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STOPPING TO SMELL THE ROSES: GARDEN TOMBS IN ROMAN ITALY*

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The ancient Romans, much like many other civilisations, built their graves and funerary monuments for the living more so than for the dead. Within the cultural practices of the Roman world, funerary monuments served a variety of purposes. They were the location of annual religious rituals that honoured the dead, including the celebration of the deceased's birthday as well as honouring their memory in other festivals such as the *Parentalia* and *Lemuria*. Tombs were also used to establish visually an individual's or a family's place within the social and political hierarchy of the community to which they belonged. Many of the recent studies of monumental tombs have focused on how these structures were used by the rising classes, particularly wealthy freedmen, to promote themselves and guarantee a place for their heirs in the political landscape in the towns throughout Roman Italy.¹

The way in which the tombs of the Roman dead played a part in the world of the living was primarily a result of their location. Roman law, according to the Twelve Tables of 451 BC, forbade burial of the dead within the *pomerium*, or more specifically, within the walls of a city. From the very earliest time of Rome, therefore, tombs radiated out of the towns and cities, creating a visually stunning and distinct landscape marked by graves. Although enough of these structures have survived antiquity in places like Rome, Ostia, Isola Sacra and Pompeii to give an idea of the environment created, the visual impact that confronted the Romans on a daily basis as they passed by the tombs is difficult for us to conceive fully. Tombs were an individual construction, and

* A previous version of this paper was presented at the Theoretical Roman Archaeology Conference 2008. I wish to thank Amy Smith and Peter Kruschwitz, both of whom have read and commented on this paper.

¹ Cf. L. Hackworth-Petersen, *The Freedman in Roman Art and Art History*, Cambridge 2006.

because they were typically built by their intended inhabitant prior to death, reflect individual choices for commemoration. This most often involved a design, a location, or some outstanding feature of style, decoration or size that would draw the eye of anyone passing by. The desire, more than anything else, was to be seen and therefore, remembered. This is evident in many of the epitaphs of Roman tombs, calling for someone to stop and read the inscription and to remember the inhabitant, often going so far as to thank the passer-by for taking the time to do this.² I suggest that the construction of garden tombs was another means for creating a visual impact. These were a place for the living to use and enjoy on a regular basis as well as monuments for the deceased. There is both archaeological and literary evidence pertaining to such garden tombs throughout Italy and in other parts of the Roman world. The occurrence of them within the city cemeteries at places such as Pompeii, where they are often associated with *schola* or bench tombs, further suggests that these tombs were created as areas to be utilised regularly by the public, and not just by family members on specific days of ritual. Such monuments imply that a certain amount of interaction between the living and the dead was not only acceptable, but fully expected.

In and of themselves, gardens played a significant role in the daily lives of Romans. Gardens were often included in the design of buildings that served the community and structures of every size and variety contained them, including shops, inns, baths, schools, theatres and temples. It has been estimated that in Pompeii alone, seventeen percent of the town's land was devoted to gardens. To provide scale, this is nearly the same amount occupied by roads and public squares.³ The fact that gardens are to be found almost everywhere in the town signifies just how important the garden was to the Pompeian psyche, and could be therefore inferred, to the Roman one.⁴ Gardens were also fully integrated into the fabric of the Roman house. Nature was placed at centre stage: the peristyle garden, with its fountains, statues, and paintings, became the focal point within the house. Planted gardens were often expanded and enhanced, using wall paintings to mimic hedges, flowers and other garden scenes. Within the house this often included a small garden or potted plants

² *CIL* I² 1202 (*ILS* 8121).

³ M. Conan, "Nature into Art: Gardens and Landscapes in the Everyday Life of Ancient Rome," *Journal of Garden History* 6:4 (1986) 348–356, 349.

