roman world was still intact (Packer 2001: 183). The presence of these quotes highlighted that the new splendour just continued, in a wider and more magnificent way, the traditions either of the recent imperial past, or of the ancient Republic. Consequently, the lavish monuments of the Forum of Trajan and the great events they commemorated would have been interpreted not as a revolutionary break with a venerated past, but as the completion, recently reached, of pre-existing art and subsequently political forms (Packer 2001: 183).
12.2.1. Caesar

As attested by the Fasti Ostienses (Vidman 1982: 126), in AD 113, before the expedition to Parthia, Trajan ordered the restoration of the Temple of Venus Genetrix, to which Caesar connected his divine and royal origins (Suet., Iul. 6. 2) (Section 4.5.2.1). It is significant that Arrian in his Parthica inserted an epigram attributed to Hadrian, and dedicated during a visit to the Syrian sanctuary of Mount Causius, to Trajan, who is celebrated as 'Aeneades' (Freese 1920: fr. 36) wishing him triumphs over the Parthians as he had already achieved over the Dacians (Migliorati 2003: 130-31). This epithet is a clear reference to the members of the Julian family, descendants of Aeneas and a direct link with Caesar, a model for Trajan since the propaganda of the Dacian victory. In fact, Trajan himself introduced in his propaganda the Dacian war as the completion of the great expedition to the East projected by Caesar in 44 BC (Suet., Iul. 44. 2); because between AD 107 and 108 he dedicated the inscriptions of the Trophy of Adamklissi to Mars Ultor (Alexandrescu Vianu 1995: 152) (Chapter 2, p. 59), the avenger of the death of Caesar (Amioti 1998: 171-72); in addition, he recalled Caesar's quadruple triumph celebrated in 46 BC (Weinstock 1971: 76-79), commissioning a restitution aureus with the name of Julius Caesar on the obverse and his own one on the reverse11 (Smallwood 1966; n. 43d) (fig. 12.1). Thus, the revival in AD 113 of political and religious motifs related to Venus and the Aeneades were part of Trajan's propagandistic connection with Caesar, the first imperator, with Trajan, as his heir in conquering the East, Dacia first and then Parthia (Migliorati 2003: 131).

**Fig. 12.1. Restitution aureus with bare head of Julius Caesar and on reverse Venus standing right, leaning on column, holding helmet and spear.**

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11 C(aius) IULIUS CAES(ar) IMP(erator) CO(n)s(ul) III and on the reverse IMP(erator) CAES(ar) TRAIAN(us) AUG(ustus) Ger(panicus) Dac(icus) P(ater) P(atriae) REST(ituit).
This link to this myth is highlighted by the presence of reliefs with cupids inside and outside the Temple of Venus Genetrix (figs. 6.10 and 8.24), as well as in many structures of Trajan's Forum, and by the connection with Venus through Trajan's desire for restoring the Temple of Venus Genetrix and the Forum of Caesar. The latter was inaugurated on the same day and year that the Senate dedicated to Trajan the Column in his Forum (Section 4.5.2.1; Coarelli 19995a: 135). According to Packer (2001: 183), the equestrian statue of Trajan in the square of his Forum (Section 2.4.1) would have alluded not only to the statue of Domitian in the Roman Forum, but also to that of Caesar in his Forum. Moreover, the porticoes of the Forum of Caesar were decorated with friezes with the same iconography of Trajanic Fragment IV (1) (Section 7.4.1.1). In Packer's opini (2008: 477), these friezes in the Forum of Caesar celebrate 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 that of Caesar, because like the dictator, Trajan had ambitions against Parthia but, unlike Caesar, he had renewed the world and initiated a new golden age. The presence in Caesar's Forum of friezes comparable to Type I (Section 4.5.2.1) and to Type IV (Section 7.4.1.1) is the clue that the figurative programme of the Forum of Caesar could have influenced the choice of subjects in the Forum of Trajan.

12.2.2. Augustus

For Bennett (1997: 154), "the Forum of Trajan is a clever adaptation of, and return to, the most creative architectural features of the Forum of Augustus". The Forum of Augustus is the second of the Imperial Fora. Its construction was decided in 42 BC, but it took a long time to build it and it was inaugurated in 2 BC. The rectangular square is surrounded by long deep porticoes, widening into large semicircular exedras (fig. 12.2). On the attic of the porticoes ran a decoration of female figures, Caryatids, and clipei (infra, p. 367-68; fig. 12.4). At the end of the square stood the Temple dedicated to Mars Ultor (Section 7.4.3.1 pp. 214-15), the avenger of the death of Augustus's adoptive father, Julius Caesar.

The monumental complex was the seat of judiciary activities: thanks to the study of trial documents, the location of the tribunal of the praetor urbanus can be identified in the western exedra and that of the praetor peregrinus in the eastern exedra of the Forum (Carnabuci 1996: 92) (Section 10.5). One of the most important discoveries of recent
excavations was a third large exedra (La Rocca 2001: 184; Rizzo 2001: 230-34; Meneghini 2009: 60) at the south-western corner of Augustus' Forum, which presupposes the presence of a fourth symmetric one on the opposite side (Chapter 2, pp. 36-37) (fig. 12.2). This means that possibly there would have been four exedras in the Forum of Augustus, if only for a short time, because after a few decades the south-western smaller ones were demolished to build the other fora (Coarelli 1995 b: 125-29; Milella 2007: 94-116).

