Augustus and 'Syracuse'*

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ABSTRACT

*Suetonius (*Aug. *72.2) records among the habits of Augustus his inclination to retreat from time to time to a place he called 'Syracuse' or his 'technophuon' (workshop). These names have been variously explained, without agreement. The paper argues that 'Syracuse' evokes a complex of associations beyond the obvious connection with Archimedes and his inventions. By recalling other well-known figures, such as Marcellus and Dionysius, as well as Augustus' own experiences in Syracuse, the name of his den effectively encapsulates the courses of action available to the emperor as ruler and as private citizen.*

I INTRODUCTION

Suetonius' *Life of Augustus* is a work famous for the small details it piles up about the emperor's life and habits, details that make him into an almost homely figure, a droll and eccentric individual. We are told, amongst other things, about his unforgettable phrase 'faster than you can cook asparagus', his fear of lightning, his dinosaur park, and his impish lucky dips at the Saturnalia.[1] Indeed, it has recently been claimed that by putting his private life and that of his extended family so conspicuously but so disarmingly on public display, Augustus was hugely responsible for the invention of 'private life' in Rome; this was just one of the many strategies by which he defused the unprecedented intrusiveness of his public presence.[2] Domesticity, we now appreciate, was a defining aspect of the imperial façade. But what did it mean when Augustus went completely out of sight? In this paper, I take one small detail from the *Vita* and argue that it offers us a window onto a much larger world. 'Syracuse', the enclosed and secret place where the emperor went to be alone, the one place where even his privacy was not on display, turns out to be a textual room with a view. The sentence in which it appears can be opened up to reveal a complex picture of Augustus' choice of roles, as private ruler and as public citizen. Not only does this tiny cameo compress the broader narrative of his performance in relation to empire and history. It also tells us how one Sicilian city continued to resound in the Roman cultural imagination.[3]

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[1] Suet., *Aug.* 87.1 (asparagus), 90.1 (lightning), 72.3 (dinosaurs), 75.1 (Saturnalia).

[2] K. Milnor, *Gender, Domesticity, and the Age of Augustus: The Invention of Private Life* (2005), especially 80–93. As recently as 1997, N. Horsfall, 'The emperor unbends: some neglected aspects of Suetonius' Life of Augustus', *Ancient History* 27 (1997), 25–30 called for more serious analysis of ancient material about 'the really private, behind-closed-doors emperor'. On the erotic dimension of imperial intimacy, see C. Vout, *Power and Eroticism in Imperial Rome* (2007).

[3] Though the germ of this essay arose quite independently with Suetonius, I must acknowledge the pioneering work of Mary Jaeger on Roman-Syracusan relations in Roman culture, in particular her magnificent *Archimedes*

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> si quando quid secreto aut sine interpellatione agere proposuisset, erat illi locus in edito singularis, quem Syracusas et τεχνόφυον [*tegnophion* Ω; *technyphion* (τεχνύφιον) Bentley; *technophyion* Carter] uocabat; huc transibat, aut in alicuius libertorum suburbanum; aeger autem in domo Maecenatis cubabat. Suet., *Aug.* 72.2

In the middle of the section of the *Vita* fenced off specifically to describe Augustus' private life (61.1: 'referam nunc interiorem ac familiarem eius [uitam]'), Suetonius turns from the emperor's startling sexual behaviour to his irreproachable domestic habits (72.1: 'in ceteris partibus uitae …'). He tells us that when Augustus wished to be alone or to do business without interruption, he 'would cross over' (*transibat*) to a place 'high up' (*in edito*) and 'self-contained' or 'detached' (*singularis*) which he called 'Syracuse' or his 'technophuon'. The manuscript reading of the second name, a hapax, is uncertain and has been variously altered. Whatever the right allocation of vowels, the word is a compound of Greek elements meaning roughly 'scheme-generating' and is usually translated 'laboratory' or 'workshop'.[4] To give a place two such different names seems whimsical, in keeping, perhaps, with the freedom the place allowed its occupier; we cannot know if there was meant to be a connection between them. But there was one obvious link between a city in Sicily and an inventor's studio that occurred to Suetonius' German translator Adolf Stahr in 1854 (and was subsequently adopted by Loeb editor J. C. Rolfe): Augustus was mapping this area of his life onto a particular historical individual. He went to this room or place to 'be' Archimedes, most famous of Syracusans, the scientist whose ingenious war-machines failed to fend off the Roman fleet or save his own life in 212 B.C., when Sicily was embroiled in the Second Punic War.[5] This is a fruitful starting point, but, as we will see, the possibilities turn out to be very much more open-ended.

Visitors to Rome since March 2008 may well be convinced that they have seen 'Syracuse' for themselves. In the late 1970s, the archaeologists who excavated Augustus' house on the Palatine, led by Gianfilippo Carettoni, identified a second-storey room at the top of the house as the place in question, an idea championed enthusiastically by Karl Galinsky in *Augustan Culture*.[6] Thirty years on, this beautifully painted room was opened to the public, along with three others, and presented as Augustus' study, the place where he 'used

and the Roman Imagination (2008), published as I was writing this paper. See also eadem, 'Cicero and Archimedes' tomb', *JRS* 92 (2002), 49–61; eadem, 'Livy and the fall of Syracuse', in U. Eigler, U. Gotter, N. Luraghi and U. Walter (eds), *Formen römischer Geschichtsschreibung von den Anfängen bis Livius: Gattungen – Autoren – Kontexte* (2003), 213–34.

[4] Text of Suetonius is taken from J. M. Carter, *Suetonius: Divus Augustus* (1982). Cf. a similar compound at Plato, *Rep.* 475e: τεχνυδρίων 'minor arts'.

[5] A. Stahr, *Suetons Kaiserbiographien* (1854), ad loc.: 'Den Namen Syrakus gab Augustus diesem seinem Arbeitskabinett wohl mit Bezug auf Archimedes von Syrakus, der in seiner Studierstube, selbst die Eroberung der Stadt nicht bemerkte'; J. C. Rolfe (ed.), *Suetonius, with an English translation* (2nd edn, 1928), ad loc.: 'With reference to the study of Archimedes, or perhaps to the general use of such elevated rooms in Syracuse.' Robert Graves inserted a similar explanation into his 1957 Penguin translation, *The Twelve Caesars*, 'perhaps because Archimedes of Syracuse had a similar one', omitted in the revised edition of M. Grant (2003).

[6] G. Carettoni, *Das Haus von Augustus auf dem Palatin* (1983); idem, *Kaiser Augustus und die verlorene Republik* (1988); I. Iacopi and G. Tedone, 'Lo "studiolo" di Augusto', *Boll. Archeol.* 1 (1990), 143–8; I. Iacopi, *The House of Augustus: Wall Paintings* (2008); K. Galinsky, *Augustan Culture* (1996), 189–91. See now the more muted claim of J. R. Clarke, 'Augustan domestic interiors: propaganda or fashion?' in K. Galinsky (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to the Age of Augustus* (2005), 264–80, at 270–1; cf. A. Carandini and D. Bruni, *La casa di Augusto: dai Lupercalia al Natale* (2008), 72–3, 162–3. N. Sojc, 'Domus Augustana auf dem Palatin', *MDAI(R)* 112 (2006), 339–50 and I. Iacopi and G. Tedone, 'Bibliotheca e porticus ad Apollinis', *MDAI(R)* 112 (2006), 351–78 argue that the 'studiolo' along with the other rooms belongs to the earliest phase of the house (thanks to Frederick Brenk for these references). Carandini and Bruni, op. cit., 162–3 note that it would have been hard for Suetonius to see any part of the original house once Augustus had superimposed his new version. However, T. P. Wiseman's review of Carandini and Bruni, 'The House of Augustus and the Lupercal', *JRA* 22 (2009), 527–45 casts grave doubts on identifying the so-called 'House of Augustus' with *any* royal residence on the Palatine: ancient sources indicate that it might just have been part of one of the aristocratic houses the emperor repossessed for incorporation into his palace complex.

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to retire when he didn't want to be disturbed', in the words of chief archaeologist Irene Iacopi.[7] An elegant little space decorated with delicate Second Style motifs and larger panels with female figures, it is more Marie Antoinette than Archimedes; nothing in the iconography obviously suggests Syracuse or its famous son. Five visitors at a time are allowed to peer through a glass panel and strain their necks looking up at the ceiling, recreating, more or less, the experience of Suetonius and his contemporaries as they peeped into the dolls-house-sized quarters of the farmhouse where Augustus was born: 'more a pantry than a nursery', as Suetonius puts it.[8]

One can only admire the decades of work spent on this project, but from a literary critic or cultural historian's perspective, the whole enterprise of identifying a random upper room with a specific textual place seems wishful thinking, a quest not far off from the search for Romulus' original hut, which we know had many different versions even in ancient Rome (the same archaeological team was responsible for the discovery of a grotto under Augustus' house confidently identified in 2008 as Romulus and Remus' nursery, the Lupercal).[9] From Suetonius' text it is by no means certain that the *locus* in question even formed part of Augustus' main palace. According to John Carter, the word *transibat* suggests that it might in fact have been quite distant, located perhaps on the Janiculum or the Aventine.[10] We need to accept that the chances are slim, if not non-existent, of ever being able to pinpoint 'Syracuse' on a map of Augustan Rome. What we can presume instead, however, is that whoever invented Augustus' 'Syracuse', whether it was the emperor himself or a later biographer, had an imaginary map in mind that gave this place specific bearings as far as its cultural meaning was concerned.

The history of the private room stretches long before and after Augustus. We find it in many shapes and sizes, from Socrates' dangling basket in Aristophanes' *Clouds* to the sound-proofed basement where Demosthenes went to practise oratory to Pliny's favourite *diaeta* in his Laurentine villa, his pet room, his 'sweet little suite', the one he designed himself ('diaeta est amores mei, re uera amores: ipse posui').[11] The tradition embraces St Simeon's pillar, the medieval monk's cell, and the Renaissance scholar's *studiolo* with its antique figurines, skulls and globes.[12] Private rooms are found in later autocrats' residences too: the White House has its Den, Franklin D. Roosevelt's house its strategic Snuggery, from which his mother used to spy on all comers, Stalin's dacha its mirror-filled lavatory, to reflect any cheating rearrangement of balls on the next-door billiard-table. The Greco-Roman word for private room, *diaeta*, is also the Greek word for a 'way of life' or a 'regimen', which suggests that the place where one went to opt out could also be held to be a form of self-expression.[13] It is not the word Suetonius happens to use (he prefers

[7] Publisher's summary of Iacopi, op. cit. (n. 6): 'Here, under a vault of stucco, the Emperor used to retire when he didn't want to be disturbed, hiding away his Alexandrian "modernity" from all the people who believed he was a conservative.'

[8] Suet., *Aug.* 6.1: 'nutrimentorum eius ostenditur adhuc locus in auito suburbano iuxta Velitras permodicus et cellae penuariae instar.' See J. Bodel, 'Monumental villas and villa monuments', *JRA* 10 (1997), 5–35, at 13 on Augustus' birthplace and the myths attached to it. B. Tamm, *Auditorium and Palatium: A Study on Assembly-Rooms in Roman Palaces during the 1st Century B.C. and the 1st Century A.D.* (1963), 49 speculates that Augustus himself may have set aside the ostentatiously modest part of his Palatine house as a museum for future generations.

