



Historic Preservation Studio I  
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Project 3: Documentation-Bache mausoleum

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The Bache Mausoleum stands on a prominent circular plot of land visible from the Jerome Avenue Entrance of Woodlawn Cemetery. Commissioned in 1916 by Bache, the mausoleum was designed by the New York City architectural firm Davis, McGrath and Kiessling and had a surrounding landscape designed by Charles Wellford Leavitt<sup>1</sup>. The mausoleum is largely a copy of Trajan's Kiosk (see figure 1), originally constructed on the Island of Philae in Egypt and is thus firmly rooted in the second Egyptian revival movement of early twentieth-century<sup>2</sup>.

Trajan's Kiosk is a product of Rome's colonization of Egypt and is clearly of classical derivation rather than ancient Egyptian. The temple and thus the Bache mausoleum, are characterized by a 14-column wrap-around colonnade atop an elevated rectangular base. The colonnade, which is engaged at the base by a screen-wall system, has elaborately carved floral capitals of four types. These capitals support blocks that carry the architraves and cornice. The entrance to both Trajan's Kiosk and the Bache mausoleum is marked by a projecting rectangular bay in the center of the front elevation.

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<sup>1</sup> Columbia University. Avery Library, Woodlawn archive. 2012.

<sup>2</sup> Keister, Douglas. *Stories in stone New York : a field guide to New York City cemeteries & their residents*. Salt Lake City: Gibbs Smith, 2011, 53.

While Davis, McGrath and Kiessling largely took the overall design for the Bache mausoleum from Trajan's Kiosk the two structures are markedly different. The Bache mausoleum's base has two separate components; the colonnaded structure sits directly atop a battered base, which is supported by a second larger base. This second base projects from the front of the mausoleum and forms a monumental staircase complete with two flanking cenotaphs. The real difference between the two structures however is in their interiors. Trajan's Kiosk was built to house a cult statue and has an open plan while the Bache mausoleum was built to house the Bache family's remains in series of separate crypts. To account for this, Davis, McGrath and Kiessling utilized Trajan's Kiosk largely as a decorative veneer system to disguise how the interior is partitioned. From the exterior the Bache mausoleum appears to be a replica Trajan's Kiosk with a freestanding structure interjected in its center. In reality the freestanding structure, which can be seen atop the screen-wall system, marks the open interior space of the mausoleum while the crypts are disguised behind the screen walls and colonnade. Thus what appears to be a freestanding column and screen-wall system are in fact thin veneers hiding a system of crypts and air vents (see figure 2).

The interior of the mausoleum is symmetrical with an elaborate Egyptian-inspired stained-glass window designed by the Gorham Company in 1921 opposite the front door<sup>3</sup>. The two walls containing the crypts each have three bays. Both center bays are niches housing one elaborate granite sarcophagus carved with a repetition of lotus flowers and buds. The two flanking bays are made up of three crypts each stacked atop

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<sup>3</sup>Columbia University: Avery Library, Woodlawn archive 2012..

the other. The mausoleum, both interior and exterior, is built of Barre Vermont Granite with a dull rubbed finish<sup>4</sup>. The door and window screen as well as the rosettes on the crypts are bronze.

In its original landscape plan the mausoleum site was densely planted especially around the rear of the monument. In doing so Leavitt was able to frame the Bache mausoleum in a very specific manner while visually separating it from the smaller monuments behind it. The landscape plan called for the removal of turf and its replacement with sand. The plantings were carefully selected to evoke the arid environment of Egypt and an avenue of sphinxes was proposed to front the mausoleum. In lieu of a path leading from the road to the mausoleum a series of irregular stones were laid (see figure 3). The mausoleum was not built on axis with the road that leads you to it. Instead it is tuned slightly, forcing the mausoleum to be viewed at a three-quarters angle. Due to these elements, in its original context the Bache Mausoleum was a highly theatrical and romantic interpretation of an ancient Egyptian ruin meant to evoke Jules Bache's wealth and social status.

Jules Bache was born in 1863 in New York to Semon and Elizabeth Van Praag Bache. His father was a wealthy merchant and it was through him that Jules entered the financial world. At the time of his death Bache headed the financial firm J.S. Bache & company, he was also the former president of the Arbor Railroad Company as well as the Wenonah Development Corporation, held mining interests in Ontario, was a vice president of the

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<sup>4</sup>Columbia University. Avery Library, Woodlawn archive 2012..

Chrysler corporation and a director in seventeen other companies<sup>5</sup>. He also held an important collection of old masters' paintings, including works by Botticelli, Raphael, Titan Rembrandt Van Dyke and Goya, which he left to the Metropolitan Museum of Art<sup>6</sup>. Bache married Florence Sheftel, noted for her slender girlish figure and looking much like Mrs. John Jacob Astor<sup>7</sup>, on May 23<sup>rd</sup> 1892; they had two daughters. Florence Bache filed for divorce in Paris in 1925, where she married Henri Ducot and died 1931<sup>8</sup>. Her sarcophagus, opposite of her former husbands', is thus occupied by her daughter Hazel Beckman Bache. The only other Bache in the mausoleum is Bache's granddaughter, Dorothy Joy Richards Hirshon.

