AN ENVOI
GETTING (AWAY FROM) IT ALL AT HADRIAN'S VILLA

Powerful Romans were hugely alert to the ways in which landscaped nature, appropriately presented, could enhance their prestige and present them in the most flattering light. Octavian's re-scripting of Pompey's *porticus* garden just before the Battle of Actium shows just how acutely the semiotics of control over nature fed into the public propaganda of the last years before the Augustan Principate. Privately, too, we have seen Roman imperialism and personal iconography filter through the scenography of the Villas 'Farnesina' and *ad Gallinas Albas*. Nero's Domus Aurea, in the mid-first century CE, shows just how politicized the landscaping of nature could become, and how disastrously it could go wrong as viewed through the eyes of disaffected elite commentators such as Pliny the Elder and Tacitus.[1] To conclude, however, we travel east from Rome along the Via Tiburtina to Hadrian's Villa (see Figure 19). This large and complex archaeological site has been extensively analysed: MacDonald and Pinto's vibrant 1995 study should be any visitor's first port of call, followed by Ricotti 2001, which includes study of the gardens and the network of subterranean roads.[2]

Arriving today at Hadrian's villa by (stopping) public bus from Rome gives a sense of the distance this estate offered from the noise and hassle of the city (twenty-eight kilometres – about half a day's ride – west). Recent exhibitions and events in London, California, and Rome, not to mention its appearance (juxtaposed with Mussolini's EUR) in Julie Taymor's film *Titus*, have showcased its contemporary and persistent significance – and popularity.[3] Nevertheless, and despite

[1] See Chapter I above; MacDonald 1982: 25–46 introduces the architecture of the Domus Aurea.

[2] Also, De Franceschini 1991 (detailed archaeological study) and 2006 (recent advances); Adembri 2000 (the basic guide, usually on sale on site).

[3] Exhibitions: 'Hadrian: Empire and Conflict', British Museum, London, 24 July–26 October 2008 (Webography: *Hadrian: Empire and Conflict*; print catalogue: Opper 2008; rave review: Boatwright 2009). Colloquium: 'Hadrian's Villa and the California Garden', Stanford University, CA, 5–6 March 2005 (Webography: *Hadrian's Villa and the California Garden*); 'Villa Adriana, paesaggio antico e ambiente moderno', Palazzo Massimo, Rome, 23–24 June 2000 (Reggiani 2002). For general comments on reception, see Watkin 1992: *passim*. On Julie Taymor (dir.), *Titus* (1999), Clear Blue Sky Productions, see Taymor 2000 for production notes (and pp. 58–9 for images), and Theodorakopoulos 2010. Luigi Magni's 1970 comedy *Scipione detto anche l'Africano* also puts the villa to dramatic use.

