

SYMBOLIC HISTORY
Through Sight and Sound

5. The Search for Rome

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- a1) *Piranesi, c. 1748, "Vedute di Roma," The Forum, engraving; + video detail*
 1) *Piranesi, c. 1765, same, Baths of Caracalla, engraving; + video detail*

Music: Monteverdi 1642, L'Incoronazione di Poppea, Finale, Vox SVBX 5212

Thou stranger, which for Rome in Rome here seekest, And nought of
 Rome in Rome perceiv'st at all,
 These same old walls, old arches, which thou seest,
 Old Palaces, is that which Rome men call.
 Behold what wreck, what ruin, and what waste,
 And how that she, which with her mighty power
 Tamed all the world, hath tamed herself at last,
 The prey of time which all things doth devour...

- Va2) *Piranesi, c. 1759, "Vedute di Roma," Temple of Venus, engraving = fig. 16*
 2) *Piranesi, c. 1774, "Vedute di Roma," Temple of Saturn, engraving; first, video detail; for fig. Va2 stands as b1 above; while 2 has no dig. detail*

The English poet Spenser, about 1590—lines echoed from Spain, 1610, Quevedo:

Buscas en Roma a Roma, O peregrino!
 Y en Roma misma a Roma no la hallas...

Both translating the French of Du Bellay, from forty years before Spenser:

Nouveau venu, qui cherches Rome en Rome,
 Et rien de Rome en Rome n'apperçois...
 Rome de Rome est le seul monument,
 Et Rome Rome a vaincu seulement...

- 3) *Piranesi, c. 1775, "Vedute di Roma", Branch of the Aqua Claudia, engraving; + video detail (not dig.)*

Du Bellay, varying the Italian of Castiglione, forty years earlier still:

Superbi colli, e voi sacre ruine,
 Che'l nome sol di Roma ancor tenete...
 Colossi, archi, teatri, opre divine...

Arches, theatres, divine works of that Rome, which Goethe, two hundred years later would seek:

- a4) *Piranesi c. 1770, "Vedute di Roma", Baths at Hadrian's Villa, engraving*
 4) *Piranesi c. 1760, "Vedute di Roma", Arch of Constantine and The Colosseum, engraving; first, video detail (not dig.)*

Saget, Steine, mir an, o sprecht ihr hohen Paläste
 Ewige Roma...

Speak, you stones, and you high palaces; speak
 Eternal Rome!

(music up, then fade)

Though what speaks again and again is not, as with Greece, the primary phenomenon, but the historical reverberations: Piranesi, Monteverdi's court of Nero and Poppea, the regal pomp and arcane luxury (while we range the Empire:

- 5) *Roman (African) Sabratha c. 200 AD ff., Baths of Oceanus and Temple of Isis*
 5a) *Roman (African) 1st-2nd cent. AD, Lepcis Magna, Auditorium of the theatre*

Sabratha, Palmyra—

Music: Monteverdi, Poppea, cont., end of the March

- a6) *Roman (Asia) Baalbek c. 210-217, Temple of Jupiter*
 6) *Roman (Asia) Palmyra 2nd - 3rd cent. AD, Temple Gate and Colonnade (video uses horizontal variant, V6; dig. vertical)*
 6a) *Roman (Asia) Palmyra 1st - 3rd cent. A.D., "Street of Columns"*
 (begin Duet)
 7) *Graeco-Roman, 1st cent. AD?, Aldobrandini Wedding, Vatican*
 7a) *Same, detail of couple; + closer V detail (not dig.)*

returning to the Roman Hellenism Nero loved).

- 8) *The Roman Forum (CGB '48)*

When Rome spoke to Gibbon he was looking out over the Forum from the steps of what was once the Capitol. This view, with sheep grazing then, was before him;

Va9) Roman Christian 5th cent. ff., Front stairs, Santa Maria in Ara Coeli (CGB '86); called 8za on dig.; but in fact dig. 9a

9) Again Santa Maria, Interior, Nave, (left) Columns and aisle (CGB '86)

and at his back, from the church of Ara Coeli, a basilica raised, like so many, on Classical columns, came the chanting of the barefoot friars—why not a hymn by Fortunatus?

Music: Fortunatus c.606, Salve Festa dies, Solesmes, Decca 7542A

That anomaly moved him to write The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire.

For 2nd 8) Roman Forum and Palatine, seen from Arch of Septimius Severus

For it is always over the Dark Age gulf that Rome looms most compellingly—"giants in the earth in those days"—as the Anglo-Saxon Wanderer broods:

This world, through the wisdom of God, has wasted,
So the pleasure of the proud has utterly perished,
And the wonder-work of giants crumbles worthless.

V2nd 9) Again Santa Maria, Interior, Nave into Choir, (CGB '86) = dig. 9zb
(music)

10) Roman Christian c. 470, Mosaic bust of St. Victor, Sant'Ambrogio, Milan

Classical arts and lore first came to the West encapsuled in monastic Christianity—this mosaic bust of St. Victor, in Milan.

11) Roman Christian c. 330, Christ's Entry into Jerusalem, from Sarcophagus of Adelfphia, National Museum, Syracuse

Yet even in that rendition to the timeless and spaceless, inherited suavities attest a vanished earthly command. (fade **Fortunatus**)

- a12) *Roman 1st c. AD, glass cameo, The Portland vase, British Museum, London; + V detail (so dig. = 12b)*
 12) *Pompeii 1st c. AD, Dionysiac scene (glass), House of Fabius, Naples Museum; first, V detail (dig. adds detail = 12za)*

In the words of Yeats: "a more gracious time has gone." Though of the music that ravished Greece and Rome, we have only snatches: an Epitaph of Seikilos: "As long as you live, be cheerful."

Music: Seikilos Song, 1st c. AD, J.E. Butt, private recording

— A time when wine and love and poetry and every spring and grove were sacred to a god. Horace:

gratia cum Nymphas geminisque sororibus audet
 ducere nuda choros—

which Johnson rhymes:

The spritely Nymph and naked Grace
 The mazy dance together trace.

But the search for Rome cannot bog down (though Rome almost did) in vain regret for the soft arts of the Hellenistic twilight. How to summon from the shades the might of Rome itself?

- 13) *Athenian 447-432 BC, Parthenon, NE corner, Acropolis, Athens (CGB '77)*
 13a) *Same, Parthenon, Head of Selene's Horse from the East Pediment (CGB '77)*

The art-road was easier when the search was for Greece. There, a sheer vitality declares and celebrates itself. Not the Acropolis only, but drama, philosophy, even history, as the Greeks lived and told it, take the voice of Pericles:

We are the school of Hellas...Wonder unending of after ages shall be ours. We have made sea and land the highway of our daring, and everywhere—for evil or good—left deathless monuments

- 14) *Roman AD 72-90, Flavian Arena (Colosseum), interior, Rome (CGB '86)*
 V14a) *Same, Flavian Arena, interior, another view*

Where Rome escapes from its monuments, its historians, even from its poet Virgil, leaves us burdened with the gloom of its own shadow, struggling in a world which, like Lucretius' universe, wears out and breaks down [II, 1148 ff.]:

In this way the walls too of the great world
 Around us shall wear out and come to ruin,
 Stormed by successive years and time's decay.

