

CICERO

Verrine II.1 THE URBAN PRAETORSHIP

Summary

Sections 41 -61:

Verres' thefts of paintings and statues as a legate of Dolabella

41. Verres behaved as badly towards Dolabella as he had towards Carbo, betraying him to his enemies and inciting hatred against him blaming him for crimes which he himself had committed. Since Dolabella actually chose Verres as his proquaestor, his betrayal is all the more disgraceful.

42. What punishment would fit a man who profaned the lot (Carbo) and the voluntary selection procedure (Dolabella) and who betrayed both? Do not interpret my brevity as making light of these charges.

43. His vile quaestorship has been described: let us now pass on to the rest of his career, starting with him as legate. I will omit the calamitous period of the Sullan depredations - he will not be allowed to use this as any part of his defence.

44. When Dolabella was assigned CILICIA, Verres inveigled himself on to his staff as legate. For Dolabella it was disastrous. For the people on Verres' route out there it was also a disaster. E.G. ACHAIA: apart from the usual minor offences, he demanded money from the magistrate of SICYON - not an unprecedented charge, but the punishment for non-payment certainly was.

45. Death by smoke for a free-born man, acclaimed by his own and by the people of Rome. Then the plundering of works of art from Achaia, and gold from the temple of Minerva at Athens. Dolabella was tried for it, but it was Verres who was the mastermind.

46. On to DELOS. The temple of Apollo was ransacked but the people dared say nothing in case Dolabella himself was involved. Verres would have got away with the lot had not a storm beached and broken his ship and Dolabella instructed the return of the loot.

47. Even for someone as inhuman and irreverent as you, Verres, this impious behaviour towards the gods surely arouses some fears and doubts about deliverance? Surely you know the story of Latona?

48. How she took refuge and gave birth to Apollo and Diana on Delos. How this island has ever since been sacred to them, so that not even the Persians dared touch it. Yet you, Verres, out of greed and evil, despoiled it apparently without a thought for the consequences.

49. His impious behaviour in ASIA (apart from the ordinary offences) included the seizure of statues from CHIOS, ERYTHRAE and HALICARNASSUS and the heartless theft of Tenes himself from TENEDOS.

50. And SAMOS! His attack on the temple of Juno caused such distress that Samian envoys reported it to C. Nero in Asia, only to be referred to Rome itself. I know about his theft of works of art from Samos from a recent visit to his house.

51. There they were, for all to see - for as long as he believed he could manipulate this court as he wished. However, once he realised his fate was sealed, those statues disappeared.

52. Hiding the loot is an admission of defeat. The testimony of Charidemus of Chios (your escort when departing from Asia) proved his innocence and your guilt over the plundering of Samos.

53. And ASPENDUS in Pamphylia! You took every statue, including the lyre-player.

54. And the temple of Diana at PERGA was pillaged by you, the gold stripped from the very statue of Diana herself. Monstrous behaviour even for an invading general, let alone a legate visiting friends and allies. In either case the loot should not have ended up in your house but as the property of the nation.

55. Great Roman generals of the past (Marcellus, Scipio, Flaminius, Paulus, Mummius) conducted great and successful campaigns, but their plunder adorns Italy, Rome and its temples. Their houses shine only with distinction and virtue - not booty.

56. These men belonged to a time when such exemplary behaviour was normal and so seem out of date now. Here is a man, P. Servilius, who recently captured the hostile city of Olympus - about the same time as you, Verres were plundering peaceful allies and friends

57. You plundered for your own benefit. Servilius' acquisitions were sanctioned by the rules of engagement, paraded and officially recorded in far greater detail than any of your private pillagings.

58. It is true you displayed your gains in the forum and *Comitium* but it gave no joy to behold your ill-gotten plunder. You thought you might buy the court with this show, playing on people's natural greed.

59. Instead, you simply convinced our friends and allies (of whom there was a large number envoys in Rome at that time) that they would never get their possessions back - indeed that the destruction of the allies was now inevitable when wrongdoers could now parade their gains in the very place where previously they would have been brought to account.

60. Verres will not deny he has these works of art. He will, however, claim to have bought

them, but his method and notion of accounting is absurd. It is not that he has never kept accounts (of which Antonius is wrongly accused) but that he only kept records up to the consulship of Terentius and Cassius.

61. Just show me proof of purchase (from your own, or your father's accounts) for any of the paintings or statues you acquired and you have won the day. What about the two solitary statues which even now adorn your atrium pool, taken from the temple of Juno on Samos, for instance?

Sections 62-85:

The episode at Lampsacum

62. Verres' passion for art was matched by his lust for women whom he abused wherever he went. I will not dwell on this, though the evidence is undisputable. One example will suffice.

63. LAMPSACUM in the Hellespont is both peaceful and civilised in the Greek manner.

Verres came there, on his way to see client kings of Bithynia and Thrace. He was lodged with Janitor. His aides were to scout for women who might make a longer stay worthwhile.

64. His aide, Rubrius, reported that the leading citizen of the town, Philodamus, had an unmarried and pure daughter. Verres determined to move there at once. Janitor objected, so Verres schemed to get Rubrius, his favourite, to be lodged there.

65. A naive Philodamus came to Verres and objected he had no obligation to lodge attendants of legates. Verres ignored the protest and foisted Rubrius on him anyway. Philodamus preserved his reputation, responded graciously and prepared a banquet in Rubrius's honour, with a special invite to anyone of Rubrius' choosing, even dismissing his own son to make room.

