



Taylor & Francis  
Taylor & Francis Group



ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGIATE  
SCHOOLS OF ARCHITECTURE

---

Hadrian and the Frontiers of Form

Author(s): Catherine Barrett

Source: *Journal of Architectural Education (1984-)*, Vol. 56, No. 3 (Feb., 2003), pp. 40-47

Published by: [Taylor & Francis, Ltd.](#) on behalf of the [Association of Collegiate Schools of Architecture, Inc.](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1425765>

Accessed: 27-03-2015 20:32 UTC

---

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at <http://www.jstor.org/page/info/about/policies/terms.jsp>

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.



Taylor & Francis, Ltd. and Association of Collegiate Schools of Architecture, Inc. are collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *Journal of Architectural Education (1984-)*.

<http://www.jstor.org>

# Hadrian and the Frontiers of Form

Architecture often stands in its own sculptural right, but how much richer we are to explore its genesis! The emperor Hadrian, ruling a kingdom much like our United States in its cultural diversity and strength of influence, realized a design of marvelous paradox in his Villa at Tivoli. This paper seeks to knit together the formal elements of the villa with the human sensibilities of Hadrian by presenting notes from several seminal works, including *Mémoires d'Hadrien* by Marguerite Yourcenar (Librarie Plon, 1958), and *Hadrian's Villa and Its Legacy* by William L. MacDonald and John A. Pinto (Yale University Press, 1995).

*Animula, vagula, blandula,  
Hospes, comesque corporis,  
Quae nunc abibis in loca,  
Pallidula, rigida, nudula,  
Nec ut soles, dabis jocos.*

(Poem attributed to Hadrian,  
dated shortly before his death)

*O blithe little soul, thou, flitting away  
Guest and comrade of this my clay,  
Whither now goest thou, to what place  
Bare and ghastly and without grace?  
Not, as thy wont was, joke and play.<sup>1</sup>*

Emperor Hadrian's Villa at Tivoli, built between 118 and 138 A.D., reflects in its remaining fragments an intoxicating contrast of established and experimental thought, ambassadorial elements of an age at its apex that knew great order and organization and simultaneously embraced much chaos and mystery. The emperor Trajan had pushed the Roman Empire to its greatest extent: westward across "Europe" to the British Isles, south to Africa, east to Syria, and north to the border of Germany, to comprise forty provinces and sixty million inhabitants. Rome learned its geography from his conquests.<sup>2</sup> Hadrian, during his twenty-year rule immediately after Trajan, put an end to this expansion, favoring productive development in the areas recently colonized. He spent more than half of his reign traveling to every part of the empire, personally reviewing the eco-

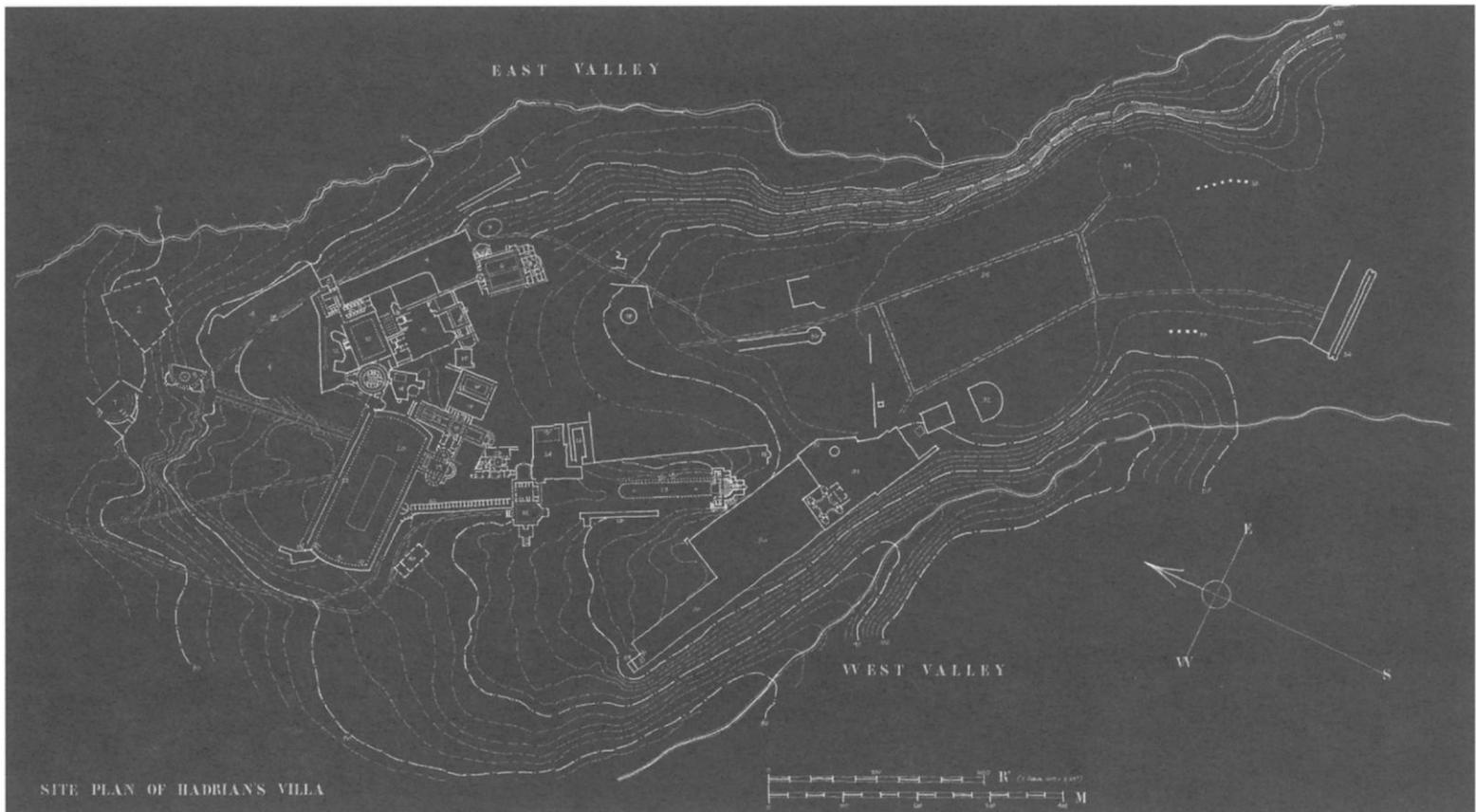
nomics and demographics of each region to determine how best to integrate them into the Roman system of government. He implemented many laws, among them legislation to encourage the free exchange of goods, to keep farmland in production, and to improve the status of slaves and women. He was prolific, and touched 130 cities throughout the empire with gifts of building projects, projects designed to stimulate local pride and to boost the economy. Pausanias, a Greek contemporary of Hadrian's, is quoted as saying that "the Megarians were so cursed for an ancient misdeed that they were the only Greeks (whom) not even Hadrian could make more prosperous."<sup>3</sup>