- 15) *Same, outside view (video shows details only, above, then below)*
 V15a) *Same, Colosseum, outside (old photo); dig. 15 = 15z, this = 15za*

Tacitus, Rome's greatest historian, records:

I have to present in succession the merciless biddings of a tyrant, incessant prosecutions, faithless friendships, the ruin of innocence, the same causes issuing in the same results, and I am everywhere confronted by a wearisome monotony in my subject matter...

(Tacitus, Annals IV, 33, tr., Church & Dodribb)

Music: Monteverdi, 1642, again Poppea, close of Prologue, Goehr, Zurich Opera Society, MMS-2028

- a16) *Roman 306 AD, Basilica of Maxentius or Constantine, from Capitoline Hill (CGB '86)*
 16) *Another view of Basilica, with vestal statues*
 V16a) *Same, another view of statues (CGB '86); dig. omits*

How shall we fasten on the form that vaulted over that failure, not just "the wide arch of the ranged empire", but the morale that held it—in the words of Pliny, "the boundless majesty of the Roman peace: Immensa Romanae Pacis maiestas"?

If there was a music of Roman power, it is lost; we have had to let Monteverdi restore it. And of course he has restored, within outward pomp,

- 17) *Roman (Flavian) c. 50-100 AD, Male Portrait Bust, Palazzo Capitolino, Rome; first, video detail (not dig.)*

(close of Prologue)

the imperial decay.

(music to Ottone's opening words: "E puro io")

When Romans of that time thought to recover the truth about themselves—the strength which despotism and luxury had plainly compromised (**Fade Monteverdi**)—they took a clue from Livy, that moralizing historian (or from Virgil, for that matter):

18) *Roman 4th-3rd cent. BC, Warriors, Bronze handle of a Cista, Villa Giulia, Rome; + V detail (dig. waits for 2nd 18)*

they looked to their stern beginnings in military virtue, a time of legendary Horatios at the bridge, or of "Troius Aeneas, pietate insignis et armis"; though these beginnings are not so early as Troy, or even as Sparta and Athens. It is crucial that these disciplined, almost primitive foot-soldiers are of the 4th or 3rd century BC, when the Greek cities are already in political decay.

19) *Attic (Kleistias) c. 570 BC, Landing of Theseus' Companions, from François vase, Museo Archaeologico, Florence; + V detail (here dig. waits)*

If we go back two or three hundred more years (here a scene from the tale of Theseus), we find the Greeks, too, keen for Ares, but with a spirit as different, as Homer is from Virgil. This preconscious vibrance can only loosen, as individuation ripens, into Plato's "fair and spangled" state, where "everything is ready to burst with liberty."

2nd 18) *Detail of 18, Roman 4th-3rd c. Warriors; for dig. = 19za*

But the Roman discipline seems to take up where the Greek left off; it is post-conscious, post-individual. Against the Macedonian phalanx, the Latin soldier with his shield, spear and short sword, was a fighting independence, self-bound into the moral collective. As if the Classical world had two phases, the Roman ordering and constrictive,

2nd 19) *Detail of 19, Landing of Theseus' Companions [video then briefly returns to Roman Warriors]; dig. here doubles details of 18 & 19*

against the exploratory and liberating Greek. So Hegel contrasts "the multiform variety of Greece" to "the crushing Destiny" of Roman power.

20) *Ionian (Magna Graecia) c. 460 BC, Birth of Aphrodite, Ludovisi Throne, Thermae, Rome*

Under the weighty vaults of the Roman Thermae, Greek originals smile out (this Ludovisi Birth of Aphrodite), like Persephone ravished to the underworld, sojourners in the darker shade.

21) *Roman c. 10 AD, Ludovisi Juno, National Museum. (Thermae), Rome V21a) Same, another view, detail; not dig.*

Here even the gods are stern, Juno, constrained, like her sober Romans (thus Jove in the Aeneid): (I, 279-283)

Harsh Juno too,
Who now with terror tires earth, sea and sky,
Will turn to kinder counsels, and with me
Cherish the Romans, masters of the world,
The togaed nation. So it is decreed.

(CGB using Rhoades)

a22) *Graeco-Roman 1st c. BC?, Musing Woman ("Domina"), from Dionysiac Frieze, det., Villa dei Misteri, Pompeii*

b22) *Cyprian late 4th c. BC, Female head, terra cotta, Cyprus Museum, Nicosia*

22) *Graeco-Roman late 1st c. BC?, Terror-Stricken Woman, detail, Great Frieze, Villa dei Misteri, Pompeii*

Music: Euripides 408 BC, Orestes fragment, Therriault & Lynch, St. John's, Santa Fe

The cyclical modification of human development seems here to confront us. It is a question of introspective personality, with the somber weight it lays on the soul. The distinction is less of Greek and Roman than of early and late; though what the Greeks matured—the subjectivity which was their "principle of decay" (Hegel) and which the chromatic fragment from Euripides wonderfully expresses (**close Euripides**)—the Romans had to contend with, had to order. Almost any head from the 4th century BC down, would present us (as does this Pompeiian one from the Villa dei Misteri, 1st century BC) with self-awareness like a palpable thing.

- 23) *Kleophrades Painter c. 500 BC, (found Vulci), Maenad in Ecstasy, Antique Collections, Munich*

And the leap back to almost any before 500 BC gives the effect of having opened a drain, from which that shadowing selfhood pours, to leave the crystal clarities of the tribal and pre-personal—of myth. (If only a comparable music could be picked up from the groves and columns of Olympia.)

- Va24) *Etruscan 2nd half of 6th c., Reclining Couple, Villa Giulia, Rome*
 24) *Etruscan 509 BC, Apollo from Veii (terracotta), head, Villa Giulia, Rome*

In fact, the two phases had been run through on Italian soil by those puzzling Etruscans, whose non-Indo-European language and mysterious origin (more Thucydides' Tyrhennians than Herodotus' Lydians), did not prevent their paralleling, almost from year to year, the Greek maturation of consciousness; so that this smiling head, or the contemporary tomb paintings from Tarquinia, wear a kind of Greek stamp of 500 BC, and of archaic impersonality.

- 25) *Etruscan 4th c. BC (or after?), Head from a sarcophagus, Carlsberg, Copenhagen*

Whereas this sarcophagus portrait, though Italian in realism, is 4th century in awareness—like the latest paintings, near the present graveyard, under the hummocked wheatfields of Tarquinia. This is the private responsibility with which Rome began, and for which it had to frame a universal law and moral discipline.

- 26) *Spanish (Punic?) 3rd c. BC?, Lady of Elche, Prado, Madrid*

We yield to the temptation of beauty (though there is disagreement about the Lady of Elche's date) to hint that the conscious and sensuous ripening was Mediterranean, and that after 400 BC (or for a guess, 3rd century) it was felt also in Graeco-Punic Spain.

- 27) *Double: [A] Hellenistic 3rd c. BC, Head of Alexander, British Museum, London, and [B] Etrusco-Roman, 3rd. c. BC?, called Junius Brutus, Conservatori, Rome; + singles [slide V & L dig. order: 27A; 27; 27B]*

Though to sense how Rome could enlist that inwardness which had become the liability of Greece, a direct contrast will be most instructive—and from the very time that Polybius undertook to account for the Greek decline and Roman rise. Set the idealized rapture and refined yearning of the Praxitelean and Alexandrian—its worlds to conquer turning into dream (as Alcibiades' did, and even Alexander's)—against the equal self-awareness of the so-called elder Brutus (who expelled the kings and left his example like an injunction to his namesake)—but an awareness energized and disciplined by will. For the wistful impulse of the Greek, the reality of control—there lies the secret of the plodding, slow, inexorable march of Rome. Thus Hegel, in one of his most powerful distinctions:

The Roman state is not a repetition of such a state of individuals as the Athenian Polis was. The geniality and joy of soul that existed there have given place to harsh and rigorous toil.

