

THE JOSHUA ROLL: A MODEL BOOK

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ABSTRACT

Fannie Ouyang: The Joshua Roll: A Model Book
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The Joshua Roll (Rome, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Pal. Gr. 431) is a Byzantine illuminated manuscript most commonly dated to the tenth century. It is often compared to the Bayeux Tapestry or Roman triumphal columns due to its continuous narrative format. Stylistically, it is compared to the Paris Psalter (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, MS. gr. 139) because the two works display classical techniques. Scholars mostly discuss the roll regarding its contents – the illustrations and text – however, this thesis will shift the conversation towards the manuscript’s unusual scroll format, which had become uncommon by the tenth century. By this time, people had long since transitioned to the codex or book format. By conducting formal, iconographic, and contextual analyses, this paper will question the Joshua Roll’s role as an illuminated manuscript and propose an alternative function as a model book.

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Introduction

The Joshua Roll (Rome, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Pal. Gr. 431) (**Figure 1**) is a Byzantine illuminated manuscript that was made in the Imperial Court School of Byzantium. It is most commonly dated to the tenth century, placing it in the “Byzantine/Macedonian Renaissance.”¹ The manuscript’s date of creation is disputed by scholars in the field of Byzantine art, and it has been dated to as early as the fifth century while the editor of the facsimile edition assigns the manuscript to the later seventh or early eighth century.² It is also noteworthy to mention that Marcantonio Michiel (c. 1484 – 1552), the first writer to ever describe the roll in his *Anonimo*, dated the manuscript to the tenth-century as well.³

The originality of the Joshua Roll and its contents have been the primary focus for scholars, but rather than further contributing to this matter, the thesis will instead bring attention to the manuscript’s format. This question is important because it was highly unusual to see scrolls by the tenth century. They had become increasingly uncommon after the invention of the codex. By providing research towards this issue, the thesis will propose the idea that the illuminated manuscript was created for a different purpose – it was designed as a model book – a book that was typically used as a reference for another artwork. As a model book, the chosen

¹ Andrew S. Keck, “Observations on the Iconography of Joshua,” *The Art Bulletin* 32, no. 4 (1950): 268.

² Meyer Schapiro, “Place of the Joshua Roll in Byzantine History,” *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* 35 (1949): 165.; Otto Mazal, *Josua-Rolle, Codex Vaticanus Pal. Graec. 431 : Facsimile*, (Graz: Akademische Druck- u. Verlagsanstalt, 1983).

³ Otto Kurz, “Recent Research,” *The Burlington Magazine* 91, no. 561 (1949): 355.; Marcanton Michiel, *Der Anonimo Morelliano*, trans. Dr. Theodor Frimmel (Wien: Verlag Von Carl Graeser, 1888), 18.

format for the Joshua Roll would make much more sense since it would have provided a functional purpose and explains the uncommon technique used for the Byzantine illustrations. This argument will suggest that sometime during the manuscript's existence, it was elevated to its now renowned status, but in reality, it should be considered in the role of a utilitarian object.

In order to support my argument, contextual, formal, and iconographic analyses will be utilized. In chapter one, I will reconsider the popular theory that the roll was produced as a gift for an emperor. The concept of a "Macedonian or Byzantine Renaissance" will also be discussed because the concept contributes to the classicizing of the scroll. Chapter two will present a history of the book and examine the functionality of the scroll, which will provide background information on the differences between codices and scrolls. This section of my argument will look at the scroll's physicality and its typical use. The images and text will also be analyzed from a technical standpoint. By introducing these topics into the argument, it allows further deliberation into the unusual format. Lastly, visual comparisons will also be presented, which will allow discussion concerning the generality of the images in the manuscript.

The Joshua Roll has been thoroughly discussed by scholars of Byzantine art history, who most commonly compare it to the Bayeux Tapestry (**Fig. 2**) and triumphal columns such as those of Trajan (**Fig. 3**) and Marcus Aurelius (**Fig. 4**) due to its continuous narrative format. It is also compared to the Paris Psalter (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, MS. gr. 139) (**Fig. 5**) due to the classical style of the illustrations.⁴ There are many theories concerning the manuscript's scroll format such as its content's derivation from wall paintings or columns, but amongst the scholars who have conducted research on the scroll, Kurt Weitzmann's ideas are the most well-

⁴ Keck, "Iconography of Joshua," 267; Steven H. Wander, *The Joshua Roll*, (Wiesbaden: Reichert, 2012), 79-84; Kurt Weitzmann, "Character and Intellectual Origins of the Macedonian Renaissance," In *Studies in Classical and Byzantine Manuscript Illumination*, Chicago and London, (1971): 206.

known and debated. This paper will continually look back on him as the author of the canonical text for the Joshua Roll. Like other scholars, Weitzmann believed that the Joshua Roll's contents must have come from a wall painting or an older illuminated manuscript.⁵ If so, the scroll format would have been the result of lining up images side by side to emulate a continuous frieze.⁶ Although he asserted that the contents were probably copied, the scroll itself was most likely an original in the sense that the Joshua Roll as a scroll and not as a codex, was the only one of its kind to contain contents from the Book of Joshua.⁷

Weitzmann relied heavily on the concept of the "Byzantine or Macedonian Renaissance" which has since been discredited by scholars who do not accept the idea that there was ever a classical revival.⁸ The term is now only used occasionally and typically in quotes to allow it less weight. Weitzmann applied this term to Byzantine artworks that exist from the ninth to the eleventh century – most commonly used for the tenth – when there appeared to be a renewed interest in classical antiquity. John Hanson, agreeing with Erwin Panofsky, says otherwise. He states that the "Byzantine or Macedonian Renaissance" did not exist for a number of reasons such as a lack of a break from the past, which resulted in a false rebirth, or an absence of a full embrace of a renaissance through both art and literature.⁹ Despite such arguments as to why this era of art creation did not exist, Weitzmann placed a lot of weight on the concept. By applying it and accepting the tenth-century dating of the Joshua Roll, he was able to explain the classical

⁵ Kurt Weitzmann, *The Joshua Roll, a Work of the Macedonian Renaissance* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1948), 101-2; Keck, "Iconography of Joshua," 268.

⁶ Keck, "Iconography of Joshua," 268.

⁷ Weitzmann, *Work of Macedonian Renaissance*, 101-2.

⁸ Keck, "Iconography of Joshua," 269.

⁹ John Hanson, "The Rise and Fall of the Macedonian Renaissance," In *A Companion to Byzantium*," edited by Liz James, Blackwell Publishing, (2010): 345.

style of the illustrations as well as the scroll format. With the renewed interest in the style, the scroll format, which was used by ancient Romans and Greeks, became another attribute that further elevated the manuscript to an example of classical revival.¹⁰

Furthering this argument, Weitzmann and Schapiro proposed that the extravagant scroll must have been presented to a successful military emperor such as Nikephoros Phokas or Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus.¹¹ During the tenth century, the Byzantine Empire was experiencing an increased number of successes in military campaigns in the Holy Land.¹² Schapiro claimed that the book of Joshua acquired new meaning in Byzantium during the tenth century and by illustrating it, the Byzantines recalled their victories over the Saracens and expressed their hope for the ultimate restoration of the Holy Land to the Church and the Empire.¹³ He furthered his argument by comparing the manuscript to the triumphal columns, explaining “The choice of the roll flows from the traditional imagery of triumph. In the Roman world, the victories of the emperors Trajan and Marcus Aurelius were monumentalized in triumphal columns on which their campaigns were represented in a continuous spiral band (**Figs. 3 & 4**).”¹⁴ Once again, he argued for a revival of classical antiquity. Amongst the various theories surrounding the Joshua Roll, the idea that it must have been created to celebrate the successes in the Holy Land is one of the most common. Since the scroll continued to carry a

¹⁰ Harry Y. Gamble, *Books and Readers in the Early Church: A History of Early Christian Texts*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), 44.

¹¹ Lyn Rodley, *The Cambridge Introduction to Byzantine Art and Architecture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 186.; Weitzmann, *Work of the Macedonian Renaissance*, 85-88.

¹² Raymond Clemens and Timothy Graham, *Introduction to Manuscript Studies*, (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2007), 250.

¹³ Schapiro, “Place of Joshua Roll,” 168.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 169.

symbolic cultural significance, particularly regarding royal proclamations and certain religious texts, it is possible that it may have acted as a gift to a high-status official.¹⁵

The Joshua Roll is about 31 centimeters tall and 1000 centimeters long. Its contents consist of fifteen folios of partially colored illustrations with an accompanying Greek text from chapters 2-10 of the Old Testament's Book of Joshua. The Book of Joshua is the sixth biblical text from the Old Testament that tells of the military campaigns of the Israelites in northern, southern, and central Canaan and Joshua's, Moses' successor's, triumphs. The book is made up of twenty-four chapters, but it is impossible to tell whether the illuminated manuscript ever contained the biblical text in its entirety. Seeing how abruptly folios 1 (**Fig. 6**) and 15 (**Fig. 7**) begin and end – the illustrations are incomplete – these become visible signs of chapter 1 and succeeding chapters after ten once existing. Although it is now difficult to determine, it is possible that the scroll was originally much longer.