[9] See C. Edwards, *Writing Rome: Textual Approaches to the City* (1997), 30–43. L. Morgan, '*Natura narratur*: Tullius Laurea's elegy for Cicero (Pliny, *Nat.* 31.8)', in S. Heyworth (ed.), *Classical Constructions: Papers in Memory of Don Fowler* (2007), 113–40 tracks the sixteenth-century 'relocation' (by a couple of miles) of the ruins of Cicero's villa at Cumae. For a sceptical response to the 'Lupercal' grotto, see Wiseman, op. cit. (n. 6).

[10] Carter, op. cit. (n. 4), ad loc.

[11] Ar., *Nub.* 218; Plut., *Dem.* 7 (cf. Quint. 10.3.25); Plin., *Ep.* 2.17.20.

[12] See W. Liebenwein, *Lo studiolo: die Entstehung eines Raumtyps und seine Entwicklung bis um 1600* (1977); D. Thornton, *The Scholar in his Study: Ownership and Experience in Renaissance Italy* (1997).

[13] Cicero in the *Laws* chooses an island in the River Fibrenus near his birthplace as the ideal setting for philosophical discussion à la *Phaedrus*: *Leg.* 2.1.1, (Atticus) 'locum mutemus et in insula quae est in Fibreno …

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locus). But a private *diaeta* in the middle of a *Vita* is potentially supremely 'biographical', an alternative, even, to Augustus' thirteen lost books of memoirs.[14] It was where Augustus went not just to be Archimedes but to be alone and 'be himself', which goes a long way towards explaining the mystique surrounding the room on the Palatine today.

In his memorable account of the psychology of the intimate places human beings hold dear — nests, drawers, cellars and attics — Gaston Bachelard writes of the specific significance of such spaces for those who possess them, the attraction for those who are excluded from them, and the impossibility of letting anyone else in: 'What would be the use, for instance, in giving the plan of the room that was really *my* room, in describing the little room at the end of the garret, in saying that from the window, across the indentations of the roofs, one could see the hill?'[15] We can only begin to guess what 'Syracuse' meant to Augustus, whether it was workshop, den or Bachelardian dream-space, but we can at least go some way towards seeing why, if it is all a fiction, it needed to be invented.

II 'SYRACUSE'?

Rooms given special place-names (and I will give some more Roman examples below) have something to tell us about the owner's relationship to the physical world; they are his (or his observers') imaginative choice from an atlas of possibilities. But what 'Syracuse' signified has been surprisingly controversial. Philemon Holland, in his 1606 translation, was confident that Augustus named it 'for pleasure therein … comparing it to that beautiful city in Sicily'.[16] More recent Suetonian commentators are understandably cautious. Shuckburgh writes: 'No satisfactory explanation has been given of why Augustus called his lofty study "Syracuse".' Carter agrees: 'The reason for the name is a mystery.' However, Shuckburgh goes on to point out that Augustus 'was at Syracuse in B.C. 21, which was then ruinous and deserted [*Cal.* 21], and he may have found it so quiet and retired (perhaps too living on the high ground of Achradina) as to suggest a suitable name'. And Carter adds: 'Perhaps the place was effectively an island, like Ortygia, the original heart of Syracuse, or was extremely difficult to penetrate, like the defences of the town in the hands of a Dionysius or an Archimedes.' Budé editor Henri Ailloud has an entirely different suggestion (also endorsed by Rolfe): the Syracusans used to sleep upstairs (he cites Nepos' life of Dion of Syracuse, who despite retiring to an upper chamber for safety, was assassinated by hostile fellow-citizens with a sword passed through a window).[17] Archaeologist Filippo Coarelli has suggested, most plausibly, that 'Syracuse' paid homage to an island retreat constructed by Dionysius inside his fortress palace on Ortygia (which he claims also inspired the Maritime Theatre in Hadrian's villa at Tivoli).[18] We might also remember another tyrant's floating retreat: Hiero's luxury ship Syracosia, 'Lady of

sermoni reliquo demus operam sedentes?' (Marcus) 'sane quidem; nam illo loco libentissime soleo uti siue quid mecum ipse cogito siue aut quid scribo aut lego'.

[14] Suet., *Aug.* 85.1.

[15] G. Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space* (2nd edn, 1994), 13.

[16] P. Holland, *Suetonius, History of Twelve Caesars*, ed. J. H. Freese (1923), 'Notes and Annotations', 37.

[17] E. S. Shuckburgh (ed.), *C. Suetoni Tranquilli Diuus Augustus* (1986); Carter, op. cit. (n. 4), ad loc.; H. Ailloud, *Suétone: vie des douze Césars*, 3 vols (1931), ad loc.; Nep., *Dion* 9.1: 'cum a conuentu se remotum Dion domi teneret atque in conclaui edito recubuisset.' For Rolfe, see n. 5.

[18] F. M. Coarelli, *Lazio* (1982), 61–2 (cf. idem, *Roma sepolta* (1984), 143–5); M. De Franceschini, *Villa Adriana: mosaici–pavimenti–edifici* (1991), 643; W. L. Macdonald and J. A. Pinto, *Hadrian's Villa and its Legacy* (1995), 81–94. Diod. 14.7.1–3 describes the retreat as a 'fortified acropolis, a place of refuge in case of need', enclosing a dockyard connected with the harbour of Laccium by a canal of one ship's width; Cic., *Tusc.* 5.59 claims that the suspicious tyrant had a retractable wooden drawbridge separating the secluded bedchamber where he slept with his wives from the main body of his palace: 'sic noctu ad eas uentitabat, ut omnia specularetur et percontaretur ante; et cum fossam latam cubiculari lecto circumdedisset eiusque fossae transitum ponticulo ligneo coniunxisset, eum ipse (MS ipsum) cum forem cubiculi clauserat, detorquebat.'

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Syracuse'.[19] Already the possibilities, with their different topographical peculiarities and historical personae, are multiplying far beyond the obvious connection with Archimedes. There is no reason so far to reject any of them. Each one, as I hope to show, may have been in play in Augustus' choice of name, or, if he did not name it himself, in the self-generating plasma of anecdotes that he inspired.[20]

To start with the place: the ancient city of Syracuse had glory and pretensions quite out of proportion to its size.[21] Part of the triad of cities, along with Athens and Carthage, that once fought for dominion over the ancient Mediterranean, it was the David that defeated Goliath Athens in the Sicilian expedition of 415–13 B.C., following Athens' defeat of Persia at Salamis in 480 B.C. — a year in which the Sicilians themselves had defeated the Carthaginians at Himera. Two centuries later, Syracuse's own empire in the Western Mediterranean succumbed in the Punic Wars to the rising power of Rome.[22] Syracuse, in other words, was 'a place with imperial stories to tell, stories of one empire giving way to another'.[23] Livy's and Plutarch's accounts of the city's capture in 212 B.C. make the Romans, especially their general Marcellus, self-conscious about the ironic cycles of history: Rome was on the up, Syracuse on the turn, poised to become a city in decline.[24] But the city continued to attract superlatives. Theocritus had called it the 'marrow of Sicily', the choicest part;[25] Cicero, quoting Sicilian historian Timaeus, calls it *urbs ornatissima* and 'the largest of Greek cities and loveliest of all cities' (*Rep*. 1.43: 'Graecarum maxumam, omnium autem esse pulcherrimam'). Syracuse was and was not equivalent to Sicily: a glorious figurehead for the whole island, whose citizens still claimed an independent, Syracusan identity.[26] It was a city connected with extreme forms of tyranny, the place where Plato went three times and failed to realize his ideal Republic (Cicero's Verres is constructed conspicuously in the mould of a Dionysius).[27] It was also famous for luxurious cuisine, lascivious dancing and

[19] Athen. 5.207a–209. See Jaeger, op. cit. (n. 3, 2008), 106–8.

[20] For Augustus' *dicta et apophthegmata*, see E. Malcovati (ed.), *Caesaris Augusti Fragmenta* (2nd edn, 1928), 106–26. On anecdotes as historical sources, see the classic paper of R. Saller, 'Anecdotes as historical evidence for the principate', *G&R* 27 (1980), 69–83.

[21] On Roman Sicily, see G. Manganaro, 'Per una storia della Sicilia romana', *ANRW* 1.1 (1972), 442–61; 'La Sicilia da Sesto Pompeio a Diocleziano', *ANRW* 2.11.1 (1988), 3–89; 'Sicilia di età imperiale', *ANRW* 2.11.1 (1988), 346–413; and the Roman essays in C. Smith and J. Serrati (eds), *Sicily from Aeneas to Augustus: New Approaches in Archaeology and History* (2001). As an archaeological and historical introduction, R. J. A. Wilson, *Sicily under the Roman Empire: The Archaeology of a Roman Province, 36 B.C.–A.D. 535* (1990) cannot be bettered. On Sicily and the Second Punic War, see J. Briscoe, 'The Second Punic War', *Cambridge Ancient History*, vol. 8 (2nd edn, 1989), 44–80. On Sicilian identity, with more detail than could possibly be given here, particularly from the epigraphic perspective, see J. R. W. Prag, *Sicily and the Roman Republic 241–44 BC: Provincialization and Provincial Identities*, unpub. PhD thesis, University College London (2004).

[22] D. Feeney, *Caesar's Calendar: Ancient Time and the Beginnings of History* (2007), 7–67 identifies calendrical synchronization as an essential constituent of ancient Mediterranean historiography.

[23] C. Connors, 'Chariton's Syracuse and its histories of empire', in M. Paschalis and S. Frangoulidis (eds), *Space in the Ancient Novel* (2002), 12–26, at 16. Cic., *Verr.* 2.2.2 credits Sicily with teaching Rome imperialism: 'prima docuit maiores nostros quam praeclarum esset exteris gentibus imperare.'

[24] Livy 25.24.11–14; Plut., *Marc*. 19.1–2.

[25] Theoc., *Id*. 28.18: Τρινακρίας μυελόν.

[26] Jonathan Prag has argued that citizens of Syracuse were much more likely to refer to themselves epigraphically as 'Syracusans' than as 'Sicilians'. See also M.-P. Loicq-Berger, *Syracuse: histoire culturelle d'une cité grecque* (1967) on evidence for a specifically Syracusan identity.

[27] On Rome's reception of the Sicilian tyrants, see J. R. Dunkle, 'The Greek tyrant and Roman political invective of the Late Republic', *TAPA* 98 (1967), 151–71; P. Grimal, 'Cicéron et les tyrans de Sicile', *Ciceroniana* 4 (1980), 63–74; I. Gildenhard, 'Reckoning with tyranny: Greek thoughts on Caesar in Cicero's *Letters to Atticus* in early 49', in S. Lewis (ed.), *Ancient Tyranny* (2006), 197–209; idem, *Paideia Romana: Cicero's Tusculan Disputations* (2007), on the *Tusculans* as a philosopher's negotiation with Caesar's tyranny. On Dionysius I, see L. J. Sanders, *Dionysius of Syracuse and Greek Tyranny* (1987); B. Caven, *Dionysius I: War-Lord of Sicily* (1990). For recent interpretations of the *Verrines*, see S. Butler, *The Hand of Cicero* (2002); S. Pittia and J. Dubouloz (eds), *La Sicilie de Cicéron. Lectures de Verrines* (2006); J. R. W. Prag (ed.), *Sicilia Nutrix Plebis Romanae: Rhetoric, Law, and Taxation in Cicero's Verrines* (2007).