It is appropriate that Jules Bache chose the form of an Egyptian temple for his mausoleum. The building form fits within the second period of Egyptian Revival architecture that surrounded the discovery of Tutankhamun's tomb by Howard Carter in 1922. By drawing parallels between himself and Trajan, the Roman Emperor whose kiosk Bache's mausoleum is based off of, Jules Bache makes a strong statement surrounding his enormous wealth and social prominence.

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<sup>5</sup> Special to THE NEW YORK TIMES. 1944. J.S. bache, banker, dies in palm beach. *New York Times (1923-Current file)*, Mar 24, 1944.

<sup>6</sup> Special to THE NEW YORK TIMES. 1944. J.S. bache, banker, dies in palm beach. *New York Times (1923-Current file)*, Mar 24, 1944.

<sup>7</sup> Society at dance for miss bache. 1914. *New - York Tribune (1911-1922)*, Jan 24, 1914.

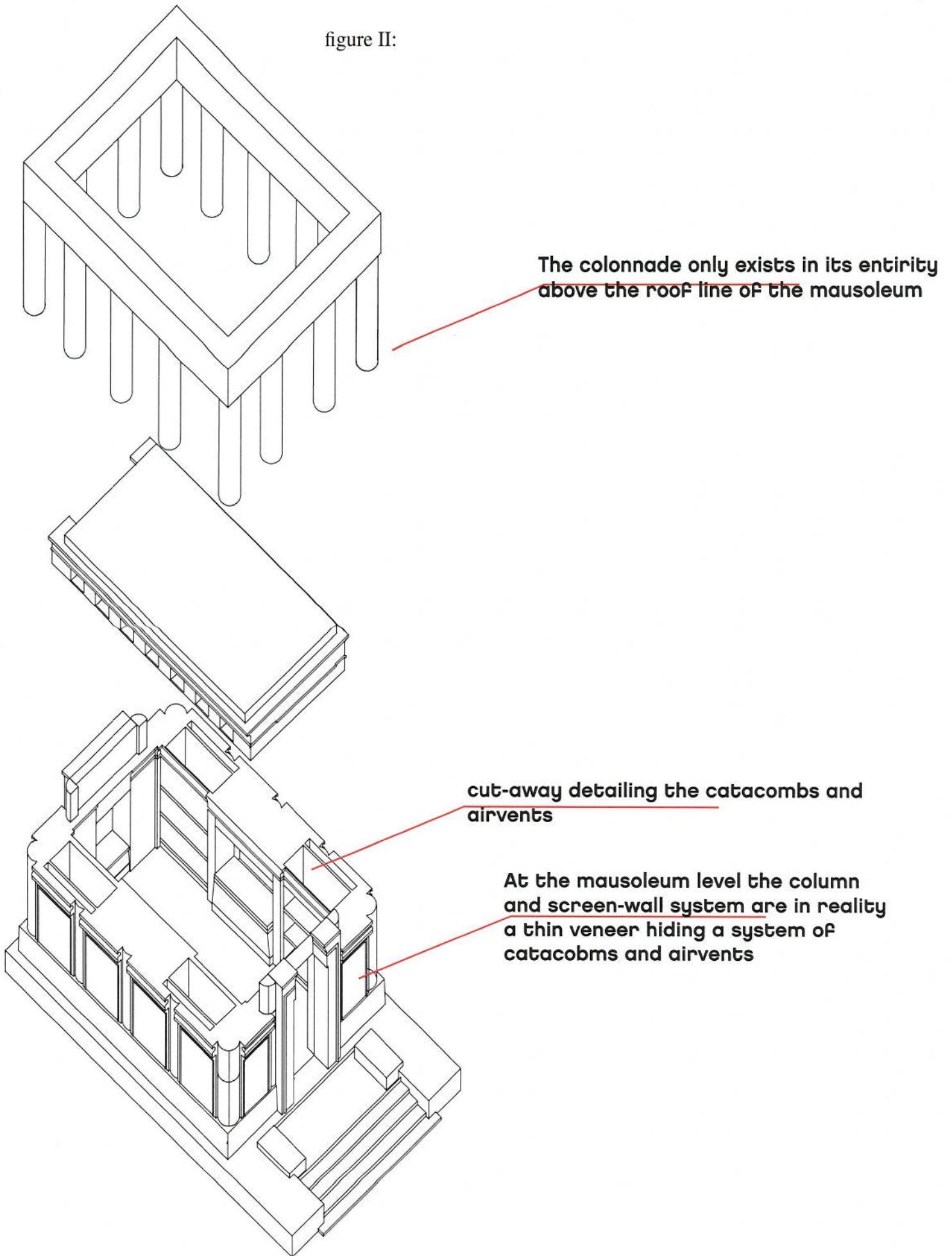
<sup>8</sup> Special to THE NEW YORK TIMES. 1944. J.S. bache, banker, dies in palm beach. *New York Times (1923-Current file)*, Mar 24, 1944.



