Vilain, R. (2019). Rilke, Rome, and the Poetics of Fountains. *German Life and Letters*, 72(3), 297-334. <https://doi.org/10.1111/glal.12233>

Peer reviewed version

License (if available):
Other

Link to published version (if available):
[10.1111/glal.12233](https://doi.org/10.1111/glal.12233)

[Link to publication record in Explore Bristol Research](#)
PDF-document

This is the author accepted manuscript (AAM). The final published version (version of record) is available online via Wiley at <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/glal.12233> . Please refer to any applicable terms of use of the publisher.

University of Bristol - Explore Bristol Research

General rights

This document is made available in accordance with publisher policies. Please cite only the published version using the reference above. Full terms of use are available:
<http://www.bristol.ac.uk/red/research-policy/pure/user-guides/ebr-terms/>

Rilke, Rome, and the Poetics of Fountains

Robert Vilain

University of Bristol

Rainer Maria Rilke made five visits to Rome between 1903 and 1910 and is generally considered to have been disappointed and frustrated by the Eternal City. These visits famously generated a crop of more than 130 gloomy or disgruntled letters – in particular to Lou Andreas-Salomé, Franz Xaver Kappus, Ellen Key, Axel Juncker, and Rilke's mother. Nevertheless, precise and often positive memories of these occasions resurface in Rilke's poems and letters until the very end of his life. Apart from some factually informative chapters in biographies and short sections of thematic studies, surprisingly little has been written on his relationship with the city, and only a few accounts explore the poetic consequences of the poet's experiences there in any detail,¹ which contrasts starkly with the extensive attention paid to Rilke's two visits to Russia and to his relationship with Paris. Whilst his visits to Rome were apparently the direct stimulus for no more than a dozen poems – Curdin Ebner notes diplomatically that 'der unmittelbare literarische Niederschlag Roms [...] hält sich [...] in Grenzen'² – Rome's poetic legacy was undoubtedly longer-lasting and more complex than this modest figure implies.

This article seeks therefore to explore these occasions more thoroughly than hitherto (making use of the latest of Rilke's voluminous correspondences to be published), to show the particular poetic significance of almost the only feature of the city that Rilke consistently admired – its fountains – and to demonstrate the poetological importance to him of the fountain motif for his poetry over at least twenty years. (In passing I will correct a number of what I believe to be errors in identifying which fountain was the model for a particular

poem). The image of the fountain (and memories of Roman fountains in particular) recur almost compulsively in poetry and letters until Rilke's death and become a touchstone for a particular poetic vision that remained strikingly consistent over time and was sustained to the last. This consistency over time is more significant than might first appear. The paradigm for modern Rilke scholarship unsurprisingly emphasizes how his poetry develops and changes,³ with the *Neue Gedichte* (written between late 1902 and 1907) and *Die Sonette an Orpheus* (1922) representing almost opposite poles of his mature poetic achievement. Comparing two poems about a dancer, one from each collection, Manfred Engel concisely summarizes how, despite formal and motivic similarities, the sonnet from the later collection demonstrates 'eine Wendung ins Generische, die für das späteste Werk charakteristisch ist'.⁴ Rilke's poetry undeniably made just such a turn, but this article attempts additionally to show how this took place in part because he made conscious use of echoes of earlier works and experiences, and that there are real and important continuities in Rilke's poetic approach, alongside clear shifts of emphasis, that are too rarely acknowledged.⁵

The first and longest of Rilke's visits to Rome lasted from September 1903 to June 1904. The city was then sometimes a stopping-off point on other journeys, such as when he made a brief second stay at the Hôtel de Russie near the Piazza del Popolo at the very end of May 1907 on his way back from Capri to Paris. He passed through again at the end of February 1908 *en route* from Munich to Naples and thence to Capri again, and on the return journey he paused in Rome a little longer, from 20 to 24 April (his fourth visit). Rilke's last sojourn in the Italian capital was between 19 March and 19 April 1910: staying in the Hôtel de Russie once more, he spent the first few days correcting the proofs of *Die Aufzeichnungen des Malte Laurids Brigge*, whose opening words had been noted down during his first visit to Rome, most probably in February 1904. In what follows, I look closely at the first and longest visit in 1903-4, including some less well-known poems written in Rome (section 1);

the last visit in 1910 and some neglected love poetry associated with it (section 2); the poetry arising from the first, including ‘Römische Fontäne’, and connections to Rilke’s study of Rodin (section 3); poetic responses to Rome in and around the *Sonette* from the early 1920s, focusing on ‘O Brunnen-Mund, du gebender’ (section 4); and finally poetry and letters between 1922 and Rilke’s death (section 5).

1. The First Visit (1903-1904) and initial poetic responses

On the recommendation of August Rodin, Rilke’s wife Clara Westhoff was due to spend nearly a year studying and working in Rome from the autumn of 1903. On 1 August Rilke wrote to Lou Andreas-Salomé explaining his own motivation for going: ‘es verlangt mich sehr, die Antike zu sehen, die ich ja eigentlich noch gar nicht kenne’. He conceded, ‘ich fühle einen italienischen Aufenthalt jetzt als eine natürliche Fortsetzung des Besten was Paris mich lernen ließ’,⁶ introducing a comparison with his Paris experience that was to set him up for disappointment. There is something in this phrasing to suggest that ‘ein italienischer Aufenthalt’ is in some way ‘the done thing’, a natural ambition for a German-language writer. There was, after all, a distinguished – not to say somewhat intimidating – tradition that Rilke may have had in mind.⁷ Johann Joachim Winckelmann left Dresden for Rome in 1755 at the recommendation of the Papal Nuncio Alberico Archinto and became Pope Clement XIII’s Prefect of Antiquities from 1763 until a few months before his death in 1768. August Graf von Platen visited Italy in 1826 and lived there for most of the rest of his life. Heinrich Heine left Germany for Italy on 4 August 1828 and his journey to Lucca, Florence, Venice and Genoa gave rise to a trilogy of *Reisebilder* (1829-1831): *Die Reise von München nach Genua*, *Die Stadt Lucca* and *Die Bäder von Lucca*, the last of which was partly a scathing response to an attack on him by Platen. But the most celebrated of all such journeys was

Goethe's between 1786 and 1788. Rilke had read at least parts of Goethe's *Italienische Reise* in March 1897 in preparation for his first visit to Italy, to Venice, and from the very beginning distanced himself from his illustrious predecessor's enthusiasm.⁸ It is likely that he remained conscious of this contrast and even that knowledge of Goethe's very different responses in part affected his own.

Nonetheless, Rilke told Lou that he felt a need to acquaint himself with the world of classical antiquity at first hand, especially 'ihre kleinen Dinge, die von so erwachsener Schönheit sind'.⁹ It is probable that he was also in search of something substantial to replicate the huge intellectual stimulus of his visits to Russia with Lou in 1899 and 1900 (photographs of Rilke in Rome in 1903 and 1904 show him wearing the Russian 'rubaschka', which suggests the continuing power of that experience).¹⁰ He did not plan to stay long, however, expecting to winter somewhere warmer, perhaps by the sea. However, after arriving in Rome on 10 September 1903, and once he had found appropriate accommodation, he stayed for nine months. Clara Rilke took an apartment and a studio in the Villa Strohl-Fern; Rainer first took a flat at Via del Campidoglio 5 (on the Capitol and thus in the heart of the ancient centre of Rome) until he moved into a separate studio in the park of the same villa on 1 December.

John Sandford reads the letters sent to family and friends during his first stay as 'on the whole, despondent and irritated in tone', suggesting that this visit was 'a singularly unsuccessful encounter with a new environment'.¹¹ Rilke wrote damningly to Kappus on 29 October 1903 that 'das fieberrufene Rom' was a city where 'die Fremde mit der Last der Heimatlosigkeit auf uns lag',¹² and to Axel Juncker on 3 November, 'Ich lebe in tiefer seelischer innerster Verstimmung, die mich zu allem unfähig macht'.¹³ On the same day he sent a miserable letter to Ellen Key that amply confirms the impression of creative paralysis:

ich hatte seit wir hier sind, so schlechte Tage [...]. Nicht dass ich krank gewesen wäre

– (die Gesundheit steht besser als im letzten Frühjahr) aber alles in mir war gebunden von Unfähigkeit, beladen mit einer jener schweren seelischen Niederlagen, die ihren Grund darin haben, dass ich nur selten und stossweise arbeite und zwischen den guten Tagen Unzeiten überschreite und durchirre, die trostlos sind.¹⁴

The specific reason for such a disconsolate attitude seems to have been (as it so often was) the lack of somewhere quiet and stable to live and, above all, to work – the path towards which, he said, was his unique task:

meine Zeit und meine Kraft kann, so wie es mit mir steht, nur *eine* Aufgabe haben, nur *diese*: den Weg zu finden, auf dem ich zu einer ruhigen, täglichen Arbeit komme, in der ich mit mehr Sicherheit und Halt wohnen kann, als in dieser ungewissen krankhaften Welt, die hinter mir zusammenstürzt und vor mir nicht ist.¹⁵

The incessant rain between mid-November and mid-January cannot have helped Rilke's mood either; he mentions it gloomily in several letters. If we are to take literally the letter to his mother of 10 March 1904, in which he explains why he has not seen her since her own arrival in Rome (despite the fact that she had journeyed there especially to see him), the need for 'Ruhe und Sammlung' for his work had by then put a stop to virtually all sorties from his lodgings: 'Ich kann unmöglich einen Besuch bei Dir machen weil es mich stört und irritiert auszugehen; (ich mache nur den einen Weg zur nahen Post sonst keinen)'.¹⁶ This may have more to do with Rilke's relationship with his mother than with his attitude to Rome, of course.

Similar complaints expressed both to his mother in late September 1903 and to Arthur Holitscher on 5 November specifically implicated the city of Rome and in particular its

chaotic array of fragmented art in the ‘krankhafte Welt’ that was causing Rilke’s dejection. He described to Pia Rilke how Rome ‘zunächst durch die Fülle aber auch durch das Durcheinander seiner so riesig zerbrochenen Kunst-Dinge einen ganz verwirrenden Eindruck macht’, likening the city to ‘eine einzige große Ausstellung in der man rasch müde wird’.¹⁷ Writing to Holitscher he struck an even more despairing note, ‘da besonders die Museen mit den vielen erbärmlichen Statuen uns hilflos machten, uns sozusagen Hoffnung und Heimat vom Leibe rissen’.¹⁸ Roman statuary was in his view nothing to compare with that of the Greeks, merely eine ganz untergeordnete dekorativ-oberflächliche Plastik’,¹⁹ and of ‘[die] kleinen Dinge’ that he had originally come to see only a few earn a mention, and usually a despondent one. In the spring he wrote of hearing Palestrina sung in St Peter’s Basilica only to add, ‘Aber es war nichts. Es zergeht alles in diesem hoffärtig-großen, leeren Haus, das wie eine hohle Puppe ist, aus der ein Riesenschmetterling ausgekrochen ist’.²⁰ Only the gardens in the Villa Borghese and on the Monte Pincio seem to have provided any respite;²¹ and the view from the cupola of St Peter’s into the Vatican gardens and beyond over the countryside surrounding the city offered a welcome vista of escape.²² The city itself felt superficial and lifeless. Where Rome inspired passion and creativity in Goethe, Rilke’s response could not be more dissimilar.