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overblown grandiosity,[28] and for mild winters and sweltering summers, as Seneca records in a vivid list of the pros and cons of visiting Syracuse.[29]

For members of the Late Republican 'ex-pat' community, Syracuse indeed held out a mixed prospect of business and pleasure. After his campaign against Sextus Pompeius in 36 B.C., Augustus further reduced the conquered city to a *colonia*, removed *Latinitas*, Latin rights, from its citizens, and planted his veterans there, to mingle with the Roman *negotiatores*, bankers and businessmen who were already laundering the profits of this fertile province.[30] Cicero had been quaestor of Sicily till 74 B.C., based at Lilybaeum on the other side of the island. He tells a revealing story about how he returned to Rome assuming his term there had been the talk of the town, but was dazed to discover that he had made no impact in the metropolis at all: the people he met first assumed he had been in Africa; and then, when they realized it was Sicily, they got the place wrong, remembering it as Syracuse (that is to say, the provincial capital, the governor's seat). Cicero despaired, went along with the story and pretended that is where he had gone, but to take the waters, not to do official business.[31] He tells another story about a Roman knight who joked that he felt like moving to Syracuse for pleasure, not for business like all the *negotiatores* ('otiandi causa non negotiandi'); he wanted to buy a nice estate where he could invite his friends and enjoy life without interruption ('sine interpellationibus', the very phrase Suetonius uses of Augustus in retreat).[32] While business (*negotium*) may have been the reality of Roman life in Syracuse, escapism (*otium*) was a huge part of the fantasy. It was a city of dreams, but more often than not these were broken ones.

There was, moreover, something peculiarly suggestive about the city's topography. Syracuse is a city with an extension, or so it appears. Just as reaching Sicily requires a sea crossing from Italy, so Ortygia, the most ancient part of Syracuse, is a virtual island separated by a narrow channel of sea (it was known as the 'Insula' in Cicero's day[33]) and joined by a bridge to the mainland (thus Dionysius' private retreat on Ortygia, cut off by a canal, was an island within an island within an island).[34] Ortygia to Syracuse, Sicily to Italy: each could be seen as the annexe or garden shed to the main house, despite the fact that Ortygia was the original, the quintessential part of the city, just as Syracuse was the 'marrow' of Sicily and Sicily was acknowledged to be more ancient than Rome. In addition, this city on the eastern coast looked out towards the Peloponnese and its mother-city Corinth, in other words towards a corresponding part of Greece 'tacked onto' the mainland, whose 'island' status was also marked in its name, a part, again, separated from the whole by an isthmus roughly equivalent to the Straits of Messina.[35] Meanwhile, the notorious impregnability of Syracuse's fortress Achradina added an idea of remoteness, the safety of its harbour a vision of peace and quiet. All of this provided a unique analogy for the relationship between main house and supplementary retreat. 'Garden shed' is not

[28] See Loicq-Berger, op. cit. (n. 26), 273 for 'un goût du grandiose' as a Syracusan characteristic, presumably by association with the tyrants' megalomaniac ambitions (she also cites the suggestive phrase of R. Rochefort, *Travail et travailleurs en Sicile. Étude de géographie sociale*, unpub. doctoral thesis, Lyon (1961): 'l'hypertrophie du moi sicilien').

[29] Sen., *Marc.* 17.2. See C. E. Manning, *On Seneca's "Ad Marciam"* (1981), G. Garbarino, '*Secum peregrinari*: il tema del viaggio in Seneca', in *De tuo tibi. Omaggio degli allievi a Italo Lana* (1996), 263–85 and S. Montiglio, 'Should the aspiring wise man travel? A conflict in Seneca's thought', *AJP* 4 (2006), 553–86, especially 567.

[30] Wilson, op. cit. (n. 21), 28.

[31] Cic., *Planc.* 26.65–27.65.

[32] Cic., *Off.* 3.14.58–9. Cf. Sen., *NQ* 4 *praef.* 1: 'delectat te, quemadmodum scribis, Lucili uirorum optime, Sicilia et officium procurationis otiosae.'

[33] Cic., *Verr.* 2.4.117: 'eorum coniunctione pars oppidi quae appellatur Insula, mari disiuncta angusto, ponte rursus adiungitur et continetur.'

[34] See the maps in Wilson, op. cit. (n. 21), 160–1.

[35] An 'umbilical' link commemorated in the various myths of a submarine stream connecting the Peloponnesian river Alpheius with the Syracusan spring Arethusa: Mosch., fr. 3 Gow; Virg., *Aen.* 3.694–6; Ov., *Met.* 3.6.29–30; Stat., *Silv.* 1.2.203–8 (rationalized by Strabo, 6.2.4 C271).

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as anachronistic as it seems. Recommending Sicily to his audience in the *Verrines*, Cicero describes this 'fruitful province' ('fructuosam … prouinciam') as the country farm to Rome's city house: 'Our provinces and subject states are like the farms of Rome: just as you take most pleasure in estates that are easy to get to, so the suburban quality (*suburbanitas*) of this province [Sicily] is a joy (*iucunda*) to Rome.'[36] In *Pro Plancio*, he describes Sicily affectionately as a 'second home' for which his mind's eye longed.[37]

How far, then, *was* Syracuse from Rome? Technically about 450 miles or a week's journey, but conceptually the distance was more elastic. Horace judged Lucilius' poem about travelling to his Sicilian estates a never-ending ramble.[38] Was going to Syracuse really just like going to one's allotment, one's summer house in the suburbs, or was it a journey into the back of beyond? Cicero praises the efficient communications between Sicily and Rome, but also presumes that, for metropolitan Romans, being posted to Sicily was the equivalent of being sent to Congo or Tangier.[39] Augustus' presumed phrase 'I'm just going across to Syracuse' sounds like another of his notorious jokes, as though he were pretending to be making a real journey to a real place (the verb *transire* is standard for making a sea crossing[40]). A similar confusion arises in Shakespeare's account of the death of Henry IV, who it was prophesied would die in Jerusalem and did indeed die in the Jerusalem chamber of the Palace of Westminster (which also contained a Jericho and a Samaria).[41] Mythologically, in any case, Sicily has always been a movable island.[42] Virgil in *Aeneid* 3 describes the primeval convulsions that first split it from Italy; Silius Italicus minimizes the stone's-throw distance between the two by calling the Straits of Messina so narrow that dogs' barks and cocks' crows can be heard across them.[43] Yet the political distance could be as decisive as the geographical one was minute. Cicero recalls his shock

[36] Cic., *Verr.* 2.2.6–7. See further F. Sartori, '*Suburbanitas Siciliae*', in P. Händel and W. Meid (eds), *Festschrift für R. Muth* (1983), 415–23. Cf. Cic., *Verr.* 2.5.157: 'suburbana et fidelis prouincia, plena optimorum sociorum honestissimorumque ciuium'; 2.3.66: 'prouincia suburbana' (bracketed as corrupt in Peterson's OCT); Flor. 2.2.15, 3.19.3: 'suburbana prouincia'; Plin., *HN* 16.38. See Cic., *Fam.* 9.7.2 on Sardinia as a 'farm' so minor that Caesar has not yet inspected it. On Sicily as appendage to Italy, see Strabo 6.2.7 C272, 6.4.1 C286. For its nearness (*propinquitas*), rhetorically manipulated to suggest the close economic relationship with Rome, see Cic., *Verr.* 2.2.5–6, 2.3.64, 2.3.211, with R. Scuderi, 'La raffigurazione ciceroniana della Sicilia e dei suoi abitanti: un fattore ambientale per la condanna di Verre', in C. Stella and A. Valvo (eds), *Studi in onore di Albino Garzetti* (1996), 409–30. Horace makes the equation of province and farm implicit in his near-juxtaposition of two *Epistles*, 1.12 and 1.14: Iccius, procurator of Agrippa's Sicilian estates, is to Agrippa (Augustus' provincial deputy) what the surly bailiff of the Sabine farm is to Horace. See M. C. J. Putnam, 'From lyric to letter: Iccius in Horace *Odes* 1.29 and *Epistles* 1.12', *AJP* 116 (1995), 193–207 on Horace's play with cornucopias, fruitfulness and profit (*fructus*), both material and philosophical, in a poem focused on a semi-independent addressee on a semi-removed island. For Augustus' own procuratorial joke, see Plut., *Mor.* 207c (= Malcovati, op. cit. (n. 20), 16): asked if Theodotus procurator of Sicily was bald or a thief, the emperor answered, 'Yes'.

[37] Cic., *Planc.* 40.95: 'Siciliam petiui animo, quae et ipsa erat mihi, sicut domus una coniuncta.' It is worth remembering that Augustus' alternative to 'Syracuse' was a freedman's suburban farm: Suet., *Aug.* 72.2.

[38] Hor., *Sat.* 1.5; Lucil. 97–147 Marx = 94–148 Warmington.

[39] Cic., *Fam.* 6.8.2: 'propinquitas locorum uel ad impetrandum adiuuat crebris litteris et nuntiis uel ad reditus celeritatem re aut impetrata'; *Planc.* 26.65–27.65 (see above); *Att.* 15.11.1: (Cassius insulted at the prospect of being given a government commission to buy corn in Sicily) 'egone ut beneficium accepissem contumeliam?'

[40] *OLD* s.v. 1.

[41] Shakespeare, *Henry IV Part II*, Act IV, Scene v, lines 234–41. Israel Shatzman alerts me to a parallel confusion: 'Strato's Tower' was the name given both to Caesarea and to an underground passage in the Hasmonaean Baris in Jerusalem, where Judas the Essene correctly predicted that Antigonus, brother of Aristobulus I, would die (Joseph., *BJ* 1.78–80; *Ant.* 13.309–13).

[42] S. Spence, 'The straits of empire: Sicily from Vergil to Dante', in T. Barolini (ed.), *Medieval Constructions in Gender and Identity: Essays in Honor of Joan M. Ferrante* (2006), 133–50 stresses the distance, physically minimal but conceptually critical, between Italy and Rome's first province.

[43] Virg., *Aen.* 3.414–19; Sil., *Pun.* 14.20–22: 'sed spatium, quod dissociat consortia terrae, | latratus fama est (sic arta interuenit unda) | et matutinos uolucrum tramittere cantus.'