**Fig. 12.2. Hypothesis of reconstructive plan of the Forum of Augustus according to new excavation.**

Some of the elements of the architectural and decorative complex of Trajan's Forum were programmatically inspired by the model of the Forum of Augustus (Pensabene 2002: 15). First, the shape of the Forum of Trajan recalls that of the Forum of Augustus. Trajan's Forum is not just a proper forum, with an empty square surrounded by covered porticoes and a temple in the middle, but a complex formed by different structures for various functions. According to Packer (2001: 182; 2010: 80), the Trajanic exedras duplicated those of the Forum of Augustus. The similarity between the two Fora is even more evident after the reconstruction of the plan with four exedras according to the above mentioned recent discovery. The plan of Trajan's Forum with four exedras thus follows exactly the only precedent among the fora, that of Augustus. La Rocca (1995;
hypothesized that in the still uncovered area of the Forum of Augustus, opposite the temple, there could have been a basilica closing the Forum. If confirmed, even if there is no evidence for a basilica in literary tradition, this hypothesis would underline the great influence of the Forum of Augustus when the Basilica Ulpia in the Forum of Trajan was planned. Furthermore, in the exedras of the porticoes of Trajan's Forum there were statues of *summi viri* (Chapter 2, p. 32; Section 4.5.4.2) imitating the first great example of the cycle of statues of the *summi viri* of the monarchy and the republic facing the members of the Julian family in each exedra of the Forum of Augustus (Section 7.4.3.1, p. 218) (fig. 12.3). The aim would have been to celebrate through these figures the continuity with the best of the past, as an imaginary connection with the gallery of the history of Rome in the Forum of Augustus.

![Fig. 12.3. Reconstruction of the gallery of summi viri in the exedras of the Forum of Augustus.](image)

Also, the imagery of the sculptures above the porticoes of the Forum of Trajan is an ideal continuation of the Forum of Augustus. In the Forum of Augustus Caryatid-like figures supported the attic storeys of the flanking porticoes of the square, framed by shields with heads of Jupiter Ammon with the characteristic spiral-shaped ram horns alternated with others, with Jupiter wearing the *torques*, the typical male neck ring of the Celtic populations as the Gauls (Ungaro 2007: 152) (*supra*, p. 365) (figs. 12.4 and 12.5 b). In the Forum of Trajan instead of the Caryatids and the shields with the head of Jupiter, it is assumed that there were statues of Dacian prisoners alternated with *imagines clipeatae* with different decorative motifs (Piazzesi 1989: 140; Packer 2001: 182; Milella 2004) (Chapter 2, p. 34) (fig. 12.5). According to Packer (2008: 477), the
considerable difference between the two Fora is that the images of Jupiter Ammon in Augustus' Forum exalted Augustus' conquests and resembled the clipei suspended or painted on the walls of private atria, while those in Trajan's Forum publicly honoured summi viri: they were not in the internal niches as those of the Forum of Augustus, and they were not, like Augustus' statues, connected with portraits of ancestors in noble atria.

![Fig. 12.4. Three-dimensional reconstruction of the southern portico of the Forum of Augustus. On the attic storey, Caryatids alternating with shields.](image)

The interpretation of these figures could perhaps be read differently. From a military point of view, they could represent populations subdued by Augustus, in relation to the other functions of the Forum connected with the war, and most of all to the Temple of Mars the Avenger standing in the middle of the Forum ((Vitr., De arch. 1.1.5; Nicolet 1988: 61-68). Alternatively, the reliefs could be read as a demonstration of devotion to Augustus who brought peace in the world, as an allusion to the age of Pericles in the case of the Caryatids, and where the heads have solely an apotropaic meaning (La Rocca 1995b: 74-87; Ungaro et. al. 2004: 23). The message to send would be that peace had been achieved with a victory, which integrated all the populations in the new Augustan founded order (Ungaro et al. 2004: 23). From a political point of view, the Forum of Augustus was an immediate instrument of visual communication, exported as a model to the cities of the pacified provinces, such as Merida and Cordoba (Section
7.4.10, p. 218) where the decorations of the attic storeys of the porticoes were copied, as the statue groups of the members of the new ruling class who sought to link their local status to Rome (Ungaro et al. 2004: 25).

According to La Rocca (2012: 18-19) there is a basic difference between the Forum of Augustus and that of Trajan. The Forum of Trajan, following the imperialistic mentality of those years, was transformed into a monument of conquest, where every element of its decoration is related to the brutal and final submission of the losers. In fact, even if we admit that the Forum of Trajan is a thoughtful re-elaboration based on the model of the Forum of Augustus, its main decorative motifs are not connected with the idea of peace as in Augustus’ Forum but with that of war. Specifically, the message transmitted in the Forum of Augustus is a message of peace, otherwise in the Forum of Trajan the concept expressed by the figurative programme is not peace but ‘pacification’ through war.

In the Forum of Augustus for La Rocca (2012: 18) the copies of the Caryatids\textsuperscript{12} of the Erechtheum on Athens’ Acropolis are peaceful and inspired placid religious sentiments, as well as the symbolic depictions of the imperial provinces identical and assimilated in

\textsuperscript{12} For Vitruvius (born c. 80-70 BC, died after c. 15 BC) (Vitr., \textit{De arch.} 1.1.5), Caryatides represented the punishment of the women of Carya, a city of Peloponnese, who allied with the Persian enemy against Greece. The Greek victors wanted them to exhibit a permanent picture of slavery, and in the heavy mockery they suffered they should pay the penalty for their city. Thus, the architects of those times designed images of them specially placed to uphold a load, so that the punishment of the Caryatides’ wrongdoing might be handed down to posterity.
front of the emperor. In contrast, in Trajan's Forum the Dacian prisoners are sombrely withdrawn in their pain, harassed by the loss of their freedom. An *exemplum virtutis*, symbolic representation of the populations humiliated and defeated because of their arrogance. Close to them there was the lit of the victorious legions, the conquered insignia, the reliefs with the panoply, the cuirassed statues of Trajan and his generals (La Rocca 2012: 19) (Chapter 2, pp. 32, 40, 57). As rarely before, the war prevails shamelessly in the public iconography, where the emperor, on foot or on horseback in reliefs and statues, crushes the submitted enemy in a scheme showing him not only as a genuine general, but as the 'always victorious', *semper victor* (La Rocca 2012: 20). In the Forum of Trajan this role is amplified as never before, because following Caesar's and Augustus' Fora which were both triumphal monuments and the result of conquests, this is the only forum originating from a great war of conquest where each detail exalts the victory over the Dacians and the military politics of the emperor (La Regina 1988: 31).