As the above discussion has shown, there are a few theories that attempt to address the scroll format of the Joshua Roll. By taking the arguments presented and positioning Weitzmann within this paper, this research project will argue away from the contents and focus on the manuscript's unique format. Widely accepted as an illuminated manuscript, the thesis will bring attention to the possibility that the artist's intention was to have the Joshua Roll function as a model book.

¹⁵ Clemens and Graham, *Introduction to Manuscript Studies*, 250.

Chapter 1: The “Macedonian Renaissance”

The “Byzantine or Macedonian Renaissance” is a contested term occasionally used for the ninth to the eleventh century in Byzantine history.¹⁶ It is most commonly applied to the tenth century when there appeared to be an increased resurgence in interest in classical scholarship and artistic style. The works of this time displayed antique features, to varying degrees, back to Late Antiquity.¹⁷ Painting and sculpture during the time employed idealized figures and shapes and treated the subjects in a non-anecdotal and emotionally neutral manner. Color came second to line and composition. The concept was first stated by Kondakoff in his *Histoire de l’art byzantin* of 1891. Kondakoff based his ideas on the antique quality of the fourteen miniatures of the Paris Psalter (**Fig. 8**), together with the drawings of the Joshua Roll (**Fig. 9**) of the Vatican Library, and on the assumption that these miniatures and drawings were contemporary with the tenth-century texts that accompanied them.¹⁸ Since the Joshua Roll’s illustrations were drawn in a classicizing style and the date of creation most often places it in the tenth century, Kurt Weitzmann conveniently assigned the scroll to the “Macedonian Renaissance.” By doing so, he was able to easily explain the style of the illuminated manuscript – the illustrations and archaic lettering – as well as its format, attributing both to the desire to replicate classical art in the tenth

¹⁶ The terms Byzantine and Macedonian Renaissance are used interchangeably but Macedonian Renaissance will be the chosen term for this paper

¹⁷ Theodora Antonopoulou, “‘What agreement has the temple of God with idols?’ Christian homilies, ancient myths, and the ‘Macedonian Renaissance’,” *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 106, no. 2 (2013): 618.

¹⁸ C. R. Morey, “Castelseprio and the Byzantine ‘Renaissance’,” *The Art Bulletin* 34, no. 3 (1952): 173.

century.¹⁹ As mentioned in the introduction, if the Joshua Roll was indeed created in the tenth century, it would have fallen in line with the Byzantine Empire's military successes, which supports the explanation that the scroll must have been presented as a gift to a military leader. The format mirrors the continuous narratives of the triumphal columns of classical antiquity in the Roman Empire, such as Trajan's Column (**Fig. 3**) and the Column of Marcus Aurelius (**Fig. 4**). In Weitzmann's opinion, the Rotulus is "the key monument of the Macedonian Renaissance" whose guiding spirit was Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus, who died in the year 959.²⁰ Despite what scholars believe about a revival of classical studies during this time, Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus had been extremely involved in collecting encyclopedias filled with branches of classical learning and recreating classical texts and images. As suggested by Weitzmann, the Joshua Roll would have been gifted to the emperor due to his interest in the subject. Nikephoros Phokas, another military emperor, is also considered by Lyn Rodley who suggests that the leader's exploits provoked comparison with Joshua.²¹ Weitzmann's proposal would indicate that the manuscript was made in such a format to emulate classical antiquity further to please the emperor's interests while Rodley's idea proposes that Nikephoros Phokas would have received the scroll as a reflection of his success. Although these arguments are plausible, this thesis will suggest otherwise. This chapter will examine the applicability of the "Macedonian Renaissance" and explain why the concept is unreliable. In doing so, I will propose that the Joshua Roll was not created in a scroll format to imitate classical antiquity. The "Macedonian Renaissance" was

¹⁹ Weitzmann, *Work of Macedonian Renaissance*, 44-45.

²⁰ Weitzmann, *Work of Macedonian Renaissance*, 85-88.; Keck, "Iconography of Joshua," 268.

²¹ Rodley, *Byzantine Art and Architecture*, 186.

merely a convenient catchall term used to categorize and justify the art of the tenth century.²²

Scholars such as Nikodim Kondakov, Hugo Buchta, and Weitzmann had expressed their approval for the classicism that was displayed in Byzantine art while showing their dismay for the general style that the era seemed to encompass, characterizing it as “lifeless” and a “decadence” languishing in the vacuum that followed the end of the classical past.²³ With such bias for the classical style, Weitzmann relied heavily on the concept of the “Macedonian Renaissance” to place the Joshua Roll into the tenth century where there seemed to be an influx of classical style artworks. Rather than putting the scroll in an earlier year, he insisted that the text, the illustrations, and the format are all deliberate decisions to create a work of art that recalls the classical past. The idea of a Renaissance during the tenth century, however, does not sit well with scholars. As explained by Panofsky, a Renaissance is the revival of something at any given time or the rebirth of everything in a particular period supposed to usher in a modern age.²⁴ Though Panofsky was writing about Western European Carolingian and twelfth-century “renascences,” not a Byzantine one, his concepts have been applied to the Joshua Roll by scholars such as John Hanson. Panofsky’s concept of revival is relatively uncomplicated, and by following this definition, Byzantium did not experience a proper rebirth. The culture is characterized as an extension of Roman culture and not a revival of it because Byzantium had existed in continuity with the Roman imperial past, free from interruption by the Germanic invasions which disrupted Western European culture.²⁵ A rebirth is also characterized by self-awareness. Unlike the artists and humanists in fifteenth-century Florence who were self-

²² Hanson, “Rise and Fall of Macedonian Renaissance,” 350.

²³ Ibid., p. 344.

²⁴ Erwin Panofsky, *Renaissance and Renascences in Western Art* (New York: Harper & Row, 1972), 5.

²⁵ Hanson, “Rise and Fall of Macedonian Renaissance,” 345.

conscious of their intent to revive the lost traditions of antiquity, even when Byzantine humanists did refer to themselves as part of a Renaissance or renewal, they seemed to refer to continuity, rather than innovation.²⁶ Therefore, a true renaissance could not have occurred. The fact that the concept of the “Macedonian Renaissance” is flawed and unreliable renders Weitzmann’s arguments concerning the Joshua Roll’s stylistic appearance and scroll format less significant. If indeed the Byzantine artists continued the classical tradition rather than revived it, a style steeped in antiquity during the tenth century would not have been as revered as modern scholars would like it to be. This reverence existed amongst twentieth-century art historians who valued a classicizing style, rooted in Greek and Roman art, above all other styles. Due to the style of the Joshua Roll and the attention to classical revival, it has often been seen as a distinguished object that has been placed on a pedestal. As one of the artistic pillars of the “Macedonian Renaissance,” once the concept is no longer viable, the manuscript’s status cannot be justified. This raises questions about its role as a gift fit for an emperor. Additionally, unlike the columns of Trajan and Marcus Aurelius, there do not appear to be any scenes that directly reference the successes of the Byzantine emperor.

Although the concept of the “Macedonian Renaissance” holds no real standing, it must also be understood how Weitzmann qualified the Joshua Roll as an object belonging to the proposed revival period. By doing so, we call into question the characteristics that allowed him to justify the manuscript’s status and role in art history. Weitzmann believed the manuscript to be an original artistic creation. There is no other scroll like it in medieval Byzantine art history. As numerous scholars argue, however, the content is most likely copied from past works.²⁷ The

²⁶ H. Hunger, “Christlicher Humanismus,” In: *Reich der Neue Mitte: der christliche Geist der byzantinischen Kultur*, (Graz & Vienna, 1965): 369.

²⁷ Dimitri Tselos, “The Joshua Roll: Original or Copy?” *The Art Bulletin* 32, no. 4 (1950): 275.

illustrations undoubtedly appear classical with the naturalistic modeling of the bodies and the contrapposto that is seen in some of the figures. Whether they have been adopted from much older works or works within the same century is difficult to say. Morey believed that the classical style was passed on through the process of copying the mid-Byzantine style of the ninth through eleventh centuries but does not believe that the Joshua Roll was a copy because it feels too antique to have been understood by a tenth-century copyist, which seems to be a pretentious claim.²⁸ Weitzmann, on the other hand, believed that both the Joshua Roll and its codex model were products of the tenth century, hence, representing works of a Byzantine renaissance.²⁹ Unlike other scholars who believed that the contents must have been derived from much older works of art and passed down, Weitzmann adamantly placed the two works – the Joshua Roll and its codex model – in the same century.³⁰ Qualifying the manuscript as a work belonging in the “Macedonian Renaissance,” one of Weitzmann’s claims was that the insertion motifs that have been added to the work to tie the scenes together are classical elements that have been employed. They are, however, regarded as adaptations of ancient mythological types that have been used through the centuries. The issue with Weitzmann’s assertion is that there are iconographical motifs and types that have survived from late antiquity into the early Byzantine period and beyond, so such classical motifs should not be considered a “renaissance” but rather a renewed use of them after a lapse during the Iconoclastic Controversy (726-843).³¹ Certainly, it can be argued that there was stylistic carryover throughout the art periods, but that is exactly the

²⁸ Keck, “Iconography of Joshua,” 268.; C. R. Morey, “Notes on East Christian Miniatures,” *The Art Bulletin* 11, no. 1 (1929): 50.

²⁹ Keck, “Iconography of Joshua,” 268.

³⁰ C. R. Morey, “The Sources of Mediaeval Style,” *The Art Bulletin* 7, no. 2 (1924): 35-50.