⁴ A. Giesecke, *The Epic City: Urbanism, Utopia, and the Garden in Ancient Greece and Rome*, Cambridge 2007, 102.

placed directly in front of a wall decorated with a floral scene in order to increase the illusion of the outside in. This was done throughout the house, bringing nature inside, whilst also domesticating, taming the outside, to create one single continuous impression of nature and civilisation in harmony. Giesecke has suggested that for the Romans, this conveys the idea of nature as another vanquished enemy.⁵ This notion is supported by Pliny, who wrote that "[i]t is a remarkable fact that ever since the time of Pompey the Great even trees have figured among the captives in our triumphal processions. The balsam-tree is now a subject of Rome, and pays tribute together with the race to which it belongs."⁶

In most houses, the incorporation of garden life was also accomplished through wall paintings. Although some of the depictions of flora and fauna contained on the walls of Roman buildings were fanciful imaginings, for the most part, the images were accurate portrayals of recognisable species, often duplicating the plants and animals found in one's garden or in the countryside. Many representations illustrated fruit trees, such as cherry, fig or lemon, all of which were grown in orchards throughout Roman Italy. Some clearly were more decorative than others, or were idealised visions of a garden that might include something as exotic as a peacock sitting on the edge of a bird bath.

The incorporation of nature into the daily life of the Romans proliferated under Augustus, with Rome itself transformed into a garden city, where there was a "blurring of distinctions between country and city," due not only to the growth of private garden villas but also the creation of public parks.⁷ The first public park built at Rome was established by Pompey the Great, and other men of the time followed suit; Marcus Agrippa left his estate, containing lavish gardens, to the Roman people.⁸ Pliny wrote of that "under the name of 'gardens' people possess the luxuries of farms and great estates within the city itself."⁹

There is also significant evidence from cities such as Ostia and Pompeii for dining in the garden. In addition to the spatial arrangement of the Roman atrium house, which typically placed the *triclinium* just off the peristyle garden so that it could be viewed by diners as they reclined on their couches,

⁵ Giesecke (above n. 4) xiv.

⁶ Plin. *nat.* 12,19,111–113. Trans. H. Rackham 1938, 1949.

⁷ Giesecke (above n. 4) xiii.

⁸ V. Jolivet, "Horti Pompeiani" in E.M. Steinby (ed.) *LTUR* III, Roma 1996, 78–79; F. Coarelli, "Horti Agrippae," in E.M. Steinby (ed.) *LTUR* III, Roma 1996, 51–52.

⁹ Plin. *nat.* 19,19,50–51. Trans. H. Rackham 1938, 1949.

archaeological remains have demonstrated the construction of both permanent and temporary structures used for dining *al fresco*.¹⁰ Outdoor dining also took place in urban vineyards and market gardens, some of which were associated with shops and bars rather than private houses.¹¹

It is not surprising therefore, that with daily life based within the concept of a garden, both real and imagined, the Romans would continue this practice when constructing their funerary monuments. Jashemski wrote that she thought "It was quite natural that the ancient Romans, for whom gardens were so important in life, should likewise surround their final resting places with plantings."¹² The association of plant life and graves or mourning is well attested in the Roman world. In *Metamorphoses*, Ovid relates the story of young Cyparissus, who upon the death of a beloved stag, chose to die himself, wishing to mourn forever. Apollo transformed him into the cypress tree, stating to the boy that "You shall be mourned by me, shall mourn for others, and your place shall always be where others grieve."¹³ Other plants had specific associations with the dead as it was customary for flowers and wreaths to be left at the grave during certain rituals and festivals, and some, such as the *Rosalia* and *Violatio*, required the offering of specific types of flowers.¹⁴

Investigating ancient plants is a rather difficult endeavour, and it is rare to find archaeological evidence for gardens in most of Italy. The only real exceptions to this exist in the areas of Campania buried by Vesuvius, but even then, evidence is reliant on undisturbed subsoil. It is, therefore, fortunate, that many texts and inscriptions¹⁵ survive that include some reference to their existence.

¹⁰ E. J. Graham, "Dining *al Fresco* with the Living and the Dead in Roman Italy," in M. Carroll et al. (eds.), *Consuming Passions: Dining from Antiquity to the Eighteenth Century*, Stroud 2005, 49–65, 53–55.

¹¹ N. Purcell, "The Roman Garden as a Domestic Building", in I. Barton (ed.), *Roman Domestic Buildings*, Exeter 1996, 121–152, 123.

¹² W. J. Jashemski, *The Gardens of Pompeii, Herculaneum and the Villas Destroyed by Vesuvius I*, New Rochelle 1979, 141.

¹³ *Ov. Met.* 10,106–142. Trans. F. J. Miller 1958.

¹⁴ *CIL* V 2090 (*ILS* 8371); *CIL* V 7906; Jashemski (above n. 12) 142.

