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Cicero In Verrem V

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Cicero *In Verrem V*

Extract 1

In English

Cicero describes Verres' unusual approach to his duties as governor of Sicily.

However, when springtime came around (and the defendant did not mark the beginning of spring by the west wind, or from some star, but reckoned spring had begun when he saw a rose), then he would devote himself to work and travelling. In this pursuit he always used to show himself so
5 enduring and energetic that no one ever saw him sitting on horseback. I should explain that, just like some king of Bithynia, he was regularly carried in an eight-slave litter, in which there was a cushion of transparent Maltese linen, stuffed with rose petals. Once his journey had been completed in this manner, whenever he arrived in some town or other, he used to be
10 carried right into the bedroom on the selfsame litter. That was where the local Sicilian dignitaries used to come, and Roman businessmen, as you have heard from many under oath. Disputes were brought in secretly, and a little later the decisions were brought out in full view. Then, after he had dispensed justice for a short time in his bedroom – at a price rather than on
15 the grounds of fairness – he thought that the remaining time was owed to Bacchus and Venus.

At this point it seems to me that I should not pass over the outstanding and singular attention to duty shown by our distinguished general. For you ought to know that, of all the towns in Sicily in which governors usually stay
20 and hold the assizes, there was not a single town where the defendant did not have (chosen from a highly respectable family, mind you) a woman for his sexual gratification.

Moreover, he held parties that displayed neither the discretion you would expect from the military governors of the Roman people, nor the self-restraint usually shown at magistrates' receptions, but involved great
25 uproar and swearing. Sometimes there were even outbreaks of hand-to-hand fighting. For that uncompromising and conscientious governor, although he had never obeyed the laws of the Roman people, was scrupulous in his observance of those laws which were laid down at drinking
30 parties. And so the outcome was that one guest might be carried bodily from the party, as if from battle, another left for dead, and most lay sprawling, senseless and unaware of anything, so that anyone who saw it would have thought he was seeing not a governor's reception, but some depraved equivalent of the battle of Cannae!

Extract 2

In English

Now with regard to the fleet, Verres, you received a ship from the Mamertini in violation of the laws, and you exempted them from supplying another in violation of the treaties. In this way you were doubly dishonest although there was only a single state involved, insofar as you exempted
5 what you should not have exempted and you received what you were not entitled to receive. You should have requisitioned a vessel to sail against the pirates, not one in which to sail off with your ill-gotten gains, a defence against the looting of the province, not transport for loot from the province. The Mamertini provided you with a town to which you could carry
10 in goods stolen from all over, and a ship in which you could carry them out!

Extract 3

In Latin

cum propter istius hanc avaritiam nomine classis esset in Sicilia, re quidem vera naves inanes, quae praedam praetori non quae praedonibus metum adferrent, tamen, cum P. Caesetius et P. Tadius decem navibus suis semiplenis navigarent, navem quandam piratarum praeda refertam non
5 ceperunt, sed abduxerunt onere suo plane captam atque depressam. erat ea navis plena iuventutis formosissimae, plena argenti facti atque signati, multa cum stragula veste. haec una navis a classe nostra non capta est, sed inventa ad Megaridem, qui locus est non longe a Syracusis. quod ubi isti nuntiatum est, tametsi in acta cum mulierculis iacebat ebrius, erexit se
10 tamen et statim quaestori legatoque suo custodes misit complures, ut omnia sibi integra quam primum exhiberentur.

adpellitur navis Syracusas; exspectatur ab omnibus supplicium. iste quasi praeda sibi advecta, non praedonibus captis, si qui senes ac deformes erant, eos in hostium numero ducit; qui aliquid formae aetatis artificique
15 habebant, abducit omnes, non nullos scribis filio cohortique distribuit, symphonicos homines sex cuidam amico suo Romam muneri misit. nox illa tota in exinaniunda nave consumitur. archipiratam ipsum videt nemo, de quo supplicium sumi oportuit. hodie omnes sic habent –quid eius sit vos coniectura adsequi debetis–istum clam a piratis ob hunc archipiratam
20 pecuniam accepisse.

“coniectura est.” iudex esse bonus nemo potest qui suspicione certa non movetur. hominem nostis, consuetudinem omnium tenetis,–qui ducem praedonum aut hostium ceperit, quam libenter eum palam ante oculos omnium esse patiatur. hominem in tanto conventu Syracusis vidi neminem,
25 iudices, qui archipiratam captum sese vidisse diceret, cum omnes, ut mos est, ut solet fieri, concurrerent, quaererent, videre cuperent. quid accidit cur tanto opere iste homo occultaretur ut eum ne casu quidem quisquam aspicere posset? homines maritimi Syracusis, qui saepe istius ducis nomen audissent, saepe timuissent, cum eius cruciatu atque supplicio pascere
30 oculos animumque exsaturare vellent, potestas aspiciendi nemini facta est.