The analogies with the Forum of Augustus are not just in the architectural forms, but also in the decorative style and the ornamental motifs, specifically in the use of decorations with a distinctive dentil and typical *Cyma reversa* mouldings (Bennett 1997: 154) with normal leaf-and-dart and in their proportions (Milella 2004). For Milella (2004), the entablatures of the Forum of Augustus and those of the Temple of Venus *Genetrix* in the Forum of Caesar reconstructed by Trajan show clearly this programmatic guideline of relating to the Augustan model (fig. 12.6).

![Fig. 12.6. Different rendering of Cyma reversa with normal leaf-and-dart on the crowning of the attic storey of the porticoes of the Forum of Augustus compared to different rendering of Cyma reversa in buildings of the complex of Trajan's Forum.](image-url)
In Packer's opinion (2001: 182), the marble floors of the exedras of the porticoes of Trajan's Forum were a variation of the floors of the side colonnades of the Forum of Augustus, and the attic storeys of the porticoes of the square of the Forum of Trajan and of the Basilica Ulpia alluded to the façade of the Republican Basilica Aemilia, founded in 179 BC and restored in 14 BC and AD 22 (Coarelli 1995a: 59). The Basilica Aemilia would also have been the model, with other previous Augustan similar structures, for the general plan of the Basilica Ulpia (Packer 2001: 182).

As already observed, the reference to Augustus is clearly visible also in the cuirassed statues which decorated the Forum of Trajan, surely inspired in the pose and the details by the very famous model of Augustus of Prima Porta (fig. 4.28; Section 4.5.4.1, p. 113). This in turn was inspired by the statue of Mars Ultor (fig. 7.33) in the cella of his Temple in the Forum of Augustus (supra, p. 365; Section 7.4.3.1 pp. 214-15). For example, among the surviving fragments of the statuary of Trajan's Forum, there is the cuirassed headless statue in the Trajan's Markets (Section 4.5.4.2, p. 122, fig. 4.34), which could be related either to the emperor as the colossal size suggest or to an important figure of his retinue, whose breastplate imitates that of Mars Ultor: in this way the avenger god was related to the Trajanic propaganda of persuading the Romans that the Dacian wars must be considered a punishment of the perfidious Dacian leader Decebalus (Cadario 2012: 105-06). Furthermore, in the noted Trophy of Adamklissi, Trajan was honoured as ultor Moesiae, avenger of the province of Moesia, which had been invaded by the Dacians, and celebrated for the restoration of the insignia lost at the time of Domitian (Migliorati 2003: 76) (supra, p. 364; Chapter 2, pp. 59-60).

The similarity to Augustan art is not only found in the architecture or the decorative style, as already discussed, but directly in the choice of subjects which where recurring in the Augustan period, such as tripods, candelabra, Victories and sphinxes. In fact, tripods were put in the porticoed courtyard (Section 5.3); candelabra in the exedras of the porticoes of the square (Section 4.4, p. 105), in the façade of the Basilica Ulpia, where also the vegetal elements were typical Augustan motifs (Section 8.5), and in the courtyard of the Column. Victories were located in the central nave of the Basilica (Section 9.4, pp. 292-93), and sphinxes, which were the symbol of Augustus' first personal seal, in the exedras of the Basilica (Section 10.3, p. 341).
At the outset of this study we questioned whether the messages of political propaganda were communicated not just by the statues, as in the case of the Forum of Augustus, but even through the decoration of the friezes. Indeed, the main difference within the strict ambit of my research is that in the Forum of Augustus the messages are conveyed by the figurative statuary system and not by the architraval friezes. In fact, while the frieze motifs occur in Augustan art, they do not occur in his Forum. In the architraval friezes of the Forum of Augustus there is simply an elaborate vegetal decoration (fig. 12.7), even if in this period the vegetal decoration could have a symbolic meaning (Section 8.5). The architraval frieze displayed on the porticoes surrounding the square of Trajan's Forum also had a vegetal decoration, as attested by a block and several small fragments which had a vegetal motif on the outward-looking side, and a different one on the inward-looking side, similarly to those in the Forum of Augustus (Ungaro et al. 2004: 28-29) (fig. 12.8). However, except for the architraval friezes of the porticoes of the square (fig. 2.13 B), those in the other sections of the complex are figurative, and thus in the Forum of Trajan the task of sending messages is assigned also to the architraval friezes, which actively advertised celebratory messages in a wider figurative programme of political propaganda. Therefore, possibly the figurative architraval friezes themselves could be considered components of a Trajanic imprint.
12.2.3. Vespasian

According to Packer (2001: 190), the Forum of Trajan not only alludes to the previous Fora of Caesar and Augustus, but also to the Temple of Peace (fig. 12.9), commissioned by Vespasian to celebrate the triumph over the Jewish revolt (AD 71) and inaugurated in AD 75 (Ungaro 2007: 170), paid for by the spoils of the Jewish War (Claridge 2010: 172). In Packer's opinion (2001: 174) the axes determining the general plan of the Forum of Trajan would have been a continuation of the pre-existing fora, and in particular the north-south axis would have extended to that of the Temple of Peace, which would have been the imaginary point from which the Trajanic project would have started. The plan of Trajan's Forum would have been set as a mirror image of the Temple of Peace, with the architectural elements of the Flavian models repeated but contemporarily modified and exalted: the Basilica Ulpia would have represented the colonnade in front of the Temple, the square of the Trajanic Forum would have evoked its garden, and the measurements of the sections of the Temple of Peace would have been adopted as modules, multiplied or divided, for the different buildings forming the Trajanic complex (Packer 2001: 175). However, this theory is rejected by Claridge
(2007: 90), who argues that there could not have been axially in a complex where there were several entrances and the buildings of the complex were all connected.

![Fig. 12.9. Reconstruction of the Temple of Peace.](image)

In section 9.5.1.5 we discussed a fragment with taurochtonous Victories from the Temple of Peace, which has the same iconography and function of the Trajanic architraval friezes in the similar context of an imperial public complex built by a previous emperor. In particular, the Forum would represent the architectonic celebration of the victorious war of the empire against the barbarians, and could be interpreted as an answer to the decorative programme of the Temple of Peace: as in a sort of 'dialogue', the two Fora could have embodied the concepts of the war and the peace of the empire (Packer 2001: 190).