Rilke’s comments to Holitscher are echoed in letters to Franz Xaver Kappus, the ‘young poet’ of the ten *Briefe an einen jungen Dichter* sent between 1903 and 1908. On 29 October 1903 Rome is described as ‘erdrückend traurig’ because of the ‘unlebendige und trübe Museumsstimmung’ (KA, IV, p. 528). Far from being a beautiful introduction to the sites of antiquity, as Rilke had hoped, the Eternal City seemed to offer at first only the oppressive experience of inauthenticity:

die Fülle seiner [Roms] hervorgeholten und mühsam aufrechterhaltenen

Vergangenheiten (von denen eine kleine Gegenwart sich ernährt), durch die namenlose, von Gelehrten und Philologen unterstützte und von den gewohnheitsmäßigen Italienreisenden nachgeahmte Überschätzung aller dieser entstellten und verdorbenen Dinge, die doch im Grunde nicht mehr sind als zufällige Reste einer anderen Zeit und eines Lebens, das nicht unseres ist und unseres nicht sein soll. [...] alle diese von Generationen immer weiterbewunderten Gegenstände, an denen Handlangerhände gebessert und ergänzt haben, bedeuten nichts, sind nichts und haben kein Herz und keinen Wert. (KA, IV, p. 528)

Similar sentiments recur in a letter to Lou a few days later: ‘Von der Vergangenheit, die sich mühselig aufrecht hält, werde ich vielleicht nichts mehr wissen; nichts von seinen Museen, die voll sinnloser Statuen stehen und von seinen Bildern wenig’.²³

Rilke admitted a few specific exceptions to his general disapproval of the large-scale, tourist-driven art establishment – the bronze equestrian statue of Marcus Aurelius on the Piazza del Campidoglio, for example, and the Ludovisi Throne (Greek, not Roman) depicting Aphrodite rising from the sea,²⁴ the city’s cascading steps, and its magnificent formal gardens. But what emerges many times as the facet of the Roman cityscape that would remain almost lambently positive in his memory – often in the same letters that register his gloomiest views of the rest of the city – are the city’s fountains: ‘es bleibt natürlich immer noch genug zum Leben hier; allein die Wasser auf allen Plätzen, diese hellen, jugendlichen Wasser, und die Treppen, die so wunderbar, wie nach dem Vorbild von Wassern, gebaut sind’.²⁵ Using variations on the same phrasing, he shares that joy with Lou: ‘In meiner [Erinnerung] werden einmal nur [Roms] Wasser sein, diese klaren köstlichen bewegten Wasser, die auf seinen Plätzen leben; seine Treppen, die nach dem Vorbild fallender Wasser erbaut, so seltsam Stufe aus Stufe schieben wie Welle aus Welle’.²⁶ Yet again, this time to

Kappus, Rilke praises how ‘unendlich lebensvolle Wasser gehen über die alten Aquädukte in die große Stadt und tanzen auf den vielen Plätzen über steinernen weißen Schalen und breiten sich aus in weiten, geräumigen Becken’ – and once more his love for the magnificent flights of steps derives from their resemblance to cascades of water: ‘Treppen von Michelangelo ersonnen, Treppen, die nach dem Vorbild abwärts gleitender Wasser erbaut sind, – breit im Gefäll von Stufe aus Stufe gebärend wie Welle aus Welle’.²⁷ Rilke’s letters to his mother are often more pragmatic and less lyrical than those to his friends, concerned with accommodation, food, money and travel, and reflecting his often very difficult relationship with her, but even she is treated to an evocation of ‘die wunderbaren Marmorbrunnen und Fontänen auf allen Plätzen, in denen allen Tag und Nacht, das wunderbare, köstliche Quellwasser fließt, das schon die Römer auf den berühmten Aquaeducten aus den Bergen herbeigeführt hatten’.²⁸

Rilke distances himself from three powerful forms of ‘origin’, Rome, Goethe and his mother, in favour of something yet more originary and elemental: water, both positively (fountains) and negatively (rain). His dissatisfaction with Rome during this first visit should be seen in the much larger emotional context of his lack of roots and a home, and his mood of anxious depression predated his arrival in Italy. The letter in which he expressed to Lou the urgency of his need to discover the ancient world begins ‘es wird nicht Ruhe um mich’ and laments how ‘immer wieder ist keine Stube um mich und ich finde kein Fenster durch das ich auf irgendetwas Ruhiges schauen kann’. Here he is somewhat sulky about the prospect of leaving his familiar room at the Vogelers’ house in Worpswede, ‘[das] rothe Zimmer, das ich mir vorher mit einigen von meinen Dingen und Büchern zu ruhiger Zeit vorbereitet hatte’, because Frau Vogeler is expecting a child and Rilke therefore fits into the category of ‘Überflüssiges’.²⁹ It is noise that most brutally troubles Rilke, and his move to the Villa Strohl-Fern is in search of ‘eine sehr stille Wohnung’.³⁰ He returns time and time again to the

subject, evidently envious of Lou when he writes in November ‘es rührt mich seltsam an, daß nun eine Heimat um Dich steht, ein Haus, Deines Wesens voll’.³¹ Unable for the most part to work effectively, Rilke displaced his thoughts towards Russia (preparing a new edition of the *Geschichten vom lieben Gott*) and Scandinavia, as his increasingly lively correspondence with the Swedish educationalist and feminist Ellen Key shows. However, despite this predominantly irritable mood, there is evidence of engagement and stimulation. Often Rilke warms to positive memories of fulfilling experiences, and his letter to Ellen Key of 22 December 1903, for example, graduates from a gripe about the rainy weather to a lyrical exposition of the magic of Christmas *en famille*.³² There were also periods in which Rilke made progress with his work. In 1906 he recalled to Karl von der Heydt ‘[die] Umstände, wie ich sie damals eine Weile in Rom hatte; allein, nur [mit] meiner Frau in der Nachbarschaft, die auch arbeitete’.³³

A few poems were written during Rilke’s solitary days in the Villa Strohl-Fern early in 1904. ‘Einladung’, written on 26 February, was first published in the Prague-based journal *Deutsche Arbeit* in June.³⁴ It anticipates motivic preferences that will emerge in later ‘Rome poems’ (water, stars, hanging foliage), but there is nothing specifically Roman about it. A second poem from about this time, ‘Die aus dem Hause Colonna’, later positioned at the end of Part I of the second *Buch der Bilder*, is quite different. The Colonnas were a wealthy Roman family that in medieval and Renaissance times supplied the Church with four cardinals and other senior ecclesiastical figures for generations – Pope Martin V (r. 1417-1431) was a Colonna (Rilke alludes to him in line 13 of the poem), as was the Blessed Margarita (1255-1280). Other notable members were military and naval leaders, and the family maintained close ties with prominent artists such as Michelangelo and Caravaggio, establishing a major art collection from the mid-17th century on.

It is with art that ‘Einladung’ opens, the portraits of long-dead male members of the

family:

Ihr fremden Männer, die ihr jetzt so still
in Bildern steht, ihr saßet gut zu Pferde
und ungeduldig gingt ihr durch das Haus;
wie ein schöner Hund, mit derselben Gebärde
5 ruhn eure Hände jetzt bei euch aus.

Euer Gesicht ist so voll von Schauen,
denn die Welt war euch Bild und Bild;
aus Waffen, Fahnen, Früchten und Frauen
quillt euch dieses große Vertrauen,
10 daß alles *ist* und daß alles *gilt*. (KA, I, p. 317)

The magnificent baroque Palazzo Colonna in the Via della Pilotta (not far from the Via del Campidoglio where Rilke first stayed) is where Rilke will have seen these portraits of confident, comfortable aristocrats.³⁵ Completely self-assured, the poem suggests, these figures derived a certainty of the solidity and significance of the world from ‘war, power [and] sensual gratification’,³⁶ and from their position at its centre. More importantly, whilst they are now literally ‘Bilder’, paintings on the wall, and thus *de facto* the immortalization of a past ‘real’ existence, their contemporary certainty of the validity of that existence derived from treating life as if it were itself ‘ein Bild’: ‘[damals] wurde für sie selbst ihr eigenes Leben zum Bild, d.h. zu einer (sogar etwas pittoresken) Verbildlichung des Seins’.³⁷ They are aware that their lives are stylized and therefore lend themselves to perpetuation in art. Rilke’s poem contrasts this with a different form of self-possession, namely childhood:

Aber damals als ihr noch zu jung
wart, die großen Schlachten zu schlagen,
zu jung um den päpstlichen Purpur zu tragen,
nicht immer glücklich bei Reiten und Jagen,
15 Knaben noch, die sich den Frauen versagen,
habt ihr aus jenen Knabentagen
keine, nicht eine Erinnerung?

Wißt ihr nicht mehr was damals war?

The poem suggests that there was what Hofmannsthal might have called a pre-existential wholeness in the childhood of these grand men that their adulthood has banished from conscious memory. The ‘war’ of line 18 corresponds to the emphatic ‘*ist*’ of line 10; it expresses the (lost) memory of an existential certainty superior to anything an adult can achieve, partly (the poem suggests, with its reference to sex in line 15) because of an innocent unselfconsciousness unique to childhood. Nonetheless, the fact that the grown now have a new form of it born of social standing, wealth and power ensures that their own self-possession is stronger than that of the average adult. According to David Quint,

[t]he aesthetic fullness and lack of self-division that the poem attributes to the nobleman thus compensates for a fall into self-consciousness and time that closes off childhood’s still more authentic imaginative unity with the world. Noble second-nature suffers some hollowing away – it is second-best – but Rilke, nonetheless, maintains the identification of this second nature with the self-conscious artist’s own

attempt to regain a lost, if immature, wholeness of feeling, i.e. the identification of aristocracy with the aesthetic impulse itself.³⁸

It may be significant, given Rilke's predominantly negative view of the museum-like atmosphere in Rome, that this meditation on art and consciousness was inspired not by the classical world but by a much later age.

Three magnificent longer narrative poems with classical subjects, 'Hetären-Gräber', first versions of 'Orpheus. Eurydike. Hermes', and 'Geburt der Venus' (which were all finished in Sweden in the autumn) were written in Rome early in 1904 and later taken into the *Neue Gedichte*. Their principal inspirations are not Roman artefacts but, respectively, the graves of courtesans located 'somewhere in a blurry border zone between Greece and Egypt',³⁹ a Roman copy of a Greek relief that Rilke would later admire in Naples,⁴⁰ and (perhaps) Botticelli's *Birth of Venus* that then hung in the Galleria dell'Accademia in Florence. So even if the art of Rome failed to trigger an aesthetic response, first-hand exposure to the classical world had clearly made an impact on Rilke's writing. It seems to have stimulated what he called 'mein viel aufnehmenderes Schauen' and thereby a new 'Arbeitsweise' that bore fruit both in the *Neue Gedichte* and his 'neue Arbeit' itself, *Malte Laurids Brigge*.⁴¹ He reported to Lou Andreas-Salomé in May 1904 that Rome had at last altered his sense of 'das Italienische': 'Daß ich nun Alles so anders fühle als einst, vielleicht trägt dazu bei, daß ich in Rom bin und nicht im Toskanischen', and despite the severe doubts of his first few months, he concedes that it was not only Tuscany that 'spoke' to him: 'Rom spricht auch'.⁴²

2. The last visit (1910) and love poetry

Rilke's second extended stay in Rome – which was also his last visit – lasted a month in spring 1910. It began once more with tiredness and disappointment. Berlin had exhausted him: he was 'müd und mürrisch',⁴³ and despite promising himself 'Alleinsein und Sonne', Rilke found the weather in Rome 'grau und regnerisch'.⁴⁴ He said the same to Mathilde Vollmoeller: 'in Rom wollte ich endlich wieder allein sein, auf Gedanken kommen', but he arrives 'in ein volles Hôtel mit Table d'hôtes und Musik und allem Zubehör', utterly taken over by tourists.⁴⁵ On his arrival he rushed to see Sidonie Nádherný von Borutin, who lived in Via de' Cappuccini, but she was away visiting her sick mother. Nonetheless, his mood was not as bleak as it had been in 1903-1904, and even the weather permitted a more generous interpretation of the city: 'Regen kam herauf, aber auch der Aufwand jener großen Wolken, die zu dem barokken Rom gehören (zur Piazza Navona), wie der harte helle Himmel zu dem anderen unbewohnten, unbegreiflichen Rom'.⁴⁶ He wrote to Giulietta von Mendelssohn-Gordigiani that 'dieses Land wiederzuerleben ist jedesmal lauter Verwandlung'.⁴⁷

Socially, Rilke's time was fuller than it had been during his first visit. His first days were dedicated to the proofs of *Malte*, which he completed on 24 March, but his evenings were sometimes spent with the publisher Samuel Fischer and his wife Hedwig, who were also living in the Hôtel de Russie, Via del Babuino. Leopold von Schlözer introduced him to Nadine Helbig (Princess Nadežda Dmitrevna Šachovskaja), 'eine merkwürdige, in ganz Rom bekannte Frau', who entertained him in the Villa Lanta on the Janiculum Hill (as she had Liszt, Wagner, Grieg, Rubinstein and D'Annunzio before him). '[T]rotz ihres damals schon großen Alters, hielt [sie] ein sehr gastliches Haus', Rilke later reported to Elya Maria Nevar.⁴⁸ Rilke also had long discussions in early April 1910 with Jakob Wassermann, who reported positively on them to his wife.⁴⁹ These distractions were a little precarious, perhaps because of Rilke's anxious devotion to Sidonie Nádherný. He did not see as much of her as he would have liked, which may have been the reasons for slightly petulant complaints such as 'ich

lasse mich so leicht deprimieren' and 'müde bin ich immer noch und ganz ohne Ordnung innen' in early April.⁵⁰

During the 1910 visit Rilke wrote or drafted a small number of poems on or shortly before 1 April.⁵¹ They are all in one way or another love poems, or poems about love and binding or separation, one inspired by Hofmannsthal's recently published romantic comedy *Christinas Heimreise*. The fact that another was included in a letter to Sidie Nádherný testifies to one likely source of the very turbulent emotions that Rilke was undoubtedly experiencing at that time. 'Ach zwischen mir und diesem Vogellaut' was written for her at the foot of the steps in the Villa Medici and is a melancholy reflection on whether there is a connection he has missed between the song of a bird and his inner life, an 'Übereinkunft' of some kind that is now too weak to stimulate a meaningful bond between himself and nature: 'Ach aus solchem / Vergessenhaben wird die Zeit . . .', he concludes (KA, I, p. 443). This theme is a version of what Anthony Stephens calls 'a limitation of the sensitivity, in particular of the capacity for emotional identification with objects in the external world',⁵² and other poems written at this time display more obvious signs of their Roman origins. Rilke uses a favourite image of the fountain at night, for example, to articulate the fundamental uncertainties of the nature of existence:

Dasein, Beschränkung, was sein und was nicht?