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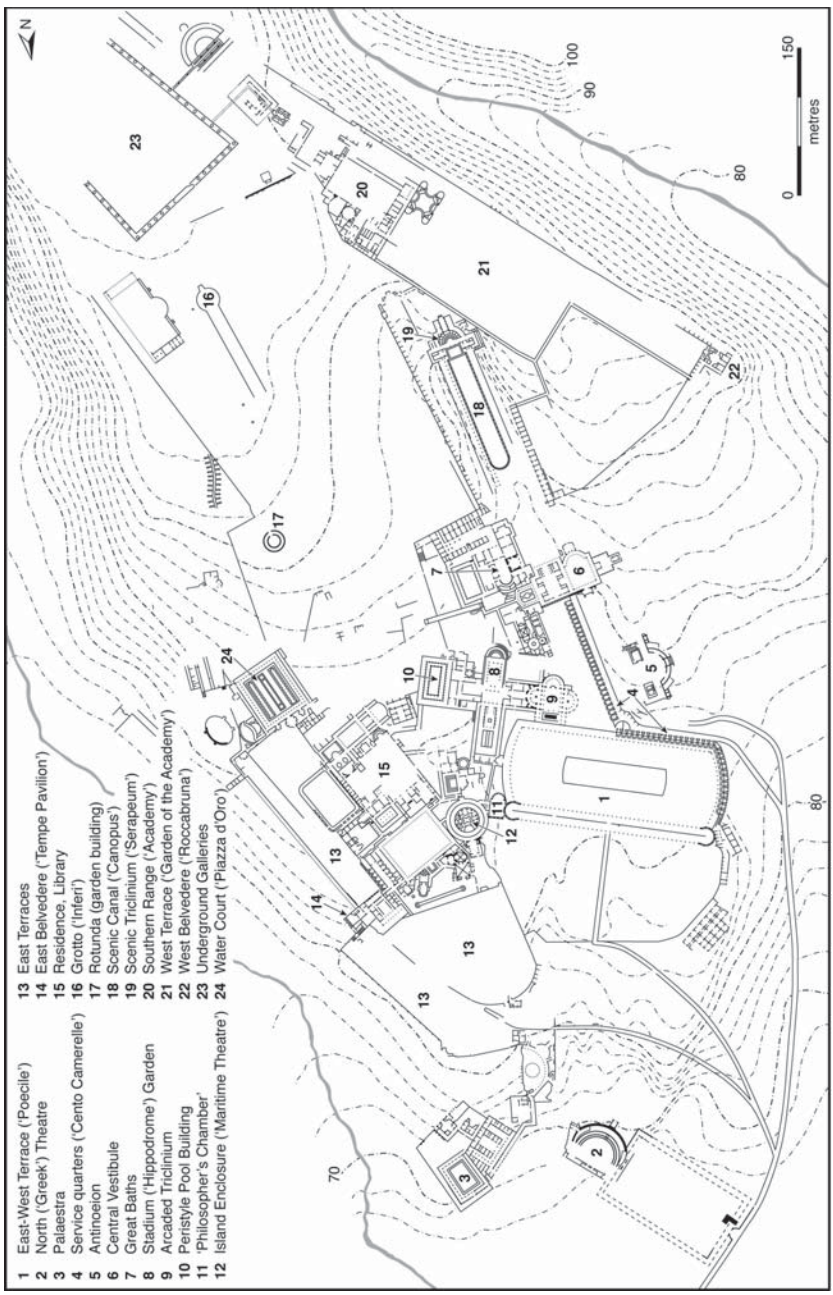


Figure 19 Plan of Hadrian's Villa, Tivoli.

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the extensive physical remains and its peaceful situation, the sheer scale and fragmentary nature of the site makes it almost impossible to understand its organization and to imagine its former appearance. It is therefore particularly exciting that one spin-off from the Hadrian's Villa Project is Chiappetta's imagining of different characters' routes through the villa.[4] If one has not got Chiappetta in hand, or a copy of Adembri (2000), a conjectural model of the estate in its heyday (located near the modern entrance) helps.[5] Prefacing one's visit with a trip to nearby Tivoli for a stroll through the Villas Gregoriana and d'Este helps to flesh out the ancient villa's potential use of landscape, and its likely sensory and intellectual qualities.

Forsyth (inspired by a visit to the Renaissance and later villas of Tivoli, and by his hunt for Cicero's Tusculan villa, at Frascati) indicates how seductive the relationship with a ruinous villascape such as this can be:

> Modern architecture and made ground are seldom picturesque either in the landscape, or on canvass [*sic*]… In landscape we love ruined temples, a Gothic castle, a moss-grown cell, more than the most elegant ['modern'] villa; because ancient Romans, a feudal baron, and a hermit, being remote from our own times or manners, are more poetical beings than a private gentleman or a modern prince. We know what the ['modern'] villa and its inhabitants are; one glance gives us all, and exhausts the subject. But we must fancy what a ruin has been; we trace and we lose its design, we rebuild and re-people it, we call in history, we compose, we animate, we create; and man ever delights in his own creation.[6]

Influential ancient literary references early on made the running for this kind of imaginative mapping of Hadrian's estate, including the description in the anonymous *Historia Augusta*'s life of Hadrian.[7] Here, we get a seductive glimpse of what happens when an emperor reinvents the (by the early second century CE) conventional theme-park model of the luxury villascape. Not just Hellenized with a *Lyceum*, a *Poecile*, and an *Academy*, we hear that this villa was conceived as a synecdoche for empire. Like an early Disneyland or Las Vegas, its parts evoked the provinces of Egypt (Canopus, Figure 20) and Greece (Valley

[4] Chiappetta 2008; see Webography: Frischer.