³¹ Weitzmann, *Work of Macedonian Renaissance*, 82.; Keck, “Iconography of Joshua,” 269.

point. By placing so much weight on the “Macedonian Renaissance,” Weitzmann failed to consider this. Rather than accepting a continuation, he created a binary with the concept – placing art objects either inside the circle of the renaissance or outside of it. Further advocating for this theory, Weitzmann also argued that the text, those with archaic lettering – a type that persisted into the Early Byzantine period – “may be regarded as a phenomenon of the revival movement of the tenth century.”³² He believed that to emulate classical antiquity further, the scribe must have replicated the style of writing. Morey and Lietzmann gave a much more probable explanation for the two types of text. The archaic text was probably copied from an older inscription, and due to fading, another scribe had to fill in the blanks with more contemporary lettering.³³

Weitzmann attempted to aggressively place the Joshua Roll in the “Macedonian Renaissance” mold with such explanations, but despite his arguments, his evidence has been called into question and have not generally been accepted in the scholarly conversation. Arguably, the Joshua Roll was neither created as a gift nor as a representation of classical revival. If the “Macedonian Renaissance” thesis is no longer tenable, it opens the door to question the theory that the Joshua Roll was an imperial gift and may have been created for an entirely different purpose. This will be further discussed in the upcoming chapters.

³² Weitzmann, *Work of Macedonian Renaissance*, 45, 50.

³³ Keck, “Iconography of Joshua,” 274.

Chapter 2: The Joshua Roll as an Object

The Joshua Roll is dated from the fifth to the tenth century AD. Unlike most, if not all, illuminated manuscripts of its time, the Roll was not made in the form of a codex – or book. Instead, it took on the form of a scroll that was highly unusual for its time because the format had almost entirely fallen out of use by the fifth century. People had since moved on to using codices for a number of reasons that will be discussed, so it is quite curious to see the artist of the manuscript continue to work with a scroll rather than transition to the more familiar codex. While not entirely uncommon, the scroll was typically used for disposable lists. The Joshua Roll's designation as a scroll has usually been explained as an outcome – derived from a continuous frieze, a tapestry, or the desire to emphasize its classicization.³⁴ This chapter, however, will argue that the scroll format was intentional – a purposeful decision intended for a model book. By understanding the history of the book, studying the functionality of the scroll, and analyzing the techniques used for the illustrations, this section will further explain why the Joshua Roll could not have been a gift to a successful Byzantine emperor as Kurt Weitzmann asserted.

The origin of the scroll format is thought to date from between c. 2925 – c. 2775 BC when its earliest form was discovered in a grave at Saqqara. Similar dates are inscribed in stones that depict scribes with scrolls.³⁵ They were originally made of papyrus until the development of

³⁴ Wander, *Joshua Roll*, 79-84.; Weitzmann, "Character and Intellectual Origins" 206.

³⁵ Cornelia Roemer, "The Papyrus Roll in Egypt, Greece, and Rome," In *A Companion to the History of the Book*, by Simon Eliot and Jonathan Rose, (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2007), 84.

parchment³⁶ and were utilized until the invention of the codex between the first and second century AD. The existence of the codex is mentioned by Martial, a Roman poet from around 38 AD, who refers to the use of the parchment codex for literary works and greeted it as a vast improvement over the roll.³⁷ The transition from scroll to codex was swift. Though scrolls did not become entirely obsolete as they continued to be used through the fifth century, codices became the standard vehicle for text. C. C. McCown states that:

In 1922 Professor Charles Henry Oldfather counted all the then-known literary works that had been found in Egypt. His inventory showed that, of 304 literary manuscripts dated in the third century, 275 were papyrus rolls, 26 papyrus codices, and 3 vellum codices. In the fourth century, out of 83 manuscripts, 34 were papyrus codices, and 10 vellum codices. In the fifth century, out of 78, 55 were codices, 43 of papyrus and 12 of vellum. That is to say, the proportion of codices in the third century was slightly less than 10 per cent; in the fourth century codices represented 53 per cent of the total, in the fifth century 70 per cent. By the seventh century the roll had all but disappeared.³⁸

Looking at these numbers, it initially seems as if there was an abundance of rolls, but when broken down, their existence was miniscule. There is an apparent decline in the number of scrolls as they were phased out by the introduction of the codex. Even the seemingly high 275 rolls in the third century are in actuality a very small number because this would have meant only 275 rolls were found over a 100 year timespan. This number falls to a measly 39 rolls in the fourth century and then 23 rolls in the fifth, demonstrating a clear favoring for the codex. Similar statistics are seen in Professor Henry A. Sanders' enumeration (he had the most completely assembled evidence for the early use of the codex). The third century reflected 6 percent codex use, the fourth – 65 percent, and the fifth – 89 percent.³⁹ With the invention of parchment in the

³⁶ This refers to vellum rather than paper

³⁷ C. C. McCown, "Codex and Roll in the New Testament," *Harvard Theological Review* 34, no. 04 (1941): 222.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 224.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 225.; Gamble, *Books and Readers*, 49.

first century AD, it became the superior material for codices. This technical development made parchment codices exceedingly more practical than papyrus scrolls, which tended to crack and have overall shorter lives. Among the list of practical reasons concerning the transition to the codex are its accessibility, its durability, its flexibility regarding adding new content, and its “shelvability” – its ability to be shelved like other books. It would seem that the codex’s physical form alone would allow it to surpass the scroll in standard use, but religion also played a factor. With the introduction of Christianity in the first century, one might expect there to be evidence of scrolls of the New Testament. The earliest examples, however, were written in papyrus codices.⁴⁰ Since codices were typically able to hold more information on less paper and were portable, they were useful forms for the Bible.⁴¹

Though the Bible, in its entirety, was rarely housed together, the separate books would have still been too large for a scroll. Typically, the standard roll consisted of twenty sheets, which amounted to 320-360 centimeters in length, an average of 340 cm.⁴² There were longer rolls as well such as one consisting of 160 sheets, measuring 2720 cm., but this would have been far too large to handle in one piece. Instead, it was kept as stock material used for single documents or short rolls.⁴³ This calls into question the Joshua Roll’s length which sits at 1000 cm. It is longer than the average 340 cm. roll, but sits far below the unmanageable 2720 cm. roll. Suspecting the manuscript must have been, at the very least, a few folios longer, it is doubtful that the scroll was ever a monstrous object. Having handled the true facsimile myself, the Joshua

⁴⁰ Roemer, “Papyrus Roll,” 93.

⁴¹ Alan Jacobs, “Christianity and the Future of the Book,” *The New Atlantis* 33 (2011): 32.

⁴² Gamble, *Books and Readers*, 45.

⁴³ T.C. Skeat, “The Length of the Standard Papyrus Roll and the Cost-Advantage of the Codex,” *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 45, (1982): 169-170.

Roll would not have been difficult to transport. Certainly, a codex version of the Book of Joshua would have been more convenient, but a scroll would have offered other features that a codex could not.

Though the codex became the prevalent form, the scroll did not cease to exist. There are a few notable scrolls that were created in the tenth century and beyond such as the Exultet rolls in Southern Italy, illuminated rolls given by Brother Henry to Stift Gottweig in the twelfth century, an English band of pictures now at Velletri in the thirteenth century, and items of luxury such as Charles of Orléans' "Vie de Nostre Dame, toute historiée, en un roule de parchemin, couvert de drap d'or, en françois" or Jean de Berry's "bible abrégée en un grand role, richement historiée et enluminée" with his two parchment mappemondes rolled in cases.⁴⁴ The scroll continued to be used in the Middle Ages for genealogies, actors' scripts, and proclamations. For list-like things, it was cheaper to use the scroll since it was simpler to add on sheets. The roll form also protected its contents and made it transportable. By the sixth century, the roll had become negligible and was only used in certain formal documents, such as bishops' encyclicals, royal proclamations, statutes, and laws, much as it is used even today in diplomas and documents for formal presentation.⁴⁵ The Torah, for example, continues to retain the scroll format for ceremonial purposes. Although it can be argued that the Joshua Roll was made as a scroll rather than a codex to present to an emperor due to a perceived status that came with the format, the physical evidence contradicts this thesis.

With the understanding that by the sixth century, scrolls were either used to represent utilitarian objects or objects of status, one must look at the Joshua Roll and question whether it

⁴⁴ Thomas Forrest Kelly, *The Exultet in Southern Italy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 4.

⁴⁵ McCown, "Codex and Roll in New Testament," 228.

was intended to have practical value or sacred value. From an initial approach, one might deem the Joshua Roll to be quite important due to its assumed contents pertaining to the Book of Joshua. This may be reasonable on some level, but it must also be taken into consideration that since the transition to the codex, there has never been evidence of Bibles existing in the scroll format.⁴⁶ Since the Book of Joshua is such a small section of the Bible, it is more feasible for it to reside in the form of a scroll versus a larger section of the Bible. After its creation in the Imperial Court School of Byzantium, the scroll remained in the East. If we entertain the idea that the Joshua Roll was of utmost importance, we must wonder why the versos of folios five (**Fig. 10**) and six (**Fig. 11**) were used at a later date.⁴⁷ At sometime in the thirteenth century, a variety of religious and secular texts were added to the verso. Excerpts from the Church of Fathers were written on the reverse including portions from the *Erotapokriseis* attributed to Dionysios of Alexandria, the *Contra Eunomium* by Basil of Caesarea, along with scholia on the Acts of the Apostles, the Gospels, and the Letter to the Hebrews as well as an apocryphal account of Melchizedek, and a commentary on Genesis.⁴⁸ It was not necessarily uncommon for scrolls to be reused for other texts. The scroll was, after all, the first form of editable text. Unlike its predecessor, the clay tablet which was imprinted with a stylus, scrolls had the ability to be reused once washed or scraped clean.⁴⁹ Though the erasing of a scroll was more commonplace before the existence of codices, scrolls containing insignificant information were typically flipped over

⁴⁶ Gamble, *Books and Readers*, 49

⁴⁷ Wander, *Joshua Roll*, 143.