Was heute sein, was morgen und was nie?

Nacht ist, Brunnen bist du sie?

Sometimes the fountain offers a vicarious form of self-identification:

Ach so ungewiß und endlos ohne

Ausdruck ist was uns im Innern ausmacht,
daß uns die zerfallene Fontäne
in dem fast verschmähten Teil des Parkes
manchmal stärkt mit ihrem Dasein. Plötzlich
hülft uns dieser überspülte Steinrand
und der Schalen Haltung und Verhältnis
und der Strahl der immer eine Mitte
kühl und unwillkürlich und von oben
in die Stille stellt. (KA, I, p. 444)

The fountain in 'Die aus dem Hause Colonna' similarly incarnates an independent existence: 'der Gedanke, / daß die Fontäne allein / draußen im Garten im Mondenschein / ihre Wasser warf, / war wie eine Welt' (KA, I, p. 317). The details of the dynamics of water tumbling from one basin to another, the disruption of a still surface by dripping water, and the image of the jet rising and falling anticipate later more famous fountain poems and also perhaps echo Conrad Ferdinand Meyer's well-known 'Der römische Brunnen'.⁵³

One should also not underestimate the impact on Rilke at exactly this time of his having concluded (if that is the right word) *Die Aufzeichnungen des Malte Laurids Brigge*, whose beginnings lay in his first visit to Rome in early 1904. He had finished dictating his manuscript at the Insel Verlag in Leipzig on 27 January 1910; by 15 February he had galley proofs and by the second week of March he was in Berlin reading them. He sent the last section of the corrected first proofs back on 24 March, from Rome, acknowledged receipt of the first part of the page proofs and looked forward to the rest.⁵⁴ On 8 April he reported to Princess Marie von Thurn und Taxis that he had finished the second proofs the previous day.⁵⁵ This was a major watershed for him. To Anton Kippenberg on 25 March he had

described the *Aufzeichnungen* as ‘etwas wie eine Unterlage, alles reicht weiter hinauf, hat mehr Raum um sich [...]. Nun kann eigentlich alles erst recht beginnen. [...] nach [Malte] sind nun nahezu aller Lieder möglich’,⁵⁶ celebrating the creative and existential potential that their completion unleashed. This enthusiasm was quickly qualified, however. Rilke’s letter to Marietta Freiin von Nordeck of 14 April, for example, is similar but more ambivalent: ‘Die [Aufzeichnungen] sind schließlich zu einer Art Abschluß gekommen, man druckt sie nun, auch da geht das Leben weiter’.⁵⁷ He situates ‘life going on’ (a rather half-hearted way of looking at the future) specifically in Rome, adding, ‘Und hier, um mich, ist Rom [...], das seine Blütezeit hat, mit vollhängenden Glyzinen, mit täglich tausend neuen Rosen, mit allen seinen schönen Brunnen, die wie das ewige Leben sind, gleichmütig neu, ohne Alter, ohne Erschöpfung’ – as if Rome in spring is merely ‘around him’, not affecting him, which is not unrelated to the anxious questioning of ‘Ach zwischen mir und diesem Vogellaut’. This sense of bewilderment was echoed in another letter, to Mathilde Vollmoeller, at almost exactly the same time, in which Rilke described Rome as indescribably beautiful but mused, ‘ich begreife nur ab und zu etwas, ausnahmsweise’ (adding with characteristic bathetic grumpiness that ‘die Unterkünfte sind unmöglich’).⁵⁸ The ongoing controversies about the interpretation of *Malte* – some seeing a positive trajectory in the work, others more influenced by Rilke’s own hints at Malte’s ‘Untergang’ – find inconclusive support from the letters of this period.

3. ‘Römische Fontäne’ (1906) and ‘der Kreis der Einsamkeit’

The poems that Rome inspired (but which were not written there) often celebrate objects and are often associated with water. They include two sonnets from the *Neue Gedichte*, ‘Römische Sarkophage’ and ‘Römische Fontäne’.⁵⁹ Some thoughts about the first of these

follow shortly; the second is about one of the more than fifty fountains in the park of the Villa Borghese – ‘ein vertrauter Zufluchtsort’⁶⁰ – in which the Villa Strohl-Fern is also situated:

Zwei Becken, eins das andre übersteigend
aus einem alten runden Marmorrand,
und aus dem oberen Wasser leis sich neigend
zum Wasser, welches unten wartend stand,

5 dem leise redenden entgegenschweigend
und heimlich, gleichsam in der hohlen Hand,
ihm Himmel hinter Grün und Dunkel zeigend
wie einen unbekannten Gegenstand;

sich selber ruhig in der schönen Schale
10 verbreitend ohne Heimweh, Kreis aus Kreis,
nur manchmal träumerisch und tropfenweis

sich niederlassend an den Moosbehängen
zum letzten Spiegel, der sein Becken leis
von unten lächeln macht mit Übergängen.

The fountain in this poem is usually identified as the Fontana ovale (Figure 1⁶¹), known in the early twentieth century as Fontana oscura, although the reference in line two to ‘ein [...] *runder* Marmorrand’ would seem to preclude this identification.⁶² Martin Sutton also points out that because this fountain is more than four metres high no onlooker could possibly see

the surface of the central basin, whereas Rilke devotes much of the poem (lines 4-12) to observations of the movement of water there and reflections of the trees and the sky.⁶³ Sutton suggests that Rilke's Roman fountain is in fact one of the much smaller ones in the park; a photograph in his article is of the Fontana dei pupazzi (Figure 2), although he does not name it. Sutton's picture clearly shows a pool at ground-level, a large carved basin in the middle, and a smaller cup-like vessel above, supported by putti.

This suggestion is greeted sympathetically by Walter Simon in his 1991 study of the poem,⁶⁴ but there are some obstacles to accepting the identification as proven. It is perhaps odd that Rilke does not mention the 'pupazzi' (literally 'puppets') that used to rise from the 'Schale' and the dolphins at their feet until they were stolen in 1983 – these were, after all, the fountain's defining feature – and the rim of the bottom pool is granite rather than marble. Most importantly perhaps, the adjective in line 13, 'zum *letzten* Spiegel', in conjunction with the 'Marmorrand' of line 2, suggests to all commentators, including Sutton, a three-vessel form, whereas this fountain only had two when Rilke saw it. Sutton's picture shows three vessels, but the Fontana dei pupazzi, like many Roman fountains, underwent some significant changes over the years and when Rilke was in Rome it lacked the topmost, cup-like vessel shown in that photograph. An 1840 painting by Jørgen Roed and Paul Franz Flickel's oil of 1878 both show the 'pupazzi' holding a small, flat disc, rather than a bowl or basin, and Roed also shows a gentle jet of water rising from this disc (which Rilke does not mention either). John Singer Sargent's watercolour of 1906 or 1907 is almost exactly contemporaneous with Rilke's observation of the fountain and composition of the poem and shows the 'pupazzi' but not the top vessel, the disc or the jet. The fountain as Sargent and Rilke saw it only has the lower pool and the large 'Schale' rising from it.⁶⁵

The rightly rejected Fontana ovale is, however, one of a pair of early 17th-century Fontane oscure situated either side of the viale del Museo Borghese. They are so named

because of the shadows cast over them by the surrounding trees, an effect that Rilke foregrounds. The other ‘dark fountain’ – the Fontana dell’Abetina, also known as the Fontana rotonda (Figure 3) – is not nearly so high as its partner and the surface of its central basin reflecting the dark green of the foliage above can easily be observed by someone standing at a modest distance. This fountain presents a more plausible model for Rilke’s poem than either the Fontana ovale or Sutton’s Fontana dei pupazzi.⁶⁶

‘Römische Fontäne’ has often been compared with fountain poems by Meyer and others,⁶⁷ although there are arguably important echoes here of Mörike’s ‘Auf eine Lampe’, a ‘Dinggedicht’ with which it perhaps has more in common poetologically. Line 9, ‘sich selber ruhig in der schönen Schale’, is reminiscent of the lamp’s ‘Marmorschale’ and of the concluding lapidary statement on the nature of beauty, ‘Was aber schön ist, selig scheint es in ihm selbst’ (and Rilke’s use of ‘sich selber’ is almost as idiosyncratic as Mörike’s much-debated use of ‘ihm’ rather than ‘sich’ in that last line). There is a combination of cheerfulness and seriousness in Mörike’s poem that is analogous to Rilke’s subtle mixture of mysterious opacity and smiling welcome, and both poems explore how an apparently dumb object is nonetheless a vessel for communication, both innately, by virtue of its status as a work of art, and via the poet’s written reconstruction of it in a second work of art. Both poems reflect the beauty of the object’s form in their own formal elegance, but Rilke’s arguably displays a greater sense that the communicative power of his fountain is rooted in reciprocities and tensions (albeit gentle ones) than is the case for Mörike’s lamp, where the sense of quiet aesthetic self-sufficiency dominates.⁶⁸ Reciprocity in a strong vertical axis (where ‘übersteigend / aus’ is met by ‘leis sich neigend’, ‘entgegenschweigend’, and ‘sich niederlassend’, and ‘oberen’ by ‘unteren’ and ‘letzten’) spatially underpins the mutual linguistic processes of speaking and listening (‘dem leise redenden entgegenschweigend’). Similarly, on the horizontal plane, the expanding circles of ripples are anthropomorphised

(‘träumerisch’, ‘ohne Heimweh’) to suggest the drifting, floating thoughts and impressions of a putative observer who eventually sees her/his pleasure articulated in the water’s ‘smile’.

Rilke’s poem also lacks the finality of Mörike’s; there is no lapidary statement on the nature of art, but instead the grammatical incompleteness of the single sentence (there is no finite verb in a main clause) suggests the possibility of an infinite extension to this object’s capacity to communicate its formal power. The fountain speaks to the observer as the poem speaks to the reader.

Günther Holst has drawn attention to a passage from Rilke’s monograph on Rodin (written in November and December 1902) that is relevant to this poem. Writing of ‘flache Steinbänder’ that link individual figures in Rodin’s group sculptures, Rilke says,

Diese Füllungen verhüten das Entstehen wertloser Durchblicke, die aus dem Dinge hinausführen in leere Luft; sie bewirken, daß die Ränder der Formen, die vor solchen Lücken immer scharf und abgeschliffen scheinen, ihre Rundung behalten, sie sammeln das Licht wie Schalen und fließen fortwährend leise über.⁶⁹

In his explanation of how these ribands of stone soften the forms’ outlines Rilke’s comparison is ostensibly with light rather than water, but the imagery of the basin overflowing is multi-valent and anticipates the 1906 fountain sonnet. Earlier in the Rodin volume there is an extended reflection on Rodin’s mask of ‘L’homme au nez cassé’ that offers a fuller context – using similar imagery – for the poem’s emphasis on the calm of the object, a peace that he says is deceptive in modern art and alien to the art of antiquity:

Als Rodin diese Maske schuf, hatte er einen ruhig sitzenden Menschen vor sich und ein ruhiges Gesicht. Aber es war das Gesicht eines Lebendigen, und als er es

durchforschte, da zeigte sich, daß es voll von Bewegung war, voll von Unruhe und Wellenschlag. In dem Verlauf der Linien war Bewegung, Bewegung war in der Neigung der Flächen, die Schatten rührten sich wie im Schläfe, und leise schien das Licht an der Stirne vorbeizugehen. Es gab also keine Ruhe, nicht einmal im Tode [...]. Es gab nur Bewegung in der Natur; und eine Kunst, die eine gewissenhafte und gläubige Auslegung des Lebens geben wollte, durfte nicht jene Ruhe, die es nirgends gab, zu ihrem Ideale machen. In Wirklichkeit hat auch die Antike nichts von einem solchen Ideal gewußt. [. . .] In die hieratisch verhaltene Gebärde uralter Kulte war die Unruhe lebendiger Flächen eingeschlossen, wie Wasser in die Wände des Gefäßes. Es waren Strömungen in den verschlossenen Göttern, welche saßen, und in den stehenden war eine Gebärde, die wie eine Fontäne aus dem Steine stieg und wieder in denselben zurückfiel, ihn mit vielen Wellen erfüllend. (KA, IV, p. 417)

Rilke is careful to underline how the movement that is innate to the outside world ('Natur'), and which must also belong to the world of art, will only become antithetical to art if it is not contained by the sculpture and if it points in some way beyond it instead.