¹⁵ G. L. Gregori, "Horti sepulcrales e cepotaphia nelle iscrizioni urbane", *BCAR* 92 (1987–88) 175–188 has compiled a list of more than fifty inscriptions from a variety of structures in Rome that contain either the words '*hortus*' or '*cepotaphium*,' all of which date to the late Republican to early Imperial period.

Martial, in describing the tomb of Antulla, wrote that it was surrounded by a "grove and fair acres of tilled land."¹⁶ In two of Cicero's letters to Atticus, he discusses the difficulty he is having in securing the correct spot for the funerary monument for his daughter Tullia outside Rome, writing that "somehow or other I want a public place; so you must contrive to get me some gardens."¹⁷ The most famous of all freedmen, Petronius's Trimalchio, when outlining his plans for his tomb to his dinner guests, states "In front, I want my tomb to measure one hundred feet long, but two hundred feet deep. Around it I want an orchard with every known variety of fruit tree. You'd better throw in a vineyard too."¹⁸ Although this was meant as satire, inscriptions from tombs survive that provide evidence that this was not such a far-fetched idea. It is thought that rather than be strictly ornamental, tomb gardens were often used to provide, from the land around the monument, enough produce to sustain the shade of the departed. One inscription states that vineyards were planted specifically to provide wine for libations.¹⁹ Other evidence suggests there was profit to be made from the sale of produce grown in garden tombs, including fruits and vegetables.²⁰ Whilst some epitaphs, often composed in metrical verse, suggest only that there should be flowers or vines near the tomb, most inscriptions are very specific in detail.²¹ One asks that it should be his own plants "from whose yield my survivors may offer roses to me on my birthday forever."²² In the inscription on a tomb built outside Rome by the freedmen Gaius Hostius Pamphilus, the enclosure of the tomb is referred to as both a farm and as gardens.²³ Another tomb at Rome describes itself in the inscription as being planted with vines, fruits, flowers and greenery, as well as having a sundial.²⁴ This is an excellent example of what Jashemski expects to find, stating that "[i]t is not at all unusual to hear of large tomb gardens, beautifully landscaped with all the embellishments that decorated the gardens of the living: shaded triclinia, statues, sundials, pools, fountains, formal plantings, and homes

¹⁶ Mart. 1,116,1. Trans. Shackleton-Bailey 1993.

¹⁷ Cic. *Att.* 262; 276 (S-B).

¹⁸ Petr. *Sat.* 71. Trans. M. Heseltine 1961.

¹⁹ *CIL* XII 1657 (*ILS* 8367).

²⁰ Jashemski (above n. 12) 144.

²¹ *CIL* XI 6565; *CIL* VI 9118.

²² *CIL* V 7454 (*ILS* 8342).

²³ "*Haec est domus aeterna, hic est fundus, heis sunt horti, hoc est monumentum nostrum.*" *CIL* I² 1319 (*ILS* 8341).

²⁴ *CIL* VI 10237 (*ILS* 7870).

for caretakers."²⁵ A number of inscriptions from Rome and other sites in Italy include the phrase *hortus cinctus maceria*, that is, that the tomb garden is surrounded by some type of wall or enclosure.²⁶ This type of monument was not limited to Roman Italy. A detailed inscription found in Gaul on a monument built by Sextus Iulius Aquila provides instruction for the maintenance of a large garden tomb that included a chapel, the sepulchre itself, and grounds that encompassed lakes and an orchard. This was to be cared for by three landscapers and their assistants, with funds provided by annual donations to be made by the deceased's grandson, heirs and freedmen and women. This also included a provision for sacrifices and banquets to be held on the first day of six of the months of the year.²⁷