[5] For helpful discussion, site plans, and illustrations, see Webography: De Franceschini; Ricotti. In print, see e.g. MacDonald and Pinto 1995: 2, fig. 1 (and extensive pull-out plan); Adembri 2000: 6–7 (reconstruction), 98–9 (layout).

[6] Forsyth 1835: 261–2. See e.g. Christian 2008 for the beginnings of these ideas.

[7] *Hist. Aug.* 26.5 (fourth century CE); MacDonald and Pinto 1995: 6–8 provides a summary of literary references. More generally, we need to keep the material covered in all previous chapters in mind.

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Figure 20 Hadrian's Villa, Tivoli, 'Canopus' and 'Serapeum' (Scenic Canal and Triclinium features). Note the reconstructed colonnade around the water feature, the Hellenic echoes in the statuary (e.g. Caryatid wannabes), and the scale of the vaulted 'Serapeum'.

of Tempe, Thessaly) on a far larger scale than ever before recorded in a garden feature. Grand official 'palace' buildings (the Central Vestibule, Circular Hall) complemented the more 'domestic' zones and structures, making this estate rival and reconfigure the power previously concentrated in the imperial palace on Rome's Palatine.[8] The hyperreal qualities of an empire available for an afternoon's stroll, and increasingly subject to personal responses and imaginative filling in of the gaps, make for a story that successive visitors have eagerly bought into.

Construction on the estate was in progress from 118–*c.*135 CE, and the original extent was in the region of 120 hectares (today, typically about 40 hectares are accessible); approximately 900 rooms and ambulatories have so far been counted, but much of the outlying

[8] Also mocked-up, we hear, were the Athenian council building (Prytaneum) and the Euripus (in Hadrian's *Poecile*).

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estate has never been excavated and even major central structures lack complete excavation.[9]

Drawing on the *Historia Augusta*'s comment, we find that many sites have traditional identifications with redolent locales. The identifications for most are at best 'likely', with many dating to the time of the villa's rediscovery as a site of antiquarian interest in the sixteenth century.[10] Its named prospects and the densely evocative quality of many of its vistas are thus as much a product of the Renaissance imagination as of substantiated fact: for example, the underground tunnels and grotto identified as Styx, Hades (*Inferi*) or the Elysian Fields, and the Scenic Triclinium with its complex hydraulics (labelled 'Serapeum' to complement the identification of 'Canopus').[11] In addition, many of the standing columns that give such grandeur to the landscaped ruins today were re-erected by the Italian state when part of the site was first purchased in 1870. As further remains were excavated, weather and environmental damage (helped by bombing in 1944) continued to necessitate ongoing repairs. The site's extensive redevelopment to facilitate tourism has made it harder for the ordinary visit to recapture the designed relationships between structures, avenues, and so forth.[12]

The surviving rich decorative programme of art, statuary, colourful inlay, and marble has been extensively documented, but also dispersed to off-site museums, leaving the experience of the Villa today strangely monochrome. No consensus helps understand how coherently programmatic the original art collection and its display was. Indeed find-spots for much of the surviving statuary are insecurely documented. Some mosaics, marble pavements, and walls remain, many restored (an example is in the Arcaded Triclinium). The wealth of stucco decoration is almost entirely long gone (exceptions, for example, in the Great Baths). In addition, much sculpture probably vanished over the years – some taken for its artistic quality, interest (examples abound in the Vatican and Capitoline Museums), or use as material for lime-making. Some simply vanished, with much architectural decor, into the boggy area in the north-west quadrant

[9] Opper 2008: 132.

[10] The first identification of the site as Hadrian's Villa followed the visit of Pope Pius II and the humanist and historian Flavio Biondo (1461). Soon after, statue finds plus wider availability of the *Historia Augusta* led to growing interest in mapping the evocatively listed sites.

[11] Using MacDonald and Pinto 1995 for less evocative/speculative toponyms.