Nicht die Bewegung war es, die dem Sinne der Skulptur (und das heißt einfach dem Wesen des Dinges) widerstrebte; es war nur die Bewegung, die nicht zu Ende geht, die nicht von anderen im Gleichgewicht gehalten wird, die hinausweist über die Grenzen des Dinges. Das plastische Ding gleicht jenen Städten der alten Zeit, die ganz in ihren Mauern lebten: die Bewohner hielten deshalb nicht ihren Atem an, und die Gebärden ihres Lebens brachen nicht ab. Aber nichts drang über die Grenzen des Kreises, der sie umgab, nichts war jenseits davon, nichts zeigte aus den Toren hinaus, und keine Erwartung war offen nach außen. Wie groß auch die Bewegung eines

Bildwerkes sein mag, sie muß, und sei es aus unendlichen Weiten, sei es aus der Tiefe des Himmels, sie muß zu ihm zurückkehren, der große Kreis muß sich schließen, der Kreis der Einsamkeit, in der ein Kunst-Ding seine Tage verbringt. Da war das Gesetz, welches, ungeschrieben, lebte in den Skulpturen vergangener Zeiten. Rodin erkannte es. Was die Dinge auszeichnet, dieses Ganz-mit-sich-Beschäftigtsein, das war es, was einer Plastik ihre Ruhe gab; sie durfte nichts von außen verlangen oder erwarten, sich auf nichts beziehen, was draußen lag, nichts sehen, was nicht in ihr war. Ihre Umgebung mußte *in* ihr liegen. (KA, IV, pp. 417-8)

Thus he resolves the paradox of the peace that consists necessarily of disturbance by positing this as innate to art, which admits (indeed requires) movement, but encloses it and ensures that it occupies its own ‘solitary circle’. A sculpture that permits a ‘Durchblick in die leere Luft’ is quite different from a fountain the surface of whose waters reflects and contains the leaves and the sky above (‘ihre Umgebung’) as if in the hollow of a hand. For Rilke in the Rodin monograph ‘[Oberfläche] bestand aus unendlich vielen Begegnungen des Lichtes mit dem Dinge’ (KA, IV, p. 411); containing these and making them coherent whilst remaining varied was the artist’s task.

In this light, ‘Römische Fontäne’ now seems only partially about a fountain, whichever one of the many in the Villa Borghese gardens may have prompted it. Whether or not he consciously had Mörike in mind, Rilke’s sonnet reflects on the same kind of questions about the nature of art as his predecessor’s poem. This should not be mistaken as advocacy of ‘l’art pour l’art’, however, as a letter to Lisa Heise written in 1919 makes clear – using fountain imagery once more:

Das Kunst-Ding kann nichts ändern und nichts verbessern, sowie es einmal das ist,

steht es den Menschen nicht anders als die Natur gegenüber, *in sich erfüllt, mit sich beschäftigt (wie eine Fontäne), also, wenn man es so nennen will: teilnahmslos*. Aber schliesslich wissen wir ja, daß diese zweite, zurückhaltende und von dem sie bestimmenden Willen zurückgehaltene Natur gleichwohl aus Menschlichem gemacht ist, aus den Extremen des Erleidens und Freuens – , und hierin liegt der Schlüssel zu jener Schatzkammer unerschöpflicher Tröstung, die im künstlerischen Werk angesammelt erscheint.⁷⁰

The last phrases here are also reminiscent of Mörike's 'Auf eine Lampe'. A poem is like a fountain, circulating its own energies, reflective of the world and humanity, but – just like a mirror – 'gegenüber'.⁷¹

4. Reminiscences of Rome and the *Sonette an Orpheus* (1922)

Rilke's urge to revisit Rome poetically coincides very precisely with two points at which his creative inspiration surged most powerfully – January 1912, when the *Duineser Elegien* were begun, and February 1922, when these were completed and when all the *Sonette an Orpheus* were composed. Rilke himself highlighted the connection in a letter to Marie von Thurn und Taxis sent from Castle Duino on 19 February 1912: 'Mich hats beruhigt, was Sie von Italien schreiben [...]; es ist merkwürdig, wie ich mich hinuntersehne, nach Rom, wo ich um diese Zeit vor acht (acht!) Jahren, ohne es recht zu wissen, den *Malte Laurids* begann, *in Tagen, die mit diesen hier eine Art Beziehung haben müssen*'.⁷² Roman churches are mentioned in the first Elegy, completed in January 1912, as the locus of monuments to those who died young and thus achieve an intensity of being that is denied to others (KA, I, p. 202). The city is mentioned briefly in lines from the ninth Elegy written a decade later in February 1922 (KA,

II, p. 228) celebrating ‘die kleinen Dinge’. Princess Marie wrote to the poet shortly after that of her longing to return to Rome – she had plans to drive there for a fortnight in April and then go on to Florence and Venice before visiting Rilke in Switzerland⁷³ – and Rilke echoed her sentiments. His response on 16 March 1922 confirms, ‘Wenn ich mir selbst auf den Grund gehe, so ist in mir *diese* Sehnsucht, Rom wieder zu sehen, dieses Jahr *enorm*, schon seit Wochen’.⁷⁴

This nostalgia had been felt intermittently for at least two years, however, for in April 1920, when pondering his unfitness to travel except in the mind, he confessed to Elya Nevar his dissatisfaction with the borderlands near Ticino because everything experienced there is overwhelmed ‘von unendlich stärkeren Erinnerungen’, of Rome in particular.

Rom, ja, Liebe, die Treppe von Aracoeli konnt ich Dich wirklich hinunterführen, die kenn ich Stufe für Stufe, wie überhaupt den Aufgang zum Capitol, was hab ichs immer geliebt, dieses Nebeneinandergestelltsein der beiden Stiegen, der mühsamen zur Kirche hinauf und der breiten gelassenen zur Piazza del Campidoglio, auf der man sich mit jeder Stufe dem Marc Aurel so milde entgegenhebt. Einmal wohnte ich dort, Piazza del Campidoglio, im letzten steilen Haus über dem Forum.⁷⁵

Only four months later Rilke visited Schloß Berg am Irchl for the first time. He was to spend the winter of 1920-1921 there (at the invitation of Colonel Richard and Mrs Lily Ziegler,⁷⁶ who were not present), trying to find the right conditions for finishing the *Elegien*. Just as it had been in Rome in 1903, the need for quiet was paramount: ‘[es war] schon von Anfang an ganz auf Abschluß und Abgeschiedenheit gestellt’, he wrote, ‘donc retraite absolue’.⁷⁷ ‘Die Stille ist unbeschreiblich’, he wrote to Dory Von der Mühl, ‘in dem alten dichten Hause sowohl, als auch draußen im Garten, wo die Fontäne mit ihrem, im Druck der Luft sich leicht

abwandelnden Fall die Geräuschgrenze angiebt, über die nur selten etwas hinausreicht'.⁷⁸ He became enchanted by this fountain: 'die ungerahmte Pièce d'eau [...], in deren Mitte, Tag und Nacht, wie ein spielender Baum [...], schlank die Figur der Fontäne steht'.⁷⁹ The vocabulary of speech and silence recurs in his evocations of this fountain and indeed it above all the auditory impressions made by this fountain that most captivate Rilke. He wrote to Baladine Klossowska that the fountain 'chatted' to him: 'c'est elle qui me cause jour et nuit, même à travers les fenêtres fermées on devine son bruit vital qui limite le silence [...] son murmure entrera toujours dans mon oreille', and just over a week later he added 'c'était elle qui vivait de sa vie impalpable, se jetant dans l'espace et retombant dans son propre sein –, enrichie de quoi? : d'elle même'.⁸⁰ A long passage on the fountain in a letter to Lily Ziegler includes a lyrical appreciation of the subtleties of the sounds:

wie spannend jedesmal ist der Augenblick, wenn ein Eingriff der Luft den stürzenden Strahl von der einen Teichseite nach der anderen hinüberzieht, durch seinen eigenen Aufstieg durch, so daß er den Bruchteil einer zögernden Minute unhörbar in sich selber fällt; und wie dann, über jeder Veränderung, sein Niederfall anders aufklang, das war von so reicher Abwandlung, daß ich neidisch wurde auf mein Gehör und noch obendrein hinaussah.⁸¹

Literary forebears and contemporaries played a part in his continued interest. In 1912 there had been some stimulus from his (re-)reading of the whole of Goethe's *Italienische Reise* ('Wunderliches und theils Hülfreiches hab ich mir da herausgelesen').⁸² In 1922 Rilke reported how, on one particularly intense day, 'da [die Sehnsucht nach Rom] fast unerträglich drängend war', it impelled him to leaf through Gabriele D'Annunzio's Proustian novel-memoir *Notturmo* (published in its final version the previous year). He copied out for her a

verse passage that contains these lines, which yet again are of a piece with the dominant motifs of his Roman experiences:

Essere il più alto e il più fosco cipresso della villa d'Este,
dopo il crepuscolo,
quando la fontana
rimuove il velo del capelvenere
dalla sua orecchia stillante
per ispiare il romore remoto
della cascata tiburtina;
e palpare la grazia della sera
con il chiaro verde sensibile
che orla il fogliame funerario.⁸³

Rilke had read D'Annunzio during his first stay in Rome, associating the city's 'Ausstellungsstimmung' and 'das Scheinleben dieses vergangenen Volkes' with 'die Gartenblumenschönheit von D'Annunzio's Versen'.⁸⁴ His reading of D'Annunzio early in 1922 seems to have triggered a train of thought that contributed to a more considered poetic recall of Rome. Even in the midst of his irritation with Rome in 1903, he had written more positively to Kappus of the capacity of certain aesthetic experiences to generate a renewed focus on the self – 'Durch solche Eindrücke sammelt man sich, gewinnt sich zurück aus dem anspruchsvollen Vielen, das da spricht und schwätzt (und wie gesprächig ist es!), und lernt langsam die sehr wenigen Dinge erkennen, in denen Ewiges dauert, das man lieben, und Einsames, daran man leise teilnehmen kann'⁸⁵ – and chief amongst these had been the fountains and the cascading steps.

It is in this light that one must read the late poetry that consciously recalled the earlier period. The poem that reflects perhaps most collectedly the lasting presence of 'Ewiges' in some of the artefacts of Rilke's Roman experience is the fifteenth poem in the second part of the *Sonette an Orpheus*.

O Brunnen-Mund, du gebender, du Mund,
der unerschöpflich Eines, Reines, spricht, –
du, vor des Wassers fließendem Gesicht,
marmorne Maske. Und im Hintergrund

5 der Aquädukte Herkunft. Weither an
Gräbern vorbei, vom Hang des Apennins
tragen sie dir dein Sagen zu, das dann
am schwarzen Altern deines Kinns

vorüberfällt in das Gefäß davor.

10 Dies ist das schlafend hingelegte Ohr,
das Marmorohr, in das du immer sprichst.

Ein Ohr der Erde. Nur mit sich allein
redet sie also. Schiebt ein Krug sich ein,
so scheint es ihr, daß du sie unterbrichst. (KA, I, pp. 264-5)

The first quatrain evokes one element of the fountain's construction, a marble mask with an open mouth. Two levels of the image are tightly superimposed, the literal, that of the water

pouring through the hole in the face, and the metaphorical, the ‘speech’ of the fountain through that mouth – the rhyme of ‘spricht’ and ‘Gesicht’ reinforces the relationship between these two levels phonetically (it is noticeable that the rhymes in this poem are all masculine, something only found once more in the *Sonette an Orpheus*, in I, xx).⁸⁶ The mouth is referred to highly emphatically – urgently, even – in the opening line, with two apostrophes, ‘O Brunnen-Mund’, ‘du Mund’, with its vowel-sound echoed in ‘Brunnen’. The water is on one level the speech, language itself, inexhaustible, whole and at one with itself, pure. These words, ‘Eines, Reines’ are virtual synonyms for Rilke: he wrote to Franz Xaver Kappus with a definition, saying ‘rein sind alle Gefühle, die Sie zusammenfassen und aufheben; unrein ist das Gefühl, das nur *eine* Seite Ihres Wesens erfaßt und sie so verzerrt’.⁸⁷ And yet line three makes it clear that the water is also itself a face, the true face of language, and the marble merely a static mask hiding the essential fluidity and ‘un-fixed-ness’ of the water – of language – itself, formless before it is somehow channelled, via the mask or in the strict patterns of the sonnet. Ronald Gray suggests that the face intimates ‘a venerable figure’, ‘an image of some poet of antiquity and indeed of all poets’.⁸⁸

Dripping, as it were, over the end of the quatrain and into the next, line four mimics the transition of the element from out of the mouth into what we will soon learn is a basin (the same technique was used at the same point in ‘Römische Fontäne’). The second quatrain identifies the origins of the water flowing from the mouth of the marble mask, which is transported from the Apennine hills outside Rome via aqueducts whose course is lined by ancient tombs. There are suggestions here that both water and language are associated with death, and if we read the fountain’s channelling as standing on one level for the forming of language into poetry, these associations are appropriate in the context of a cycle dedicated to Orpheus, who descended into Hades to rescue his muse. The aqueducts in Rilke’s poem run *past* the monuments to death, however, acknowledging its presence in life but not diverted by

it. '[Sie] tragen dir [the mouth] dein Sagen zu', they carry the 'saying' that emerges from the mouth as water and language and which 'vorüberfällt' – in a radical enjambement across the interface of the octave and the sestet – into a vessel placed in front of it, dripping over the chin of the mask, a chin blackened with age.