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at being refused entry to Sicily in 58 B.C. by his one-time friend, the praetor there: 'Just as the island seemed to be stretching out its arms towards me, he refused to let me land.'[44]

III THE VIEW FROM SYRACUSE

One reason that the modern identification of Augustus' 'studiolo' on the Palatine is unconvincing is that it is a room without windows. True, some of the ancients did use their private rooms to realize fantasies of total isolation: Quintilian tells us about Demosthenes' padded cell, but Plutarch says the room in question was a basement (like the bunker Augustus went to in order to escape lightning).[45] Maybe there is little point in hypothesizing about the specifications of a place that probably never existed. But Suetonius does say that Augustus' room was high up (*in edito*), which suggests that 'Syracuse' was important not just as a place to go to, but also as a place to look out from.[46] Many legends grew up about visibility from Sicily, suggesting its status almost as triangular watchtower of the Mediterranean, from which three crucial nations, Carthage (from Lilybaeum), Greece (from Pelorus, nearest to Syracuse) and Italy (from Messina), could be surveyed.[47] A story circulated about a Sicilian Greek, possibly called Strabo like the geographer, who stood on the promontory at Lilybaeum and was able to count ships as they left the harbour at Carthage (200 km away).[48] Cicero conjures up the agony of a live Roman citizen, Gavius of Compsa, deliberately crucified by Verres in a spot overlooking the Straits so that he could appreciate the narrow gap between slavery in Messina and freedom in Regium on the other side.[49] Valerius Maximus tells how Hannibal executed a helmsman who failed to convince him that the distance between Italy and Sicily could be so tiny (and thus caused him to sail back to Africa).[50] The helmsman was cleared after his death and a statue erected of him looking out to sea ('speculatrix statua angusti atque aestuosi maris') above the straits as a monument to Punic temerity.[51]

Another occurrence of the rare word *speculatrix* can be found in Statius, *Silv*. 2.2, where the villa of Pollius Felix at Sorrento is introduced as 'speculatrix uilla' (3), because its many rooms look out on different islands in the bay of Puteoli: 'Why should I recount the numberless summits and changing views? Each chamber has its own delight, its own particular sea' (Loeb translation, Mozley).[52] Seneca, too, describes elevated villas, poised

[44] Cic., *Planc*. 40.96: 'cum ipsa paene insula mihi sese obuiam ferre uellet, praetor ille … me in Siciliam uenire noluit.'

[45] Quint. 10.3.25: 'Demosthenes melius, qui se in locum ex quo nulla exaudiri vox et ex quo nihil prospici posset recondebat, ne aliud agere mentem cogerent oculi. ideoque lucubrantes silentium noctis et clusum cubiculum et lumen unum velut †rectos† maxime teneat'; Plut., *Dem*. 7. Augustus' bunker: Suet., *Aug*. 90.

[46] Cic., *Verr*. 2.4.117: 'situ … ex omni aditu uel terra uel mari praeclaro ad aspectum.' On the sights of Sicily, and above all Syracuse: Cic., *Verr*. 2.5.68; Sen., *Marc*. 17.2, 6; Ov., *Ex Pont*. 2.10.22–9.

[47] Strabo 6.1.5 C257, 6.2.1 C265–6.

[48] Cic., *Acad*. 2.81; Varro ap. Plin., *HN* 7.85; Strabo 6.2.1 C267; Val. Max. 1.2; Solinus 1.99; and Ael., *Var. Hist*. 11.13. S. Pothecary, 'Strabo the geographer: his name and its meaning', *Mnemosyne* 52 (1999), 691–704, at 695 calls this figure 'surely fictional'.

[49] Cic., *Verr*. 2.5.169: 'ex cruce Italiam cernere ac domum suam prospicere posset? … Italiae conspectus ad eam rem ab isto delectus est, ut ille in dolore cruciatuque moriens perangusto fretu diuisa seruitutis ac libertatis iura cognosceret.'

[50] Val. Max. 9.8 ext. 1: 'dum tam paruo spatio Italiam Siciliamque inter se diuisas non credit.'

[51] The Polla elogium (*ILLRP* 454 Degrassi) records a road built *ad fretum ad statuam*, which suggests that there might have been a complementary statue on the Italian side. A. M. Prestianni, 'Il Peloro nell'antichità: miti scienze storia', in B. Gentili and A. Pinzone (eds), *Messina e Reggio nell'antichità: storia, società, cultura* (2002), 141–84 discusses Pelorus' etymological and cultural associations with the gigantesque and mentions a 'tower' in Strabo (3.5.5 C171) possibly identical to the statue.

[52] Stat., *Silv*. 2.2.3: 'celsa Dicarchei speculatrix uilla profundi'; 2.2.83–5: 'quid mille reuoluam | culmina uisendique uices? sua cuique uoluptas | atque omni proprium thalamo mare'. See H.-J. Van Dam, *P. Papinius Statius, Siluae Book II: A Commentary* (1984); C. Newlands, *Statius' Silvae and the Poetics of Empire* (2002),

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above the countryside for a panoramic vista, as 'almost military'.[53] Like islands, towers were look-out points, and Augustus' 'Syracuse' might well be imagined as a tower with views on all sides, a *speculatrix turris* offering a virtual *periplous* equivalent to the geographers' tours of the triangular island to which its original belonged (though the most obvious view from the city itself would have been towards Greece).[54] The queen of all the rooms in Pollius' villa is the *diaeta* at the top, facing Naples, which for Statius is the perfect Greek city, home of his hero Virgil and headquarters of the Epicurean cult that inspired this villa's own *placida quies*: *Silv*. 2.2.83–5, 'una tamen cunctis, procul eminet una diaetis | quae tibi Parthenopen derecto limite ponti | ingerit'; 131–2, 'celsa tu mentis ab arce | despicis errantes humanaque gaudia rides.' Livy calls Archimedes an astronomer, a 'spectator caeli siderumque', and Silius Italicus credits him with the building of a ten-storey tower, from which he could view the sky.[55] Marcellus, in several accounts, stands on a high hill outside Syracuse to survey his victory. Thus a single room towering above the rest might recall the metaphorical and physical pre-eminence of some very different Syracusan heroes, with their shared, almost ethereal distraction from the here and now.[56]

All the uncertainty in these *topographical* relationships — Italy to Sicily, Sicily to Syracuse, Syracuse to Ortygia, supplementary but original part versus younger mainland, Sicily as both destination and watchtower — is generally reflected in the historical and cultural relationship of Syracuse to Rome. Katherine Clarke has observed that Strabo's geographic scheme of the world — inseparable, she claims, from his historical scheme — made Rome the unquestioned epicentre. But as she points out, this scheme still allowed for various cities of the Empire, especially old Greek ones, to stand out as potential cultural rivals to the metropolis. Naples, for example, was 'a welcome retreat from the pressures of Rome' (Strabo 5.4.7 C246), where, 'absorbed in the city's Greek ambience', Augustus also chose to die (Suet., *Aug*. 98.5).[57] It was these once glorious subject cities that offered cultural and architectural models to Rome, not vice versa: thus the temple of Aphrodite at Eryx in Sicily was the model for the temple of Venus Erycina near the Colline Gate (Strabo 6.2.6), vowed by the Romans as an act of contrition.[58] Proud Sicily was reduced to being the supplier, the 'bread-basket' or 'treasury' of Rome, the 'nurse' or 'storeroom' of the Roman people.[59] Yet Syracuse held its own as 'fairest of cities'. Again, we find the hierarchy between centre and periphery significantly skewed.

154–98. The villa of Lucullus in Phaedrus' anecdote about the emperor Tiberius similarly looks out on both the Sicilian and the Tyrrhenian seas: 2.5.10, 'prospectat Siculum et respicit Tuscum mare'. Pliny's favourite suite in his Laurentine villa (*Ep*. 2.17.20) overlooks the sea on one side, the land on the other.

[53] Sen., *Ep*. 51.11: 'uidebatur hoc magis militare, ex edito speculari late longeque subiecta … scies non uillas sed castra.'

[54] Stephen Harrison suggests to me a link with the 'Tower of Maecenas' in Rome, from which Nero allegedly fiddled while Rome burned (Suet., *Nero* 38): see C. Ampolo, 'Livio I, 44, 3: la casa di Servio Tullio, l'Esquilino e Mecenate', *PP* 51 (1996), 27–32. Cic., *Tusc*. 5.59 alleges that Dionysius I was so afraid of public meetings that he conducted them from a tall tower: 'cum in communibus suggestis consistere non auderet, contionari ex turri alta solebatur.' H. Lauter, *Die Architektur des Hellenismus* (1986), 225–6 suggests that Augustus' 'Syracuse' was inspired specifically by look-out towers like those found in houses in the theatre quarter of Delos, via a presumed link with Sicily.

[55] Sil., *Pun*. 14.300–2: 'turris, multiplici surgens ad sidera tecto, | exibat, tabulata decem cui crescere Graius | fecerat et multas nemorum consumpserat umbras'; 14.341–9: 'uir fuit Isthmiacis decus immortale colonis, | ingenio facile ante alios telluris alumnus, | nudus opum, sed cui caelum terraeque paterent. | ille, nouus pluuias Titan ut proderet ortu | fuscatis tristis radiis; ille haereat anne | pendeat instabilis tellus; cur foedere certo | hunc affusa globum Tethys circumligit undis, | nouerat atque una pelagi lunaeque labores, | et pater Oceanus qua lege effunderet aestus.'

[56] See Jaeger, op. cit. (n. 3, 2008), 95–7. Virgil, too, remarks on Marcellus' metaphorical pre-eminence: *Aen*. 6.855–6, 'aspice ut insignis spoliis Marcellus opimis | ingreditur uictorque uiris supereminet omnis?'

[57] K. Clarke, *Between Geography and History: Hellenistic Constructions of the Roman World* (2001), 224.

[58] ibid., 225.

[59] Strabo 6.2.7 C273: ταμεῖον τῆς Ῥώμης; Cic., *Verr*. 2.2.5: 'itaque ille M. Cato Sapiens cellam penariam rei publicae nostrae, nutricem plebis Romanae Siciliam nominabat. nos uero experti sumus … nobis non pro penaria cella sed pro aerario illo maiorum uetere ac referto fuisse.'

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Just how seriously, then, should we consider the political implications of the name? Woldemar Görler has put Augustus' 'Syracuse', together with the modern city Syracuse in New York State, at the head of a collection of examples of real or mythological place-names given by the Romans and their successors to special parts of their houses, gardens and colonies.[60] Cicero admired Atticus' garden Amaltheion, for example, birthplace of Zeus, and wanted one for himself; he built his own 'Lyceum' and 'Academy' on his Tusculan farm. Hadrian's theme park at Tivoli famously included a Vale of Tempe, a Stoa Poikile, a Canopus, and even, 'so that nothing was left out' of this Grand Tour, Hades itself.[61] Of course, Görler argues, these names draw on more than topological analogies: they create an imaginary, hotchpotch panorama of the Romans' cultural heritage. But for him they are ultimately sentimental; he regards antiquity as a time-free zone, a scrapyard of columns and grottoes to be casually pillaged. A more historicized, more politicized reading is offered by Bettina Bergmann, who argues that the Romans' romantic nostalgia for their cultural heritage is based stickily on the 'appropriation of another people's past for self-definition'.[62] In real life, these names and their associations were the cultural products of conquered cities: the picturesque ruins of Roman gardens stood on the metaphorical or sometimes real ruins of subject states of the Roman Empire.[63] Perhaps this is a bit momentous for every landscaped Euripus, every suburban Tempe, but Augustus' 'Syracuse' would appear to be the epitome of just such an ambivalent place: supplementary in a political sense, essential in a cultural one. The name evoked a city 'annexed' to Rome but emblazoned with an independent identity and, more importantly, a tyrannical past — harbouring possessions, material and cultural, that were still objects of desire.