[12] On the UNESCO World Heritage List since 1999, the site continues to undergo changes as a result of conservation, facilitating public access, and archaeological work. The 'Doric' Temple, for example, is a work of restoration.

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(just off the map, Figure 19). Decorative as well as structural marbles were robbed for reuse in later building programmes.[13] Even so, the chaotic profusion of remains, ongoing excavations, ruins, and greenery give a sense of how much more than just a lavish residence this estate was.[14]

It is initially tempting to find in this villa an analogue for the kind of 'villa-as-city' motif alluded to by Pliny when describing seaside villas, and a feature of invective against the Domus Aurea. After all, the size of the site and scale of its buildings dwarfs Pompeii, and representatively urban structures can be ticked off: baths, theatres, porticoes, avenues and colonnaded walkways, plantings, (possibly) a *palaestra*, fountains, temples, libraries, and public (reception) hall.[15] But in addition we find a grotto, pools, a hippodrome (stadium) garden, banqueting halls and lavish outdoor *triclinia*, extensive open (or unbuilt-up) space and belvederes, as well as a widespread network of underground tunnels, galleries, and service quarters, all recalling elements of the textual villas we visited in Chapter V; moreover, many typical urban features are (so far) missing.[16]

As MacDonald and Pinto comment, only a quarter of the sixty or so buildings are unambiguously identifiable, and the spatial relationship between them – together with the lack of a rectilinear street-grid pattern – makes it unlikely that the original scenography directly mimicked a new 'Roman' town.[17] It is more likely that the mass of buildings and surrounding parkland evoked the idea or symbolic value of Rome as imperial capital – the city whose political functions it partly usurped – and reflected to some extent Hadrian's ambiguous relationship with Rome, a place where he spent relatively little time. This estate allowed him to avoid the city centre by bringing the functions of the city out to Tibur, in the process providing an urban, political gloss to any visit

[13] See Raeder 1983 on the eclectic range of statuary. Piranesi's late eighteenth-century excavations record structures now lost (see his detailed and still hugely useful site plan: *Pianta delle fabbriche esistenti nella Villa Adriana,* 1781, in Pinto 1993, and online at Webography: Catena Digital Archive of Historic Gardens and Landscapes); also the 1751 revised edition of Contini's cartographic visualization of Ligorio's survey (*Pianta della villa tiburtina di Adriano Cesare*), in Ranaldi 2001.

[14] Gizzi 2002; Guarino and Bruno 2002.

[15] Newby 2002 locates the hypothetical *palaestra* behind the 'Greek' Theatre. For itineraries that emphasize this civic aspect, see Chiappetta 2008: 92–3, 126–7.

[16] E.g. no honorific arches, agoras, or shops, no basilicas, forum, senate house, or major official cult temples. See sample itineraries at Chiappetta 2008: 46–7, 70–1. Cf. the shops embedded in the peri-urban 'Farnesina'.

[17] MacDonald and Pinto 1995: 11.

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to the estate.[18] Obvious comparisons can be made with the projects of two other philhellenic emperors: Nero's Domus Aurea and Domitian's Alban Villa;[19] but Trajan, too, enjoyed country estates (for example, Centum Cellae), a less awkward precedent.[20] Raeder's discussion of the continuity between villas of the late Republic, through these imperial estates, to Hadrian's Villa provides useful context to follow up.[21]

Topographically, the central area occupied a north–south sloping plateau with stream-filled valleys to north-east and south-west, feeding into the (still navigable) River Anio. All the strictures of situation for an ideal villa seem to be in place – good infrastructure (Via Tiburtina, Anio), a town nearby (Tibur), plentiful water (local streams and proximity to aqueducts en route to Rome from the Anio),[22] a physical situation that made hydraulics – and elaborate water features – relatively straightforward (the sloping plateau), and ample sunlight and cooling winds.[23] These physical features were then enhanced and subtly moulded. The height of the plateau became more dramatic through extensive terracing and the construction of deep substructures which, in conjunction with belvederes, authorized or prioritized particular vistas and caused the whole site to float upon a raised artificial horizon.[24] The villa made a dramatic statement of visual unity in its north-eastern and south-western terraced elevations (one catching the morning, the other the evening sun). These grand façades, particularly monolithic in form to the south-west, stood out as monumental enhancements of the villa's command of the landscape, also hinting that the natural environment supported and endorsed Hadrian's combined personal and public *auctoritas*.