28) *Roman c. 70 AD, Male Portrait, Museo Capitolino, Rome;+ V det. (not dig.)*

Everywhere in the art record of that responsibility we read "the crushing destiny" for which the world, as Hegel also says, was "sunk in melancholy"; so that even today we cannot walk the portrait halls of a Roman museum without being bowed by that burden of loss and heaviness, as if we too had to pay for the formative struggle which lay like a pall upon the human spirit.

a29) *Roman 1st c. AD, Arch of Titus, among trees, Rome*

b29) *Same, Triumphal chariot, detail, Arch of Titus, Relief*

29) *Same, Jews led Captive (70 AD), detail, Arch of Titus*

V29a) *Same, The Arch of Titus, (upper portion) (dig. omits)*

Music: Monteverdi, 1642, Poppea, again the pomp of the Finale, Vox SVBX 5212 (through slide a34)

Under that brooding, the question becomes imperative: "rigorous toil" for what end? The search for origins gave us brazen warriors. Titus' triumphal arch on the Forum celebrates the sack of Jerusalem, the Jews led in chains, the seven-branched candelabra among the spoils. Does the guidance of Jove (Aeneas, "Jovis monitis") reduce to a doggedness of military conquest, of which the facade is Ara Pacis, the altar of peace—heavy virtues extolled without the vibrance or intellect of Greece?

- a30) *Etrusco-Roman 5th c. BC, She-wolf of Rome, Palazzo dei Conservatori*
 30) *Same, detail of head, with fangs*

From the wolf origins praised from Livy down—hidebound severity, and outward fierceness: killjoy Marcus Cato, censor, whose morals did not preclude avarice, crying for the destruction of Carthage at every meeting of the Senate: "Delenda est Carthago"; murderous Marius, boasting of ignorance:

I never studied Greek; I never wanted to. What I learned was more for my country's good: to strike the enemy, stand close guard, bear hunger, heat and cold, sleep on the ground, fear nothing but a coward's fame.

(Sallust, *Jugurtha* LXXV, 33)

- 31) *Roman 3rd c. AD, Battle with Barbarians, Ludovisi Sarcophagus, Museo Nazionale, Rome*
 V31a) *Same, detail of barbarian dying (not dig.)*

—even to this 3rd century AD Ludovisi Sarcophagus with the battle between Romans and Barbarians—the central theme of the "togaed race", in life and art, is war. Of course peace is intended, peace and law, all the virtues which Caesar, in Shaw, calls Rome's gifts to the world in exchange for a few ornaments:

- a32) *Roman 114 AD, Trajan's Column, Piazza Del Foro Traiano, Rome*
 32) *Same, detail of the Frieze*
 32a) *Same, closer detail (video shows various details; dig. one)*

there is the good emperor Trajan, of the adoptive line, whose happy rule Gibbon so praised; but observe his most conspicuous monument, the column with its 650-foot-long coiled frieze of the Dacian campaigns, how it falls together, over a gap of a century and a half, with Caesar's account of the Gallic Wars: (from II, 23-28)

...the 9th and 10th legions drove the Atrebates from the high ground to the river, and when they attempted to cross, pressed after them sword in hand, and killed a great many... crossing... and pushing on, though the slope was against them... .

But the enemy, even in their despair, displayed such heroic courage that, when their foremost ranks had fallen, the next mounted upon their prostrate comrades and fought standing on their bodies...

- 33) *Roman, late 2nd c., Column of Marcus Aurelius, detail, execution and burning, Rome; + video detail (not dig.)*
- 33a) *Same, detail, massacre of barbarian prisoners*
- 33b) *Same, detail, rape of barbarian women*

The battle was over; and the Nervian people, nay their very name, was brought to the verge of extinction...

Even Marcus Aurelius, philosopher, is commemorated by such a column, to a detail of which we have shifted while reading Caesar. That was most of his life, laboring and fighting in a last Roman effort to extend, hold and consolidate. Without those notes in his book of somber meditations: "This among the Quadi on the Danube"—the soldiers, while he wrote, executing prisoners perhaps, or burning villages—who would have tied the scenes of the Column to those Greek expressions of the Stoic ideal: "to keep the divine Genius within pure and unwronged, lord of all pleasures and pains."

- a34) *Roman c. 166-180, Equestrian Marcus Aurelius, the Capitol, Rome*
(whole from below) *(fade Poppea Pomp)*

b34) *Same, Equestrian bronze, detail of Marcus*

34) *Same, Head of Marcus*

34a) *Same, closer detail of head [so dig.; V to detail with horse, from a34]*

Though the face of the equestrian Marcus speaks more—that bronze work preserved through the Dark Ages because the Christians thought it Constantine, and on their side.

Music: Monteverdi, 1642, Poppea, Lullaby, "Oblivion," Opera Soc., MMS-2028

Those lonely Aurelian eyes are not at all like Constantine's eyes of staring dogma, yet they are barometric signs of something that was working in the Christians' favor:

Wilt thou then, O my soul, ever at last be good and simple and single and naked, showing thyself more visible than the body that overlies thee?... Ever be fulfilled and self-sufficing, longing for nothing?

As if there were two persons representing two Romes, the outward of public power (itself a wedded pair of war and law), and the inner of these shadowy musings.

- 35) *Roman, c. 176-9, Marcus Aurelius Sacrificing, Capitoline Museum, Rome; + video details (dig. one detail)*
- 35a) *Græco-Roman (Athens) 160 AD, Portrait of Annius Verus, son of Marcus Aurelius, Louvre; + V detail (not dig.)*

That separation of outward and inward, body and spirit, is the melancholy which pervades the late classical; and buttressed against it, never denying it, the Roman and Stoic command:

Be like a headland of rock, on which the waves break incessantly, but it stands fast, and around it the seething of the waters sinks to rest.

Under the titanic vaults of Rome, such depths were forming. For Virgil, the romantic transformation of the *Odyssey* yields to the god-given task of rule. For Hegel, the compulsion of rule foments inwardness:

...the world is sunk in melancholy, and it is all over with the natural side of Spirit; yet only from this could arise the supersensuous, the free Spirit in Christianity...

(fade Lullaby)

- Va36) *Etrusco-Roman 1st c. BC, Terracotta Portrait, profile, Villa Giulia, Rome*
- 36) *Same, frontal view (dig. shows frontal view only)*

Early Rome was a force in the world, but it was not yet world-historical. It deepens to that when the rather plain humanity of the Latin citizen of the Republic, a now legally defined private person, becomes, in the accession of empire and of Alexandrian consciousness, the focus of a double crisis, the class and power struggle of the Civil Wars, and the temptation of luxury and the softening arts.