Friezes comparable to Frieze Type I and IV from the *Templum Gentes Flaviae* and Type II, IV, V and VI from the Palace of Domitian confirm that not only the Temple of the Peace but also other Flavian official architectures until the reign of Domitian could influence as models the iconographic choices of the decorative motifs of the friezes of the Forum of Trajan.

**12.3. An Hypothesis: The Eagle-headed Griffin Friezes as Trajan’s Architectural 'Signature'**

In Chapter 11 we highlighted how, among the other decorative motifs, the role of the griffins is very prominent (Chapter 11, p. 357). The starting point of this analysis was
the separation of frieze type with griffins according to their iconography with eagle or lion heads. In fact, in all the other studies of decorative motifs of the architraval frieze, the griffins are mentioned without any consideration of this iconographic alteration. This study instead takes into account the difference between the eagle-headed griffin, identified as Frieze Types I and III, and the lion-headed griffin, here Frieze Type IV.

In this section we consider the hypothesis that the eagle-headed griffin friezes were a specific Trajanic architectural 'signature' as opposed to the lion-headed griffin friezes which are particularly related to the Hadrianic period. To confirm or reject this hypothesis, it is necessary to understand whether there is an incidence of the use of both these decorative motifs specifically in Trajanic period, analyzing the data from Chapters 4 and 7 in the sections concerning the decorations of cuirassed imperial statues.

12.3.1. Eagle- and Lion-headed Griffins on Cuirassed Statues

While investigating the friezes with an iconography comparable to Frieze Types I, III and IV, in Chapters 4 and 7 we focused on cuirassed statues whose breastplates display the same decorative motif in both the variations with eagle- and lion-headed (Section 4.5.4 for Types I and III, and 7.4.3 for Type IV).

In their specific publications on the iconography of cuirassed statues Vermeule (1959-60; 1964; 1966; 1974; 1978; 1980), Stemmer (1978) and recently Cadario (2004; 2006; 2011; 2012) studied the topic in depth, and among all the iconographies they also analyzed breastplates decorated with griffins. From their researches and from consulting iconographic repertoires and catalogues in key museums, although cuirassed statues are not the main topic of this research, we have studied the different pre-Trajanic eagle-headed and lion-headed ones and notable Trajanic and post-Trajanic ones to demonstrate the level of diffusion of these two iconographic variations before, during and after Trajan's period.

In particular, as summarized in the following synoptic table (fig. 12.10), in Chapter 4 (Section 4.5.4) we considered eagle-headed griffins on cuirasses of nine statues of Julio-Claudian to Hadrianic date (figs. 4.29-39). In all of these the eagle-headed griffins stand facing each other, and most of them lean a paw on a candelabrum, except those where the candelabra are missing (figs. 4.31-32, 4.38-39). From the stylistic point of view, in
some cases the lower side of the breastplate is decorated with an inverted palmette, in others by an acanthus tuft from which vegetal scrolls spring. In addition to those considered in Section 4.5.4, there are other Trajanic statues with eagle-headed griffins on the breastplate, such as that in the amphitheatre of Pozzuoli (Stemmer 1978: 13), another in the Archaeological Museum of Olympia (Vermeule 1959-60: 49; Stemmer 1978: 49-50) and that in the Museum of the Baths of Diocletian of Rome (Vermeule 1959-60: 51; Stemmer 1978: 65).

As shown in the following synopsis (fig. 12.11), in Chapter 7 we analyzed lion-headed griffins on the breastplates of ten statues of Augustan to late Antonine date (figs. 7.33-42). Also in all these examples the pairs of lion-headed griffins stand and lean a paw on a candelabrum in front of them, with the exception of the cuirassed statue in Baltimore (fig. 7.38) and that in Leptis Magna (fig. 7.42), where the candelabrum is missing. In the cuirassed statues with the same iconography of Type IV there is the pose variation of the lion-headed griffins turning their head back, as in the statue of Mars Ultor in the Capitoline Museums (fig. 7.33), that of Holconius Rufus in Naples (fig. 7.35), and in the Julio-Claudian statues in Verona (fig. 7.37) and in Baltimore (fig. 7.38). From the stylistic point of view, in all the selected statues of the 1st century AD the breastplate is decorated by an inverted palmette, except for the statue of Titus in Naples (fig. 7.39), the first statue type of the emperor with an acanthus tuft.