As counterpoint to the distillation of economic and legal issues that marked this period, religious choices became ever more abundant. The Romans had appropriated the myths and gods of the Greeks and the Etruscans, to which they added their own. They had embraced recent cult arrivals from Greece and the East; the Eleusian and Bacchic Mysteries; the cults of Mithra, Isis, and Orpheus; and the monotheistic religions of Judaism and Christianity, which were tolerated if not encouraged. The philosophic schools of Stoicism and Epicurianism also enjoyed a resurgence in reaction to the degeneracy of civic life during the Julio-Claudian dynasty. Hadrian, with his insatiable curiosity, dipped his hand in all. He developed an intense love for Greek culture from his early education there, to such an extent that he

"entertained the possibility of Hellenicizing the barbarians, of Atticizing Rome, of softly imposing on the world the only culture that would separate itself from the monstrous, the unformed, the immobile, that had invented a definition of methods, a theory of politics as well as for beauty."<sup>4</sup> In addition to conscientiously observing traditional Roman religious practice, he was initiated in the Eleusian Mysteries while in Greece. He had studied and admired the Stoics, whose doctrines of equilibrium and free will may have informed his liberal attitudes. In her book *Mémoires d'Hadrien*, Marguerite Yourcenar writes in several instances of Hadrian's interest in the universal qualities of the Stoic deity.<sup>5</sup> F.H. Sandbach, in *The Stoics*, discusses this phenomenon in depth but, in summation, states "There are many passages (in ancient texts written by the Stoics) in which the Stoic god is said to be a breath (pneuma) that passes through all things and fashions them."<sup>6</sup>

Hadrian existed as a god himself, as a Roman emperor ruling during the few hundred years within which western emperors were deified. "Gods were no more, Christ was not yet; there was, from the time of Cicero (about 50 B.C.) to Marcus Aurelius (about 200 A.D.) a unique moment when man alone was god."<sup>7</sup> Yourcenar used this quote from Gustave Flaubert as genesis for Hadrian's musings on his unique situation. He was a god, and therefore personally responsible for the multitudes of his empire, but by nature he was a solitary man who preferred

1. Plan of Hadrian's Villa. (Credit: C. Barrett.)



the company of the night sky. The capacity to absorb this paradox assisted his ambitions to improve the state of the empire by personal oversight and to express his creative ideas of solitary vision in other arenas.

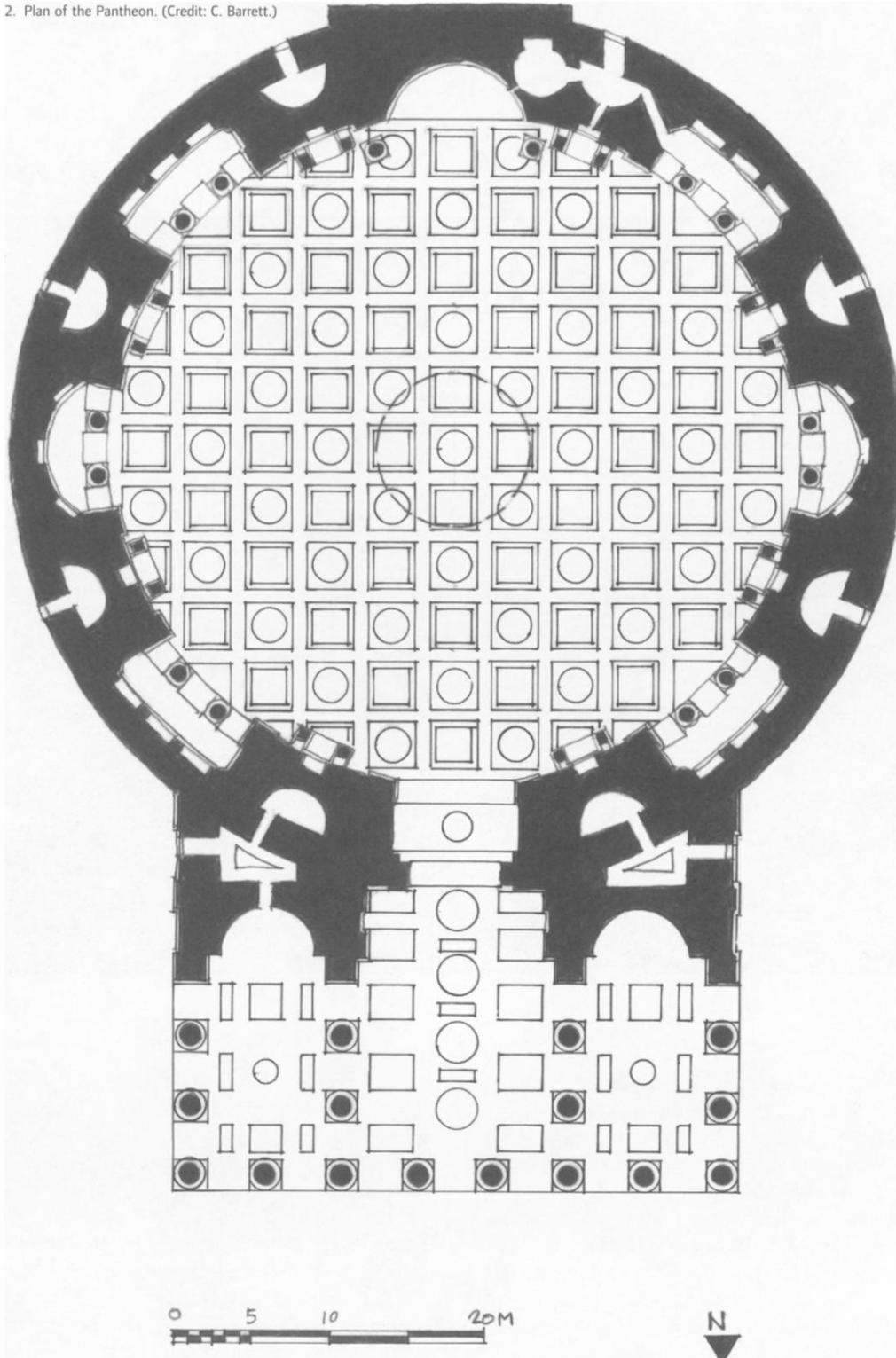
His complexities of personality were well acknowledged. "He was, in the same person, austere and genial, dignified and playful, dilatory and quick to act, niggardly and generous, deceitful and straightforward, cruel and merciful, and always in all