The first tercet maintains the dual valency of the image, with the ear (in an echo, perhaps, of the 'orecchia stillante' of D'Annunzio's fountain) representing both the physical basin underneath the marble mask and the metaphorical receptacle of speech and language. The 'ear' is on its side, asleep; the communicative cycle of which it is a part is not reliant on conscious listening (and the receiving basin in 'Römische Fontäne' was also 'schweigend'). The inexhaustible nature of the cycle referred to in line two with 'unerschöpflich' is echoed here in the phrase 'in das du immer sprichst' – an idea prefigured in the first of the *Duineser Elegien*: 'Aber das Wehende höre, / die ununterbrochene Nachricht, die aus Stille sich bildet' (KA, II, p. 202).

The pronouns at the end of the poem have generated some discussion. So far, 'du' has referred to the 'Brunnen-Mund', the marble mask (line 1) endlessly spouting words and water into the basin (line 11). Line 13 introduces a 'sie', different from the 'sie' of line 7 (the aqueducts), and clearly referring to 'Erde'. The speech act that is the flow of water is a conversation between the earth and itself, the rising of the waters in the hills leads to their reception in the fountain's drain and ultimately to the recycling of the element as part of the familiar water cycle. A natural product is channelled through other natural products, albeit products shaped by human agency (the mask, the basin, the poem). Metaphorically this 'closes a circuit', as Black notes, and the conversation becomes a 'self-communing'.⁸⁹ Gray takes the same view: 'The converse of the earth is incommunicable to others, it remains mystery, and although the outline of the mystery can be drawn, it can never be entered into'.⁹⁰ Many of Rilke's poems, especially the late ones, allude to the cycles of nature, evaporation

and precipitation, the production of fruit on trees via the absorption of nutrients from the earth, the simultaneous actions of rising and falling that the last lines of the *Duineser Elegien* celebrate: ‘Und wir, die an *steigendes* Glück / denken, empfänden die Rührung, / die uns beinahe bestürzt, wenn ein Glückliches *fällt*’ (KA, II, p. 234). The essentially gratuitous nature of these bountiful processes was anticipated in the powerful adjective in line one, ‘du gebender’: Rilke was always hostile to teleological action, action conceived in search of a specific goal, and loved unselfish, pure gesture such as this.

The significance of the jug pushed under the cascade in line 13 is not entirely unproblematic. No external agent is identified (the jug inserts *itself* under the flow of water), and while the action suggests (to the earth) that her conversation is being interrupted it is not immediately clear by whom. ‘Du’ has so far been used consistently of the ‘Brunnen-Mund’ itself,⁹¹ and the rhyme of ‘du sprichst’ with ‘du [...] unterbrichst’ at the end of each tercet might initially suggest that each instance of the pronoun has the same reference. However, because the mask is so central a *component* of the cyclical conversation it is hard to see how it can be thought to be interrupting the earth’s discourse with herself. The interposition of the jug may be anonymous, but the object itself implies human activity or need, so ‘du’ here may point to a reader, to humanity itself (and ‘man’ might have made the same point with less confusion). The verb in the phrase ‘so *scheint* es ihr’ has also been thought to be ‘puzzling’: ‘To say that it merely “seems” to the earth that her discourse is interrupted looks a little disingenuous, as though Rilke intended to suggest that a possibility of deception remains’.⁹² But if the emphasis is on ‘ihr’ (it seems to the *earth*, not to ‘you’), ‘scheint’ can be read simply as drawing attention to the metaphorical status of the linguistic dimension – reminding us that an act in the material world is not felt in the same way within the metaphor. Gray’s translation of these lines in fact captures this sense very nicely: ‘Let a jug intrude, / she’ll only think you’ve interrupted her’.

The symbolic association of the water in the fountain with language, speech and song is, as Engel suggests, not especially complex and has its roots in the classical tradition.⁹³ Both the classical and the Christian traditions are rich repositories of the use of the fountain to suggest the source of wisdom, authority, truth, or prophecy. The Bible in particular sees ‘der Brunnen’ (usually in the sense of ‘well’) as a source of physical and spiritual sustenance, frequently in conjunction with the image of the jug drawing water. Greek and Roman traditions link fountains and springs with and artistic creation: Hesiod has the Muses dancing on Mount Helicon around the Hippocrene or Horse’s Spring; Lucretius recalls their original home, on Mount Olympus near the spring in Pieria, which they shared with Orpheus, the dedicatee of Rilke’s collection; the Castalian Spring at Delphi was associated with the god of poetry, Apollo, and poetic inspiration. All of this hovers in the background of Rilke’s poem, and in this light Jean Bollack may be right to suggest more concretely that the allusions here to the source of the water – seen as language, song and poetry – represent the weight of poetic tradition itself: ‘Mit den Namen der nahen Gebirge und der archäologischen Überreste wird die kulturelle und auch rituelle Vergangenheit einbezogen, zu der wohl auch die Totenwelt der etruskischen Fundstellen gehören. [...] All dies Hinzufließende gehört der poetischen Tradition an. Es ist ein Hintergrund’.⁹⁴

It may even be the case that Rilke’s opening apostrophe ‘O Brunnen-Mund’ is a conscious or unconscious echo of Horace’s famous hymnic vocative ‘O fons Bandusiae’ (*Odes*, 3.13), although I believe this has not so far been suggested. The echo is plausible not least if one recollects Horace’s repeated reference or appeal to a ‘tu / te’ (like Rilke’s repeated ‘du’) and the final image of the hollow rocks ‘unde loquaces / lymphae desiliunt tuae’ (‘whence your *talkative* waters leap down’), which ‘confirm[s] the metamorphic capacity of the poet’s art; the waters are now audible to the reader’.⁹⁵ Unsurprisingly, given Horace’s views on the function of art, the final stanza identifies his own poem as the agent of the

fountain's immortality: 'fies nobilium tu quoque fontium / me dicente cavis impositam ilicem saxis' ('you too will become one of the famous springs / fountains when I speak of the oak tree that stands above your hollow rocks'). Be this as it may: to see Rilke's sonnet as just another example of a familiar topos is to ignore the specificity of his insistence – here and elsewhere – on the self-contained cyclicity of the fountain's flow, which is not part of the classical or biblical traditions, but which is consistently important to Rilke.

Rilke's poems are never simple *transpositions d'art*. However, since they are often inspired by real objects it is as well to be precise about these stimuli; the details are sometimes important. In 1958 Hermann Mörchen speculated that the fountain in Rilke's sonnet was 'ein schlichter [...], ländlicher Brunnen, vermutlich in der Campagna',⁹⁶ but a suggestion made in 1987 by Ernst Leisi that Rilke's inspiration might have been the one outside the Basilica of Santa Sabina in Rome (Figure 4) has been more generally accepted, and it has the support of KA.⁹⁷ Rilke knew Santa Sabina; the church features in one of the trips he recommended to his mother when she visited him in Rome in 1904.⁹⁸ Situated on the Piazza Pietro D'Illiria near one of the entrances to the Giardino degli Aranci, its fountain, like many others in Rome, is in two parts: a large grotesque marble face spouts water into a huge granite trough below. In this respect the structure of the fountain does match the poem's description of water dripping over its stained marble chin into 'das Gefäß davor', but the basin with its two large carved handles cannot plausibly be described as 'ohrenförmig'. In fact, Rilke cannot even have seen the Santa Sabina fountain in its current form because it was not assembled and placed there until 1936, a decade after his death.⁹⁹

Rilke's fountain is instead the Fontana del Mascherone (Figure 5), attributed to Girolamo Rainaldi and located to this day behind the Palazzo Farnese on the Via Giulia.¹⁰⁰ It was originally constructed in 1626 from two separate components, both of them ancient in origin. Below is a granite trough on two pedestals (not mentioned in Rilke's sonnet); above is

a marble face set into a vertical marble tablet with a flourish on both sides, topped with a bronze fleur-de-lys, the emblem of the Farnese family. Out of the mouth of the face – Rilke calls it a ‘Maske’, which may suggest he knew this fountain’s nickname – a stream of water gushes into a smaller basin, fluted like a shell, which corresponds much more exactly to ‘das schlafend hingelegte Ohr, / das Marmorohr’ in Rilke’s sonnet than does the basin in the Santa Sabina fountain.

As the sonnet suggests, the 1626 Fontana del Mascherone draws water from one of the Roman aqueducts, and indeed owes its very existence to the restoration between 1605 and 1612 of the Acqua Paola or Pauline Aqueduct, which – as explained in the 1903 Baedeker for *Mittel-Italien und Rom*,¹⁰¹ of which Rilke possessed a copy – was rebuilt over the remains of the obsolete Acqua Traiana and provided the whole district of Regola with running water.¹⁰² The aqueduct took water from a variety of sources around the volcanic basin of Lake Bracciano and its main course ended on top of the Janiculum Hill in the Fontana dell’Acqua Paola. Branches carried water to the Trastevere and Borgo districts along the western side of the Tiber, to the Vatican, and to Regola along the eastern side, via pipes that crossed the river running along the Ponte Sisto. The waters from the aqueduct reached the left bank of the Tiber at the terminal point of the Via Giulia, the Fontana di Ponte Sisto, which was completed in 1613 but destroyed at the end of the nineteenth century. Soon after running water became available, however, the Farnese family had the Fontana del Mascherone built as a semi-public fountain some 150 metres further along the Via Giulia, behind their family palace. It was intended to be functional as well as ornamental,¹⁰³ but famously, when Marc’Antonio Zondadari was elected 65th Grand Master of the Sovereign Military and Hospitaller Order of St John of Jerusalem of Rhodes and of Malta in 1720, the Via Giulia was the location for sumptuous celebrations attended by much of the nobility of Rome and the Fontana del Mascherone was made to run with wine for hours on end.¹⁰⁴

There are several features of the Via Giulia fountain, therefore, that make it a much more likely model for Rilke's sonnet than the one outside Santa Sabina on the Aventine Hill. The reference to the aqueduct echoes poems from the *Neue Gedichte* that were written between Rilke's two longer sojourns in Rome. 'Römische Campagna' describes the Appian Way, 'der grade Gräberweg' lined with memorials and tombs leading out of the city and escaping the scrutiny of 'die Fenster' and thus human observation: 'Während er den weiten / Aquädukten zuwinkt herzuschreiten, / geben ihm die Himmel für die seine / ihre Leere, die ihn überlebt'.¹⁰⁵ The aqueducts that bring Rome its water are here the final conduits for what the graves promise, not oblivion but an absorption into a greater totality, a 'Leere' seen positively and eternally. In 'Römische Sarkophage' the sarcophagi undergo a transformation. Originally a person's mortal remains would slowly decompose in these 'flesh-devouring' coffins, 'bis es die unbekannten Munde schluckten, / die niemals reden' (KA, I, p. 473) – into oblivion. But when they are transformed into fountains ('Da wurde von den alten Aquädukten / ewiges Wasser in sie eingelenkt'), the sarcophagi become the vehicles for bright communication: 'das spiegelt jetzt und geht und glänzt in ihnen'.¹⁰⁶ Not only does the reference to the aqueducts guiding the water to the fountains anticipate 'O Brunnen-Mund', the imagery of the mouth and face and the topos of (poetic) speech and silence do, too. As a coffin, the sarcophagus suppressed communication and promoted eternal silence; as a fountain basin it partakes of the endless conversation with the earth that the sonnet evokes. In the tenth sonnet of Part I of the *Sonette an Orpheus* Rilke seems almost to explicate this transformation. He greets the 'antikische Sarkophage, / die das fröhliche Wasser römischer Tage / als ein wandelndes Lied durchfließt', but also others:

alle, die man dem Zweifel entreißt,
grüß ich, die wiedergeöffneten Munde,

die schon wußten, was schweigen heißt. (KA, II, p. 245)

