



Left Antique marble vase with a bacchanalian frieze, from the Villa Borghese.

Right Antique vase with maenads, from the Albani collection.

Anonymous Roman draughtsman

Study of the Borghese vase; Study of an antique vase from the Albani collection

- (i) Pen and dark brown ink and brown wash over black chalk, 408 × 272 mm, inscribed on verso 'Vasa della Villa Borghese'. Laid to a 19th-century wove paper mount sheet.
- (ii) Pen and brown ink with brown wash over black chalk, chalk rule lines at top and base of the vase, 407 × 267 mm. Watermark: fleur-de-lys within two concentric circles, letters A | C. Laid to a 19th-century wove paper mount sheet.

Uniformly framed (by Paul Levi, 1991).

PROVENANCE [*probably* Cardinal Alessandro Albani (1692–1779), kept in his palazzo 'alle Quattro Fontane' in Rome — within the Albani collection of prints and drawings, including the 'Museo Cartaceo', sold in 1762 to James Adam as agent for the Royal Librarian Richard Dalton — King George III, kept in Buckingham House — among sheets of the 'Museo Cartaceo' appropriated by Dalton (1715–1791) during a reorganisation of the drawings circa 1786–1788 — *presumably* his deceased sale by Greenwood's auction house, London, 11–19 May 1791 — *presumably* the antiquary John MacGowan (died in 1803, Edinburgh), his deceased sale by Thomas Philipe's auction house, London, 26 January–4 February 1804 — *presumably* the antiquary Charles Townley (1737–1805) — by descent to John Townley, *presumably* his sale, Sotheby, Wilkinson and Hodge, London, 10–11 May 1865, indirectly to] — Sir William Stirling Maxwell of Pollok (1818–1878), and bound in an album entitled 'Drawings by Italian Old Masters. Sculpture' (fols. 2–3) — by descent within the family — consigned for sale by Phillips, Son & Neale, 'Old Master Drawings', London, 12 December 1990, lots 219–374 (these sheets lot 220) — Private collection, Dublin

THESE DECORATIVE DRAWINGS were extracted in 1990 from one of the two albums of 'Drawings by Italian Old Masters. Sculpture' assembled *circa* 1871 by the Scottish antiquary Sir William Stirling Maxwell. Most of the drawings contained in these two albums had been commissioned by Cassiano dal Pozzo (1588–1637) for his celebrated 'Museo Cartaceo', a corpus of drawings of antiquities in Rome. After Cassiano's death the 'Museo Cartaceo' passed between his younger brother, Carlo Antonio dal Pozzo, Pope Clement XI, Cardinal Alessandro Albani, and in 1762 was sold to George III. When the Royal Librarian, Richard Dalton, reorganised the drawings, he extracted for himself more than 1000 sheets, and these came onto the market at Dalton's deceased sale by Greenwood's auction house (11–19 May 1791), and eventually into the possession of Stirling Maxwell.



Drawing of the Borghese vase, in pen and dark brown ink and brown wash
(sheet 408 × 272 mm)



Vase from the Albani collection, drawn in pen and brown ink with brown wash
(sheet 407 × 267 mm)

Cassiano's 'Museo Cartaceo' had been substantially enriched by its successive owners, Carlo Antonio dal Pozzo (1606–1689) and Cardinal Alessandro Albani (1692–1779), the latter incorporating drawings inherited from his uncle, Pope Clement XI, including a hoard accumulated by the artist Carlo Maratti. While our two drawings might have been introduced into the 'Museo Cartaceo' by Carlo Antonio, before ill health brought his collecting to a halt in 1685, it is more likely that they were executed in the eighteenth century, and were added by Cardinal Albani. The paper evidence does not settle the issue: just one watermark can be seen, a fleur-de-lys within a double circle, accompanied the letters A | C (in the sheet of the Albani vase). This mark has not been observed elsewhere; comparable marks, with different letters, are found in Italian papers manufactured from about 1660 to 1740.

One drawing is inscribed on sheet verso 'Vasa della Villa Borghese' by an eighteenth century hand. The monumental Borghese vase had been excavated in the sixteenth century on the ancient site of the garden of Sallust, and by the mid-seventeenth century was one of the most admired of antique marble vases.¹ The vase is here drawn in mirror image of the original, suggesting that it is a preparatory drawing for a print, or else a copy of a print.