It is difficult to envisage the impact of the range of East Terraces from Tibur's villa-rich heights; visually, planting would have affected how the estate imposed on the view from Tibur and the main access

[18] We cannot know how closely involved Hadrian was in the design of the estate, nor how directly it reflected or shaped his personality; see MacDonald and Pinto 1995: 14–23 for a plausible attempt to plug Hadrian into this landscape; Ricotti 2001 attempts a detailed mapping of Hadrian onto the estate. Also useful: Hoffmann 1998; Ghio 2002.

[19] Ball 2004; Newby 2005: 96–105. Cf. Juv. 4 on Domitian's Alban 'court'.

[20] Plin. *Ep.* 6.31.14–15.

[21] Raeder 1983: 287–90.

[22] First the Anio Vetus, later the Aqua Claudia and Anio Nouus.

[23] On the role of water, see MacDonald and Pinto 1995: 170–82; Ricotti 1998.

[24] Compare again with the extensive remodelling of the Palatine plateau in Rome, initiated to some extent by Nero but monumentalized by Domitian (MacDonald 1982: 47–74). That the Villa Adriana (anciently, Villa Tiburtina) was Hadrian's residence while notionally at Rome strengthens the connection. He had a plethora of other suburban villas, e.g. at Antium, Baiae, and Puteoli (where he died).

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to the site (from the north, probably gained by road from a turn-off on the Via Tiburtina). The first impression of the estate from the low-lying route across the Campagna from Rome (a little south, but primarily west) highlights the villa's use of topography to enhance the designed qualities of the landscape. The monumental East and West Terraces took full advantage of the two valleys to showcase the scale and boldness of the design; Pember's imaginative reconstruction of Pliny's Laurentina (Figure 8) hints at the effect.[25] The bulk of the west façade of the East–West Terrace – about ninety-five metres wide, and supported by massive substructures (service quarters) – dominated the main access from the north and from the western route from Rome. Rotating about forty-five degrees, the East-West Terrace's long northern Ambulatory Wall confronted those approaching from the plain below and made a massive visual statement to travellers coming from the Via Tiburtina, whether guests (perhaps approaching the central '*Poecile*' entrance), or courtiers or functionaries (heading on towards the political spaces that dominated the villa's eastern range).[26]

This axial rotation means that the villa turns away from the city it replaces, and subtly demonstrates that the visitor is entering a world where Rome's traditional heart is not the primary point of reference. Assuming that the main access route swept across the Anio and the north-eastern valley ('Tempe'), the villa's use of the terrain as scenography may also have collapsed a range of features into one dramatic isovist: a vista taking in the East Terraces' bulk – and amblers enjoying the view (perhaps from the East Belvedere) – as well as, just possibly, the matching West Belvedere ('Roccabruna'). This was despite the density of buildings in the north-west quadrant of the site and the distance involved: as the crow flies, from the North ('Greek') Theatre it is nearly one and a half kilometres to the West Belvedere.

We can compare the contrastingly dialogic gaze between Rome and the Villa d'Este at nearby Tivoli (see Figure 21) to get a sense of the difference that orientation makes. Working for Cardinal Ippolito II d'Este, Pirro Ligorio took marble and ideas from Hadrian's Villa to create a hugely influential and symbolic fantasy landscape. He used Tivoli's natural cliffs to fashion panoramic and densely decorated

[25] At around 300 metres, the range of East and West Terraces is astounding. The West ('Academy Gardens') range becomes more human in scope with the Southern ('Academy') Range.

[26] Identified by Pirro Ligorio – excavating during the 1550s and 1560s – as the *Poecile* (i.e. evoking the Painted Stoa in Athens, where the philosopher Zeno once taught) and *c.*230 metres long. See Ligorio 1723: *passim*.

