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# Columna divi Antonini

John B. WARD-PERKINS

The emperor Antoninus Pius died on March 7, A.D. 161\*. His body was cremated with due ceremony in the Campus Martius; he was formally deified and, like Trajan before him and Marcus Aurelius after him, he was commemorated by the erection of a column, which was located near the site of the *ustrinum* upon which his body had been cremated. Column and *ustrinum* were excavated at the beginning of the eighteenth century, an operation which attracted a great deal of interest at the time and was recorded in considerable detail by a number of eyewitnesses. The *ustrinum* lay just to the west of the Piazza Montecitorio beneath the present-day Via del Vicariato. It was oriented slightly west of north, roughly though not exactly parallel with the Via Lata (Via del Corso), and the column stood on the same axis and orientation about 30 m. to the north of it. Similarly oriented and a short distance to the east lay the *ustrinum* of Marcus Aurelius, the remains of which were partially recovered when the site of the modern parliament building was cleared in 1907. The fourth member of the group, the column of Marcus Aurelius, which might logically have been expected to occupy a similar position in relation to his *ustrinum*, was in fact sited some distance away, near the Via Lata, where it still stands<sup>1</sup>.

The column of Antoninus Pius never wholly vanished from sight, but by the beginning of the eighteenth century only about 6 m. of the shaft still projected above the mound of ruins, the *Mons Citatorius*, or *Acceptorius*, the name of which is commemorated in the adjoining Palazzo and Piazza Montecitorio. The Corinthian capital and the statue of Antoninus Pius which crowned it in antiquity had long vanished, but as early as 1694, when Carlo Fontana presented to Innocent XII his plans for the development of the area, we already find reference to the idea of reusing the column within the new project, balancing the column of Marcus Aurelius as part of a single grand design. In 1703 Clement XI gave orders for its excavation, and in 1705, after several false starts, the column was successfully lowered from its sculptured pedestal and, together with the pedestal, was transported to the open space of the Piazza Montecitorio. There some of the sculpture was restored, and between 1761 and 1763 the base was erected in the

\* I am indebted to Dr. Curtis Clay for much patient help in steering me through the intricacies of the coinage — the advice is his, the mistakes are mine; and to Dr. Peter Kussmaul for helping me with the details of the inscription. Also to the many colleagues at the Institute for Advanced Study with whom I have been able to discuss the implications of the identifications here proposed, and especially to Professor J. F. Gilliam, who very kindly read and commented on the manuscript.

## Abbreviations:

*BMCRE* *British Museum Coinage of the Roman Empire* (London).  
*IGR* *Inscriptiones graecae ad res romanas pertinentes* (Paris).

<sup>1</sup> The basic study of the eighteenth-century finds is that of Christian Hülsen in *RM*, 4 (1889), 41-64. For subsequent bibliography, see E. Nash, *Pictorial Dictionary of Ancient Rome*, I (London, 1961). Lise Vogel, *The Column of Antoninus Pius* (Harvard, 1973) gives a very fully documented account of the excavation and subsequent vicissitudes of the column and its pedestal.



Piazza and is so shown by Piranesi in a print published in 1770. A number of projects were put forward for the use of the column, but none came to fruition. It was removed to storage behind the Curia Innocenziana, and there it was badly damaged by a fire in 1759 which consumed the timbers supporting and protecting it. In 1789-1790 what remained was broken up and used to repair various Roman obelisks, notably that which now stands in the Piazza Montecitorio, while the pedestal was removed to the Vatican, to the centre of the Giardino della Pigna. In 1885 it was again moved to the position which it now occupies at the north end of the Cortile della Pigna. Set into the plinth below it is part of the inscribed undersurface of the column, the only recognizable fragment of it still surviving.

The dedication of the column, inscribed in letters of bronze on one face of the pedestal, reads:

DIVO.ANTONINO.AVG.PIO  
ANTONINVS.AVGVSTVS.ET  
VERVS.AVGVSTVS.FILII

(CIL, VI, 1004)

Though hardly in itself sufficient to justify the claim of its latest commentator, Lise Vogel, that it "securely documents the monument to shortly after the death of Antoninus in A.D.161"<sup>2</sup>, the emphatic simplicity of the statement of the joint succession would accord very well with such an interpretation. On the opposite face is a symbolic representation of the apotheosis of Antoninus and of his wife Faustina, who died in A.D.140-141 and was already commemorated in the temple in the Forum Romanum, to which the name of Antoninus was now added. The couple are shown as borne heavenwards on the back of a winged male figure in the presence of Roma and of a semi-nude reclining youth, who upholds an obelisk and is generally agreed to be a personification of the Campus Martius, bearing the *gnomon* of Augustus.

