

Introduction

This critical analysis, of *'in C. Verrem'* 2.1.63-64, will be an overview, using the two paragraphs to explore the style and devices used by Cicero in the *'in C. Verrem'* speeches, rather than a word-by-word, line-by-line commentary. However, word choice, the reasoning behind the choice, and their wider implications will also be considered. Also, reasoning behind Cicero's inclusion of the Lampsacus episode within *'in Verrem'* 2.1 will also be explored.

A great deal is written about the skulduggery and tactics employed by Verres, and his patrons, to save himself from being pitted against Cicero as prosecutor for his case.¹ None of these tactics worked, due to Cicero's knowledge of Roman Law, his craft, and guile. Needless to say, Verres went into exile rather than wait for the trial to conclude, which meant that Cicero won his case without reciting 'the bulk of the text he later circulated', a fact which needs to be taken into consideration when reading the Verrine orations.²

Verres was to stand trial for acts against the Sicilian community which occurred during his tenure as Governor (Pro-Praetor) between 73-71 B.C.³ Verres was accused of the looting of the province's temples, and extortion. The Sicilian people persuaded Cicero to prosecute Verres on their behalf, the relationship between Cicero and the Sicilian people being favourable. Cicero had been Quaestor in Sicily in 75 B.C. and was trusted.⁴ Being a prosecutor in the courts of the Roman Republic was a perilous job, political life was tempestuous and unstable. It was easy to make enemies and what better way of doing so than to bring one of your peers before the courts, and act as prosecutor?⁵ However, Cicero accepted the challenge.

Style and Method

According to Cicero in *'Orator'* there are three types of orator, with distinguishing styles in the main influenced by Greek orators such as Demosthenes, Aeschines, Lysias, and even writers of history such as Thucydides.⁶ First, those who with, *'grandiloqui, ut ita dicam, fuerunt cum ampla et sententiarum gravitate et maiestate verborum, vehementes, varii, copiosi, graves, ad permovendos et convertendos animos instructi et parati'*.⁷ Secondly, those who were *'tenues acuti, omnia docentes et dilucidiora, non ampliora facientes, subtili*

¹ Cic.*in Q. Caecilium*; Gildenhard, 2011, p.1; Gurd, 2010, pp.80-81.

² Gurd, 2010, p.80.

³ Gildenhard, 2011, p.6.

⁴ Gildenhard, 2011, p.6.

⁵ Booth (ed.), 2007, pp.7-8.

⁶ Cic.Ora.24-32.

⁷ Cic.Ora.20-24.

quadam et pressa oratione et limata'.⁸ Finally, there is a style which is between the two that has neither the electricity of the first, or the intellectual acumen of the second.⁹ As Cicero puts to Brutus in the '*Oraator*', the oratorical 'ideal', '*is qui in foro causisque civilibus ita dicet, ut probet, ut delectare, ut flectat*', and quite simply, '*probare necessitates est, delectare suavitatis, flectere victoriae; nam id unum ex omnibus ad obtinendas causas potest plurimum*'.¹⁰

Style aside, it was then left to what methods a particular orator chose to pursue. The art of persuasion, the ability to 'sway', can be broken into three distinct parts; λόγος – reason and consideration within the argument, ἔθος – disposition and manner (of both prosecution and defence), and πάθος – the ability to stir up the emotions within the audience.¹¹

Other methods of Greek rhetorical influence found within Cicero's speeches, and particularly evident in this passage (*in Verrem* 2.1.63-64.) are, ἑπαινος (praise) and ψόγος (blame).¹²

Performance (?)

In the Verrine orations especially, it is clear that these 'speeches' are highly polished prose works, and given their length, a large portion would not have been in the speeches had Cicero had the chance to perform them before an audience. As mentioned above, Verres goes into self-imposed exile before the case against him is concluded, and, as such, 'the Verrines...present an unusual case in their memorialisation of an act of oral performance that never took place'.¹³ However, this should not detract from the importance of the performance of a speech, in Roman oratory performance was key. An impressive performance could, quite possibly, lead to a successful prosecution, or defence, regardless of the evidence presented, and/or whether that evidence happened to be mainly fiction.¹⁴ The performance or 'presentation', a belief of Cicero's, and other practitioners, was central to the 'swaying' of the jury to your way of thinking and, ultimately, securing victory.