- a37) *Graeco-Roman 1st c. BC?, Villa dei Misteri Frieze, Pompeii*
- 37) *Same, closer view (CGB '80); + video detail (not dig.)*

Marvelous arts at their best, and it would seem quite above politics—though the strictures would apply to sybaritic Pompeii, as to Aeneas lapped in Dido's arms: "Heedless of empire, by base love enthralled." Yet the Villa of Mysteries is as startling a height of Greek art on Italian soil as Lucretius' Epicurean poem. The parallel is instructive, though they seem opposite at first: Lucretius denying these gods, these

mysteries; while he celebrates a super-mystery of atomic nature ruled by Love, the alma genetrix invoked as "Te, dea."

38) *Same freeze, detail of Ordeal and Bacchante; + V detail (not dig.)*

...we are all sprung from heavenly seed; all have the same father, by whom mother earth...conceives and bears goodly crops and joyous trees and the race of men...

A thing therefore never returns to nothing... rains die, when father ether has tumbled them into the lap of mother earth; but then goodly crops spring up...and trees laden with fruit...and the leafy forests ring on all sides with the song of new birds... (Lucretius, De Rerum Natura, II, 991 ff; & I, 248 ff., Munro, tr.)

a39) *Again frieze, Reading the Ritual, detail*

39) *Same, close detail of face (Initiatrice)*

39a) *Same, another portion of the frieze (for which video has two details, from V&A&B of 39a); dig. whole 39a*

Music: Again Euripides 408 BC, Orestes fragment, Therriault & Lynch

Though like all expressions of post-Euripidean soul, the Villa of Mysteries and the De Rerum Natura betray the loneliness and torment at the heart of things, as when Lucretius writes of the frenzy of love:

...they pine away by a hidden wound, at a loss to know what they really desire...feasts are set out, perfumes, crowns and garlands..all in vain, since from the very fountain of delight, a bitter drop wells up, to pain amid the flowers. (Lucretius, De Rerum Natura, IV, 1117-34 adapted from Munro)

(end Euripides)

Fitting, St. Jerome should record of Lucretius (how factually no one knows):

...driven mad by a love-potion, after he had written, in the intervals of his insanity, a number of books... he killed himself by his own hand in his forty-fourth year.

The despair of reason might almost have been potion enough.

- 40) *Roman terracotta head c. 50 BC, Man of the Republic, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; + V detail (not dig.)*
 40a) *Hellenistic, 1st half of 2nd cent. BC, Head of Flamininus (?), Delphi Museum, Greece; first, video detail (not dig.)*
 40b) *Roman 1st c. BC, Unknown Man, Glyptothek, Munich*

If the Boston museum bust is of 50 BC as claimed, it shows us an aesthetic patrician who has lived through the troubles of Lucretius' time (III, 70 ff) : "while men ... amass wealth by civil bloodshed and greedily double their riches, piling up murder on murder." Those eyes could have seen the Forum massacre of ten thousand men gathered to protest Sulla's corn laws; Spartacus' Slave War, put down after two years (71 BC) with like violence: five thousand fugitives killed by Pompey, six thousand slaves crucified along the road from Rome to Capua. Perhaps, like Cicero's refined friend Atticus, he took the philosophic way of withdrawal from the state, regretted by Plato and praised by Lucretius, in the image of looking from land to a navy distressed at sea (De Rerum Natura, Book II, opening):

...to hold the lofty and serene positions well fortified by the learning of the wise, from which you may look down on others wandering abroad and going astray...the rivalry of birth, the struggle night and day to reach the summit of power and be masters of the world. (De Rerum Natura, II, 7-13, Munro, tr.)

- Va41) *Dioscorides of Samos 1st c. BC, Street Musicians, mosaic, from Villa Cicero, Pompeii, National Museum, Naples*
 41) *Hellenistic late 3rd c. BC, Old Woman Drunk, Capitoline Museum, Rome; + V detail (not dig.)*

It was only in that Rome, glutting itself on the spoils of the Hellenic East—not wealth only, but the doubts and sophistications, the sensational vulgarities and refinements of art—the city, as Sallust said, "become a sink into which there poured all who

were in any place notorious for crime or vice"—it was then, in war and successive purges, in the corruption and breakdown of republican institutions—

- a42) *Graeco-Roman c. 50 BC, Pompey the Great, Glyptothek, Copenhagen*
 Vb42) *Roman 1st c. BC, Republican Bust, Antique Collections, Munich; not dig.*
 42) *Roman c. 60 BC, Portrait of a Patrician, Museo Torlonia, Rome; + V detail*
 42a) *Roman c. 40 BC, Cato of Utica, Rabat Museum, Volubilis, Morocco*

that great personalities arise—Cato, Pompey, Cicero, Caesar, Agrippa—called forth by the imperatives of a threatened world. Now the portrait bust, Rome's chief contribution to Classical art, becomes a record, not merely of the warts and wrinkles, but through that surface, of momentous needs and changes in the soul. Let this type of eroded and embattled Roman rigor stand for Cato, inflexible as he. But it must reach beyond itself to catch those last hours as told by Plutarch. I do not mean (against the sweetness of Socrates' talking and falling asleep in the shade of his hemlock) Cato's bungling suicide, so that he had to drag his guts out and tear them with his hands; but rather what won him a place in Dante's theology: that he advised his son to withdraw from politics, and so passed his last evening reading Plato on immortality.

- a43) *Roman c. 50 BC?, Marble bust of Cicero, Uffizi, Florence; + V detail; not dig.*
 43) *Roman c. 50 BC, Cicero, Capitoline Museum, Rome; first, video detail; not dig.*

That was in 46 BC. Caesar had just prevailed over Pompey. Cicero's letters are our best window into Roman failure. Where the official portrait shows his other side, the public front of success devoted to the higher aim—as his rhetoric sounds the obligation of Plato's Republic, to which his translation gave that Latin name: Res publica, the commonweal. His advice to his brother on provincial rule rings with the key words: peace, clemency, mildness, humanity, justice (pax, clementia, mansuetudo, virtus, humanitas, justitia), to be taken up in chorus by responsible Rome. In his high-mindedness, Cicero had actually believed he could save the Constitution by a "concord of orders."

- a44) *Roman, c. 50 BC, Immolator of the Republic, Vatican, Rome (CGB '86); + V detail (not dig.)*
 44) *Same, another view; + V detail (also dig. detail)*

The breaking of that hope spotlights his wry and self-searching grandeur—an introspection paralleled in this bust of an Immolator. Cicero writes Atticus in 49 BC (Feb. 27):

Caesar and Pompey have not aimed at the honor and happiness of the state, but at absolute power... Both want to be kings... Maybe you have been looking for a little consolation. I cannot see any. We could not possibly be worse off than we are, more wretched, ruined, disgraced.

And to Paetus after Caesar's triumph (46 BC)

I think I know well enough what will happen: those who are in power will have their way, and power now will always go by the sword... Whoever could not put up with this, was in duty bound to die.

(It is the braver example of Cato which haunts him here.)

But since I, hero and philosopher in one, took life to be the best thing after all—why, I cannot but love a man whose kindness has let me have it. Though even if he were really eager for a free constitution, he has no power of action, so deeply has he entangled himself... We are slaves to Caesar and Caesar slave to the times... Prepare for the worst, and bear what is to happen.