What emerges from this analysis is that the griffins on the breastplates of the cuirassed statues all differ from the precise iconography of Frieze Type I, because the eagle-headed griffins stand rather than crouch. Thus, the pose is very similar to Frieze Type III and IV, where the griffins stand, except for those cases where the griffins turn their head back.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type I identification</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Fig. no.</th>
<th>Standing griffin</th>
<th>No inverted acanthus</th>
<th>Paw on candelabrum</th>
<th>Inverted candelabrum</th>
<th>Acanthus palmette</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Druso Major</td>
<td>Vatican Museum</td>
<td>4.29</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Julio-Claudian</td>
<td>Louvre Museum Paris</td>
<td>4.30</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nero</td>
<td>Archaeological Museum Istanbul</td>
<td>4.31</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trajan</td>
<td>Museum of Samnium Beneventum</td>
<td>4.32</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trajan</td>
<td>Ny Carlsberg Museum Copenhagen</td>
<td>4.33</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trajan</td>
<td>Museum of Imperial Forums Rome</td>
<td>4.34</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trajan</td>
<td>Antalya Museum</td>
<td>4.35</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trajan</td>
<td>Museum of Dutch Antiquities Leiden</td>
<td>4.36</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trajan</td>
<td>Palazzo Senatorio Rome</td>
<td>4.37</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trajan</td>
<td>Antalya Museum</td>
<td>4.38</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trajan</td>
<td>Hadrian</td>
<td>4.39</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig. 12.10. Synoptic table of cuirassed statues comparable to Frieze Type I and III.
### Fig. 12.1. Synoptic table of cuirassed statues comparable to Frieze Type IV.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type IV identification</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Fig. no.</th>
<th>Standing griffin</th>
<th>Paw on candelabrum</th>
<th>Head turning back</th>
<th>No candelabrum</th>
<th>Inverted palmette</th>
<th>Acanthus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mars Ultor</td>
<td>Capitoline Museums Rome</td>
<td>7.33</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romulus</td>
<td>Cordoba, copy in Museum of Imperial Forums Rome</td>
<td>7.34</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holconius Rufus</td>
<td>Archaeological Museum Naples</td>
<td>7.35</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Julio-Claudian cuirassed statue</td>
<td>Villa Albani</td>
<td>7.36</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Julio-Claudian cuirassed statue</td>
<td>Archaeological Museum Verona</td>
<td>7.37</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Julio-Claudian cuirassed statue</td>
<td>The Walters Art Museum Baltimore</td>
<td>7.38</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Titus</td>
<td>Archaeological Museum Naples</td>
<td>7.39</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trajanic cuirassed statue</td>
<td>Private collection Lugano</td>
<td>7.40</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hadrianic cuirassed statue</td>
<td>Louvre Museum Paris</td>
<td>7.41</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Late Antonine cuirassed statue</td>
<td>Archaeological Museum Leptis Magna</td>
<td>7.42</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As seen, we selected representative samples of cuirassed statues with eagle- and lion-headed griffins (all the pre-Trajanic, the most significant contemporary ones and some examples of the post-Trajanic) to compare them to Frieze Types I, III and IV, but we have also scrutinized most of the published ones: in his study Stemmer (1978) analyzed 13 statues with eagle-headed griffins, of which 4 portray the emperor Trajan, and 16 statues with lion-headed griffins. Vermeule (1959-60; 1964; 1966; 1974; 1978; 1980) listed 12 cuirassed statues with eagle-headed griffins, 6 Trajanic, 3 Hadrianic and 2 Antonine ones; and 10 with lion-headed griffins. A first consideration is that the majority of eagle-headed griffins could be ascribable to Trajanic cuirassed statues and later on to Hadrianic ones. Otherwise, lion-headed griffins seem to have been employed more evenly in the imperial period, possibly because they decorated the breastplate of the statue of Mars Ultor in the Forum of Augustus which was later used as a model by many other emperors from the Augustan to the late Antonine era. Perhaps, the difference between lion- and eagle-heads could be more basic, where the lions recall Mars and the eagles Jupiter.

In Chapter 2 (Section 2.3, p. 25) we discussed that the north section of the Forum of Trajan was completed by Hadrian (Claridge 2013: 10, 15; 2014). Fragments IV (1 and 2) of Frieze Type IV were found in the north end of the complex of the Forum (Section 7.2.8). We analyzed these cuirassed statues to check the possibility of relating the iconographic variation of the lion-headed griffins specifically to the Hadrianic period. In this case, the variances in the iconography could have had different meanings, and the choice of eagle-headed griffins could have been related to Trajan when he was alive, and the lion-headed griffins after his death, when Hadrian commissioned the construction of a Temple dedicated to him as a god (Section 2.4.10). But as just explained there are several examples of lion-headed griffins decorating breastplates of many imperial statues, from the early imperial period to the 2nd century AD, and not only connected with Hadrian. Thus, we could not verify this hypothesis. It would have been attractive to ascribe Fragments IV (1 and 2) with the same iconography to the Hadrianic restoration and completion of the Forum of Trajan, but there is no evidence to support this hypothesis. Furthermore, from the stylistic point of view the mouldings of IV (1 and 2) do not survive, and according to Milella without this detail it is not possible to attest if these fragments are Hadrianic rather than Trajanic (Milella personal
communication 23/9/2014). According to current knowledge, the friezes with lion-headed griffins could not be strictly related to Hadrian.

However, we can observe that while there are imperial cuirassed statues decorated with lion-headed griffins before, during and after the Trajanic period, most of the cuirassed statues with eagle-headed griffins can be related to the emperor Trajan. This observation reinforces what was already noted in Chapter 11, namely that there is a prevalence of griffins, especially eagle-headed, in the Trajanic iconography of his Forum. Thus, this decorative motif of eagle-headed griffin could have been recognized as an emblem and a 'signature' of the emperor, which could have served as a leitmotif in many sections of the complex of the Forum.

**12.3.2. Lion-headed Griffin Friezes: Hadrianic or Not?**

As noted, Frieze Type IV is likely related to the Hadrianic completion of the complex of the Forum. To test this hypothesis we considered the activity of Trajan's successor, especially as commissioner of restorations and constructions of other architectural projects (Gregorovius 1898; Henderson 1923; Corradi 1946; Taliaferro Boatwright 1987; Birley 1997; Opper 2008; Morwood 2013), to check the presence of a possible revival of the same decorative motifs under Hadrian's reign. Hadrian introduced himself as a new *conditor Urbis* with the restitution of the *pomerium* in AD 121 and the re-foundation of the *Auratorium* on the Palatine Hill in AD 136 (Palombi 2012: 40). He sustained urban development in Rome and Ostia (fig. 2.34), and ordered in the city centre restoration of the imperial palace on the Palatine Hill, the Temple of Divine Julius and the Forum of Augustus, according to the limited evidence identified as Hadrianic (Taliaferro Boatwright 1987: 95), and the construction of the Temple of Venus and Rome. In Campus Martius he commissioned the reconstruction of the Pantheon after AD 80 fire and the building of the Temple dedicated to his mother-in-law Matidia and her mother Marciana, Trajan's sister (Palombi 2012: 41); and across the Tiber he sponsored the construction in his mother's gardens of his monumental funerary monument, the *Mausoleum of Hadrian* (Palombi 2012: 41). Outside Rome, Hadrian built his Villa Adriana in Tivoli. He spent half of his reign far from Rome travelling around the provinces: in Athens he commissioned the building of several monuments, in Italica and Pergamon two temples dedicated to Divine Trajan, the *Traianenum* (Calandra 2012: 80), not to mention military constructions such as Hadrian's Wall (Opper 2008: 380).
None of these buildings was decorated, according to current knowledge, with architraval friezes or reliefs with the same iconographies of Trajanic frieze types. This consideration helps us understand that they could not constitute a typical Hadrianic theme, although undoubtedly they were part of a traditional language to transmit messages in imperial monuments, attested by examples before and contemporary with the Hadrianic period, and also after it, such as the most relevant later example of the Temple of Antoninus and Faustina decorated with architraval friezes with eagle-headed griffins and candelabra with a funerary meaning of psychopomp (Section 4.5.3).