On the two lateral faces of the pedestal are portrayed a pair of near-identical scenes depicting the *decursio*, or military procession, which was an integral part of a Roman public funeral. The doubling of the scene has in the past occasioned some perplexity, but a detailed analysis by Lise Vogel<sup>3</sup> of the costumes and grouping of the individual figures has led her to suggest that the leaders of the two processions were none other than the deceased emperor's two adopted sons; of the remaining riders ten represent the body of the *equites Romani*, the remaining six the *seviri equitum Romanorum*, the leaders of the six *turmae* into which the *equites* were organized. There was a long-standing association of the emperor's heir with the *equites* (Marcus himself had served as a *sevir* in 140), and from the accounts of the funerals of Pertinax and of Septimius Severus it is clear that the traditional association of the *equites* themselves with the ceremonials of public funerals was still maintained<sup>4</sup>. The footsoldiers are praetorians<sup>5</sup>.

So interpreted, the virtual identity of the two *decursio* scenes makes very good sense in the context of the situation that immediately followed the death of Antoninus. Although, in accordance with Hadrian's wishes, Antoninus had adopted Lucius at the same time as Marcus, he had subsequently done very little to advance him, and there seems no reason to doubt the truth of the tradition that the formal appointment of Lucius as co-emperor with his adopted brother was made by the senate on the insistence of Marcus himself<sup>6</sup>. For the first time the Empire found itself with two equal rulers: *imperium Romanum duos Augustos habere coepit*<sup>7</sup>. From the coinage and from epigraphy it is clear that this was an innovation that was felt to warrant the full deployment of the official propaganda services.

Both the column and the monumentalized *ustrinum* are shown on the commemorative *Divus Antoninus* coinage<sup>8</sup>. Of the six known reverse types one is an altar, another an eagle on a globe, a generic symbol of apotheosis, two others, on *denarii* and *sestertii* respectively, portray a statue of the late emperor, and a similar statue drawn by a quadriga of elephants. All of these are

<sup>2</sup> L. Vogel, *op. cit.*, p. 1.

<sup>3</sup> L. Vogel, *op. cit.*, p. 56-60.

<sup>4</sup> Dio, 77, 5,5 (Pertinax); Herodian, 4, 2,9 (Septimius Severus).

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Dio, 59, 11,2, of the funeral of Drusilla.

<sup>6</sup> The appointment of Verus as co-consul with Marcus in 160 had perhaps already marked the beginning of a change of policy in this direction; see P. L. Strack, *Untersuchungen zur römischen Reichsprägung*, III (Stuttgart, 1937), p. 161-2.

<sup>7</sup> SHA, *vit. M. Aurelii*, 7, 6.

<sup>8</sup> *BMCRE*, IV (London, 1940), nos. 41-77, pl. 54, 9-18 and 870-893, pls. 71, 8, 9 and 72, 1-5, 10, 11.



numismatic stereotypes which could have been issued immediately after the formal deification of Antoninus, before plans for the column had taken shape. The fifth type shows the column as planned, if not already completed, surmounted by a statue of Antoninus and standing within a balustrade. The sixth illustrates the *ustrinum* in the monumentalized form of which the excavations of 1703 revealed the remains. All of this is fully consistent with rapid planning and execution of the column; and although this is as much as one can claim on the basis of the coin evidence, on balance it does look as if the column was planned very shortly after Antoninus' death and erected with no more delay than would have been needed to assemble the materials and workmen.

Why the choice of a column? Lise Vogel makes curiously heavy weather of this question<sup>9</sup>. After remarking that "the most obvious precedent for the Antonine column is the column of Trajan", she rejects the precedent on the grounds that Trajan's column, though conceived as a commemorative victory monument, was in fact used as his tomb, whereas the column of Antoninus was a cenotaph. Now it is perfectly true that Trajan's burial within the city limits was an unprecedented honour, and one that was not repeated. Although there was a well-established tradition of such intramural *heroa* in the cities of the eastern provinces<sup>10</sup>, the practice never caught on in the West; and Hadrian's building of a grandiose new dynastic mausoleum just across the river obviated the need for any repetition of what remained a unique event. But whatever may have been in the minds of the original designers of Trajan's column, it remains an undoubted fact that he was in the event buried in the pedestal; the column *did* become a funerary monument; and when it was the turn of Marcus Aurelius himself to be commemorated in the Campus Martius, near the site of his own *ustrinum* and of the column of Antoninus, it was quite unquestionably Trajan's column that was the model chosen. There does not seem to be any reason why Marcus Aurelius should have felt differently twenty years earlier when it was a matter of commemorating his adoptive father.