Cic.Verr.2.1.63.

Having portrayed Verres as a sexually deviant animal in the preceding paragraph 2.1.62, alluded to with word choices such as '*indomitas*', and '*effrenatas*', Cicero's character development of Verres continues in 2.1.63. with an event taken from Verres' early political career which is offered as 'evidence'.¹⁵ Evidence, which, plausibly, is in the most part fabrication, a prime example of 'spin'.¹⁶ Who of Cicero's contemporary audience would have any possible idea of what had, and had not, taken place in Lampsacus?

⁸ Cic.Ora.20-24.

⁹ Cic.Orat.20-24.

¹⁰ Cic.Orat.69.

¹¹ Gildenhard, 2011, pp.11-12.

¹² Booth (ed.), 2007, pp.3-5.

¹³ Gurd, 2010, p.81.

¹⁴ Tempest, 2013; Steel, 2004, p.250.

¹⁵ Gildenhard, 2011, p.94.

¹⁶ Steel, 2004; Gildenhard, 2011, pp.97-98.

The apportioning of ‘praise’ and ‘blame’ begins, and is stressed, with Verres and his underlings’ intent on evil doings, having stepped foot into the town of Lampsacus (which lies on the Hellespont). The good people of Lampsacus welcome Verres and his entourage hospitably to their town, as is their custom toward citizens of Rome (*‘officiosi’, ‘accommodati’*).¹⁷ Verres, as Cicero would have us believe, is looking for the quickest way to make financial gain, and to feed his sexual desires, by any means.¹⁸ We are also treated, by Cicero, to a description of Verres’ entourage (*‘nequissimis turpissimisque hominibus’*).¹⁹ This could be seen as an attempt to show how Verres’ bad behaviour leeches into, and corrupts, those who surround him. There is, however, a wider scope to this evidence offered by Cicero. It has greater implications for the Roman Republic bringing the problem closer to home and placing it at the feet of those within the Senate, and members of the jury. This could be viewed as a subtle attack by Cicero on the politicians of the Republic, exposing corruption, and the abuse of power on Greek (and other) colonies by Roman politicians such as Verres (and many others).²⁰ In some ways it is an appeal for reform by Cicero, Verres, and his kind’s behaviour would eventually, if not already doing so, bring disaster upon the Republic, this ‘body’, or style of governance, which was valued so much by all (those who are virtuous at least). A further important aspect to this ‘evidence’ is that by portraying an individual (Verres) as rotten from the start (almost from birth is the implication) the more credence was lent to your prosecution (Cicero’s) when it finally came to the discussion of the present violation (acts in Sicily) for which the defendant (Verres) was being prosecuted.²¹ Again, these elements, are important devices employed in the swaying of the audience/jury.

Cic.Verr.2.1.64.

From the use of invective displaying Verres’ character, and his tendencies, in 2.1.62, to the balance of ‘praise’ and ‘blame’ in 2.1.63, 2.1.64 opens with the account of ‘tale’ proper.²² The story of what happened at Lampsacus begins here, with the main protagonist, it would seem, being Rubrius, a member of Verres’ seedy entourage.²³ Rubrius is described as, a man tailor-made (*‘factus homo’*), in possession of a wondrous craft (*‘miro artificio’*), and all the necessary skills to search out (*‘investigare’*) all the ‘things’ which will satisfy the needs of his master, Verres.²⁴ An inhabitant of Lampsacus named Philodamus is then introduced, by Cicero, as a principal member of the wealth and nobility of Lampsacus (*‘genere, honore, copiis, existimatione facile principem Lampsacenorum’*).²⁵ Following this, and crucial to the story, is the introduction of Philodamus’ chaste (*‘pudicitia’*) daughter of remarkable beauty, (*‘mulierem eximia pulchritudine’*).²⁶ The existence of this beautiful daughter of a rich and noble provincial is reported by Rubrius, back to Verres, and the consequences stemming

¹⁷ Cic.Verr.2.1.63; Gildenhard, 2011, p.100.