Thus, we can conclude that the architraval friezes can be considered components of imperial architectural 'signatures', as demonstrated by other architraval friezes with the iconography of Frieze Types IV and VI in the Palace of Domitian and the Temple of Peace, which is the most notable example because of the similarity not only of the subjects represented but also of the function of the building they decorated, another of the Imperial Fora. Specifically the Trajanic architraval friezes, although incorporating traditional elements, constitute a recognisable Trajanic imprint, because while, as already mentioned, those in Forum of Augustus only had a vegetal decoration, these friezes in the Forum of Trajan are the only ones with a figurative decoration adorning all the buildings forming a forum complex known so far. The decorative motifs of the seven different types of the architraval friezes were a key component of the visual imagery of the Forum, with a special role played by the griffins.

12.4. Conclusion

In conclusion, we can finally answer the questions raised at the beginning of the research: is there a relationship between the subjects represented on the friezes and the structures where they were exhibited? It is possible that behind the iconographic choice of the decorative motifs of the friezes there is a deeper meaning which could be part of a wider figurative programme?

First of all, we can identify a connection between the subjects represented on the Trajanic friezes and the architectural structures where they were exhibited. The iconography of the architraval friezes supports the hypothesis that they could be tailored to the function of the particular spaces they decorated. Of course it is easier to identify the conceptual link when the function of the buildings is known or it is possible to
propose hypotheses about their use. However, when the available data are too scarce and there are no instruments to hypothesize, the symbology could be interpreted in the light of traditional iconography alluding to a more general conceptual sphere rather than a specific context. Furthermore, certainly in relation to the iconographic choices of the decorative motifs, there is a deeper meaning inserted in the wider figurative programme of the Forum. It seems to me that they are clearly part of the great celebration of the military virtues of the emperor over his enemies. This exaltation is expressed through the language of his predecessors, discussed in Section 12.2, and Trajan launches this message of eternal glory under the protection and the supervision of basically two divinities: Nemesis and Apollo. Nemesis, through the griffins, her attributes, and other motifs expressing concepts 'under the jurisdiction' of the goddess, is related to the righteous avenge and the punishment of the Dacian foe. Apollo supervises different aspects, as justice and law through the sphinxes, or the protection of the gold mines through the griffins-guardians, or, after Trajan's death, the funerary sphere through the traditional psychopomp griffins.

This study aimed to investigate how far these seemingly relatively insignificant decorative details contributed to the overall decorative programme of Trajan's Forum. Clearly, some questions remain unsolved: only in the case of new excavations in the area of the Forum would offer more information on the complex, confirming or rejecting those which are so far only hypotheses regarding the reconstructions of the buildings and their functions. The possible discovery of new fragments would shed light on the presence of more distinctive components in the friezes which would contain more variations. In particular, new excavations in the north area of the Forum could reveal important evidence to explain the precise provenance and location of Frieze Type IV, which is still unknown.

However, the potential symbolism of the architraval friezes demonstrates that all the components of this wider figurative programme contributed to exalt and promote the military power and the prestige of the emperor. This general concept has previously been considered. We verified this traditional interpretation and confirmed the identification of the location of the friezes with griffins and candelabra of the Louvre from the courtyard of the Column. Furthermore, we doubt the hypothesis of the function of the porticoed courtyard related to the exhibition of the booty from Dacia, but agree
with the interpretation of the sphinxes as attributes of Apollo, god of justice and law, and propose the leading role of Nemesis in the symbology of the reliefs of the architraval friezes.

In summary, this thesis has involved the comprehensive analysis of all the extant or known architraval friezes with an ascertained provenance from the Forum of Trajan (some of them only briefly mentioned before or not published yet). Of particular note in this study has been:

- the identification of a distinction between lion-headed and eagle-headed griffins never taken into consideration before
- the attribution of Frieze Type III to the three-segmented hall and Frieze Type IV to an area in the north end of the Forum, previously considered part of a single frieze
- a wide comparison - too little attempted before - of the iconography of the Trajanic friezes to that of the most relevant, previous, contemporary and later examples.

This research can be registered as just one of several contributions to the study of the different aspects of the Forum of Trajan, but it is the first comprehensive study about the very specific ambit of the figurative architraval friezes. I hope that I have provided en route a significant and original element of analysis to the overall picture of our knowledge of the figurative programme of the whole complex of the Forum of Trajan in the heart of imperial Rome.
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Glossary

Ab love electus (La): elected by Jupiter.

Ad gallinas albas (La): literally 'at white chickens', referring to the villa of the first empress Livia Drusilla, where there was a famous breed of white chickens. According to the legend, the first chicken with a laurel branch in its beak was dropped by an eagle onto her knees.

Adlocutio (La): address by a general (usually the emperor) to his massed army and a general salute from the army to their leader.

Aeternitas imperii (La): eternity of the empire.

Annona (La): the grain supply of Rome.

Apotheosis (from Gk): the elevation of someone to divine status.

Arcae (La): literally strong boxes, in this case the banks of the senators.

Armaria (La): bookcases.

Arpia (It): harpy.

Atrium Libertatis (La): Atrium of the Freedom.

Auditorium (La): literally 'a place where something is heard', a building reserved for the audience where performances took place.

Auguratorium (La): a building where auguries were observed.

Aurea aetas (La): golden age.

Aureus (La): a Roman gold coin from approximately the 2nd century BC to the 4th AD, corresponding to 25 denarii.

Basoli (La): large paving basalt stones.

Betilus (La): sacred cone-shaped stone.

Bibliotheca templi Traiani (La): library of the Temple of Trajan.

Bibliotheca Ulpia (La): Ulpian library.

Camerelle (It.): small rooms.