The most detailed description of a garden tomb, including a list of plants to be used for decorating the monument, comes from the *Culex*, in which a shepherd constructs a tomb for a gnat. Upon the death of the gnat, "hard by the running stream that lurked beneath green leafage, he busily begins to fashion a place, marking it in circular form, and oft turning to service his iron spade, to dig up grassy sods from the green turf. And now his mindful care, pursuing the toil begun, heaped up a towering work, and with broad rampart the earthy mound grew into the circle he had traced. Round about this, mindful of constant care, he sets stones, fashioned from polished marble."²⁸ This passage describes perfectly the construction of a *tumulus* tomb, an ancient Etruscan form found throughout Italy, North Africa and the east. The *tumulus* consists of a round stone wall surmounted by earth, usually planted with grass or flowers. It goes on to say, "Here are to grow acanthus and the blushing rose with crimson bloom, and violets of every kind. Here are Spartan myrtle and hyacinth, and here saffron, sprung from Cilician fields, and soaring laurel, the glory of Phoebus. Here are oleander, and lilies, and rosemary, tended in familiar haunts, and the Sabine plant, which for men of old feigned rich frankincense; and marigold, and glistening ivy, with pale clusters, and bocchus, mindful of Libya's king. Here are amaranth, blooming bumastus, and ever-flowering laurestine. Yonder fails not the Narcissus, whose noble beauty kindled with Love's flame for his own limbs; and what flowers soever the spring seasons renew, with these

²⁵ W. F. Jashemski, "Tomb Gardens at Pompeii", *CJ* 66 (1970–71) 97–115, 101.

²⁶ *CIL* VI 13823 (*ILS* 8352); *CIL* VI 10876; *CIL* VI 10237 (*ILS* 7870); X 2244.

²⁷ *CIL* XIII 5708 (*ILS* 8379).

²⁸ [Verg.] *Culex* 385–398. Trans. H. R. Fairclough 2000.

the mound is strewn above."²⁹ Jashemski has stated that the types of plants listed were those favoured by the Romans, and suggests further that the variety included were likely to have "been carefully chosen to provide a succession of bloom against an evergreen background throughout the changing seasons."³⁰ This description is also supported by epigraphic evidence: an inscription on a Roman tomb from Cirta in Africa states that "On my tumulus bees shall sip the thyme blossoms, the birds shall sing pleasantly to me in verdant grottoes; there buds the laurel, and golden bunches of grapes hang on the vines."³¹

There are also two surviving plans of garden tombs on marble plaques. One, found at the necropolis on the Via Labicana outside of Rome, shows a round monument in a formal garden, surrounded by a series of square and rectangular flower beds, and rows that indicate trees, shrubs or vines.³² The second, now located in the Perugia Museum, depicts an enclosure measuring sixty five by seventy six Roman feet, and outlines a range of buildings on a plot that may be a complex for ritual funerary banquets and possibly include accommodation for slaves and equipment for maintaining the garden.³³

The physical inclusion of gardens in tombs could be manifested in a number of ways, depending primarily on the type of tomb, the resources available to the individual constructing it, and the amount of land available for the build. Most plots would have been, due to the expense of the land, too small to include anything other than a cypress tree, or possibly some evergreens and a few flowers. However, the idea of the garden was not limited to actual plantings. As the interiors of many tombs were decorated in the same manner as houses, wall paintings of flora and fauna were the easiest and least expensive way to incorporate nature in one's final resting place.³⁴ The interior of the tomb of the young aedile Gaius Vestorius Priscus, buried by his mother outside the Porta Vesuvio at Pompeii, included depictions of animals such as a leopard and a peacock, and a garden scene. Another tomb, 19ES, outside Porta Nocera at

²⁹ [Verg.] *Culex* 398–414. Trans. H. R. Fairclough 2000.

³⁰ Jashemski (above n. 25) 102.

³¹ *CIL* VIII 7854. Though this inscription is in metrical verse and not typical of funerary inscriptions, I suggest that it is still a relevant piece of evidence for garden tombs, providing a more aesthetic description of a commonly known form.

³² *CIL* VI 9015= 29847a = (*ILS* 8120). Cf. *AE* 1991, 74; J. Toynbee, *Death and Burial in the Roman World*, Baltimore 1971, 99.

³³ *CIL* VI 29847; Toynbee (above n. 32) 98.

³⁴ Gregori suggests that the plantings on the outside of the tomb were meant to evoke the garden paintings decorating the tomb interior. Gregori (above n. 15) 175.

Pompeii, contained garden paintings on the front of the tomb. Recessed arched panels on either side of the doorway contained depictions of crater-shaped fountains surrounded by flowering shrubs, with birds flying around it, all placed behind a low lattice fence.³⁵ The painting is, however, too severely damaged to identify the species of plant or bird with any certainty. I suggest that based on the evidence of similar occurrences within Roman houses, there were most likely plantings directly in front of this decoration specifically placed in order to enhance the illusion of a garden.