⁴⁸ Peter Schreiner, "Die Prachthandschrift als Gebrauchsgegenstand: theologische und wirtschaftsgeschichtliche Notizen auf dem Verso des Josua-Rotulus (Vat. Palat. Gr. 431)," *Anzeiger der philosophisch-historischen Klasse der Osterreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften* 134 (1997-99): 46-47.

⁴⁹ Michael F. Suarez, and H. R. Woudhuysen, *The Book: A Global History*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 46.

and used for additional texts. This practice usually occurred when there was a lack of a new roll, but even then, the original texts on the scrolls were tax lists or other official documents that had gone out of use.⁵⁰ One would imagine that such an item, especially a gift to a successful Byzantine emperor who contributed to the empire's resurgence, might be revered rather than used as a piece of scrap paper. Even if the connection to the emperor was no longer recognized, taking note of the rarity of the scroll format especially by the thirteenth century, it is strange to see the back of the Joshua Roll marked up with text. This does not automatically disqualify the Joshua Roll's importance but does bring upon suspicion concerning its actual value as a scroll and as a biblical text.

Delving further into the scroll format and studying the Joshua Roll as an object, it is strange to see the manuscript rolled outwards instead of inwards. Typically the scroll is rolled inwards to protect its contents from the elements, but with the illuminated manuscript, this is not the case.⁵¹ All the illustrations are left open to become potentially damaged. As seen with commonly rolled scrolls that received a lot of wear on the outer portions due to constant handling, the Joshua Roll's exposed illustrations would have had even fewer defenses.⁵² T.C. Skeat explains that the scroll has a natural tendency to roll into itself. Upon the time of manufacture, the scroll is kept constantly rolled up unless it is opened to be written in or to be read.⁵³ The Joshua Roll does not have this characteristic, which suggests an alternative use.

Briefly mentioned above are the Exultet rolls (**Fig. 12**). These were used to lend

⁵⁰ Roemer, "Papyrus Roll," 87.

⁵¹ Gamble, *Books and Readers*, 45-7.

⁵² Kelly, *Exultet in Southern Italy*, 12.

⁵³ T.C. Skeat, "Roll versus Codex: A New Approach?," *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 84 (1990): 297.; *Idem.*, "The Origin of the Christian Codex," *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 102, (1994): 265-266.

importance, solemnity, and magnificence to the liturgy of the Easter vigil.⁵⁴ Like the Joshua Roll, some of these scrolls were rolled outwards. They are illustrated with pictures and accompanied by text, so when it came time for the deacon to sing the Exultet song, the roll (**Fig. 13**) was draped over the front side of the pulpit for the parishioners to follow along. By having the Exultet Roll rolled outwards, this would allow the deacon to continuously slip it over the side of the pulpit without having to unroll the scroll downwards towards himself and then inching it forwards off the lectern for the viewers. To shift the focus back to the Joshua Roll and working with similar logic, if the scroll was indeed a model book, it comes as no surprise that it would be easier to move through the contents if the versos were rolled into each other. This would have provided quick access to different scenes within the manuscript. Facing outwards, one would not have to unroll the scroll to find a specific scene. Skeat points out that, “The roll might have possessed some psychological advantage in that reading a roll is a continuous process, unbroken by the necessity for page-turning, which cuts the reader off from all that has gone before and gives only limited access to what is to come.”⁵⁵ By using the physical scroll format, it suggests that the artist created a model book that allowed others to have a continuous experience, which did not impede their work while they were referencing the Roll. Whoever used it would have been able to quickly move through the scroll to whichever scene they may have wanted, since the illustrations were facing outwards, as opposed to opening up the scroll and searching for a specific scene. Furthering this point, if indeed a model book, it would have mattered less if the contents became damaged or lost. Like early preparatory drawings that were made on wax-

⁵⁴ Kelly, *Exultet in Southern Italy*, 4.

⁵⁵ Skeat, “Roll versus Codex,” 297.

tablets, once no longer needed, the drawings could be erased.⁵⁶

Since the illustrations are exposed to the elements, the technique used for the drawings is highlighted. Upon studying the illustrations, they immediately elicit questions. They are atypical of Byzantine illustrations which are normally brightly painted in opaque egg tempera often with the extensive use of gold.⁵⁷ Instead, the drawings were done in grisaille.⁵⁸ This meant that the work was done primarily in shades of grey. Typically this technique was chosen because it was much quicker and cheaper since it did not require other colors, though colors were added to the Joshua Roll at a later date. On top of this, the grisaille medium allowed the scroll to be rolled and unrolled without chipping and peeling.⁵⁹ The chosen colors are a slightly lighter shade than the ink used to draw the illustrations, which was a common technique for model books, used to indicate modeling. Though color was rare in the early period, the most commonly used was red since it was readily available in a monastery scriptorium.⁶⁰ A blue wash was also seen. Coincidentally, these colors are exactly those that were used in the Joshua Roll. This choice of technique and the lack of initial color further propose its function. The Joshua Roll, created so inexpensively, could not have been the classicizing scroll that Weitzmann imagined to have been presented to an emperor. Though the illustrations display the grand classical style that was praised during the tenth century, the execution of the manuscript does not hold that same status.

Additionally, the text that is written beneath the drawings does not help elevate the Roll's

⁵⁶ Robert W. Scheller, *A Survey of Medieval Model Books*, (Haarlem: Erven F. Bohn, 1963) 2.

⁵⁷ Wander, *Joshua Roll*, 82.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 82.

⁵⁹ Keck, "Iconography of Joshua," 274.

⁶⁰ Robert W. Scheller, *Exemplum: Model-book Drawings and the Practice of Artistic Transmission in the Middle Ages (ca. 900 - ca. 1470)*, (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1995) 38-9.

status. Just like the color, it was added later.⁶¹ This was contrary to the usual workflow of an illuminated manuscript where the text came before the illuminations.⁶² Unlike the fairly neat script that is typically seen in illuminated manuscripts on ruled lines, the Joshua Roll's text is written askew and by two different scribes, one writing in Septuagint⁶³ and the other in standard Greek print.⁶⁴ The Septuagint script is one of Weitzmann's major arguments that allowed him to date the scroll to the tenth century. He regarded it as a phenomenon of the revival movement.⁶⁵ Morey and Lietzmann gave a much more plausible explanation, suggesting that the scribe copied inscriptions which were legible in the Joshua Roll's model, and made substitutions in uncials of their time for the words that were not legible.⁶⁶ Morey also proposed that the original text of the illuminated manuscript was written at the end of the roll or on a separate roll, and after it was worn down from use, a restorer copied it to the bottom of the illustrations.⁶⁷ Considering that these ideas are pure speculation, while arguing Morey's proposal for a 700 A.D. dating of the Roll, Weitzmann made a point that if the space beneath the images had remained empty and was not filled in until centuries later, the scribe would have had to successfully interpret the intention

⁶¹ Hans Graeven, "Typen der Wiener Genesis auf byzantinischen Elfenbeinreliefs," *Jahrbuch d. kunsthst. Sammlungen d. Allerhochsten Kaiserhauses*, (Ad. Holzhausen, 1900,) 91; C. R. Morey, *Early Christian art; an outline of the evolution of style and iconography in sculpture and painting from antiquity to the eighth century*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1942), 69: "This text is of the tenth century; the drawings can be assigned, in the writer's opinion, to the end of the seventh century or the beginning of the eighth."

⁶² Christopher De Hamel, *The British library guide to manuscript illumination: history and techniques* (London: British Library, 2001), 48.

⁶³ The translation of the Hebrew Bible into Koine Greek, a common form of Greek written and spoken during Hellenistic and Roman antiquity, and the early Byzantine era.

⁶⁴ Wander, *Joshua Roll*, 18.

⁶⁵ Weitzmann, *Work of Macedonian Renaissance*, 45-50.

⁶⁶ C. R. Morey, "The 'Byzantine Renaissance,'" *Speculum* 14, no. 2 (1939): 156.

⁶⁷ *Idem.*, "Notes on East Christian Miniatures," p. 48.

of the painter.⁶⁸ This brings the chapter to the next point – without the text that dictates the meaning of the illustrations, can the contents hold its ground and definitively say that it concerns the Book of Joshua.

By approaching the manuscript with the idea of it being a model book, let us remove the text and the color. What are left are the non-descript paintings. With and even without color, the illustrations appear as any generic war scene. Without the text, it must be questioned whether the drawings represent the Book of Joshua. If not, these illustrations become models of buildings, single figures, figures in groups, horses, hills, and trees. Further analysis of the images will be presented in the next chapter. Even if the Roll is a copy of the Book of Joshua, it does not necessarily mean that the artist's intention was to present the scroll in such a fashion. Rather, they may have pulled from memory to replicate scenes to create a functional model book.