In the form of a fountain, the ‘mouths that never speak’ are ‘newly opened’, although in their speech they are perpetually conscious of its opposite, silence. It is to eternity (‘ewiges Wasser’, KA, I, p. 475) rather than oblivion that the fountains lead. In the context of the original function of the sarcophagi, Rilke asked parenthetically in ‘Römische Sarkophage’, ‘Wo besteht und denkt / ein Hirn, um ihrer einst sich zu bedienen?’, a question that is implicitly answered when the object becomes less functional and more decorative, a work of art: the fountain, but also both poems, as the reference in Sonnet I.X to ‘ein wandelndes Lied’ implies. In the fluidity that replaces stasis the object becomes communicatively fluent.¹⁰⁷

5. Last years: ‘ce jeu, auquel on ne peut nullement se mêler’

Italy, and Rome in particular, had been ‘ein Ruf für mich [...] und eine unabgeschlossene Episode’ – as Rilke wrote to Lou Andreas-Salomé in 1904, just before packing up to go on to Naples, and then heading north to Denmark and Sweden.¹⁰⁸ ‘Nun aber kann ich es getrost verlassen, denn der Abschluß ist da’. This proved not to be true, creatively at least, despite the widespread perception that Rome did not give rise to many works of significance. But that a recollection of a city Rilke initially found extremely irksome and disappointing should be so powerful and important in the middle of February 1922 when he wrote ‘O Brunnen-Mund’ is still on the face of it something of a surprise, even when taking into account the resurgent memories of Rome documented in his letters of the period. But why was Rilke’s need for reconnection with antiquity in the early 1920s as he was completing the *Elegien* and the *Sonette* so urgent? And why did so many of the poems in which it was manifested return to Rome and the imagery of fountains and water? Uncollected poems from the precise period in

which the *Sonette* were written return almost often to this field of imagery, and both explicitly and implicitly to Rome. The draft of one of these contrasts mankind's bustling contemporary distraction with the strength of the (poetic) tradition of celebration, beginning thus:

Aber, ihr Freunde, zum Fest, laßt uns gedenken der Feste,
wenn uns ein eigenes nicht, mitten im Umzug, gelingt.
Seht, sie meinen auch uns, alle der Villa d'Este
spielende Brunnen, wenn auch nicht mehr ein jeglicher springt.

(KA, II, p. 280)

The fountains of the Villa d'Este may not all still flow with water, but their incompleteness (like that of the torso of Apollo) does not prevent them, as works of art, from targeting humanity, even if they do not quite demand 'Du mußt dein Leben ändern' (KA, I, p. 513). The poem closes with an echo of the same thoughts, contrasting the fashioning of imagery into stable and lasting art with the disjunctive effects of modern chattering life to suggest – again using the images of the fountain jet and the aqueduct – that art roots us still in a powerful tradition:

Laßt euch, was ruhig geruht, nicht in den Herzen zerreden.

Sind wir auch anders, als die, denen noch Feste gelangen,
dieser leistende Strahl, der uns als Stärke entquillt,
ist über große, zu uns, Aquädukte gegangen. (KA, II, pp. 280-1)

The capacity of the fountain to convey art's paradoxical combination of immediate presence

and intimations of eternal life that Rilke explored in the Rodin monograph resurface at this period, too:

Wir hören seit lange die Brunnen mit.

Sie klingen uns beinah wie Zeit.

Aber sie halten viel eher Schritt

mit der wandelnden Ewigkeit.

Das Wasser ist fremd und das Wasser ist dein,

von hier und *doch* nicht von hier.

Eine Weile bist du der Brunnenstein,

und es spiegelt die Dinge in dir. (KA, II, p. 282)

Another of the sonnets written in February 1922 but not taken into the Orpheus collection does perhaps evoke the Fontana ovale in the Borghese park (Figure 1), since its opening paradoxically suggests how the splash of a fountain jet onto the surface of the water in the basin generates the silent homage to Orpheus that is the poem about the object:

Welche Stille um einen Gott! Wie hörst du in ihr

jeden Wechsel im Auffall des Brunnenstrahls

am weilenden Wasser des Marmorovals.¹⁰⁹

This fountain is clearly not the one in Schloß Berg as is usually assumed, since Rilke notes more than once in his correspondence that the Swiss fountain is '[un] étang sans bordure' (Figure 6).¹¹⁰ That does not mean, however, that the auditory emphasis in Rilke's evocations

of that fountain has not found expression here, too. Schloß Berg is most probably, however, the subject of a French poem written in February 1924, ‘La Fontaine’ from *Vergers* (KA, V, p. 34), in which the ‘seule leçon’ of the fountain, ‘qui en toi-même retombes’, is its self-contained cyclicity.¹¹¹

What these poems have in common is the particular quality of dynamic ‘Stille’ or energetic ‘Ruhe’ that Rilke had some two decades earlier associated with a particular kind of self-sufficiency in Rodin’s statues and which constituted their ability to mediate between humankind and the world, time and eternity – as the jug interposed in Sonnet II, xv apparently interrupts but does not *disrupt* the eternal conversation that the earth in ‘Brunnen-Mund’ has with itself. Rilke’s fountains thus articulate aspects of his defence strategy against ‘das immer raschere Hinschwinden von so vielem Sichtbaren, das nicht mehr ersetzt werden wird’ and its replacement by transient technological novelties.¹¹² In that respect they continue the tasks of the *Neue Gedichte*, although in a different tone. Wolfgang Janke writes of the sonnet on the Villa d’Este fountains quoted above,

was bei uns vorherrscht, sind Zerstretheit (die sich nicht auf die Stimmen göttlichen Zuspruchs konzentriert) und Verzicht (der vom Göttertag und Götterfest Abschied nimmt). Wir sind im Zugriff der Maschine und der Kriegsmaschinerie anders geworden. Aber da ist auch eine stärkende Überlieferung wie ein Aquädukt, das belebenden Geist zu uns, den Letzten vielleicht, hinüberleitet.¹¹³

The fountain in the Via Giulia is an affirmation of the value of the world of meaningful things as they interact with the cycles of nature.

In an article exploring the reasons why the *Duineser Elegien* differ so radically from the *Neue Gedichte*, Richard Sheppard focuses on the strong presence in the earlier collection

of a stillness that is entirely absent from the *Elegien*: ‘the most characteristic of the *Neue Gedichte* form a unity which is like the unity of a multi-faceted glass globe and involve fluid circular motion around a delicately-poised still point’, he suggests, and ‘the motion of the characteristic New Poem is [...] an ordered dance in which movement succeeds movement continuously’.¹¹⁴ He makes a specific point about the differentiated use of the word ‘plötzlich’ in line 15 of the second of the *Duineser Elegien* (KA, II, p. 205) and in ‘Die Fensterrose’ and ‘Das Kapital’ (KA, I, pp. 465-6) that has a direct bearing on the jug-image in ‘O Brunnen-Mund’: ‘in the first case [DE], the word indicates that a completely discontinuous change of image and direction is about to take place, whereas in the second case [NG], the same word simply indicates that an on-going and continuous pattern of motion has been interrupted for an instant only’. Rilke’s continued use of the motif of the fountain after the conclusion of the *Elegies* – and its very close associations with earlier poetry and often with specific objects seen decades before – marks a clear tendency within the *Sonnets* and later poetry that feeds on an aesthetic developed in the first decade of the twentieth century and, despite the radical shift that the *Elegies* represent, has not been abandoned. The caesura that Engel, Fülleborn and others posit (note 3) exists between the *Elegien* and all that follows, but not between the *Sonette* and pre-Duino ‘Dinggedichte’, for all the differences of style and tone that usually distinguish the later works from the earlier ones.

Rilke returned yet again to thoughts of the fountains of Rome only a few months before his death in a letter to Princess Marie von Thurn und Taxis of 31 July 1926. He justified his admiration of Jean Giraudoux after the Princess had described the French author’s recently published novel *Bella* as ‘gräßlich – langweilig à mourir und falsch wie es nicht fälscher sein könnte – un faux Proust’:

Giraudoux n’est pas comparable à Proust [...] [il] marche, par miracle, sur des eaux

mouvantes; le lecteur imprudent qui essaie de marcher à côté de lui, perd pied et s'enfonce ...; [...] car tout est là pour créer un mouvant équilibre gratuit, pas plus réel que ces reflets de certaines fontaines à Rome qui se jouent sur la coupe supérieure d'un bassin. Il faut accepter de loin ce jeu, auquel on ne peut nullement se mêler. *Le liseur de Giraudoux se trouve invité d'assister à une sorte de 'Patience' spirituelle constituée par un jeu de cartes d'une beauté incomparable: Karte für Karte wird aufgelegt, rasch, wie es kommt, rasch und über-rasch-end, manchmal geht es auf, manchmal nicht . . . , das Spiel wird zusammengeschoben, gemischt, und schon beginnt eine neue Patience.*¹¹⁵

New is the image of the card-game, although this is only a rephrasing of familiar ideas of cyclicity and balance. Consistently, therefore, from his first visit to Rome to his last months of life, Rilke champions the self-sufficiency of the fountain, its imperviousness to outside interference, and its indifference to judgement – and keeps the image and its qualities at the heart of his thinking about poetry. Whilst not connected exclusively to Rome, Rilke's 'fountain poetics' are overwhelmingly determined by his experiences of that city, including his miserable first visit. The subjective and the poetical responses to Rome are interdependent rather than alternatives. The public Rome that (as Rilke saw it) pandered ruinously to hordes of aesthetically indifferent and incompetent tourists was what generated the imaginative space in which 'Kunst-Dinge' could take refuge and grow in intimate self-sufficiency. But the hostile bustle of the 'große Ausstellung' was a necessary precondition for identifying the beauty and structure of Roman fountains and steps and seeing in them a capacity to articulate significant artistic truths.

¹ For many years the standard study has been Helmut Wocke, *Rilke und Italien. Mit Benutzung ungedruckter Quellen dargestellt*, Gießener Beiträge zur deutschen Philologie, 73, Gießen 1940 (and only pp. 35-45 focus on Rome). More recently a richly documented exhibition catalogue has provided valuable resources on Rilke and Italy, and although there is no chapter on Rilke and Rome, there is a short section in Curdin Ebner's introduction entitled 'Das große, rufende Rom', pp. 30-41: *Rilke. Les Jours d'Italie – die italienischen Tage. Ausstellung aus Anlass des vierten Rilke-Festivals 2009, Fondation Rainer Maria Rilke, Sierre / Siders 19. Juni – 25. Oktober 2009*, ed. Curdin Ebner, Sierre 2009. Ralph Freedman, *Life of a Poet. Rainer Maria Rilke*, Evanston, IL 1998, has a chapter on the first visit (pp. 203-14) and useful pages on the last (pp. 303-6). Donald Prater, *A Ringing Glass. The Life of Rainer Maria Rilke*, Oxford 1986, is sparing in his comments (cf. esp. pp. 100-3, 174-5), although stresses the periods of quiet that Rilke found to work (pp. 130-1 and 137) and the importance of Rome to the genesis of *Malte* (pp. 159-61). John Sandford, *Landscape and Landscape Imagery in R. M. Rilke*, London 1980, has some most illuminating thoughts on Rome and fountains, pp. 25-7 and 103-7.

² Ebner, 'Das große, rufende Rom' (note 1), p. 39.

³ The editors of the *Kommentierte Ausgabe* of his works, Manfred Engel and Ulrich Fülleborn, identify '[die] in der Rilke-Forschung überlicherweise unterschiedenen vier Werkphasen', namely 'early work', 'middle period', 'late work', 'Sonette an Orpheus and last poems'. They emphasise in particular 'eine Zäsur zwischen den *Duineser Elegien* und den *Sonetten*'. See *Werke. Kommentierte Ausgabe in vier Bänden*, ed. Manfred Engel, Ulrich Fülleborn, Horst Nalewski and August Stahl, Frankfurt a. M. 1996 (henceforth *KA*), here I, p. 607 and II, p. 703.

⁴ Manfred Engel, 'Die "Sonette an Orpheus" als Beginn des spätesten Werkes', in *Nach*

Duino. Studien zu Rainer Maria Rilkes späten Gedichten, ed. Karen Leeder and Robert Vilain, Göttingen 2010, pp. 20-4 (p. 24), comparing ‘Spanische Tänzerin’ and ‘Tänzerin: o du Verlegung’ (KA, I, p. 491 and II, p. 266).