things changeable."<sup>8</sup> Yourcenar interprets his changeability as the expression of a personality fascinated with frontiers: the literal frontiers of his military life as well as his cultural and philosophical frontiers. Hadrian incessantly searches for the "points of contact" between the Oriental kingdom of the Parthians and the Roman Empire; he thus negotiates peace with King Osroes rather than forcing it by conquest.<sup>9</sup> He dreams of a system of comprehending the world through a series of contacts

based on sensuality and intuition that allow one to enter the interior world of another, and thus to explore the unknown territory of oneself.

Yourcenar's celebrated book was written in 1951 and is a fictional autobiography, but it has been described as "the best known view of the emperor" in which her objective "is not that of the professional historian but that of a philosopher of character concerned to draw a compelling picture of the dominant figure of an age."<sup>10</sup> Yourcenar pre-

2. Plan of the Pantheon. (Credit: C. Barrett.)



sents Hadrian's life as a letter that he writes to his nephew Marcus Aurelius as he prepares to die. The book vividly describes Hadrian's obsession for testing "terra cognita" against "terra incognita," and whether or not we believe the rendering, the physical forms of his Villa at Tivoli stand as clear evidence of a mind concerned with the nature of paradox.

*The frontier appears . . . as a hazy border that stimulates the curiosity for lands unknown, and for great change. It is the state of being open to all possibilities, even those that reverse the initial plan.<sup>11</sup>*

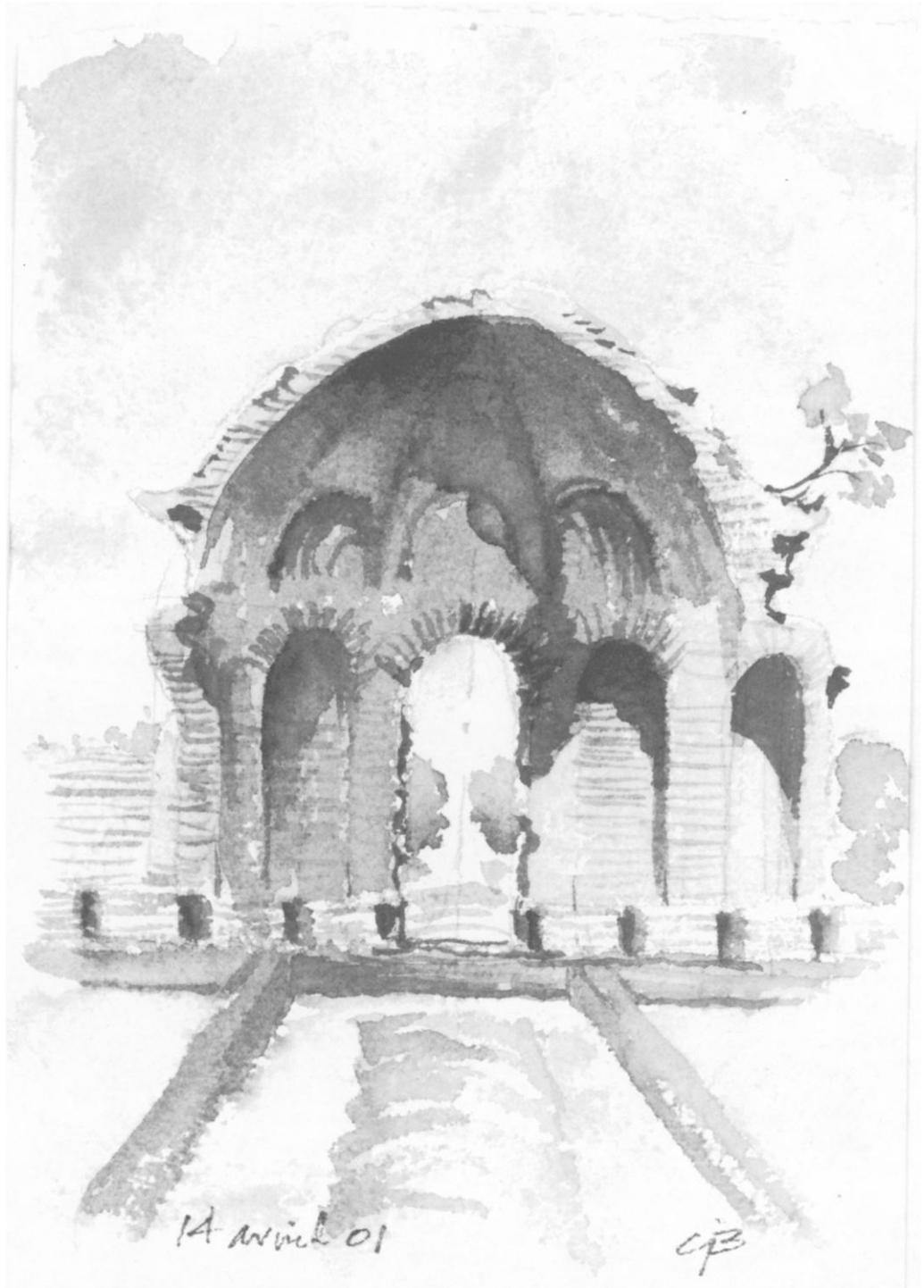
Although there is no record of an "architect" of the villa, it is fairly certain that Hadrian was in large part responsible for its design, just as is assumed to be the case for the Pantheon.<sup>12</sup> The villa plan is huge, more than 150 acres, and it stretches across the landscape like a sleeping giant's bones kicked asunder. There are four major axes to assist attempts at comprehension, but the variety of final assembly continually takes one by surprise, and is shocking taken in the context of villa architecture before this time.