Other tombs included images of gardens or flowers in the actual structure of the monument. Floral and vegetal motifs were common on funerary monuments, ranging from simple rosettes to elaborate depictions of plants and flowers. Some tombs are decorated with vines or sprays growing out of a vase, and are thought to be a representation of the flowers left as offerings, or in the case of vines, "recall the god Bacchus and the hope of immortality."³⁶ There are a few tombs on which entire trees are shown in relief, interpretations of which range from the representation of funeral gardens, Apollonian imagery, or "signifying other world fertility."³⁷

An example of this from Pompeii is found on the Tomb of the Garlands, located outside Porta Herculaneum. It is thought to be one of the oldest tombs in the city, dating from the late Republican period.³⁸ The tomb is named for the decoration on the sides of the tomb, which consists of narrow floral garlands, wound with ribbons with fringed ends. These garlands are attached to the top corner of the tomb with large bows. Similar motifs are found on the wall paintings of Roman houses, further illustrating the similarities in domestic and funerary decoration.

Garden tombs are most likely manifested as a small plot of land adjacent to a tomb that was used for a garden. In Pompeii, a number of *scholae*, or bench tombs, a completely unique tomb type found only in this town, have small enclosures believed to have contained such gardens. Two *scholae* found adjacent to Porta Stabiae have small plots of land enclosed by low stone walls.

³⁵ W. F. Jashemski, *The Gardens of Pompeii, II: Appendices*, New York 1993, 369; S. De Caro – A. D'Ambrosio, *Un Impegno per Pompei, Fotopiano e Documentazione della Necropoli di Porta Nocera*, Milan 1983, 19ES.

³⁶ A. Woods, *The Funerary Monuments of the Augustales in Italy*, PhD. Diss. UCLA 1991, 99.

³⁷ Woods (above n. 36) 99–100.

³⁸ V. Kockel, *Die Grabbauten vor dem Herculaner Tor in Pompeji*, Mainz 1983, 126–151.

The tomb directly adjacent to the city wall, built for Marcus Tullius, was, according to the inscription, given by order of the *decuriones*. It is believed that this man was responsible for constructing the Temple of Fortuna Augusta in AD 3/4, thus providing an approximate date for his tomb as well as a reason for the town's generosity.³⁹ The second tomb was dedicated to Marcus Alleius Minius, a *duovir*.⁴⁰ Twenty years after their excavation, Spano conducted further examination of the subsoil in the enclosed areas behind the two benches. Determining that these spaces were originally gardens, he planted roses, anemones and myrtle.⁴¹ Though there has been some subsequent debate as to the veracity of Spano's conclusions, modern plantings have destroyed any possibility of exploring ancient root systems further. The contrary argument claims these low walls were simply boundaries, but Jashemski disagrees, stating that "[t]he Pompeians would not leave plots of bare soil, especially in conspicuous places, near the city gates, attached to *scholae* intended for rest and enjoyment."⁴²

Two more *scholae* are located outside of Porta Nola, only one of which has an associated garden plot. The smaller of the two benches is dedicated to Aesquillia Polla, the young wife of a *duovir*. Like the *scholae* at Porta Stabiae, there is a small rectangular plot adjacent to this monument that some believe was another tomb garden, and was planted as such by Spano.⁴³ Again, any conclusive evidence has been destroyed by modern foliage.

There are a number of other tombs at Pompeii which could conceivably have been associated with gardens. In the necropolis at Porta Herculaneum there are a number of areas that warrant further investigation. The Tomb of Mamia, 4S, also a *schola* tomb, does not contain a walled enclosure like the other bench tombs already discussed, however there is a large open space directly behind it that is delineated by two low walls. Radiating out from the rear of the structure at approximately forty-five degree angles, I would surmise this area would have contained formal plantings.

³⁹ A. Sogliano, "Scoperte Epigrafiche", *NSA* 1890, 329–334, 329; *CIL* X 820 (*ILS* 5398); *CIL* X 821 (*ILS* 5398a).

⁴⁰ Sogliano (above n. 39) 330.

⁴¹ G. Spano, "Scavo nel giardino alla tomba di M. Tullio, Fuori Porta di Stabia", *NSA* 1910, 567–569; Jashemski (above n. 35) 255.