- 45) *Roman c. 50 BC, bronze head, called Caesar, Museo Nazionale, Rome*
- V45a) *Cleomenes of Athens, c. 50 BC, Roman Orator, Louvre, Paris*
- V45b) *Roman 1st c. BC, Nymph & Satyr, Archeological Museum, Venice*
- 45c) *Detail of 45, so-called Caesar*
- V45d) *Roman 1st c. AD, Portrait of an Elderly Man, Vatican*

With the bronze called "Caesar" in the National Museum in Rome, the bitterness of tyranny and proscription comes to a focus of grim involvement. As in Catullus' poem scourging Caesar, Pompey, most of all the parasite Mamurra, depravity and blame whirl in self-wounding fury:

The man who can face this, the man who can take it,
Is whored himself, a drunk, a swindler. Mamurra
Laps the fat of crested Gaul and farthest Britain.
Pansied Romulus, you see this thing, you take it?
How he struts his way through everybody's bedroom,
Like a white pigeon, a soft-skinned white Adonis —

Pansied little Roman, you take it in, you bear it?
 You are like him then, as drunk, as whored a swindler.
 And was it for this, Rome's only great general,
 You conquered the remotest island of the West,
 To feed this screwed-out tool of yours, Mamurra?
 See him spend, twenty or thirty million? First were
 His own estates, then the loot of Pontus, then of Spain
 Hear Tagus, gold-bearing river. They say the Gauls
 And Britains fear him? And you love the mongrel? Both
 Of you, Caesar, Pompey? While he swills oil of patrimony?
 For this, like in-laws, father and son,
 You have sluiced wealth and all of the world-city. (CGB)

- 46) *Double: [A] Greek (Phidian?) c. 440 BC, Older Riace Warrior, detail, Reggio Calabria; and [B] Roman c. 45 BC (copy?), bust called Julius Caesar, Vatican*
 46a) *Double: [A] Again, Riace Warrior; [B] Again, bronze called Caesar, cf. 45*

Let this Greek 5th century BC Riace Warrior (left), beside the Vatican bust probably of Julius Caesar (right), raise the question another 2000 years of debate will not end: how far Caesar's private ambition bodied forth an Alexandrian awareness of his world-calling, by one-man rule to reconstitute a vitiated Rome? In 60 BC, when he gave up the triumph won in Spain, to become Triumvirate Consul and so form an army by the conquest of Gaul—did he launch Lycurgus and Alcibiades upon a time always more darkened to cynical excess? And eleven years later, threatened by Pompey and the Senate with prosecution, when he took his army across the Rubicon ("Alea jacta est"), what die was cast? Did a last Greek fragrance of mind venture itself on the great-souled spendthrift and demagogue—already doomed by senatorial conspiracy to subserve the cautious weight of Augustan rule?

- 47) *Roman c. 40 BC, The young Octavian, Museo Barracco, Rome; + V detail*

"His virtues be execrated, for they have ruined my country," said Cato. That was of Caesar. But there was a tide, which Machiavelli defined for all who came after him. Cicero too blamed individuals, accidents, had painfully to discover that the new Triumvirs would not relinquish power. His last letter to Brutus (43 BC) is of disappointment in this Octavian, by whom he was to fall in the purges of that year, victim of the man he had hoped to guide:

But what grieves me most even now, as I write, is that where the Republic has accepted me as a surety for that youth—almost, indeed, that boy—it hardly seems that I can make my promise good.

- 48) *Roman, c. 30 BC?, Head of Augustus (Octavian), marble, British Museum, London; first, video detail (not dig.)*
- 48a) *Hellenistic Roman c. 20-10 BC, Bronze head of Augustus as Idealized Greek hero, British Museum, London; + V detail (not dig.)*

Here is Plutarch's account of the calculating schemer, not quite suppressed in the official portraits:

And now, more than at any other time, Cicero let himself be carried away and deceived, though an old man by the persuasions of a boy. He joined Octavius in soliciting votes and procured the good-will of the senate, not without blame at the time on the part of his friends; and he too, soon enough after, saw that he had ruined himself and betrayed the liberty of his country. For the young man, once established, and possessed of the office of consul, bade Cicero farewell; and, reconciling himself to Antony and Lepidus, joined his power with theirs, and divided the government, like a piece of property, with them. Thus united they made a schedule of above two hundred persons who were to be put to death...

(It is the scene Shakespeare shows us in Julius Caesar.)

- 49) *Roman, c. 20 BC, Augustus, Capitoline Museum, Rome; + V detail (not dig.)*

How quickly the August image smoothes and idealizes itself, enacts in life and art the poetry of Virgil:

We have reached the ultimate age foretold by the Sibyl's song;
Again the great cycle begins; the first time returns.
The virgin Justice descends; Saturn's reign is restored:
From heaven to earth he comes, of the new world the firstborn.
(CGB using the Loeb)

In a Rome harrying itself by civil war, others shared in the myth of an age of gold. Horace invites us to sail to the Blessed Isles. (Epode, XVI)

- 50) *Roman 13-9 BC, Ara Pacis, east relief, Tellus Italia, with Air and Water, Rome (CGB '86)*
 50a) *Same, Ara Pacis, whole altar as reconstructed*
 50b) *Same, Tellus relief, central figure (black and white); dig. pans on 50*

"Where Ceres year by year crowns all the untilled earth with sheaves." But Virgil turned his entire creative output to making that vision history. And with such sway, that the cold genius of Octavian, and the artists of his chief work, the Ara Pacis, or Altar of Peace, convert the dream façade into the truth of Rome:

Behold how the great world threatened under its cloudy dome,
 The land and far-spread seas and the sky's fathomless home,
 How all created things rejoice in the time to come.

(CGB)

The Eclogues so begin it, leaping from actual abuse and decline (the land-grab of 41 BC in Eclogues I and IX), to prophetic paradise. In the Georgics we go from "tot bella per orbem"—"the globe all war, the fields rot in neglect" (in I), to the praise of Italy and rustic happiness (in II):

- 51) *Same, detail of Tellus-Italia (CGB '86)*
 V51a) *Roman c. 100 BC, Relief from the altar of Domitius Ahenobarbus, Louvre, Paris (dig. omits)*
 51b) *Again Ara Pacis, whole Tellus relief (as in 50)*

Here blooms perpetual spring... twice teem the flocks... Hail! land of
 Saturn, mighty mother thou
 Of fruits and heroes... still the year o'erflows
 With young of kine, still Ceres' wheaten sheaf
 Loads with crops the furrow, bursts the barns...
 Such life the Sabines led...Etruria thus
 To greatness grew, and Rome with circling walls
 Clasped to her single breast the sevenfold hills.

The Aeneid too, though its theme is war, rests on that recovered Arcady. Evadner's Latium (Book VIII) was Saturn's refuge from Jove: he gave it laws; "Under his scepter were the fabled golden years." But we have heard in the prophecies of Book VI: "Caesar Augustus, a god's son, shall rebuild the golden age through Latian fields once

ruled by Saturn." So of course Italy, as bountiful Tellus-Gaia, is central to the Altar of Peace.