It was not uncommon for Bible manuscripts to serve as models for wall paintings and mosaics. “In fact, Steven Wander states that it has been presumed that illustrated rotuli surviving from the later Middle Ages in Western Europe were studies for or copies after pictorial cycles in stained glass, sculpture and wall painting.”⁶⁹ Two examples also exist of illuminated manuscripts standing as the models for larger wall paintings – the seventh-century Ashburnham Pentateuch (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, MS nouv. acq. lat. 2334, also known as the Tours Pentateuch) for the late eleventh-century frescoes at the abbey of Saint-Julien, Tours and the sixth-century Cotton Genesis (London, British Library, MS Cotton Otho B VI) for the thirteenth-century San Marco mosaics in Venice – though this was not their original purpose.⁷⁰ Grabar

⁶⁸ Weitzmann, *Work of Macedonian Renaissance*, 46.

⁶⁹ Wander, *Joshua Roll*, 81.

⁷⁰ Dorothy Verkerk, *Early Medieval Bible Illumination and the Ashburnham Pentateuch*, (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 53.; C. R. Dodwell, *The pictorial arts of the West, 800-1200*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993) 236.; Rachel Hachlili, *Ancient Jewish Art and Archaeology In the Diaspora*, (Leiden: Brill,

explained that the now fragmentary murals in the church of Saint-Julien were iconographically inspired by the miniatures of the Ashburnham Pentateuch.⁷¹ The scenes depicted Moses breaking the Tablets of the Law, the Israelites adorning the golden calf, the idolaters being killed by the Levites, and the Ark of the Covenant. Weitzmann stated that book illustrations were the storehouse of iconography and were consulted and copied by artists in all fields.⁷² Quite possibly, the Joshua Roll could have also been a model for a larger piece seeing that the frescoes that were discovered at Santa Maria foris portas in Castelseprio (**Fig. 14**) are shockingly similar in terms of style, though there is no definitive answer to this observation. If this is the case for the Joshua Roll, its scroll format seems to make the most sense as well as the illustration style. Alternatively, scholars have also proposed that two sets of ivory plaques that depict scenes from the Book of Joshua are closely based on the Roll.⁷³ The plaques come off of two larger ivory caskets. These ivories are housed in the Metropolitan Museum, New York, and the Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A), London. The Metropolitan panels depict Joshua's defeat of the men of Ai (**Fig. 15**) (compare to folio 10 (**Fig. 16**)), the king of Ai before Joshua, hanged (**Fig. 17**) (compare to folio 11 (**Fig. 18**)), and the men of Gibeon before Joshua (**Fig. 19**) (compare to folios 11-12 (**Fig. 20**)). The V&A ivory depicts the first appearance of the men of Gibeon before Joshua and two messengers before Joshua (**Fig. 21**) (compare to folios 11-12 (**Fig. 22**)). Merely looking at style, the plaques do not appear to be copies, or at least the modern idea of a copy,

1998) 186.; Scheller, *Exemplum: Model-book Drawings*, 31.

⁷¹ A. Grabar, "Fresques romanes copiées sur les miniatures du Pentateuque de Tours," *Cahiers archéologiques* 10 (1957), 329-41.

⁷² Kurt Weitzmann, "The Illustration of the Septuagint," reprinted in his *Studies in Classical and Byzantine Manuscript Illumination*, ed. by H. L. Kessler (University of Chicago: Chicago, 1971) 49.

⁷³ John Lowden, "Illustrated Octateuch Manuscripts: A Byzantine Phenomenon," in *The Old Testament in Byzantium*, ed. by Paul Magdalino and Robert S. Nelson (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010) 132.

which will be discussed in the next chapter; however, the scenes do roughly match up.

Considering the possibility that a gift was given to a reputable leader in the tenth century, an ivory casket would have been the more likely contender than a partially colored scroll.⁷⁴ Since ivory was a luxury material, being able to possess an ivory casket would have bestowed the owner with prestige. They were appropriate gifts for high-ranking military commanders or the emperor.⁷⁵ Possibly the reference for the ivory plaques or the wall paintings at Castelseprio, unlike the Ashburnham Pentateuch and the Cotton Genesis that were created as illuminated manuscripts and later chosen as models, I assert that the Joshua Roll was created for the sole purpose of being a model book rather than an illuminated manuscript.

By studying the technical aspects of the Joshua Roll, it can be seen how atypical the manuscript was. None of its characteristics follow the standard norms of the time: the scroll was rolled inside out, the illustrations were drawn in grisaille, and the text was written askew and added at a much later time. These aspects, individually, appear trivial, but together, they provide a world of evidence towards a different truth.

⁷⁴ Paul Williamson, *An Introduction to Medieval Ivory Carvings* (London: V & A Publishing, 1982) 12-13.

⁷⁵ *Idem.*, *Medieval Ivory Carvings : Early Christian to Romanesque* (London: V&A Publishing, 2010) 74-5.

Chapter 3: “Errors” or Intentions

The date of the hypothetical original has been the subject of contention, as much as the date for the Joshua Roll itself. Some scholars argue that the original must have been from antiquity due to the highly classical style, while others place it in the same century as the Joshua Roll.⁷⁶ In order to make sense of the scroll, scholars have become caught up with the style and date of the illustrations and the question of a model. One idea that has been overlooked is that there may have been an original work of art whose rough sketches may have been intended as references for future works. When viewed through this lens, Kurt Weitzmann’s observation that there were ten instances when the artist made “errors” in the illustration of the Joshua narrative should be re-evaluated.⁷⁷ The model/copy argument falls apart when it is argued on the one hand that the drawings are of high quality and on the other hand that the artist was inept at copying the model. I assert that the artist exercised his agency in the creation of these military scenes and that the identification of these scenes with the story of Joshua may need to be revisited.

It is hard to reconcile a roll created as a gift for a Byzantine emperor with an artist unable to create a scroll of the highest quality and not filled with “inaccuracies” as Weitzmann claimed – especially a scroll that replicated classical antiquity and referenced monumental structures such as Trajan’s Column. These “errors” would have been amateur mistakes for an artist of such skill and caliber, especially if the manuscript was created for an emperor with a growing interest in

⁷⁶ C. R. Morey, “Notes on East Christian Miniatures,” 46.

⁷⁷ Weitzmann, *Work of Macedonian Renaissance*, 33-34.

classical studies, as Weitzmann proposed. It would be strange to present a great leader with a work that failed to represent a story of triumph and war correctly, when that story itself was a reflection of the realistic successes.

Conversely, if the manuscript's role was as a model book, the artist may very well have had the freedom to interpret the story in the illustrations in a way that reflected the Book of Joshua but did not completely copy it. Jocelyn Penny Small writes about copies being "close enough."⁷⁸ Before the technologically advanced machines of today that allow people to make exact copies of images, copies from antiquity were made by people. Our modern understanding of what a copy should be today is drastically different than the classical understanding. In antiquity, copies could be distinguished from the model and each other. Small states that although copies did not have to be exact, "they generally had the same subject and elements as the original and were portrayed in the same manner. The three requirements of subject, elements, and style must all be met."⁷⁹ This gave the artist some freedom to interpret the originals and depict them in alternative ways. Roman sculptors, for example, attentively reproduced aspects of the image that were unfamiliar while executing more freely those the artist already knew.⁸⁰ The Joshua Roll's artist appears to do exactly this. Rather than creating an exact copy of scenes from previous illustrations of the Book of Joshua, the artist of the illuminated manuscript selects,

⁷⁸ Jocelyn Penny Small, "Visual Copies and Memory," In *Mnemosyne, Supplements : Orality, Literacy, Memory in the Ancient Greek and Roman World : Orality and Literacy in Ancient Greece*, ed. Anne Mackay, (Leiden, NL: Brill, 2008), 231; E. K. Gazda, "Roman Sculpture and the Ethos of Emulation: Reconsidering Repetition," *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 97, Greece in Rome: Influence, Integration, Resistance (1995): 121-156; B. S. Ridgway, "The Study of Greek Sculpture in the Twenty-First Century," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 149 (2005): 63-71; M. Koortbojian, "Forms of Attention: Four Notes on Replication and Variation," *The Ancient Art of Emulation: Studies in Artistic Originality and Tradition from the Present to Classical Antiquity*, Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome, Supplementary Volumes, vol. 1, (2002): 173-204.

⁷⁹ Small, "Visual Copies," 230.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 231.

alters, and combines certain events.

Meyer Schapiro and Weitzmann believed that, since there is no scroll like the Joshua Roll that exists from the past, triumphal columns in Constantinople inspired the artist. They conclude that the painter of the manuscript had ample opportunity to see and study them when he undertook to represent in book illumination, in the most monumental form possible, the theme of a victorious war.⁸¹ This is supported by Steven H. Wander who provides a mathematical approach to this idea. He observes that many scenes contain a sloping ground line of approximately the same angle, always rising from left to right, by roughly 10 degrees (**Fig. 23**).⁸² He also makes a note of the increasing figure size (**Fig. 24 & 25**), attributing this to the carryover from the column design. This argument for an original scroll drawn from observations of a column seems convincing, but one must discern that a 10-degree angle in the illustrations does not necessarily equate to an artist studying a column. One wonders why the artist did not choose to draw in a straight line. Additionally, depending on the artist's height and their distance to the column, the perspective changes and alters the angle of the images. A shorter person, for example, would see the same section of images as a taller person differently.