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Figure 21 Tivoli, view towards Rome from the Villa d'Este. Note that the dome of St Peter's is visible on the skyline.

outdoor terraces and promenades, to embed faux-natural grottoes and formal and informal pools, and to showcase a bewildering array of fountains.[27] The 'Rometta' famously recreated Rome as a lower-terrace topographic water feature – the real city shimmers on the horizon behind the hyperreal version within which guests and owner could play at mastery of space and politics.[28] Now sadly incomplete, the scope and complexity of Ligorio's original vision (displayed in Giovanni Francesco Venturini's 1691 engraving) surely echoed in miniature the reinvented political villa created by Hadrian.

Despite these conjectures and comparisons, on the ground the site continues to tease visitors and to offer few satisfactory way-finding strategies. It is simultaneously too full of features and too lacking in three-dimensional coherence. Even the hypothetical itineraries proposed by Chiappetta (2008) are only presented as two-dimensional skeleton plans, which do not capture the complexity of interpretative challenges facing us today. Tall cypresses give some hints of the lush greenery that the sophisticated hydraulics must have helped to soften

[27] Coffin 1960, 2004: 83–105; Dernie 1996. In brief, see Nys 2000.
[28] Madonna 1991; Dernie 1997.

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the plateau, setting off the sparkling white and, closer to, colourful marble walls and pavements (cf. Figure 9). Aurally, too, the site bears little relationship to its probable ancient design – the multiplicity of natural and artificial water courses and fountains must have made a delightful impact after a dusty ride or trip in an uncomfortable carriage, while the villa's height, from the plain, would have promised the murmur of refreshing breezes, rustling the plantings designed to soothe eyes and ears alike.[29] Greenery may have softened some of the potentially domineering monumentality, uniting built and natural environments in one designed, harmonious landscape.

Much of the impact of the relational qualities between spaces and structures is lost and has not yet been fully understood, and modern authorized itineraries offer no sense of how the original axial routes, avenues, and paths mediated between landscape and visitor, and perhaps also scripted the kind of visit available to different classes of visitor. As we have seen, a key villa activity was the philosophically engaged stroll, but today no traces of this activity can be mapped. Zones that now seem visually or spatially connected may have been designed as structurally and experientially separate.[30] Examples of 'lost' views might include one from the West Terrace across the 'Canopus', or from the East–West Terrace into the 'Stadium' Garden. We get no sense of the sensory delights or intellectual interest offered by a stroll to one of the Belvederes and, while the relationship between the Peristyle Pool Building, 'Stadium' Garden, and East–West Terrace seems structurally cluttered today, it must have originally made for interesting sightline patterns and provided an important sense of diminution in scale between the roofs of the first and last structures. The relationship between the upper park (not as now a fairly barren expanse with little to detain the eye, but complete with rotunda and grotto and, we must imagine, lush planting, statuary, and other landscape structures) and the 'Canopus' in its mini-valley (Figure 20) would once have been dialogic and complementary rather than mutually incomprehensible.

[29] Recall Vitruvius' comment that appropriate greenery has a physically beneficial effect on the eyes (5.9.5). Compare the dense greenery of frescoed plantings discussed above (Chapter VI), but also the importance of natural features more generally in painted and literary scenography. Ligorio's nearby Villa d'Este offers a useful analogue in terms of colour, shade, prospects, complexity, and sound (though on a comparatively minute scale). The Virtual Villa of Livia (Webography: *The Virtual Museum of the Ancient Via Flaminia*) suggests a sense of how elevation impacted on a villa's relationship with its approaches.

[30] For a general overview (urban morphology), see MacDonald 1986: 32–110; on Hadrian's Villa, see MacDonald and Pinto 1995: 78–138 (and *passim*). Jashemski and Ricotti 1992 discuss archaeological case studies.