In this particular case, however, there is a further historical dimension to consider. It is not just that Augustus was a reader of history, an inheritor of cultural myths. For him, Syracuse was a living place. He had been there at least twice, indeed had played a crucial part in its recent history. We need the two perspectives at once — *both* Augustus' inherited view of the historical associations of Syracuse *and* his own experience of *imperium* on the ground — to explain the meaning of his city in the clouds, whether or not it was ever a real re-creation and whether, even if it was, we can find traces of it now.

IV ARCHIMEDES AND THE SIEGE OF SYRACUSE

As we have seen, a cluster of connected elements — the idea of retreat from public life, the inventor's workshop and the remote and elevated stronghold — would seem to lie behind Suetonius' account of 'Syracuse' and help to 'thicken up' the basic association that Stahr made between Augustus and Archimedes. Yet despite their potential for being dispersed among different personalities and scenarios, all these elements nevertheless find concentrated form in the myths surrounding a particular historical moment, a crucial one in the biography of Syracuse's most celebrated and polymathic son — inventor of the

[60] W. Görler, 'Syracusae auf dem Palatin; Syracuse, New York: Sentimentale Namengebung in Rom und später', in W. Görler and S. Koster (eds), *Pratum Saraviense: Festgabe für Peter Steinmetz* (1990), 169–83.

[61] Cic., *Tusc.* 2.9, *Div.* 1.8, *Att.* 1.31.1 (Amaltheion); Cic., *Att.* 1.4.3, 1.6.2, 1.9.2, 1.10.3, 1.15, *Fam.* 7.23.2, *Q. Fr.* 3.9.7 (Lyceum and Academy); *SHA*, *Hadrian* 26.5: 'Tiburtinam uillam mire exaedificauit, ita ut ea et prouinciarum et locorum celeberrima nomina inscriberet, uelut Lyceum, Academian, Prytaneum, Canopum, Poicilen, Tempe uocaret. et, ut nihil praetermitteret, etiam inferos finxit.'

[62] B. Bergmann, 'Meanwhile, back in Italy …: Creating landscapes of allusion', in S. E. Alcock, J. F. Cherry and J. Elsner (eds), *Pausanias: Travel and Memory in Roman Greece* (2001), 154–66.

[63] T. Hägg's map of the locations of Greek novel plots, which span the eastern Mediterranean from Syracuse and Tarentum to Antioch and Ethiopia (*The Novel in Antiquity* (1980), endpapers charting the routes of Xenophon's *Ephesian Tale*), is the ultimate inspiration for F. Moretti's controversial European novel 'maps' (*Atlas of the European Novel, 1800–1900* (1998), 52). Greek-facing Syracuse could claim to be a Roman's first point of contact with this 'romantic' quarter of the known world.

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claw, the screw and the sun-reflecting mirrors, astronomer, strategist, engineer, architect, and bathtub mathematician.[64] The story of Archimedes' death is narrated most vividly by Valerius Maximus. While the Roman general Marcellus was besieging the city during the Second Punic War, his soldiers came across Archimedes while he was obliviously drawing geometrical diagrams in the dust. When challenged to give his name, he refused and said instead to them, demonstrating his single-minded obsession with mathematics, 'I beg you, don't disturb me' (or, translating the original Greek, 'don't disturb these circles', the shapes he was drawing). The appeal fell on deaf ears, and he was brutally murdered, his spilled blood, Valerius adds, obliterating the drawings on the ground.[65] In its context, the story is an *exemplum* illustrating the wholehearted dedication of the Greeks to intellectual pursuits. Archimedes, practical designer of many of the lethal weapons with which Syracuse and its tyrant Hiero had resisted the Roman siege, is frozen at his moment of greatest abstraction, in the city and yet removed from it, in 'head in the clouds' (or rather, 'head on the ground') contemplation of eternal mathematical truths. We can draw another conclusion: the name Augustus gave his private retreat is effectively a giant 'Do not disturb' sign.

But the story has deeper implications. As Mary Jaeger has shown decisively in *Archimedes and the Roman Imagination*, Syracuse and its most famous alumnus function as virtual equivalents in the history of the Roman Empire.[66] This Sicilian *homunculus*, as Cicero affectionately calls him, provided a focus for the Romans to rehearse their guilt and mixed feelings towards the conquest of the Greeks and their colonies, and towards their own claim to a share of intellectual prestige. Indeed, Archimedes plays a large part in Cicero's own self-creation with regard to the Greek past, most famously in an extended digression in *Tusculan Disputations*, a work in which Cicero plays mediator of Greek thought to a resistant Roman audience, describing his heroic rediscovery of Archimedes' overgrown tomb in ruined Syracuse, the spot marked by a give-away sphere inscribed within a cylinder.[67] In her sharp reading of this passage, Jaeger shows how Cicero both fashions himself *in opposition* to the mathematician, enlightened Roman master versus ruined Greek subject, and superimposes himself on Archimedes' image, inventing himself both as upholder of universal standards of humanity and as indefatigable investigator, whether of intellectual discoveries or, in this case, of the authentic sepulchre of a *homo acutissimus* under the brambles of a ruined cemetery.[68] In other words, this is Cicero's own 'Eureka' moment.[69]

The other famous legend of Roman contrition focused on Syracuse is the account, found in Livy and Plutarch, of how the general Marcellus wept while looking over the city from a high place and seeing that the Romans were responsible for destroying it.[70] This

[64] On Archimedes' life, see E. J. Dijksterhuis, *Archimedes*, trans. C. Dikshoorns (1987). Jaeger, op. cit. (n. 3, 2008), 77–100 draws attention to the importance of genre and framing in shaping the various literary biographies.
[65] Val. Max. 7 ext. 7. See also Polyb. 8.3; Cic., *Verr.* 2.1.131; Livy 25.31.9; Plin., *HN* 7.125; Sil., *Pun.* 14.676–8; Plut., *Marc.* 19.4–6; with Jaeger, op. cit. (n. 3, 2008), 77–100 for a subtle discussion of authorial agendas in each case. For visual representations of Archimedes' death, see F. Winter, 'Der Tod des Archimedes', *82. Winckelmannsprogramm der Archäologischen Gesellschaft zu Berlin* (1924). On the tradition of representing Greek philosophers' deaths as appropriate to their teachings, see A. Chitwood, *Death by Philosophy: The Biographical Tradition in the Life and Death of the Archaic Philosophers, Empedocles, Heraclitus, and Democritus* (2004).
[66] Jaeger, op. cit. (n. 3, 2008), *passim*, especially 91–3.
[67] Cic., *Tusc.* 5.64–6.
[68] Jaeger, op. cit. (n. 3, 2002); eadem, op. cit. (n. 3, 2008), 32–47.
[69] Metonymy for the consummate investigation of his career, the prosecution of Verres: see Butler, op. cit. (n. 27). For Cicero and Archimedes as investigators: (Cicero) Cic., *Tusc.* 5.64, 'ego quaestor … indagaui'; *Tusc.* 5.65, 'dixi me illud ipsum arbitrari esse quod quaererem'; (Archimedes) Val. Max. 8.7 ext. 7, 'propter nimiam cupiditatem inuestigandi'; Vitr. 9 *praef.* 10, 'inuenisse quod quaereret'.
[70] Livy 25.24.11–14; Plut., *Marc.* 19.1–2. Sil., *Pun.* 14.666–7 also describes Marcellus looking down on the city from a high rampart: 'sublimis de alto | aggere despexit.' See E. M. Carawan, 'The tragic history of Marcellus and Livy's characterization', *CJ* 80 (1984), 131–41; J. Marincola, 'Marcellus at Syracuse (Livy XXV, 24, 11–15):

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unusual case of Roman sensibility has been interpreted as cultural homage to earlier Greek models: it is a sign of Marcellus' attested philhellenism that he gestures towards a long tradition of weeping by the victorious party, known from the *Iliad* and elsewhere in Livy, to mark a *peripeteia* in history, when one cycle of power had come to an end and another was beginning to flourish on the upturn.[71] Here, Rome, the central subject of Livy's history, rises, is increased (*aucta*), by Syracuse's fall, but the moment is marked by generous and spontaneous mourning.

Worse was to follow with the removal to Rome of the city's priceless artworks, the Elgin Marbles of their day, an event interpreted both as a moral and aesthetic watershed and as a curse.[72] Livy implies that, though Marcellus piously dedicated the spoils to adorn the temples of Honos and Virtus, this opened the floodgates for the opportunistic and impious despoiling of Greek sites that was to tarnish the Romans' reputation as colonists, the same acquisitive and philistine approach Cicero had deplored in Verres, predatory governor of Sicily, whom he had modelled in the image of a Sicilian tyrant.[73] Plutarch (*Marc.* 21.1–2) sees the event rather as an aesthetic triumph for the Greeks: the Syracusan spoils civilized Rome and brought about a revolution in the appreciation of art for art's sake. Writers like Polybius (9.10.3–13) saw the spoils as tainted, arguing that they excited *phthonos* among the disinherited foreign visitors to Rome. And as with Cicero's story, a personal element is involved. Marcellus is said to have kept behind only one looted object for himself, the second of two *sphaerae*, or orreries, the one made by Archimedes himself, while he dedicated the older, more attractive one in his temple, attempting to ward off *hubris* in the process.[74] But the *Roma aucta* launched by Syracuse was already a Rome in moral decline, its downhill progress encapsulated in the general's own post-Syracusan fortunes, with Syracuse seen by Livy as the *peripeteia* of Marcellus' own tragedy, which responded to Thucydides' tragic account of Athens two centuries before.[75]

Marcellus' acts of contrition seem to have set a precedent for later conquerors. Not only did Augustus devote care to restoring the city in 21 B.C., but so, rather puzzlingly, we are told, did Caligula only a few decades later.[76] Hadrian, too, is depicted on a denarius raising a kneeling Sicily from the ground and is described as *restitutor Siciliae*.[77] 'Restoring Sicily',

a historian reflects', in *Studies in Latin Literature and Roman History* (2005), 219–29; Jaeger, op. cit. (n. 3, 2003); eadem, op. cit. (n. 3, 2008), 85–100. In general on Marcellus and Syracuse, see A. M. Eckstein, *Senate and General: Individual Decision-Making and Roman Foreign Relations, 264–194 B. C.* (1987), 157–69; E. S. Gruen, *Culture and National Identity: Republican Rome* (1983), 94–103.

[71] A. Rossi, 'The tears of Marcellus: history of a literary motif in Livy', *G&R* 47 (2000), 56–66. Scipio's tearful reaction to the sack of Carthage in 146 B.C. (Diod. 32.24) was a correspondingly self-conscious response to the cycles of history: see Feeney, op. cit. (n. 22), 54–6.

[72] M. McDonnell, 'Roman aesthetics and the spoils of Syracuse', in S. Dillon and K. E. Welch (eds), *Representations of War in Ancient Rome* (2006), 68–90.

