

University of Massachusetts - Amherst

From the Selected Works of Charles Kay Smith

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Hadrian's Beard, A Prose/Poem 2/26/2014

Charles Kay Smith, *University of Massachusetts at Amherst*



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Hadrian's Beard

Attired as a Roman general, his visage
shocked viewers with its Greek beard,
unlike the shaven face of Caesar
and all Roman emperors before.

Greece and Rome merged in his portraits,
and in his architectural feats:
the Pantheon in Rome and his Villa—
integrated forms of twined cultures.

His famed wall was not just
to defend but to define
the border of new Greco-Rome—
Hadrian's dual cultured world.

If today's major cultures—Mid-Eastern,
Eastern and Western--were equally respected
And universally acknowledged
for many contributions to us all,

From the Mid-East, Gilgamesh, the Bible,
Koran, first States, and advancing
philosophy and mathematics.
The East's Buddhism and Confucianism,

silk and paper. The West enriched
with modern science, and communications.
The music, writing, and art of each
has spread for centuries among the others.

Interdependence is accelerating.
Each culture would be poorer without the others.
The three could compose a cultural trinity
with little need for walls or wars.