⁴² Jashemski (above n. 25) 110.

⁴³ G. Spano, "Scavi fuori Porta di Nola", *NSA* 1910, 385–393; Jashemski (above n. 35) 255.

Tomb 16S, identified as belonging to Aulus Umbricius Scaurus, a known garum manufacturer, was built sometime in the mid-first century AD.⁴⁴ As seen today, it is surrounded by trees and flowering shrubs. The sheer size of the plot of land, relative to the dimensions of the actual monument constructed is considerable, and is exactly the sort of place in which a formal garden would be expected. This garden would have been tended by the heirs who were also responsible for the tomb, and would have been used not just on festival days, but also presumably would have been accessible to the general public to admire and enjoy, thus adding to the memory of the tomb's inhabitant.

There are some funerary enclosures that contain no actual tomb whatsoever. These may, as is the case at 19S, contain a single *columella*, or gravestone, or in the instance of 39AN, is simply a large enclosed space with no visible construction. Because there are no traces of any built structures in these areas, the dead they were meant to honor must have been commemorated by a means that left no archaeological evidence, such as a garden.

Outside of the cities and towns, particularly on the large country estates of the Roman elite, it was standard practice to build funerary monuments and shrines within the gardens on one's own property. There is an example of this custom being adapted for an urban environment in Pompeii. The suburban villa known as the Villa of the Mosaic Columns outside of Porta Herculaneum contains two tombs that sit along the street front, but are also contained within a section of the villa's garden.⁴⁵ This small garden was only accessible through an entrance that required one to pass first through a larger garden that is associated with the villa. Examination of the subsoil revealed the presence of root cavities belonging to trees and shrubs. The remains of an enclosure wall and planting beds on the west and south sides support the presence of a garden.⁴⁶ This example is interesting because it is combining the urban practices of funerary construction with those of the elite countryside, but until now, has never been thoroughly studied or completely excavated.

The best example of a garden tomb at Rome is the Mausoleum of Augustus. Strabo described the monument as "[A] great mound near the river on a lofty foundation of white marble, thickly covered with ever-greens to the very summit. Now on top is a bronze image of Augustus Caesar; beneath the

⁴⁴ Kockel (above n. 38) 70–75.

⁴⁵ Kockel (above n. 38) 152–161; Jashemski (above n. 35) 256.

⁴⁶ A. Maiuri, "Area Sepolcrale della Villa delle Colonne a Mosaico", *NSA* 1943, 295–310; Jashemski (above n. 35) 256.

mound are the tombs of himself and his kinsmen and intimates; behind the mound is a large sacred precinct with wonderful promenades; and in the centre of the Campus is the wall (this too of white marble) round his crematorium; the wall is surrounded by a circular iron fence and the space within the wall is planted with black poplars."⁴⁷ Suetonius tells us that when Augustus built his tomb in 28 BC, he "at the same time opened to the public the groves and walks by which it was surrounded."⁴⁸ Not only was the mausoleum a *tumulus* tomb that incorporated plants and trees within the structure of the monument itself, but it was constructed within a large garden.

A similar, though much smaller *tumulus* tomb is located in the necropolis of Porta Nocera at Pompeii. Belonging to a woman named Veia Barchilla, it would have originally been covered with earth and planted with greenery and flowers. This tomb sits in a large walled enclosure that is shared with a second, unrelated tomb. The interior space of the enclosure between the tombs is actually large enough for a third construction, but there is no archaeological evidence for any building in the middle of this area. Both tombs date to the late Republican or early Augustan period, so it is unlikely that another tomb was planned but never realised.⁴⁹ Considering the amount of open space within this enclosure, it seems unlikely that this space was not also used as a garden.

Another tomb with a large enclosure at Porta Nocera is 3OS. Built in the late Republic, the tomb, belonging to Lucius Ceius Serapio, is located directly behind Tomb 1OS but at a higher elevation, in an enclosure that extends behind the other monuments along the road. In its current state, it contains an abundance of trees and flowering bushes. Because it is at a different level to the rest of the tombs, it also provides an excellent vantage point for viewing the city. If formally landscaped, it would have been a remarkable tribute to the deceased and would have provided a beautiful spot in which to pass the time.