[73] Livy 25.40.1. Cic., *Verr.* 2.4.121 alleges that, by contrast with Verres, Marcellus siphoned none of the spoils off to private houses, profaned no sanctuaries, and left many exceptional objects in Syracuse ('Syracusis autem permulta atque egregia reliquit'). Jaeger, op. cit. (n. 3, 2008), 88 notes some significant members of Cicero's audience: a descendant, C. Marcellus, proconsul of Sicily in 79 B.C., was among the *iudices* at Verres' trial, while another Marcellus was a witness for the defence.

[74] Cic., *Rep.* 1.21. See Jaeger, op. cit. (n. 3, 2008), 48–68.

[75] See Carawan, op. cit. (n. 70); T. Harrison, 'Sicily in the Athenian imagination', in Smith and Serrati, op. cit. (n. 21), 84–96; H. Flower, '"Memories" of Marcellus: history and memory in Roman Republican culture', in Eigler, Gotter, Luraghi and Walter, op. cit. (n. 3), 39–52, at 46 on the *damnatio* of Marcellus in some interested historians.

[76] Strabo 6.2.4 C272 (Augustus); Suet., *Gaius* 21: 'Syracusis conlapsa uetustate moenia deorumque aedes refectae' (Caligula). Connors, op. cit. (n. 23), 21, n. 22 correctly divines that Strabo had some explaining away to do in giving Augustus' reasons for not wholly restoring Dionysius' city. R. J. A. Wilson, 'Towns of Sicily during the Empire', *ANRW* 2.11.1 (1988), 90–206, at 113–15 suggests that, thanks to extensive works by Hellenistic kings and republican benefactors, Augustus had little to do other than improve the city's amenities by adding an amphitheatre, porticos and parks.

[77] Wilson, op. cit. (n. 21), 179, fig. 150. Cf. on the temple of Venus at Eryx, Tac., *Ann.* 4.43: 'et Segestani aedem Veneris montem apud Erycum, uetustate dilapsum, restaurari postulauere, nota memorantes de origine eius et

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or 'restoring Syracuse' in particular, should perhaps be understood less as a practical scheme and more as a symbolic gesture on the part of the Roman emperors, whether considered as an act of penance, endlessly repeated tears of guilt, or as an act of resurgence, one that depended on the illusion of a Syracuse always in recovery, its razed monuments testifying to the overthrow of tyrants by legitimate liberators.[78]

If there is one overriding pattern we can extract from these different stories about the siege of Syracuse and its aftermath, it is that their Roman protagonists, Cicero and Marcellus above all, are portrayed each time as wanting to embrace two roles at once: the more easily available one, that of the conquistador, the sometimes compassionate implementer of Roman *imperium moresque*, and the more elusive and more prized one of human being *sans frontières*, a role lodged primarily in these stories with the Greeks, whether exemplified in Archimedes' concern for mathematics or the workings of the universe or in the artistic masterpieces that washed up in Rome or in the civilizing debates they inspired among their new owners. Marcellus' weeping is a philhellenic gesture; Cicero transforms himself into a Greek-style inventor, staging his own attention-stealing moment of discovery at Archimedes' tomb.

At the end of the digression in *Tusculan Disputations*, Cicero offers his readers a stark choice of roles. What civilized human being, he says, would not rather be Archimedes the mathematician than Dionysius the all-powerful but fearful tyrant?[79] The contrast evokes two famous Syracusans, each in his own way supreme, self-absorbed and autonomous.[80] This contrast between (Greek) tyrant and (Greek) mathematician had already been dramatized in a more sensitive *Roman* versus Greek version in the legend of *Marcellus* versus Archimedes, and again in Cicero's own self-centred but responsible encounter with Syracuse's past. In all cases, we can see the Romans hovering uncertainly between the two roles. What I suggest here — and this is where Augustus' 'Syracuse' comes in — is that these precedents must weigh heavily in any momentary textual encounter between a Roman emperor (potential successor, after all, to the Sicilian tyrants[81]) and a dead Greek genius, and at least raise questions about tyranny versus the life of the mind and conquest versus cultural homage. It is possible that Augustus — like Marcellus, like Cicero — wanted a piece of both. Or, even for those who do not believe Augustus' 'Syracuse' was a real place, that the invention of the name embroiled him in or challenged him with responding to three possible roles available to him through contact with the subject-city: tyrant, conqueror and genius all at once.

Nowhere in her work on Archimedes and Syracuse does Mary Jaeger mention Augustus' den named for the Syracusan mathematician. Neither does Catherine Connors, in an ingenious paper that links Syracuse much more closely with Augustus.[82] Her hypothesis is that Chariton's first-century B.C. romance *Chaereas and Callirhoe*, a tale of separated lovers spun in and around Syracuse, is also what she calls a 'history of empire'; this is a

laeta Tiberio'; Suet., *Claud.* 25: 'templumque in Sicilia Veneris Erycinae uetustate conlapsum ut ex aerario pop. R. reficeretur, auctor fuit.'

[78] See W. R. Connor, 'The razing of the house in Greek society', *TAPA* 115 (1985), 79–102, especially 83, citing Timoleon's demolition of Syracusan tyrants' houses in 343/2 B.C. (Plut., *Timol.* 22.1–3).

[79] Cic., *Tusc.* 5.65: 'quis est omnium, qui modo cum Musis, id est cum humanitate et cum doctrina, habeat aliquod commercium, qui se non hunc mathematicum malit quam illum tyrannum?'

[80] Jaeger, op. cit. (n. 3, 2002), 53–4 (cf. eadem, op. cit. (n. 3, 2008), 37 and 173, n. 16) points out that the negative aspects are curiously conflated in Daumier's charcoal sketch of Archimedes dying with a Damoclean sword hanging over his head (B. Laughton, *The Drawings of Daumier and Millet* (1991), 51).

[81] Horace's miniature gigantomachy in *C.* 3.4 blends Pindaric praise for Hiero's foundation of Aetna in *Pythian* 1 with more muted allusions to Augustus' own Sicilian victory over Sextus Pompeius (see Nisbet-Rudd ad loc.). For Syracusan tyrants as cautionary role models, compare *C.* 3.1.17–19: 'destrictus ensis cui super impia | ceruice pendet, non Siculae dapes | dulcem elaborabunt saporem', where the 'sword of Damocles', courtier to Dionysius I, is suspended over an unnamed tyrant (cf. Cic., *Tusc.* 5.21.61–2).

[82] Connors, op. cit. (n. 23).

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novel that blandly accepts its status as a product of contemporary colonial oppression, 'being Greek under Augustus', while legitimizing a past and perhaps also a present history of tyranny in Syracuse. The child born to the couple, temporarily fostered by his mother's first husband, is never named, but Connors argues that he must be called Dionysius after his adoptive father, and thus the end of the novel must look ahead to Syracuse's Golden Age under Dionysius I and tacitly bless the Mediterranean enterprises of Chariton's own emperor, Augustus. In her succinct formulation: 'For Augustus, as for Chariton, Syracuse is a place where you solve a pirate problem and begin an empire.'[83] Although Connors does not mention Augustus' little 'Syracuse', she comes closest to my own view in believing that the romanticized locations of Greek novels (and, by extension, those of Roman houses and gardens) have a meaning for those who encounter and reproduce them beyond that of their celebrated and now ruined past.

V AUGUSTUS AND SYRACUSE

Augustus' personal experience of Sicily is something that we can track throughout the Suetonian *Vita*, starting in the second chapter. Scraping around for a distinguished ancestor for the emperor, Suetonius records the following fact: Augustus' great-grandfather served in Sicily as military tribune under Aemilius Papus in the Second Punic War, while his grandfather was content with municipal office in a small Italian town.[84] This is what other people write, says Suetonius: Augustus in his autobiography (now lost) wrote merely (*nihil amplius quam*) that he had come from an old equestrian family and that his father was the first member to become senator (this in the face of taunts from Antony that his great-grandfather was a freedman and a rope-maker from near Thurii, his grandfather an *argentarius*, and his maternal grandfather an African who kept a baker's shop in Aricia). Whatever the truth about the great-grandfather, Augustus' silence about him is interesting and might, I suggest, be connected with a later event in his life. Some time before 54 B.C., his sister Octavia, trophy wife *par excellence*, married Gaius Claudius Marcellus Minor. With that marriage, Augustus' connections with Sicily took a leap up the social scale; indeed, they gave him, from childhood, instant access to the aristocratic hall of fame. Through his brother-in-law, then through his new nephew and adopted heir (also Marcellus), he acquired the most famous 'Sicilian' ancestor of all: the glorious conqueror, the conscientious objector, the philhellenic Republican general M. Marcellus, the one who wept tears of contrition and historical sensibility at the same siege of Syracuse. Later generations of the Marcelli continued to live off that Marcellus' reputation: as a result of their family name, they enjoyed the same quasi-Hellenistic ruler cult (including the annual games, the Marcellia) among the Syracusans in perpetuity.[85] In other words, Octavia's marriage into that particular family brought with it a special relationship with Syracuse.

Marcellus died tragically young in 23 B.C., but it is clear how hard up to that point Augustus was working to cement the relationship and intertwine the two family trees, first by marrying his henchman Agrippa to Marcellus' sister Claudia Marcella in 28 B.C. and

[83] Connors, op. cit. (n. 23), 19.
[84] Suet., *Aug.* 2.2–3.
[85] See e.g. Cic., *Verr.* 2.2.51; also Hor., *C.* 1.12.45–6: 'crescit occulto uelut arbor aeuo | fama Marcelli', with Nisbet-Hubbard ad loc. (this Pindaric image creates a family tree that ties the conqueror of Syracuse to his Marcellan descendants, the 'late efflorescence of three successive consuls in the last years of the Republic'). On the Late Republican revival of Marcellus' reputation, see Flower, op. cit. (n. 75). On the Marcellan 'cult' in Syracuse, see J. Rives, 'Marcellus and the Syracusans', *CP* 88 (1993), 32–5; R. F. Glei, 'The show must go on: the death of Marcellus and the future of the Augustan principate (*Aeneid* 6.860–86)', in H.-P. Stahl (ed.), *Vergil's Aeneid: Augustan Epic and Political Context* (1998), 119–34. See also E. Gabba, 'Posidonio, Marcello e la Sicilia', in M. L. Gualandi, L. Massei and S. Settis (eds), ΑΠΑΡΧΑΙ. *Nuove ricerche e studi sulla Magna Grecia e la Sicilia antica in onore di Paolo Enrico Arias* (1982), vol. 2, 611–14 (= *Aspetti culturali dell'imperialismo romano* (1993), 79–88).