The obvious precedent is in fact precisely what it seems to be. There was a difference between the two monuments, but it was a purely formal difference. Whereas the shaft of Trajan's column was of marble and elaborately carved with the story of his Dacian victories, that of Antoninus was a plain granite monolith. The question at issue is not what model Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus were following, but why they chose to differ from that model in this particular respect.

One reason that has been suggested is that Antoninus Pius was a man of peace, to whom a monument with the detailed connotations of Trajan's column would have been singularly inappropriate; whereas Marcus Aurelius, a soldier emperor *malgré lui* who had spent much of his reign campaigning on the northern frontiers, was very properly commemorated in carvings that were a deliberate evocation of his great soldier predecessor. This is true enough so far as it goes; and one might add that the column of Egyptian granite which Malalas records as having been erected in the centre of Antioch to carry a statue of Tiberius<sup>11</sup> would have afforded a familiar formal precedent for the simpler, monolithic version. But there is another possible reason for the choice of this alternative, a more prosaic but not for that reason any less cogent reason, and it is the purpose of this note to invite consideration of this alternative.

The essential piece of evidence is the inscription on the underside of the column shaft (Fig. 1 and 2)<sup>12</sup>. This was cut at the quarry, before shipment, and it records that the column was one of a pair, fifty Roman feet in length, which were extracted and inventoried in the ninth year of Trajan's reign; it names the quarry supervisor, Dioskouros, and the engineer in charge of the operation, [...]*jeides*, who is presumably to be identified with the Herakleides known to have been operating at about this time in the quarries of grey Egyptian granite at Mons Claudianus in the Eastern Desert<sup>13</sup>. Although this inscription raises a number of secondary questions, it also establishes the fact that the column of Antoninus was quarried in A.D. 105-106, some 56 years before it was called into service. It must have been lying in the marble yards ever since.

<sup>9</sup> L. Vogel, *op. cit.*, p. 23-31.

<sup>10</sup> *E.g.* the near-contemporary burial of C. Iulius Celsus Polemaeanus in a vaulted chamber beneath the apse of his library at Ephesus.

<sup>11</sup> Malalas, *Chron.*, 300-301.

<sup>12</sup> *IGR*, 1, 529; first accurately published by De Fabris, *Il piedistallo della colonna Antonina* (Roma, 1846), whence L. Bruzza, *Ann.Inst.*, 1870, tav. d'agg. G, 3; and, with photograph, Ward-Perkins, *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 57 (1971), p. 23, n. 27, and pl. XIII.

<sup>13</sup> L. 2, "in the ninth year of Trajan", refers almost certainly to the Egyptian royal year, beginning on 29 August 105, rather than to the tribunician year, beginning on 10 December 104. The significance of the small symbol at the end of l. 3 is not clear. For Herakleides, see *IGR*, 1, 1260 (*CIG*, 4713 d); and Th. Kraus, "Zu einer neugefundenen Inschrift am Mons Claudianus", *Acta of the Fifth International Congress of Greek and Roman Epigraphy* (Oxford, 1971), p. 391-395.



Apart from the unusual size of the column, there is nothing exceptional about such a time-lag. The marble workers employed in a building at Ostia which was destroyed in A.D. 394 during construction, were found to have been using two blocks of Numidian marble quarried at Simitthu three hundred years earlier, under Domitian<sup>14</sup>; and among the pieces found in the nineteenth century in the marble yards below the Aventine were a large number of blocks and columns which had been quarried in the first or second centuries A.D. and which in the event were never used. Much of the turn-over in the marble yards was, of course, far more rapid. But by the beginning of the second century supplies of many qualities had built up to the point where almost any normal demands could have been met from stock.

