

Cicero Against Verres:

73-71: Verres governor of Sicily

70: prosecution of Verres for extortion (*res repetundae*) and the *Verrine Orations*; Verres goes into exile> second action not delivered.

Read the following passages:

“This same man while praetor plundered and stripped those most ancient monuments, some erected by wealthy monarchs and intended by them as ornaments for their cities; some, too, the work of our own generals, which they either gave or restored as conquerors to the different states in Sicily. And he did this not only in the case of public statues and ornaments, but he also plundered all the temples consecrated in the deepest religious feelings of the people. He did not leave, in short, one god to the Sicilians which appeared to him to be made in a tolerably workmanlike manner, and with any of the skill of the ancients. I am prevented by actual shame from speaking of his nefarious licentiousness as shown in rapes and other such enormities; and I am unwilling also to increase the distress of those men who have been unable to preserve their children and their wives unpolluted by his wanton lust.” (Cic. *Verr.* 1.1.14)

“At that time the same Diana of which I am speaking is restored with the greatest care to the Segestans. It is taken back to Segesta; it is replaced in its ancient situation, to the greatest joy and delight of all the citizens. It was placed at Segesta on a very lofty pedestal, on which was cut in large letters the name of Publius Africanus; and a statement was also engraved that “he had restored it after having taken Carthage.” It was worshipped by the citizens; it was visited by all strangers; when I was quaestor it was the very first thing, they showed me. It was a very large and tall statue with a flowing robe, but in spite of its large size it gave the idea of the age and dress of a virgin; her arrows hung from her shoulder, in her left hand she carried her bow, her right hand held a burning torch.

[75] When that enemy of all sacred things, that violator of all religious scruples saw it, he began to burn with covetousness and insanity, as if he himself had been struck with that torch. He commands the magistrates to take the statue down and give it to him; and declares to them that nothing can be more agreeable to him. But they said that it was impossible for them to do so; that they were prevented from doing so, not only by the most extreme religious reverence, but also by the greatest respect for their own laws and courts of justice. Then he began to entreat this favour of them, then to threaten them, then to try and excite their hopes, then to arouse their fears. They opposed to his demands the name of Africanus; they said that it was the gift of the Roman people; that they themselves had no right over a thing which a most illustrious general, having taken a city of the enemy, had chosen to stand there as a monument of the victory of the Roman people.

[76] As he did not relax in his demand, but urged it every day with daily increasing earnestness, the matter was brought before their senate. His demand raises a violent outcry on all sides. And so at that time, and at his first arrival at Segesta, it is refused. Afterwards, whatever burdens could be imposed on any city in respect of exacting sailors and rowers, or in levying corn, he imposed on the Segestans beyond all other cities, and a good deal more than they could bear. Besides that, he used to summon their magistrates before him; he used to send for all the most noble and most virtuous of the citizens, to hurry them about with him to all the courts of justice in the province, to threaten every one of them separately to be the ruin of him, and to announce to them all in a body that he would utterly destroy their city. Therefore, at last, the Segestans, subdued by much ill-treatment and by great fear, resolved to obey the command of the praetor. With great grief and lamentation on the part of the whole

city, with many tears and wailings on the part of all the men and women, a contract is advertised for taking down the statue of Diana.

See now with what religious reverence it is regarded. Know, O judges, that among all the Segestans none was found, whether free man or slave, whether citizen or foreigner, to dare to touch that statue. Know that some barbarian workmen were brought from Lilybaeum; they at length, ignorant of the whole business, and of the religious character of the image, agreed to take it down for a sum of money, and took it down. And when it was being taken out of the city, how great was the concourse of women! how great was the weeping of the old men! some of whom even recollected that day when that same Diana being brought back to Segesta from Carthage, had announced to them, by its return, the victory of the Roman people. How different from that time did this day seem! then the general of the Roman people, a most illustrious man, was bringing back to the Segestans the gods of their fathers, recovered from an enemy's city; now a most base and profligate praetor of the same Roman people, was taking away, with the most nefarious wickedness, those very same gods from a city of his allies. What is more notorious throughout all Sicily than that all the matrons and virgins of Segesta came together when Diana was being taken out of their city? that they anointed her with precious unguents? that they crowned her with chaplets and flowers? that they attended her to the borders of their territory with frankincense and burning perfumes?

(Cic. *Verr.* 2.1.74-7)

Q: What do the descriptions of Verres' dealings with art contribute to his damning of Verres? What are the similarities with what happened at Henna?