John Lowden disagrees with the idea that the scroll was an original, arguing instead that, it was a meticulous copy of different work. He supports his idea by pointing out disembodied heads and limbs, which are seen on the top left of folio 10 (**Fig. 26**).⁸³ He states that these illustrations were drawn in such a way because the artist probably could not make out the rest of the original painting. A closer examination of the scenes and figure demonstrates that it is hard to

⁸¹ Weitzmann, *Work of Macedonian Renaissance*, 101-2.

⁸² Wander, *Joshua Roll*, 86.

⁸³ John Lowden, *The Octateuchs: A Study in Byzantine Manuscript Illustration* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1992), 107.

agree with his argument. The “disembodied” heads and limbs can be interpreted to be the hands of God instructing Joshua, which is an image that shows up quite often in other illustrated events as well. For example, the bodiless limbs appear in the Smyrna Octateuch’s (Evangelical School Library, cod. A.I) scene where Noah and His Sons Dismantle the Ark (**Fig. 27**). The arm of God is clearly emerging downwards from the center of the scene. Again, this is seen in the Rome Octateuch (Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, cod. Vat. gr. 746) scene during the Second Giving of the Law (**Fig. 28**). God’s arm emerges from the sky as Moses turns his head away to avoid seeing God’s face. A solid comparison can thus be made between the Roll and the Istanbul Octateuch (Topkapi Sarayi Library, cod. G. I. 8), in which God Promises Joshua the Capture of Ai and Soldiers on the March (**Fig. 29 & 30**). Mirroring one another, the two illuminated manuscripts depict God’s hand emerging from the right side of the image to address Joshua. Despite the uncannily similar images, the artist did take some liberties which will be seen from Weitzmann’s “inaccuracies.”

Looking closely at a few of Weitzmann’s “errors,” it seems that he may have interpreted the scenes according to what he considered appropriate illustrations. In scenes five and six (crossing the Jordan), he stated that the stream of water is omitted and criticizes the scene for causing confusion; however, there is a definite splash of blue in the background that indicates this topographical feature (**Fig. 31**). The critique seems trivial since the illustration continues to be a clear depiction of the crossing: Joshua and his Levites are carrying the Ark of the Covenant. An illustration of this same scene in two later manuscripts – the Bible Historiale (MS M.394 fol. 100v) (**Fig. 32**) from 1415 and the Speculum humane salvationis (MS M.140 fol. 15r) (**Fig. 33**) from 1350 to 1400 – are shown without any splashes of blue, but yet they are both identified as the crossing of the Jordan. In scene 10 (the fall of Jericho), Weitzmann stated that the city of

Jericho should collapse rather than set aflame (**Fig. 34**). The city does seem to collapse, as the buildings appear to be falling sideways. It is true that Jericho does not get set on fire in the biblical text; however, the next city Joshua and his troops go to is Ai, which does get set on fire. Since the inscriptions beneath the illustrations came after the creation of the scroll, the scribe could have misinterpreted the scene and written the wrong commentary. The artist could have also simply taken some creative liberties by combining the two events together to represent both the fall of Jericho as well as the burning of Ai or simply incorrectly remembered the story. In furthering his argument that the manuscript must have been an original scroll, Weitzmann showed that the scenes did not easily flow into one another as one might expect from a continuous narrative piece from late classical art. The isolated scenes are joined in a superficial way by the addition of hills and trees executed in a late antique illusionistic manner (**Fig. 35**).⁸⁴ By partitioning these scenes with such fillers, it suggests that the artist consciously separated the different models from one another, allowing for precise copying. This was a recognizable technique used by model book draftsmen. They made sure to not allow their drawings to overlap and consciously depicted their subjects as far away as possible from one another.⁸⁵ These “inaccuracies” that Weitzmann pointed out as well as the lack of flow further strengthens this paper’s argument that the Joshua Roll must have been a model book. The “errors” can be interpreted as artistic decisions, while the lack of flow, as stated before, are intentionally separated scenes. Studying the illustrations, the “errors” are simply read that way by Weitzmann. The scenes are not necessarily wrong; they have only been altered in a way that is not typically seen in manuscripts concerning the Book of Joshua.

⁸⁴ Wormald, “Joshua Roll by Kurt Weitzmann,” 237.

⁸⁵ Scheller, *Exemplum: Model-book Drawings*, 42.

By comparing these scenes to those in Trajan's Column⁸⁶ and the Bayeux Tapestry,⁸⁷ it can be demonstrated how generic the military scenes are. Although the illustrations do appear to reflect the story of Joshua in a general sense, the scenes lack specificity. This is noticed in Trajan's Column. Instead of providing specific day-to-day scenes, the artist sprinkles in renowned events here and there to give the impression of continuous action, however, in actuality, the column is not necessarily representing exactly what happened.⁸⁸ Since the column had originally been voted for a different purpose and the scenes were not constructed until after the wars, it is quite possible that an artist followed a war-time sketch-book.⁸⁹ This would explain the column's small percentage of scenes that depict Trajan and scenes that are recognized as historical events.⁹⁰ The majority of the scenes depict non-descript marches and battles.

Like Trajan's Column, the Joshua Roll is filled with general scenes. If unfamiliar with the story of Joshua, the images can be easily misinterpreted. Without telling attributions, if a scene were to be removed from the rest of the scroll, it would come to hold no meaning. The three battle scenes that appear in the scroll for example – the defeat of the Israelites at Ai (**Fig. 36**), the defeat of the men of Ai (**Fig. 37**), and the defeat of the Amorites (**Fig. 38**) – are similar and

⁸⁶ "Trajan's Column - Reading an Ancient Comic Strip," Trajan's Column - Reading an Ancient Comic Strip | National Geographic, <http://www.nationalgeographic.com/trajan-column/>; D. Richter, *Das römische Heer auf der Trajanssäule : Propaganda und Realität : Waffen und Ausrüstung : Marsch, Arbeit und Kampf* (Mannheim : Bibliopolis, 2004); Sir Ian Richmond, *Trajan's Army on Trajan's Column*, (London: British School at Rome, 1982).

⁸⁷ Anna C. Henderson with Gale R. Owen-Crocker, eds., *Making sense of the Bayeux tapestry: readings and reworkings*, (Manchester : Manchester University Press, 2016); see also, John F. Szabo, *The Bayeux Tapestry : A Critically Annotated Bibliography*, (Lanham, Maryland : Rowman & Littlefield, 2015).

⁸⁸ Richmond, *Trajan's Army on Trajan's Column*, 3.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

⁹⁰ The National Geographic divides the Trajan's Column scenes into eight types: twenty-nine percent marches, twenty-one percent battles, twelve percent other, twelve percent construction, nine percent negotiations, seven percent sacrifices, six percent Trajan speeches, and four percent of events recorded by historians. With only ten percent of the column's contents identifiably related to historical events, the other ninety percent become generic scenes.

interchangeable. Every illustration is made up of groups of soldiers in battle stances. The defeat of the Israelites at Ai and the defeat of the men at Ai are essentially the same scene. The only difference is that the latter has a few more men. Additionally, unlike other contemporary battle illustrations, it lacks scenes of violent conflict and bloody battles such as those that populate the Bayeux Tapestry (**Fig. 39**). Even within the Book of Joshua, the stoning of Achan is shown with a great deal of blood in Walter's manuscript (W. 106) (**Fig. 40**), which is lacking in the Joshua Roll (**Fig. 41**). As a model book, the artist would not have needed to provide such detail unless they chose to.⁹¹ The blood and gore would be optional for whoever were to reference the scroll.

The scenes that depict Joshua receiving visitors (**Fig. 42 compare to Fig. 43**) and the scenes that depict an assembly of troops (**Fig. 44 compare to Fig. 45**) are notably similar to those from Trajan's column. If one were to simply look at these two types of scenes, it would be difficult to figure out what they were about as well as to which story they belong. Unless the user of the Joshua Roll is well versed in the story and recognizes the scenes, without the inscriptions, the drawings can be interpreted to be anything. The war scenes depicted in the Joshua Roll are obscure. There are certain indicators such as the crossing of the Jordan that may suggest that the scroll concerns the Book of Joshua but overall, the scenes remain nonspecific. By creating a model book, the artist does not necessarily have to create detailed images and as with other copies during the time, "close enough" was good enough.

⁹¹ Scheller, *Exemplum: Model-book Drawings*, 43-5.

Conclusion

Unfortunately, due to the obscurity of the Joshua Roll, a lot of the theories concerning the illuminated manuscript and its contents are speculative. Despite this, it is my hope that the evidence presented within this thesis is convincing enough to support and suggest the possibility of an alternative identity for the scroll. It is impossible to say what the artist intended with the work, and why the illustrations only appear to be partially colored and described with a mess of text, but a model book seems to be a viable option.