If, then, the successors of Antoninus really were in a hurry (and we have seen that the evidence does accord with such a suggestion), here ready to hand was a splendid piece. It was not quite the largest monolithic column ever to reach Rome, as was claimed at the time of its excavation<sup>15</sup>; the Proconnesian marble columns of the Basilica of Maxentius were in fact longer by five Roman feet<sup>16</sup>. Nevertheless, at fifty Roman feet it was already ten feet longer than the columns of the Pantheon — and it was ready for immediate use. Why look further? We may surely accept that it was the column of Trajan which suggested the choice of a columnar monument, and that the exact form which the latter took was determined by the availability of this particular column.

What remains unexplained is how a piece of these exceptional dimensions came to be lying in the marble yards, awaiting use. It must surely have been originally quarried to order. By this date columns of normal lengths were being quarried as a matter of standard production, but it is hard to believe that two pieces of the gigantic size of the Antoninus column were laboriously extracted and shipped to Rome on the off-chance that a use might be found for them. For what purpose, then, was the column originally ordered? Why was it not used, and what happened to its fellow?

We can only guess. But we do have several substantial clues — among them the material, the size, and the date. This out-size pair of granite columns can only have been intended for imperial use; and the contemporary monument which outshone all others for the grandiosity of its conception and the richness of its materials was, of course, the Forum and Basilica of Trajan<sup>17</sup>.

The Forum and Basilica were dedicated on January 1, 112, and Trajan's Column on May 12, 113<sup>18</sup>. These are the only firmly attested dates that we have; but given the size of the enterprise and the quantities of exotic materials involved, it may safely be assumed that the main outlines of the project were established by, at latest, June 105, when Trajan left Rome to assume command of the Second Dacian War<sup>19</sup>. There would still, of course, have been room for considerable modifications of detail, particularly in the part that lay beyond the Basilica. The Column, for example, cannot have been planned in detail (if at all) before the end of the Second Dacian War in 106 and Trajan's return to Rome in the following year; indeed, the fact that its foundations were trenched through the concrete substructures of the pavement of the library courtyard shows that it was an afterthought<sup>20</sup>. Even so we have to allow time for designing and for the assembly of the very large blocks of fine Luni marble of which it is composed; and here the coinage can perhaps help us<sup>21</sup>. Prior to Trajan's sixth consulate (January 1, 112) the representations of the Column on coins are rare and schematic, and one of them appears to show it as crowned by an eagle, instead of by the statue of Trajan which is what the completed

<sup>14</sup> G. Becatti, *Edificio con opus sectile fuori Porta Marina, Scavi di Ostia*, VI (Roma, 1969), p. 22-5; see also *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 57 (1971), p. 13-14.

<sup>15</sup> E.g. by Francesco Posterla in Carlo Fontana, *Discorso sopra l'antico Monte Citatorio* (Roma, 1708), p. 51: "la maggiore di tutte le altre di Roma e conseguentemente di tutto il Mondo".

<sup>16</sup> *MAAR*, 4 (1924), p. 142, fig. 20.

<sup>17</sup> The only other major building recorded as having been under construction at this time was the Baths of Trajan, dedicated in 109. Although the eight columns of the frigidarium would have been large, comparison with the Baths of Diocletian and the Basilica of Maxentius shows that they could not have been of these huge dimensions.

<sup>18</sup> *Fasti Ostienses*, fragm. 22 (A. Deggrassi, *Inscr. Ital.*, XIII 1 [1947], p. 173 f.); cf. *CIL*, VI, 959, 960. The brick stamps from the libraries confirm that the original structures were of Trajanic date (H. Bloch, *I bolli laterizi* [Roma, 1947], p. 57-61) but are not more closely datable.

<sup>19</sup> *Fasti Ostienses*, loc. cit.

<sup>20</sup> G. Boni, *NotSc*, 1907, 361 f.

<sup>21</sup> P. L. Strack, *Untersuchungen zur römischen Reichsprägung des zweiten Jahrhunderts*, vol. 1 (Stuttgart, 1931), p. 205-6, nos. 386, 388 (cos VI); H. Mattingly, *BMCRE*, III, p. LXXX, CIII; F. Panvini Rosati, "La colonna sulle monete di Traiano", *Ann. Ist. Ital. di Numismatica*, 5-6, 1958-59 (1960), p. 29-40.