William MacDonald and John A. Pinto in their recent book, *Hadrian's Villa and Its Legacy* (1995), cover the villa in great depth. They admit to an "impression of disorder . . . as though a great house had come apart," but in their final analysis find great order and beauty, not in the geometry of the overall plan, but in the "successive experiences" of the gardens and structures.<sup>13</sup> These constructions are intimately tied to the topography of the terrain, but their ghostly footprints are so compelling that the connection is easily lost. MacDonald and Pinto suggest that the villa is a "laboratory," a place where Hadrian expressed his personal interpretations of the myriad of cultures, religions, and physical environments that made up his memory.<sup>14</sup> In fact, the villa has been called "a cosmic theater of memory" by Indra Kagis McEwen, who refers to the

memory training techniques utilized at that time in teaching rhetoric, which Hadrian certainly would have known.<sup>15</sup> Architectural form and spatial sequencing were often used as metaphorical placeholders in the mind for subjects one wished to commit to memory, and McEwen maintains that beyond the common idea that Hadrian's villa was a postcard collection of the places he had visited, it served as a physical embodiment of the layers of his memory.

These authors see some value in studying the villa in conjunction with the Pantheon, either as counterpoints to each other or for the relationships between the Pantheon and the Maritime Theater. Some of the comparisons between the Pantheon and the Maritime Theater are obvious, such as the similar dimensions and the simultaneity of their construction. Metaphysical attributes exist but are more difficult to define. The centrality of the forms has been considered as a metaphor for imperial divinity, and for the Roman Empire as a symbol of the entire world. The consideration of counterpoint, however, seems more complex and deserves further study. MacDonald and Pinto see the Pantheon consolidating the variety of the Roman Empire in a single large and symbolic gesture, whereas the Villa at Tivoli extends across the landscape as a prolonged, intoxicated feast of the varied facets of the empire.<sup>16</sup> What is remarkable is that, assuming Hadrian was in large part responsible for both creations, from one mind we have two such richly symbolic reflections of the Roman world: one a distillation, almost zenlike in its reductive nature, and the other so full of variety we can hardly believe it possible to exist with any grace at all.

One might say that Hadrian exercised his love of paradox from the start by choosing this site for his project. His choice has never been easily accepted: most noble villas were built in the hills to take advantage of the views of Rome and the distant countryside, but the latest analyses seem to agree that the acreage and the availability of natural resources specific to this site made it eminently suitable. It's also possible that the existing Republi-



can villa located there, and subsequently assimilated into the Villa at Tivoli design, belonged to the family of Sabina, Hadrian's wife.

We do know that Hadrian consciously eschewed Rome and its nobility, preferring the culture of Greece, and naturally the Romans took offense at what they perceived as a snub even as they thanked him for twenty years of prosperity and peace, and, in fact, no emperor probably cared more for the Roman people. His attitude of separation fuels Eleanor Clark's poetic description of the site: "It is a subtle brooding piece of land, chosen by a man worshipped as a god over half the world and to whom elevation must have been insufferable."<sup>17</sup> The hills, with their noble villas, are kept at a distance, and Hadrian's privacy inviolate. Consider also Hadrian's twenty years of military life: he was well practiced in living out-of-doors and of choosing camps for his troops that would afford them protection as well as advantage of outlook. The ideal site for a Roman camp has been described as "sited near water, on open ground (preferably raised ground) that did not offer cover to the enemy."<sup>18</sup>

The overriding theme is one of privacy, of contained interior experience, although there are certainly points in the villa that are out-looking, where distant views are framed. The building complexes are mostly self-referential, and the beauty is found in their internal conversations. Paradox is here, however, as the shapes explore their own frontiers. A theme is stated; then opposed. A form is defined only to be dematerialized, continually searching for the "other."