Chiton (Gk): the basic garment worn by Greek men and women. Essentially a sleeveless linen or wool shirt draped by the wearer in various ways and kept in place at the
shoulders by brooches and at the waist by a belt. Worn usually knee-length by men and full-length by women.

*Cingulum* (La): Roman military belt.

*Cipollino* or Carystian *marble* (It): onion stone, name given by the Italian stonecutters to the marble called by the Romans *marmor carystium*, whose quarries were in Greece, with a white-green base and thick wavy green ribs reminiscent of onion layers.

*Clipeus*, *pl. clipei* (La): a large Greek and Roman shield.

*Clipeus virtutis* (La): literally shield of bravery, an award for a Roman soldier who saved the life of a comrade in battle.

*Cochlea* (La): snail.

*Collegium* (La): association.

*Commentarii* (La): in Roman history, *memoranda* and personal notes that were later used by historians as source materials. They could be turned into memoirs when public men of noble family drafted records of their achievements for their family archives.

*Conditor Urbis* (La): founder of Rome.

*Congiaria* (La): literally vessels containing one *congius*, a measure of volume equal to six *sextarii*. They became liberal donations to the people and sometimes to the soldiers of oil, wine, grain, and under the Empire most of all money.

*Consilium* (La): council.

*Cyma reversa* (La): in classical architecture a moulding (*cyma*) having an undulating or S-shaped profile, whose upper section is convex and lower section nearer the wall concave, essentially a reversed (*reversa*) cyma with the convex part nearer the wall, called *cyma recta*. Also called *cymatium* or ogee.

*Curia Iulia* (La): Rome's Senate House, begun by Julius Caesar in 44 BC to replace the Curia Hostilia and completed by Octavian in 29 BC.

*Denarius* (La): small silver coin minted during the Roman Empire from the 3rd century BC to 3rd century AD.

*De visu* (La): with one's own eyes.

*Divus* (La): divine.

*Domus Augustana* (La): the private residence in the Palace of Domitian on the Palatine Hill.

*Domus Aurea* (La): Golden House of Nero.
Domus Flavia (La): the representative and official section of the Palace of Domitian on the Palatine Hill.

Equites singulares (La): imperial horseguards.

Equus Domitian (La): equestrian statue of the emperor Domitian in the Roman Forum.

Equus Traiani (La): equestrian statue of the emperor Trajan in the Forum of Trajan.

Esedra arborea (It): tree exedra.

Ex manubiiis (La): from the profits of war.

Exemplum virtutis (La): example of virtue.

Fabri navales (La): the professional association of shipwrights.

Fasti Ostienses (La): marble calendar extant in fragmentary form, with added list of Roman consuls and consuls as well as Ostia's magistrates. The list is expanded by reports from Rome and Ostia, acquiring the character of a chronicle.

Fides (La): faith, belief.

Forma Urbis (Romae) (La): Severan Marble Plan of Rome, an enormous map displayed inside the Templum Pacis in Rome. It depicted the ground plan of every architectural feature in the ancient city, from large public monuments to small shops, rooms, and even staircases.

Gens Iulia (La): the Julian family, the dynasty of Julius Caesar first and then Augustus.

Gens Ulpia (La): the Ulpian family, the family of the emperor Trajan.

Genetrix (La): mother.

Gorgoneion (Gk): head of the Gorgon Medusa.

Guttus (La): vase for perfume, oil and water.

Horrea (La): public warehouses, especially granaries.

Habitus (La): dress.

Hybris, or hubris, or ὑβρις (Gk): extreme pride or arrogance.

Ignis eternus (La): eternal fire.

Imagines clipeatae (La): figures depicted in monumental clipei decorating imperial Fora.

Imitatio (La): imitation.
Imperator (La): army commander who has the *imperium*. In the case of Julius Caesar, this title was an indication of his absolute, dictatorial military power.

*Imperium* (La): literally 'command', 'empire', the supreme executive power in the Roman State, involving both military and judicial authority.

*In situ* (La): in place.

*In toto* (La): in total.


*Iuris peritus* (La): expert at law.

*Insignia* (La): attributes.

*Kantharos* (Gk): Greek drinking cup with two high vertical handles.

*Krater* (Gk): large Greek vase used to mix wine and water.

*Lebes*, pl. *lebetes* (Gk): a deep Greek bowl, usually handless and with a low neck.

*Libri lintei* (La): linen scrolls where the names of the magistrates were traditionally written.

*Ludus Magnus* (La): the biggest gladiatorial training school in Rome.

*Ludi Victoriae* (La): Sulla's games to celebrate his victory over Samnites, won on 1 November 82 BC near Porta Collina, and to commit it to public memory. This festival became regular in 81 BC and it lasted from 26 October to 1 November.

*Ludi Victoriae Caesaris* (La): introduced by Caesar in 45 BC, rivalling Sulla's games, they ran from 20 to 30 July.

*Lorica* (La): Roman muscle cuirass of leather or metal.

*Lucifera* (male *luciferus*) (La): light bearer.

*Lux perpetua* (La): perpetual light.

*Maiestas* (La): majesty.


*Naumachia Traiani* (La): literally Trajan's naval combat, both the naval battles and the venues in which they took place.

*Negotium*, pl. *negotia* (La): daily businesses or affairs.
Numidian marble: called by the Italian stonecutters giallo antico, ancient yellow, is yellow coloured and it was quarried in ancient Numidia, north-Africa.

Octastyle (from Gk): having eight columns in the front, as in some Greek temples.

Odeon (Gk): smaller than a theatre, it was used for musical concerts and for recitations of poetry or show declamations.

Opera omnia (La): complete work of an author or artist.

Opes (La): Wealth.

Optimus Princeps (La): epithet of Trajan, officially declared by the Senate 'the best emperor'.

Opus sectile (La): art technique where marble, mother of pearl and glass pieces are cut and inlaid into walls and floors to make a picture or pattern.

Ordo terrarum (La): the order of the pacified territories controlled by Rome.

Paludamentum (La): Roman cloak fastened at one shoulder, worn by military commanders. During the empire it was restricted to the emperor.

Panem et circenses (La): literally 'bread and circus', i. e. food and entertainment.