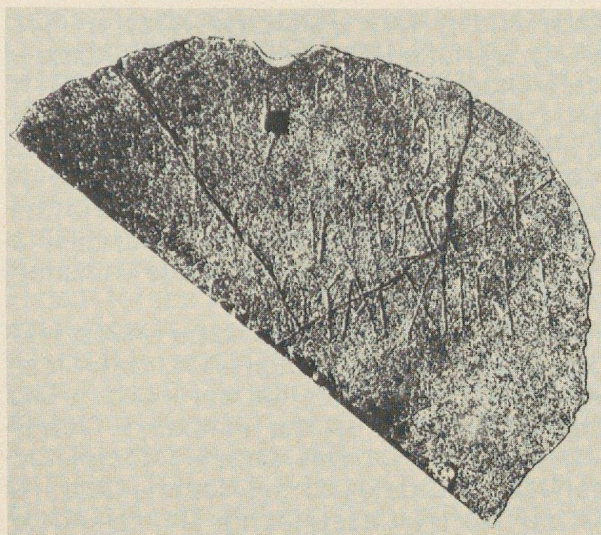


Fig. 1. The inscription of Dioskouros and Herakleides.

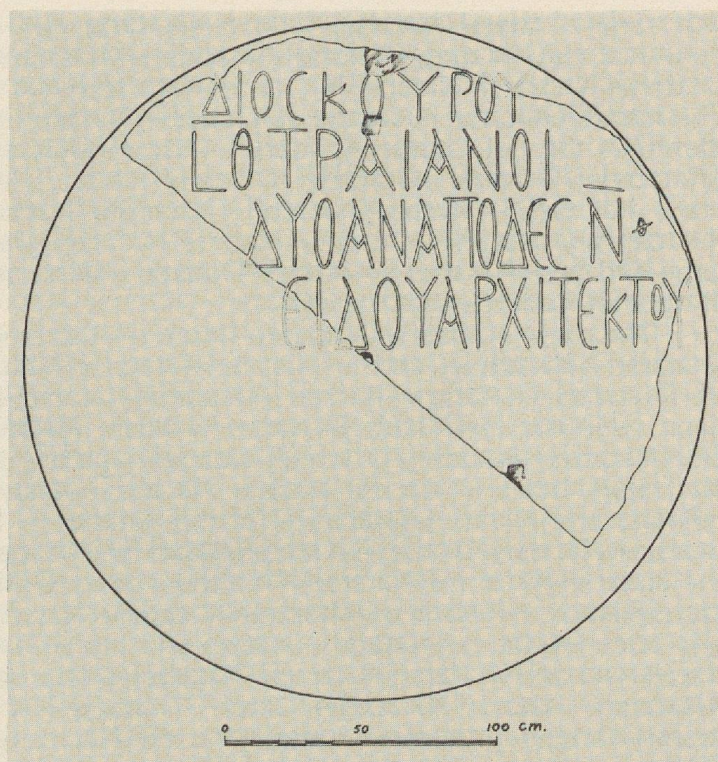


Fig. 2. Drawing of the inscription.

monument carried<sup>22</sup>. It is not until the sixth consulate coinage that we are confronted by what is, in numismatic terms, a true likeness of the Column as it was actually completed. It looks as if most of the actual erection and carving took place in the two years immediately preceeding the inauguration ceremony of May 12, 113<sup>23</sup>.

However the dedication of the Column was not the end of the story. Beyond it, completing the grand design, lay the temple which we know to have been dedicated by Hadrian in honour of Divus Traianus and Diva Plotina<sup>24</sup>. Plotina died in 121 or 122, and the actual dedication in this form may well not have taken place until Hadrian's return from his great provincial tour, in 127. Since the formal deification of Trajan could not have taken place until after his death in 117, it is usually assumed that the temple was not only dedicated but was also substantially built by Hadrian.

This, as it stands, is a reasonable enough conclusion, but it does leave a lot of loose ends. For what such evidence is worth, the architectural logic of the whole great axial complex cries aloud for the emphatic dominant at the far end which the huge temple finally supplied. Irrespective of whether Trajan did anything about its construction during his lifetime, it is hard to believe that some such feature did not exist on the drawing board right from the outset.

The coinage, which is our fullest continuous document for the period and cannot therefore be disregarded, is exasperatingly ambiguous. The fact that Hadrian neither records the dedication nor illustrates the temple is in itself of no significance. The only major Hadrianic monument to appear on his coinage is his temple of Venus and Rome, and it is already certain from other sources that he did dedicate the temple of Divus Traianus. Trajan's own coinage does, on the other hand, illustrate no less than two large octostyle temples between c. 105 and 107, but the identifications of both are controversial.