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Additional aspects that fail to cross over into a modern visit include the important relationship between sun and shade (outdoors, but also in the covered porticoes), the depth of shadow and quality of light at different times of day, the breeziness or stillness of particular avenues and configurations of outdoor space, and the physical difference between dusty grit (the main surface underfoot today) and the range of potential original paved and natural surfaces and terrains. All of these alter our perception of the villa as a meaningful space, and make the modern visitor's experience of a tour worlds apart from that of a guest, a visiting official, or a member of the imperial family in Hadrian's day. Its confusing, ruinous, but also often iconic topography shifts us unsettlingly between 'known' and 'unknowable' perceptual nodes. On my last visit – a baking-hot, thundery, and airless day – I lingered interminably, frustrated at the incomprehensible structures and blank spaces, willing them to come into focus (known, recognized sites, yet implacable to understanding), and tiredly zipped through the more immediately charming and iconic 'Canopus', shady 'Serapeum' (Scenic Canal and Triclinium), and 'Maritime Theatre' features.[31]

Missing too, of course, are the marble and flesh-and-blood figures who populated this landscape.[32] We speculated – discussing the Horti Sallustiani – on how a programme of statuary could script or at least endorse a series of possible itineraries through an estate. Hadrian's Tiburtine villa must similarly have made use of its valleys to create tempting stories amid which to ramble, and even to act out fantasies. As so often, and in common with so many sites extensively admired in previous centuries, working out who and what the villa's marble and bronze inhabitants were, and how they related to each other, eludes us.[33] We can only observe that the density of outdoor sculpture, while

[31] In a complex and agenda-setting study, Porteous 1990 explores how memory, sensory experience (including smell), imagination, ethics, and sense of self combine to generate individual and emotionally charted 'experiences' of place.

[32] It is not just Hadrian, his family, guests, and functionaries whose silence haunts this landscape. The physical effort and management of this estate (like others) was based on slave labour – voices mostly overlooked when enjoying a few days in the country; on daily life at the villa, see MacDonald and Pinto 1995: 183–97.

[33] Famous examples of the villa's silent inhabitants are two black marble centaurs (from Aphrodisias) and an extensively restored red marble faun (famous from Nathaniel Hawthorne's 1860 novel *The Marble Faun*), both in Rome's Musei Capitolini; and Egyptian and Egyptianizing statues (displayed to emphasize a connection with the Villa's 'Canopus'), in the Vatican Museums. Others include Graeco-Roman favourites such as Dionysus, Mercury, Apollo, Athena, Diana, Venus, Mars, Atalanta, Hercules, Fortuna, Muses, Amazons, Sileni, nymphs, caryatids, athletes, and gladiators. Images of Hadrian, Antinous (posthumously), and the imperial family also shared the estate with their flesh-and-blood counterparts, along with an array of marble beasts. See MacDonald and Pinto 1995: 141–51.

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hard to gauge, is likely to have been at least in line with the kind of sculptural dispositions noted by Cicero when hunting for art.[34]

By the second century CE, art 'factories' in Athens, Alexandria, and Aphrodisias were producing often outstanding copies but also original pieces to satisfy increasingly demanding and sophisticated consumers keen to acquire the cachet of being a collector. 'Antiquities' also seem still to have been coming onto the market, and Hadrian's well-documented admiration for all things Greek must have made for an intensification in trade and production – following imperial fashion.[35] Stylistically, there must have been variability in quality, but semiotically the number, disposition, and eclectic subject matter of the statuary must have heightened the sense that this estate represented Hadrian's vision of the empire in microcosm.[36]

Conclusions, and looking ahead

Starting with thematic explorations of landscape, this *Survey* dug into how and why the natural world meant something more than food and drink, or a charming scene, in ancient Rome, and also questioned whether it figured in the development of a quintessential Roman mindset. A range of theoretical and methodological approaches opened up some of the problems and delights that we face when trying to understand how nature mattered urgently – aesthetically, productively, financially, philosophically – at a time when Rome was becoming a major Mediterranean power. Investigating Latin literary landscapes and setting them in context helps to sketch out what Romans thought (or wanted their friends, enemies, and rivals to think they thought) about the world they inhabited; but we always read within the constraints of our remove from a society whose vocabulary, syntax, *mores*, and values are two millennia from ours. We then turned to a set of significant images and sites, moving from muted pastoral

[34] E.g. Cic. *Att.* 1.1.5, 1.4.3, 1.8.2, 1.9.2, 1.10.3, 1.16.15, 13.40, 15.9; *Fam.* 7.23; *Leg.* 2.2, 6, 7, 3.13. Cicero knows that statuary transforms what surrounds it. See also Raeder 1983: 287–9; Leen 1991; Neudecker 1998; Narducci 2003. As noted in Chapter 5, Pliny's villas (as described) are remarkable for the absence of marble and statuary.