In brief, the Joshua Roll has been widely accepted as an illuminated manuscript. Despite this, the research and evidence provided within this thesis presents an alternative reading of the scroll. By questioning the concept of the “Macedonian Renaissance,” this paper forces a hole in Weitzmann’s theory, opening a door to other possibilities for the Joshua Roll’s purpose and existence. In terms of what a typical scroll should be, the Joshua Roll was not it. It featured a number of strange characteristics, starting with the method of rolling. Rather than having the contents protected internally, they were exposed to the elements due to the inside out rolling style. Instead of seeing the lavish use of gold in the illustrations, which was typical of Byzantine art, the artist implemented a grisaille technique that was generally used for preparatory works. Lastly, unlike other illuminated manuscripts that were first filled with text with illustrations to follow, the text in the Joshua Roll came much later. Furthermore, the versos were written on, treating the roll like scrap paper. There was evident skill seen in the execution of the illustrations and although Weitzmann claimed there to be “errors,” the illustrations were drawn in such a way that they were ultimately generic. Though there is no claim to any definitive answers to the

actual use of the scroll, it is difficult to deny the evidence. Looking at the oddities, the illuminated manuscript would have been a strange gift to present to an emperor and seeing that the existence of model books was not uncommon, the Joshua Roll may have very well been one.

Figures



Figure 1. Joshua Roll, (Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Pal. gr. 431), 10th century AD?



Figure 2. Bishop Odo, Bayeux Tapestry, c. 1070s, England

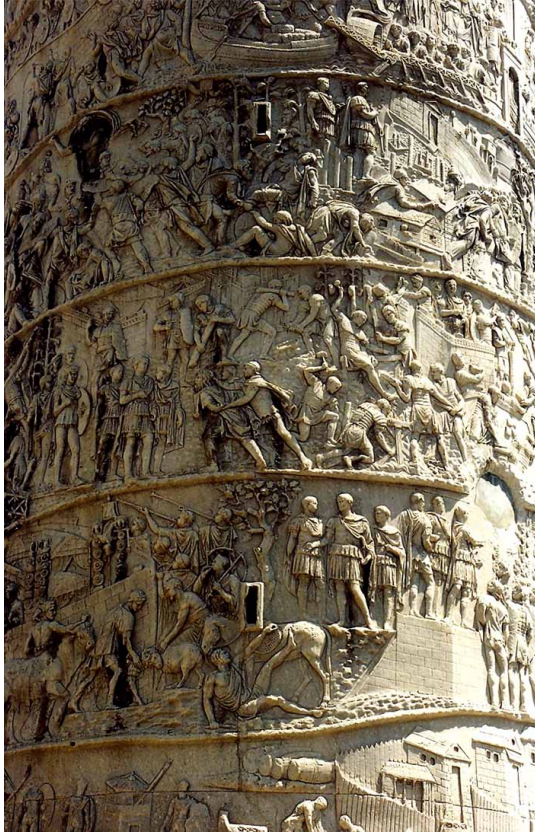


Figure 3. Emperor Trajan, Trajan's Column, 107-113 AD, Rome, Italy

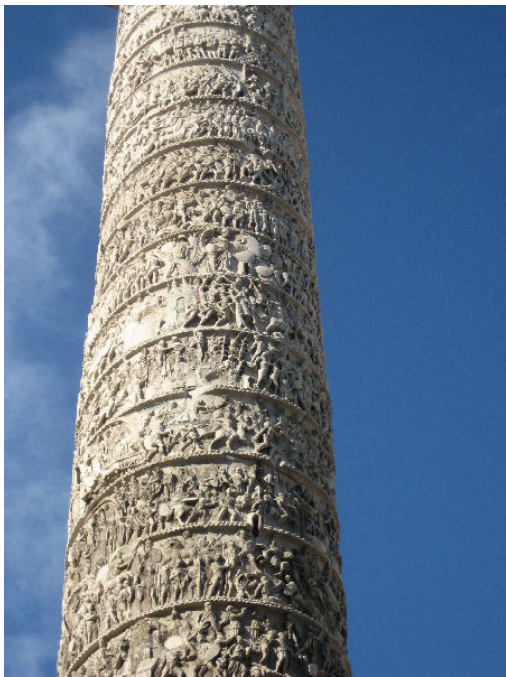


Figure 4. Column of Marcus Aurelius, 193 AD, Rome, Italy



Figure 5. The Reproach of Nathan and the Penance of King David (folio 136v), Paris Psalter (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, MS. gr. 139), 10th century AD



Figure 6. Folio 1, Joshua Roll, (Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Pal. gr. 431), 10th century AD?



Figure 7. Folio 15, Joshua Roll, (Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Pal. gr. 431), 10th century AD?



Figure 8. David Glorified by the Women of Israel (folio 5v), Paris Psalter (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, MS. gr. 139), 10th century AD



Figure 9. Folio 7, Joshua Roll, (Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Pal. gr. 431), 10th century AD?

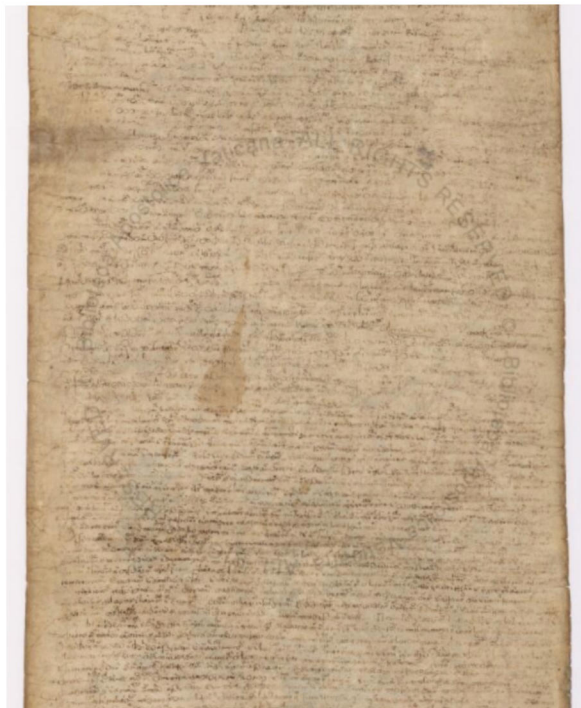


Figure 10. Folio 5 verso, Joshua Roll (Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Pal. gr. 431), 10th century AD?

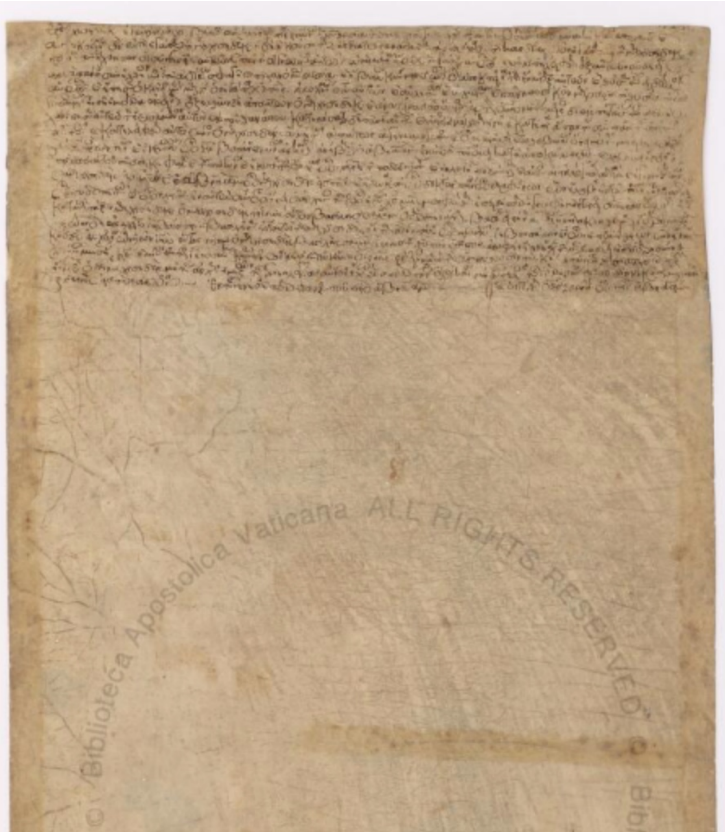


Figure 11. Folio 6 verso, Joshua Roll (Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Pal. gr. 431), 10th century AD?



Figure 12. Exultet roll, Benevento, Italy, 981-987



Figure 13. Exultet roll displayed over the front of the pulpit



Figure 14. Fresco of Joseph's Dream, Church of Santa Maria foris portas, Varese, Italy



Figure 15. Defeat of men of Ai, Panel from Ivory Casket, Constantinople, 900-1000



Figure 16. Folio 10, Joshua Roll, (Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Pal. gr. 431), 10th century AD?