66. Rubrius invited Verres' aides who, on Verres' instructions, monopolised the toasts, then called for Philodamus' daughter to come and join in. Philodamus' protests were ignored and the house was sealed off.

67. Philodamus ordered slaves to defend his daughter, and sent for his son. Meanwhile there was uproar and assault in the house, with boiling water poured over the host. The son and the people of Lampsacum gathered in outrage at the house. Then Cornelius (Verres' lictor) was killed and Rubrius was injured. Verres fled.

68. At an assembly the next morning the people judged they had the right to avenge the insult with force. They could not tolerate such abuse of authority by mere legates and would accept the consequences of their actions.

69. They marched on Verres' house, intent on destruction. Roman businessmen, however, persuaded them that they 'would be guilty of a lesser fault if they spared a criminal than if they failed to spare a legate'.70. Verres is a worse scoundrel than Hadrianus, but more fortunate in that he managed to avoid his fate of being burned alive. Hadrianus deserved his fate - how much more does Verres, then, and he cannot claim that actions on behalf of the state brought him to this perilous situation.

71. Verres dares not account for this disturbance at Lampsacum; but we have reputable men (Tettius and Varro) here who will support the account I have given, having heard it, in one case (C. Varro) from Philodamus himself. Clearly, fortune has allowed Verres to survive only so that you may condemn him. Verres may repeat Hortensius' assertion that Philodamus and his son were condemned by C. Nero.

72. If so, it was for the murder of Cornelius. You, Verres, were not thereby acquitted of wrongdoing. Their conviction should inspire pity, because the victim deserved to be killed. Verres primed Dolabella to intervene in the trial of Philodamus.

73. Dolabella abandoned his duty for this worthless man to travel to Nero, get the case against Philodamus heard in a tribunal with Verres, his supporter, and Dolabella himself sitting in judgement.

74. Poor Philodamus had no one to defend him. Dolabella's influence prevailed. The prosecutor was a Roman citizen and creditor who was bribed by Verres. Despite the odds against Philodamus being stacked against him, Verres' crimes were so overwhelming that Philodamus's case was deferred for a further hearing.

75. At the second hearing, Philodamus and his son stood no chance. Excellent, but timid Nero could not withstand the insistence of aggressive Dolabella and the activities of Verres. Condemnation was extorted and the penalty demanded at once, so that as few as possible would hear of Verres' crimes.

76. The execution in the forum of Laodicea was attended by tears of father, son, Nero, Lampsacum and all Asia. Two innocent men, friends and allies of the Roman people, beheaded because of this shameless creature.

77. Did Verres mean so much to you, Dolabella, that you would desert your duty and sink so low? Did you expect Verres to be your friend? Don't you know what he did to Carbo? Now he has turned against you.

78. Is there to be no limit to your passions, Verres? Will you send men marauding wherever if you cannot find satisfaction locally? Can you deny that the people of Lampsacum wanted

to burn you, a legate of the Roman people, alive? I have your correspondence with Nero which proves it.

79. Did the people of Lampsacum pose a threat to Rome? We would normally declare war on a state which so treated one of our legates.

80. Yet, as you yourself wrote to Nero, they created a most serious disturbance against you. Why? If it was due to the actions of Rubrius, why did they not come to you to complain, rather than attack you? Witness statements, and Rubrius' continued silence are eloquent confirmation of your involvement and guilt.

81. So great are your crimes that those wronged by you could not wait for the law to deal with you. These people are not uncivilised. They respect Rome and are happy to be subjects of ours. The strength of their pain is evidenced by their recourse to violence against a legate.

*82. Do not force allies to have to resort to such means of self-protection. They are depending on you, the jury, to make Verres pay the penalty. And do you, Verres imagine that despite your violent and shameful behaviour, that you escaped from the sword of friends to find refuge here. You are mistaken.

83. The condemnation of Philostratus and his son do not prove that the attack on you was unjust. I will use your own testimony to show that you off-loaded the blame on to others, but that these supposed guilty ones were not punished. Your letter to Nero blames Themistagoras and Thessalus for stirring up the people against you, yet nowhere are you taking action against them, not even at the trial of Philodamus.

84. In evidence you said you would take proceedings against them on another occasion. Yet despite the harm done to the office of legate, you have taken no such legal action. Why not? Was it not your duty to have them summoned by the consuls?

85. The outrage done to M. Aurelius Scaurus by the eminent Pericles of Ephesus (being prevented from forcibly removing a runaway slave from the temple of Diana) resulted in his being summoned to answer for his actions in Rome. Don't you think that if you had reported your bad treatment at Lampsacum to the Senate, everyone would have rallied to your cause, considering it to be a danger to us all and determined to ensure that the status of legate should be safeguarded?

Sections 86 - 90

The theft of the Milesian gallery

86. The Lampsacum affair displayed his wanton lust. His treatment of the MILESIAANS was

just as serious and showed his avarice. He secured from them a splendid galley , for protection purposes, to sail to Myndus - but not before he had plundered their wool and caused them other expenses. I won't go into detail but ...

87. On arrival at Myndus, he sent the crew packing, sold the ship to Magius and Fannius (now regarded by the Senate as enemies of the the State) who then sailed it around all the enemies of the Roman People.

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