<sup>22</sup> P.L. Strack, *op. cit.*, pl. VI, no. 386; not to be confused (as it is by Becatti, *La Colonna Istoriata* [Roma, 1960], p. 26-31) with pl. VIII, no. 458, which illustrates a column without a pedestal and with a smooth shaft, surmounted by an owl. This is a late cos VI coin (*BMCRE*, III, 1025, pl. 41,7) and, if genuine, it portrays a different monument. But Curtis Clay has suggested to me that the coin may well be a forgery.

<sup>23</sup> There is nothing to show at what stage it was decided to incorporate a funerary chamber within the base of the column. The latest possible date for the inclusion of such a chamber would have been at the moment of cutting and assembling the eight huge blocks which constitute the pedestal, and this can hardly have been later than 111.

<sup>24</sup> *CIL*, VI 1, 966; VI 4.2, 31215. The recorded fragments appear to come from two inscriptions with identical texts, one of which was "in very large bronze letters" and comes presumably from the façade of the temple itself. Cf. SHA, *Hadr.*, 19, 9: *nunquam ipse nisi in Traiani templo nomen suum scripsit*.



One of these temples, with a standing cult-statue and a very distinctive array of five acroterial statues ranged along the pediment, is tentatively identified by Strack<sup>25</sup> as the temple of Divus Nerva to which Pliny is thought to make a reference in the Panegyric of A.D.103<sup>26</sup>. The identification is accepted as plausible by Mattingly<sup>27</sup> but rejected outright by Hill<sup>28</sup>, who identifies the cult-statue as representing Honos, and the coins as referring to an otherwise unrecorded Trajanic rebuilding of one of the city's three ancient shrines of that divinity. Two of these may well have disappeared long before, but one is known to have been still extant in the first century A.D. when it was restored by Vespasian. Divus Nerva or Honos? In either case a large and (since it was an official Trajanic enterprise) opulent building seems to have vanished altogether from the later record.

The other octostyle temple to figure on the Trajanic coinage of about the same period had a seated cult-statue, and it must have been a building of even greater pretensions, since it is portrayed as standing within an independent enclosure flanked by monumental porticoes. It has been variously identified. Brown and Nash, for example, take it to be the temple of Venus Genetrix, the rebuilding of which was perhaps begun by Domitian but was certainly completed by Trajan; but they do not explain the discrepancy between the dates of the commemorative coinage and of the rededication of the temple, in 113, nor do they account for the failure to represent its most distinctive architectural feature, namely the substitution of a sheer podium for the usual flight of frontal steps<sup>29</sup>. Others have identified it as the temple of Divus Traianus, an identification which is architecturally satisfactory, but which leaves an awkward twenty-year gap between the coinage in question and the actual dedication<sup>30</sup>. Hill's suggestion that this is the temple on the Palatine which Elagabalus appropriated for Sol-Elagabal, and which Severus Alexander restored to Jupiter Ultor<sup>31</sup>, rests solely on his identification of the cult-statue as representing Jupiter Victor, since the third-century coins which portray the building on the Palatine and which he claims as displaying a striking similarity to the Trajanic issues, do in fact illustrate a hexastyle temple, obliging him to postulate a rebuilding by Elagabalus<sup>32</sup>. On the internal evidence of the coins Strack and Mattingly<sup>33</sup> were probably wiser to concede defeat, leaving us with yet another very large monument on our hands, a monument which, be it noted, must have been of the same order of size as the Forum Augustum and the temple of Mars Ultor.

In terms of architecture, it is unquestionably the temple which Hadrian dedicated to Divus Traianus and to Diva Plotina which, of all the buildings known to have been associated with Trajan, most nearly approximates to the representations on Trajan's own coinage. Whatever survives of it lies buried beneath the church of S. Maria di Loreto, where remains attributable to it have been recovered on a number of occasions<sup>34</sup>. It was certainly a grandiose building; it was octostyle (or larger), and there is some reason to believe that it stood against the rear wall of an open space, flanked by porticoes and facing the Column and the Basilica Ulpia. There are substantial difficulties in the way of identifying it with either of the buildings shown on the Trajanic coinage, among them the *prima facie* improbability that Trajan could have been seen to be preparing a temple destined to be dedicated to himself; and again the problem of the cult figures shown in the coinage. Nevertheless, it remains true that in purely architectural terms what we know of the temple of Divus Traianus does accord very well with the image portrayed on the coinage, and particularly with that of the more elaborate of the two buildings.