[35] For Hadrian as trendsetter, see Zanker 1996: 198–266 (contextualizing discussion).

[36] Surviving and identified statuary (Raeder 1983: 205–42) is short on 'state' or 'official' imagery; if so, this suggests that the villa reflected a strikingly individual perspective on state and empire alike.

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corridor frescoes, through the immersive painted garden-room style, to the real gardens and parks of Rome's environs.

Drawing on what ancient authors wrote about the environment adds meaning to these physical sights and spaces. Nevertheless, despite our access to literary texts, the role of the ancient landscape as a kind of autobiographical statement, filled with the murmur of conversation, laughter, music, and footsteps, and coloured by the emblematic role of labour, is elusive.[37] Roman landscapes are always subordinated to human interest and ingenuity (artistic or practical) and, in the end, this fleeting human quality and the interpretative gap that keeps us guessing about what real and depicted Roman landscapes meant to their original audiences are what makes their richness so hard to recapture. Like Forsyth (quoted above) we can think ourselves onto Columella's farm, and we can still stroll along Hadrian's terraces, but we struggle to make a direct connection with the daily reality of Roman landscape's autocratic, numinous, and ideational meaning, and we fill in the gaps with our own concerns. Whether walking physically across these ancient spaces or traversing them in the mind's eye, we enrich them as 'realandimagined' sites. The place of the observer is never straightforwardly resolvable as simply a position in space.[38] Space, too, we have seen, is experienced subjectively and through personal, cultural, social, and historical filters. Every space has its own uniquely nuanced vocabulary and syntax, and no two observers will accentuate it identically.

Nevertheless this *Survey*'s case studies do leave us with an identifiable and culturally significant Roman interest in how 'landscape' tells on the figures who designed, described, and inhabited it. This fascination with the scenic backdrop and its affective qualities coloured all aspects of elite Roman life – and was central to the murky world of countless agricultural slaves who worked to make the countryside and parklands fit the ideal. Individual responses and patterns of movement relating to specific sites and descriptions may be irrecoverable, and day-to-day experience of landscape for most citizens is lost, but as we have seen – even when farming is ostensibly the focus – depicted and textualized ethnoscapes were typically designed to produce or stimulate particular kinds of physical and intellectual activity, or sensory response. The

[37] Hadrian's Villa demonstrates the disappearance of the 'service' aspects of a villascape. See Chiappetta 2008: 158–9 (the subterranean service routes); compare, for example, Calke Abbey, Derbyshire, UK.

[38] Royo and Gruet 2008: 391.

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contemporary Green agenda and anxiety about climate change give us a chance to re-engage with concerns that ancient Romans might have understood as integral to a meaningful interest in landscape: how to cohabit harmoniously with capricious *Natura*, how to benefit sustainably from the environment, and how to place humankind productively within a complexly interconnected universe.[39] We may not always fully understand the resonances, but we can see the kinds of issue that crop up frequently enough to develop an interpretative pattern.

Underpinning ancient interest in landscape was its role as a signal that nature was on one's side, and this typically meant more than simply good farming practice and putting food on the plate. At Rome in particular, defining the environment and mapping one's place within it, metaphorically or literally, was part of a more-or-less explicit and ongoing process of self-fashioning articulated by wealthy, ambitious, and educated citizens, a process which trickled down through the practice of daily life, colouring non-elite Romans' experience of their collective role in history and place in the cosmos. This book hopes to encourage further reflection on how understanding Roman identity went hand in hand with exploring, inhabiting, and cultivating the landscape in the widest possible sense. Landscape, we may eventually conclude, matters, in interesting and sometimes surprising ways, and constantly encourages viewers, readers, and passers-through to explore farther on and further in.

[39] The most influential modern discussion of how and why viewing the countryside as a site of Golden Age nostalgia is a politicized act is R. Williams 1973. Surveying the environmental agenda, see e.g. Bignell 2009; Danvers 2009.

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