The earliest known print of the Borghese vase is based on a drawing made by François Perrier during his second stay in Italy (late 1634–1644) and published in 1645 in Perrier's work devoted to Roman bas-reliefs.² Perrier's etching is in reverse of the original, however it is a continuous strip view of the frieze only, and not a source for our drawing. The vase afterwards was engraved by Georges Tournier (c. 1651), Pietro Santi Bartoli (c. 1680), an anonymous engraver (1700), and Francesco Aquila (1713); none of their prints corresponds

to our drawing.³ The two drawings of the Borghese vase in the 'Museo Cartaceo' – British Museum, Franks I, fol. 123 (entire relief)⁴ and Windsor, Royal Library, III, fol. 9, 8332 (part of the relief)⁵ – also seem to be unrelated.

Our other drawing represents a marble bell vase then documented in the Albani collection and now in the Torlonia family collection.⁶ The drawing portrays one side of the vase, with three Kallimachian maenads, and handles in the form of bearded male heads. The vase is again drawn in mirror image of the original. A detail (the maenad with tympanum) had been sketched by the sculptor Pierre Jacques (1520–1596) between 1572 and 1577.⁷ The only known print of this vase was engraved c. 1768–1778 by Giovanni Battista Piranesi, and first distributed in 1778.⁸

Four other drawings in the Stirling Maxwell albums are attributable to the same anonymous draughtsman (SM, folios 4–5). Depicting figures of the Victories arranging armour won by Domitian, the four drawings record fragments of the reliefs which typically decorated the ends of projections extending outwards from an entablature and supported by a column. Comparable reliefs, discovered in the 1720s during systematic excavations of the Aula Regia of the Domus Flavia on the Palatine by Francesco Bianchini, are documented in Bianchini's *Del Palazzo de' Cesari: opera postuma* (Verona 1738) and in G.B. Piranesi's *I Trofei di*

¹ The vase was acquired by Napoleon Bonaparte from his brother-in-law, Prince Camillo Borghese, when he purchased the latter's entire art collection in 1808; it is now Musée du Louvre, Inv. MR 985 (Ma 86). *I Borghese e l'antico*, catalogue of an exhibition held at the Galleria Borghese, Rome, 7 December 2011–9 April 2012, edited by Anna Coliva (Rome 2011), pp.238–239 no. 4. Dagmar Grassinger, *Römische Marmokratere* (Mainz am Rhein 1991), pp.181–183, no 23 and plates 83–90.

² François Perrier, *Icones et segmenta illustrivm e marmore tabularvm quæ Romæ adhuc extant* (Rome 1645), pls. 10–11 ([image](#), [image](#)).

³ Georges Tournier, for Charles Errard, *Recueil de divers vases antiques* (S.l., s.n., [1651]), [image](#); Pietro Santi Bartoli and Giovanni Pietro Bellori, *Admiranda romanarum antiquitatum ac veteris sculpturae vestigia anaglyphico opere elaborata ex marmoreis exemplaribus quæ Romæ adhuc extant in Capitolio aedibus hortisque virorum principum ad antiquam elegantiam* (Rome 1693), pls. 50–51 ([image](#), [image](#)); Domenico Montelatici, *Villa Borghese fuori di Porta Pinciana: con l'ornamenti, che si osservano nel di lei palazzo, e con le figure delle statue più singolare* (Roma 1700), pl. opposite p.265 ([image](#)); Francesco Aquila, *Raccolta di vasi diversi* (Rome 1713), pl.[3] ([image](#)).

⁴ British Museum, Department of Greek & Roman Antiquities, Franks, II, fol. 123, no. 512; Cornelius C. Vermeule, 'The Dal Pozzo-Albani Drawings of Classical Antiquities in the British Museum' in *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society* 50 (1960), p.33 no. 512. British Museum, Registration No. 2005,0927.123 ([image](#)).

⁵ Windsor, Royal Library, vol. 3 (A 42: 157), fol. 9, no. 8332; Cornelius C. Vermeule, 'The Dal Pozzo-Albani Drawings of Classical Antiquities in the Royal Library at Windsor Castle' in *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society* 56 (1966), p.21 no. 8332.

⁶ Rome, Museo Torlonia, Inv. 421. P.E. Visconti, *Catalogue of the Torlonia Museum of ancient sculpture* (Rome 1883), p.229 no.421; Carlo Lodovico Visconti, *I monumenti del Museo Torlonia di sculture antiche riprodotti con la fototipia* (Rome 1884–1885), II, p.293 no. 421 and pl. 106 ([image](#)); Carlo Gasparri, *Materiali per servire allo studio del Museo Torlonia di scultura antica* (Rome 1980), p.204 no. 421; Grassinger, *op. cit.* (1991), pp.201–202 no.41 figs. 60–66; Lori-Ann Touchette, *The dancing Maenad reliefs: continuity and change in Roman copies*, University of London. Institute of Classical Studies. Bulletin supplements; 62 (London 1995), p.84 no. 55.