Roman tombs were visited by the family and heirs of the deceased in order to carry out the rituals of the dead and on festival days. However, tombs and cemeteries also served other purposes. As discussed above, the *schola* tombs of Pompeii provided a public amenity by creating spaces in which to sit. It is no coincidence that the largest of these sit outside the busiest city gates. Part of the rituals associated with both the newly dead, and as part of the celebration of anniversaries and festivals included consuming a meal at the

⁴⁷ Strab. 5,3,8. Trans. H. L. Jones 1923.

⁴⁸ Suet. *Aug.* 100. Trans. J. C. Rolfe 1964.

⁴⁹ De Caro – D'Ambrosio (above n. 35) 1ES; 3ES.

grave site.⁵⁰ Evidence from Ostia, Isola Sacra and Pompeii includes *triclinia* and *biclinia* as part of a tomb complex, and can also contain provisions for cooking and fresh water supplies.⁵¹ Many funerary items actually contain depictions of drinking and dining. These images, often of the deceased reclining on a couch, are found in tomb paintings and in relief on altars, cinerary urns, and sarcophagi.⁵² As there is a tradition of garden dining in the Roman world and graveside dining, it is therefore likely that these two activities were combined. Graham has suggested that "poorer members of the community should be imagined conducting feasts in the form of picnics."⁵³ For those unable to afford the large peristyle house, garden tombs could have provided the sort of green space needed for a picnic.

In addition, it is important to remember the location of tombs outside city gates, and the use determined by such. Those travelling to the city, particularly merchants, would have stopped at the city gates to have goods inspected and pay taxes.⁵⁴ On busy days such as when the local market was held, this could mean long delays and queues. This is exactly the situation for which the *scholae* were constructed, and garden tombs would provide further space for refuge from the heat and dust. There is some evidence for city gates being closed at night, and as a result, travellers took provisions for spending a night out of doors.⁵⁵ In such instances, the tomb enclosures, especially those large enough to contain gardens, could provide the space needed for preparing food and sleeping.

Gardens were a fundamental component of daily life for the ancient Romans. As such, it is therefore not surprising that aspects of nature were incorporated into the monuments of the dead. The precedence for utilising the same techniques of decoration in the house and the tomb is well established for wall painting, and should therefore be held applicable for gardens. Gardens were not only used as locations in which to build tombs, but elements of the garden were also incorporated in tomb design. This in and of itself implicates

⁵⁰ *CIL* VI 14614 (*ILS* 7931).

⁵¹ Jashemski (above n. 25) 100; Jashemski (above n. 12) 142–143; K. Dunbabin, *The Roman Banquet: Images of Conviviality*, Cambridge 2003, 127–128; Graham (above n. 10) 58–62.

⁵² Dunbabin (above n. 51) 103–140.

⁵³ Graham (above n. 10) 60.

⁵⁴ C. van Tilburg, *Traffic and Congestion in the Roman Empire*, London 2007, 85.

⁵⁵ *Cic. inv.* 2,123 (trans. H. M. Hubbell 1949); van Tilburg (above n. 54) 110.

how important nature was to the ancient Romans. Tomb design was visually competitive, and placing your monument within a large enclosure that included an elaborate flower garden, an orchard or even vineyards would most certainly have caught the eye of those passing. The mere idea of creating a garden around one's tomb suggests that these spaces were meant to be utilised and visited by the living. Unlike modern cemeteries that, more often than not, are removed from the living world and require a conscious decision to enter, the necropoleis of the Romans were part of the city, and were passed through by large portions of the population on a daily basis. The existence of the bench tombs at Pompeii, which are usually associated with an adjacent garden plot, show that these areas were heavily travelled and visited because they offer a place to stop, to rest. Gardens were also connected with dining, and garden tombs would have been used in the same way, both by members of the deceased's family and, I believe, the general populace as well.

The dead may have been gone, but were certainly not forgotten by the ancient Romans. In addition to festivals and anniversaries that celebrated the dead and required visits to, and sacrifices made at the grave site, the practice of burial along the roads ensured that the dead were a constant in the daily life of anyone entering or leaving a city. As the primary motivation in constructing a tomb was remembrance, the key was to attract the attention of those passing by. Including lavish gardens, sweet smelling flowers, or providing simply the shade of a single tree under which a weary traveller could rest would have assured one's continued place amongst the living.