*The light tent, the architecture of cloth and cords, was still preferred. . . . I distrust any fixation that attaches me to any home, even a moving one.*<sup>19</sup>

At the end of a long corridor extending from the relatively conservative precinct of the remodeled Republican villa, sits the entry vestibule for the Piazza d'Oro, expressing in solid form this "architec-

ture of cloth and cords," of energy bound and released.<sup>20</sup> The dome of the vestibule, gored and fluted like a brioche mold with an oculus, sits neatly above an octagonal chamber that alternates rectangular with apsidal fountain niches. The entry axis and opposing axis take rectangular forms that constrain and anchor the energy, then release it with measure through door and window openings, altogether a neat exercise in contradiction.<sup>21</sup>

On axis with the entry is a well-behaved but complex peristyle courtyard with a central canal, "an enclosed garden with splendid waterworks,"<sup>22</sup> and beyond, in answer to the light chord struck by the entry vestibule, we find the orchestral space of the nymphaeum, where everything is turned topsyturvy. Here, at four times the scale of the entry vestibule, the lines of the internal arcades wind round each other like Maypole dancers. Four arcades are pushed into the center by deep and narrow fountain niches; those pushing out and away from the center are answered by others that send curves back, like the overlapping waves of ebbing and flowing tides. The columns marking the sinuous lines of these arcades have composite capitals with inverted volutes, a theme that Borromini apparently liked and borrowed for his column capitals at San Carlo alle Quattro Fontane.<sup>23</sup>

This remarkable cloverleaf fountain court space may have been covered, although there is no evidence of a permanent roof. Such a structure would have been awkward in the context of the surrounding barrel vaults, and indeed reads strangely on the beautiful model in the villa museum. A publication of about twenty years ago, used as a tour guide to the "reconstructed" villa, shows it roofless. Perhaps here is a place where Hadrian did use the architecture of cloth and cords.

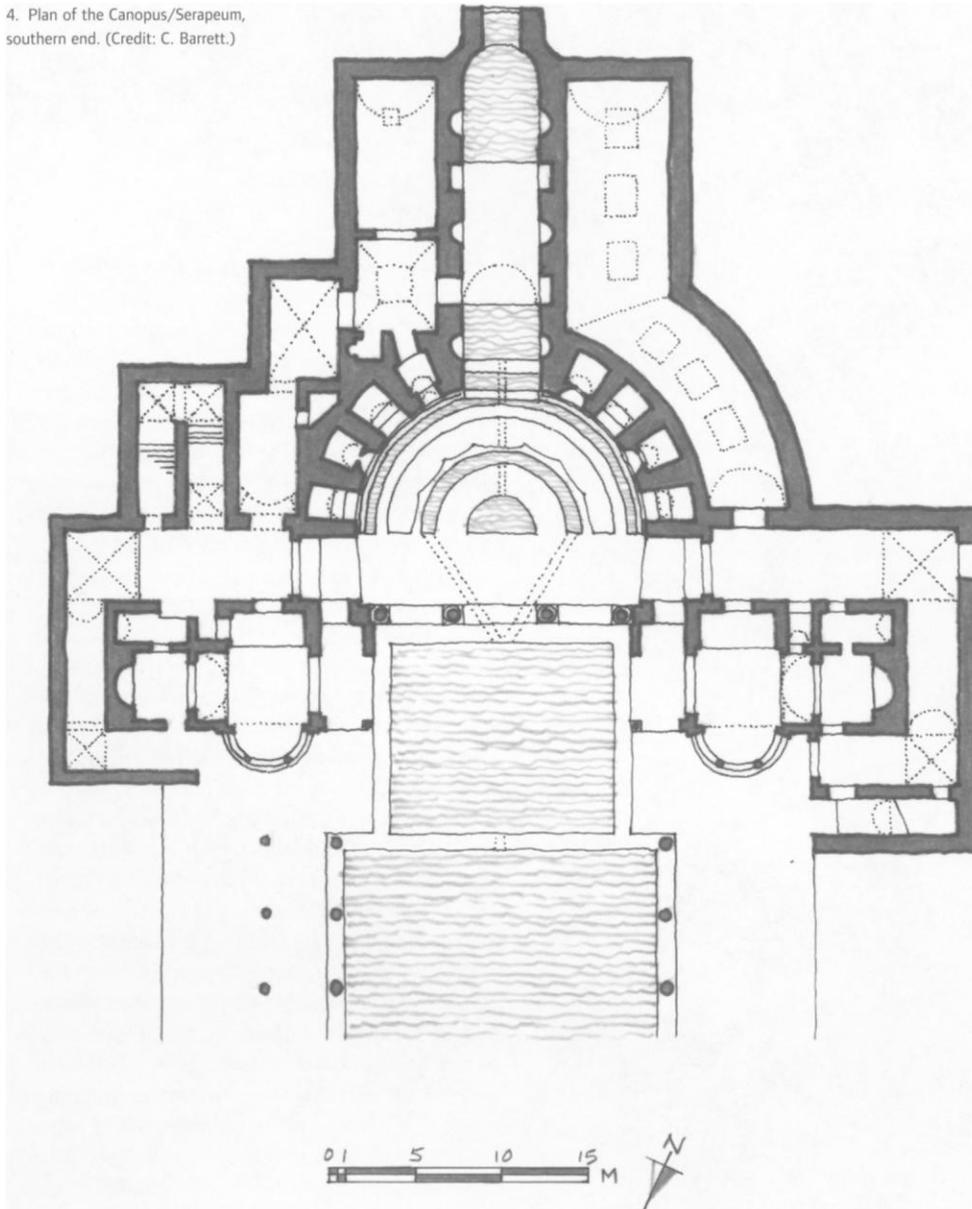
Closing the axis of the entry vestibule and embracing the restless fountain court is a sweeping nymphaeum wall that takes part in the "majesty of line" Eleanor Clark describes.<sup>24</sup> It contains seven niches of alternating shape, echoing the theme of the entry while presenting it in a new context. The

nymphaeum is a staple of Roman villa architecture and a tribute to the symbolic and literary importance of water. Many nymphaeums are associated with rocky, mossy grottoes, but, here at the Villa at Tivoli, where "a dripping through moss is not his style," Hadrian's nymphaeums are imagined by Eleanor Clark to be more formally elegant, "quiet in their extravagance."<sup>25</sup> However they were adorned, they were conceived of as singular, dominant sources of that fluid and musical material that so refreshed and played, weaving its way throughout the building precincts as silk thread warping through wool fabric.