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then Marcellus himself to his own daughter Julia in 25 B.C. (just as he would work hard to bind his family to the Claudii when he took Tiberius as his heir).[86] Can it be a coincidence that 21 B.C., when he visited Syracuse to start the symbolic restoration of the city, was the same year that, following a decent interval after Marcellus' death, he cut his losses and made Agrippa marry Julia? Did this make the visit an act of continued *pietas* or one of subtle infiltration? This is, again, speculative, but could it be that he allowed *himself* to represent the Marcelli that year and enjoy the festival held in their honour? In other words, in real-life Syracuse, just as in the imaginative one, Augustus might have been playing at being Marcellus quite as much as he was playing Archimedes.[87]

Was there in any case more overlap than we might think between the two roles, just as we saw there was between Archimedes and Dionysius? Plutarch's 'Life of Archimedes' is a miniature inset into his *Life of Marcellus*: the two are paradoxically merged, two unique, great-hearted, Greek-biased men, head and shoulders above their peers.[88] They are connected in other ways as well. It has been argued that the theatre built in Marcellus' honour in Rome was a concrete representation of celestial and terrestrial hemispheres (reproducing Archimedes' spheres). We learn that the tutors Augustus provided for Marcellus were an Academic philosopher and a specialist in siege-warfare, both Greeks. No wonder that it is hard to tell whether Virgil's famous contrast at *Aen.* 6.847–53, between the cerebral and artistic achievements of the Greeks (Syracusans, and Archimedes in particular, Jaeger suggests) and the imperial achievements of the Romans, entirely excludes the two Marcelli who appear in the subsequent procession from any tinge of philhellenic *paideia*.[89] In reality, Augustus' imperial treatment of Syracuse was pragmatic, striking a careful middle path between veneration and oppression. Any neo-tyrannical tinge to his activities could be masked by the republican aristocratic model made available to him by the Marcelli. But his private fantasy may have been of sampling all the various kinds of *megaloprepeia*, high-mindedness, offered by the city's earlier protagonists.

In chapter 85 of his *Vita*, Suetonius gives us another tantalizing fact: that among Augustus' (now lost) literary works was a short poem in hexameters called 'Sicily'. We do not know if its subject matter was past or present: Augustus himself, Sicily itself or the deeds of his newly-acquired ancestor. Augustus might have chosen to relate his own exploits against Sextus Pompeius or have somehow claimed kin by telling the *res gestae* of the adopted ancestor Marcellus (as Cicero's *Marius* had enabled him to claim kin with that other famous *nouus homo*). Either way, it is dismissed as dabbling, a half-baked attempt ('poetica summatim attigit'). According to Suetonius' account, Augustus' real-life *Bellum Siculum* was a lacklustre affair, drawn out by storms, shipwreck and famine — for a long time arguably the low point of his rise to power, the occasion when it seemed that Octavian, as he then was, would meet his Waterloo. Eventually, in 36 B.C., he defeated Pompeius at Naulochus, north of Syracuse. But Suetonius tells us something strange about Octavian's behaviour before the final battle. Apparently he succumbed to a catatonic stupor, such a deep sleep that his friends had to wake him up to give him the signal, and even then he spent some time just lying on his back staring up at the sky.[90] Antony was ready with his jeers again; and from the perspective of a military rival this does look more than a bit eccentric. From another point of view, however, it is possible that Octavian was basing his posture self-consciously on legends of Greek, especially Sicilian, thinkers and their remem-

[86] H. Brandt, 'Marcellus' *successioni praeparatus*', *Chiron* 25 (1995), 1–17.
[87] H. Flower, 'The tradition of the *spolia opima*: M. Claudius Marcellus and Augustus', *ClAnt* 19 (2000), 34–59, at 46–59 considers Augustus' re-invention of the 'tradition' of the *spolia opima* among other attempts to foster links with this Republican hero (who had himself, she suggests, originally invented the tradition).
[88] Jaeger, op. cit. (n. 3, 2008), 116–20.
[89] B. Poulle, 'Le théâtre de Marcellus et la sphère', *MEFRA* 111 (1999), 257–72; N. Horsfall, 'Virgil and Marcellus' education', *CQ* 39 (1989), 266–7; Jaeger, op. cit. (n. 3, 2008), 98.
[90] Suet., *Aug.* 16.2: 'ne rectis quidem oculis eum aspicere potuisse instructam aciem, uerum supinum, caelum intuentem, stupidum cubuisse, nec prius surrexisse ac militibus in conspectum uenisse quam a M. Agrippa fugatae sint hostium naues.' Cf. App., *BC* 5.121.

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bered moments of 'time out': Empedocles stumbling into the volcano, the Epicureans focused on long-distance views, or even Archimedes himself. Octavian's eyes are directed away from the surrounding terrestrial conflict (Suetonius puns on *acies*, battleline and line of vision) and fixed on the larger movements of the heavens. His supine, upward-gazing posture complements rather than reproduces the bent form of the *homunculus* fixed on his drawings. But Archimedes is described by Livy as an astronomer, a 'unicus spectator caeli siderumque', and was associated with high-up places, like Silius' tower.[91] What is most remarkable here, however, is the shared element of abstraction, special homage perhaps to the Sicilian location. The episode curiously mimics a legend about Octavian's childhood: that he once mysteriously disappeared from his cot on the ground floor of the house and was found at the top of a tall tower, staring at the rising sun.[92]

We could add to this another possibly 'Archimedean' framework in Augustus' life: the context given for his other attempts at literary composition. He is said to have composed epigrams 'at the time of the bath'. Maybe it is too far-fetched to see the bathroom setting as specifically Archimedean, but Vitruvius does tell us memorably how Archimedes rose naked from his bath-time experiment and ran shouting 'Eureka Eureka' through the streets of Syracuse.[93] It is clear, at least, that Augustus, or his biographer, considered Greek-style nakedness an appropriate condition for the occasional activity of philhellenic verse composition. But once again, the question of biographical influence is complicated. Another well-known anecdote, about Augustus' aborted tragedy *Ajax* — which committed suicide, according to his own *bon mot*, by falling not on its sword but on its sponge — has a more plausible Syracusan model in the grandiose but unsuccessful literary efforts of Dionysius, an earlier royal writer of tragedies.[94]

Dionysius is a more likely ancestor, too, for another of Augustus' areas of inventiveness, in the sphere of words. The Sicilian tyrant was notorious for his proto-Saturnalian puns, such as *menekratēs* ('Menecrates' / 'staying-power') for a column, *iacchos* ('Bacchus' / 'squealer') for a pig, and *mustēria* ('mysteries' / 'mouse insurance') for mouseholes.[95] Both of Augustus' names for his hideaway are Greek, the second of them, *technophu*(*i*)*on*, a hapax, whatever the word might actually be. Suetonius tells us that Augustus, despite initial enthusiasm and the best tutors, never did master Greek proficiently, but we do see in his letters many similar examples of playful neologism and, in his case, bilingual code-switching: he invented a new word *betizare*, 'to wilt like spinach', a Latin variant of the popular Greek adaptation *lachanizare*; he coined a new place-name, *Apragopolis*, 'Lazyville', caricaturing those who went to find *la dolce vita* on Capri; he also wrote extempore comic verses in Greek; and his letters are peppered with playful Grecisms.[96] This capricious, even satirical engagement with the lower end of Greek culture (Suet., *Aug.*

[91] Livy 24.34.1–2; Sil., *Pun.* 14.300–2.

[92] Suet., *Aug.* 94.6: 'infans adhuc, ut scriptum apud C. Drusum exstat, repositus uespere in cunas a nutricula loco plano, postera luce non comparuit diuque quaestius tandem in altissima turri repertus est iacens contra solis exortum.'

[93] Vitr. 9 *praef.* 10.

[94] Suet., *Aug.* 85.2 ('Sicily', Ajax and the baths): 'poetica summatim attigit. unus liber exstat, scriptus ab eo hexametris uersibus, cuius et argumentum et titulus est Sicilia; exstat alter aeque modicus epigrammatum, quae fere tempore balinei meditabatur. nam tragoediam magno impetu exorsus, non succedenti stilo, aboleuit quaerentibusque amicis, quidnam Aiax ageret, respondit, Aiacem suum in spongeam incubuisse.' For Dionysius the tragedian, see Cicero's dim view, one shared by the Greeks, at *Tusc.* 5.63: 'poetam etiam tragicum — quam bonum, nihil ad rem: in hoc genere nescio quo pacto magis quam in aliis suum cuique pulcrum est'; C. O. Zuretti, 'L'attività letteraria dei due Dionisii di Siracusa', *RFIC* 25 (1898), 529–57; 26 (1899), 1–23; W. Süß, 'Der ältere Dionys als Tragiker', *RhM* 109 (1966), 299–318; E. Simon, 'Dramen des älteren Dionysios auf italiotischen Vasen', in Gualandi, Massei and Settis, op. cit. (n. 85), 479–82. For fragments of his work, see A. Nauck (ed.), *Tragicorum Graecorum Fragmenta* (2nd edn, 1889), 616–19 and B. Snell (ed.), *Tragicorum Graecorum Fragmenta*, vol. 1 (1971), 240–6.

[95] Athen. 3.98d.

[96] Suet., *Aug.* 87.2: 'ponit assidue betizare pro languere, quod uulgo lachanizare dicitur'; 98.3–4: 'nullo denique genere hilaritatis abstinuit. uicinam Capreis insulam Apragopolim appellabat, a desidia secedentium illuc e comitatu suo'; 89.1: 'non tamen ut aut [Graece] loqueretur expedite aut componere aliquid auderet; nam et

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98.3: 'nullo denique genere hilaritatis abstinuit') might make us suspect that Augustus only ever positioned himself as a mock-Archimedes or an off-duty Dionysius (I return to this idea later).

Of course, the emperor made more serious attempts to master the Greek world, though it is hard, again, to say whether these are more easily interpreted as Archimedean or Dionysian (or Marcellan).[97] The word Pliny uses of Augustus parcelling up his empire, *descripsit* (sometimes *discripsit*), is the same word Livy and Valerius use of Archimedes drawing geometric diagrams in the sand.[98] Both tyrants and mathematicians could be regarded as geometers, chorographers or mappers of space. Strabo's geography affirmed a world centred on Rome, a world, in Katherine Clarke's words, 'constructed with a periphery and a primary centre', and much of the time emperor and capital city did coincide geographically.[99] But despite his extraordinarily methodical division of the known world into provinces, regions and so on, which includes his division of Sicily into five *coloniae* and one favoured *municipium*, Messina, Augustus was as wilful as any Greek tyrant or later Roman emperor where his own location and locomotion were concerned. He took a fancy to Capri when a moribund tree sprang into life the moment he landed there and managed to persuade the Neapolitans to let him have it in return for another island.[100] He turned up late to official banquets and snacked in his carriage instead; he went to the Esquiline to be ill, to Campania to relax, and to Naples to die.[101] Rather than sitting at the centre of his cosmopolis and keeping to routines, he took the voyage out or sideways, went in search of the source. According to Suetonius, Augustus had excellent first-hand knowledge of the whole of his empire. There were apparently only two provinces he never got to: Africa and Sardinia. In both cases Sicily was the stepping-stone, where he was stranded by storms and prevented from jumping off.[102] One might say that Augustus' 'Syracuse' allowed him to play at drawing his own shapes on the ground and at telescoping his empire into his own city, even into his own house, by incorporating a Sicilian colony known to be offshore, rebellious, magnificent, but always ruined and no longer at its cultural height, into a private fantasy. On his map of the empire, Syracuse was merely an annexe or a suburb.

