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Behind the Scenes of Trajan's Column

The lecture aims to re-examine aspects of the study of the reliefs of Trajan's Column by Conrad Cichorius. The 19<sup>th</sup> century pioneering studies of Wilhelm Froehner and Salmon Reinach were followed by that of Conrad Cichorius. His meticulous research encompassed, for the first time, a close examination of the plaster casts of the Column's reliefs that were produced upon the request of Napoléon III. Coupled with the results of field trips his study yielded the publication of two atlases and a companion book in which the canonic division of the scenes, still in use to date, was set. The destructive impact of the air pollution in Rome in the past century marks these plaster casts as the most dependable representation of the Column's depictions. Recently, over 200 unnumbered plates of the Cichorius' atlases were discovered in a bookshop in Germany. The sheets of the plates exhibit pencil notes and varied signs, all clearly indicating that these are the art proofs and handexampler of Cichorius. Most interesting of all were the German scholar's remarks, as well as his dividing marks that partly deviate (!) from the canonic division of the final publication. This find sheds new light upon the varied considerations that stood behind Cichorius's division of the spiral reliefs, which comprises the narrative depicted upon Trajan's Column.