

Syrτος

Part I

NOLI TURBARE CIRCULOS MEOS

General Marcellus assaulted the city of Syracuse by sea with sixty galleys. The Romans advanced. Their ships were equipped with five rows of oars and with missiles to hurl at the walls.

Eight ships were chained together and a bridge of planks was built across those ships. Upon this bridge stood a machine that could hurl stones and darts upon the city.

“Give me a place to stand and I will move the earth,” Archimedes may have told the King sometime before.

To demonstrate his art, Archimedes pulled a ship from the sea. Convinced of the power of geometry, the king bade Archimedes to apply his art and devise machines of war to defend the fair city of Syracuse.

The Roman soldiers assaulted Syracuse from two sides at once, frightening the townspeople into confusion. Then Archimedes directed his inventions toward the enemy. Immense masses of stone and missile weapons fell upon the Romans, throwing their forces into chaos.

The abundant and magnificent preparations, all of the men, and all of the ships and all of Marcellus' previous glory were but trifles for Archimedes and his machines. Some of the Roman ships were sunk with great weights hurled at them from the shore. Others were lifted on end by huge cranes and plunged to the bottom of the sea. The general withdrew his remaining ships from combat and sounded the retreat to the troops on land until a new course of action could be drawn. But even the cleverest of plans was not equal to the machines of Syracuse.

“How may we fight this hundred-handed giant of geometry?”, Marcellus may have said after the battle. Yet Archimedes would not leave behind him any words of his inventions. He would not comment on his engines of war.

(continued)

Part II

NOLI OBSECRO ISTUM DISTURBARE

One by one Marcellus took the cities of Sicily. He conquered all that dared to encounter him. During negotiations for the release of a Syracuse prisoner, Marcellus noticed a carelessly guarded tower in the wall of Syracuse. When the townspeople were celebrating a feast to the goddess Diana, Marcellus occupied the tower and filled the wall with soldiers. Frightening the Syracusans with trumpets, the soldiers made their way to Arcadina, the finest section of the city. When this they took at daybreak, the officers offered congratulations to the victorious general.

Archimedes was possessed by his art. He would forget to eat and bathe. When he was forcibly reminded of his negligence and carried off to be anointed, he would trace geometrical figures on his oiled skin. Once while bathing, he found the solution to a problem he had long been pondering. Overjoyed, he ran home naked crying "Eureka! I've found it!"

It was Archimedes request that over his tomb be placed a cylinder containing a sphere along with an inscription of the ration the two solids bear to each other.

From a hill, Marcellus looked down to the city and wept. The money and slaves he agreed were fair plunder and the soldiers took their due. Amidst all the celebration and joy, Marcellus felt great sadness when the wealth of generations of prosperity was scattered in an hour. His order stood firm that no free person of Syracuse be killed, misused or enslaved. (From a hill, Marcellus looked down to the city and wept.)

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Part III

NOLI OBSECRO ISTUM DISTURBARE

The Roman invasion of Syracuse proceeded unnoticed as Archimedes fixed his eyes and his mind on a diagram.

“I will kill you.”

“Hold your sword a little while. Stay your hand that I might finish what has been begun. Hold your sword until my work has been completed. Let it not be left inconclusive and imperfect. Hold your sword a little while.”

The soldier was not moved and killed Archimedes on the spot.

NOLI TURBARE CIRCULOS MEOS

NOLI OBSECRO ISTUM DISTURBARE

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“What is that old man carrying?”

“I cannot tell from this far off.”

“It looks like gold.”

“That gold should be with Roman soldiers.”

They slew Archimedes but they had no gold. He carried instruments used to measure the sun.

NOLI TURBARE CIRCULOS MEOS

NOLI OBSECRO ISTUM DISTURBARE

Marcellus mourned Archimedes' death. He honored Archimedes' family and provided for them. Marcellus was a man of justice and showed his moderation to all he conquered.

For a given sphere the total surface of a cylinder which has the largest circle of the sphere as a base and whose height is equal to the diameter, is one and a half times the surface of the sphere and its volume is one and a half times the volume of the sphere.