

Temples as Witness and Victim in Cicero's Orations

At the conclusion of Cicero's first speech against Catiline, delivered in the Temple of Jupiter Stator, he turned to address the god directly, beseeching him to help defend the city and temples from Catiline (*in Cat.* 1.33). It seems likely that Cicero physically gestured toward the statue of Jupiter when he made his plea (Aldrete 1999), using it to help reinforce his own case for security against Catiline (Vasaly 1993). Studies into such references to temples in Ciceronian oratory has yielded valuable insights into how Rome's religious landscape could provide both backdrop and ammunition for the public speeches of Rome. Less explored, though just as compelling, are how temples and temple infrastructure could be the victims themselves. There are numerous examples from throughout Cicero's career of various rivals using temples for their own advantage or in conflict with the public good, while Cicero was a noble and pious defender of such institutions. In this way, Cicero used Romans' interactions with temples and their infrastructure as a way to make their piety a public matter. At the same time, this would help to define what should be considered good "Roman" behavior.

In 70 BCE, while prosecuting Verres for corruption as governor of Sicily, Cicero called attention to Verres' abuse of temples, one of many, but this one at Rome. He accused Verres of using the restoration of the Temple of Castor as a means to make a profit (*Verr.* 2.1.130-153). Unlike the reference to Jupiter Stator, the trial of Verres was not at the Temple of Castor (indeed, the Second Action was never even delivered), yet it still proved a valuable reference for Cicero's case against Verres, even more so because this abuse was in Rome, not on Sicily, and one of the jurors, a young P. Iunius, oversaw its restoration. The implication was clear, that if Verres was left unpunished, he would be free to further plunder Rome's temples as he saw fit.

Verres also abused temple infrastructure while governor of Sicily, using temple slaves for unrelated tasks like his oppressive tax collection (*Verr.* 2.3.86). Here, Cicero makes the issue clear: with Verres' actions as precedent, temple slaves at Rome could also be entrusted to tax collection. Temple slaves were a common feature in the Roman world (Riçl 2003), but Verres was apparently tasking these slaves with duties that would have been unusual. It was also an abuse of public property for personal gain, as these slaves likely owed some of the profits to Verres. Thus, when Verres used one of slaves, Diognotus, he was not only drawing away his services from Venus' temple but also into his own pocket. Allowing such actions to stand at Rome would be disastrous.

Near the end of Cicero's life and career, he saw just that sort of situation come to pass with Mark Antony. Antony, soon after the assassination of Julius Caesar, had suddenly found his massive debts absolved, so quickly that it "seemed like a portent" (*Phil.* 5.11). He had apparently relieved himself of those debts by relying on money that was acquired from the proscriptions of Pompeians, and subsequently been stored in the Temple of Ops. Miano 2015 suggests that this might have been a portion of the state treasury, but at the very least we know Antony used it for personal debts (*Cic. Att.* 14.14; *Phil.* 2.93; Manuwald 2007). Thus, by using this money, Antony was abusing public funds (Miles) and abusing the Temple of Ops, by using forgery (*Phil.* 2.35-36), to redirect the funds toward his debts. Of course, Antony was accused of many other serious crimes, as was Verres, such as his holding the senate under armed guard at the Temple of Concord (*Phil.* 3.30; Straumann 2016), but his abuse of the Temple of Ops was just as condemnable as the barricading of the Temple of Concord. Against both Verres and Antony, the temples stood for Cicero as both a witness to their respective crimes, but also as victims of their abuse. For that, these men needed to be stopped.

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