A high wall encloses the courtyard of the Piazza d'Oro, imparting a sense of privacy and clarity. All is not evident at first glance, however. There is another important space here, attached to the north side of this precinct, "embedded like a barnacle in all that pattern and splendor [which] stubbornly faces off all by itself over the gulch to the mountains."<sup>26</sup> The gulch is the area called "Tempe" in the *Historia Augusta*, considered to be Hadrian's re-creation of the grand and sacred canyon of Thesaly in Greece, and the apsidal space still faces a beautiful panorama and astounds with the graceful curves of its forecourt, curves that "may be the most fluid reverse curves in Roman architecture."<sup>27</sup> The tourists often bypass this beautiful outlook, and thus they may be missing an important link to Hadrian's relationship with the vault of the sky. Here is evidence, as at the famous Serapeum, of Hadrian's attempts to dematerialize form, to join the heavens, the earth, and the underworld in one continuum.

*The young Bithynian was seen by him (Hadrian) as an enigmatic figure of transition between two worlds and two modes of thought. With his arcadian ancestors and his astounding beauty he recalled mythological Greece, "where all, seen from a distance, seemed to have been noble and simple: encompassing tenderness, glory, and death."*<sup>28</sup>

4. Plan of the Canopus/Serapeum, southern end. (Credit: C. Barrett.)



The Canopus/Serapeum is a gigantic earth sculpture composed of three major elements: two long embankments, a planar tongue of water in their valley, and a glittering geode of a cave wedged in the terminus. This precinct in particular has generated much speculation and debate as to its use and meaning. There is a long discourse on nomenclature from MacDonald and Pinto, who pre-

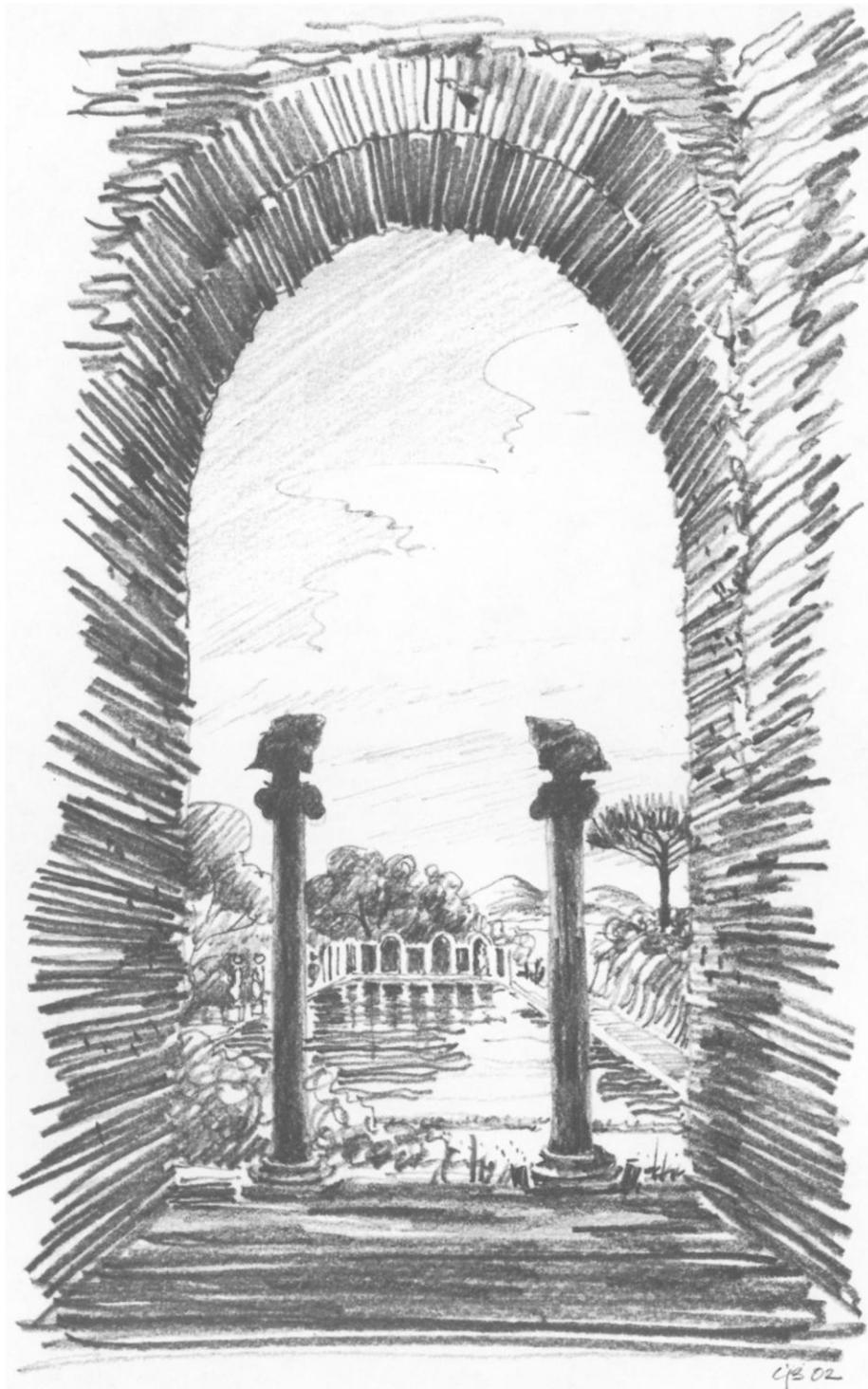
fer to call the complex "Scenic Triclinium and Canal." (See note 20.) "Canope," however, is one of the seven areas of the villa mentioned in the *Historia Augusta*, and, because this body of water resembles a canal more than any other at the villa, the name Canopus/Serapeum endures. Canopus was a town near Alexandria, Egypt, and contained a canal celebrated for the licentious parties held along its

banks. The word *Serapeum* derives from the Temple of Serapis, which was located nearby. Brick stamping indicates construction between 125 and 128 A.D., a few years before Hadrian's last trip up the Nile and the death of his companion Antinous.