⁷ Paris, BNF, Estampes, Rés. Fb 18a–40. Salomon Reinach, *L'album de Pierre Jacques, sculpteur de Reims, dessiné à Rome de 1572 à 1577* (Paris 1902), p.117 ([entry](#)) and pl. 14 bis ([image](#)).

⁸ G.B. Piranesi, 'Vaso antico che si vede nella Villa di S. Em. il sig. Cardinale Alessandro Albani fuori di Porta Salara. Posa questo vaso sopra un tripode che si conserva nel Museo Capitolino' (plate 528 × 384 mm; Focillon 634, Wilton-Ely 921, Ficacci 766); published in Piranesi's *Vasi candelabri cippi sarcofagi tripodi lverne ed ornamenti antichi* (Rome 1778), pl. 36 ([image](#)). Compare the print by Tommaso Piroli, 'Coro di menadi | Villa Albani' for Giorgio Zoëga, *Li bassirilievi antichi di Roma* (Rome 1808), II, p.177 and Tav. 84 ([image](#)).

Ottaviano Augusto (Rome 1753).⁹ Two reliefs in the latter work, one shown by Piranesi in very weathered and battered state, match in content drawings by our anonymous draughtsman (SM, fol. 4 top and SM, fol. 5 top), and strengthen the supposition that he is recording fragments found on the Palatine Hill (**Figs. 2 and 4, 5 and 7**).¹⁰ A drawing by Piranesi of another fragmentary relief is quite close to one by our anonymous draughtsman (SM, fol. 4 bottom; **Figs. 1, 3**).¹¹ Piranesi does not locate the object, however on another sheet, very similarly executed, and possibly from the same sketchbook, he records a lunette-shaped, unrestored Trajani relief then in the Albani collection.¹² It could be that the four reliefs drawn by our anonymous draughtsman, like the marble bell vase, were once in the Albani collection. If this should be the case, then his drawings may date from the early-eighteenth century, and are late additions to the ‘Museo Cartaceo’.

See overleaf for *Comparative illustrations*

⁹ The excavations were promoted by Francesco Maria Farnese and many of the finds are kept today in the Farnese palace, in niches under the second porch. Peter Heinrich von Blanckenhagen, *Flavische Architektur und ihre Dekoration* (Berlin 1940), pp.64–76 (esp.65–66).

¹⁰ Compare G.B. Piranesi, *I Trofei di Ottaviano Augusto* (Rome 1753), pl. 10, legend: ‘Frammento di marmo di un Architrave e Fregio ritrovato tra le rovine del Palazzo de’ Cesari negli Orti Farnesiani. Nel Fregio scolpito di eccellente maniera apparisce una Vittoria alata con accanto il piede di un gran Candeliero. Questa, come vogliono alcuni stava in atto do coronare un Trofeo, che avena inalzatao dinanzi, di cui altro non si vede presentemente, che alcuni rotti Scudi appesi in alto, e sotto di essi un gran cumulo di altri Scrudi, e di spoglie militari. L’Architrave, del pari egregiamente lavorato, ha la gola superiore intagliata a fogliami di acanto: l’inferiore a foglie di olmo, ed i tondini compartiti a fiselli, e ad altri appricciosi lavoro’, an etching with similar content to SM f.5 (Focillon 138; Giesecke 114; Hind 75–76; Wilton-Ely I, 321.10; [image](#)). Patrizio Pensabene, ‘Frammenti della decorazione architettonica della Domus Flavia sul Palatino’ in *Piranesi nei luoghi di Piranesi*, catalogue of an exhibition, edited by Anna Marzia Positano (Rome 1979), pp.73–84 (p.74 and fig. 18).

¹¹ New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, Inv. 1966.11:33 ([image](#)). Robert Hannah, ‘The Roman model for another Piranesi drawing’ in *Master Drawings* 32 (1994), pp.50–53.