- a52) *Same, Ara Pacis, west side, Aeneas at the Sanctuary of the Penates (black & white)*
 652) *Triple: [A] Greece c. 600 B.C., Colossal head of Hera, Museum, Olympia; [B] Roman 1st c. AD, head of Juno, Thermae, Rome; and [C] early Christian, 3rd cent., detail of seated Christ, Thermae, Rome*
 52) *Again Aeneas' sacrifice from Ara Pacis (CGB '86) (video reverses 52 and a52; not so dig.)*

The Great Wheel is a destiny involving gods, nature and man. We have considered nature. As for the gods, Polybius had been puzzled to note that superstition, for the late Greeks a vice, was the moral strength of Rome (religion changing roles with cultural need: for the Homeric Greeks, life-force; for the Romans, discipline; for the Christians, mystical hope). But by the time of Virgil, Roman faith was as undermined as Roman agriculture. So pious Aeneas' dependence on the gods, whose agent he becomes ("jussa divum exsequitur" — IV, 396), was also a creative leap, by which the reliefs of the Ara Pacis begin with this (damaged) Sacrifice of Aeneas;

- 53) *Same, Ara Pacis, south side, Sacrifice by the Family of Augustus (CGB '86)*
 53a) *Same, detail of Augustus leading the procession (CGB '86)*
 53b) *Same, detail of family and friends of Augustus (CGB '86); + V det.; not dig.*

and end with Augustus, as Pontifex Maximus, leading his family and friends (the family of state) in an offering for peace. The repeated prophecies of the Aeneid are fulfilled: Jove to Venus in Book I: "The togaed nation, masters of the world...Then wars shall cease, the rugged time grow mild"; Jove to Aeneas, in Book IV, of the mission of his line: "to rule over Italy...and to law's bidding make the whole world bow." And of course the prophecy of the Underworld, and the future carved on the shield.

Gibbon remarks on Augustus' skill in playing Roman citizen and leader of the Senate. And perhaps the most touching thing about the Ara Pacis is that so pompous a fulfillment of divine and world destiny remains a simple gathering of wives and children, relatives and friends—

- 54) *Same, Ara Pacis, detail of above, Head of Maecenas between other heads (CGB '86)*
- 54a) *Same, closer detail*
- 54b) *Double: [A] Greece, 590-80 B.C., Cleobis detail, Delphi; and [B] Augustan, 13-9 B.C., Aeneas sacrificing, detail, Ara Pacis. [Earlier V546 — doubling Peplos Korê and Antonia Minor from Ara Pacis — revised ('96) to this 546.]*

old Maecenas, Virgil's loved patron, touched with lachrimae rerum,_ as when Augustus and Octavia, reading in the underworld canto those predictions of their Golden Age, came to the lines on the death of Marcellus: "Manibus date lilia plenis"—"give hands full of lilies"—and broke into tears.

Strange how Homer is reversed. The instinctive life which was affirmative there, has turned to weakness, to the romantic longing which made Virgil's voice falter at Dido's line ("since this name only, of guest, survives that of husband"); while what was negative in Homer, Destiny, against which Greek life smilingly pitted itself, has become with Rome the heavy hope.

- 55) *Roman c. 20 BC, Prima Porta Augustus, whole statue, Vatican, Rome (CGB '86)*
- 55a) *Same, another view; + V detail (not dig.)*
- 56) *Same, Prima Porta Augustus, waist up (CGB '86); + V det. of 55a (not dig.)*
- 56a) *Same, detail of armor only (CGB '86, color; or black & white); copy of Faust 14*
- 56b) *Same, detail of head and shoulders*

That is the pronouncement which stands in Book VI, at the center of the epic: (after Humphries)

...Rome, that glorious city,
Will bound her power by earth, her pride by heaven...
...These are Iulus' children...

Caesar Augustus, son of a god, founder of
An age of gold...he will extend his empire
Beyond the Indies, beyond the normal measure
Of years and constellations, where high Atlas
Turns on his shoulder the star-studded world...

Others, no doubt, will better mould the bronze
To the semblance of soft breathing, draw from marble

The living countenance; and others plead
 With greater eloquence, or learn to measure,
 Better than we, the pathways of the heaven,
 The rising of the stars: remember, Roman,
 These are your fine arts: to rule the people
 Under law, to impose the way of peace,
 To spare the humble, and war down the proud.

It is as if the Prima Porta Augustus had been made to fulfill that command.

And as Aeneas takes up the shield carved with the future of Italy from Romulus and Remus to the defeat of Marc Antony—Antony, unlike high-souled Aeneas, captive to his African Dido: "with horrors, an Egyptian wife"—as Aeneas, uncomprehending but "proud and happy, lifts to his shoulder all that fortune, the fame and glory of his children's children"—Augustus here assumes his symbolic armor: under the gods of the sky, the conquered earth reconciled by Rome.

How fitly the stone mouth might sound Augustus' account of his own reign, the Res Gestae, inscribed late in his life on monuments over the empire --

57) *Roman 312 BC and after, Via Appia, Queen of Roads*

that realm of ordered power: provinces, arches, aqueducts, law, radiating like Roman roads from the Principate center.

58) *Roman, 5 BC, Tropaea Augusti, La Turbie, Monaco (restored 1934)*

When I was nineteen I collected an army on my own account and at my own expense, by the help of which I restored the Republic to liberty...I had to undertake wars by land and sea, civil and foreign, all over the world, and when victorious I spared surviving citizens...

59) *Roman, completed 13 AD, Theatre of Marcellus, Rome*

I built the Curia and the Chalcidicum which adjoins it, the temple of Apollo, the temple of the Divine Julius, the Lupercal... I constructed the Flaminian Road... with all the bridges except the Mulvian and Minucian... I built a theatre to bear the name of my son-in-law, Marcellus...

60) *Roman (Spain), c. 100 AD, (Trajan) Aqueduct, Segovia (CGB '66)*

I cleared the sea of pirates...I extended the frontiers of all the provinces of the Roman people...

61) *Augustan wooden arch, rebuilt in stone under Tiberius, Orange, S. France*

Twice I triumphed with an ovation; in my triumphs were led captive before my chariot nine kings or children of kings...

62) *Roman c. 10 BC, Augustus as Pontifex Maximus, Thermae Museum, Rome*

62a) *Same, upper detail*

62b) *Roman 15-37 AD, The Gemma Augustea, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna; + V detail (not fig.)*

I transferred the republic from my power to the will of the Senate and people of Rome. For which good service I was by decree of the Senate called by the name of Augustus... in recognition of valour, clemency, justice, piety...

The old Republican watchwords invoked to close down the Republic. Characteristic that he never mentions the command of the Praetorian Guard. As Cicero said: "Power now will always go by the sword." A reliance which would shrink later emperors to puppets of their own arms.

The whole achievement of Virgil and Augustus being, in one sense, a romantic dream.

a63) *Roman c. 10-20 AD, Bucolic Landscape, detail, from Villa of Agrippa Posthumus, Museo Nazionale, Naples*

63) *Roman (Augustan) c 10 AD?, Fresco, Ulysses among the Laestrygonians, Vatican Library, Rome; + V detail (to the right; so fig.)*

Resolution could not shore up the psyche. Again the fragment from Euripides.

Music: Euripides 408 BC, Orestes fragment, last part

The Hellenistic illusionism of escape — "Could I take me to some cavern for my hiding," (end Euripides) bred of the civil wars: Horace's Blessed Isles, Virgil's Mincian Arcadia — flows through the ivory gate of the Aeneid, appears in the haunted Odysseus landscapes,

where the facts of Homer take the shades of Virgil: like Polyphemus glimpsed through mist as he wades into the sea, groans, and laves the gored socket of his eye (Aeneid III).