⁵ I have made a similar argument elsewhere, identifying connections between one of the *Neue Gedichte* and Rilke’s latest works: ‘A Poem, a Dancer and a Painting: Rainer Maria Rilke’s “Spanische Tänzerin”’, *GLL*, 70.3 (2017), 300-13. It is entirely coincidental that the poems I use to make this argument here and in 2017 are two of those cited by Engel (note 4), but this coincidence may nonetheless be significant.

⁶ Rainer Maria Rilke, Lou Andreas-Salomé, *Briefwechsel*, ed. Ernst Pfeiffer, Zurich & Wiesbaden 1952, pp. 74-5 (henceforth *BwLAS*).

⁷ See, for example, Gretchen L. Hachmeister, *Italy in the German Literary Imagination: Goethe’s ‘Italian Journey’ and its Reception by Eichendorff, Platen and Heine*, New York 2002, and Lukas Bauer, 2012, “‘Auch ich in Arkadien’”? The Allure of Italy for the German traveller in Goethe’s *Italienische Reise*, Eichendorff’s *Aus dem Leben eines Taugenichts* and Heine’s *Reise von München nach Genua*’, *Publications of the English Goethe Society*, 81.3 (2012), 178-94.

⁸ See his letter to Mathilde Goudstikker of 25 March 1897 published in Joachim Storck, ‘Rilkes frühestes Venedig-Erlebnis’, *Blätter der Rilke-Gesellschaft*, 16/17 (1989/1990), 19-32 (p. 22).

⁹ *BwLAS*, p. 74.

¹⁰ See for example Ebner, ‘Das große, rufende Rom’ (note 1), pp. 30-1.

¹¹ Sandford, *Landscape and Landscape Imagery* (note 1), p. 25.

¹² Rilke, *Briefe an einen jungen Dichter*, in KA, IV, pp. 514-48 (p. 528).

¹³ Rilke, *Briefe an Axel Juncker*, ed. Renate Scharffenberg, Frankfurt a. M. 1979, p. 105.

¹⁴ Rilke, *Briefwechsel mit Ellen Key*, ed. Theodore Fiedler, Frankfurt a. M. and Leipzig 1993, pp. 38-9 (henceforth *BwEK*).

¹⁵ *BwLAS*, p. 115 (3 November 1903).

¹⁶ Rilke, *Briefe an die Mutter*, ed. Ruth Sieber-Rilke, 2 vols, Frankfurt a. M and Leipzig 2009, I, pp. 426-7 (henceforth *BadM*). He repeats the claim on 2 and 12 May 1904 (pp. 438-9). A letter to Ellen Key of 6 February suggests a brief respite (*BwEK*, p. 45).

¹⁷ *BadM*, I, pp. 392-3.

¹⁸ Rilke, *Briefe aus den Jahren 1902 bis 1906*, ed. Ruth Sieber-Rilke and Carl Sieber, Leipzig 1930, p. 130 (henceforth *B02-06*).

¹⁹ *Ibid.*.

²⁰ *BwLAS*, p. 140 ([31] March 1904).

²¹ *Ibid.* and *BadM*, I, p. 397.

²² *BadM*, I, p. 393.

²³ *BwLAS*, p. 114 (3 November 1903).

²⁴ This is one of the ‘small things’, ‘ein schönes Marmording’ alongside ‘eine Säule in irgendeiner kleinen, vergessenen Kirche, irgendwelche ganz unbekannte Sachen, ein Blick über die arme Campagna hin’ (*BwLAS*, p. 114).

²⁵ *B02-06*, p. 130 (5 November 1903, to Holitscher).

²⁶ *BwLAS*, p. 114 (3 November 1903).

²⁷ *KA*, IV, p. 528 (29 October 1903).

²⁸ *BadM*, I, p. 394 (30 September 1903).

²⁹ *BwLAS*, p. 73 (1 August 1903).

³⁰ *BwLAS*, p. 115 (3 November 1903).

³¹ *BwLAS*, p. 118 (13 November 1903).

³² B02-06, pp. 136-7.

³³ Rilke, *Briefe*, ed. Karl Altheim with Ruth Sieber-Rilke, Wiesbaden 1950, 2 vols (henceforth *B*), I, p. 125 (18 April 1906).

³⁴ *Deutsche Arbeit. Monatsschrift für das geistige Leben der Deutschen in Böhmen*, 3.9 (June 1904), p. 760. It was taken into *Die frühen Gedichte*, Leipzig 1920, p. 33, and then into *Sämtliche Werke*, ed. Ernst Zinn et al., 7 vols, Frankfurt a. M. 1955-97, III, p. 468 (henceforth *SW*). Felix Ming set it to music in 1946. The two poems that appeared alongside it, 'Das Abendmahl' and 'Die Konfirmanden' (written in Paris the previous May) were later taken into *Das Buch der Bilder*, but 'Einladung' has hardly ever been reprinted.

³⁵ The topography in the penultimate stanza tends to confirm that this is the location: 'Das Fenster ging bis zu den Füßen auf wie eine Tür; / und es war Park mit Wiesen und Wegen: / seltsam nah und doch so entlegen, / seltsam hell und doch wie verborgen'. Just such a window opens from the first-floor Sala Ovale towards the Giardini di Montecavallo, and the paradox of nearness and distance expresses how the path to the gardens begins as a small bridge across the street below.

³⁶ David Quint, 'Uneasy Riders: Some Literary Modernists and the Aristocracy', *Neohelicon*, 42 (2015), pp. 17-42 (p. 36).

³⁷ Peter Por, *Die orphische Figur. Zur Poetik von Rilkes 'Neuen Gedichten'*, Heidelberg 1997, p. 75 (cf. also p. 235).

³⁸ Quint, 'Uneasy Riders' (note 36), p. 36.

³⁹ Joseph Metz, 'Exhuming Rilke's Orphic Body. Gender and Poetic Voice in "Orpheus. Eurydike. Hermes" and "Hetären-Gräber"', *Germanic Review*, 79.4 (2004), 247-72 (p. 257).

⁴⁰ See *KA*, IV, p. 588-9 ('Aufzeichnungen aus Neapel und Capri, II' [1907]). Rilke's first visit to Naples was in June 1904, probably after the first version of the poem was written, although

he could have seen other Roman copies of Phidias's work in the Louvre or the Villa Albani in Rome itself (Ebnetter, 'Das große, rufende Rom' [note 1], p. 37).

⁴¹ *BwLAS*, p. 142 (15 April 1904).

⁴² *BwLAS*, p. 153 (12 May 1904).

⁴³ Rilke and Marie von Thurn und Taxis, *Briefwechsel*, 2 vols, Zurich and Frankfurt a. M. 1951, I, p. 13 (henceforth *BwTT*).

⁴⁴ *BwTT*, I, p. 12; Rilke and Sidonie Nádherný von Borutin, *Briefwechsel 1906-1926*, ed. Joachim W. Storck et al., Göttingen 2007, p. 94 (henceforth *BwSNvB*).

⁴⁵ Rilke and Mathilde Vollmoeller, *Paris tut not. Briefwechsel*, ed. Barbara Glauert-Hesse, Göttingen 2001, p. 72 (henceforth *BwMV*). See also his letter to Anton Kippenberg of 25 March: 'das schöne Hôtel de Russie [...] ist jetzt nur ein lauter Haufen von Unterkünften, mit Musik und anderem Lärm [...]: sogar in den Badezimmern stehen Notbetten' – his underlying point being that it is all wasted on the visitors, 'denn niemand [...] sieht etwas, glaubt an das, was er sieht, oder hat es irgendwie nöthig': Rilke, *Briefwechsel mit Anton Kippenberg, 1906-1926*, ed. Ingeborg Schnack and Renate Schaffenberg, 2 vols, Frankfurt a. M. and Leipzig 1995, I, 200 (henceforth *BwAK*).

⁴⁶ *BwTT*, I, p. 13.

⁴⁷ Quoted from Ingeborg Schnack, *Rilke-Chronik*, extended edn by Renate Scharffenberg, Frankfurt a. M. and Leipzig 2009, p. 343.

⁴⁸ *Freundschaft mit Rainer Maria Rilke: Begegnungen, Gespräche, Briefe und Aufzeichnungen mitgeteilt durch Elya Maria Nevar*, Bern-Bümpliz 1946, pp. 148-9 (1 April 1920).

⁴⁹ See Schnack, *Chronik* (note 47), p. 345.

⁵⁰ *BwSNvB*, pp. 96-7.

⁵¹ There are six in German and one in French: ‘Sieh, Liebende: sie kommen einzeln fast’, ‘Ach zwischen mir und diesem Vogellaut’, ‘Dasein, Beschränkung, was sein und was nicht?’, ‘Ach so ungewiß und endlos ohne’, ‘Und seine Lider trugen wie ein Mund’ (fragment), ‘Florindo: Richter derer, die sich nicht’ (SW, II, pp. 374-6, and KA, I, 442-4, which omits the fragment); ‘Oh vie vécue depuis quel temps’ (KA, V, p. 156).

⁵² Anthony Stephens, *Rainer Maria Rilke’s ‘Gedichte An Die Nacht’. An Essay in Interpretation*, Cambridge 1972, pp. 46-7. See also Otto H. Olzien, *Rainer Maria Rilke. Wirklichkeit und Sprache*, Stuttgart 1984, p. 148.

⁵³ C. F. Meyer, *Sämtliche Werke: Historisch-kritische Ausgabe*, ed. Hans Zeller and Alfred Zäch, Berne 1958-74, I, p. 170.

⁵⁴ BwAK, I, p. 191 (‘Die erste [Korrektur] ist da: nun ganz und gar das Rechte’ – although he still needed the typed version with which to compare it), and I, pp. 200-1.

⁵⁵ BwTT, I, p. 12.

⁵⁶ BwAK, I, p. 84.

⁵⁷ Rilke, *Briefe aus den Jahren 1907 bis 1914*, ed. Ruth Sieber-Rilke and Carl Sieber, Leipzig 1933, p. 100.

⁵⁸ BwMV, p. 73 (28 March 1910).

⁵⁹ Both from Book I: KA, I, pp. 472-3 (written in May or June 1906) and I, pp. 489-90 (8 July 1906). *German Life and Letters* has something of a tradition of publishing critical comment on Rilke’s fountain poems: articles include H. W. Belmore, ‘Two Poems on a Fountain in Rome: C. F. Meyer and R. M. Rilke’, *GLL*, 10.1 (1956), 49-53; H. M. Black, ‘Two Sonnets of Rilke’, *GLL*, 19.4 (1966), 262-78 (which ends with a short critical comment by R. D. Gray and elicited a response by Belmore in *GLL*, 21.1 [1967], 60-2); Martin Sutton, ‘C. F. Meyer and R. M. Rilke: Which Roman Fountain?’, *GLL*, 40.2 (1987), 135-41.

⁶⁰ B02-06, p. 130 (5 November 1903, to Holitscher).

⁶¹ I am grateful to Andrea Bernardi, Oxford Brookes University, for taking the photographs in Figures 1 to 5.

⁶² It was thus identified by Ingeborg Schnack in *Rilkes Leben und Werk im Bild*, Wiesbaden 1956 (no. 117), subsequently echoed by August Stahl, *Rilke. Kommentar zum lyrischen Werk*, Munich 1978, p. 212, and in *KA*, I, p. 948.

⁶³ Sutton, 'Which Roman Fountain?' (note 59), pp. 138-9.

⁶⁴ Walter Simon, 'Zu Rilkes Sonnet "Römische Fontäne"', in *Blätter der Rilke-Gesellschaft*, 18 (1991), pp. 93-110 (pp. 96-7).

⁶⁵ Roed also shows the fountain with four masked spouts set into the sides of the 'Schale' out of which water falls into the lower basin. These have since been removed; they are not depicted by Flickel and Sargent and so will not have been known to Rilke either. I have not been able to ascertain when the topmost vessel was added or whether it was removed in the theft of 1983 or before then.

⁶⁶ Oddly, Sutton only considers this fountain in the context of C. F. Meyer's poem and does not speculate as to its relevance to Rilke. A useful brief guide to the fountains can be found in 'Ma quante sono le fontane di Villa Borghese?', posted on 9 August 2013 in *Roma2Oggi* (<http://www.roma2oggi.it/?p=4842>). Confusingly, the epithets 'ovale' and 'rotonda' are used of several other fountains in the Borghese park and elsewhere in Rome.

⁶⁷ See in particular: Michael Franz, 'Die Fontäne. Genesis eines Motivs im lyrischen Werk Rilkes. Gedanken beim Lesen von zwei Gedichten', in *Rilke. Studien zu Werk und Wirkungsgeschichte*, ed. Edda Bauer, Berlin 1976, pp. 70-99; Günther J. Holst, 'Noch einige Bemerkungen zu Rilkes "Fontäne"', in *Blätter der Rilke-Gesellschaft*, 9 (1982), pp. 18-21; and the works mentioned in note 59. Simon. 'Zu Rilkes Sonett' (note 64) gives a long list of

such studies.