¹² New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, Inv. 1966.11:35, ‘Lunette with Trophies; Winged Serpents and Dolphins in Spandrels’, red chalk, over black chalk, on paper; framing line in red chalk (264 × 560 mm; [image](#)). Robert Hannah, ‘The Classical Model for a Piranesi Drawing Rediscovered’ in *Master Drawings* 25 (1987), pp.270–272, 321; *Exploring Rome: Piranesi and his contemporaries*, catalogue for an exhibition held at the Canadian Centre for Architecture, Montréal, 17 August 1993–2 January 1994 (New York 1993), pp.46–47 no. 28. The object is reproduced by Anne Claude Philippe comte de Caylus, *Recueil d’antiquités égyptiennes, étrusques, grecques, romaines et gauloises* (Paris 1759), III, pl. 63 ([image](#)); Georg Zoëga, *op. cit.* (1808), II, p.283 pl. 113 ([image](#)); see also Stefano Antonio Morcelli, *Indicazione antiquaria per la villa suburbana dell’eccellentissima casa Albani* (Rome 1785), p.68 no. 648 ([entry](#)); Alessandro R.G.F. Torlonia, *Description de la Villa Albani* (Rome 1869), p.144 nos. 1005–1006 ([entry](#)).



Fig. 1 *Comparative illustration* Stirling Maxwell album, f. 4 lower.
Images courtesy of the [Cassiano dal Pozzo Research Project](#)



Fig. 2 *Comparative illustration* Stirling Maxwell album, f. 4 top

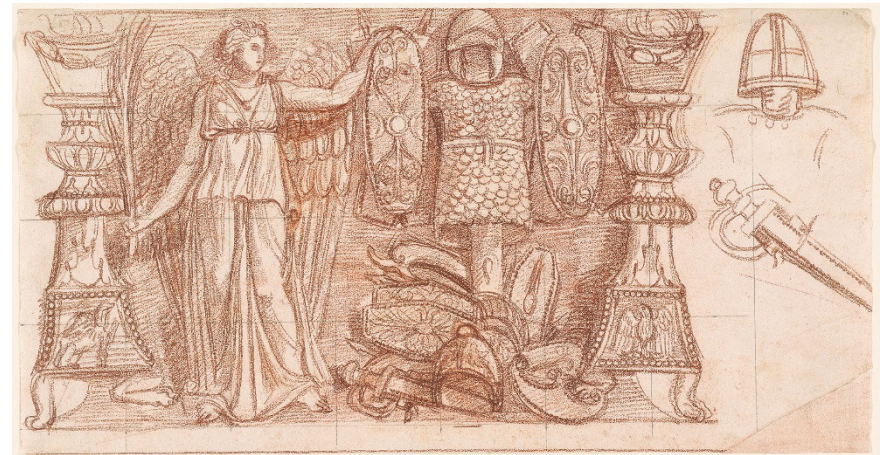


Fig. 3 *Comparative illustration* G.B. Piranesi, Frieze with Figure of Victory, Palm, Trophies, and Candelabra. Red chalk on paper; squared in black chalk. (216 × 410 mm)
Pierpont Morgan Library, Bequest of Junius S. Morgan and gift of Henry S. Morgan, [1966.11.33](#)



Fig. 4 *Comparative illustration* G.B. Piranesi, *I Trofei di Ottaviano Augusto* (Rome 1753), detail of 'Frammento di marmo di un Architrave e Fregio ritrovato tra le rovine del Palazzo de' Cesari negli Orti Farnesiani' ([image source](#))

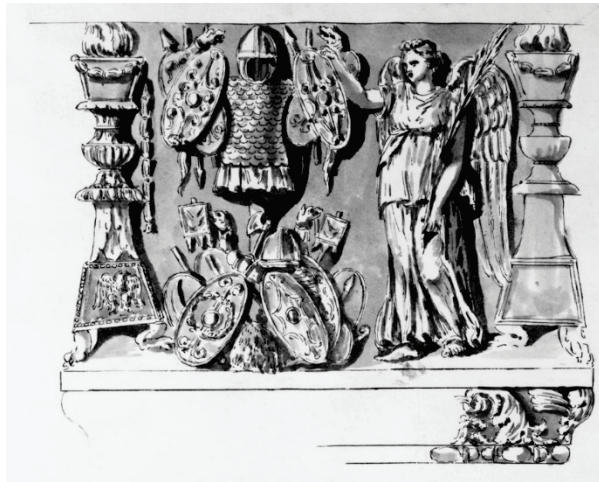


Fig. 5 *Comparative illustration* Stirling Maxwell album, f. 5 top.
Images courtesy of the [Cassiano dal Pozzo Research Project](#)



Fig. 6 *Comparative illustration* Stirling Maxwell album, f. 5 lower



Fig. 7 *Comparative illustration* G.B. Piranesi, *I Trofei di Ottaviano Augusto* (Rome 1753),
detail of 'Trofei de Daci e de Sarmati ed altri popoli alleati scolpiti nella fascia e nel
pedestallo della colonna traiana' ([image source](#))