Did Augustus set any precedents with his private room? We might see Tiberius' withdrawal to an entire favourite island, Capri, 'approached by one tiny harbour and cut off by steep rocks', as the unacceptably permanent and transgressive exaggeration of Augustus' retreat to 'Syracuse' (or of Augustus' own occasional visits to Capri).[103] Caligula held a banquet in a rural tree-house and called it his 'nest'.[104] Hadrian's so-called 'Maritime Theatre', an island retreat within his retreat at Tivoli, came with a retractable drawbridge for supreme isolation (inspired either by 'Syracuse' or directly by accounts of Dionysius' Syracusan island retreat[105]). The emperor Pertinax led his assassins a merry dance through his palace, past the area called *Sicilia et Iouis cenatio*, 'Sicily and Jupiter's

si quid res exigeret, Latine formabat uertendumque alii dabat'. See J. N. Adams, *Bilingualism and the Latin Language* (2003), 11, 311, 331–2, 420.

[97] See G. Bowersock, *Augustus and the Greek World* (1965).

[98] Augustus: Plin., *HN* 3.49: 'ex descriptione Augusti'; 3.46: 'discriptionemque ab eo factam Italiae'; Isid., *Or.* 5.36.4: 'Romanum orbem descripsit'. Archimedes: Livy 25.31.9: '[Archimeden] intentum formis quas in puluere descripserat'; Val. Max. 8.7 ext.7: 'dum animo et oculis in terra defixis formas describit'; Cic., *Fin.* 5.50: 'qui dum in puluere quaedam describit attentius'.

[99] Clarke, op. cit. (n. 57), 210.

[100] Suet., *Aug.* 92.2.

[101] Suet., *Aug.* 72.2, 98.5.

[102] Suet., *Aug.* 47.1.

[103] Suet., *Tib.* 40: 'Capreas se contulit, praecipue delectatus insula, quod uno paruoque litore adiretur, saepta undique praeruptis immensae altitudinis rupibus et profundo mari.' Cf. Suet., *Aug.* 98.1: 'tunc Campaniae ora proximisque insulis circuitis, Caprearum quoque secessu quadriduum impendit, remisissimo ad otium et ad omnem comitatem animo.'

[104] Plin., *HN* 12.5.10. See E. Thomas, *Monumentality and the Roman Empire* (2007), 255 on the architectural concept of *nidificatio*.

[105] See Coarelli, op. cit. (n. 18) and Macdonald and Pinto, op. cit. (n. 18), 81–94.

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Dining Room' (the first was probably the name given to the peristyle adjoining the second, complete with pool and central island; *Iouis cenatio* was the name Domitian gave his grandiose dining room), and then to the inner parts of his house, where he was killed.[106] We learn, significantly, that Pertinax was a reluctant ruler, one who shunned *imperium* and imperial trappings of all kinds and wanted to return to private life,[107] despite the fact that he inherited rooms with names that suggest overweening power.[108] Claudius, another shrinking emperor-to-be, had been plucked from behind the curtains in another inner room with a name, the Hermaeum.[109] Alexander Severus called a suite of rooms after his mother, Mamaea; popularly and tellingly misheard as Mamma (the emperor returning to the womb in the bosom of his house?)[110] Thus, the naming of rooms or favouritism in rooms is connected with intimacy in both senses. (Pliny says effusively of his *diaeta*, 'It's my pet place, I set it up myself'.[111]) But it is linked just as much with self-determination, not ruling the world but ruling oneself. Statius likens Pollio's attic room to the high citadel (*celsa arx*) of the mind, philosophical self-sufficiency.[112] Montaigne, who based many of his personal habits, including his diet, on those of Augustus, wrote of his beloved tower, with its bookcases and open views on all sides: 'It is my throne and here alone I am ruler of myself.'[113] Jung built a very similar-looking 'spiritual' tower at Bollingen in Switzerland, to symbolize the configuration of different layers of the human psyche.[114] Those who were not autocrats could rule their own world in such isolated spaces as these; for those who were, it offered an alternative kind of autonomy. Bachelard quotes an aphorism from Baudelaire: 'There is no room for intimacy in a palace.'[115] But the Roman emperors prove him wrong: these intimate spaces were a necessary supplement to palace life.

VI AN AUGUSTAN JOKE?

To sum up: I have claimed a great deal for the interpretative possibilities in the name of Augustus' 'Syracuse', arguing that it conjures up associations not just with the scientist Archimedes, but also with Sicilian tyrants who courted solitude and feared death and Roman conquerors torn between possessing Greek culture and nobly renouncing it. I suggested that it played the Romans' longing for escapism and transcendence off against their practical imperialist ambitions and Augustus' desire for isolation off against his

[106] *SHA*, *Pertinax* 11.5–8: 'enimuero tantum odium in Pertinacem omnium aulicorum fuit, ut ad facinus milites hortarentur superuenerunt Pertinaci. cum ille aulicum famulicium ordinaret, ingressique porticus Palatii usque ad locum qui appellatur Sicilia et Iouis cenatio … uerum cum ad interiora prorumperent … ' The notion of a tyrant's impenetrable lair is present in Pliny's picture of Domitian in *Panegyricus* 48–9 (and see S. Lundén, 'The Palatine Labyrinth', *Caerdroia* 34 (2004), 7–14; thanks to Edmund Thomas for this reference).

[107] *SHA*, *Pertinax* 13.1: 'imperium et omnia imperialia sic horruit, ut sibi semper ostenderet displicere, 13.3: 'uoluit etiam imperium deponere atque ad priuatam uitam redire.'

[108] Unless, as Jonathan Prag suggests to me, *Sicilia* was in fact just a triangular room.

[109] Suet., *Claud*. 10.1.

[110] *SHA*, *Alex*. *Seu*. 26.9: 'in matrem Mamaeam unice pius fuit, ita ut Romae in Palatio faceret diaetas nominis Mamaeae, quas imperitum uulgus hodie "ad Mammam" uocat.'

[111] *Ep*. 2.17.20. See J. Henderson, 'Portrait of the artist as a figure of style: P.L.I.N.Y's Letters', *Arethusa* 36 (2003), 115–25, at 123: 'Pliny shapes his ideal as a frozen, timeless, self-contained, self-sufficient privacy, where he can concern himself with the writings which may give him immortality.'

[112] Stat., *Silv*. 2.2.131.

[113] Montaigne *Essays* III: 3 [C], trans. M. A. Screech (1993): 'There I have my seat. I assay making my dominion over it absolutely pure … Wretched the man (to my taste) who has nowhere in his house where he can be by himself, pay court to himself in private and hide away!'

[114] 'At Bollingen I am in the midst of my true life, I am most deeply myself' (C. Jung, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, trans. R. and C. Wilson (1989), 225).

[115] Bachelard, op. cit. (n. 15), 29 — a loose paraphrase, in fact, from C. Baudelaire's 'Les projets' in *Le spleen de Paris*: 'Non! ce n'est pas dans un palais que je voudrais posséder sa chère vie. Nous n'y serions pas chez nous. D'ailleurs ces murs criblés d'or ne laisseraient pas une place pour accrocher son image; dans ces solennelles galeries, il n'y a pas un coin pour l'intimité.'

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dynastic strategies.[116] I also noted a further complication: that the Republican, aristocratic model of a Marcellus was always there to interfere with more obvious tyrannical parallels with Dionysius or the milder Hiero. 'Syracuse', in other words, has the potential to be understood as the workshop of a cultural *bricoleur*, a hothouse of imperial ideas (appropriately enough, when Pierre Grimal calls Sicilian history in Cicero's hands a 'political laboratory'[117]). Yet in the end we must wonder just how serious and complicated it was all meant to be, or rather, whether the room was not meant to be a carefully calculated venue for *non-seriousness*. Augustus did not exactly do nothing in 'Syracuse' (*agere* is the word Suetonius uses).[118] But it is as likely as not that whatever happened behind those closed doors was framed as an alternative to public affairs and standard routines: something more contemplative, more experimental, a change of perspective induced by a change of scene ('si … proposuisset' suggests 'scheme-generating' itself, or at least the abandonment of normal activity).

A running thread in Suetonius' *Vita* is not just Augustus' playful side, but his distinctive amateurishness: the unfinished poem 'Sicily', his incompetence in Greek, his game of 'dead lions' in the middle of a sea-battle. In that context, 'going to Syracuse', to an inventor's studio or a tyrant's lair, looks like just another Augustan joke. Compared with the giants of the past, Augustus had no apparent *technē* to practise in his *technophu(i)on*; he had no overt pretensions to tyranny, *paideia* or scientific expertise to win him honorary citizenship of Syracuse. Which might have been the whole point: to be an unthreatening Dionysius, a reluctant Marcellus, or an inept Archimedes.[119] In a famous letter to Livia about what to do with Claudius, Augustus worries that the boy is behaving *meteōrōs*, in a 'head in the clouds' (literally 'suspended') way, rather than being *diligens*: he needs to be brought down to earth and learn the proper routines.[120] Meteora is now the name of a famous group of suspended Byzantine monasteries in the mountains of Greece. 'Syracuse', Augustus' house in the clouds, might have been the ancient equivalent in more ways than one: a place where a man who deliberately did *not* identify himself with tyrants or geniuses took time out to hover superficially in the shadow of the greats and where his unprecedented power could be abdicated, domesticated or played down to become a charade of almost absurd ordinariness, just a quick trip to the tree-house at the end of the garden or a bit of 'do it yourself' in the shed.

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[116] See Grimal, op. cit. (n. 27), 69 on solitude as a trait shared by Dionysius and Julius Caesar: 'Le tyran cherche en vain un ami.' See also Plut., *Dion* 9.3 for a picture of Dionysius' son, the future Dionysius II, who spent his childhood locked up in a room making wooden toys.

[117] Grimal, op. cit. (n. 27), 73: 'Et c'est toute l'histoire sicilienne qui apparaît ainsi comme une sorte de laboratoire politique aux yeux du consulaire romain.'

[118] At *Rep*. 1.28, Cicero contrasts Dionysius' destructive 'achievements' with the 'inactivity' that produced Archimedes' sphere: 'cum ipsam sphaeram, nihil cum agere uideretur … effecerit.'

[119] See Z. Yavetz, 'The personality of Augustus: reflections on Syme's *Roman Revolution*', in K. A. Raaflaub and M. Toher (eds), *Between Republic and Empire: Interpretations of Augustus and his Principate* (1990), 21–41, at 39: 'In his self-representation, Augustus underscored mainly his *humanitas*, which should be interpreted as it is by the Younger Pliny [*Ep*. 9.5] as the gift of endearing oneself to the lowly while at the same time winning the affections of the eminent.' On Augustus' jokes, he notes a 'tendency to dissimulate … [he] preferred ambiguous formulations to clear ones' (35).

[120] Suet., *Claud*. 4.5: 'qui [Claudius] uellem diligentius et minus μετεώρως deligeret sibi aliquem, cuius motum et habitum et incessum imitaretur.' Socrates in the *Clouds* justifies his basket on the grounds that a suspended state allows him to make meteorological discoveries: Ar., *Nub*. 227–30.

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