The games of contrast exhibit themselves here with great skill: natural inclinations of the landscape were emphasized to increase the contrast between the open, relatively limpid space at the northern "entry" end and the complex cave at the deepest part of the cut at the southern terminus. The two elements contrast with and complete each other. "The Canal draws the Triclinium's interior out toward the open, and the Triclinium makes the Canal whole and gives it reason to exist."<sup>29</sup> The attraction of the triclinium would be overpowering if the canal sat simply as a flat shape between the hillsides. In the transit from the valley mouth to the cave, the visitor is delayed by the mystery of the rhythmically placed statuary standing at the water's edge, facing the canal and locked in private dialogue with the scene. One is compelled to join these figures from the pantheon of the world's gods in contemplation, perhaps in composure of the spirit as a preparation for the feast that awaits.

The Serapeum, "Scenic Triclinium," or dining hall, rises like a hood at the southern end of the canal. Its cover is a half dome with an oculus, gored and fluted as the roof of the entry vestibule at the Piazza D'Oro, but this time sheathed in glass and ceramic tesserae to reflect the play of the water below. Behind the raised seating platform that follows the arc in plan are eight niches of alternating shape and function. Rectangular niches once spilled water forward to the pool directly in front of the diners, and the apsidal, domed niches contained statuary. The main canal continues here in miniature, terminating in an apsidal pool deep in the cave's recess. Sometimes covered, sometimes skylit, sometimes bridged, sometimes open, the small canal teases our perception of its presence as it moves on

5. Sketch looking north from the interior of the Serapeum triclinium. (Credit: C. Barrett.)



axis toward the larger expanse of water. Subtle openings in the walls of the cave connect to the larger complex of underground hallways that riddle the villa, a complex suggested to be the “Inferno,” or underworld, mentioned in the *Historia Augusta*. Standing in the triclinium facing north, a visitor partakes simultaneously of several worlds. The underworld and the watery world of the nymphaeum wall are behind, and the earthly world is below. The half dome of the triclinium hood and four large columns frame the celestial world, and, also, in the distance, the crown of Mount Montecelio, on axis with the whole assembly.

Here, more than any other place at the villa, Antinous seems present. This Bithynian youth was Hadrian’s constant companion from about 122 A.D. until the time of his death in 130 A.D. He drowned in the Nile at the age of twenty, and it is said that Hadrian wept unconsolably at the news. Antinous was deified, an unprecedented act heretofore reserved for members of the imperial family, and Hadrian dedicated a new town in Egypt, Antinopolis, to his memory.<sup>30</sup> Eleanor Clark sees this grief as the first “romantic agony” made public in Rome, “the individual soul asserting itself in strange and dangerous fashion,”<sup>31</sup> relative to the pragmatic Roman attitude about love and family. Antinous is present here as Hadrian’s struggle to represent the universal opposites: self and other, masculine and feminine. He is the canal: a pure phallic form mirroring the gazes of the Greek and Egyptian deities, and ultimately reflecting the feminine complexities of Hadrian, of the grand and voluminous Serapeum. Antinous, however, may also have embodied the final frontier that Hadrian could not comprehend, the “other” he could not enter. His power over Hadrian may have derived from the irresistible nature of his refutation of Hadrian’s theory of contact: perhaps Hadrian could never truly find points of contact with Antinous and “found himself faced with the initial chaos, that is to say, in contemporary terms, with the absurd.”<sup>32</sup>

## Notes

1. There have been many translations of this famous poem. This one is taken from the article "Hadrian's Rhetoric II, *Thesaurus Eloquentiae*, the Villa at Tivoli," by Indra Kagis McEwen (*RES* 25 (spring 1994): 55), and is a translation made by A. O'Brien-Moore that appears in the Loeb edition of the *Historia Augusta* (see note 8).
2. Will Durant, *Caesar and Christ* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1994), p. 413.
3. Mary T. Boatwright, *Hadrian and the Cities of the Roman Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), pp. 4–5.
4. Marguerite Yourcenar, *Mémoires d'Hadrien* (Paris: Librairie Plon, 1958), p. 105. ("J'entrevois la possibilité d'helléniser les barbares, d'atticiser Rome, d'imposer doucement au monde la seule culture qui se soit un jour séparée du monstrueux, de l'informe, de l'immobile, qui ait inventé une définition de la méthode, une théorie de la politique et de la beauté.")  
Excerpts from this book are presented in their original French to duplicate their rhythm and tone as accurately as possible. All English translations are by the author.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 7. "I believed . . . that it would be possible to share thus in the existence of everything, and this sympathy would be one of the least revocable types of immortality." ("J'ai cru . . . qu'il serait possible de partager de la sorte l'existence de tous, et cette sympathie serait l'une des espèces les moins revocables de l'immortalité.")
6. F.H. Sandbach, *The Stoics* (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing, 1994), p. 73.
7. Yourcenar, *Mémoires d'Hadrien*, p. 427.
8. This phrase is often quoted as it is one of the few sources contemporary with Hadrian. Here, it is taken from *The Pantheon*, by William MacDonald (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1976, p. 12) and associated footnotes. Direct sources that discuss Hadrian are rare. The *Historia Augusta* is a biography of the Roman emperors originally written in the fourth century and transcribed in the eleventh, in thirty-nine volumes, and it offers several selected quotes from contemporaries of Hadrian. Other sources include a biographical text from Dio Cassius, a senator of the second century A.D., and miscellaneous letters, inscriptions, coins, artifacts and structures.
9. Henriette Levillain, *Commente: Mémoires d'Hadrien de Marguerite Yourcenar* (France: Editions Gallimard, 1992), p. 65. *Points of contact* is a phrase used frequently by Hadrian in Yourcenar's book, an expression of his theory of understanding unfamiliar situations, and his attempt to identify with all aspects of the world. Levillain discusses this phrase in depth in chapter 3, "Le Plan d'une Vie."
10. William MacDonald and John A. Pinto, *Hadrian's Villa and Its Legacy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), p. 12.
11. Levillain, *Commente*, p. 60. ("... la frontière apparaît . . . comme une délimitation floue qui stimule la curiosité<sup>2</sup> des terres inconnues et

des grands dépassements. Lieu de toutes les virtualités, même de celles qui inversent le plan initial.")