- 64) *Roman late 1st cent. BC, Portrait of a girl (terracotta), Staatliche Museen, Berlin ; + V detail (so dig.)*
 64a) *Graeco-Roman Africa c. 40-50 BC, Cleopatra, Cherel, Algeria; + V & I dig. detail*

Under the tender modeling of this Augustan girl, ideal as the Ara Pacis, romantic person ripens toward imperial (ultimately Christian) longing.

Why else would Milton have chosen the Fifth Ode of Horace for translation (and made it the only Latin poem native to English), but for some renouncing hunger that rocks the smooth surface of its Hellenism?—

What slender Youth bedew'd with liquid odours
 Courts thee on Roses in some pleasant Cave,
 Pyrrha, for whom bindst thou
 In wreaths thy golden Hair,
 Plain in thy neatness; O how oft shall he
 On Faith and changed Gods complain: and Seas
 Rough with black winds and storms
 Unwonted shall admire;
 Who now enjoyes thee credulous, all Gold,
 Who always vacant, alwayes amiable
 Hopes thee; of flattering gales
 Unmindfull? Hapless they
 To whom thou untry'd seem'st fair. Me in my vow'd Picture the sacred
 wall declares t' have hung
 My dank and dropping weeds
 To the stern God of Sea.

- a65) *Roman (Pompeii) 70-79 AD, Atrium, House of the Vetii (rebuilt) (CGB '89)*
 65) *Roman (Pompeii) 1st cent. AD, Portrait of a Girl, Nat. Mus., Naples*
 65a) *Graeco-Roman 1st cent. AD, House of the Vetii Frescoed wall*

What had made one-man rule inevitable but the corruption of the Republic? And where was its deepest seat but in the sensuous fragrance and softening nostalgias, to which the houses of Pompeii more richly attest than the stripped fragments of Graeco-Roman song: "Calliopeia".

Music: Græco-Roman 1st cent. AD, Calliopeia Hymn, J.E. Butt (close)

In that cleavage between private wish and public facade, we look under every rich carpet (or in this case, wall painting) to find cockroaches.

- 66) *Roman, c. 38 BC (or later?), Mural of a garden from the Villa of Livia, Thermae, Rome*
- 66a) *Roman 1st c. AD, Livia Drusilla, Augustus' wife, Vatican Museum, Rome; + V detail (so dig.)*
- V66b) *Another detail from the Villa Livia mural*
- 66c) *Same, another detail*

This garden scene is from the Prima Porta Villa of Livia, in the spirit of Virgil's fruitful Italy. It was probably painted about 38 BC, when Augustus dumped his first wife Scribonia (mother of their notorious Julia), and had Livia divorced from her husband (father of Tiberius), to espouse her imperious charms. Suspected of various crimes—the premature death of Marcellus and other near heirs, and even of the death of Augustus—she inherited a third of his property, and became joint-ruler with her son, until her dominance drove him to the queer retreat of Capri. It is the beginning of the fevered conversion of sex into power, so disturbing in imperial Rome. And poor old Agrippa, Augustus' loyal "architect of Empire", had to divorce the wife he loved and marry that now widowed and lusting Julia. Such the nobly robed family of the Altar of Peace.

- 67) *Roman (Flavian), late 1st cent. AD, Portrait of a youth, British Museum, London*
- 67a) *Egyptian (Amarna), c. 1370-60 BC, Head from a harp, Louvre, Paris*
- 67b) *Again 67, Flavian Youth, detail; + closer V detail (not dig.)*

It is worth jumping forward here, a few generations, to pick up a face that, of all faces, gives a probable insight into Julia—this Flavian youth, for whom the Principate splendor has not solved the inner why. Not since the old thousand year culture of the Nile had anything of such rich satiety appeared. Petronius Arbiter might have put him in the Satyricon; but he bridges time; for Lucretius had already given the description of his ennui:

The man who is sick of home issues from his mansion, and is no better off abroad. He races to his country house... yawns as he reaches it and

sinks into heavy sleep, seeks forgetfulness, or in haste goes back to town... In this way each flies from himself, hates himself, because he is sick and does not know the cause. (Lucretius, De Rerum Natura, III, 1060 ff., adapted from Munro's translation)

- Va68) Roman copy of Greek, 3rd cent., Hermaphrodite (from the rear), Louvre, Paris (Mattress by Bernini)*
668) Same, another view, (CGB '80)
68) Same, frontal view (CGB '80)

That malady now, with all its symptomatic excess, seized on the heart of empire. In the hypocritical position of trying to reform and stiffen the moral codes, "the divine Augustus", Seneca tells us, "was forced to exile his own daughter, Julia, who had surpassed in lust every infamous meaning of the word, and had covered the imperial home with scandal."

Ten years later it would be the granddaughter—Julia's Julia. Since Ovid, having written The Art of Love, was banished at the same time, there were hints of a supervised experiment in postures. ("Would you, the supervisor, grossly gape on?")

- 69) View from Posillippo, over Nisida & Baia's Bay to Cape Miseno etc. (Bery)*
69a) Lake of Avernus, near Cumae, north of Naples (CGB '84)

Works of art, however, will not guide us to the cruel and jaded sensualities of which we read in the satirists or the gossiping historian Suetonius. Imagination can only grope backward from the present scene of Baia on the Bay of Naples, to the luxurious Roman spa, senators lolling in litters and gilded boats, or with women in the warm pools of Avernus, under showers of roses thrown by lascivious dancers. (So Seneca.)

- 70) View of Capri from the Villa of Augustus towards Tiberius' Villa (CGB '80)*
70a) Ruins of Tiberius' Villa, Capri (CGB '80)

Across the bay lies Capri, where Tiberius fled embittered, covered with sores, scabs and pustules. Suetonius:

He had assembled from all quarters girls and perverts... who invented monstrous feats of lubricity... to inflame his feeble appetite.

(Not to mention those unweaned children he called his little fishes.)

They still point out the scene of his executions, from which he used to order that those who had been condemned, after long and exquisite tortures, be cast headlong into the sea before his eyes, while a band of marines waited below for the bodies and broke their bones with boathooks and oars, to prevent any breath of life from remaining in them.

- 71) *View through mist across the Forum to the Palatine*
- 71a) *Roman, 28 AD, Bust of Caligula, The Louvre, Paris*
- V71b) *Rome from Forum to Palatine (CGB '86, underexposed; dig. omits.)*
- 71c) *Rome, The Palatine from across the Circo Massimo*

Flee, like the sick patrician, back to Rome, past the Palatine, then tiers on tiers of colonnades, where Tiberius' successor, mad Caligula, walked. Suetonius:

For this man, who so utterly despised the Gods, was wont at the slightest thunder and lightning to shut his eyes, muffle up his head, and if they increased to leap from his bed and hide under it... He was terrified also by strange apparitions... Therefore weary of lying in bed awake during the greater part of the night, he would now sit upon his couch and now wander through the long colonnades, crying out from time to time for daylight, and longing for its coming.