Extract 4

In English

One man, Publius Servilius, has captured more pirate chiefs alive than all previous governors put together. So then, was anyone at any time ever denied the satisfaction of being allowed to see a captured pirate? No, on the contrary, wherever Servilius went, he would provide everyone with that most enjoyable spectacle, the sight of their enemies captured and in chains. That's why people everywhere flocked to him, so that crowds came not only from those towns through which the procession passed, but from the neighbouring towns as well, just to see the pirates. Now, as for his triumph itself, why was it the most pleasing and enjoyable of all for the Roman people? Because nothing is sweeter than victory, and there is no more certain proof of victory than to see those you have often feared being led to their execution in chains.

Extract 5

In Latin

hoc tu quam ob rem non fecisti? quam ob rem ita pirata iste occultatus est quasi eum aspici nefas esset? quam ob rem supplicium non sumpsisti? quam ob causam hominem reservasti? equem scis in Sicilia antea captum archipiratam qui non securi percussus sit? unum cedo auctorem tui facti, unius profer exemplum. vivum tu archipiratam servabas: quo? per triumphum, credo, quem ante currum tuum duceres; neque enim quicquam erat reliquum nisi uti classe populi Romani pulcherrima amissa provinciaque lacerata triumphus tibi navalis decerneretur.

age porro, custodiri ducem praedonum novo more quam securi feriri omnium exemplo magis placuit. quae sunt istae custodiae? apud quos homines, quem ad modum est adservatus? lautumias Syracusanas omnes audistis, plerique nostis. opus est ingens, magnificum, regum ac tyrannorum; totum est e saxo in mirandam altitudinem depresso et multorum operis penitus exciso; nihil tam clausum ad exitum, nihil tam saeptum undique, nihil tam tutum ad custodiam nec fieri nec cogitari potest. in has lautumias, si qui publice custodiendi sunt, etiam ex ceteris oppidis Siciliae deduci imperantur.

Extract 6

In English

But because he had thrown lots of Roman citizens in there as his prisoners, and because he had ordered that the rest of pirates be detained there too, he realised that if he put this substitute pirate chief in the same prison, lots of people in the quarries would ask where the real captain was. And so he did not dare entrust this man to the best and safest place of imprisonment. In short, he feared every part of Syracuse. He sent the man away – but where? To Lilybaeum, perhaps? I see, however that would mean he did not actually fear every community on the coast. No, not there, gentlemen of the jury. To Panhormus, therefore? I take your point, although, since he had been captured in the waters of Syracuse, it was in Syracuse above all, that he should have been, if not executed, at least imprisoned.

Extract 7

In Latin

- ne Panhormum quidem. quo igitur? quo putatis? ad homines a piratarum metu et suspicione alienissimos, a navigando rebusque maritimis remotissimos, ad Centuripinos, homines maxime mediterraneos, summos aratores, qui nomen numquam timuissent maritimi praedonis, unum te
- 5 praetore horruissent Apronium, terrestrem archipiratam. et ut quivis facile perspiceret id ab isto actum esse ut ille suppositus facile et libenter se illum qui non erat esse simularet, imperat Centuripinis ut is victu ceterisque rebus quam liberalissime commodissimeque adhiberetur.
- interea Syracusani, homines periti et humani, qui non modo ea quae
- 10 perspicua essent videre verum etiam occulta suspicari possent, habebant rationem omnes cotidie piratarum qui securi ferirentur; quam multos esse oporteret, ex ipso navigio quod erat captum et ex remorum numero coniciebant. iste, quod omnes qui artificii aliquid habuerant aut formae removerat atque abduxerat, reliquos si, ut consuetudo est, universos ad
- 15 palum alligasset, clamorem populi fore suspicabatur, cum tanto plures abducti essent quam relictis; propter hanc causam cum instituisset alios alio tempore producere, tamen in tanto conventu nemo erat quin rationem numerumque haberet, et reliquos non desideraret solum sed etiam posceret et flagitaret.
- 20 cum magnus numerus deesset, tum iste homo nefarius in eorum locum quos domum suam de piratis abduxerat substituere et supponere coepit cives Romanos, quos in carcerem antea coniecerat; quorum alios Sertorianos milites fuisse insimulabat, et ex Hispania fugientes ad Siciliam adpulsos esse dicebat, alios, qui a praedonibus erant capti, cum mercaturas facerent aut
- 25 aliquam ob causam navigarent, sua voluntate cum piratis fuisse arguebat. itaque alii cives Romani, ne cognoscerentur, capitibus obvolutis e carcere ad palum atque ad necem rapiebantur, alii, cum a multis civibus Romanis cognoscerentur, ab omnibus defenderentur, securi feriebantur. quorum ego de acerbissima morte crudelissimoque cruciatu dicam cum eum locum
- 30 tractare coepero, et ita dicam ut, si me in ea querimonia quam sum habiturus de istius crudelitate et de civium Romanorum indignissima morte non modo vires verum etiam vita deficiat, id mihi praeclarum et iucundum putem.

Extract 8

In English

- So this was Verres' great achievement, this was his famous victory: he captured a small pirate ship and released its captain; he sent a troupe of musicians to Rome and he took the men and boys that were good looking and those that were skilled home with him. To take their place, and to
- 5 make up their number, he tortured and executed Roman citizens, as though they were enemies. He stole all the fine clothing and he pilfered and pocketed all the silver and gold.

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