12. William MacDonald, *The Pantheon: Design, Meaning, and Progeny* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1976), p. 12. "The architect of the Pantheon is unknown. . . . But whoever the architect may have been, Hadrian's building it was and is; he stands in relation to it as Justinian to the Hagia Sophia or Louis XIV to Versailles. Hadrian, the Pantheon, and the cultural texture of the early second century are all inextricably interwoven, and there can be no doubt that the conception of the building and the motivating personality behind its creation were Hadrian's."
13. MacDonald and Pinto, *Hadrian's Villa*, p. 36.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 195.
15. McEwen, "Hadrian's Rhetoric II," p. 60.
16. The first chapter of *The Pantheon: Design, Meaning, and Progeny* is titled "In the Temple of the Whole World," and there MacDonald calls the Pantheon "one of the grand architectural creations of all time: original, utterly bold, many-layered in associations and meaning, the container of a kind of immanent universality" (p. 11). In *Hadrian's Villa*, MacDonald and Pinto compare the Pantheon to the Villa at Tivoli: "The Pantheon's public, unitary space, dedicated to all the gods, describes a timeless cosmic order; the Villa contains a complex detailed statement, in a private setting, of that order, of the things seen in it and what they stand for. The Pantheon's ideated horizon and vault of heaven suggest a peaceful, unified realm of classical lands under the surveillance of the gods; at the Villa the cultural framework of that realm was made visible in a complementary statement about the interaction of Greek and Roman thought and experience" (p. 196).
17. Eleanor Clark, *Rome and a Villa* (New York: Atheneum, 1982), p. 158.
18. Lesley and Roy Adkins, *Handbook to Life in Ancient Rome* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), p. 93.
19. Yourcenar, *Mémoires d'Hadrien*, p. 174. ("La tente légère, l'architecture de toile et de cordes, était encore la préférée. . . . Je me défiais trop de toute fixité pour m'attacher à aucune demeure, même mouvante.")
20. Nomenclature at the villa is a story in itself. From the *Historia Augusta* we have another scrap of evidence about the villa, whereby the author describes seven named parts as "examples of places and provinces most famous." These are named as the Lyceum, Academicum, Prytaneum, Canopum, Poicilen, Tempe, and the Inferno. There is no physical description, which omission has provided much fertile ground for speculation among scholars and makes the villa the enigma it is today.

The Piazza d'Oro was so named because so much imperial portrait sculpture and beautiful artwork was found there, but MacDonald and Pinto, in an effort to render a more neutral interpretation to spaces in the villa, have renamed it "The Water Court." Their research and pre-

sentation are superb and the most complete to date, but on this point are very frustrating, as their new names for spaces at the villa have not been adopted by any more recent publications or presentations. In this article, I will maintain the older and more romantic names for the sake of familiarity, clarifying where necessary when I quote MacDonald and Pinto.

21. Yourcenar, *Mémoires d'Hadrien*, p. 116. "Together we have the passion to embellish, then to deconstruct, our souls; to test our spirit on all the touchstones." ("Nous avions tous deux la passion d'orner, puis de dépouiller notre âme, d'éprouver notre esprit à toutes les pierres de touche.") This is Hadrian talking about his relationship with Trajan's wife and his mother-in-law, Plotina. There were rumors that she manipulated events to secure Hadrian's succession at the time of Trajan's death, but, in any case, she enjoys a reputation for being a sage and educated woman. She loved to read, and Hadrian dedicated a library in Rome to her.
22. MacDonald and Pinto, *Hadrian's Villa*, p. 99.
23. *Ibid.*, pp. 225–226.
24. Clark, *Rome and a Villa*, p. 176.
25. *Ibid.*, p. 163.
26. *Ibid.*, p. 176.
27. MacDonald and Pinto, *Hadrian's Villa*, p. 59. The authors offer an interesting description of the original Tempe as well as Hadrian's, and Vincent Scully, in *The Earth, the Temple, and the Gods* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1962, ch. 7) writes in depth about Apollo and the Vale of Tempe. Their description of the form of the forecourt is from p. 100.
28. Levillain, *Commente*, p. 71. ("Le jeune Bithynien apparaît en effet à ses yeux comme une énigmatique figure de transition entre deux mondes et deux modes de pensée. Par ses ancêtres arcadiens et sa fulgurante beauté, il réssuscite la Grèce mythologique, où tout, vu à distance, semble avoir été noble et simple, la tendresse, la gloire, la mort.")
29. MacDonald and Pinto, *Hadrian's Villa*, p. 112.
30. Lesley and Roy Adkins, *Handbook*, pp. 251–252.
31. Clark, *Rome*, p. 189.
32. Levillain devotes a chapter in her book to the "Theme of the Frontier," in which she discusses the theories of contact mentioned in *Mémoires d'Hadrien*. The first and probably most succinct citation is from the first chapter, "Animula vagula blandula": "I dreamed at times of constructing a system of human knowledge based on the erotic, a theory of contact, where the mystery and dignity of another consists precisely in offering to me this point of entry into another world." ("J'ai rêvé parfois d'élaborer un système de connaissance humaine basé sur l'érotique, une théorie du contact, où le mystère et la dignité d'autrui consisteraient précisément à offrir au Moi ce point d'appui d'un autre monde" (p. 16).)

The final quotation is originally written ("se trouve confronté au chaos initial; soit, pour parler en termes contemporains, à l'absurde" (p. 72).)