figure 1: Trajan's Kiosk



figure II:



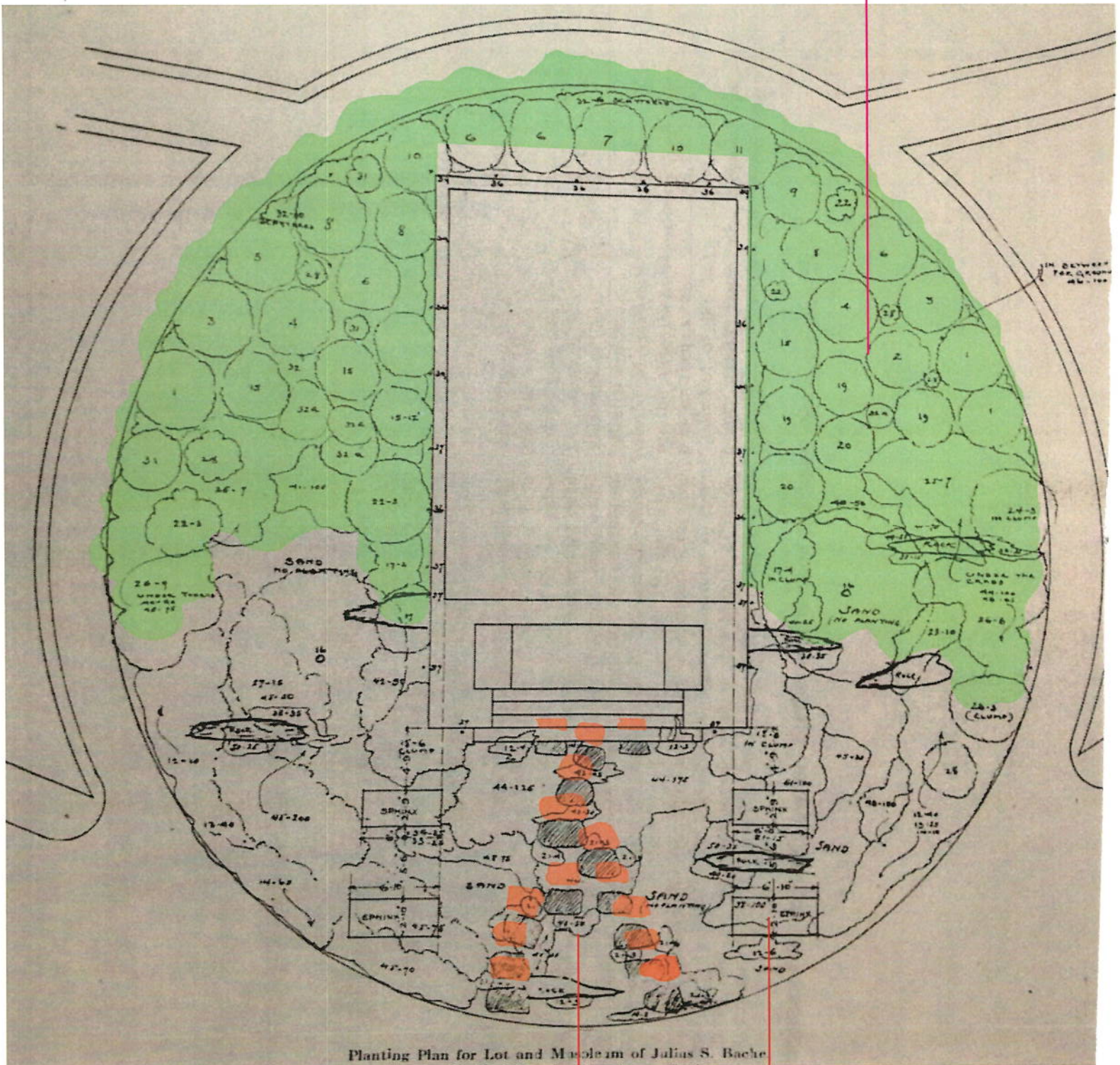
The colonnade only exists in its entirety above the roof line of the mausoleum

cut-away detailing the catacombs and airvents

At the mausoleum level the column and screen-wall system are in reality a thin veneer hiding a system of catacombs and airvents

figure III:

Lush plantings Frame building and block views



A path made up of irregular stones

A series of sphinxes were meant to flank the mausoleum reminiscent to the avenue of sphinxes at Luxor