¹⁸ Cic.Verr.2.1.63.

¹⁹ Cic.Verr.2.1.63.

²⁰ Steel, 2004, p.251.

²¹ ?

²² Booth (ed.), 2007, pp.1-8.

²³ Cic.Verr.2.1.64.

²⁴ Cic.Verr.2.1.64.

²⁵ Cic.Verr.2.1.64.

²⁶ Cic.Verr.2.1.64.

from this are disastrous.²⁷ At a dinner hosted by Philodamus, at which Rubrius and other members of Verres' entourage are guests, a melee ensues, instigated by the attempted rape of Philodamus' daughter (under orders of Verres although Verres is not present) and the lictor, Cornelius, is killed.²⁸ The death of a Roman official has grave consequences for Philodamus and his family. The tale of Verres in Lampsacus will ultimately conclude, of sorts, in 2.1.75-76 with the condemning to death, and following execution of Philodamus, and his son, being guilty of nothing more (Cicero believes) of individual family members doing their familial duties, a father protecting the chastity of his daughter, and a son protecting the life of his father.²⁹

The description of Philodamus, and his family, by Cicero is important. Verres' worming his way into the lives of this prestigious provincial family may be beneficial in both sexual and financial ways. The sexual element is stressed by Cicero to reveal the baseness of Verres' character and his entourage, and their disregard for tradition (the Greek tradition of *ξενία* 'guest-friendship').³⁰ Regardless of whether it was a Roman practice or not, in early Greek society the idea of 'guest-friendship' was 'fundamental for regulating social relations'.³¹ This breaking of ritual by Verres whilst in a position of authority, representing the Roman Republic in Cicero's eyes, would not have been lost on Cicero's audience.

The choice of the word '*pudicitia*' in the description of Philodamus' daughter by Cicero is also especially pertinent. *pudicitia*, unlike *ξενία*, is a wholly Roman concept, the ideal of 'sexual virtue'.³² The use of this word by Cicero is damning. It shows Verres' willingness to break this virtuous ideal, or code, which is held by the Romans beside 'justice, liberty, peace, dignity and temperance'.³³ This particular word choice also enables Cicero to create *παθος*.

The financial element is stressed, because Cicero cannot be seen to be straying too far from the business at hand. Cicero would not want this 'story' of what happened at Lampsacus to have been dismissed as irrelevant.³⁴ The financial implications being important when referring back to the actual crime Verres is on trial for (or to be brought to trial for) which was the looting of temples and extortion, which took place in the more recent past on the island of Sicily under his governorship.³⁵

Conclusion

It is evident that the Verrine Orations are highly polished prose works and should probably be considered as such, rather than speeches that could have been performed before the Senate, jury, or the Roman public. Crucially, the length, and of course, the history surrounding the '*in C. Verrem*' speeches is confirmation of this. It could be argued that certain aspects of in Verrem 2.1, such as the Lampsacus episode, might not have even been

²⁷ Cic.Verr.2.1.63-76.

²⁸ Cic.Verr.2.1.66-67.

²⁹ Cic.Verr.2.1.64-76.

³⁰ Cic.Verr.2.1.66; Walsh and Merrill, 2002, pp.22-31.

³¹ Walsh and Merrill, 2002, p.22

³² Langlands, 2006, p.2.

³³ Langlands, 2006, p.2.

³⁴ Booth (ed.), 2007, p.3.

³⁵ Cic.Verr.

tolerated by a Roman Court, at least, not to the extent existing in the published work.³⁶ However, there is the feel of live performance within the published speech '*in Verrem 2.1*', such as, Cicero speaking directly to the jury, ('*iudices*'), and the pointing out of Verres by Cicero to the jury, 'that man (near you)', ('*iste*'), as if all are present (prosecution, defence and jury).³⁷ Elements of performance exist within the unperformed, which as stated above was considered the crucial component to Roman oratory, and the key to success in both prosecution and defence.

word count 1888

³⁶ Booth (ed.), 2007, pp.5-8.

³⁷ Cic.Verr.2.1.63-64.

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