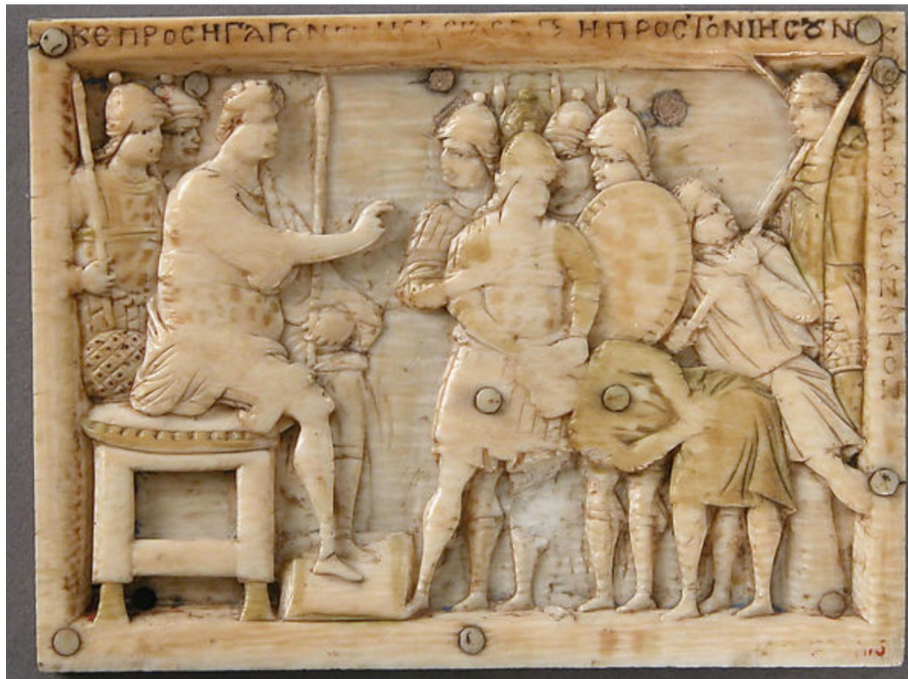


Figure 17. King of Ai before Joshua, hanged, Panel from Ivory Casket, Constantinople, 900-1000



Figure 18. Folio 11, Joshua Roll, (Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Pal. gr. 431), 10th century AD?



Figure 19. Men of Gibeon before Joshua, Panel from Ivory Casket, Constantinople, 900-1000



Figure 20. Folio 11-12, Joshua Roll, (Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Pal. gr. 431), 10th century AD?



Figure 21. Men of Gibeon before Joshua and two messengers before Joshua, Panel from Ivory Casket, Constantinople, second half of the 10th century



Figure 22. Folio 11-12, Joshua Roll, (Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Pal. gr. 431), 10th century AD?

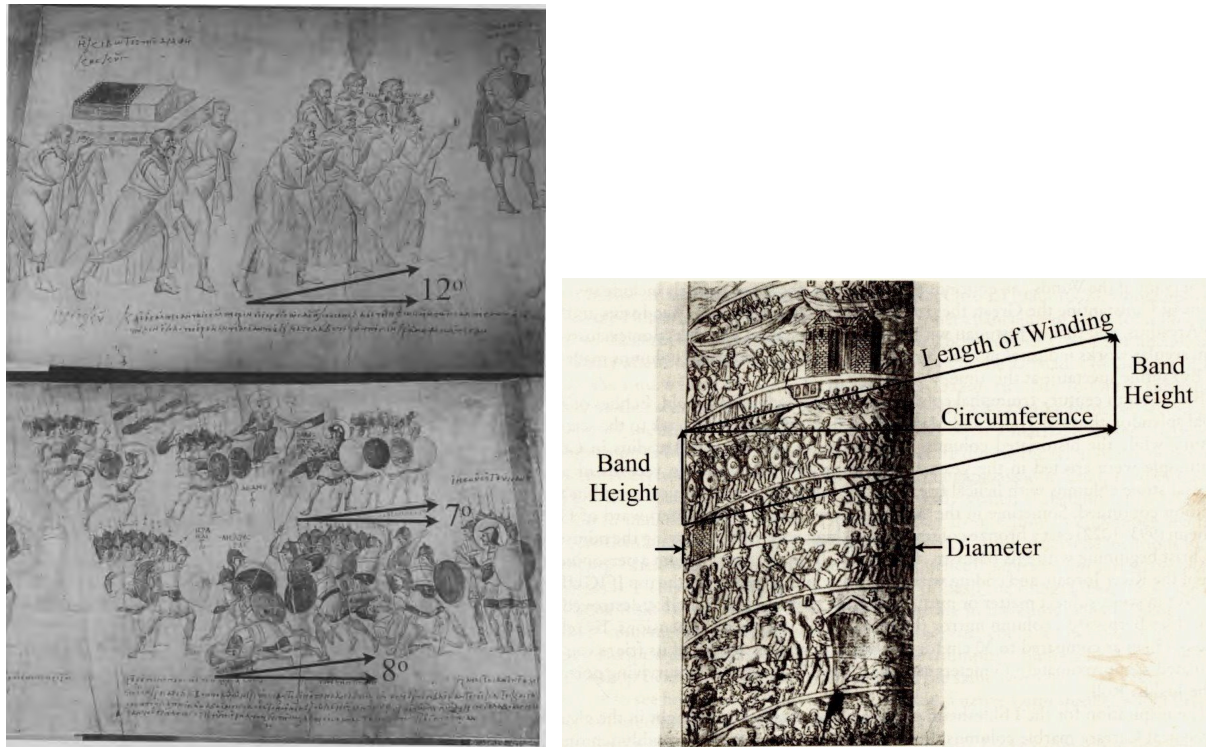


Figure 23. Wander's suggested sloping ground line in scenes 10 and 22



Figure 24. Wander's size comparisons, spies in scenes 1 and 12



Figure 25. Wander's size comparisons, Joshua in scenes 3, 21, and 30



Figure 26. Folio 10, Joshua Roll, (Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Pal. gr. 431), 10th century AD?



Figure 27. Noah and His Sons Dismantle the Ark, Smyrna Octateuch (Evangelical School Library, cod. A.I), fol. 21v, 13th century



Figure 28. Second Giving of the Law, Rome Octateuch (Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, cod. Vat. gr. 746)



Figure 29. God Promises Joshua the Capture of Ai and Soldiers on the March, Istanbul Octateuch (Topkapi Sarayi Library, cod. G. I. 8)



Figure 30. God Promises Joshua the Capture of Ai and Soldiers on the March, Joshua Roll, (Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Pal. Gr. 431), 10th century AD?



Figure 31. Crossing of Jordan on the left, Joshua Roll, (Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Pal. gr. 431), 10th century AD?



Figure 32. Crossing the Jordan, Bible Historiale (MS M.394 fol. 100v), 1415



Figure 33. Crossing the Jordan, Speculum humanae salvationis (MS M.140 fol. 15r), 1350-1400



Figure 34. Fall of Jericho/Burning of Ai?, Joshua Roll, (Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Pal. gr. 431), 10th century AD?



Figure 35. Folio 7 displaying scene isolation, Joshua Roll, (Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Pal. gr. 431), 10th century AD?



Figure 36. Defeat of the Israelites at Ai, Joshua Roll, (Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Pal. gr. 431), 10th century AD?



Figure 37. Defeat of men at Ai, Joshua Roll, (Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Pal. gr. 431), 10th century AD?



Figure 38. Defeat of the Amorites, Joshua Roll, (Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Pal. gr. 431), 10th century AD?



Figure 39. Bishop Odo, Battle of Hastings, Bayeux Tapestry, c. 1070s, England



Figure 40. William de Brailes, Stoning of Achan, Walter's manuscript (W. 106), ca. 1250



Figure 41. Stoning of Achan, Joshua Roll, (Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Pal. gr. 431), 10th century AD?



Figure 42. Joshua receiving men of Ai, Joshua Roll, (Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Pal. gr. 431), 10th century AD?



Figure 43. Emperor Trajan, Trajan receiving Dacians, Trajan's Column, 107-113 AD, Rome, Italy



Figure 44. Joshua speaking to troops, Joshua Roll, (Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Pal. gr. 431), 10th century AD?

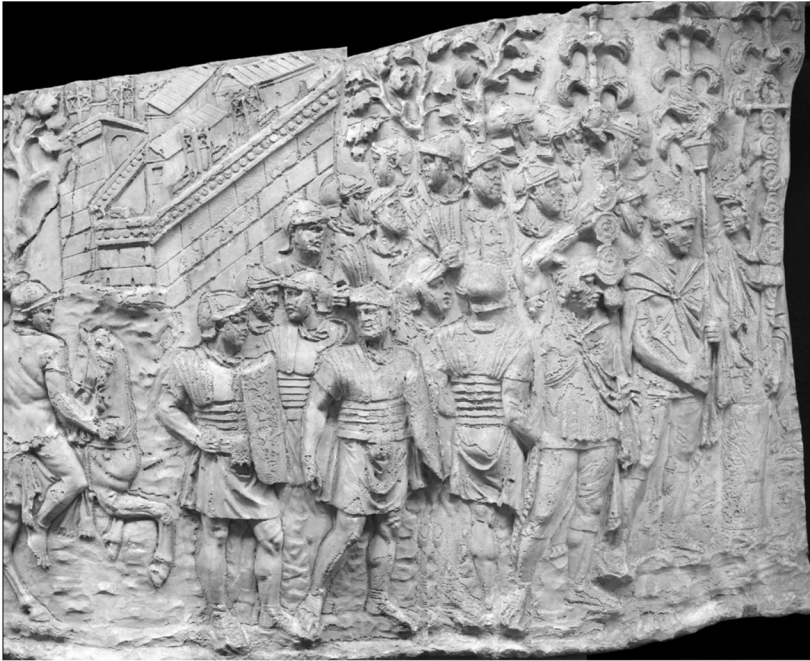


Figure 45. Emperor Trajan, Assembly of troops, Trajan's Column, 107-113 AD, Rome, Italy

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