It is at this point that we may return to the Antonine Column. The only relevant fragment of the temple of Divus Traianus still accessible is the upper part of a huge monolithic column of

<sup>25</sup> P.L. Strack, *op. cit.*, p. 147-9, nos. 152 (pl. II) and 392 (pl. VI).

<sup>26</sup> *Paneg.* 2: (*Nerva*) *quem tu lacrimis primum, ita ut decuit filium, mox templis honestasti*. But this passage could equally well mean no more than the inclusion of Divus Nerva among the existing cults of the Divi throughout the Empire. It adds little or nothing to the presumption, based on historical precedent, that provision of some sort must have been made in the capital for the cult of Divus Nerva.

<sup>27</sup> *BMCRE*, III, p. CII.

<sup>28</sup> P.V. Hill, *NumChr*, 5 (1965), p. 157-8.

<sup>29</sup> D.F. Brown, *Temples of Rome as Coin-types, Numismatic Notes and Monographs*, 90 (New York, 1940), p. 15, pl. IV, 3; E. Nash, *op. cit.*, I, p. 34, fig. 26. For the rededication in 113, see *Fasti Ostienses* (A. Degrassi, *op. cit.*, fragm. 22). That the steps in this case are not simply a conventional way of representing a temple is shown by the existence of a variant type (P.L. Strack, *op. cit.*, p. 394, pl. VI) portraying a frontal altar and flanking statues.

<sup>30</sup> *E.g.* G. Lugli, *Roma Antica: il centro monumentale* (Roma, 1946), p. 295, fig. 87.

<sup>31</sup> P.V. Hill, *op. cit.*, p. 158-160.

<sup>32</sup> The numismatically possible alternative of an octostyle temple portrayed with only six columns so as better to display the cult statue leaves the argument from architectural similarity poised on very slender foundations.

<sup>33</sup> P.L. Strack, *op. cit.*, p. 149-154; H. Mattingly, *op. cit.*, p. CII.

<sup>34</sup> S.B. Platner-T. Ashby, *A Topographical Dictionary of Ancient Rome* (Oxford, 1929), s.v. *Forum Traiani*; to which add R. Lanciani, *Storia degli Scavi di Roma*, II (Roma, 1902), p. 124. Ligorio speaks of columns 6 feet in diameter.



Mons Claudianus granite now lying near the edge of the excavated area, just to the north of the pedestal of Trajan's Column. It is not an easy piece to measure with precision, but the diameter at the narrowest point of the neck, just below the upper moulding can be calculated as between 162 and 166 cm.<sup>35</sup> The corresponding dimensions of one of the forty-foot granite columns of the porch of the Pantheon has been very precisely measured as 131.25 cm.<sup>36</sup> We do not have the equivalent figure for the Column of Antoninus, even the length of which is variously recorded by the eighteenth-century observers. Fortunately, however, we do have the clear statement of the quarry inscription that it was fifty Roman feet long, and, assuming the same relative proportions as the Pantheon column, we get an equivalent neck dimension of 164 cm. Except for the Pantheon column, which was very carefully measured with precision equipment, these figures are approximate, but the approximations lie well within the margin of accuracy to which Roman builders themselves were accustomed to working. Given the practice of quarrying large columns to standard dimensions calculated in multiples of five or ten Roman feet, it does therefore seem very likely that those of the temple of Trajan were also fifty-footers.

In other words, in the year 105 columns of the exceptional size of those used in the temple of Divus Traianus were being quarried in Egypt. That the column of Antoninus was of red Aswān granite and that lying beside Trajan's Column of grey Mons Claudianus granite is hardly a difficulty. We find precisely the same combination of red and grey Egyptian granite a few years later in the porch of the Pantheon; and with the huge programme of Trajan's Forum to complete, it would have made good logistic sense to distribute production between the two big imperial quarries which produced what were evidently felt to be compatible materials. Nor is it an accident that we find the same column-specialist, Herakleides, active in both quarries at just about this date. Similar reasons of good sense could be invoked to explain how one of the columns came to be left lying in the yards, to be put into service half-a-century later. Allowing for the hazards of seasonal shipping and for the time needed for the actual quarrying and dressing of one of these huge monoliths, one would have had to reckon on at least two years between ordering and delivery. Accidents did occur at the quarries, in transit, and during erection, and it would have been plain folly not to have allowed a margin of one or two extra pieces of each dimension.