- 72) *View of Vatican gardens, with St. Peter's dome*
- 72a) *Terraced fields outside Jerusalem*
- 72b) *Model of Rome 1st - 4th cent., (Gismondi), Museum of Roman Civilization, Rome*
- V72c) *Byzantine, c. 1000, Martyrdom of St. Ignatius (c. 107), Menologium of Basil II, Vatican Library*
- 72d) *Vatican Gardens (CGB '84)*

What can we do but flee again, across the Tiber, into Nero's gardens. We find ourselves at the heart of Christendom. For Peter—in fact or faith—was martyred here, and the Church rose over his blood. How remote this Vatican garden from the place of persecution Tacitus describes:

Christus, the founder of that name, was put to death as a criminal by Pontius Pilate... but the pernicious superstition, repressed for a time, broke out again, not only through Judaea, where the mischief

originated, but through the city of Rome also, whither all things horrible and disgraceful flow...

In their deaths they were made the subjects of sport, for they were covered with the hides of wild beasts and worried to death by dogs, or nailed to crosses, or set fire to, and when day declined burnt to serve for nocturnal lights. Nero offered his own gardens for that spectacle... mingling with the common people in the habit of a charioteer...

(Tacitus, Annals, XV, 44, tr. Church & Brodribb)

- 73) *Roman 72-90 & 312-316, Colosseum seen through the Arch of Constantine; + V detail (not dig.)*
 V73a) *Again Colosseum, arches from within*

The Rome we have been in search of lies like the city itself, range upon range and vault opening under vault. Through the first layer of military force we have come into the arch of responsible rule. Deeper in that pile of enslavement and law, we enter the treasure chamber of privacy. The first impression is almost to drive us back appalled.

- 74) *Roman Bust, c. 66-68 AD, Nero, Museo Capitolino, Rome; or V74*
 V74a) *Roman, 14-37 AD, Grimani Relief, Lioness with her Cubs, Museum, Vienna*
 74b) *Pompeii, c 70 A.D., Erotic wall painting, National Museum, Naples*

We seem to be witnessing one of those movies of the life of Christ, where the debauchery of Rome suggests a new Babylon. Tacitus:

Nero (who polluted himself by every lawful or lawless indulgence)...had a raft constructed on Agrippa's lake... the crews arranged according to age and experience in vice. Birds and beasts had been procured from remote countries, and sea monsters from the ocean. On the margin of the lake were set up brothels crowded with noble ladies, and on the opposite bank were seen naked prostitutes with obscene gestures and movements... (Tacitus, Annals XV, 37; tr. Church & Brodribb)

- a75) *Roman, 1st cent. AD, Patrician carrying busts of his ancestors, Capitoline Museum, Rome*
 75) *Roman, c. 150 AD, Young Marcus Aurelius, Capitoline Museum, Rome; + V detail (also dig.)*

But Nero and Paul were not the only contenders in the Roman vault of personality. The pagan moral force rallied again and again. Perhaps never before or since was such a battle waged in the psyche. And with each recovery the outward empire was reordered, but against longer odds, and the soul under deeper shadow. With Marcus Aurelius the beauty of classical form masks an inwardness where solitude and dark have become habitual. So his Meditations

Of the life of man the duration is but a point, its substance streaming away, its perceptions dim, the fabric of the entire body prone to decay, and the soul a vortex, and fortune incalculable, and fame uncertain. In a word, all the things of the body are as a river, and the things of the soul as a dream and a vapour; and life is a warfare and a pilgrim's sojourn, and fame after death is only forgetfulness. What then is it that can help us on our way? One thing and one alone—Philosophy. (tr., C.R. Haines)

- Va76) Roman (Hadrian) 120 AD, Pantheon, from the Piazza, Rome; not dig.*
76) Same, closer view (CGB '86): V, detail only
76a) Pantheon, interior (CGB '86, horizontal slide, copy of E. Xian V53)

We have relied on the portrait bust to voice the inner struggle. But architecture, too, that monumental enclosure of space, conveys, in its very language of thrusts, tensile nobilities. Rome's greatest building, the Pantheon, combines a columned porch, perhaps of the time of Augustus, with a dome built under Hadrian, the first huge dome ever constructed, forming the most impressive and best preserved Roman interior. As Hegel says:

under the pain inflicted by Despotism, spirit, driven back into its inmost depths...seeks for a harmony in itself, and begins now an inner life.

- a77) Pantheon, from the West side (CGB '86)*
77) Pantheon, interior (CGB '86, vertical slide); V takes details only, above then below; dig. whole, then upper detail
77a) Byzantine (Justinian) 502-537 & 558-62, Hagia Sophia, Dome (interior), Constantinople (CGB '77; copy of E. Xian 55)
77b) Michelangelo, c. 1550-90, Dome (interior), St. Peter's, Rome

At the center of all that arching of aqueducts and bridges, amphitheatres and mammoth baths, enclosed in the bend of the Tiber and the utilitarian plainness of huge rubble walls, opens this round-shelled, eye-lighted sphere, first massive solution of the symbolic inner room. To enter it is to share a space pregnant with the moral deepening of Rome. As the private person glimpsed in brooding portraits fills the frame of universal law, so this luminous closure invests the cement walls of its outwardness. And as the subjective morality of the West was first explored in the conscious responsibilities of Rome, so this dome generates a long line, through the spatial withdrawal of Byzantine, to the proud assertions of the Renaissance and later West.

- 78) *Roman Christian, 2nd-4th cent., Catacombs of St. Calixtus, Rome*
 78a) *Roman Heads, Double: [A] 1st c. AD, from Ostia; and [B] 4th c. AD, from Via Appia, both National Museum (Thermae), Rome (CGB '86)*
 78b) *Again, Catacombs of St. Calixtus, another view*

Music: Gregorian Easter Service Alleluia Mode 7, Angel 35116

From Aeneas down that struggle under stoical command: "Be like a headland of rock," had shaped the deepest reality of Rome. But after Marcus Aurelius, it required more than those heavy-eyed searchers for gnosis could supply. Obligation and destiny shifted from Aeneas Jovis monitis to Augustine's "a broken and a contrite heart, the Spouse, the Cup of our Redemption."

But when the soul-sick Roman went down into the Catacombs, it was into a crypt that had long been forming under the imperial walls, a brooding place of consciousness, which Christianity would hail, with solemn hallelujas, as the birthplace of light.

- a79) *Roman-Christian mid-3rd cent., fresco detail, Shepherd with scroll, and flock, Hypogeum of the Aurelii, Rome*
 b79) *Same, another detail, Head of the Apostle Paul*
 79) *Roman-Christian 4th c., Bust of Christ fresco, Cemetery of Comodilla, Rome*

Between the opposites of an age there is a kind of creative play. The surrender of Christianity, the pride of Rome, these form the axis on which Western history is strung. Here, the promise of the City of God (I Cor. 15, 19-20):

If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept...

(End Gregorian)

80) *Roman end of 1st c. BC, Agrippa, Uffizi, Florence*

80a) *Same, close detail of face*

There, the military might behind the Prima Porta Augustus, Augustus' soldier, who engineered his rise, honest Agrippa—yoked opposites of our world:

...Remember, Roman...to rule the people
Under law, to impose the way of peace,
To spare the humble, and war down the proud.

How the 17th century, from Monteverdi, through the court of Louis XIV, to Augustan England, swells with that trumpet voluntary.

Music: Jeremiah Clarke (once thought Purcell), 1700, March, called "Trumpet Voluntary" (close), Bach Guild HM-31 SD