⁶⁸ This, of course, depends on what view one takes of the meaning of both ‘scheint’ (*videtur* or *lucet*) and ‘ihm’ (a Swabian alternative to ‘sich’ or a reference to ‘wer’ or other possible antecedents). See for example Martin Heidegger and Emil Staiger, ‘Zu einem Vers von Mörike’, *Trivium*, 9 (1951), pp. 1-16, and Albrecht Holschuh, ‘Wem leuchtet Mörikes “Lampe”?’’, *Zeitschrift für Deutsche Philologie*, 110.4 (1991), pp. 574-93.

⁶⁹ Rilke, *Auguste Rodin, Erster Teil, KA*, IV, pp. 403-49 (p. 447), quoted by Holst, ‘Noch einige Bemerkungen’ (note 67), p. 20. This was first published in 1903; a third edition in 1907 added a second part.

⁷⁰ *B*, II, pp. 135-6 (2 August 1919, my emphasis). See also Sandford’s judicious comments on the importance of rising and falling jets of water in Rilke’s fountain imagery in *Landscape and Landscape Imagery* (note 1), pp. 103-7.

⁷¹ This was to be an enduring view: cf. also the seventh of the *Duineser Elegien*, in which the reciprocity of rising and falling is more energetic but no less contained: ‘Fontäne, / die zu dem drängenden Strahl schon das Fallen zuvornimmt / im versprechlichen Spiel’ (*KA*, I, p. 220).

⁷² *BwTT*, I, p. 114 (my emphasis). Less than a week later he underlines the sense of urgency: ‘In Betreff Roms beherrscht ich mich schon solange, ach, wohl auch noch weiter’ (I, p. 119).

⁷³ *BwTT*, II, p. 702 (1 March 1922).

⁷⁴ *BwTT*, II, p. 703 (emphasis RMR).

⁷⁵ Nevar, *Freundschaft mit Rainer Maria Rilke* (note 488), p. 148 (1 April 1920).

⁷⁶ See Schnack, *Chronik* (note 47), pp. 685 and 693-8, and *KA*, IV, 1051-2.

⁷⁷ *B*, II, p. 207 (21 December 1920, to Carl Burckhardt), and *BwTT*, II, p. 623. Many other letters stress his pleasure at being isolated and peaceful.

⁷⁸ Rilke, *Briefe an Schweizer Freunde*, ed. Rätus Luck, Frankfurt a. M. 1990, p. 109 (17 November 1920; henceforth *BSF*).

⁷⁹ *B*, II, p. 196 (25 November 1920, to Marie Therese Mirbach-Geldern).

⁸⁰ Rilke and Merline, *Correspondance 1920-1926*, Zurich 1954, pp. 94-5 and 98 (18 and 26 November 1920; henceforth *CorrM*).

⁸¹ *BSF*, p. 107 (14 November 1920). Rilke used similar phrasing in autobiographical prose documents entitled ‘Das Testament’, written at Schloß Berg in late June 1921 (*KA*, IV, 712 and 716). On the significance of ‘Gehör’ in these texts, see Silke Pasewalck, ‘Die fünffingrige Hand’: *Die Bedeutung der sinnlichen Wahrnehmung beim späten Rilke*, Berlin 2002, pp. 252-75.

⁸² *BwTT*, I, p. 114.

⁸³ *BwTT*, II, pp. 704-5, quoting from Gabriele D’Annunzio, *Notturmo*, Milan 1921, pp. 335-6.

⁸⁴ *BwAS*, p. 156 (12 May 1904).

⁸⁵ *KA*, IV, pp. 528-9 (29 October 1903).

⁸⁶ See Hermann Mörchén, *Rilkes Sonette an Orpheus*, Stuttgart 1958, p. 311.

⁸⁷ *B*, I, p. 105 (4 November 1904).

⁸⁸ Ronald Gray, *The German Tradition in Literature 1871-1945*, Cambridge 1977, p. 233.

⁸⁹ Black, ‘Two Sonnets’ (note 59), p. 264.

⁹⁰ Gray, *The German Tradition* (note 88), p. 235.

⁹¹ See Mörchén, *Rilkes Sonette an Orpheus* (note 86), p. 311

⁹² Gray, *The German Tradition*, p. 235.

⁹³ Engel, ‘Die “Sonette an Orpheus” als Beginn des spätesten Werkes’ (note 4), p. 21: ‘Das ist nun wirklich ein einfaches Gedicht mit einfach-eingängiger Symbolik. [...] [Wir] erkennen ein vertrautes Kulturzeichen wieder. [...] Die Natur [bekommt] eine Quasisprache: “natura

loquitur”’.

⁹⁴ See his short reading of the sonnet in *Über ‘Die Sonette an Orpheus’ von Rilke. Lektüren*, ed. Christoph König, Göttingen 2016, pp. 218-9. Strangely, Bollack almost ignores the physical reality of the fountain, seeing the mask only as a threshold between present reality and various kinds of ‘other’, and as ‘wohl [...] eine Totenmaske, wenn man, was vorausgeht, als Vorwelt richtig interpretiert. Das Wasser floss schon, doch wurde es in Kanäle geleitet, eingefasst und gesammelt. Die Formen wurden ausgebildet’.

⁹⁵ Dan Curley, ‘The Alcaic Kid (Horace, “Carm.” 3.13)’, *The Classical World*, 97.2 (2004), 137-52 (p. 150). Horace is quoted from Q. Horati Flacci, *Opera*, ed. H. W. Garrod, Oxford Scholarly Editions Online 2015. I am grateful to Steffan Davies and Christopher Pelling for suggestions and advice on this parallel. Any errors are mine.

⁹⁶ Mörchen, *Rilkes Sonette an Orpheus* (note 86), p. 311

⁹⁷ Ernst Leisi, *Rilkes Sonette an Orpheus*, Tübingen 1987, p. 152; KA, II, p. 756 (‘Vorbild ist nach Leisi [...] wohl der römische Brunnen bei Santa Sabina, der eine “marmorne Maske” wie auch ein ohrenförmiges Becken aufweist’). Leisi is in fact more tentative than this implies, suggesting that the poem is *probably* written about a real fountain and that this is *possibly* the one outside Santa Sabina. Engel, ‘Die “Sonette an Orpheus” als Beginn des spätesten Werkes’ (note 4), accepts this identification (p. 21).

⁹⁸ *BadM*, I, p. 430.

⁹⁹ In the late 16th century a Roman trough was paired with a marble face designed by Giacomo Della Porta and commissioned from Bartolomeo Bassi in 1593. The resulting fountain was continuously in use as a drinking trough at the Campo Vaccino until the late 18th century. In 1818 the Campo Vaccino *basin* was moved to the Quirinal and, after a period in storage, in 1827 Della Porta’s *face* was placed above a small sarcophagus trough at the

Porto Leonino downstream from the current Principe Amedeo bridge, opposite the church of San Giovanni dei Fiorentini at the north-westernmost end of the Via Giulia. This fountain was disassembled sometime after 1875 when large embankment walls were constructed along the banks of the river to prevent flooding (an 1850 postcard shows both parts of the fountain; Ettore Roesler Franz's watercolour of c. 1890 shows only the trough: see <http://www.flickriver.com/photos/dealvariis/5608911481/> and <https://www.rome-roma.net/rome-ancienne-peintre.php?auteur=Ettore%20Roesler%20Franz>). The Della Porta mask was placed in storage until 1936, when it was moved to its present location by Rome's Superintendent of Monuments, Antonio Muñoz, and given its third basin. Rilke cannot ever have seen the fountain in its Santa Sabina form or even the Della Porta face on its own. I am indebted to Andrea Pollett for information on the history of Roman fountains, via his highly informative website 'Virtual Roma' (<http://roma.andreapollett.com/eng.htm>) and in personal communications. Cf. also <https://www.romasegreta.it/tevere/porto-leonino.html> and:

Annarena Ambrogì, *Vasche di età romana in marmi bianchi e colorati*, Rome 1995, pp. 90-1, 140, 210-1 and 234; Cesare D'Onofrio, *Le Fontane di Roma, con documenti e disegni inediti*, Rome 1957, pp. 170-1; and Luigi Càllari, *Le Fontane di Roma*, Rome 1945, p. 286.

¹⁰⁰ I drew attention to this briefly in the notes to Rainer Maria Rilke, *Selected Poems*, ed.

Robert Vilain, with new translations by Susan Ranson and Marielle Sutherland, Oxford 2011, p. 331.

¹⁰¹ Karl Baedeker, *Mittel-Italien und Rom*, 13th edn, Leipzig 1903, p. 405; cf. Hans Janssen, 'Rilkes Bibliothek', *Philobiblon*, 33.4 (1989), 293-319 (p. 296) and Rilke's letter to his mother of 3 February 1904 (*BadM*, I, p. 422).

¹⁰² For further details see Christoph H. Heilmann, 'Acqua Paola and the Urban Planning of Paul V Borghese', *The Burlington Magazine*, 112.811 (1970), 656-63, and Peter J. Aicher,

Guide to the Aqueducts of Ancient Rome, Wauconda IL 1995, pp. 44-51 and 76-9.

¹⁰³ The form of the fountain itself has remained constant but the significant changes in its surroundings occasioned by building and rebuilding can be seen by comparing the illustrations in François-Charles Uginet, *Le Palais Farnèse*, 3 vols, Rome 1980, II, pp. 38-9 and 87.

¹⁰⁴ See Willy Pocino, *Le curiosità di Roma. Storie, aneddoti e segreti legati a luoghi, tradizioni e monumenti esistenti o scomparsi di una città irripetibile*, Rome 1985, p. 499, and Marvin Pulvers, *Roman Fountains. 2000 Fountains in Rome. A Complete Collection*, Rome 2002, p. 436.

¹⁰⁵ KA, I, p. 549. Seamus Heaney published a fine translation of this poem in the *Times Literary Supplement*, 27/ 9 (5 May 2005), p. 10.

¹⁰⁶ Hermann Weigand notes that the human realm in this poem is characterized chiefly by ‘ein Erleiden oder rein Zustand’ (citing ‘hingestellt’, ‘verteilt’, ‘verweilt’, ‘lag’, etc.); the unknown mouths and the imagined brain are associated with activity (‘schluckten’, ‘denkt’); the water that speaks of eternity, however, operates with three glittering active verbs: ‘Rilkes “Römische Sarkophage”’, in *Critical Probings. Essays in European Literature*, ed. Ulrich K. Goldsmith, Berne and Frankfurt a. M. 1982, pp. 159-70 (p. 170).

¹⁰⁷ The focus here on the theme of speech is not intended to obscure the other important and familiar themes in this poem, notably the evocation of the ‘Doppelbereich’: ‘Die Sarkophage sind ein Bild für den Durchgang durch das Totenreich und die Rückkehr zum Leben’: see for example Thomas Krämer, *Rilkes ‘Sonette an Orpheus’, erster Teil. Ein Interpretationsgang*, Würzburg 1999, pp. 98-100.

¹⁰⁸ BwAS, pp. 156-7.

¹⁰⁹ KA, II, p. 281. This and the other poems quoted here from this sequence are dated ‘Muzot,

16./17. Februar 1922' or '17./19. Februar 1922'.

¹¹⁰ *CorrM*, p. 94 (18 November 1920). For the alternative assumption, see Pasewalck, 'Die fünffingrige Hand' (note 81), p. 263, *KA*, II, 783, and *KA*, V, 478. Given the clear references to other Roman fountains at this time, however, it is much more likely that Rilke has Rome in mind here. My source for this image is Jörg Schuster, 'Kunstleben'. *Zur Kulturpoetik des Briefs um 1900. Korrespondenzen Hugo von Hofmannsthal und Rainer Maria Rilkes*, Paderborn 2014, p. 351, and I am grateful to him for providing a copy and to the DLA Marbach for permission to publish it here.

¹¹¹ See note 71 for similarities with the seventh of the *Duineser Elegien*.

¹¹² *B*, II, p. 483 (13 November 1925, to Witold Hulewicz).

¹¹³ Wolfgang Janke, *Archaischer Gesang. Pindar, Hölderlin, Rilke. Werke und Wahrheit*, Würzburg 2005, p. 207.

¹¹⁴ Richard Sheppard, 'From the "Neue Gedichte" to the "Duineser Elegien": Rilke's Chandos Crisis', *MLR*, 68 (1973), pp. 577-92 (pp. 579 and 580).

¹¹⁵ *BwTT*, II, p. 878 (emphasis RMR).