The suggestion that the Antoninus Column originally reached Rome as part of a shipment destined for the temple that was to stand at the north-west end of Trajan's Forum is in accordance with the known archaeological facts, and it does at least have the merit of providing a rational explanation for the presence in the marble yards of a granite column of hitherto unprecedented size. The problem remains, then, one primarily of historical probability. Is it inconceivable that the emperor who was prepared to break with tradition by arranging openly during his lifetime for his own burial within the *pomerium* might also have been realistic enough to make plans for the temple which all precedent indicated would be accorded to him after his death? Not, of course, under that name. But a formula could surely have been found which would have enabled work to proceed on what would one day become his own temple, without giving overt offence to contemporary religious susceptibilities. For example, might it not have been conceived initially as a dynastic temple, dedicated in the first instance to Divus Nerva, the founder of the new imperial family, and destined within Trajan's own lifetime to accommodate two further Divi, his own natural father and his sister, both of whom were deified in or about A.D. 112<sup>37</sup>? Such a dedication, while leaving the way open to a future rededication that would include Trajan himself, would in no way have violated the conventions of the charade which accompanied the according of divine honours after death to deserving holders of the principate and to members of their immediate families<sup>38</sup>. The Column-heroon, established within the city limits, was in fact a far more substantial innovation and one which without very explicit literary and archaeological evidence we should probably have had considerable difficulty in accepting.

As a basis for discussion, then, it may be suggested that the plan for a temple was an integral part of the original project, which was presumably formulated in 103-104 after the conclusion of the first Dacian War and before the outbreak of the second Dacian War in 105. The orders for materials were despatched, and at least one pair of columns was quarried between August 105 and August 106. In or after 107 the design of the complex was modified so as to include the sculptured column, which was to be a commemorative victory monument

<sup>35</sup> I owe these measurements to Luciana Valentini.

<sup>36</sup> *MAAR*, 4 (1924), p. 114, fig. 17.

<sup>37</sup> Very much as later in the century Antoninus Pius built and dedicated to Diva Faustina the temple which, after his own death, was dedicated also to himself.

<sup>38</sup> For the minor Divi of the imperial family in the second century, see James H. Oliver, *Harvard Theological Review*, 42 (1949), p. 35-40.



and a heroon-tomb for the emperor. The forum and basilica were ready for dedication at the beginning of 112, and the column in May of the following year. The temple was not dedicated in what was to be its definitive form until after the deaths of both Trajan (117) and Plotina (probably in 121), very possibly not indeed until some years thereafter, on Hadrian's return to Rome in 127. Later tradition held that Hadrian was also responsible for its construction. But that would have been a very natural inference from the fact, visible for all to see, that contrary to his usual practice of personal anonymity his name appeared on the dedicatory inscription of the temple, as it was bound to do on a dynastic monument dedicated by the emperor *parentibus suis*. This later tradition cannot be used to exclude the possibility that actual building was well advanced, if not completed, during Trajan's own lifetime, possibly even at the same time as the rest of the complex, in 112-113.

How much (if any) of this is reflected in the coin evidence is a matter which only numismatists are competent to decide. A mere archeologist may, however, be permitted to remark that the postulation of an otherwise totally unrecorded octostyle temple of (for example) Honos does raise reciprocal problems for the archaeologist and topographer. An octostyle Roman temple was by any standards a large building. To lose all subsequent trace of one such may be a topographical possibility. To lose two verges on the careless. We should all be happier if at least one of the representations of the octostyle buildings on the coinage could be related to the building at the north-west end of Trajan's Forum. This would involve two assumptions; that the coinage was programmatic rather than an actual view of the finished building, and that the form of dedication depicted is compatible with the eventual emergence of this building as the temple of Divus Traianus. Strack, in identifying one of these buildings as possibly a temple of Divus Nerva, would seem to be pointing in this direction. Is the coinage of 112 which jointly honours Divus Nerva and Divus Traianus Pater possibly relevant<sup>39</sup>? The date is suggestive. Diva Marciana could have been honoured in the same building. These are matters upon which the present writer is in no way competent to pronounce, but the hypothesis does *prima facie* seem to be one worth exploring.

<sup>39</sup> P.L. Strack, *op. cit.*, p. 215-216, pl. III; H. Mattingly, *op. cit.*, p. LXXXI, nos. 498-499, pl. 17, 18, 19.