Pater patriae (La): title conferred by the Roman Senate, meaning 'father of the country', literally 'father of the Fatherland'.

Patera (La): flat ceremonial dish used for pouring libations of liquids to the gods.

Pavonazzetto marble (It): called by the Romans marmor phygium, it was named after the peacock by the Italian stonecutters because of its darker purple markings, with veins of white, recalling the colours of a peacock's tail. The quarries were in Docimium, Asia Minor.

Pensionnaire (Fr): scholar of the French Academy in Rome. French artists who win the Prix de Rome (Rome Prize), are honoured with a 3, 4 or 5-year scholarship in Rome to study art and architecture. They are known as pensionnaires de l'Académie (Academy pensioners).

Perypterus (La): surrounded by columns.

Perypterus sine postico (La): surrounded by columns but without columns at the back.

Phiale (Gk): wide shallow Greek cup, with or without a foot, generally with a boss rising from the center.

Philopolémos (Gk), princeps (La): war lover.

Pietas (La): piety, religiosity.
Platea Traiani (La): a street or square mentioned only once in AD 398. It was probably near the Forum of Trajan.

Pomerium (La): sacred boundary of the city of Rome.

Pontifex maximus (La): literally 'greatest pontiff'. Originally it was the title of the highest priest of Roman religion. Later it was referred to the emperors as one of their many titles, becoming simply a referent for the sacral aspect of imperial duties and powers.

Porticus Porphyretica (La): Porphyry portico.

Portasanta marble (It): white, grey or bluish marble with purplish spots. Named by the Italian stonecutters "holy door", because it decorates the jambs of the Holy Door at St Peter's Basilica in the Vatican City. Called by the Romans marmor chium, named after the quarries in the Greek island of Chios.

Portus Traiani (La): Trajan's harbour.

Praefectus Aegypti (La): governor of Roman Egypt, the prefect administered the Roman province of Egypt with the delegated authority (imperium) of the emperor.

Praefectus annonae (La): the Roman imperial official charged with the supervision of the grain supply to the city of Rome.

Praefectura Urbi (La): the prefecture of the City of Rome.

Praefectus Urbi (La): prefect of the City of Rome.

Praetor urbanus (La): urban praetor presiding in civil cases between citizens.

Praetor peregrinus (La): praetor administering justice among foreigners.

Praetores (La): Roman judicial officers who had broad authority in cases of equity, were responsible for the production of the public games, and, in the absence of consuls, exercised extensive authority in the government.

Princeps (La): literally 'first one' or 'leader', the unofficial title used by the Roman emperors from Augustus to Diocletian.

Principia (La): site of the headquarters tent or building in the centre of the planned camp, where the administration of the legion and religious ceremonies took place.

Procurator Fori Divi Traiani (La): the 'general manager' of the Forum of Trajan.

Prostyle hexastyle (from Gk): having six free standing columns across the front, as in some Greek temples.

Pseudo-perypterus (La) hexastyle (from Gk): having six columns fitted into the wall instead of standing alone, as in some Greek temples.
Psychopomp (from Gk): literally 'guider of souls', creature escorting newly-deceased souls to the afterlife.

_Pteryges_ (Gk): literally feathers in Greek, leather or linen strips or tabs forming a sort of skirt covering and protecting the pelvis and upper thighs of the Greek and Roman soldiers. They also covered the shoulders.

_Publica iudicia_ (La): public courts.

_Quaestiones perpetuae_ (La): criminal courts.

_Rankenfrau_ (Ger): winged, vegiped female also known as the Vegetal Goddess.

_Rara temporum felicitate_ (La): in a rare age of happiness.

_Saeculum aureum_ (La): golden age.

_Semper victor_ (La): always victorious.

_Scaenae frons_ (La): the scene building behind the stage in Roman theatres, that was as tall as the seating area and was divided into at least three stories with a roof extending over the stage area from the top level.

_Schola_ (La): school.

_Scrinium_, pl. _scrinia_ (La): box.

_Signum_ (La): sign.

_Spolia opimia_ (La): literally rich spoils, taken by Romulus as a trophy when he defeated and stripped Acro, king of the Caeninenses, following the Rape of the Sabine Women.

_Summi viri_ (La): topmost men.

_Suppl icatio thure et vino_ (La): during the sacrifices, supplication with incense and wine made before the immolation of the victim.

_Tabernae_ (La): shops.

_Tabula_, pl. _tabulae_ (La): tablet(s).

_Taurochtonous_ (from Gk): killing a bull.

_Telamones_ (from Gk): plural of Telamon, the name of a mythical hero. Male figures used as pillars to support an entablature or other structures.

_Templum Gentis Flaviae_ (La): Temple of the Flavian family.

_Templum Pacis_ (La): Temple of Peace.
Tepidarium (La): A warm (tepidus) room in Roman baths lying between the frigidarium (cold bath room) and caldarium (hot bath room), usually heated by a hypocaust.

Theatrum Traiani (La): Trajan's Theatre.

Tribunus militum a populo (La): military tribune by popular demand.

Tropaeum Traiani (La): Trajan's Trophy.

Thiasos (Gk), thiasus (La): retinue of Dionysus.

Thymiaterion, pl. thymiateria (Gk): incense burner.

Tituli and eloquilia (La): in the Forum of Augustus there was a gallery of statues. Under each statue an inscription (titulus) was appended, recording the name, magistracies held, and a brief account of the achievements of the individual (eloquia).

Trait d'union (Fr): link.

Tribunalia (La): courthouses.

Torques (La): torc, from the verb torqueo, to twist, Celtic metal neck ring.

υβριστής (Gk): insulter or abuser.

Ultror (La): avenger.

Ultror Moesiae (La): avenger of the Roman province of Moesia.

Venationes (La): animal hunts held in the amphitheatre.

Via Traiana (La): Trajan's Way.

Victoria (La): Victory.

Victoria Romanorum, virtus Augusti, gloria exercitus (La): 'victory of the Romans', 'military valour of the emperor', 'glory of the army'.

Volumen, pl. volumina (La): papyrus scrolls.